

# **ESSENCE**

# OF EKA VIMSHATI PURANAS

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#### Other Scripts by the same Author:

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

Dwadasha Divya Sahasranaama:a) Devi Chaturvidha Sahasra naama: Lakshmi, Lalitha, Saraswati, Gayatri;b) Chaturvidha Shiva Sahasra naama-Linga-Shiva-Brahma Puranas and Maha Bhagavata;c) Trividha Vishnu and Yugala Radha-Krishna Sahasra naama-Padma-Skanda-Maha Bharata and Narada Purana. Stotra Kavacha- A Shield of Prayers -Purana Saaraamsha; Select Stories from Puranas

Essence of Dharma Sindhu - Dharma Bindu - Shiva Sahasra Lingarchana-Essence of Paraashara Smriti-Essence of Pradhana Tirtha Mahima- Essence of Ashtaadasha Upanishads: Brihadarankya, Katha, Taittiriya/ Taittiriya Aranyaka, Isha, Svetashvatara, Maha Narayana and Maitreyi, Chhadogya and Kena, Atreya and Kausheetaki, Mundaka, Maandukya, Prashna, Jaabaala and Kaivalya. Also 'Upanishad Saaraamsa' -

Essence of Virat Parva of Maha Bharata- Essence of Bharat Yatra Smriti -Essence of Brahma Sutras-Essence of Sankhya Parijnaana- Essence of Knowledge of Numbers for students-Essence of Narada Charitra; Essence Neeti Chandrika-Essence of Hindu Festivals and AusteritiesEssence of Manu Smriti-Quintessence of Manu Smriti- Essence of Paramartha Saara; Essence of Pratyaksha Bhaskra; Essence of Pratyaksha Chandra; Essence of Vidya-Vigjnaana-Vaak Devi; Essence of Bhagya -Bhogya-Yogyata Lakshmi - Essence of Soundarya Lahari- Essence of Popular Stotras- Essence of Pancha Maha Bhutas-Essence of Taittireeya Aranyaka- Quintessence of Soundarya Lahari- Essence of Gayatri- Essence of Ganesha Mahima - Essence of Shiva Raatri Mahima- Essence of Chaturupanishads- Essence of Ashtaadasha Upanishads - Essence of Bhagavad Gita

Essence of Valmiki Baala Ramayana- Essence of Valmiki Ayodhya Ramayana- Essence of Aranya Ramayana-Essence of Valmiki Kishkindha Ramayana- Essence of Valmiki Sundara Ramayana- Essence of Valmiki Yuddha Ramayana- Essence of Valmiki Uttara Ramayana- Quitessecence of Valmiki Ramayana;

Essence of Veda Vyasa Smriti-Essence of Yagjnyavalkya Smriti-Essence of Aapastamba Dharma Sutras- Essence of Devi Navaratri Mahima- Essence of Aapstamba Grihya Sutras- Essence of Bhishma Parva of Maha Bharata- Essence of Post Life Existence-based on Upanishads, Puranas, and Itihaasaas - Essence of Nava Graha Mahatmya- Essence of Kaala Chakra- Essence of Pranava- Essence of Drona Parva Of Maha Bharata Yuddha - Essence of Shanti Moksha Maha Bharata-Part One - Essence of Shanti Moksha Maha Bharata- Part 2; Essence of Ashta Dikpaalakaas- Essence of Bhagavan Dattaterya - Magnificence of Tripuraambika; Essence of Sanaatana Dharma; Essence of Pradhana Gita Samgraha; Essence of Sanatsujeetiya Bharata; Essence of Maaya Prakriti and Vishnu Mayam

Note: All the above Scriptures already were released on www. Kamakoti. Org/news by the respective references.

#### **Preface**

Blessed be the unforgettable and memorabe day of my post retirement two decades approx when with diffidence had approached HH. Vijayendra Sarasvati of Kanchi Mutt with the copies of the Brief Essences of Mahabhagavata and Shiva Puranaas. Even without glancing the pages, he instructed one of his desciples to publish vide Kama Koti . org. books section for world vide publicity by google. Then He instructed me to script the translations of the series of Ashtaadasha Puranas as per His insrtuction and almost each alternative month I made a bee line trips from Chennai to Kanchi pura periodically. Such was the ever lasting benevolence showered on me and family there since.

In the course of time HH named me 'Puraanaala Vaaru' while introducing to the public to my embarassment yet even as of a matter of self contentment. Later on He named me as 'Purana Upanishad Vaaru' subsequently. The first vibration by which the HH thus became aware of the self and thereafter it is vibration after vibration in 'aarohana and avarohana' manner caused as my Praana the Life Energy indeed. From Puranas to Upanishads, Itihaasaas, Smritis, Sutras, Festivals and Austerities, Nava Grahaas, Ashta Dik Palakas, Pratyaksha Surya Chandras, Lakshmi Sarasvatis all climaxing in to the Sahasra Naamaas and Pranava Nadaas were enlightened by Marga Darshi and Guru Deva, the Unique Kanchi Swami.

It was His personal directive that the Paramartha saara on Kashmiri Shaivism was attempted and so was the Essences of Manu Smriti- Apastamba Dharma and Grihya Sutras. So was the specific instruction to cover Jainism vide Bharata Yatra Smriti. The memorable Essence of Soundarya Lahari and the Essence of Dharma Sindhu and Dharma Bindu were of His inspiration and so was the Essence of Brahma Sutras.

This presentation covers broadly covers the Puranaas delineating Parama Shiva-Maha Vishnu-Parameshvari- Brahma Deva-Ganesha- Skanda - Dashava taaraas highlighting Matsya -Kurma -Varaaha - Vamanas and Kalki by way of Bhavishya Purana, besides of Maharshis of the Supreme Ranking of Markandeya -Naradaas and so on..

Indeed my post retirement material life, the smooth transfer to the Vedic Cuture was facilitated by the unique Kanchi Swami and am ever beholden my the self and family to the HH.

VDN.Rao and family

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# ESSENCE OF AGNI PURANA

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#### **ESSENCE OF AGNI PURANA**

Shriyam Sarasvateem Gaureem Ganesham Skandameeshvaram, Brahmaanam Vaahnimindraadeen Vasudemam nammamyaham/

(My greetings to Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Gauri, Parvati, Ganesh, Kartikeya, and Vasudeva)

Stated to have been recited by 'Agni' (The Fire God) to the illustrious Sage Vasishtha, Agni Purana is among the renowned Eighteen Sacred Puranas of Hindu Belief. In turn, Vasishtha narrated the contents to Vedavyasa, who passed on the same to the learned Suta Maha Muni. As a Sacred Yagna (Ritualistic Sacrifice) dedicated to Lord Vishnu was being performed at the 'Nimisharanya' (Nimisha Forest) under the guidance of 'Shaunaka', Suta Maha Muni arrived at the Yagna and preached the Agni Purana, which taught the Essence of Parama Brahma Tatwa to all the Rishis who were assembled there and further on to the Gen Next.

'Agni Purana' is the essence of Vedas and Upanishads. It underlines the concept of 'Advaita Brahma Gyan' (Awareness of Unity of Almighty and the Self). In other words, Human Soul and the Supreme Power are one and the same. Also, the Purana emphasizes on the ritualistic aspects and religious practices related to temples, installation of idols, idol worship, 'Japas' (repetitive recitation of 'Mantras'), 'Homams' and 'Yagnas', visits to 'Thirthas' (Holy Places including Rivers, Worship Spots and 'Ashrams' (places where Religious Leaders and Godmen seek retreat,) and so on. Spread over some 383 chapters over twelve thousand "Shlokas', Agni Purana contains the gists of the Ten Avatars/ Incarnations of Lord Vishnu viz. 'Matsya', (Fish), 'Kurma' (Turtle), 'Varaha' (Boar), 'Narasimha' (Man/Lion), 'Vamana' (Dwarf), 'Parasurama', 'Rama', 'Krishna', 'Buddha' and Kalki. It also gives a detailed account of the Great Hindu Epics of 'Ramayana' and 'Maha Bharata' as also of 'Harivamsa'. There are references in the Purana to Physical Features of World, Varnashrama and Ashrama Dharma, Temple Construction, Procedure of Pujas, Achaara Varnana, Tirtha Mahatmya, Power of Gayatri Mantra, Yoga Practice, Vedas and Puranas, Dhanurveda and Principles of Battle, Duties of Kings, 'Brahma Gyan', Bhagavat Gita and Yama 'Gita'. Shri Lakshmi Stotra, Vishnu Panjara Stotra and Paapa Naasha Stora are other highlights. Being the Preserver of the Universe, Lord Vishnu takes to human form on earth occasionally whenever an evil force takes an extreme presence to upset the equilibrium of human existence and destroys the evil to re-establish and vindicate righteousness. The Lord had already taken to nine such 'Avatars' (incarnations) and the Tenth is in the offing as the Contemporary 'Yuga' (the fourth and final cycle of Time viz. 'Kali' Yuga, preceded by 'Dwapara' Yuga, 'Tretha' Yuga and 'Kritha' Yuga)) would be terminated.

# 'Dashaavataaras' (The Ten Incarnations)

Matsya Avatara: As the Universe time drew near to Final Destruction including the 'Bhulok' (Earth), 'Swarglok' (Heaven) and 'Bhuvarlok' (intermediate Region), it was flooded with water. As 'Vaivaswata Manu' (son of Surya) was in prayers in River 'Kirtimala'; he found a tiny fish in the water on his palms which begged him not to throw it as big fish might swallow it. Manu kept it in a pot, but soon the fish grew big to occupy the ocean and asked him to build a mammoth Ship and transfer 'Sapta Rishis' (Seven Sages) and a sample each of flora and fauna. Vihnu in the form Matsya declared that the Universe would

be flooded soon, that the ship would be saved along with Manu and others, that He would destroy demon 'Hayagriva' and re-create the Universe.

Kurma Avatara: As 'Asuras' (Demons) and 'Suras' (Devas) were on fierce battle for long time, Lord 'Brahma' (The Creator) and Lord 'Vishnu' (The Preserver) arrived a truce between the two parties who churned 'Kshira Sagar' (the Ocean of Milk) to attain 'Amrita' (Elixir). The mountain 'Mandara' was commisioned as a rod for the churning and 'Vasuki', the Great Serpent as the rope. Demons grabbed the face of 'Vasuki' out of pride and many perished due to the poisonous flames from its several mouths, whereas Devas preferred to opt for the tail of the Serpent out of veneration for Vasuki. Since the Mountain could not be balanced in the Ocean, Lord Vishnu took the form of a Turtle (Kurma) and withstood the weight and speed of the churning. In the course of churning, came out a colossal poisonous fire, named 'Kalakuta', which engulfed the whole Universe. Lord 'Eswara' swallowed the Great Fire and kept it in His Throat and thus came to be known as 'Neelagriva' (The Blue Throated). Eventually, a number of Objects emerged as a result of the churning but the Demons rejected them all as they were only bent on 'Amritha' and none else. Among the Objects were: 'Sura' (The Divine Drink), 'Parijata' the Tree bringing heavenly fragrance by its flowers since opted by Indra for his Garden; 'Koustubha' the Holy Jewel adorning Lord Vishnu's chest, the Celestial Animals viz. 'Kapila' the Sacred Cow, 'Uttchaiswarya' the Divine Horse and 'Iravata' the Elephant used by Indra; 'Apsaras', the Heavenly Dancers; Lakshmi ther Goddess of Wealth, who preferred to be the Consort of Lord Vishnu and finally emerged 'Dhanvantari'- the God of Medicine, along with the most awaited 'Amritha', which was sought to be grabbed by Demons and Gods alike. To sort out the confusion, there appeared a dazzling damsel 'Mohini' (The Unique Enchantress)-who was Lord Vishnu Himself-and both Suras and Asuras accepted her as an arbitrator and 'just' distributor of Amritha. Mohini made both the parties wait for their turn and served Devas first and declared that the stock of Amritha was all consumed and disappointed the Demons. One of the Demons, Rahu- pretended to be the Moon God and consumed Amrita; on conceding the protests of Sun and Moon, Mohini cut his head. But since he managed to take sips of the Life-giving Drink, Rahu survived and in fact managed to secure a boon that he could devour both Sun and Moon and hence the Solar and Lunar Eclipses. As a result of the drama Demons were defeated and Devas retained power in Heaven thus vindicating the Divine Position of Devas.

Varaha Avatar: Sage Kashyapa and his wife Diti gave birth to 'Hiranyaksha', who in turn pleased Lord Brahma, and managed a boon that no force on Earth could destroy him in battles. He conquered all the three worlds, viz. the Earth, Heaven and the Under-World. In fact, he dragged Earth into the depths of the Ocean and there was complete chaos in the Universe. Lord Vishnu had to take the form of a boar, which after a prolonged battle destroyed the demon and restored Earth by lifting it by His tusks. The Balance of the Universe would have been completely upset if Earth were not saved along with the virtues of Mankind, the Holy Scriptures and the very concept of Righteousness and Godliness.

Narasamiha Avatar: As his elder brother Hiranyaksha was killed by Lord Vishnu, 'Hiranyakashipa' desired to avenge the death. But he realized that unless he pleased Brahma (Lord of Creation) with rigorous meditation and sacrifice, he would not receive the boons that he wanted. Finally, Brahma acceded to all of his wishes that he could not be killed by any human being or beast, by night or day, in the sky or on the Earth or in water. Having secured the boons, the Demon became all powerful and tormented one and all, especially those who prayed to Lord Vishnu. In fact, he insisted that he alone should be prayed to. He attacked Sages, destroyed 'Yagnyas' (Sacrifices) and temples and sought to terminate the Good and the righteous. But his own son, named 'Prahlada', was an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu from his childhood. Hiranyakashipa tried all means of cajoling, threatening and finally used various methods of killing him. Yet, each time that he sought to destroy the son, he was saved and Prahlada's devotion became more intense than ever. Finally in a fit of desperation, the father asked the son: 'Many a time, I tried to murder you, you are saved! Where is your Vishnu? You say that he is everywhere! Can you show him to me in this pillar? 'The son replied coolly that He is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent! Enraged by this reply, the Demon struck the pillar and there emerged Lord

Vishnu in the form of Narasimha (Half-Man and Half-Lion), kept the Demon on His lap and tore him into pieces. As per the prescription of the boon received by the demon from Lord Brahma, the annihilation happened neither by a human being nor a beast, not at a time when it was night or day (viz. dusk time) and neither on earth, sky or water! In this Incarnation, Lord Vishnu had thus not only saved Prahlada, as also established a firm victory of Goodness over Evil, Virtue over Sin, and Permanent over Ephemeral!

Vamana Avatar: 'Bali', the grandson of Prahlada, was a Demon King in the lineage of Hiranyakashipa, who became all powerful and was most dreaded by 'Devas'. He drove Devas away from Heaven, who fled away to Lord Vishnu for refuge. Vishnu assured Devas that Bali, who was in fact a benevolent King although dominant, would be humbled and that they would be restored to Heaven soon.. Eventually, the Lord was born to Kashyapa and Diti and grew as a midget ('Vamana'). As King Bali was performing a Ritualistic Yagna (Sacrifice), he declared that on the occasion nobody would be turned out without fulfilling their wishes. Vamana arrived and asked for a 'small boon', viz. a three feet of land to be given as a 'dakshina' (a fee) to his Guru (Teacher). The Guru of Demons, Sage 'Shukracharya' suspected that the dwarf was a fake and might perhaps be Lord Vishnu Himself. King Bali said that if the dwarf were the Lord Himself, then the posterity would remember the King as a donor to the Lord. Thus saying the King asked Sage Sukracharya to sprinkle the holy water from a vessel to commence the ritualistic proceedings. Guru Sukracharya still tried to prevent the act of donation and entered the vessel in a miniature form so that the holy water could not be sprinkled. Vamana was clever enough to pierce a piece of grass into the curved mouth of the vessel and thus pricked into one of the eyes of Sukracharya by doing permanent damage to the eye. As the action of donating the three feet of land was complete, Vamana assumed a huge body and occupied one foot with Bhuloka, (Earth), another with Bhuwarloka and still demanded a third step for Swarloka. Thus King Bali had no other recourse to shift himself to 'Patala' (Under World). Lord Vishnu was immensely pleased with Bali's altruism and gave him the boon to bear the title and powers of Lord Indra, the King of Heaven.

Parasurama Avatar: As per the 'Varna Dharma' of Hinduism there are four categories of castes of which the first category is of 'Brahmins' practising ritualistic prayers, Sacrifices, religious preaching, temple-running etc. Next category comprises 'Kshatriyas' or the Warriors and Kings, whose duty is to protect all other classes of people, especially the Brahmins. In this background, Kshatriyas had over a few generations neglected the interests of the three 'Varnas' and became despotic and cruel. It was at this time, that Lord Vishnu came to mortal life as the son of Sage' Jamadagni' and 'Renuka' and assumed the name of 'Parasu Rama' or the one with an axe to punish the evil. 'Kartaveerya' was the contemporary King who was an ill-famed and cruel tyrant, with thousand hands. He not only subjected his own people with oppression and brutality but became a terror among his neighbouring Kingdoms too. He had a few boons from Lord Dattatreya which were misused and tormented one and all. On one occasion, the King visited the Ashram (the Hermitage) of Jamadagni and was impressed with the Holy Cow, 'Kamadhenu', as the cow could fulfill all desires of human beings. The King had forcibly taken away the Cow, despite Jamadagni's protests. Parasurama waged a war with the King and cut off his thousand hands. His sons retaliated by killing Jamadagni and destroyed the Hermitage, when Parasurama was away. As a sequel, Parasurama had not only killed the progeny of Kartaveerya, but also hunted and shattered the totality of the Kshatriya clan by waging some twenty one wars to avenge the killings of his father and followers. Eventually, Parasurama retired and lived at Mount Mahendra. He returned again to Earth only in the subsequent 'Yuga' (the second in the Time-series of human existence, viz. Threta Yuga').

Rama Avatar: Lord Vishnu's next incarnation was that of Rama. He was born into 'Surya Vamsa' (the ancestry of Sun God) to 'Dasaratha' and 'Kousalya', while his brothers were born to his step mothers as 'Laxmana' to 'Sumithra', 'Bharata' and 'Shatrughna' to 'Kaikeyi'. As the boys grew up, Sage 'Viswamitra' asked for the help of Rama to protect the Yagna (Sacred Ritual) from Demons, as they tended to spoil the Ritual by pouring blood into the 'Agni Kunda' (the Fire Pit). Dasaratha was most reluctant to depute Rama for the purpose as he was still in teens and said that he was prepared to defend the Yagna himself. Viswamitra insisted only on Rama and Dasaratha had to agree; Rama was

accompanied by Laxmana too, as he was not only the closest among his brothers, but also devoted to Rama. The Yagna was performed successfully and Rama killed a dreadful 'Rakshasi' (demoness) named 'Tataki' and demon by name 'Subahu'; Rama also threw away thousands of miles off the high Sea another demon named 'Maricha' by the power of his arrows. As a symbol of his appreciation to Rama, Viswamitra taught how to use valuable 'astras' '(Divine Arrows) to destroy enemies, in addition to those which were already taught to him by his own Guru 'Vasishtha', another Great Sage in the court of King Dasaratha. On way back to Ayodhya, the Capital of his Kingdom, Viswamithra took Rama to the Capital City ('Mithila') of another King namely 'Janaka'. The latter announced a 'Swayam Vara' (Self-choice of a husband by a daughter; in this case Lady Sita), the criterion of eligibility for a suitable suitor being that 'Shiva Dhanush'-a Divine Set of Bow and Arrow, belonging originally by Lord Shiva Himself- to be fixed and broken. Rama succeeded in breaking the 'Shiva Dhanush' and married Sita, who was basically Goddess Lakshmi, the spouse of Lord Vishnu Himself. Alongside, Janaka performed the weddings of his other daughters to Rama's other brothers, viz .Lakshmana to 'Urmila', Bharata to 'Mandavi', and Shatrughna to 'Shrutakirti'. On way back to Ayodhya after the joyous weddings, Rama had an encounter with Parasurama, another incarnation of Lord Vishnu Himself, as Prasurama was annoyed that Rama broke the Shiva Dhanush. But Rama sought to convince Parasurama and more significantly the entire world that he was indeed the Avatar of Lord Vishnu. As there was a seeming threat posed by Parasurama, Rama broke another powerful Set of Bow and Arrows, viz. 'Narayana Dhanush' as given by Parasurama. On return to Ayodhya, Dasaratha declared Rama to be the 'Yuvraj' (heir apparent). The entire Kingdom and all the citizens felt highly overjoyed and ecstatic at the great news, as even by then, Rama was considered as a role model for humanity and a 'Maryada Purush' (an exceptionally noble and lovable person). But, the youngest wife of Dasaratha, Kaikayi, opposed the proposal and as instigated by her maid servant 'Manthara', reminded the King of two of his boons to her that were due to her when she nursed him after a battle with a demon in the past. She asked for fulfilling her boons that Bharata, her elder son, be made the heir apparent and that Rama be consigned to forests for 14 years. Dasaratha had no choice but to concede her requests. Rama obeyed the paternal wishes, as conveyed to him by Kaikeyi, since Dasaratha had already swooned after hearing the undue demands. Rama was accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana. Subsequently, Dasaratha died of heart attack. Bharata was away from Ayodhya to Mithila, as pre-planned by Kaikeyi, and on return, felt hurt by the terrible turnover of events, reprimanded his mother, refused to become the King, kept the throne unoccupied as he was only a caretaker, that too when asked by Rama whom he met in the forests, and carried back Rama's 'Padukas' (wooden footwear) to Ayodhya to be cherished on the Royal Throne.

Meanwhile, Rama and Sita, accompanied by Lakshmana moved on to 'Dandakaranya' (Thick interior of Forests) and lived in a hermitage, named 'Panchavati' on the quiet banks of River 'Godavari'. In course of time, a Rakshasa woman, by name 'Surpanakha' approached Rama and desired to marry her. Rama said that his wife was already with him but perhaps another male viz. Lakshmana might agree to do so. Lakshmana got Ram's coded message and slit Surpanakha's ears and nose. The latter desired to avenge the insult and prevailed on her brother 'Khara' to attack Rama and Lakshmana with his full army. The demon and his men were all killed in the battle and Surpanakha approached the mighty King of Lanka, viz.the ten headed and most dreaded 'Ravana' to retaliate. Enraged by the series of the deadly events, Ravana ordered Maricha to take the form of a Golden Deer to entice Lady Sita, so that Rama would chase it and thus abduct Sita. Rama killed the deer but shouted Rama's name aloud as a ploy and Lakshmana left Sita alone and went in search of Rama. Meanwhile 'Ravana' succeeded in abducting Sita and took her away to Lanka. The Great Kite 'Jatayu' intercepted Rayana to rescue Sita but Rayana killed Jatayu. While dying, Jatayu informed Rama and Lakshmana, who were searching for Sita, that Ravana abducted Sita. Wandering in the forests, Rama made friends with 'Sugriva', the illustrious Monkey Chieftain, along his supporters, especially the Illustrious 'Hanuman', who had become Rama's instant devotee and unfailing follower. Sugriva was being harassed by his elder brother 'Vali', who was a powerful and tyrannical King of 'Kishkintha'. Rama helped Sugriva to kill Vali and made him the King of Kishkintha. Sugriva sent his Monkey soldiers far and wide to locate Sita. Finally, Hanuman crossed the Sea and met Sita in a garden

of Ravana under an Ashoka Tree. He identified himself as a devotee of Rama with the help of his golden ring that was given by Rama himself as an identity. Hanuman created havoc in the Ashoka garden and killed many Rakshasa soldiers. Ravana's son, 'Meghanadh' had to utilize his prize 'Brahmastra' (the Divine Weapon of Brahma) to control Hanuman and present him in the royal court of Ravana. King Ravana ordered that Hanuman should be taught a lesson by scorching Hanuman's tail. In turn, Hanuman destroyed palaces, public places and a large part of Lanka's Capital and finally returned to Kishkintha to report the presence of Sita, who was being pressurized to marry Ravana as also the happenings of his visit to Lanka.

Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva, Hanuman, the giant Bear Jambavanta, and the massive Monkey-Brigade reached the shores of the Sea and built a gigantic 'Ram Sethu' (Bridge) across the Sea, inscribing the name of Rama on each rock and let it float! Having crossed the Sea, the 'Rama Sena' (Rama's Army) was composed and formulated to surround the entire Island of Lanka. One of Ravana's brothers, 'Vibhishana', who was a man of principles and morals tried to reason out with Ravana not to combat with Rama on the flimsy grounds of obsession with Sita, but he left the party of Ravana to join Rama, where there was 'Dharma' (Justice and Truth). In the fierce and long drawn battle that ensued, Rama killed Ravana's monstrous brother 'Kumbhakarna' and his outrageous son Meghanadha, alias Indrajit. The all powerful Ravana himself had to be wrecked by Rama by utilizing the massive Brahmastra while the entire Rakshasa community was destroyed by Rama's followers. After a long lapse of fourteen years, Rama, Sita and Lakshmana returned to Ayodhya, accompanied by the memorable Hanuman, Sugriva, Vibhushana and innumerable fellow warriors of the Rama Vijay (Rama's Victory) to witness Lord Rama's Coronation. The popular 'Rama Rajya' (Rama's Administration) was a bench-mark as per Hindu Mythology, witnessing the practice of Dharma in full force. The ideals that were followed were as per Scriptures of the Yore and reached peaks of human existence of Justice and Nobility.

Krishna Avatar: The eighth incarnation of Lord Vishnu was of Krishna, belonging to the 'Yadava' Community which was traced back to the ancestry of Lord Brahma. The lineage of Brahma commenced from his son 'Atri' onward to- Soma-Pururuva-Ayu-Nahusha-Yayati-and Yadu. Thus Krishna was born into 'Yadaya Vamsa' to 'Vasudeya' and 'Deyaki' in Mathura. Deyaki's wicked brother 'Kamsa' was the tyrant King, who heard a Divine Voice from the Skies that Devaki's eighth son would kill him. Thus he imprisoned his sister and husband and killed each of the babies born to them. Kamsa took extra precautions to ensure that the eighth child ought not to vanish from the prison. Somehow Vasudeva managed to sneak out the child to safety on a stormy midnight into the cradle of a child just born to 'Nanda' and 'Yashoda' at 'Gokul' across the river 'Yamuna' and the couple brought up the child as their own. The baby since exchanged and brought back to the prison flew away from Kamsa's hands trying to kill that baby too, who flew away from Kamsa's hands and thundered from the sky that the real child, Krishna was safe in Gokul. Having spotted the house where Krishna was safe, Kamsa deputed several demons to somehow kill the child; the demons that turned up thus included 'Pothana', 'Arishta', 'Vrushabha', 'Keshi', 'Dhenuka', 'Gardabha' and so on and Krishna killed them all. Krishna also overpowered a poisonous snake, 'Kaliya', in a poisonous pond as he entered the pond chasing a play ball with his friends. Krishna humbled Lord Indra, who rained incessantly at Gokula since the inhabitants of that place did not offer prayers to the Rain God, 'Varuna', by lifting a huge mountain, 'Govardhana' by his little finger. As Krishna and his elder brother 'Balarama' grew up, Kamsa invited them to Mathura on a so-called friendly visit, with the malicious intention of killing them. On their entry into the city, Kamsa let loose a mad elephant, which was killed. Kamsa also arranged a duel with tworenowned wrestlers, but Krishna and Balarama killed them too. Finally Krishna destroyed Kamsa and got rid of a terrible King bringing great relief to all concerned. Close to the end of Kamsa, another mighty devil named 'Jarasandha' challenged Krishna and sought revenge for Kamsa's (his brother in law) death. Jarasandha too was killed by Krishna. Yet another enemy of Krishna, named 'Sisupala' met his extermination later. There was another momentous occasion, when Krishna and his spouse, 'Satyabhama' fought a deadly demon, 'Narakasura'. It was destined that Satyabhama would terminate the Rakshasa, since Krishna pretended unconsciousness on the battle field to enable her to take the lead-role of killing the

'Asura'. The Victory Day was celebrated as 'Deepavali', the Memorable Festival of Lights. This occasion also led to Krishna's presenting a boon to Satyabhama and her request to Krishna to fetch the celestial flower, Parijata, from the Garden of Lord Indra in Swarga). The Story goes on that unfortunately the Parijata Tree brought from Swarga was planted in the Garden of Rukmini, the senior consort of Krishna and led to jealousies and quarrels in Krishna's intimae family affairs! Moreover, Narakasura imprisoned sixteen thousand daughters of various Devas, Gandharvas, and Yakshas-all from celestial families and Krishna married them, besides his own eight Royal Queens! Besides, Radha the beloved of Krishna led to the concept of 'Ras-Leela' or Group Dances and singing by Gopikas (the girls infatuated with Krishna.)

The Chapter on Harivamsa makes references to Krishna's many sons. But, the Stories of 'Pradyumna' and 'Aniruddha' became popular. Through Rukmini, the Principal Consort of Krishna, Pradyumna was born, but as soon as he was born, a Rakshasa named 'Shambhara' abducted the child and threw him in a Sea. A fish swallowed the child but a fisherman caught the fish and out of its stomach emerged Pradumna. Eventually, Pradyumna killed Shambhara and married 'Mayavati'. Aniruddha was born to the couple and Krishna felt happy. Aniruddha and 'Usha' were in love, but 'Baana'; an evil-minded King did not approve the wedding and fought with Aniduddha. Finally, Krishna vanquished Baana and made Aniruddha and Usha happy.

Closely linked with the Avatar of Krishna is the Story of 'Maha Bharata', the Great Indian Epic of Ancient India. In fact, the Mahabharata Epic is but an excuse to enact the drama of 'Pandavas' and 'Kauravas', of which the Central Role is of Krishna himself. Pandavas represented nobility, justice, valour and idealism, where as Kauravas stood for evil, jealousy, meanness and injustice. Krishna sought to depict the good and bad qualities distinctly and reveal that Truth triumphed finally and decidedly.

In the lineage that originated from Brahma to Atri down to Yayati, the latter had two wives viz. Devayani, who had two sons named Yadu and Turvusu, while Sharmishtha had three sons named Druhya, Anu and Puru. Krishna was born into Yadu Vamsa, whereas Kuru into Puru Vamsa. King Shantanu was in Kuru Vamsa and he had two wives, Ganga and Satyavati. Bhishma was born to Ganga, whereas Chitrangada and Vichitraveerya to Satyavati. Chitrangada died early and Vichitraveerya was sickly. Meanwhile, Bhishma conquered the King of Kasi and brought three of his daughters, Amba, Ambica and Ambalika with the intention of having them wedded to Vichitraveerya, his younger brother. The three daughters demanded that Bhishma should marry them since they were conquered by Bhishma, but Bhishma took a vow that he would be a bachelor always as he promised his father to facilitate Kingship to the progeny of Satvavati. The eldest daughter, Amba became furious and killed herself in 'Yoga Agni'as she was not married to Bhishma (In her subsequent birth, Amba was reborn as Sikhandi, a transgender who killed Bhishma subsequently). Since there was a crisis of family lineage to be perpetuated, Bhishma requested Vedavyasa to bless Ambica and Ambalika into bed. The girls did not initially agree and sent their 'Dasi', a servant maid and thus was born 'Vidura'. On the persuasion of Bhishma the sisters followed into the bed later; Ambica closed her eyes in the union and thus begot a blind son named 'Dhritarashtra', while Ambalika paled away in the union with the fright of Vyasa and thus had 'Pandu' as her son with congenital skin disease. Dhritarashstra was married to 'Gandhari', who also preferred to close her eyes with cloth as a respect to her husband. They got hundred sons, most important of them being 'Duryodhana' and 'Dussasana'. Pandu married Kunti and Madri. Even before her wedding, Kunti was blessed with a son, Karna, by the grace of Sun God, and after marriage she begot Yudhishtara through God Dharma (God of Justice), Bhima by 'Vayu' (God of Wind) and Arjun by God Indra. By the grace of Aswini Gods were born to Madri and they were named Nakula and Sahadeva. As a result of a curse by a Sage, Pandu died untimely and ever since then, Pandavas became fatherless and grew under the care of their paternal uncle Dhritarashtra the blind King. (Vidura, the son of a servant maid born to Vedavyasa was disqualified to become the King and thus became the Chief Adviser to the King.) The hundred strong progeny of Dhritarashtra headed by Duryodhana grew up as the spoilt and much pampered children and developed hatred towards their Pandava cousins, day by day. Karna was disowned by Kunti since she was an unwed mother b ut tried out an experiment to test a boon given by a Sage and invoked Sun God resulting in her pregnancy and birth of a boy; she packed off the child in a box floating in a river and a

chariot driver, 'Suta' and his wife Radha brought up the child as their son. Karna had joined Duryodhana. The Kauravas and Pandavas had a common Guru (Teacher), Drona Acharya, to train them in the art of archery and military skills. Invariably, Pandavas excelled Kauravas in the training sessions and that was an added angle of jealousy to Kauravas, which eventually turned out as hatred. As Bhima was an expert in physical duels and the art of using mace in duel-fight, Duryodhana got envious. Similarly, Arjun was an expert in archery and used to draw praise from Drona. Duryodhana sought to pit Karna in the art of archery, but Guru Drona did not allow Karna in the classes, as Karna was not a Prince, as all others were. At once, Duryodhana being the heir apparent to the Throne declared Karna as the Prince of a subordinate State of the Hastinapura Kingdom and made Karna eligible to join the elite of Princes. In course of time, Kauravas tried several means of terminating Pandavas. The evil minded uncle of Kaurava sons, 'Shakuni' had been an active party in all such wicked actions. In fact, there was a group of four villains- 'Dushta Chathushtaya', comprising Duryodhana, Dussasana, Shakuni and Karna- who were responsible to somehow destroy Pandavas. They arranged a mansion made of shellac to inhabit Pandavas and tried to put it on fire overnight. Lord Krishna, who had all along been on the side of Dharma (Justice) and of Pandayas, had forewarned them of the evil plans of Kaurayas to burn the mansion and got them transferred safe through a tunnel leading to a village nearby. Pandavas were disguised as a Brahmin family and rented a small house. Kuaravas, including the King and the citizens, believed that Pandavas were ablaze in the mansion. Even in disguise as Brahmins, the five Pandava sons and mother Kunti lived on and rescued the entire village by Bhima from the menace of a Rakshasa, named 'Bakasura', who demanded a villager a day as his food. In course of time, they attended a 'Swayamvara' (Bride seeking to secure a suitable bridegroom) of Draupadi, the daughter of King Drupada and among all the aspirantsuitors only Arjuna was able to smash up a fish revolving fast in a circle placed above the head level and seeing down of its reflection in a water flowing down under. Kaurava sons and Bhishma also attended the function and recognized Pandavas. Kaurava sons were dismayed, but gave great relief to Bhishma and all the well-wishers of Pandaya. But, Arjun's victory of winning Drauapadi's hand posed a problem since Arjun could not marry ahead of his elder brothers. The puzzle was sorted by Bhishma in consultation with the Sages, Draupadi and elders concerned that she should marry all the Pandava brothers in a lot. Following the Wedding, Bhishma advised King Dhritarashtra to give half of the Kingdom to Pandavas. Thus Yudhishtara became the King and gradually annexed many Kingdoms and became powerful and wealthy. Pandavas celebrated 'Rajasuya Yagna' (Royal Sacrifice) and elected Krishna as the Chief Guest of the Grand Function. Sisupala, another King and cousin of Krishna objected that the honour to Krishna, whom he defeated in successive wars. But the reality was that his mother requested Krishna to spare Sisupala for one hundred mistakes, before he was destined to die in Krishna's hands finally and thus Krishna hid himself from the wars with Sisupala and suffered him thus far. On reaching the hundred mistakes, Krishna terminated Sisupala. As Pandavas were at their climatic position, Kauravas felt highly jealous and as advised by the wily Shakuni, invited Dharmaraja for a Game of Chess, in which Shakuni played foul. Dharmaraja lost not only the Kingdom, but also Draupadi, who was forcibly brought into the Royal Court by Dussasana in the presence of Dhritharashtra, Bhishma, Drona and all the gentry; she was insulted and sought to be disrobed. Further, Dharmaraja was made to agree that Pandavas would spend in the forests for twelve years and an additional year in 'Ajnatavas' (in disguise and not to be noticed or identified by Kauravas or anyone else), failing which, another twelve years of forest life would be reimposed! After completing the Forest life for twelve years, Pandavas (with the exception of Kunti who stayed with Vidura) took refuge in the Kingdom of 'Virata' in disguised forms viz. Dharmaraja as King Virat's Brahmana- Adviser and companion to play chess, Bhima as the Royal cook, Arjuna as the transgender dance teacher of the King's daughter, Uttara; Nakula and Sahadeva as trainers in the Royal stable of the King's horses and Draupadi as the Queen's Principal Maid. During the disguised stay of Pandavas, Bhima weeded out Keechaka one night without trace, even as the King himself was not unhappy about his brother-in-law's villainy and over-control. In the meantime, Kauravas attacked Virat's Kingdom and forcibly took away thousands of cows of King Virat's. Arjun had then decided to take away the disguise of Pandavas, as the period of one year of 'Ajnatavas' was just concluded. In fact, all the Pandavas revealed their own identities. Arjun had defended Virat's Kingdom single handed and frightened away

Kauravas by his powerful arrows and finally utilizing just one 'Sammohan Astra', the Divine Arrow putting the entire Kaurava Army unconscious. Not realizing the real identity of Pandavas, King Virat and family as also the subjects of the Kingdom extended apologies to Pandavas. The Princess Uttara was married to Abhimanyu, the son of Arjun. Back to normalcy after suffering the Forest life for twelve years and the disguised existence for one year, Pandavas demanded their share of Kingdom again. In fact, Bhima, Arjun and Draupadi refused to pardon the innumerable misdeeds of Kauravas and wished to take revenge on the battle field, but for the restraint imposed on them by Dharmaraja. Lord Krishna was deputed for peace talks. Kauravas on the other hand refused to part with even a pin worth of land, let alone five villages for Pandavas. Thus the epoch-making Great Battle of Maha Bharata became inevitable. Kurukshetra was the historic war-field, where the battle lines were drawn and the composition of both the fighting parties were identified. As per options offered by Krishna, Duryadhana secured large number of soldiers and Arjuna agreed to be Krishna's charioteer, without fighting himself. Elders like Bhishma and Drona had to fight on the side of Kauravas, though reluctantly, since they had been loyal to King Dhritarashtra. As several grandfathers and uncle figures, close relatives and cousins were faced on the opposite side for a bloody war, Arjuna got bewildered and made a scene of his inability to fight and jumped out of his chariot. Krishna had then delivered his immortal 'Gita Pravachan' (The Discourse of Gita) which constituted the Quintessence of Holy Hindu Scriptures. He explained in detail that the death of stalwarts like Bhishma and Drona or close relatives of Pandavas or of anybody else, would merely mean the destruction of their physical existence but their Atma (Inner Soul) is indestructible as 'It' would don another body in the never-ending cycle of life, according to the Register of their previous lives viz. 'Sanchita' or the Stored Results of their actions in earlier births and of 'Prarabdha' or their own destinies which would shape their future. Arjuna was just an instrument in the drama of Life. The real quest of life is to attain the Union of individual Atma or the Inner Soul with 'Paramatma', the Super Soul. This is what 'Gyana' (Knowledge or Awareness) is all about and what Yogis (Sages) have all along endeavored to achieve through the ages. Arjuna was thus pacified and was asked to do his Dharma (Duty). In the fierce battle that followed for eighteen days, there was destruction all around from both the sides of warriors. Bhishma, the war-veteran and Commander-in-Chief withdrew from the battle as he was faced with a trans-gender, named Sikhandi, whom Bhishma refused to fight with and thus fell a victim but did not die; he had the boon to live as per his choice-day and preferred to live through the entire duration of the battle and waited for 'Uttarayan', i.e. the first day of Solar journey upwards the northern direction. Drona, the next Commander stopped fighting at the false news confirmed by Dharmaraja, (ever known for his utterances of Truth only) in hushed tone that his son Aswatthama (meant actually named after an elephant) died. Drona was thus killed by Dhrishtadyumna without resistance. Karna who was the next Commander of Kauravas was arrowed to death by Arjuna, as the former could not remember the secret 'Mantras' (stanzas) while releasing arrows favoring specific Gods to invoke special powers; Karna's amnesia was the resultant curse by a Sage which let him down to Arjun's arrows. The Final chapter of the Great Battle of Mahabharata, the Legendary Epic was scripted by a powerful and climactic duel of maces between Duryodhana and Bhima. As Duryodhana defended his position for long, Krishna gave a gesture to Bhima to hit the opponent on his thighs as the former's body was made sturdy all over excepting the thighs; Gandhari, mother of Duryodhana had the power of fortifying any part of a body by opening her ever closed sight just once but Duryodhana hid the loins and thighs and hence were vulnerable. Thus ended the sordid tale of Duryodhana, who was the Prime Villain of the Epic. Dharmaraja was made the King again to Hastinapur Kingdom and after him, the Dynasty carried on the Kingship by Parikshit, the son of Uttara. Lord Krishna who had firmly re-established Dharma on Earth, not only by his own fascinating deeds to vindicate 'Nyaya' (justice) and Nobility, but also by using Pandavas as instruments to bring success to His efforts. Once again He proved through His Avatar (Incarnation) of Lord Vishnu that each time human existence gets disturbed by evil forces, He would appear as an earthly figure and rectify imbalances of the Universe.

**Buddha Avatar:** As there was an ongoing battle of Devas and Asuras for long time, Devas approached Lord Vishnu to revive 'Dharma' and 'Nyaya' and beseeched Him to take human form once again. The

Lord said that 'Mayamoha' would soon take birth as Buddha to one Sudhodana. But the illusions that would be created in the name of Buddha would be such that many evil persons would call themselves as Buddhists and undo all the Golden Traditions established in Vedas and other Scriptures. The misleading ways would advocate materialism in detestable manner and finally end up in the last phase of 'Kali Yuga'.. [Note: While Agni Purana had thus prophesied the sinful and irrecoverable era ahead, Buddha himself was stated to have provided a silver-line in the quest of Truth and Dharma. He preached the concept of Self -Realisation and recommended the right path to this Goal. He found that the basis of evil was unhappiness and desire, while the means of overcoming the evil is the attitude to secure freedom from material happiness. He preached the eight fold path, viz. the right view, the right intention, the right speech, the right thought, the right livelihood, the right action, the right mindfulness and the right concentration. Another significant preaching of Buddha was to follow the principles of 'Ahimsa' (nonviolence) and 'Samyam' (Restraint). But in the post-Buddha period, varied interpretations of Buddhism were adopted to suit some of the following generations, including the practice of low and misleading Tantras]

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Kalki Avatar: Agni Purana also prophesied the Final Avatar of Lord Vishnu as Kalki, to be born to 'Vishnuyasha'. He would be fully armed to destroy the disbelievers of God and perpetrate sins and criminal acts and re-establish Dharma (Virtue) and Nyaya (Justice) and revive the concepts of four 'varnas' (castes,) viz. Brahmana (the nobility), Vaisya (the business class), Kshatriya (the Warriors and Defenders) and Sudra (the Others). The revival of the four 'Ashrams' (Stages of Life) too would happen viz. Balya (Childhood), Grihastha (the family person), Vanaprastha (the senior and religious class) and Sanyasa (Seekers of Truth and death-awaiting). [Note: The popular belief is that by the close of the fourth phase of Kalki Yuga (era) as against the first phase now, Lord Vishnu would take the 'Avatar' (Incarnation) riding a flying white divine horse, brandishing a sword, destroying the Evil and reviving the Virtue, thus heralding a completely New World Order following the Great Destruction and evolving a Fresh Cycle of Creation.]

#### The profile of Universal Creation

Agni narrated the Story of Creation to Vasishtha as follows: Prior to Creation, Vishnu the Eternal and All Pervasive created Water and there was no day, night or time. He materialised 'Prakriti' and with its interaction with Prakriti created 'Maha Tatwa' and from the latter emerged 'Ahamkar' (the feature of the Self and Ego). Ahamkar was of three forms viz. 'Vaikarika' or Satvika, 'Thaijasa' or Rajasa and

'Bhutadirupa' or Tamasika. From Tamasika Ahamkar, there was the Tanmatra of 'Shabd' or Sound which produced 'Aakaash' (Sky); from Sky was generated the Tanmatra of 'Sparsh' or the Touch which in turn created 'Vaayu' (Air). From 'Vayu' the Tanmatra of 'Rupa' or Form, enabled the emergence of Agni (Fire). From Agni, the 'Rasa' Tanmatra created 'Jal' (water). From water the 'Gandha Tanmatra' or the feature smell created Bhumi or Earth. Such is the chain reaction from Sound to Touch to Form to Rasa to Smell-all the creations of Tamasika Ahamkar. From the Rajasika/Tejasika Ahamkar, Ten 'Indriyas' or physical parts got created while the most significant physical component is 'Manas' or Mind viz. the eleventh Indriya is the product of Satvika 'Ahamkar. Then the 'Swayambhu Shakti'or the Supreme Energy generated water. He sowed a Seed (virility) into the Water and on the Water Surface, and there floated a Golden Egg or the Brahmanda, from which emerged Lord Brahama. The Golden Egg opened in two parts, one as Heaven and the other as Earth, the connecting link being the Sky. Brahma then created Earth in Water and ten directions, besides 'kaal' (Time), 'man' (mind), 'kaam' (desire), 'vani' (speech), 'krodh'(anger) and 'rati'(passion). Then emerged Vidyut (Lighting), Thunder, Clouds, Rainbows, Words and Anger. He created from His Body the Texts of Vedas (Rig, Yajur and Sama) mainly to make sure and also enable Yagnyas and other Sacred Ceremonies. He created the four Sanaka brothers, the manifestation of anger as Rudra; and the seven sons from His Powers, viz. Marichi, Atri, Pulasthya, Pulaha, Kratu, and Vasishta. Brahma materialised half of his body as Purusha (male) and the other half as 'Stree' (Female). The 'Srishti' from the females led to that of 'Prajas'. Human Creation was made possible by the first Manu called Swayambhu Manu and his wife Shatarupa; the couple gave birth to two sons Prayamvrata and Uttanapaada and a daughter Devahuti who married Sage Kardama. Agni Deva then described the lineage of Swayambhu Manu who included the illustrious Dhruva and Chakchusha Manu, Prachetas, Daksha Prajapati, Ashtaa Vasus (viz. Aap, Dhruva, Soma, Dhara, Anila, Anala, Pratyusha and Prabhasa), and Eleven Rudras (stated to be the main Rudras besides thousands and more) viz. Hara, Bahurupa, Triambaka, Aparajita, Vrishakapi, Shambhu, Kapardi, Raivata, Mrigavyaadha, Sarpa and Kapali). Thus Agni Deva described Prakriti / Maha Tatwa Srishti or Brahma Sarga, the second one was known as Tanmatra Srishta called Bhuta Sarga, the Third Srishti is 'Vaikarika' or Aindraka Sarga. The Fourth Srishti is called Mukhya Sarga or 'Sthavara' Srishti of 'Vriksha, Parvat adi'/ Trees, Mountains etc. The 'Tiryagyonya' Srishti of 'Pashu-Pakshis' or animals and birds is the Fifth Srishti. The sixth Srishti is of Deva Sarga (Urthva Strota/ higher); the seventh Sarga is Manava Sarga and the eighth Sarga is Anugraha Sarga based on Satvik as well as of Tamasika-orientation. The ninth variety is Nitya Sarga or the usual Srishti.

#### Procedure of 'Puja' to Ganapati, Shiva, Chandi, Vishnu or Surya

In the context of normal Puja, the 'Puja Mandap' (Platform) may be arranged for worship to Dhata and Vidhata as also Ganga and Yamuna in the Dakshina (South), then to Shankhanidhi and Padma nidhi, Dwara Lakshmi, Vaastu Purusha, Adhara Shakti, Kurma, Ananta, Prithvi, Dharma, Gyana, Vairaagya, and Aishwarya. Then puja be performed to Adharma (Vice), Ajnaan (Ignorance), Avairagya (Worldly attractions), and 'Anaishwarya' (Extreme Poverty) by visualising the Lotus Parts of root, stem, lotus flower, kesar powder and the lotus-ears. Then worship the four Vedas, the three Gunas of Sat-Rajo-Tamas, the Shaktis viz. Vimala, Utkarshini, Jnaana, Kriya, and Yoga. Puja should be done to Prahvi, Satya, Isha, Anugraha, Durga, Sarasvati, Ganesha, Kshetrapala, Vasudeva (Samkarshana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha). Continue the Puja to Hridaya (heart), Shira (head), Shikha (tuft), Kavacha,(shoulders), Netra (Eyes) etc.as also to Shankha (conchshell), Chakra (the wheel), Gada (mace), Padma called 'Astras'; to Srivatsa, Koustubh, Vanamali and Lakshmi, Pushti, and Garuda. Puja should be performed to Dikpalakas viz. Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirruti, Varuna, Vaayu, Kubera, Ishana, Brahma and Ananta.

Having observed the above, **Ganapati Puja** may be initiated to accomplish all the desires. The Anga Nyasa may commence with: *Ganamjayaya Swaha-Hridaya; Eka dumshtraaya hum-shir; Achala karniney* 

namo namah-shikha; Gajavaktraaya namo namah-Kavacha; Mahodaraaya chandaaya namah-netra; Sudundahastaaya hum phat-Astra. This will be followed by puja of the main petals of Lotus viz. Gana, Guru, Guru-Paduka, Shakti, Ananta and Dharma. Then, puja be performed to the nine Peetha-Shaktis viz. Tivra, Jwalini, Nanda, Bhogada, Kamarupini, Ugra, Tejovati, Satya and Vighnanaashini. 'Asana' of Chandana may be offered with the Beeja Mantras: 'Yam': Shoshaka vayu; 'Ram': Agni; 'Lam': Plava (Prithvi) and 'vam': Amrita. The Ganesha Gayatri may be rendered next: Om Lambodaraaya Vidmahey Mahodaraaya Dheemahey tanno dantii prachodayaat. Then the limbs of Ganesha be worshipped with the following 'naamaas': Ganapati, Ganaadhipa, Ganesha, Mahodara, Gajavaktra, Lambodara, Vikata, Vishna naashana and Dhumrvarna, besides Indra and Loka paalaas.

Shiva Puja is initiated with worship to Nandi Deva, followed by Durga, Yamuna, Shiva Ganas, Vaani, Shree, Guru, Vaastudeva, Adhara Shakti, and Dharma. Then Puja should be performed to 'Nava Shaktis', viz. Vaama, Jyeshtha, Roudri, Kaali, Kala-vikarini, Balavikarini, Balapramathini, Sarvabhutashamani, and Kalyanamayi Manonmayi. Shiva Puja is then commenced with the Mantra HAAM HAAM SHIVA MURTAYENAMAH by Anga Nyasa of the Pancha Mukha (Five Faces of Shiva with the Mantra viz.: HAAM ISHAANAAYA NAMAH, HEEM VAAMADEVAAYA NAMAH, HUUM SADYOJAATAAYANAMAH, HAIM AGHORAAYA NAMAH, HOUM TATPURU -SHAAYA NAMAH/ Then worship only to Shiva by the Mantra HOUM SHIVAAYA HOUM/; HAAM HAUM SHIVAAYA NAMAH (Avahana) with Sthapani Mudra, Sannidhaapani Mudra, and Samnirodhani Mudra and NISHTHURAAYAI KAALKALYAYAI PHUT with Khadga Mudra to toss away obstacles. Then perform 'Amritikaran' by saying: Hridayaya namah (heart representing Chetana Shakti), Sirasey Swaaha (Siras representing eight-folded Ishvaryas); Shikhaayai vashath (Shikha representing Vashitya/complete control); Kavachaaya hum (kavacha / shield representing Abhedya Teja or indestructible radiance); Netraabhyaam voushat (Shiva's intolerable valour destroys all obstacles) and Astraaya Phut. Thus the Lord's physical parts are distinguished with Hridayaya namah, Shirasey swaaha, Shikhaayai vashat, Kavachaaya hum, Netraabhyaam voushat, and Astraaya Phut and while uttering the words perform 'Panchopachaaraas' or five services viz. 'paadya' to his feet, 'achamana' with Arghya /water, Durva leaf, Pushpa, and Akshata kept on the head of the Idol (Linga). Then the devoteed should proceed with 'Abhisheka'/ 'Abhukshan' first with water, milk, curd, ghee, honey, and sugar to the 'Pancha Mukhas' viz. Ishana, Tatpurusha, Aghora, Vamadeva, and Sadyojaata with the respective Mantras viz. Om Ishaanah Sarva Vidyaameeshwarah Sarva Bhutaanaam Brahmaadhipatirbrahmano Brahaa Shivomestu Sadaa Shiyom; Om Tatpurushaaya yidmahey Maha Deyaaya dhimahi, tanno Rudrah prachodayaat; Om Aghorebhyothaghorebhyah, Sarveybhyaha Sarva sarvebhoy namastestu Rudra Rupebhyah/; Om Vaamadevaaya namo Jyeshthaayanamah Shreshthaaya namo Rudraaya namah Kaalaaya namah Kalavikaranaaya namo Balavikaranaaya namo Balaaya namo Bala Pramathanaayanamah Sarva Bhuta damanaaya namo Manonmayaya namaha; Om Sadyojaatama prapadyaami Sadyojaataaya vai namo namah, bhavey bhavey naatibhavey bhavaswa maam bhavodbhavaayanamah/ Further bathe the Vigrah/ Linga with chandana, kesar etc.and clean it with a clean Vastra; never keep the 'Mastaka' (top) of the Linga without flowers and perform the 'Upacharas' or services viz. Paadya, Achamana, Arghya, Gandha, Pushpa, Dhupa, Deepa, Naivedya, Achamaneeya, Katodvartan, Tambula, Mukhavaasa/ mouth-freshener, Darpana, Durva, Akshata etc. Recite the Mula Mantra hundred and eight times and pray as follows: Yatkinchitkurmahey Deva sadaa sukrut dushkrutam, Tanmey Shiyapadasthasya hum khah kshepaya Shankara, Shivo daataa Shivo bhokta Shivah Sarvamidam jagat, Shivo jayati Sarvatra yah Shivah sohameyvacha/ (Deva Shankara! We surrenderb at the most propitious feet of Yours for protection. Whatever good-bad deeds that we have so far committed may please be cancelled and discarded. HUM KSHAH! Shiva is the Daataa / donor; Shiva is the Bhokta / the acceptor; Shiva is the whole Universe; Victory be to Shiva always; whatever is Shiva is Shiva / myself!

**Surya Puja** commences with worship to Nandi, Pingala, Ucchaiswara, and Aruna, followed by Prabhuta, Vimala, Soma, Prathah Sandhya and Saayam Sandhya, Para Sukha and Skanda; further followed by Pujas to Nava Shaktis viz. Deepta, Sukshma, Jaya, Bhadra, Vibhuti, Vimala, Amogha, Vidyuta and Sarnathomukhi. Then 'Asanam' (seat) is to be arranged by the Mantra: *Brahma Vishnu Shivaatmakaaya* 

Shouraaya peethhaya namah/ Then other 'Upachaaraas' (Services) are offered to Surya Deva as follows: *Om kham Khakholkaaya namah:* Deva Suryodbhbhavaaya namah; *Om hraam hreem sah Suryaya namah-iti Puja; Om Aaam namah-hridayaaya namah; Om Arkaaya namah-sirah pujayami.* 

Similarly Puja should be performed to **Agni:** *Om Bhurbhuvah swah Jwalaanyai <u>shikhaaai namah</u>, <i>Om hum <u>kavachaayai namah</u>; om netra bhyaam namah; om rum Arkaastraaya namah*. Agni puja may be followed by the Pujas to Surya's two wives viz. Sangjna Devi and Chhaaya Devi, to Chandra, Mangal, Budhha, Brihaspati, Shukra, Shani, Rahu and Ketu along with relevant services like 'Asana' etc.

Vishnu Puja is initiated with offering 'Aasanam' by the Mantra: Om Shreem Shreem Shridharo Harih Hraam/ This would be followed by Murti Puja with the Trailokya mohana Mantras viz. Om kleem Hrishikeshaya namah and Om hum Vishnavey namah/ The Anganyasa Mantras are as follows: Om Aam Hridayaaya namah, Om eem shirasey namah, Om Uum shikhaayai namah, Om aem kavachaaya namah, Om aim netrabhyaam namah, Om Astraaya namah, Om Chakraayanamah, Om gum Gadayai namah, etc. covering Shankha, Khadga, Sharanga Dhanush, Paasha, Ankusha, Musala, Shri Vatsa, Koustubha, Vanamala, Maha Lakshmi and Garuda. This Puja would further continue with Stutis of Vishnu and Lakshmi; and relevant Mantras to: Om Gum Ganapatayenamah, Om hreem Gauryaimamah, Om Shreem Shriayai namah, Om hreem Twaritayai namah, Om Aim kleem soum Tripuraayaanamah. The Puja would contain all the relevant services including Arghya, Paadya, Achamana, Madhuparka, Snaana, Vastra, Yagnopaveeta, Abushana, Gandha, Pushpa, Dhupa, Dipa and Naivedya all dedicated to: 'Om Namo Bhagavatey Pundarikaakshaaya.' This kind of all- comprehensive Puja should indeed bestow the 'Chaturvidha Purusharthas' of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha to the devotees.

#### Shri Lakshmi Stotra and benefits

Mahatma Pushkar informed Parashurama that Lord Indra being desirous of retaining Devi Lakshmi in Indraloka for ever in the Form of Rajya Lakshmi. His eulogy to Devi Lakshi was as follows: Namasye Sarvalokaanaam jananeemabdhi sambhavaam, Shriyamunnidra Padmaaksheem Vishnu vakhasthala sthitaam/ Twam Siddhistwam Swaaha Sudhaa twam Lokapaalini, Sandhya raatrih prabhaa bhutirmedhaa shraddhaa Saraswati/Yagna Vidya Maha Vidya Guhaa Vidya cha shobhaney, Atma Vidyaa cha Devi twam vimukti phaladayini/ Aanveekshaki Trayee Vaartaa dandanitis twameya cha, Sowmya sowmyam Jagadrupam tawaitatddevi puritam/ Ka tatwanya twaamrutey Devi Sarva Yagna mayam vapuhu, Adyhaastey Deva Devasya Yogichintyam gadaabhrutah/ Twaya Devi parithayktam Sakalam Bhuyanatrayam, Vinishtapraayamabhayat twayedaaneem samedhitam/ Daaraah purtaasthathagaaram suhruddhaanya dhanaadhikam, Bhavateytanmahaabhaagey nithyam twadveekshanaannrunaam/ Shareerarogya maiswaryamaripaksha khsayah sukham, Devi twadrushti drushtaanaam purushaanaam na durlabham/ Tweamambaa sarvabhutaanaam Devadevo Haih pitaa, Twayatad Vishnuunaachaamba Jagad vyaaptam charaacharam/ Maanam kosham tathaa kosdhtam maa gruham maa paricchhadam, Maa shariram kalatram cha thyajethaah Sarva paavani/ Maa putraan maasahrudvargaan maa pashua maa vibhushanam, Thyajethaa mama Devasya Vishnor vakhasthaalaaley/ Satyana samashauchaabhyaam tatha sheelaadibhirgunaih, Kulaaisvaryescha yujjantey purushaa nirgunaa api/ sashlyaghyah sa guni dhanyah sa kuleenah sa buddhimaan, sa surah sa cha vikraanto yasatvayaa Devi veekshitah/ Sadyo vaigunyamaayaanti sheelaadyaah sakalaa gunahah, Paraanmikhee Jagaddhaatri yasya twam Vishnuvallabhey/ Na tey varnaayutam shattaa gunaan jimhaapi vedhasah, praseeda Devi Padmaakshi maasmaamssatyaakshih kadaachana/

(My reverential salutations to you the Mother of Universe! Maha Lakshmi! You were materialised fom the Ocean, with magnificent eyes that are resplendent and are like opened up Lotus flowers occupying the chest of Vishnu; You are the hall-mark of Purity and the personification of propitiousness. You are the Siddhi, Swaha, Swadha, Sudha, Sandhya, Ratri, Prabha, Bhuti, Medha, Shraddhaa and Sarasvati. You are the Yagna Vidya, Maha Vidya, Guhya Vidya, and the Provider of Atma Vidya. You are the 'Anveekshani' or the Darshana Shastra, Trayi or the Form of Three Vedas viz. Ruk-Yajur and Sama; the 'Vaarta' or the three most significant professions of human beings viz. Krishi / Agriculture, Goraksha or the security of Cows, Vanijya or business and Danda Niti or the Art of Defence and Attack. You are the

Form of 'Saumyata' or of poise and composure; since You are ever-present; You are also the most charming and esteemed. Are you not the singular woman sporting a mace called Kaumudi to defend the virtuous and punish the Evil! You are the Yagnamayi whom Yogis and Maharshis pray to and cogitate about. It is by your grace and magnanimity that the whole World got revived after its erstwhile destruction and is looking full and on-going. With your kindness that all the human beings and their families are fine and the womanfolk, children, households, and existence in general is contented and smooth enough with 'Dhana-Dhaanyas'. Once your merciful looks are available, persons are healthy, wealthy, contented without enemies and hindrances. You are indeed the mother of all and vishnu is the father, controlling and preserving the 'charaachara Jagat' comprising the moveable and immoveable Benigs. You are our self-esteem, our Treasure-Hold, Anna Bhaandaar or Food-reservoir, the entire household, our well being and families; do keep us safe and satisfied Devi! Those whom you leave away, their truthfulness, stability, virtuosity are all deserted instantly. Your benevolence would turn a miserable being surfeit with riches, a vicious entity into an ideal being worthy of reputation, courage, and perfection. A remote glance of yours would bring about a mind-blowing transformation of a human being. Even Brahma woud fail in esimating your qualities and how else marginal beings could possibly do! Mother, my earnest prayer to you is to bless me and never ever leave me enven by mistake!).

As Indra Deva made a Prayer as above, his 'Indratva' lasted long with a steady throne and enjoyed great reputation. Mahatma Pushkar affirmed: Evam stutaadadow Shreescha Varamindraaya chepsitam, Susthiratvam cha Rajasya sagraamavijayadikam/ Swastotra paatha shravana karthruunaam Bhukti Muktidam, Shri Stotram satatam tasmaat patthecha shunuyaanarah/ (As Indra praised Devi Maha Lakshmi with her 'Amsha' as Rajyalakshmi, his Kingdom was safe and his enemies were routed in the battle between Devas and Danavas. Those who read and hear this Maha Stotra of Devi Lakshmi would secure prosperity and happiness and as such Mahatma Pushkaraa advised Parashu Rama to the entire humanity to make it a ritual of reading Devi Lashmi's Stotra as often as possible and definitely on Fridays each week.

# 'Vishnu Panjara Stotra' for providing 'Raksha' (Safety)

Mahatma Pushkar revealed the significance of Vishnu Panjara Stotra to Parashu Rama, which provides Raksha to whoever recites it. In the past, Bhagavan Brahma endowed the Stotra to Shankara Deva to provide with him safety at the time of battle with Tripuraasura and the same was furnished to Indra by Brihaspati while terminating the demon Bali. This Stotra is popular as a means of securing protection and well being, besides functioning as a shield while facing any impending danger or risk as also to accomplish success and victory: Vishnuh praacyaam sthitaschakri Harir-dakshinato Gadee, Prateetchaam Shaarangadhrug Vishnurjishnuh khadgee mamottarey/ Hrishikesho Vikoneshu tatcchidreshu Janaardanah, Krodarupee Herirbhumow Narasimheswrarey mama/ Kshuraantamamalam chakram bhramatyetat Sudarshanam, Asyaamshumaalaa dushprekshya hantum pretanishaacharaan/ Gadaa cheyam Sahasraarchih pradeepta paayakojjyalaa, Raksho bhuta pisaachaanaam Daakineenaam cha naashani/ Sharanga visphurjitah chaiva Vasudevasya madrapuun, Tiryangmanushya kushmaanada preeytaadeena hantwa seshatah/ Khangadhharojjwala jyotsnaana nirdhuta ye samaahitaah, tey yaantu shaamyataam sadyo Garudeneva Pannagaah/Yey Kushmaandasthaa Yaksha ye Daityaa ye Nishaacharaah, Pretaa vinaayakaah kruraa Manushyaa Jaambhagaah Khagaah/ Simhaadayascha pashavo danda suukaascha pannagaah, Sarvey bhavantu tey sowmyah Krishnashankharavaaritaah/ Chittavrittiharaa ye mey ye janaah smriti haarakaah, Balowjasaam cha hartaarascchaayaa vibhramschakaascha ye/Ye Chopabhoga hartaaro ye cha lakshana naasakaah, Kushmaandastey pranashyantu Vishnu chakra ravaahitaah/ Buddhi swasthyam Mah swasthyam swasthya –maindriyakam tathaa, Mamaastu Deva devasya Vaasudevasya keertanaat/ Pushthey purastaanmama Dakshinottarey vikonatchaastu Janaardano Haarih, Tameedyameeshaana manantamacyhutam Janaardanam pranipatito na seedati/ Yathaa param Brahma Haristathaa paro Jagatswarupascha sa eva Keshavah, Satyena teynaachyuta naama keertanaat pranashyetu trividham mamaashubham/ ( In the Eastern side is

Chakradhaari Vishnu and in the Southern side is Gadaadhaari Shrihari. Bhagavaan Hrishikesha is protecting in the 'Dikkonas' or side-angles, Janaardana is situated in the middle portion. Varaaha dhaari Shrihari is protecting on the Bhumi and Bhagavan Nrisimha shields on the Shy. In the other side-lines Sudarshana Chakra is constantly on the move and provides guard all over. If 'Pretas' or 'Nishaacharas'the night-long tormentors-seek to bother, they woud find it impossible to withstand the extreme dazzle of the Sudarshana Chakra. Bhagavan Shri Hari's 'Gadaa' (Mace) called Kaumudi sparkles with thousands of highly explosive rays. These sizzling rays destroy Rakshasas, Bhutas, Piscachas and Daakinis instantly. Bagavan Vaasudeva's Sharanga Dhanush creates such deafening and reverberating sound waves that 'Shatru Bhuta Manushya' (most cruel humans), 'Kushmandas', 'Pretas', 'Tiryagyoni' Praanis or these frightening species on way back to be reborn again are extinguished at once. Those named or unnamed enemies to the devotees would get flooded in the tempestuous flows of overwhelming sparks of the 'Khadga' (Sword) of Shri Hari, in the same maaner as Garuda Deva exteminates serpents. All the species that seek to torture Vishnu's devotees-be they Kushmanadas, Yakshas, Rakshasas, Pretas, Viyayakas, cruel human beings, hunting birds of huge or miniscule sizes, animals like lions or tigers, snakes, or of any evil spirits, would get overpowered by the 'Shankha naada' of Bhagava. May Vishnu Kirtana provide me 'Buddhi', 'Man' and physical control and bestow 'Swasthya labha'or multi-sided equilibrium to my inner- conciousness and purify my Soul to be worthy of the grace of Bhagavan Vishnu. Dedicated Bhaktaas are never let down by the most merciful 'Paramaatma'; May this 'Vishnu Panjara' shield me from wordly distress and lead me on to the Sacred Path of Mukti.

#### Maarjana /Apaamaarjana Stotras for Raksha to self and others

Agni Deva suggested to Narada Muni the following Stotras to provide safety to human beings for themselves and for others as also mitigate difficulties and bestow happiness: Om namo Paramaarthyaaya Purushaaya Mahaatmaaney, Aruupa Bahu Rupaaya Vyapiney Paramaatmaney/ Nishkalmashaaya Shraddhaaya Dhyaanayoga rataayacha, Namaskrutya Pravakshaami yat tatsidhyatu mey vachah/ Varaahaaya NrisimhaayaVamanaaya Mahatmaney, Namaskrutya Pravakshaami Yat tatsudyhatu meyvacha/Trivikramaaya Raamaaya Vaikunthaaya Naraaya cha, Namaskruthya pravakshaami yat tat siddhyatu mey vacha/ (Om Paramaartha Swarupa, Prathama Purusha, Mahatma, Niraakaara, Sahsra Rupa, the All Pervading Paramaatma, the Blemishless and the epitome of Purity, Serenity and ever worthy of meditation: may this inner voice of mine be truthful that my protection is always assured by you; Varaha Deva, Narasiha Deva and Vamana Deva, may my fortification be assured; may Trivikrama Deva, Rama and Vaikunthaya, my sincere salutations to you and may my wellbeing be always assured.) Varaaha Naraimhesha Vaamanesha Trivikrama, Hayagriva Sarvesha Hrishikesha Haraashubham/Aparaajita Chakraadyaischaturbhih Paramaardhaih, Akhanditaanu bhaavaaistwam Sarvadushta haro bhava/Haraamukasya duritam sarvam cha kushalam kuru, Mrithyu bandhaarthibhayadam durishtasya cha yatphalam/ (Bhagayan Varaha, Nrisimha, Vaamaneswara, Trivikrama, Hayagriyesha, Sarvesha, Hrishikesha! The Unconquerable Parameshwara! May all my 'Ashubhas' or inauspicious happenings be demolished! May your 'Chakra of endless energy and other most powerful 'Aayudhaas' wipe out my enemies! May my illnesses and bodily afflictions be obliterated and my sins be destroyed, while bestow upon me 'Sarva Kushalam' (total propitiousness) and Kshema (safety). Deva! Provide me with the 'Phala' of yagnas devoid of imperfections and indemnify me from untimely death, ill health, shackles of any kind, ill-omens, and frights.) Paraabhidhyaana sahitaih prayuktam cha abhichaarikam, Garasparsha mahaaroga prayogam jarayaa jara/ Om namo Vasudevaaya namah Krishnaaya khadginey, Namah Pushkara netraaya Keshavaayadi chakriney/ Namah Kamalakinchatkapeeta nirmala vaasasey, Mahahavir puraskandhadhrushta chakriney/Danshtrodhrutakshiti bhrutey Trayee Mutrtimatey namah, Mahayagna Varaahaaya Shobhaaganka shaayaney/Taptahaataka keshaantadjjwalatpaavaka lochana, Vajraadhika sprasha Divya Simha Namostutey/ Kaashapaayaati hraswaaya Rugyajushssaama bhushiney, Tubhyam Vaamana

Rupaayaakramatey gaam Namo Namah/ (Those who have the evil-feelings of harming others by way of perfoming 'Abhichaarika Karmas' or negative deeds such as administering poisonous food / drinks ought to be obliterated and their misdeeds be retalliated. Vasudeva, Khadgadhari, Chakradhari, Kamalanayana and 'Peetambaradhara', who wears excellent clothes of saffron colour, please accept my salutations. You are the Yagna Varaha and Veda Vigraha who had saved 'Prithvi' and Vedas by your powerful 'damshtras' (tusks); You are Narasimha who had piercing and dazzling eyes and iron-like sharp nails by whose mere touch was slaughtered the invincible demon, Hiranya –kashipu; You are Vamana Deva the embodiment of Rug-Yajur and Sama Vedas and manifested as the Virat Swarupa who occupied the Three Worlds to facilitate the re-installation of Devas in Swarga and to bring the Universe to Order as Trivikrama) Varaahasesha drishtaani sarva paapa phalaani vai, Marda Marda Mahaa Damshtra Marda Mardacha tatphalam/ Narasimha karaalasya danta praanataanalojjwala, Bhanja bhanja ninaadena dushtaan pashyaarti- naashana/Rugyajussaama garbhaabhi raavirbhavar Vaamanarupadhruk, Prashaam Sarva Duhkhaani nayatvasya Janaardana/ Ekaahikam Dwayahikam cha tatha Tridivasam Jwaram, Chaturthikam tathaatyugram tathaiva satatam jwaram/ Doshothyam sannipaatestham tathaivaganthukam jwaram, Shamamnayaashu Govindachhindhi chhindhyasya Vedanaam/ (Varaharupi Narayana, please devastate all kinds of dangerous diseases born out of long standing sins; Maha Varaha! Vikata Nrisimha! Do ravage the enemies who occupied my fortunes and fate for long; Vamana deha dhaari! Being the embodiment of all 'confidential Tatwas, kindly provide solace and alleviate sufferings of physical and psychological nature to human beings. Govinda! Humanity is suffering from descriptions of various diseases like Tridoshaja, Sannipaataja, Agantuka, Ekaahika, Dwaahika, Traahika, Atyanta Ugra, and so on. Please extinguish these and other diseases, Parama Deva! Netra duhkham Shiro duhkham duhkhamchodara sambhavaam, Anishwaasamatishwaasham paritaapam savepathum/ Gudaghraanaanghri rogaanscha kushthu rogaamstatha kshayam, kaamalaamdeesthatha rogaanprameyhaamchaati daarunam/ Bhagandara –atisaaraamscha mukharogaamscha valguleem, Ashmareem mutrakrucchaamscha rogaanaamscha daarunaan/ ye vaataprabhaavaa rogaa ye cha pittha samudbhavaah, Kaphodbhavaascha ye kechid yechaanye saamnipaatikaah/ Aagantukaaschaye rogaa lutaavisphotakaadayah, the sarvam prashamamyaantu Vaasudevasya kirtanaan/ Vilayam yaantutey sarvey Vishnorucchaaraneyacha, Kshayam gacchaantu Govinda naaocchaarana bheshajaat, Nashyati sakalaa rogaah Satyam Satyam vadaamyaham/ (May those persons suffering from eyes, head, stomach, breathing, sweating, shivering, mulavyadhi, nasal problems, foot diseases, leprosy, kshaya, kaamalaadi roga, bhagandar, atisaara, facial problems, valguli, stones, kidneys, and so on be cured. By virtue of Vaasudeva Sankeertana, all kinds of Vaataja, Pittaja, kaphaja, sannipaataja, Aagantuka, lutaa (Makari), Visphota (boils) etc. could be cured by the swing of Suarshana chakra. By taking the names of Achyuta, Ananta and Govinda, various diseases would be destroyed indeed! Sthaavaram jangamam vaapi krutrimam chaapi yadvisham, Dantodbhavam nakhabhavamaakaasha prabhavam visham/ Lootikaadi prabhavam yaccha vishamanyatu duhkhadam, Shamam nayatu tatsarvam Vaasudevasya keertanam/ Grahaan Pretagrahaamschaapi tathaa vai daakinigrahaan, Betaalaamsha Pishaachaamscha Gandharyaan Yaksha Raakshasaan/ Shakuniputanaadyaamscha tathaa Vainaayakaangrahaan, Mukhamandeem tathaa kruraam Revatim Vrudbharevatim/ Vruddhika –akhyaanangrahaams tatha Matrugrahaanapi, Baalaasya Vishnoscharitam hantu Balagrahaanimaan/ Vriddhaascha ye Grahaah kechida ye cha Balagrahah kwachit, Narasimhaya tey drushtyaa dagdhaa ye chaapi Youvaney/ Sataakaraala vadano Naarasimho Mahabalah, Grahaanaseshaannihseshaan karotu jagato hitah/ Narasimha Mahasiha Jjwaamaalojjwalaanana, Grahaanaseshaan Sarvesha khaada Khaadogni lochana/ (Bhagavan Vaasudeva's Samkeertana would certainly appease several types of poisons like Sthavara, Jangama, Kritrima, Dantodhbhuta, Nakhodbhuta, Aakaashodbhuta and Lutikadbyotpanna varieties. Kirtanas on 'Bala Krishna charitra' would decimate Balagrahas like Grahas, Preta Grahas, Dakini Grahas, Vetaals, Pishachaas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Rakshasas, Shakuni-Putana Grahas, Vinayaka grahas, Mukha mandikaas, Cruel Revatis, Vrudbarevati, Vrudhbhika graha and Matru Grahas. May Bhagavan Narasimha's extreme vision burn off Vriddha, Bala and Yuva Grahas into ashes. Maha Nrisimha! Do devastate all the Dushta Grahas with your piercing looks and provide us liberation.

Ye rogaa ye Mahotpaataa Yadvisham ye Mahagrahah, Yaanicha krurabhutaani graha -peedaashcha daarunaah/ Shastra khateshu ye doshaa Jwaalaagardhabhakaadayah, Taani Sarvaani Sarvaatmaa Paraamaatmaa Janaardanah/ Sarva dushtaanirakshaamsi kshayam yaantu Vibhishana, Praachyaam Prateechyaam cha dishi Dakshinottarasthaa/ Rakshaam karotu Sarvaatmaa Narasimhah swagarjithaih, Divi Bhuvantarikshye cha Pushthitah paarsyetogratah/ Rakshaam karotu Bhagavaan Bahurupee Janardanah/ Yatha Vishnurjagatsarwam sadevasura maanusham, tey na Satyena drushtaani shamasya vrajantu vai/ (Vasudeva! Do assume which ever Form that you intend to; but destroy all kinds of diseases, utpataas, poison, Maha Grahas, Bhutas, Graha Peedas, 'Shastra kshata' or surgery-oriented tribulations, burns, and any other difficulties. May Sarvatma Nrisimha guard our Eastern, Western, Northern and Southern directions with his frightening roars; May Janardana protect us in Bhuloka, Swarga loka, 'Antariksha' and all that one could not be perceived by us! May Bhagavan Vishnu who is the Swarupa of the entire Universe including Devas, Daityas and human beings provide shield to one and all and safeguard us all from all kinds of physical and other evils and diseases!) Yada Vishnow smritey sadyah samkshayam yaanti paatakaah, Satyena tena sakalam dushtamasya prashaamyatu, Yathaa Yagneswaro Vishnurdeveshvapi hi geeyatey/ Satyana tena sakalam yanmayoktam tathaastu tat, Shantirastu Shivam chaastu dushtamasya prashaamyatu/ Vaasudeva shareetarothaih kushainirnaashatam maya, Aapaamaarjitu Govindo Naro Narayanastathaa/ Tathaastu Sarva duhkhaanaam pprashamovachanaadvareh, Apaamaarjanakam shastam Sarvarogaadivaaranam/ Aham Harih kushaa Vishnur hataa rogaa mayaa tava/ (At the very thought of Shri Vishnu, the long-stored groups of sins wilt away instantly and in the same manner all the diseases fade away too. Vishnu is always extolled by all Devatas and this truth underlines the fact that sins and diseases wither away for human beings too. The Kusha grass is stated to emerge from Vishnu's own body and little wonder that the 'Apaamarjana Stotra' enables the sins and maladies of devotees to get flushed out of their physiques for good.

#### A Brief on Vedas and Puranas

Mahatma Pushkar gave an Outline on Vedas by way of emphasising their key role in Hindu Dharma. Vedas are the beacon lights to search the ways and means to achieve the 'Purusharthas' of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. The four Vedas viz. Rig, Yajur, Saama and Atharva Vedas put together are stated to total one lakh Mantras. Rigveda contains two distinct 'Shaakhaas' or branches, viz. 'Sankhyayana' and 'Ashvala -ayana' and together contains one thousand Mantras, while Rigvediya Brahmana Bhhaga contains two thousand Mantras. Maharshis like Shri Krishna Dwaipayana took Rigveda as 'Pramana' (Standard) Veda. Yajur Veda contains nineteen thousand Mantras. Of these, the Brahmana Grandhas have one thousand Mantras and the Shaakhas have one thousand six hundred and eight Mantras. In Yajurveda the main Shaakhaas are 'Kanvi', 'Maadhyanandini', 'Kathi', 'Maadhya Kathi', 'Maitraayani', 'Taittireeya' and 'Vaishampaaniya'. Saama Veda has two main Shakhas viz. 'Kouthuma' and 'Aatharvaayani'or Raamaayaniya' and these contain 'Veda', 'Aaranyaka', 'Uktha' and 'Vuuh' 'Gaanaas' or Verses. Saama Veda has nine thousand four hundred twenty five Mantras-all stated to be related to Brahma. Atharva Veda has Rishi-oriented Shaakhaas like Sumantu, Jaajali, Shlokaayani, Shounaka, Pippalaad and Munjakesha. These contain sixteen thousand Mantras and hundred 'Upanishads'. The Shaakha differentiation of Vedas and of Itihaasaas and Puraanas was stated to have been done by Vishnu Himself and were of Vishnu Swarupa. Vyaasa preached Puranas to Lomaharshana and to Suta by way of 'Purana Pravachana'. The main 'Sishyas' of Vyasa were Sumati, Agnivarcha, Shimshapaayan, Kritavrata and Saayarni. Shimshapaayan and others were engaged in constructing 'Samhitaas'.

Pushkar informed Parashurama that Lord Brahma described the various **Puranas** to his Manasa Putra Maharshi Marichi. *Brahma Purana* has twenty five 'Shlokas'/ Stanzas and might be given as 'Daan'(charity) to a Brahmana on Vaishakha Purnima along with a Jala Dhenu or Water-Cow. *Padma Purana* 's Padma Samhita or Bhumi Khand has twelve thousand Shlokas which might be given away in

charity with a cow on Jyeshtha Purnima for the benefit of reading/ hearing it. Vishnu Purana with twenty three thousand Shokas is best given in charity along with a Jala Dhenu on Ashadha Purnima for 'Vishnu Pada Prapti'. Vayu Purana with fourteen thousand stanzas is Bhagavan Shankara's loved one and its 'daana'by the donor should preferably be hand written along with Gud (Jaggery)-Dhenu on Shravana Purnima for excellent results, Maha Bhabaata Purana is an Eighteen thousand Shloka volume with Vishnu orientation for Daana on Bhadrapada Purnima along with a golden Simhasana. Narada Purana with twenty thousand Shlokas described Brihatkalpa's principles of Dharma and is given as daana on Ashvin Purnima along a cow. Markandeya Purana with nine thousand Shlokas contained preachings of 'Pakshis' on 'Dharaaadharma'topics and is best awarded to a Bramhana on a Kartika Purnima. Being a comprehensive exposition of several Principles of Dharma, Mantras and Vedangas, Agni Purana contained twelve thousand Shlokas which may be given away in charity to a deserving Veda Pundit on Marga Sirsha month preferably on hand written form by the donor; this Purana is a bestower of 'Maha Phalas' as it contains age old Mantras to socially oriented teachings. Bhavishya Purana is with orientation of Surya Deva, emphasizing his Supremacy over fourteen thousand Shlokas and 'daan' of jaggery and fruits on Pousha Purnima day assures excellent health and quality life by the grace of Surya Deva. Brahma Vaivarta Purana containing eighteen thousand Shlokas was scripted at the instance of Saavaran Manu and is best offered as charity to a Brahmana on Magha Purnima. On the same Magha Purnima, charity along with Varaha Purana would accomplish Brahma loka. Linga Purana with eleven thousand Shlokas is all about Agnimaya Linga of Parameswara and its charity on Phalguni Purnima with Tila Dhenu assures Shiva Prapti. Garuda Purana with twenty four thousand Shlokas depicting the picture of post-life experiences has to be given as daana to a Brahmana on Chaitra Purnima along with Suvarna Hamsa (Golden Swan) for favour of securing 'Vishnu Pada'/ Vaikuntha. Skanda Purana is the longest of Puranaas scripted with eighty four thousand Stanzas and charity of this Purana on Chaitra Purnima would bestow Shivaloka Prapti. Matsya, Kurma and Vamana Puranas have thirteen thousand, eight thousand and ten thousand Shlokas respectively and charites of golden fish; golden Kurma and golden Vishnu Murti are best performed on Sharad Purna Vishu Samkraanti. Brahmanda Purana with twelve thousand Shlokas is to be offered to a Vedic Brahmana alng with 'Daanaas'.

#### **Temple Construction and fruits**

Even a thought of constructing a Temple or a Water Body is adequate to demolish sins of long standing nature and to actually accomplishing the task is like establishing a right to reach Vaikuntha. The devotee who completes the temple construction also redeems the sins of his previous generations; indeed, his 'pitaras' would secure instant relief from the torments of hells and qualify for substantial dispensations. The person(s) responsible for this deed of extraordinary merit is eligible for 'Yagna Phal', 'Samasta Tirthta Snaana Phal', and 'veera phal' or death on battle fields. If a miser takes up the deed of Temple renovation, let alone construction, would in his own life time qualify the fulfillment of his dreamlike aspirations of muliplying his assets. The construction of even an 'Ekayatan' or single one room temple would attain Swargaloka. A 'trayayatan' 'mandira nirmaan' enables reaching Brahma loka. A 'panchaayatan mandira nirmaan' bestows Shiva Loka and an 'Ashtaayatan', facilitates Srihari' Sannithi' while a 'Shodayatana' fulfils Purushaarthas, of Dharma, Artha, Kaama and Moksha. A rich person's lavishness in temple construction would indeed undermine the effort of a poor but motivated person's temple consruction, thus proving that the motivation would have to emerge from 'within' rather than from fat money-pocket. Even when children for fun or playfulness build temples with sand would also qualify for salvation. Persons who undertake repairs, let alone construct temples new, are also eligible for attaining Mukti. Those who are responsible for constructing temples of Vishnu, Shiva, Surya or Devi become residents of those very Lokas and more significantly their family members too share the same benefit. Of what avail is the money earned by a rich person if even a temple is not constructed by him or her! Of what avail is such opulence not spared for the use of the poor, the Brahmanas, or for noble deeds! Just as death is certain, the riches unused for religious purposes too are certain to vanish sooner or later. That is why charity is one sure way of redeeming the sins of the past and providing a shield against the

onslaught of sins of the future. And the crowning act of charity is to construct temples! Equally significant is to set up 'Deva Pratimas' made of wood or bricks or stone or the best of all by metals. It is stated that 'Deva Pratima Sthapana' along with the relevant Mantras and accompanying formalities and regular worship is a far reaching deed of divinity. Lord Yama Dharmara Raja addressed the 'Yamadootas' and said: 'Never bring human beings to 'Narakas' who constructed temples, or set up Idols of Devas, or were engaged in regular Pujas there. Aviod those persons from a distance who are connected with devotion of Bhagavan, especially taking the name of the Supreme while in sleep or consciousness, while sitting or walking, or in any other positions. Be far away from those who enter the temples and make offerings to Bhagavan of flowers, dhoop, clothings etc, in the service of Bhagavan. Never even look at those who built 'Mandirs' of Bhagavan of any name like Vishnu/ Shiva/ Shakti and other Forms or even the progeny or relatives of those illustrious devotees as there is no question of bringing those to Narakas at all. Dharmaraja said: Ishtakachaya vinyaaso yaavantyaabdaani tishthati, taadvarsha sahasraani tatkarturdivi samsthitih / Pratimaakrud Vishnu lokam sthaapako leeyatey Harou, Devasadyaprati kruti pratishthaakruttu gocharey (The person who constructed the Temple should reside in Swarga for so many years as the totality of bricks used in it. He who made the Pratima would attain 'Vishnuloka' and he who made the temple and established the Pratima would live in that loka forever!)

After Agni Deva quoted Yama Dharma Raja about the far-reaching results of Temple Construction warning Yama dootas not to reach any where near those devotees who constructed Places of Worship, Bhagavan Hayagriva addressed Lord Brahma about the methodology of 'Deva Pratishtha'in the Temples and enumerated twenty five 'Tantras' utilised in the process of 'Pratishtha' or setting up the Devas; these Tantras are Aadi Hayasirsha Tantra, Trilokya mohana Tantra, Vaibhava Tantra, Pushkara Tantra, Prahlada Tantra, Gaargya Tantra, Gaalava Tantra, Naradiya Tantra, Shri Praschantra, Shalindya Tantra, Ishwara Tantra, Satya Tantra, Shounaka Tantra, Vasishthokta Jnaana Saagara Tantra, Swaayambhuva Tantra, Kapila Tantra, Taakshya (Garuda) Tantra, Naarayaneeya Tantra, Aagneya Tantra, Narasimha Tantra, Ananda Tantra, Aaruna Tantra, Bodhaayana Tantra, Ashtaanga Tantra, and Vishwa Tantra. Bhagavan Hayagriva explained the implications of 'Deva Sthapana' as per Vaastu Shastra and decide the Placement of the Idols to be installed in the specified Temples. Then the procedure of 'Shila Nyasa' was described; for instance, a 'Mandapa' has to be constructed first, then four 'Kundas' be planned; Kumbha Nyasa or Kalasha Sthapana and Ishtikaa Nyasa be performed; Dwara and Sthambha construction be taken up; relevant Homas be executed with 'Adhara' and 'Aajya bhaga' Ahutis. 'Kalasha Sthapana'or installation of Kalashas (vessels) viz. Padma, Maha Padma, Makara, Kacchapa, Kumuda, Ananda, Padma and Shankha would be followed. 'Ishtika Sthapana' (installation of bricks), cleaning of 'Vaastu Kundas' with cow's urine, 'Kunda Garbha Sthapana', filling up the Kunda with bricks, construction of 'Devaalaya Praasaad' or the area around the 'Temple's Garbha', Installation of 'Deva Pratimas', 'Bhuta Shanti', Shalagrama Vigraha Puja, 'Pratima Lakshana' or features of the Idols and the Stotras of the Deities to be installed, 'Adhiva -asan' or 'Saannithya -karana' or straight-facing the devotees; 'Avabhruta Snaanaas' of the installed Deities, 'Dwara Pratishtha' or installation of doors, 'Dwaja -aropana' ot the hoisting of the Temple Flag; digging of wells / water bodies in the Temple Region; 'Griha Pravesha', welcome to 'Gomaata'into the 'Devaalaya Praangana' (Temple surroundings), installation of saplings of trees and of Utsava Deities for 'Parikramana' (taking the Deities around the Temple), 'Bhojana Samaaraathana' to devotees and multifarious other activities including setting up daily Puja activities in the morning through the Temple closures are all to be organised with the full back-up of Mantras.

While the above is a general frame work of Temple Construction, the procedure and back up of Mantras is more focussed as relevant to specified Deities viz Shiva, Vishnu, Devis, Vishnu's Avataras, Gajaanana, Subramanya, Surya, etc. along with the features of the Idols, postures of being seated, or standing, or resting; details of hands and ornamentation, accompanying consorts etc.

#### Tirtha Mahatmya

Yasya hastoucha paadou cha manaschaiva susamyatam/ V idya tapascha kirtischa sa Tirtha phalamshrutey, pratigrahaadupaavruttho laghvaahaaro jitendriyah/ Nishpaapas tirthayaatri tu sarva

yagnaphlam labhet, Anuposhya triraatreena Tirthaanyanabhi gamya cha/ Adatvaa kaanchanam Gaascha Daridro naama jayate, Tirthaabhi gamaney tatasyaadyadyajnaanenaashyatey phalam/ (That sinless Tirtha Yatri whose hands, feet and heart are well-regulated and that person's Vidya (learning), Tapasya (strength of meditation) and wide fame are well- recognised should be able to reap the fruits of performing Yagnas. That person who had not peformed fasts for three nights, nor gave away charity of gold and cows; nor is even undertaken Tirtha Yatras must be considered as a Daridra (Pauper). The fruits of Tirha Yatras would excel those of Yagnaas too.

*Pushkar:* is an important 'Tirtha', where Lord Brahma is stated to take baths along with Indra and Devas. Performance of Pujas to Devas, Shraadhhas and Tarpanas to Pitaras and daanas to learned Brahmanas especially on Purnima day in the month of 'Kartika' bestows the 'Punya' of Ashwamedha Yagna and achivement of Brahma loka. Jambu Marg and Tandulik Ashram are the holy Tirthas nearby. Other significant Tirthas include Kanvaashrama, Koti Tirtha, Narmada and Arbuda (Mount Abu). Charmanvati (Chambal), Sindhu, Somnath, Prabhasa, Sarasvati-Sagara Sangam, are also notable Titrhas. Pindaraka Kshetra, Dwaraka and Gomati are sacred Places.

*Kurukshetra* is another Holy Spot, frequented by Lord Vishnu and others. It is believed that the dust of this Kshetra assures 'Parama Gati' The entire region where the River Ganga flows is sacred; those who view the River, touch it, drink its holy water or even pronounce its name and chant its 'Mahima' are purified along with previous generations.

*Prayaga*, the point of confluence of three rivers-Ganga, Yamuna and the under-ground river Saraswati -is a sacred place where Brahma, Vishnu, Indra, and many other Gods are present, besides Pitru Devatas (fore- fathers) await offerings from their offspring. Three baths at 'Prayaga' during the month of 'Magha' are considered equal to a passage to Brahmalok after one's departure from Life. This sacred Place is stated to be the personification of Vedas and Yagnaas. Chanting the Mahatmya of Prayaga or even feel its Earth are stated to be the demolisher of sins. At this unique Tirtha, 'Pitru Karyas' viz. Shraddhaas and Tarpanas along with 'daanaas' would yield far-reaching fruits.

*Varanasi:* Lord Shiva told Parvathi that He would never like to leave Varanasi; the Holy Ganges confluencing with two Rivers, viz. Varana and Asi. Parama Shiva confirmed to Devi Gauri that her had never left the Place ('Avi' + 'Mukta') and was ever-present there. Deeds including 'Snaan', Japa, Homa, Deva Pujana, Shraaddha, Daana, Nivaasa (residing) and Mrityu (death) are expected to yield far-reaching benefits. Eight most illustrious Tirthas viz. Harischandra, Aamraatakeswar, Japeshwara, Shri Parvat, Mahalaya, Bhrigu, Chandeshwar, and Kedara Tirtha are all hidden in this Avimukta Kshetra.

There are several other sacred places dotted all over in the Karma Bhumi of Bharat, especially where rivers flow. But Gaya is stated to be an outstanding holy spot for reasons more than one. Gayasura, a King of Rakshasas did fierce meditation of which Devas were afraid. Vishnu appeared before Gayasura and granted a boon to him that the latter should be the most Sacred Thirtha. As Vihnu granted the wish, all the human beings and Daityas had the darshan of Gayasura and reached Vaikuntha. Thus Devas and human beings did not have to pray none else but at Gaya. Brahma and Devas approached Vishnu and the latter advised the former to approach Gayasura to let him perform Yagna on the Asura's body. Gayasura agreed and Brahma performed the Yagna on his head. At the time of 'Purnaahuti' or the climax of the Yagna, the Asura bacame shaky and was trying to wriggle out from the Fire-Pit; Vishnu advised Yama Dharma Raja to keep a very heavy stone on the Asura's body and let all the Devas occupy his body; so that the Asura could not wriggle out at the time of the Purnahuti. Yama Dharma Raja fetched that stone which was the same that got materialised as a result of a curse given by Maharshi Marichi to his wife called Dharmavrata; she disregarded Maharshi's order to press his legs as he slept off, but Brahma arrived meanwhille and she disturbed the Maharshi's sleep and hence the curse. Dharmavrata gave a return curse to Marichi to face Shiva's curse to him eventually since after all she was confused whether to welcome Brahma, the father of Marichi or to obey Marichi's instruction. She kept aside the curse in the form of the stone and entered Agni to perform Tapasya for thousands of years. As Vishnu was pleased, he decided to turn the curse as an advantage to her as the stone was blessed with the foot prints of all the Devas and thus set it against the huge body of Gayasura and thus would by famous as the Devashila, Sarva Deva Swarupa, Sarva Tirtha mayi and the Punya shila. But even after placing the Shila on the Asura's body with the feet of all the Devas there on, the Asura was still breathing and hence Vishnu had to keep his 'Gada' (mace) to fully sniff him out by adding his own presence to the Place. Thus the Tirtha has the paramount significance due to its association with Brahma's Yagna on the forehead of Gadasura, with the footprints of all the Devas, the memorable stone of Satyavrata and finally the presence of Lord Vishnu himself by the Adi Gada which was originally the backbone of Gadaasura killed by Vishnu and turned into a Gada by Viswakarma the Architect of Devas! It is this most Sacred Tirtha where till date 'Shraddhas' are performed. There are no restrictions of time or day to perform Shraaddhas at Gaya. It is believed that 'Pitras' celebrate when the sons decide to travel for Gaya. Brahma Jnaanam Gayaa shraaddham Gogruhey maranam tathaa, Vaasam pumsaam Kurukshethrey muktireshaa chaturvidhaa/ (The four major means of attaining 'Mukti' are Brahma Gyan, Shraddha performed at Gaya, death in a Goshaala, and residence at Kurukshetra.) The aspiration of Pitaras is that their progeny would arrive at Gaya to perform Shraaddha so that they could be redeemed! The Shraddhas at Gaya are 'Nava Devaatmak'viz. father, grand father, great grand father, mother, grand mother and great grand mother, father's mother, father's grand mother and father's great grand mother.

# **Description of Bhuvan Kosha**

Earth is stated to be spread over seventy thousand yojanas with a height of ten thousand yojanas. (Yojana is 15km. approx). Underneath the Earth are stated to be seven underground worlds with ten thousand yojanas each viz. Atala, Vitala, Nitala, Mahatala, Sutala, Talatala and Rasatala /Patala. These Patalas are described as of black, yellow, red, white, stony, kankar (brownish sediment) or gold colours. Underneath the Patalas is surmised as Sesha Nag or Ananta Deva holding the entire weight of Earth. It is further stated that some one lakh yojanas higher than Earth is Surya Mandala.; some one lakh yojanas above the Surya Mandala is the Chandra Mandala from where Nakshatras shine about a lakh yojanas there-beyond. The Planet of Budha (Mercury) is two lakh yojanas higher than that of the Nakshatras. The planet of Shukra (Venus) is two lakh vojanas above that of Budha. Mangal is two lakh above Sukra and like-wise two lakhs each are Brihaspati (Jupiter) and Shanaischara above each other. Saptarshi loka is situated one lakh yojanas from that of Saturn and Dhruva loka is further up by one more lakh yojanas. Thus Dhruva is the ultimate of 'Bhurbhuvah Swaha' or the highest point of Thee Lokas, beyond Earth. Some one crore yojanas beyond Dhruva is 'Maharloka' where Siddha ganas like 'Kalpaanta jeevi' Bhrigu. 'Janaloka' is situated two crore yojanas above Maharloka resided by Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanaatana and Sanat Kumaras and Siddha Purushas like the Sanaka brothers stay. Eight crore yojanas above the Jana loka is 'Tapoloka' where Devatas reside. Some nintysix crore yojanas far beyond Tapoloka is the Satya loka or Brahma loka. From Bhulok to Surya Mandala is known as Bhuvar loka and from Surya loka to Dhruva loka is called Swargaloka which is of fifteen lakh yojana area. This region is popularly called the place where Brahmanda was cut, from where the 'Pancha Bhutas' of 'Prithivyaapastejovaayurakaasas' got materialised. Around all these is said to spread 'Ahamkar' which created Maha Tatwa and Prakriti and far away from these manifestations is the Unique Paramatma of 'Vyaktaavyata' Supreme Being. Surya Deva's Chariot has a length of nine thousand yojanas and width of double the size, has seven horses named after seven 'Chandaas' viz. Gayatri, Brihati, Ushnik, Jagati, Trishthup, Anushthup and Pankti; and is responsible for denoting 'Samvatsaras; 'Ayanas', Ritis (seasons), months, days and nights. The view of 'Sishumara' or the dolphin like group of planets and Stars which is some thirteen lakh yojanas away on the sky is stated to be the Swarupa of Vishnu Himself, with Dhruva at the tail which is self-revolving and rotating Chandra, Surya and other planets. The Chariot of Surya visions every month the Maharshis in various lokas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Yakshas, etc besides being the embodiment of Vedas and the 'Pratyakta Deva' percievable to the entire Srishti of the Super Lord's making. Similarly the chariots of Chandra and other planets were described by Agni Deva: Chandra has a tricycled chariot with ten horses moving freely among the nakshatra lokas. Agni Deva informed Sage Vasishtha that as many as Devatas enjoyed Chandra's nector-like 'Kalas'; for example, on Amavasya day, Pitrugana 30,333

were able to enjoy one 'Rashmi' (moon ray) called 'Ama' and were able absorb to only two 'kalas'. Budha's chariot is made of Vayu and Agni with eight horses; Shukra has an eight horsed chariot, like in the case of Brihaspati and Shanaischara as well as Rahu and Ketu. Prithvi comprises Seven Dwipas surrounded by Seven Oceans, the Dwipas being Jambu, Plaksha, Shalmali, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaka and Pushkara. The Oceans are Lavana, Ikshu, Sura, Ghrita, Dadhi and Jala. Jambu Dwipa in which Bharat is situated surrounded with salty water and is popular as 'Karma Bhumi!'

#### 'Aashrama/ Varna Dharmas'

Agni Deva quoted Mahatma Pushkar having preached Parashu Rama about the Varna and Ashrama Dharmas. The common Principles of Dharma applicable to all human beings of irrespective of the 'Chatur Varnas' include Ahimsa (Non-violence), Satya Bhashan (Truth), Daya (Kindness), 'Anugraha' Mercy), Tirthha Yatras (Visit to Holy Places), 'Matsaraabhaava' (freedom from jealousy), Daan (Charity), Brahmacharya (celibacy), Seva (Service to Devas, Gurus and Brahmanas), Para Dharma Samata (respect to other Dharmas/religions), Pitru Puja (worship to Pitras), Bhakti (Devotion to Paramatma), Shastra Pathana (Reading Scriptures), Kruraraavaabhaava (absence of cruelty / vindictiveness), Sahanasheelata ( tolerance) and Astikata (faith/conviction). The Dharmas of 'Brahmanas' include performance of Yagnas ane enabling them to perform, accepting daanaas, Vedaadhyana and preaching of Vedas. The duties of Khatriyas is administration and defence, enforcing and observing Dharma, charity and enabling Yagnas and noble deeds, and punishing the wicked and non-virtuous. In addition to the common duties applicable to one and all Vaishyas have additional duties of agriculture, goraksha, and business. Providing assistance to the other Vranas in the conduct of their own duties, a Shudra has also to perform the common duties prescribed to all. Once 'Yagnopaveeta Samskar' is performed, the Brahmana / Kshatriya and Vaishya vrana boys are called 'Dwijas' or reborn again by retaining however the original caste. The age for the Samskara is eight years in case of Brahmana boys, eleven to Kshatiriya and twelve years in the case of Vaishyas.But the outside limits are sixteen years, twenty two years and twenty four years respectively. The Gurus should teach lessons in Shouchachara, Sadaachaara, Agnihotra and Sandhyopaasana to the Brahmacharis, after Yagnopaveeta Dharana, besides the do's and don'ts of the Brahmacharya. Those who face Purva (East) and eats food gets his long life; who eats facing Dakshina (South) gets fame; eats Paschima mukha or west ward obtains dhan (money) and eats the bhojan facing 'Uttara' enjoys Virtuous life. Brahmacharis have to be taught to perform Sandyha Vandana thrice a day or at least twice; Agnihotra twice in the morning and evening; abstain from madhu (intoxicants), maamsa (meat), vivaada ( arguments), singing, dancing, violence, carrying tales, criticising others, and 'Ashleela charcha or conversation on sex. Vedaadhyana and acquisition of rudimentary knowledge especially of 'Shadangaas'like Vyakarana, Chandas, etc.has to be taught so that the Brahmachari would be able to prepare himself in Dharmika Jeevana when he grows up gradually in life ahead. As regards Varna sankara, basic regulations were given by Agni Deva: If a shudra is born to a brahmana woman, the offspring is called a 'Chandala'. If a Kshatriya marries a Brahmana woman, the offspring becomes a 'Suta'. The offsping of Vaishya male to a varnantara woman is called 'Vaidehaka'. The offsping of a Kshatriya woman born to a Shudra male is called a 'Pakkas'. A Kshatriya Putra born to a Vaishya / Shudra male is called Magadha / Ayogava respectively. Offspring of such permutations/ combinations are generally called 'Vilomaja santaana'. If need be, in inevitable situations, Brahmanas may take over the

deeds of Kshatriyas and Vaishyas like agriculture, business, rearing of cows and even money loaning, but should not sell salt, jaggery, milk, and meat. Brahmanas might be committing certain sins in the discharge of duties of Kshatriyas or Vaishyas but those indiscretions could be offset by their other Brahmana Dharmas like Deva Pujas and Yagnas. In the context of farming, it is said that a plough is best run by eight bulls, or by six bulls by those who have to eke livelihood, by heartless persons by four bull but by two bulls only by the wicked persons; Brahmanas who slip down from 'ruta' Brahmanas or those whose desires are fulfilled on their own; to those viz. 'Amrita' who do not ask for anything but their desires are fulfilled; to those who ask but still do not get are 'Mritas'.Brahmanas are for hence allowed to do farming or business callled Satyaanruta but certainly not 'swaana-vritti' or dog-like life.

# 'Aachaara Varnana' (Description of Traditions)

Mahatma Pushkar addressed Parashurama that every human being should get up early morning at 'Brahma muhurtha' and pray to Vishnu/Shiva/Shakti and after morning abutions perform the six types of 'Snaanaas'viz. 'Nitya', 'Naimittika', 'Kaamya', 'Kriyaanga', 'Malakarshana' and 'Kriya'. Water from ground-wells is pure enough, water-stream is better, Sarovar water is much better, River water is further better, water from Tirthas is far better and Ganga water is the best of all. The person concerned would bathe in the water for a while cleaning the body and commence reciting the three Ruchas viz. Hiranya varnaa shuchah paavakaayaa sujatah Kashyapoyaasvidrah etc, Sham no Devirabheeeshtayey etc and Aapohishtha mayo bhuvah etc. Then the Mantra: Ida maapam etc. to be followed by Drupadaadivamunchatu etc. 'Purusha Suktam' saying Sahasra Sirshah Purushah etc. may be recited and Gayatri Mantra be repeated as many times as possible. After the bath and wearing clean 'Vastra yugma' (two clothings), perform Sandhya Vandana, Pitru Tarpana, Agnihotra homa and complete surrender to Maha Deva. Pushkar reiterated certain obvious dos and don'ts to Parashurama for the awareness of posterity: Never look straight to Surya Deva at the Sunrise and Sunset timings. Never see one's own reflection in water. Never look intently at a naked woman, or into a well or at a place of murder or the face of a murderer. Never enter the interior room of others nor their treasure room. Never be a messenger to anybody. Never enter a shaky boat, tree or elevation. Keep sustained interest in one's own household, money matters and Shastras. Do not create sounds from one's own body parts except by way of handclaps. Never travel or move about without light. Never enter a house excepting through specified doors. Never tamper with natural colour of one's own face. Never ever hurt anybody's feelings; in fact make it a point to say: 'be happy, be happy! but never ever utter undesirable sayings to others. Never exchange clothes of others. Never pass through two respected persons. Never look up Sun, Moon and Stars with disrespect or mischief. Never praise a river being in another river. After entering a River, never leave without prayers to 'Ishta devatas' and if possible perform pitru tarpana. Never pollute any water body, nor take bath fully naked. Never reside at a Place where there is to Vaidya, King or his representative, and a River or Waterbody. Never converse with a woman in menses or with a fallen woman for long. Never cough or yawn or sneeze without covering face with a piece of cloth. Keep the information under wraps about the insult to self or own's own well wishers. Never criticise Scriptures, Vedas, Kings, Rishis, and Devas. On the days coinciding with one's own Birth Stars, pray to Chandra the Swami of the Nakshatras and perform noble deeds including Daanas to Brahmanas and Annadanaas to the needy and the Poor. Avoid oil-baths on Shashthi, Ashtami and Chaturdashi. Never express excessive disliking or liking to woman. Be always keep one's emotions and passions under control and never forget or ignore the Almighty.

#### **Dreams and Omens**

A fairly detailed analysis of dreams and Omens is provided in Agni Purana. Dreams are good when they involve mountains, palaces, snakes, riding horses or bulls, white flowers, trees, possession of arms and many heads, triumphs in wars, wearing garlands or clothes, witnessing eclipses, Stars, Sun or Moon, eating rice pudding, drinking wine or blood, eating meat, milking cows, buffalos, blessings from Devas, Brahmanas, coronation, one's own death or cutting off head, one's own house burning, playing musical instruments, climbing trees, clear skies, wet clothes and so on. Bad dreams are a shaven head of one's own, wearing shabby clothes, drinking oil, house collapse, angry Gods or Brahmanas, falling from above, killing snakes or animals, playing with monkeys, weddings, singing and so on. Prayers to Vishnu, or Shiva or Ganesha or Surya would appease bad dreams, while good dreams should enable the dreamer to make them true if the person discontinues sleeping.

Good Omens: Good omens while leaving house are facing white flowers, full vessels, meat, distant sounds, goat, cow, horse, elephant, fire, gold, silver, sword, umbrella, fruits, butter or curd, sugarcane, sound of thunder, lightning, dead body without anybody crying, donkey's braying; buffallo crossing from left to right; horse, cats, donkeys, from right to left; crows near door or with mud, or a dog with meat in mouth and so on. Bad omens are facing cotton, dry grass, cowdung, coal, leather, hair, a lunatic, chandala, widow, ashes, bones, sound of musical instruments, break down of vehicle, fall of umbrella on head, recall back before journey and so on.'

#### 'Paapa naashaka Stotra'

When a human being is smitten by sins like 'Parastree gamana' (illicit relations with other's women), 'Paraswaapaharana' (robbing the belongings of others) and 'Jeeva himsa' (brutality against various Beings), then 'Prayaschitta' (penance) is said to be the recitation of the following 'Stuti' (tribute) to Vishnu Deva:

Vishnavey Vishnavey

nityam Vishnavey namah, Namaami Vishnum Chithasthamahamkaaragatih Harim/
Chitasthameeshamavyakta manantamaparijitam, Vishnumeedyamaseshana Ananda nidhanam Vibhum/
Vishnuschagato yanmey Vishnu buddhi gatascha yat, Yacchaahamkaarago Vishnuryadvishnur -mayi
samshitah/ Karoti Karma bhutesou sthaavarasya charasyacha, Tat paapam naashamaayaatu tasmitreva
hi chintatatey/ Dhaato harati yat Paapam swapney drushtastu bhaavanaat, Tamupendra -maham
Vishnum Pranamaami Paraatparam/ Sarwasvareswara Vibho Paramaatma Trijdhokshajah, Hrishikesha
Hrishikesha Hrishikesha namostutey/Nrisimhaananta Govinda Bhutabhaavana Keshava, Duruktam
dushkrutam dhyatam Shaamaaagham namostutey/ Yanmaya chintitam drushtam Swachinta -vasha
vartinaa, Akaarya Mahadatyugram tavacchimam naya Keshava/ Brahmanya Deva Govida Paramartha
paraayana, Jagannatha Jagatbhaatah Paapa prashama achyutam/ Yathaapaharney Saayaahney
Madhyaahnecha tatha nishi, Kaayena Manasaa Vaachaa kritam paapamajaanataa/ Jaanataacha
Hrishikesha Pundarikaakshah Madhava, Naamatrotyatchaaranatah Paapam yaau mama kshayam/
Shareeram mey Hrishikesha Pundareekaaksha Madhava, Paapam prashamayaadya twam Vaakaritham
mama Maadhava/ Yadbhunjana yat Swapamstisthan gacchaan jaagrad yadashitaha, Kritavaan
paapamadyaaham kaayena manasaa giraa/ Yat swalpamapi yat sthuulam kuyoni narakaavaham, tad

vaatu prashamam sarvam Vaasudevaanu keertinaat/ Param Brahma Param dhaama pavitram paramamcha yat, Tasmin prakeertitey Vishnou yat paapam tat pranashyatu/ Yat praapya na nivartantey gandhasprashaadi varjitam, Surayastah sarvam shamatvagham/ (Sarva Vyapi Vishnu! My salutations to you. Srihari Vishnu! My greetings to you. I pray to that Vishnu who is all-pervasive, selfless and firmed up in my heart. I implore that Vishnu who is fully radiant in my Soul and who is Unknown, Everlasting, and Unconquerable. My earnest veneration to the awe-inspiring, all powerful and ageless Paramatma who is far above the beginnings and finalities! Vishnu is steeped in my heart; Vishnu is the illumination of my 'Antaratma'or in my inner-consciousness; Vishnu is my self-image! May that Vishnu who is the undercurrent of 'Charaachara praanis' or the Moveable and Immoveable Beings demolish my sins with his benevolence! To those devotees who meditate to him with sincerity, their blemishes are destroyed; the griefs under his protection are flattened and he appears before them in their dreams. It is he who extends his hand in this utterly supportless world full of darkness and gloom and to that manifestation of singular optimism that I urge upon for that succor. My homage to you Sarveswara! Vibho! Hrishikesha! Hrishikesha! Hrishikesha! Nrisimha! Ananta! Govinda! The Originator of the Universe! Kindly condone the sinful words and deeds of mine. Whatever mindless thoughts and evil conversations that I have made may be dissolved. You are the bench-mark of 'Maryada' (graciousness) and embodiment of mercy, Jagannatha! My prayers are to uplift me from the low levels of ignorance and viciousness and being the Creator and Preserver of the Srishti, pardon my hopeless sins and accept my assurances not to repeat my indiscretions in future. I might have committed sins in the mornings, afternoons, evenings and nights, whether knowingly or forgetfully; physically, mentally or by way of conversation; may all these transgressions be wiped out by my mere utterances of the three sacred names of yours viz. Pundarikaksha, Hrishikesha and Madhava. What ever sins of mine that were perpetrated while eating, sleeping, standing, moving about, or fully awaken by way of thought, deed or vocal means-be it a small or huge proportion-be rescinded. Oh Vasudeva! Parabrahma! Paramadhama! Parama Pavitra! May my offenses be revoked by my singing of holy hymns of your propitious names. May Maha Vishnu from whom Jnaanis and Yogis never return after attaining him and who is devoid of, and untouched by, Tanmatras like smell, touch and vision cancel all my wrong doings.)

Paapa pranaashanam strotram yah patheycchrunuyaadapi, Sharirai maanasair vaagvijaih krutaaih paapaihi pramuchyatey/ Sarvapaapagrahaadibhyo yaati padam, Tasmaat Paapey krutey japyamStotram Sarvaaghamardinam/ Praayaschittamaghaudhaanaa stotram vratakrutey varam, Praayaschitthaih stotra japairvratarnashyati paatakam/ (Those persons who aim at destroying sins should read or atleast hear the above 'Stotra' so that they would surely get rid of all kinds of sins committed by physical, mental or vocal means as also free from the severities of 'Paapa Grahaas' and accomplish 'Vishnu Paramapada'. Thus this Stotra is a panacea and an effective 'Prayaschitta' (atonemnt) for a multitude of sins. Hence to attain the siddhis of 'Bhogas' (enjoyments) and Moksha (Salvation), this golden 'Stotra'be recited with sincerity).

'Gayatri Mantra' and 'Sandhya Vidhi'

'Gayatri Mantra' is a very powerful and Sacred Prayer integrating the Inner Soul and the Super Force. Of the several veins in a human body, ten of them are supposed to be important providing life, viz. Ida, Pingala, Sushumna, Gandhari, Hastijihva, Prutha, Yasha, Alambusha, Huhu and Shankhini. Mainly these veins are responsible for creating 'Prana Vayu' (The breath of Life). Apart from Prana Vayu, there are nine other forms of life's breathing, viz. Vyana, Apana, Samana, Udana, Naga, Kurma, Krikara, Devadatta, and Dhananjaya. Actually, five forms of Life's breathing are stated to be more important, viz. Prana (Principal Energy), Apana (Internal Energy), Samana (Balancing Energy), Vyana (Central Energy) and Udana (External Energy). Goddess Gayatri is thus stated to have five faces representing and five portions of the Mantra, viz. Om (the Central Face), Bhur bhuvassuvaha (the second face), tat savitur varenyam (the third face), Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi (the fourth face) and Dhi-yo-yona prachodayat (the fifth face). The Lords of Universe-Tri Murthis- named Brahma (the Creator), Vishnu (the Sustainer), and Shiva (Liquidator), having three attributes viz. Satvika (Creation or Existence), Rajasica (Preservation) and Tamasika (Destruction or Extinction) are all absorbed in prayers to Devi Gayatri Now the integration of the Super Force and the inner soul of Human Beings are effected via the Three Murthies and the most suited conduit to do so is by chanting the Gayatri Mantra.

The Literal and word- by-word meaning of Gayatri Manthra is: Om: (All Mighty God) – Buhr (Embodiment of Vital Energy)-Bhuvaha (Destroyer of Suffering)-Swaha (Embodiment of Happiness)-Tat (That God) -Savithur (Bright like Sun)-Varenyam (The Supreme)- Bhargo (Destroyer of Sins)- Devasya (Divine Force)-Dhimahi (May Receive)-Dhiyo (Intellect)-Yo (Who)-Na (Our)-Prachodayat (Let inspire in right direction). The meaning in sum is: Oh God, You Are the Creator of Life, Destroyer of Sorrow, Bestower of Happiness and the Creator of Universe. May we receive Your Supreme Light to demolish our sins and guide us in our intellect in the right direction.

[NOTE: Scientific explanations have been offered by modern Scientists about the Gayatri Mantra. According to Astro Physics and Astronomy, a sound is produced due to the fast movement of Earth, Planets and Galaxy or the Milky Way, called Akshay Ganga, having some 100,000 million Stars. The Galaxy, the Moon and the Earth – all revolving around the Sun-each moving on their own axis-at a mind boggling velocity speed of 20,000 miles per second, produce the Sound and Sages (Rishies) had named the Super Sound as OM. The sum of the Gayatri Mantra sums up as follows: The Earth (Bhur), the Planets (Bhuhava) and the Galaxy (Swah) are rotating on their own axis at a great velocity as the Great sound OM is made, which is the Formless Entity. The total kinetic energy generated by the movement totals or balances the total energy consumption of Cosmos and this is named as Pranava or the body energy (mass of galaxies multiplied by velocity and further multiplied by two: Mass x Velocity x 2). That entity (God), who manifests in the form of Supreme Radiance (The Sun or Savitur) is worthy of bowing or respected (Varenyam). We should meditate (dheemahi) upon the light (bhargo) of that Entity (devasya) and also do the chanting of OM. May He (Yo) guide in the right direction (prachodayat) our (nah) intellect (dhiyo)!] Agni Purana assures that the incantation of Gayatri Mantra seven times a day, of course by fully understanding the full meaning of the Mantra, as it would vanish sins; once the number of the invocation is multiplied, good results would be muliplied too. The simplest and the easiest possibility of reciting Gayatri Mantra at any time or place is a great boon to mankind, as it improves concentration, mental focus, feeling of wellness and a lot of peace. In fact, whenever a human being gets disturbed by difficult situations of mundane life, it is most likely that even strong feelings of anger, envy, fatigue, defeat, helplessness, confusion and many other emotions of mind or physique are diluted and overcome. Quite apart from the spiritual import, the Mantra acts like an instant tonic of purely mundane activities.

<u>Sandhya Vidhi</u>: After invoking Gayatri by pronouncing OM, a devotee is to touch the 'sikha' or tuft on the back portion of head is expected to be; perform 'Achamana' (sip spoonful water thrice) and touch hridaya (heart), naabhi (navel), and both the shoulders. Then perform <u>Viniyoga</u> by uttering the following: Omkaarasya Brahma Rishih Gayatri Chhandoragni Devataa Shuklo varnah Sarva karmaa —rambhey viniyogah/ (Commencing with Omkaara, the Viniyoga/ introduction states: Brahma is Rishi, Gayatri is the Chhandas or the form of Prosody, Agni / Paramatma is the targetted Deity). Devi Gayatri's <u>dhyaana</u>

or meditation is done by the Mantra: Shuklaa chaagni mukhi Divya Katyaana sa gotrajaa, Thailokyavaranaa Divya Prithirvyaadhaara samyutaa/ Aksha sutra dhara Devi Pammaasana gataa Shubha / Devi's Aavaahana or welcome / invocation is followed with this Mantra: Om Tejosi Mahosi Balamasi Bhraajosi Devaanaam dhaamanaamaasi, Vishwamasi Vishvaayuh Sarvamasi Sarvaayuh Om Abhi Bhuh/ This Mantra would be followed by: Aagaccha Varadey Devi japey mey sannidhow bhava, Gaayantam traayasey yasmaad Gayathrii twam tatah smrutaa/ (The Rishis of all 'Vyahritis' is Prajapati himself; He is always existent in the Ekaakshara Swarupa of OM in Vyashti or singular and Samishti (Plural) Forms. Saptavyaahriteenam Vishwamitra Jamadagni Bharadwaja Gautamaatri vasishtha Kashyapa Rishayey Gayarushnikanushthubbruhati Pinga Trishthub jajadyaschhandaadaagi vaayavaadityaBrihaspati varunendri Vishva devataa anaadishta praayaschattey praanaamaayamey vinogoyah/ (The Sapta Vyahritis are: the Sapta Rishis viz. Viswamitra, Jamadagni, Bharadwaja, Gautama, Atri, Vasishtha, and Kashyapa; the Sapta Devatas are: Agni, Vayu, Surya, Brihaspati, Varuna, Indra and Vishwa Deva; Sapta Chhandah viz. Gayarti, Ushnik, Aushthup, Brihati, Pinga, Trishthup, and Jagati). Following this, Three Ruchas are rendered as follows:

Om aapo hi shtha mayo bhuvah, Om taana urjey dathaatana, Om Maheranaaya Chakshasey, Om yo vah Shivatamo rasah, Om Tasya bhajayateha nah, Om ushiteeriva Maatarah, Om Tasmaa aram gamaava vah, Yasya Khayayah jinvitha, Om Aapo janaayatha cha nah/ After the above Richas, further Richas be rendered as follows: Om Drupadaadiva mumuchaanah Savitrah snaato malaadva, Putam Pavitrenovaajya maapah shuddhantu mainasah/ Thus rendering the aforesaid Ruchas, the Mantra: Hiranya Varnaah Shuchaya etc. be uttered and simultaneously water drops be sprinkled on the devotee's head eight times, so that he would be freed from all the sins committed till date. Now the Aghamarshana Mantra is rendered thrice: Om Rutascha Satyanchaabheedbhaatthapaso dhyayajaayat, tato raatra jaayata, tatah Samudro arnavah, Samudraadarnavaadadhi Samvatsaro ajaayata, ahoraatrani vidadhadravischasya mishato vashee, Suryaachandramasou Dhaataa yathaa purvamakalpayat, Divascha Prithivischaantariksamayo swah / Thereafter, three Marjana Mantras be rendered for which Sindhudwipa isRishi, Gayatri is Chhanda and Varuna is Devata and the Mantraas are: Apohishta mayo bhuvah ta na oorje dadhatana, maheranaaya chakshase yo vah sivatamorasah/ Tasya bhajayateha nah Usateeriva Matarah, Tasma aranga mamavah/ yasyakshayaya jinvatha, Apo janayata cha nah Om Bhurbhuvassusah/ Now, the Gayatri Siro Mantra is to be recited for which Prajapati is Rishi, Chhanda rahita Yajur mantrah, viz. Aapo jyoti rasomritam Brahma Bhurbhuvahsswarom/ Pranayama leads to 'Vayu', Vayu creates Agni, Agni creates Jala (Varuna) and that is why the 'Shuddha Jala' is taken now as 'Achamana' with the Mantra: Antascharasi bhuteshu Guhaayaam Viswa murthishu, Tapo yagno vashatkaara aapo jyotee rasomrutam. [While these are the basic Mantras, appropriate variations be observed, for Pratahkaaleena, Maadhyahnnika and Suryastamaya timings].

#### **Sansrit Literature and Grammar**

Agni Purana has dealt in detail with the Literature and Grammar of Sanskrit, the language of Gods. The alphabet has sixty four 'Varnas' including twenty four vowels (Swar Varnas). There are three Tones (swaras) in which the letters of the alphabet are uttered. The vovels are pronounced in three tones viz. Udatta, Anudatta and Svaritha. The Letters are pronounced from the throat, tongue, chest, teeth, nose, lips, head and palate. The language is either in the form of Gadya (prose) or Poetry or misra (mixture). Prose has three types viz. 'churnaka' plain without compound sentences, 'Utkalika' full of compounded sentences and 'Vrattagandhi' (complex sentences with the combinations of the earlier type). Poetry has to

have a poetic sense, rules of poem writing, knowledge of 'Chandass' (meter-framing) and keen arareness of rhetoric (alankaras) and a spread of 'Nava Rasas' (nine sentiments) viz. Hasya (comical), Sringar (romantic), Shanta (serenity), Karuna (Kindness), Veera (valour), Bhayankara (frightening), roudra (awe-inspiring), Adbhuta (exraordinary) and Bhibhatsa (offensive). Good literature is also enriched by various 'kalas' (arts or skills))- some sixty of them-including dance, designing, music, painting, instrumentals, architecture, singing, acting, and so on. [Note: In fact, the specialised disciplines of date are innumerable and highly specialised in nature. Many of these are ramifications of Art and Literature as also modern off shoots of technological progress and each specialisation has its own distinct grammar.]

Agni Purana describes Sanskrit Grammar in great details: 'Sandhis' (word conjunctions) and 'Samasas' (qualified words or group of words); 'vachanas' (numbers like 'eka' or single vachana, 'bahu' or multiple vachanas) and genders (male, female or neutral) or 'karakas' (cases) and 'vibhaktis' (caseendings). There are six 'karakas', viz. Karthri (Nominative Case), Karma (objective case), Karana (instrumental case), Sampradana (Dative case), Apadana or source of something (ablative case), when there is a relation of a possession is involved, then the person who has the possession is the 'Karaka' in the sixth case. In the final case, the Karaka is adhikarana (locative case). The vibhakties are to be added to the respective counterpart cases of 'Karakas', to arrive at the appropriate Karakas (Cases) and vibhakties (case endings). Thus the details of Sanskrit Literature and Grammar as covered in Agni Purana are fairly exhaustive and extensive.

#### **Rudiments of Yoga Practice**

The major objective of 'Yoga' (art of controlling the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of life) is a powerful tool provided to a person with which to align the Self with the Super Force. The pre-requisites are righteousness, truthfulness, celibacy, control of senses and emotions, devotion to the Super Force, and tendency against material possessions. Yoga Abhyas (Practice of Yoga) commences with proper posture in a clean surrounding, seated on a piece of cloth on ground, with head and neck set straight up and concentrating motionless on the tip of one's own nose. The posture should ideally be in a 'Padmasana' mode, ie. the right foot resting on left thigh and vice versa, and left hand palm pointed upwards resting on right thigh and right hand palm closing the left palm. 'Prana Vayu' (the breath of life) has to be controlled by a finger placed on either of the nostrils, alternately exhaling and inhaling fully. The process of controlling the breath by exhaling is known as 'Rechaka' and by inhaling is 'pooraka', while the intermediate phase is known as 'Kumbha.' The process of controlling breathing is 'Pranayama', which ought to be done fast and strongly with heavy doses continously with no breaks The process of Pranayama needs to be accompanied by 'Dhyana' or meditation (preferably by reciting Gayatri Mantra in the three successive phase of Rechaka, Pooraka and Kumbha.) Indeed, this practice of Yoga even for a little while initially is a great achivement, and such doses of intermittent phases might happen as often as possible to make the practice a reality. The ultimate of Pranayama and Dhyana is to attain the status of 'Samadhi' or the complete alignment of Atman (The Inner Self) and Paramatman (The Super Soul). [Note: Sage Patanjali's Raja Yoga defined 'Ashtanga Yoga' (The Eight Limbed Yoga) viz. Yama (The five abstention):non-violence, non-lying, non-covetousness, non-sensuality, and non-possessiveness; Niyama (The Five Observances): Purity, contentment, austerity, study and Surrender to God; Asana ( Seated position for Meditation); *Pranayama* (Lengthening of 'Prana', the Life Force, or Vital Energy); Pratyahara (Abstraction) or withdrawal of sense-organs from external objects; Dharana (Meditation): intense contemplation of the nature of Objects of meditation; and Samadhi (Liberation or merger with the object of meditation] While the ideal achievement might fall short of human endeavour through Yoga, there are several Yoga practices, which ought to induce beneficial results to set right human limbs and lead to well-being of the Inner Self as well.]

# 'Dhanurveda' (The Science of Archery and Weaponry) and Rules of Battle

'Dhanurveda' or the knowledge of Archery and Weaponry is an important aspect covered in Agni Purana. Mainly five categories of weaponry are stated to have been used in the days of yore, viz. 'Yantramukta' launched from Yantra (machinery/ engines), including arrows released from bows; 'Pani Mukta' or thrown by hands, like stones or spears; 'mukta sandharita' ie, flung or withdrawn by hands; the weapons like swords invariably used by hands; and 'amukta' used by brute force such as duels/wrestling. The use of bow and arrows is an art by itself: the bow ('dhanush') with a tightly fitted strong string, making an arch form and the arrow drawn back as far as possible to be released while chanting a prayer to the respective Gods like 'Agni' (Fire), 'Vayu' (Wind), 'Indra' (Chief of Devas), 'Varuna' (God of Rain), Serpent ('Naga') etc. appropriate to an occasion. The opponent would naturally retalliate and the initiator should have the knowledge to anticipate an opposite action and the fight keeps going depending the tolerance and attacking power of an archer. In addition to the set of bows and arrows, a warrior is also equipped with an arrow-hive to store the arrows to be hung behind in the back, armoury protecting the chest, neck, hands, legs, feet, groins, back and of course the head, a belt to accommodate a sword, a dagger, a noose, a mace, an iron chain, and most of all a shield. The charioteer, the horses and a strong chariot are to be suitably equipped too. The art of handling each item of defence and offence to one's own advantage is an integral part of 'Dhanurveda' training and skill management, which alone is the answer for the success of the battle discipline. Agni Purana prescribes the Rules of 'Dharma Yuddha' or a Battle for Justice. Once a battle is decided mutually, there should be a lead time for the preliminaries,- a week's time- to offer prayers to 'Ganesha' viz. the very First God to worship and the 'Trimurthies' ( Triumverate) viz. Brahma, the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Eswar, the Destroyer; to 'Dikpalas' (the Gods of Four Directions); 'Rudras'the Gods of Killings; the 'Nava Grahas' (Gods of Planets) as also of Stars; and Aswini Devatas and Rivers. The Army assembles at the eastern point of the Capital City before the departure and at the start off of the March should be rejoiced by Victory Slogans and reverberation of musical instruments. There would not be a recall or a faltering step once the march is flagged off. After covering a good distance of a couple of miles, there might be a brief stop over for rest/regrouping/ prayers. The King (Chief) should not intervene in the battle directly till the very end. But, he should be behind at a distance to keep up the morale of the Army. There should be formations of an elephant each in the center, defended by four chariots of four horses each, each horse defended by four infantrymen, who should be in the forefront, defended behind by archers and horses and behind them be 'Yantramuktas' or mehanically propelled explosives. The attacking men should have the pride of place- be it in the infantry, or on horses or chariots or 'Yantramuktas' and comparatively less courageous and defensive forces should be in the rear. A person killed in a war deserves 'Veera Swarga', equivalent to performing 'Yagnas' and a soldier who runs away or shows his back or wantonly avoids confrontation would be considered not only as a criminal in the eyes of Law but as a sinner or murderer of a Brahmin in the eyes of God. At the same time, the defeated soldiers are to be let back honourably by the victorious side with grace. It would be a sin to maltreat the defeated soldiers, slay the persons unarmed, perpetrate revenge of any kind to the citizens of the defeated kingdom, especially the spectators, scribes, women and children and take advantage of any kind to the defenceless.

### Kingship Duties and Rama Rajya

A King is expected to be an earthly version of God, responsible for creating happiness and welfare, preserving security and prosperity and punishing the evil and disobedient. He is expected to set examples, without favour or fear. He should be above suspicion or indiscipline, promote competition and justice, encourage diligence and duty. His Coronation is a multi-splendered spectacle with elaborate Rituals ans Sacrifices, fun and fanfare, feasts and festivities and gifts and gratitudes to poor and unpriveleged. On taking over the Kingship, he makes a series of appointments and postings of Priminister and Ministers, Top Officials and Advisers and a whole lot of Workforce at various levels. A Military General has to be a Kshatriya or Brahmin, a Treasurer has to have keen knowledge of Jewels, a Charioteer should be an expert of horses & elephants as also an outstanding ability of conducting chariots with alacrity on the

battle fields, Doctors of experience and proven merit, and likewise persons of outstanding ability in each and every discipline and tested loyalty to the King and the Court. Each official of any level has to be well behaved, honest, diligent and above all types of temptations. There has to a completely decentralised system of Governance, within a well- set and publicly announced framework of Rules and there could never be an exception unless with the approval of the King who makes the Law or its Interpretation. There has to be a strong and widespread network of espionage and surveillance to the grass root levels to protect the interests of the Kingdom, the King, Officials and law-abiding citizens. Criminals are severely punished and Loyalists are assured of peaceful existence. The course of Law is not only just and swift but also should look to be convincing, transparent and unambiguous. The fiscal and monetary policy of the Government should also be uniform, impartial and well defined. Taxes are fixed as per the Sacred Texts and the process of tax collection has to be smooth, timely and automatic. Defaulters or protesters have to get opporunities to approach the Concerned Officials. Property Rights are also to be well defined, especially in respect of the poor, women, children, orphans and disabled and regular courts of civil and criminal cases are to be dealt with within approved time frames. There are various techniques used to let the offenders make confessions, the most significant ones being, 'Sama' (persuasion), 'Dana' (Gifting), 'Bheda' (divide interests), 'Danda' (punish), 'Maya' (Decieve or create make-believe situation), 'upeksha' (ingore) and 'mayajal' (jugglery). Punishments accorded to offenders not only punitive but more than that they serve as examples to ensure that others perpetrate similar offences. For example, a thief who steals Gold or Jewellery has his hands cut. A Brahman who provides wrong or misleading witness would be banished from the Kingdom. In case anybody kills cows, horses, elephants or camels would be summarily executed. Cases of abduction of a woman, or of poisoning, arson too attract execution. Disloyalty by a woman to husband or vice versa have their facial parts cut, torn by dogs and paraded in public.

Rama Rajya: The perception, as to how a King should govern his Kingdom and the Subjects, was illustrated by Lord Rama to Laxmana. Agni Purana has described Rama's Percepts of an Ideal King: A King has to create wealth, increase it, protect it, and donate it. He should be humble-the humility arising out of victory, essentially after defeating the human senses of revenge, anger and retribution. He should be strong, magnanimous and forgiving, kind and protective. His support to the inferior and the needy is as significant as to punish and uproot the wicked and harmful. The human vices of greed, lust, dishonesty are but the reflections of a sick mind, which has no conviction or courage or helpfulness to the needy. Rama also advised considerable patience to deal with the timid, haughty and hurtful as these are indeed the traits of a villian. Once there is no ray of remorse and there is no trace of recovery from the pent-up senses of ego, impoliteness and audacity, then the time to end the culprit has arrived.

# **Property Rights**

According to Agni Purana, the property of a dead father has to be shared by sons and his widow in equal shares. Unlike in the Modern Law, daughters have no share, but the sons of unmarried daughters have to jointly share the expenses of the marriages to the extent of one-fourth of each son's inheritance (including the carry forward debts made by the dead person in respect of the daughters already married). If the dead person has no issues, the person who enjoys the inheritance would also bear the duty of repaying debts made by the dead man. But, the widow would not have to share the burden of debts from her share of property. A woman is not responsible for debts incurred by husband or son, and so is the case of a man's responsibility to his wife's or son's debts, unless they make a joint loan deed. Incase of disputes in general, if the witness provided is proved false, the punishment to the false witness would attract eight times the punishment given to the false claimant. If a Brahman gives the false witness or false claim, the punishment is banishment from the Kingdom. Whenever there is no written contract of a loan, excepting in the presence of witness, the latter has to swear by fire or water. In case of fire, the witness keeps seven dry leaves on his head and a red hot metal piece in his palm; if the hot metal on his palm does not hurt, then the claim as supported by the witness is true! In case of an oath by water, the witness would not drown if the claimant is right!

# 'Atma Gyan' (Awareness of Super Force) and the example of Jada Bharata

While the Physical Body is ephemeral, the Inner Soul or 'Atma' is an integral part of 'Paramatma' or the Super Force, the Inner Soul's existence is however subject to the survival of physical life. The Body is made of the Five Elements, Viz. 'Prithivi' (Earth), 'Apas' (Water), 'Tejas' (Fire), 'Vayu' (Air), and 'Akash' (Sky) and the individual Soul merges back into the Elements of 'Parcha Bhoota', which are the handmaids of 'Paramatma'; In other words, the smaller light confluences with the Enormous Light. The Super Force is Unknown ('Avyaktam'); Permanent ('Sasvatam'); All Pervading (Omni-Present); It has no beginning or end ('Anantam'); It is not spent out but ever-springing ('Avyayam'). Knowledge of this Truth of Life is 'Brahma Gyan'. The process of alignment of the Inner Soul to 'Paramatma' or in other words the pursuit of the Truth is performed by several ways and means but the most effective routes to yield concrete relults are five major methods as recommended by Sages: to perform 'Yagnas', which is the hardest yet a quick mode; to observe 'Tapas' ( serious meditation) and adopt an ascetic Life; detach from material happiness or follow the descipline of 'Vairagya'; to be an ascetic or the scooll of 'Sanyasa'; and the path of 'Jnana Yoga' or the Ultimate Path of Self-Realisation.

In the context of the 'Nyasa' (Pursuit of Truth or of 'Paramatma'), Agni Purana has illustrated 'Jada Bharata' as having attained maturity in the knowledge of 'The Grand Alignment', and he had devoted his lifetime in Meditation at a place known as 'Shalagrama'. But he was highly fond of a deer as it was a 'Jyatismara' (which had the knoweldge its earlier birth). After the deer died, Bharata also died later and was reborn as a 'jyatismara' human. While travelling from place to place, Bharata came across the King of the Place, named 'Souribha' being carried in a palanquin by some of his persons, who caught hold of Bharata too and made him carry the palanquin for some time. The King admonished Bharata that he was not carrying the palanquin properly. Bharata replied to the King that it was just an illusion, as neither the King was not being carried nor Bharata was carrying the palanquin. He said that the King, the Palanquin and he himself were non existent as all these entities are one and the same! On realisation that the person concerned was indeed a philosopher, the King sought to know as to who was he. The reply was: 'Are you referring to my Atman or your Atman or the all pervasive Paramatman?' 'Who am I' is a very complicated query, replied Bharat. The King asked Bharat again, 'Whatever form in which you are, who you are?' Bharat's reply was that the palanquin being carried was made of wood and the wood came from trees and the trees were in forests; and would it be alright to say that the palnquin was made of the forest! As the King had no reply, he beame an instant disciple of Bharata. The latter narrated the story of Ribhu and Nidhgha. The former was the Guru and the latter the disciple. After the formal teaching was over, Nidhgha left his Guru to seek his livelihood in a city. A few years, the Guru visited the disciple and Nidhgha became wealthy by then. The disciple gave lots of food and fruits and enquired whether the Guru was satisfied. The latter replied that he ate but was not hungry. The Guru visited the disciple after a long lapse of time once again and the disciple shifted his residence away in the outskirts, since he did not like the King. Apparently, Nidgha got envious of the King. He did not even like the King visiting the outskirts when the Guru was there. The Guru asked Nidhgha to identify the King. The latter described the King seated on an elephant. The Guru replied to the disciple that he was not able to identify either the elephant or the King or even the crowd of persons as all the objects were just similar to each other in their essential forms, viz. there were no forms at all, as there was only one Form unseen, unfelt, unheard, and unidentified! And that is 'Paramatma'! The story of Ribhu and Nidgha was assimilated by King Souribha as also the secrets of the Knowledge of Brahma Gyan. The Knowledge is as complicated as is simple: existence of the Entire Universe is an illusion and the most effective form of learning is the capacity to sift the Illusion and The Reality!

#### The spirit of Bhagavad Gita

At the opening of Maha Bharata Battle, Arjuna was bewildered that in the opposite camp were such illustrious personalities including grand fathers, uncles, cousin brothers and innumerable relatives and that he could possibly not fight with them as it was indeed criminal by any standard of Dharma (Virtue), Nyaaya (Justice) and his own innner conscience. Arjuna was neither timid nor an escapist and being an

invincible arrowsman he was indeed sure of demolishing the enemy, but that grievous sense of remorse of having to brutally kill his own kith and kin had been bottled up for long had suddenly erupted and pushed him out of the chariot and Bhagavan Krishna had to come to deliver his historic Bhagavad 'Gita Pravachana' even the first arrow sound of Arjuna's famed 'Gandiva' was heard. It was that historic melting point of Maha Bharata Battle that Bhagavan had to call a 'spade as a spade': Arjuna! If indeed a person is stated to be dead physically, the conclusion can never be that his 'Atma' or inner being is dead as well! Hence physical existence has little relevance and crying for a physically dead person is futile, since he or she is bound to reappear into life sooner or later. Atma has no birth, no death and is indestructible. Hence crying for a physically 'departed soul' should never be resorted to. Jyatasya hi dhruvo Mrityhuh dhravam Janma mritasya cha, Tasmaadapari -haaryaarthey na twam shochitu maharhasi/ (That which is born would have to die and that which is dead is reborn again; this is the Law of Nature. None could break this Law and hence why think about so seriously then!) Dhyayato vishayaan pumsaha sangasteyshoopajaayatey, Sangaat -sanjaayatey kaama krodhopijaayatey/ Krodhaatbhavati sammohah sammohaat smriti vibhramah, Smritir bhramso buddhi naashaat pranasyati/ (As persons who have 'Vishaya chinta' or desire for matters tend to get frustrated, the frustration leads to anger; from anger emerges obsession and mania which lead to indiscretion and lack of thinking capacity which leads to 'sarva naasha' or total collapse. This is why 'Satsang' or companionship of the Virtuous persons would diminish desires and excessive fixations; it is that state of 'Sthitapragna' or self-control that one should aspire for. As all the human beings sleep off in the nights, the Yogis are awake; similarly the desires of life which are highly temporary are discarded by Yogis for whom 'Tripti' or self-contenment is the Principle and attainment of Bhagavan is the singular target. A person who could distinguish the variations of 'Gunas' viz. Satvika, Rajasika and Tamasika as well the resultant Karma-Vibhagas or the permutations of actions has little attractions of the Illusive Entity that life is all about. Arjuna! If you sail off by the boat of 'Jnaana' or Enlightened Awareness, you should be able to cross the deep waters of sins. The 'Agni' of 'Jnaana' destroys all kinds of common place actions; however since a few actions are perforce taken as existing in the mundane world are to be executed like drops on a lotus leaf with a sense of high detachment. Once that sense of objectivity is developed, you could vision others in yourself as you would have liked them to vision you. Arjuna! It is almost impossible for you to break the illusion that

peculiar mix of the three Gunas have created; this is possible only if you take my 'Sharan' or unqualified shelter. Four kinds of human beings approach me, Shri Krishna affirmed, viz. Jijnaaus or those who seek him; or 'Aarthaas' or utterly helpless; or 'Arthaartis' or those who desparately seek fulfillment of their intense desires; or pure 'Jnaanis'. Of these, Jnaanis would realise the lasting nature of Parama Tatwa Brahma, as all the human beings are however subject to the impulses of 'Adhi bhoutika' (pertaining to one's body), 'Adhyatmika' (pertaining to one's own consciousness), and Adhi Daivika (pertaining to the Divine acts) natures. It is beyond these impulses that a human being is driven normally, but Jnaanis overcome the impulses and target the Supreme Energy only. As a person reaches the point of facing death, which ever feelings flash on the mental screen are the decisive forces and hence keep on practising Omkara so that Bhagavan would be the final destiny.

This human body is a 'Kshetra' and the awareness of the 'Kshetragna' is what Jnaana all about. This 'Kshetra' is the amalgam of 'Pancha Mahabhutas' or the the Five Entities of *Prithivyaapas tejo Vaauraakaashas*, the 'Ahamkaara' / Self-Worth, 'Buddhi', 'Avyakta' (the Incomprehensible / Mula Prakriti), Ten Indriyas, one's own Mind; the Acts of Five Indriyas or human limbs; desirse, hatred, happiness, unhappiness; the gross body, consciousness, Chetana (liveliness) and dhriti (endurance). This is the 'Vikara sahita Kshetra' or the Body with all the above characteristics. Bhgavan Krishna then defined Jnaana as inclusive of 'Ahimaana shunyata' (lack of Self-Image), 'Daambhika Abhava' (lack of boastfulness), 'Ahimsa' (non-Violence), 'Kshama' (tolerance), 'Saralata' (softness), Guruseva (Service to Teachers), Baahyaantara Shuddhi (External and Internal Cleanliness), 'Antahkarana Sthirata' (stability of innner consciousness), 'Sharira Manendriya Nigrah' (Control of Body, mind and internal organs), 'Anahankaara' (lack of ego), equanimity of feelings at birth, death and disease,

'Putrastreegrihaabhimana' or lack of extreme attachments of family and home (lack of interest in luxuries and comforts), lack of interest in births-deaths and diseases), composure and self-control on failures and successes, and singularity of approach to the Eternal. Bhagavan declared that the rest of feelings were of the expressions of Materialisation or 'Agnana' or ignorance.

Then Bhagavan Shri Krishna explained to Arjuna the meaning of '*Jneya Tatva*' or popularly known as Para Brahma, which is neither 'Sat' (Truth) nor 'Asat' (Non-existent) and is 'Vilakshana' or featureless. That Supreme is the hands and legs of everybody, their eyes and ears, their head and face. That Supreme is all-pervasive; being limbless has all the vision, speech, hearing, etc; is a 'Nirguna' but has the Knowledge of all Gunas; is the Form of Moveable and Immoveable objects; has no dimensions, weight, distance and time; is indivisible, invisible, incomprehensible; is the Creative Shakti, the Preserving Shakting and the Destroying Shakti; that Shakti is Surya, Chandra, Dikpalalas, Stars, Pancha Bhutas, Dikpalakas, Devas, Danavas, Gandharvas, or each and every formulation of the known and the unknown. It is that 'Paramatma' who is not seen, heard, touched, felt except through inner vision, inner hearing and inner feeling. That Paramatma is indeed recognisable by several 'Sukshma Buddhis', 'Dhyaanis', 'Sankhya Yogis', 'Karma Yogis'. Yadaahi nendriyaartheshu na karmaswanushajjatey, Sarva Samkalpa Sanyaasi yogaaruudhasta -dostadochyatey ( A Sadhaka ought to discard comforts and desire for worldly actions, as also the responsibilities of life then only becomes a true Yogi, To become a true Yogi, one has to be a 'Gunaateeta' or Nirguna. But to be able to reach the extreme stage in life, one has to perfect one's own life. Apparently Lord Shri Krishna preached Arjuna to discover the path to Moksha Sanyasa the hard way by firstly performing his duty as a Kshatriya: Shreyaan Swadharmo vigunah paradharmaat swanushthitaat, Swadharmey nidhanam shreyah Para dharmo bhayaapahah (Even if one finds his own duty unattractive and futile, and even if one could take up the duties of other 'Varnas'/Castes, still one ought to execute one's own natural duty, since abandoning it as frightening as death itself!). Also, Bhagavan cautiouned Arjuna: Karmanyevaadhi kaarastey maa phaleshu kadaachana, Maa Karma phalaheturbhuuh maa tey sangostwa karmani/ (Arjuna! Your freedom is restricted to perform your duty only. You cannot however intervene with the achievement of your actions. At the same time however you cannot help performing your duty any way!). Thus the Essence of Bhagavad Gita is to free Arjuna from his apprehensions to fight in the Maha Bharata Battle and merely do his duty; Lord Krishna however painted the greater picture by immortalising Gita, the path of Nirvana through various steps viz. Sankhya Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnaana Yoga, Karma Sanyasa Yoga, Dhyana Yoga, Jnana Vijnaana Yoga, Ahshara Parabhrahma Yoga, Rajavidyaarajaguhya Yoga, Vibhti Yoga, Vishwarupa Sandarshana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Kshetra Kshetrajna Yoga, Guna Traya Vibhaga Yoga, Purushottama Praapti Yoga, Daivaasura sampad -Vibhaga Yoga, Shradhhatraya Vibhaga Yoga and finally Moksha Sanyasa Yoga).

#### Yama Dharma Raja and 'Yama Gita'

Subsequent to death, body forms are given the nomenclature of 'ativahikas', as is described in Agni Purana. The followers of Lord 'Yama' (God of Death), known as 'Yama dhootas' or Yama's servants take the 'ativahikas' to the Abode of Yama. The Great Accountant of Lord Yama, named 'Chitragupta' presents the facts of good deeds or misdeeds- 'Punya' and 'Papa'- of each 'ativahika' and a decision is taken whether, or how, or for how long the penalty or otherwise needs to be enforced and indeed there are no exceptions, no clarifications, no consultations, and no loopholes in the Law. The judgments are instantaneous and action packed. Lord Yama of Death is also the Lord of Dharma (Justice). The cycle of death, birth and rebirth is certain, instant and unending. Agni Purana also narrates the details of Hell (Naraka Lok); the number of hells is stated to be twenty-eight, each comprising many subsidiaries, depending on the type or duration or the extent of the sin. The sinners are boiled in oil, or whipped, or pierced with spears or eaten up by fire balls, or eaten up by birds, or tortured by machines and so on, depending on the sins. If one kills a cow, the person goes to 'Mahavicha' Naraka; if a Brahman is killed, the destination would be a Burning Naraka, named 'Amakumbha'; killing of women, children and the old persons would attract 'Rourava' Naraka; an arsonist is sent to 'Maha Rourava'; a thief goes to 'Tamisra' (pierced by spears and swords) or 'Mahatamisra' (bitten by snakes and insects) depending on

the extent of the deed; killing father or mother takes one to 'Asipatravana' (cut into pieces by swords again and again) or 'karambhavaluka' (made to stand deep into burning sands for long duration); a tyrant is crushed like an oil seed in 'Thailanpaka'; a person who is hypocrital is packed up to 'Mahapata' and like wise sinners such as killers of animals, tree cutters, critisisers of Vedas or teachers, those who provide false witnesses and so on are all punished as per the Regulations of the Narakas.Rebirths are also ordained, at the time of reverting the 'ativahikas' to mortal life, again on the basis of the 'sanchitas' (as stored in the earlier births) or 'Prarabdhaas' (accounts maintained in the previous birth alone). Retribution is also as per norms in the rebirths: a killer of Brahmana is reborn as a deer, dog, pig or camel or becomes a victim of tuberculosis; a drunkard is reborn as a donkey or if reborn as a human again, would have deformed teeth of a dog; a thief of gold becomes a worm or an insect; a stealer of food becomes dumb; a stealer of foodgrains as a rat; a stealer of animals as a goat; a stealer of fruits as a monkey; stealer of meat as vulture; of milk as a cow and so on.

'Yama Gita' is an interesting chapter in Agni Purana. It describes the Story of 'Nachiketa', the faithful son of King 'Vajashrava'. The King performed a Sacred Sacrifice against all his possessions. Nachiketa kept on enquiring of his father as to whom all the possessions were given to against the expenses for the Sacred Sacrifice or the Yagna'. The King did not wish to reply to the immature enquiry of his son. But, when Nachiketa insisted on knowing, the father said out of disgust that along with all his possessions, he gave away his son Nachiketa too to Lord Yama. Believing this, Nachiketa travelled all the way to Lord Yama's Abode by virtue of his severe and sincere meditation and the Lord was not agreeable to accept him since his life was intact on Earth. But, despite Lord Yama's persuasion, Nachiketa woud not change his mind. As a result, Lord Yama provided the Discourse known to posterity as the Yama Gita. Yama Dharma Raja wondered as to why human beings get enamoured with extremely temporary wishes and become victims of insignificant comforts like 'Aasan' (seat), Shayya (bed), Vaahan (carriage), Paridhaan (Vastras/clothing), and Griha (homes). Sage Kapila said: 'Bhogaasakti'or desire for luxuries ought to be replaced by 'Atma Tatva Chintana' or the analysis of the Soul. King Janaka opined that human beings were always subjected to the onslaught of 'Adhyatmika, Adhidaivika and Adhibhoutika' tribulations and still they did not take lessons from them but strangely enough crave for momentary pleasure instead of seeking permanent bliss of Paramatma! Sanakaadi Maharshis affirmed that after all whatever desires that human beings might have, could be fulfilled instantly with the help of Tapasya but to attain the path of Avinaashi Brahma should be the lasting source of delight and that was what they should try to secure instead of frivolties! Naasti Vishnu samam dhyeyam tapo naanshanaat param, naasyaataarogya samam dhanyam naasti Gangaaamaa sarit, na sosti baandhavah kaschid Vishnum muktwa Jagadgurum (There is nothing more worthy that is worshippable than Vishnu, no better Tapasya than fasting, nothing more valuable than 'Arogya' or good health and no superior river than Ganga and finally there is no other closer 'bandhava' or relative than Vishnu. Those who die while in introspection about Vishnu that he exists and guides our actions from above, in front, in the Indriyas, in the heart and the face are sure to identify with Vishnu). Nobody could ever restrict Para Brahma by a name or identify by a Samsthana or an Estalishment or by a Rupa! Some worship him as Vishnu or Shiva, Brahma, Indra, Surya, or Para Brahma or Maya or Shakti! From Brahma to a worm, the entire Srishti is Paramatma. Atma (Soul) has no features, no characteristics, no age, no home, no dimensions, no body and least of all an identity. But is perceivable by Dharma against Adharma, inaana against ignorance and 'bhakti'or devoton against 'rakti' (desire). That Supreme Power is visible by the means of Puja, Dhyana, Japa, Aaradhana, Homa, Daana, Tarpana, Abhisheka, Snaana, Tirtha, Vrata, Kirtana, Yagna, Yoga, Veda, Shastra, Purana, Satkarma, Seva, Nigraha and Sacrifice. If humam body is likened to a Ratha (Chariot), Atma is the Rathi (or the Driven), Buddhi or Inner Consiousness is the Sarathi (Charioteer), 'Manas' is the 'lagaam' or the Checkmate, 'Indrivas' or the horses, 'Vishya Maarg' or the road to doom or Nirvana as the case that might be and Bhokta is the 'Atma' or the Conscience. If the foolish Sarathi does not hold the mind and Indriayas tightly then the horses tend to run towards 'Samsara' which is broad and readily attractive and not to the narrow path of 'Parama pada'. It is the discretion of the Sarathi to checkmate the horse-like temptations of a makebelieve rosy path; if the horses are driven by 'Buddhi' by its own self, then the latter is directed to Maha

Tatwa which in turn would point out to Mula Prakriti which finally nables to realise the Parama Purusha. Thus, the Essence of Dharma Raja's Discourse was that human beings were indeed fully aware that they should not commit sins; strangely enough however-and despite the awareness that such wicked acts would attract heavy penalties- they continue to perform sins with full consiousness. Sages have been dinning in the ears of humanity that the notorious the Six Enemies of Humanity,viz. Desire ('Kama'), Anger (Krodha), Greed ('Lobha'), Infatuation ('Moha'), Arrogance ('Mada'), and Jealousy ('Matsarya) should be refrained from at any cost, but the ways of human life are entirely contrary to the morals preached conveniently and nonchalantly, without fear or qualms of consciousness. 'Yama Gita' further exhorts that a human life, which is far more precious than all other forms of non-human species, should not be frittered away without cashing the opportunity as it seldom realises the need for aligning the Inner Soul with the Super force. Thus the final goal or Life's real achievement is the union with the Supreme and the greatest possibility is to invest the physical existence to achieve the Finality.

#### 'Phala Shruti'

The Holy Agni Purana provides a glimpse of the content and course of 'Brahma Gyan' or the Awareness of the Self and Super Energy. The portrayal of the track leading to this Goal is through traditional Vedic prescriptions based on Rituals, Sacrifices, Abstinence, Meditation, Temple Visits, practice of Yoga and Gayatri. Agni Purana seeks to offer solace, happiness, security, peace of mind, discipline, self-confidence, success, and a perfect guide to achieving goals of Spititual and Meaningful Existence. Mere possession of the Purana is stated to frighten away the Evil spirits, enemies or thieves and encourage frequent visits of Devas and 'Satpurushas' (Godmen). There would not be health problems or unresolved issues. The family life would be full of contenment and compositeness. Reciting chapters or even discourses by the Learned would even substitute visits to holy places, or providing alms and performance of 'Vratas' or 'Pujas'. In short, Agni Purana is a provider of 'Iham' and 'Param'.

\*

swasti Prajaabhyah paripaalayantaam Nyayamargeyna Maheem Mahesha, Gobrahmane - bhyah Shubhamastu nityam Lokaassamasta sukhino bhavantu/ (Mahesha! (May the Nation be administered on the path of Justice; may the Virtuous Brahmanas and cows be happy and auspicious always, may the entire Universe by happy and contented).

Kaaley varshatu Parjanyah Prithvi sasya shalini Deshoayam Kshut Kshobha rahito Brahmanaassantu nirbhayah/ Aputro Putranassantu Putranassantu Poutrinah, Adhanah Sadhanaassatu Jeevantu sharadam shataah/ (May there by timely and adequate rains to turn the lands evergreen with good crops; may not the Nation ever suffer from hunger and poverty; may Brahmanas live fearlessly; may all beget good sons and grandsons, and may the Poor become rich and may all live for hundred years with contentment.)

#### ESSENCE OF BHAVISHYA PURANA

Yo goshatam kanakashringamayam dadaati vipraaya Vedavidushe cha bahu shrutaaya,

Punyaam Bhavishyasukathaam shrunuyaat samagraam Punyam samam bhavati tasya cha tasya chaiva/ (The 'Punya' or the high merit of donating hundreds of cows with golden horns to Vidwan Brahmanas who are steeped in the knowledge of Vedas and other Holy Scriptures is accomplished by reading / hearing this Bhavishya Maha Purana).

[A 'Purana' literally denotes an account of the past History, but Bhavishya Purana is the History of the Future- a blend of the Past and the Future- occupying a distinct place among the Eighteen Maha Puranas. This Purana contains Brahma Parva, Madhyama Parva, Pratisarga Parva and Uttara Parva. The First Parva broadly describes the Major Deities of Vishnu, Shiva and Sun God as also methods of worship; the Madhyama and Prati Sargas deal with Rituals and Predictions of 'Future' reflecting the trends of Modern History and the Uttar Parva constitutes a hand book of religious faiths and Vratas. Considering the fact that this Purana was dated some time in the Fifth Cenury BC, the Predictions contained were so sound and accurate that they defied one's imagination!]

#### Preface of the Purana

At a holy gathering convened by King Shataanik of Pandava Vamsa (clan) where a galaxy of illustrious Maharshis like Vasishth, Parashar, Jaimini, Yagnyavalkya, Goutam, Vaishampaayan, Shaunak, Angira and Bharadwaj were present, Veda Vyas along with one of his disciples Sage Sumantu made an entry and introduced the pupil as a highly competent Scholar and could be depended on to clear any of the King's doubts; the latter was interested in hearing of Bhavishya Purana which was originally recited by Brahma, then on to Maha Deva to Vishnu to Narada to Indra to Parashar to Vyasa and further down to Sumantu. The underlining Message in the Purana was that 'Sadachara Dharma' or Moralistic Virtue was the best way of life: *Idam swastyayatanam shreshthamidam buddhi vivardhanam, idam yashasyam satatamidam nih shreyasam param/* (This Purana is the most propitious, the enhancer of high quality virtue, reputation and 'Paramapadam' or Salvation.).

Sumantu prefaced that this Purana had five features viz. Sarga (Creation), Pratisarga (Secondary Creation) that preceded each Kalpa, Water and Earth; Vamsa, Manvantara and Vamsanuchara. There were also fourteen Vidyas viz. Four Vedas of Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva; six Vedangas viz. Siksha (Phonetics or Study and Application of Knowledge), Kalpa (Ritual), Vyakarana(Grammar), Niruti (Entymology or 'Utpatti' or the Production of Word-derivatives), Chandas (Meter or Prosody/Rhythemics of Verses), and Jyotisha (Study and Practice of Astronomy); 'Meemamsa' (Reasoning and or to perform a duty); Nyaya; (Justice); Purana and Dharma Shastra (The Guidebook on Virtue); additionally, there are four more Vidyas viz. 'Ayur Veda' or the Veda related to Longevity and Good Health, Dhanur Veda (The Martial Art of Bow and Arrows), Gandharva Veda (The discipline Fine Arts) and Artha Shastra (The discipline of Fine Arts) thus totalling Eighteen Vidyas.

# Creation and Concept of Time

At the beginning of Creation, there was darkness all around and the Supreme Energy created 'Maha Jal' (the Great Water) first. 'Parabrahma'had his resting place (Ayana) in the water (Naara) and materialised Maya or Prakriti and as a result of the interaction, there was a Golden Egg out of which emerged Brahma. After persistent 'Tapasya' (meditation), Brahma created 'Bhumi' (Earth) from one part of the Egg and 'Akash' (Sky) from another; from the middle portion of the Egg was created 'Swarga' or the Celestial Region, Eight Directions, 'Samudra' or the Great Ocean, the 'Maha Tatvas' (Great Awareness or Consciousness of Elements) and the 'Charachara Srishti' or the Moveable and Non-moving Beings. After creating the Sky, he created Vayu (Air), Agni (Fire), Jal (water) and Prithvi. Brahma prescribed the names and tasks of each Institution or Entity. He created Devas and their 'Ganas' (troupes), the Yagnas like Jyothistomas; Grahas (Planets), Nakshatras (Stars), Nadis (Rivers), Samudras (Seas), Parvatas (Mountains), Concept of Time like Samvarsaras (Years), Masas (Months), Dinas (days), and Ritus ( Seasons). He created 'Shadvargas' viz. Kama (Desire), Krodha (Anger), Lobha (Greed), Moha (Infatuation), Mada (Ego) and Matsara (Jealousy); Dharma (Virtue), Adharma (Vice), Sukha (Happiness) and Duhkha (Grief) etc. Brahma created Brahmanas from his face, Kshatriyas from his hands, Vaishyas from thighs and Shudras fron his feet. He created Rig Veda from his Eastern Face which was received by Vasistha Muni; Yajur Veda from his Southern Head as secured by Yagnyavalkya Muni, Sama Veda from the Western Head achieved by Gautama Muni, Atharva Veda from the Northern Face obtained by Shaunaka Muni, and from his Upturned Face emerged Eighteen Puranas, Itihasas and Shastras. He divided his body on the right side to generate males and the left side to create women. He materialised a Virat Purusha or a Gigantic Male who performed Tapasya for long time to create Ten Prajapatis viz. Narada, Bhrugu, Vasishtha, Pracheta, Pulaha, Kratu, Pulastya, Atri, Angirasa and Marichi as also a number of Secondary Rishis. The he created Devatas, Munis, Daityas, Rakshasas, Piscachas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Pitras, Human Beings, Nagas, Serpents, and so on and set them all in their positions. Lightnings, Clouds, Rainbows, Dhumaketus, Ulkas, Thunders, Fishes, Animals, Birds, and moveable and non moveable objects. Eversince 'Srishti' or Creation commenced, Brahma's one day lasts till the end of a 'Kalpa' and at the end of his one day comes a 'Pralaya' (The Great Annihilation); Srishti is resumed by the next morning again. It is said that one 'Truti' makes one Nimesha, eighteen nimeshas a Kashtha, thirty kashthas one Kala, thirty kalas one Kshana, twelve kshanas one Muhurta, thirty muhurtas make a day and night, thirty day-nights make one month, two months one Ritu, three Ritus one Ayana, and two Ayanas a year. One day-night of Pitras equals one month of human beings; in other words, Shukla Paksha or a fortnight of humans makes a day for Pitras and Krishna Paksha a night. Satya Yuga comprises 4,800 Divya years or 17, 28,000 solar years; Treta Yuga comprises 3,600 Divya years or 12, 96,000 solar Years; Dwapara Yuga comprises 2,400 Divya years or 8, 64,000 solar years and Kali Yuga comprises 1,200 Divya years or 43,200 solar years; thus one Chatur Yuga or Maha Yuga adds up to 32000 Divya years or 43, 20, 000 solar years. One thousand years of Devas equals one day of Brahma and another thousand Divya years make Brahma's night; 12,000 Divya years make one Divya Yuga and 170 Maha Yugas make one Manvantara, while fourteen Manvantaras make one Brahma day.

## 'Samskaras' (Sacred Rites)

Vedas and Shastras prescribed forty kinds of 'Samskaras', relevant to Brahmanas among the 'Chaturvarnas' or Four Castes ranging from 'Garbha Dhaan'/ 'Rutusanti' (Impregnation); 'Pumsavana', a Sacred Rite after third month of Conception; 'Seemantrotrayan', literally meaning the parting of hair of the pregnant mother or the Rite performed in the sixth or eighth month of pregnancy; 'Jaata Karma or cutting of the navel-tube; 'Naamkarana' or giving a name to the child; 'Annaprasasna' giving the first morcel of food; 'Chooda Karma' or cutting the lock of hair of the baby; 'Upanayana' (Sacred Rite of wearing Holy Thread and 'Upadesha' or Instruction of Gayatri Mantra); Four-folded Veda Vrata; Vivaha (Wedding); 'Pancha Maha Yagna' or the Sacrifices addressed to Devas, Pitras, Human Beings, Pancha Bhutas and Brahma to satisfy them; 'Sapta Paaka Yagna Samstha' or Seven-folded Sacrifices of Cooked Materials viz.'Ashtakaadvaya', 'Paarvana', 'Shraavani', 'Aagrahaayani', 'Chaitri'/Shulagava'and 'Aashvayuji'; 'Sapta havijna Samstha' or Seven-folded 'Havis' or oblations in Agni /Fire viz. 'Agnyadhaan', 'Agni-hotra', 'Darsha-Pournamasa,' 'Chaaturmaasya', 'Niruddha Pashu Bandha',

'Soutramani'; and 'Sapta Soma Samstha' viz. 'Agnishtoma', 'Athaygnishtoma', 'Ukthya', 'Shodashi', 'Vaajapeya', 'Atiraatra'and 'Aaptoryami; these are the Samskaras relevant to Brahmanas. The Brahmanas are expected to practise Eight 'Atma Gunas' or Self-oriented Features or Characteristics viz. *Anasuya Dayaa Kshaantiranaayasam cha Mangalam, Akaarpanyam tathaa shouchamaspuhaa cha Kuruduha!* (The seven salient features of Brahmanas are non-jealousy, Mercifulness, Forgiveness, unconcern, propitiousness, equanimity, inward and outward cleanliness and detachment). The Sacred Rites like Garbhadhaan, Pumsavan, Seemantotrayan, Jatakarma, Anna -praashana, Chuda karma and Yagnopapeet are meant of removing 'beeja-sambandhi' or Seed-related Doshas or Blemishes, whereas Vedaadhyana (Study of Vedas), Vratas or Pujas, Homams (Fire Rituals), Tri Vidya Vratas, Devarshi-Pitru 'Tarpanas' (Water oblations), 'Putrotpaadana', Pancha Maha Yagna and such other Jyotishtoma Yagnas are targetted to 'Brahma Praapti' or attaining Salvation.

Jaatakarma, a ritual for boys is performed along with Veda Mantras on the tenth day, or twelfth day, or eighteenth or on the completion of birth; the infant is taken out from the house either on the twelfth day or the fourth month and this act is called 'Nishkraman'. During the sixth month, 'Annaprashana'or first touch of food is performed; either during the first or third year his 'Mundan' or first hair-cut is done. In the fifth or eighth year Yagnopapeet Samskar is performed to Brahmanas; the sixth or eleventh year after birth for Kshatriyas, and during the eighth or twelfth year to Vaishyas. But this Sanskar is futile beyond sixteenth year for Brahmanas, twenty two years for Kshatriyas and twenty fourth years for Vaishyas; such persons are known as 'Vraatya' and are not qualified for wearing the 'Yagnopateeta', unless a Ritual called 'Vatsyashtom Yagna' is performed for 'Prayaschittha' or purification. Brahmanas are expected to perform 'Achamana' before taking up any Sacred Ritual, after cleaning hands and feet seated on a clean 'Asana' or Seat looking East or North, with the right hand on the right thigh, sipping spoonfuls of water reciting the names of Keshava, Narayana, Govinda and so on. The act of Achamana is not to be done while standing, conversing, looking sideways without concentration, or in a hurry and least of all while being angry or with a disturbed mind. It is stated that in a Brahmana's right palm are five 'Tirthas'viz. Deva Tirtha (on top of the four fingers excepting the thumb), Pitru Tirtha at the bottom of the pointing finger, Brahma Tirtha at the bottom of the middle wrist, Prajapatya Tirtha underneath the little finger and Soumya Tirtha at the center of the palm. Hence, all Achananas etc. related to Deva Karmas including 'Devarchana'/ Pujas of Devas or giving dakshina or 'daana' (charity) to Brahmanas are to be performed from the finger tops excepting the thumb; Tarpanas, Pinda daanas, or all acts related to Pitras are done from Pitru Tirthas; Achamana is executed from Brahma Tirtha or at the bottom of right palm above the wrist; Prajaparthya Tirtha area is utilised to perform all the propitious tasks involving Weddings, Upanayanas etc. and Soma Tirtha is utilised for certain other tasks like 'Kamandalu grahana' or accepting Holy Water Vessels or 'Dadhi Prashana' ceremonies. As Achamanas are carried out, the first sip of water signifies Rig Veda, the second sip for Yajur Veda, the third one for Sama Veda; later on when the right thumb touches the face, Atharva Veda is satisfied, when the lips are touched Itihaasas and Puranas are contented, when water is sprinkled on the head Bhagavan Rudra is gladdened, Rishiganas are happy as the tuft is touched, when both the eyes are touched Surya Deva is satisfied, touch of the nose satisfies Vayu Deva, ears satisfy the Ten 'Dishas' or Directions, and shoulders make Yama Dharma Raja, Kubera, Varuna, Indra and Agni Deva satisfied. Also, when Brahmanas perform Achamana, they should touch eyes with thumb along with Tarjani (fore finger), nose with thumb along with Anamika finger, face with thumb and Madhyama finger, ears with thumb and Kanishtha (little) finger, shoulders with all fingers, thumb with navel, and all the fingers with head; Angushtha is of Agni Swarupa, Tarjani Vayu, Madhyama Prajapati, Anamika is of Surya Rupa, and Kanishthika of Indra. Another precaution is that Brahmanas must perform Achamana involving Brahma Tirtha, Prajapatya Tirtha, and Deva Tirtha, but not Pitru Tirtha. Also Achamana water should reach the heart in respect of Brahmanas, upto the 'Kantha' or throat in case of Kshatriyas, lip touch for Vaishyas and mere body touch for Shudras.

Brahmachari Dharma' (Duties of Bachelor Life)

Having taught the basics like 'Suacha' (Purity), 'Aachaar' (Tradition), and 'Aachaman', Sumantu Muni proceeded to describe the method of teaching 'Vedadhyayana' after a Vidyarthi got seated on a Kushagrass-made mat, wore a 'Pavitra' made again of Kusha, performed three 'Pranayamas' or nasal exercises and recite 'Omkara'- the representation of Three Vedas by the words viz. Akara, Uukara and Makara, or AUM. Further, Gayatri's three 'Padas' or steps again taken from three Vedas were 'Bhuh, Bhuvah and Swaha', thus the integrated Tripada Gayatri viz. 'Om Bhurbhuvah Swaha'. Those who recite Gayatri Mantra for three years continuously and formally in the prescribed manner with devotion would take the form of 'Vayu' (wind) and fly with speed on the sky and attain Brahma Tatwa. The single word OM is Parabrahma and 'Pranayam' is itself a unique Tapas (meditation). There is no better Mantra than Savitri or Gayatri. 'Mouna' or avoidance of talking except the Truth, Tapasya, 'Havan' or formal obeisance to Fire God, Daan, and Yagna-related tasks might have implications of practice / shortcomings and might even be subject to diminishing significance; but recital of Omkar by way of 'Japa Yagna' of Pranava has an everlasting importance. While 'Upanshu Japa' with only the movement of lips and tongue without making the least sound is far more effective than Japa otherwise, 'Manasika Japa' (only in mind) is stated to be more Superior to Upanshu Japa; this is as valuable as 'Paka Yagna' comprising Pitru Karma, Havan and Bali Vaiswa Deva executed together in a formal manner and hence the utmost significance of Gayatri-Japa, which would be a must to Brahamanas!

Recital of Gayatri Mantra at 'Praathah Sandhya' or before Sunrise is very significant and so is 'Sayam Sandhya' or before Sun set till the appearance of Stars on the Sky. Praatah Sandhya is better performed while standing so that the sins of the previous night are demolished and contrarily Gayatri Japa before Sun set is effected while seated; the Place for carrying the Gayatri Japa should be secluded in Privacy, an open space or lonely banks of a river or water bodies and without 'Uccharana' or vocal utterance. A Brahmachari is expected to stay at the residence of a Guru, without comforts but with bare necessities; for example he is to sleep on Earth; perform service to Guru / Parents; by absorbing the know-how or the awareness of contempory happenings without reactions as mere water drops on a lotus leaf! Besides one's own Parents and his Guru (teacher), a Brahmachari has ten more Teachers viz. the son(s) of Guru, those who provide service, afford Knowledge and awareness of daily tasks, a Dharmic or a Virtuous; a Pavitra or a Puritan, 'Vishwasi'or a Confidant worthy of Trust, 'Shaktimaan' or a source of Physical Strength, an 'Udaar' or liberal-minded, 'Sadhu Swabhaav' or Gentleman and a person of his own clan. A Brahmana is stated to have three births, one from his mother, another after wearing Yagnopaveet and the third after taking 'diksha' (observance) of Yagna. At the time of 'Yagnopapeeta dharana', mother is Gayatri and 'Acharya' or the intiator is father; the latter too is the Guru since the Brahmachari is bestowed with the authority of learning Vedas or 'Vedadhyaayana' and heretofore, boy was as good as a Shudra. But, since then or after Gayatri's eligibility, a Brahmachari is bound by do's and don't's as that eligibility entails duties such as wear Mekhala skin, Danda, 'Vastras' (clothes) as presribed and of course the Yagnopapeet. He should always maintain purity, discipline, restraint and dignity. He ought to be involved with the use of flowers, fruits, water, 'Samidhas' or dry wooden pieces for Agni Homams, mrittika or the water-bed earth, kusha grass, and such other material for the use of Sacred Tasks.

Needless to emphasise that a Brahmachari should get rid of meat, madya (intoxicants), gandha or scented bases, flower garlands, violence, body-decoratives and scents, footwear, umbrellas, dance and music other than for religious purposes. The other 'taboos'include 'Asatya' (utterances of lies), 'Asteya' (stealing), 'Para Ninda' (criticism of others), company of women and involvement of 'Arishad -vargas' or the Six Enemies of human beings like desire, anger, greed, attachment, ego and envy. Whenever there is 'Guru Ninda' or criticism of Guru by others, be passive or aviod or close the ears. Thus a 'Vidyardhi' or a 'Brahmachari' has to euip and prepare himself in all the directions of moral life fully before he enters the hard core life of 'Garhastya' ahead! Before marriage, one has to realise that the two major corner-stones of wedded life are the kind of woman to marry and the utmost consideration of earning livelihood in a righteous way; mutual compatibility of man and woman by according equal status to each other is the key to perform 'Dharmika Vidhis' or the Duties of Virtue to accomplish the four essential ingredients of ideal

human life viz. Dharma (Rectitude), Artha (Wealth / Well Being), Kama (Fulfillment of Desires) and Moksha (Salvation).

## 'Garhastya Dharma' (Virtues of Married Life)

Sumantu Muni enlightened the King Shataanik about the importance of Agnihotra (Fire-pit), 'Vratas' (formal Pujas with Vows), 'Upavasas' (fastings), 'Niyamas' (Self-control measures), Daanas (charities), Deva 'Stutis' (hymns of extolling) and Bhakti (Devotion) in the households of human beings, especially of Brahmanas. (*Vratopavasa niyamai naanaa daanaistatha Nripa! Devaadayo bhavantyeva preetaasteshaam na samshayah/ viseshaadupavasena tithaih kila Maheepathey prretaa Devaadayastheshaam bhavanti Kurunandana/* 

It was the confirmed view of the Muni that a Brahmana household which had no Agnihotra was as bad as that of a home with a dead body. A home of a Brahmana Grihasta is incomplete without formally performing 'Pancha Yagnas' viz. Brahma Yagna, Pitru Yagna, Deva Yagna, Bhuta Yagna and Atithi Yana; these Yagnas are to be executed to ward off the 'doshas' or defects in each and every home arising out of 'Jeeva-himsa' being commited at five places viz. 'okhli' or mortar cum pounder; 'chakki' or grinder of corn into flour; 'chulha' or cooking stove; 'Jhaadu' or sweeper of floor; and water-pipe! Brahma Yagna denotes Veda- Adhyana (recitation) and Adhyapana (instruction); Pitru Yagna is to satisfy Pitras by 'Tarpanas' or water-based oblations, Shraddha Karmas etc.; Deva Yagna is dedicated to Devas by way of 'Havana karyas' or offerings of classified butter / ghee in Agnihotra so as to forward throug that medium to designated Devas through appropriate Mantras; Bhuta Yagnas as offerings to Balivaishva Deva; and Atithi Yagna or welcoming and hosting guests in the house holds. These regulations or Yagnas ward off the defects in a household.

## 'Vratas' on 'Pratipada', 'Dwiteeya' and 'Triteeya' 'Tithis'

Muni Sumantu described about the significance of performing Tithi-specific Vratas and procedures: By way of 'Upavasas' (fastings), one should consume milk on the Pratipada or the first day of a month; on the Dviteeya (Second) day only saltless food; on Triteeya (third) day rice with tilas (sesame seed); on the Chaturthi (Fourth) day only milk; on the Panchami (fifth) day, only fruits; on the Shashthi (Sixth) day, cooked vegetables only; on the Saptami (Seventh) day, only 'bilwaahaar' or wood-apple leaves; on the Ashtami (eighth) day, only barley be consumed; on the Navami (ninth) day only 'Anagnipaak' or uncooked edibles; on Dashami and Ehadashi (tenth and eleventh) 'ghrutaahar' or food with ghee; on Dwadashi (twelfth) day, 'kheer' or cooked rice and sugared milk; on Trayodashi (Thirteenth) day only 'Gomutra' or cow's urine; on Chaturdashi (fourteenth day) one could consume 'Yavaanna' or rice with Yava (Cumin seeds); on 'Purnima' (Full Moon) day one should consume water with kusha grass and on 'Amavasya' (Dark Moon) day 'Havishya Bhojan'or normally Moong Dal, Til oil, Jeera and Tamarind. This type of 'Tithi Bhojan' for one fortnight yields the fruit of performing ten Ashvamedha Yagna; for three/four months would give the reward of hundred Ashvamedha and Rajasuya Yagnas and the happiness of staying in Swarga for one Manvantara; and for one year of fastings, the stay in Surya loka is assured for fourteen Manvantaras. This 'Upavasa Vrata' could be performed by men, women of any 'Varna'.

On the *Pratipada* Tithi especially of Kartika month, worship to Brahma is executed to signify Brahma's Creation Process on that day in the Pratipadika Kalpa; Yagna, Tapas, Tirtha Snaan, Puja by Lotus and other flowers / fruits along with the traditional Sixteen Services like Abhishek (Bathing) of Pratima (idol) with milk, curd, honey and ghee with Veda Mantras; Dhupa, Deepa, Vastra, Aabhushana or ornaments,

Naivedya and Daan of a Kapila Cow. Continous 'Japa' of Gayatri Mantra is a natural component of the Puja package. On Kartika Shukla Tithi specially, Brahma's 'Ratha Yatra' (Procession of the Chariot) be celebrated with the Idols of Brahma and Gayatri, followed by night-long 'Jaagaran' (Keeping Awake) with Recitation of Vedas and Puja on the following day would be performed with devotion. The resultant remuneration of this devotion would be the devotee's long stay at Brahma loka after life.

To signify the illustration of Sage Chyavan and his wife Sukanya during the second Kalpa, a significant Vrata known as Pushpa Dwiteeya is executed in Kartika Shulka month commencing from Dwiteeya for one year by eating only flowers of the season and by giving away Gold / Silver Flowers or atleast lotus flowers as charity to Brahmanas by which Ashvini Kumars would be pleased to bestow beautiful physiques of youth and good health. A young princess called Sukanya entered into a forest along with her friends and by mistake pierced into the eyes causing blindness of Chyavana Muni who was performing Tapas sitting behind a thick bush since she felt that the eyes were glittering worms and as a result the Muni cursed that the soldiers of the King whose daughter that the princess was, would suffer from the stoppage of their body excrements; the King apologised to the blinded Muni and to appease the latter's agony offered his daughter in wedding. Sukanya, a mere girl, suffered silenty about the wedding with an old Sage but the passing Ashwini Kumars (Celestial Physicians) over the sky understood the plight of the girl and blessed that her husband would be transformed to a handsome young youth. The Muni gave a boon in turn to Ashwini Kumars that they could be supplied Ambrosia (Amrit) as they were not eligible to secure it as Deva's Physicians but they were not Devas. There was an altercation between the Muni and Indra and finally the Muni by his Mantra Shakti made eligible to receive 'havis' from Yagnas as Devas and thus secured access to Amrit. Successful performance of this Pushpa Dwiteeya Vrata would facilitate the devotees concerned to reach heavens till the end of the 'Kalpa' and on return to Martya loka would bless them with excellent health, fame and family happiness.

On the *Dwiteeya* of Shravana Krishna Paksha, worship of Bhagavan Vishnu along with Devi Lakshmi by way of 'Ashunya Shayana' Vrata or *Phala Dwiteeya* is recommended to ensure that no married woman would become a widow and that she and her husband would not leave company of each other as long as they live with mutual fondness and happiness. The Vrata should commence with 'Vishnu Praarthana' or Prayer as follows:

Shrivatsadhharir chhreekaanta Shrivatsa Shripateyravyaya, Garhasthyam maa pranaamsham mey yatu Dharmarthakaamadam/ Gaavascha maa pranashyantu maa pranashyantu mey janaah/ Jaamayo maa pranashyantu mattho daampatya bhedatah,Lakshmya viyujyeham Deva na kadaachidyatha Bhaganaan/ Tatha kalatra sambandho Deva maa mey viyujyataam, Lakshmyaa nashunyam varada yathaa tey shayanam sadaa,Shayya mamaapya shunyaastu tatha tu Madhusudana/

(Hey Bhagavan Vishnu who adorns Srivatsa insignia and Lakshmi Devi's dear husband, kinldly protect our 'Garhastya' by fulfilling our desires of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha; please ensure that our family members, cows, womenfolk and all of us face any difficulty, that there should never be any diffrence of opinions; that we would never ever part with Lakshmi nor part with each other; our beds should never be empty, just as your bed should never part with Lakshmi Devi!). After praying Vishnu and Lakshmi, the couple performing the Phala Dwiteeya Vrata should consume only fruits in the nights and after the next morning Pujas donate variety of ripe and sweet fruits to Brahmanas along with clothes, suvarna (gold) and prized gifts. The Vrata is to be continued for four months likewise to ensure all round propitiousness and joy to the entire family.

At the beginning of the Third Kalpa, Devi Gauri prescribed *Mangala Gauri Triteeya Tithi Vrata* as conveyed to Yama Dharma Raja. Those women who perform this Vrata should always be happy along with their husbands, just as Devi Gauri enjoys her company with Lord Shiva. Unmarried girls ought to perform this Vrata sincerely to ensure securing ideal husbands. Widows too might perform the Vrat to ensure that there would not be widowhood in subsequent births. During the observance of this Vrata, consumption of salt ought to be avoided; in fact, a day before the Puja, the womenfolk should fast and on

the day of the puja to Gauri Pratima (Idol), the fast might be terminated by night with saltless food; they should sleep near the Idol in the Puja Place itself; after the repeat Puja again on the subsequent day satisfy Brahmanas with Vastras, Dakshina and other gifts.

Devi Indrani carried out the Vrata and secured a virtuous son named Jayanta. Devi Arundhati did the Vrata and attained a high place as a Star on the Sky along with her husband Vasistha! Devi Rohini secured the best position among the co-wives of Chandra by the grace of Devi Gauri after executing the Vrata successfully. Thus the Triteeya Vrata is performed on the Third days of Vaishaka, Bhadrapada or / and Magha months. Observance of *Akshaya Triteeya* in any of these months by donating Anna-Vastra-Bhojan-Suvarna and Jala after fasting and worship would bestow Akshaya (endless) benefits of Ruddhi (Prosperity), Buddhi (Intellect), Vriddhi (Enhancement), Siddhi (Achievement) and Shri (Wealth)!

## 'Ganesha Chaturthi Vrata'-Origin, Procedure and Reward

Ganesha Chaturthi Vrata scheduled on Bhadrapada Shulka Chaturthi every year is a popular and auspicious function observed in several parts of Bharat by all the members of households and by all Varnas to ensure fulfillment of long standing desires, 'Vidva' (education), good health, wealth, longevity and most importantly clearance of obstacles and assurance of success as 'Vighneswara' is the Foremost Deity of Sanction to be appeased for the accomplishment of any task to be undertaken not only by human beings but even Devas, Rakshasas and even Trimurthis! Once Ganesha's younger brother, Kartikeya, was stated to have attempted the scripting of the characteristics of men and women but Ganesha seemed to have frustrated the attempts of Kartikeya who almost did the description of 'Purusha Lakshanas' but left the effort concerning the features of women. In fact, Kartikeya felt so angry that he pulled out one of the tusks of Ganesha. When Parameswara intervened and enquired about his own 'Purusha Lakshanas', Kartikeya described about Shiva that he was a 'Kapaali' and of none-too pleasant a visage, Shiva got irritated and threw away the Script in the Sea. Shiva commanded 'Samudra' (the Sea) to complete the Script of the Characteristics of Women and retrieve the Script of Kartikeya about men. Hence the Scripts were named 'Samudrika Shastra'. Even now, the Idols of Ganesha are presented as holding a part of his tusks with one of his hands! Another context which prompted Shiva to let Brahma authorise Ganesha to become the 'Gana Nayaka' and 'Vighna Rajah' was when even ordinary and often egoistic human beings in Krita Yuga had no bounds and barriers in performing deeds that they were not expected to do; also there was no access to human beings to get bad dreams or omens so that they would realise forewarnings not to indulge in such avoidable activities. This was the reason why human beings had to be aware of warnings of impediments and non-achievements and as such all the beings in Srishti are made to realise perforce that there would never be a ready and unquestioned admittance to the gates of success, without proper propitiation of Vighna Deva.!

After comfortably seated on his throne, the Idol of Vighna Rajah is welcomed for initiating worship by the devotees with 'Snaan' or bathing with scented waters and 'Panchamritams' being the mix of milk, curd, honey, fruit-pulp and coconut water. While performing the 'Snaan'/'Abhisheka', the following 'Mantra' be recited: Sahasraaksham shata dhaaramrushibhih paavanam kritam, thena twamabhishinchaami paavamaanyaha punantutey/ bhagamtey Varuno raajaa bhagam Suryo Brihapatih, Bhagamindrischa Vaayuscha bhagam Saptarshayo daduh/ yatey Kesheshu dourbhaagyamseemantey yaccha Murdhani, Lalaatey karnayo rakshanoraapastadughnantu tey sadaa/ After the 'Mantra Snaan', the devotee should offer palm-ful of flowers by reciting the Mantra:

Rupam dehi yasho dehi bhagam Bhagavati dehi mey, Putraan dehi dhanam dehi Sarvaan Kaamaamscha dehi mey, Achalaam Buddhim mey dehi Dharaayaam Khyatimevacha /

(Hey Bhagavati, Kindly bestow to us attractive appearance, reputation, vivacity, ideal progeny, prosperity and fulfillment of all our desires; do grant me steady intellect and status in life!). Following formal worship to Ganesha, his Wives Buddhi (Wisdom) and Siddhi (Accompishment), Shiva, Devi Parvati, Devi Lakshmi, Surya, Kartikeya, and other Devas, Brahmanas are satisfied with Bhojan, Vastras, Dakshinas and Gifts.

While Ganesh Puja is performed on Bhadrapada Shukla Chaturthi regularly, there is basically no specific time of Tithi, Nakshatra and Maasa restraints. Like performing Devi Gayatri Mantra daily, Ganesha Gayatri too could be a daily recited Mantra, viz. *Mahakarnaaya vidmahey Vakratundaaya dheemahi tanno Dantih prachodayaat*; in fact worship of Vighneswara is a 'must' before any 'Puja' as prescribed in Vedic faith.

Specifically speaking however, Chaturthi in Bhadrapada Shukla Paksha has added significance since that day happens to be an auspicious day for Shiva worship too. That is also the day of devotion to a married woman's parents-in-law to achieve 'Sowbhagyata' or longevity of her husband and propitiousness to all the members of the family, since Puja on that day has the double advantage of Shiva and Ganesha. Further, worship on any Shukla Chaturthi coinciding with Bhoumavara (Tuesday) bestows contentment and pleasure, besides 'Soundaryata' (beauty and grace) to women, since that day signifies the Mangala Deva-the 'Tejas' of Shiva and Parvati transferred to Bhu Devi- who wears blood-red Vastras and of fiery nature- also popular as Kuja, Rakta, Veera and Angaraka.

'Naga Panchami' Vrata'-Origin and Procedure of Worship

(Suggestions of anti-snakebite 'Auoshadhis' / Indigenous Medicines)

When Rakshasas and Devas undertook the task of churning the Ocean to seek the emergence of 'Amrit', several entities got materialised among whom was a Horse named 'Uchhaih Shrava' with a white body but black in hair. Kadru the mother of Nagas (Snakes) remarked to her 'Sapatni' (co-wife) Vinata that Ucchhaih Shrava was white in body but black in hair, but Vinata replied that the horse was all white. The 'Sapatnis' took a bet and to prove her point, Kadru called her Naga sons to paint the horse hair white all over. The Naga sons did not to do so as it was immoral and an angry Kadru gave a 'Shaap' (curse) to her sons that after the Great Battle of Maha Bharata between Pandavas and Kauravas, a Pandava King named Janamejaya would perform a 'Sarpa Yagna' in which the entire 'Sarpa Vamsa' would be destroyed. The 'Naga Ganas' were afraid of their mother's curse and with the help of Vasuki approached Lord Brahma who assuaged their fears and said that 'Tapasvi'Brahmana called Astika, son of Jaratkaaru, would save a sizeable snake population from destruction. Lord Shri Krishna also confirmed the fact to Yudhishtara of Pandavas in the Epic of Maha Bharata that some hundred years hence King Janamejaya would perform 'Sarpa Yagna' or Sacrifice of Serpents to avenge the death of his father King Pareekshit who died of the bite of Taksha the most obnoxious serpent following a curse of a Brahmana son of a Sage in meditation for an insult caused by the King to the Sage by hanging a dead snake around the Sage's neck. The intervention of Astika to stop the Sarpa Yagna of burning crores of poisonous snakes in the 'Homaagni' or the Sacrificial Fire was held on a Panchami Tithi Day when the Snake Vamsa was rescued and that was why Naga Panchami, the fifth day of Shravana Shuddha Fortnight came to be observed. Thus worship of poisonous Snakes on that day by way of washing and feeding them at their pits with milk as also performing formal Pujas with flowers, 'Dhup'by incense sticks, 'Arati' with camphor lighting or Oilsoaked cotton vicks, and Naivedya with 'Kheer' to the Serpent. Brahmanas recite Mantras like the following to protect the devotees: Sarva Nagaah preeyantam mey yey kechit Prithivithaley, yey cha helimarichistha yentarey Divi samstithah/ Yey Nadeeshu Mahanaga ye Sarasvati gaaminah, yey cha Vaapee tadagashu teshu sarveshu vai namah (May all Nagas whether on Earth, Sky, Swarga, in the Sun rays, Sarovaras or lakes, wells or other water bodies, be appeased as we greet these deities again and again). After the formal worship, Brahmanas are treated by good food commencing with sweets and savouries and by 'dakshinas' or cash and gifts. The 'Sarpa Vrata' is best observed in the Panchami Tithis

of all the months by worshipping the Twelve leading Snakes named: Ananta, Vasuki, Shankha, Padma, Kambala, Karkotaka, Aswatara, Dhrita Rashtra, Shankhapaala, Kaaliya, Takshaka and Pingala. Sincere devotion to Naga Devas by peforming the Pujas would save the entire family of 'Naga Bhaya' or the Fear of Snakes as also of Snake bites to the entire generation of their lives. Nag Puja also bestows health, longevity, and great peace of mind.

Sage Sumantu quoted to King Shataani the conversation between Maharshis Kashyapa and Gautama about the features, appearances and types of serpents: During the Jeyshtha and Ashaadha months, serpents tend to very aggressive and the male /female variety turns into mutual union. During the rainy season, the female snake conceives and remains pregnant for four months and during the Kartika month delivers two hundred forty eggs but by the dispensation of Mother Nature only a very few remain intact. The mother snake retain the eggs for six months and seven days after their emergence, the baby serpents assume black colour. Normally the life span of a serpent is twenty years but it is a known fact that every day there is a threat of life to the reptile from peacocks, human beings, chakora birds, cats, pigs, scorpions, as also by cows, buffalos, horses and camels which kill the snakes by their horns and feet. After a bite, its poison gets immediately gets replenished. A serpent has two hundred feet enabling tremendous speed in mobility but in a stationary state not visible. It has a mouth, two tongues, thirty two teeth and four extended teeth called makari, karaali, kaalaratri and yamaduti stated to signify Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra and Yama. There are eight reasons as to why a snake bites, viz. by way of hard weight, erstwhile enemity, fear, arrogance, hunger, speedy production of excessive poison, safety of its progeny and provocation. A snake bite is normally irrevocable causing death. But, depending on physical indications of the affected person, there certainly are 'Aoushadhis' which could do miracles!

Seven Stages of physical features as per the speed impact of the poison after the snake bite: In the first stage of the speed effect, the indication is 'Romancha' or stiffening of body hair; in the second stage, there would be excessive sweating; in the third stage, there wuld be body shiver; in the fourth stage hearing capacity is affected; in the fifth stage, there would be hiccups or gulping sounds; in the sixth stage the neck gets dropped; in the seventh stage, poison gets spread all over the body.

If eye-vision is diminishing and the whole body has a burning sensation, then probably the skin of the poisoned person is affected; a pounded mixture of 'Aaak Jad', 'Apamaarg', 'Tagar' and 'Priyangu' in water should reduce the impact of the poison.

Since blood flow into the skin pores is spreading poison, the person feels excessively thirsty and might even swoon and hence cold items be provided with a grinding of 'Usheer' /'Khas', 'chandan', 'kuut', Tagar', 'Neelotpal', 'Sinduvaar Jada', 'Dhuter jad', 'Hing' (Asafoetida), and 'mircha' should help; if not: 'Bhatakatayya', 'Indrana jad', and 'Sarpagandhi' should be ground in a mix and administered; if this mix is also ineffective, grinding of Sinduvar and Hing powder be given as a drink with water; these powders could also be used as 'Anjan' and 'Lepa'. If poison enters 'pitta' into blood, the patient jumps up and down, the body becomes yellowish, vision becomes yellowish too, the person gets thirsty and swooning; at this stage, a mixture of Peepul, honey, mahuva, ghee, 'thumba jad' and Indrayana Jad should all be ground together and along with Cow's urine made into a paste as powder, lepana and Anjana. If poison enters 'Kapha' due to Pitta, the body becomes stiff, breating becomes difficult, throat makes sounds, and 'lar' comes out of mouth; then 'Peepul, mirch, sounth, sleshmataka of bahuvara vriksha/tree and lodh and Madhusara' should be mixed (grinding) and an equal part with cow's urine and used as a lepana /anjana.

If poison enters Vaata with Kapha, the affected person's stomach gets bloated and vision gets blocked, then 'Shona (Sonagaachha) jad, Priyal, Gajapeepul, Bhaarangi, Vacha, Peepul, Devadaru, Mahuva, Madhusara, Sinduvara and Hing' should be powdered (grinding) in 'golis' and make the patient eat, as also use as lepana/anjana.

If poison enters 'Mazza' due to Vaata, the affected person gets blinded and all body parts get disfunctioned, then a mixture of ghee, honey, sugar with Khas, ane chandana be pounded and given as a drink, or administer its powder through inhaling.

If poison enters majja to 'marmasthaan', all body parts fail and the body drops on the Earth; by cutting the veins blood is not shown, then the ultimate medicine prescribed by Lord Rudra would be 'Mritasanjeevani Auoshadhi' viz. Peacock Pitta and Marajarika Pitta, Gandhanadi jad, Kumkum, tagar, kut, Kaasamarda's chhaal, Utpal, Kumud and Kamal all in equal parts along with Cow's urine be mixed (grinding) and use a nashya/anjana; by so doing Kalasarpa becomes a Hamsa (swan).

Sage Kashyapa advised humanity through Gautama Muni, that recital of the following Mantra especially after sincerely performing Naga Panchami Vrata on the Panchami Tithis of Shravana Shukla, Bhadrapada Shukla as also Ahwin Shukla months viz.

Om Kurukulley phat swaha. Recital of the Mantra is a Heavy Security Shield and no snake of any description would and could approach the devotee concerned.

#### Skanda Shashthi Vrata

Kartika Deva's 'Avirbhaava' or Holy Appearance was stated to have occurred in Kartika Month on the Shashthi day of the Shukla Paksha (Fortnight), as Kritthika Devis enabled his birth; Bhagavan Shiva, Agni Deva and Devi Ganga had vital roles in the birth. Again, it was on the same Tithi of Shashthi that Kartikeya was conferred the Title of Deva Senapati. The Skanda Vrata is performed on both the Shukla and Krishna Paksha Shashthis of the month. On these days, the ground rules are to observe fasting (except consume a few fruits), celibacy and sleeping on ground, and worship Kartikeya 'Pratima' (Idol) with 'Arghya Pradaana' or offering Water by the Mantra: *Saptarshidaaraja Skanda Swaahaapati samudbhava, Rudraaryamaagnija vibho Gangaagarbha namostutey, Preeyatam Devasenaaneeh sapaadayatu hrudgutam.* The Vrata proceeds with the worship of Skanda by flowers, ghee, curd and such other material. Brahmanas are to be satisfied with Bhojan, dakshinas and Vastra. By the grace of Skanda Deva, performance of this Vrata in a formal manner would bestow Siddhi (Achievement), Dhruti (Firmness), Tushti (Contentment), Rajya (Kingship), Ayu (Longevity), Arogya (Health) and Mukti (Salvation). Kartikeya Vrata is performed on Shasthi day of Bhadrapada month also in the same manner and veneration as above. In fact, the Vrata is also observed on the Shashthi of Maragasirsha Shukla Month too.

It was in this context that Sumantu Muni emphasised that 'Vedadhyana' was indeed a pre-requisite of 'Vrata paalana', but the principal objective is 'Sadacharana' or Good Practice / Application of Values in the performance of Vratas; *Achaara heenan na punanti Veda yadyapyadheetah saha shatbhirangaih*, *shilpam hi Vedadhyanam Dwijaanam vrutam Smrutam Brahmana lakshmanam tu/* (Reating Vedas is no doubt an important requisite, since Vedas fom the framework but practice of what Vedas contained is the principal objective of Brahmanas.) Hence Practice of Vratas with sincerity is far more crucial than the knowledge of performing them.

#### SURYOPAAKHYANA

Surya 'Mahatmya', 'Saptami Vrata': Method and Reward of 'Ratha Satpami'

It was on 'Saptami'Tithi that Bhagavan Surya made his initial manifestation to the Universe. His original Appearance inside a Holy Egg continued and from there itself, he grew and hence was called 'Martaanda'. He was wedded to the daughter of Daksha Prajapati, called Sanjna, and begot Dharma Raja, Vaivasvata and Yamuna Devi. But since Sanjna was unable to bear the heat and dazzle of Surya Deva, created from her shadow a similar substitute, called Chhaya Devi to proxy her and left for Uttarakuru Desha to perform Tapasya in the form of as a horse. Meanwhile, Chhaya Devi gave birth to Shaneswara and Devi Tapati, but aftersome time, Chhaya Devi's partial attitude to her own children and those of Sanjna came to be noticed; Yama Dharma pointed out to Chhaya Devi about the differential treatment and

in course of the argument, Yama raised his right leg's ankle which was objected to by Chhava and she gave a curse to Yama that if his feet ankles were placed on Earth they would be eaten by worms! As Dharma Raja complained to Surya Deva, the father assuaged the feelings of his son, who was in fact a specimen of virtue, saying that the 'shaap' of Sandhya Devi was not to be too harmful since, after all, worms might take away the flesh and blood of his ankle to Bhuloka but feet would be in tact any way. Sandhya was frightened and blurted the truth to Surya Deva that Sanjna materialised her to deputise her and the latter left to her father's place; Daksha told Surya Deva that Sanjna could not withstand his heat and had been performing Tapasya in the form of a horse at Uttarakuru. Surya requested Vishwakarma to reduce his heat and radiance and after assuming the forms of a horse approached Sanjna and by the mutual contact of the noses of Surya and Sanjana in horse forms were born Ashvini Kumars and Raivata. Since the Episode of Sanjna and Surva occurred on Sapta Tithi of Magha Shukla Paksha as above, the day is considered as most auspicious to signify the union the Couple. Those who perform the Saptami Vrata of Bhagavan Surya by keeping fast on Shashthi, the previous day as well as on that day till the dusk time, perform formal Puja on Saptami, give away a good food with penty of Vegetables to Brahmanas along with Vastras, dakshina and gifts, and break the fast with the food observing silence during the night would be eligible to the fulfillment of desires, victory, and even Kingship. King Kuru observed this Vrata for several years at Kurukshetra on Magha Saptami and attained fulfillment of all desires. Kartika Shukla Saptami, Bhadrapada Panchami /Shashthi, Vaisakha Triteeya, and again on Ashvin Navami are also considered aupicious to observe the Vrata.

Lord Shri Krishna advised his son Samba that there could be no other Deity like Suryanayana since he could be sighted readily on the Sky. He said: Pratyaksham Devata Suryo Jagatchhaykshu Diyakarah, Tasmaadabhayadhika kaachiddevata naasti shaashvati/ yasmaadidam jagajjaatam layam yaasyati yatracha/ (Bhagavan Suryanarayana is the readily available vision to the eyes in the whole Universe beyond whom could be no other Deity; the entire 'Jagat' has emerged and also terminated only by him.) Time measurement is facilitated only by him since the earliest Satya Yuga; he is the unique cause for the Presence of Grahas (Planets), Nakshatras (Stars), Yogas, Karanaas, Rashis, Aditya, Vasu, Rudra, Vayu, Agni, Ashvani Kumaras, Indra, Prajapati, Dishas, Bhuh, Bhuvah, and Swah. Besides, he is the permanent 'Saakshi' (Evidence) of Mountains, Rivers, Samudra, Naga and all other 'Charaachara' or Stationary and Mobile Beings; the World wakes up with him and sleeps due to him; Vedas, Shastras and Itihasas are never tired of praising him as Paramatma, Antaratma and such other truisms; he is present every where, he is eternal and he is all-knowing; and he is the only and distinctive refuge-point to every one always. Having said this, Lord Shri Krishna advised his son Samba about the method of regular and daily worship so demolish sins and 'Vighnas' (obstacles). Early morning, before Sun rise, one should complete the ablutions, bathing, wearing clean clothes and offering 'Achamana' or sipping of three spoonful water by reciting Kesavaya Swaha, Narayana Swaha, and Madhvavaya Swaha etc.and offer 'Arghya' (water with both the palms) to Suryanarayana by mentally reciting the 'Sakshaatkara Mantra' viz. OM KHAKHOL -KHAYA SWAHA; perform Tri-vidha Praanaayaama of Purak, Rechak and Kumbhak or the inhaling, holding and exhaling the four kinds airs viz. Vayavi, Agneyi, Mahendri and Vaaruni for attaining 'baahyaantara suddhi'or external and internal purity by means of 'Soshan', 'Dahan', 'Stambhan' and 'Plaavan' of one's body. Then, one has to integrate the 'Sthula' or the physical and 'Sukshma' or the miniscule 'Indrivas' or limbs. Thereafter one has to perform 'Anganyasa' as follows: OM KHAH SWAHA HRIDAYAYANAMAH, OM KHAM SWAHA SHIRASEY SWAHA, OM ULKAAYA SWAHA SHIKHAANAI VASHATU, OM YAYA SWAHA KAVACHAAYA HUM, OM SWAAM SWAAHA NETRATHRAYAYA AOUSHATU, OM HAAM SWAAHA ASTRAAYA PHAT. Thereafter, water is sprinkled on all the worship materials and performs the worship by way of all the Services including offerings of flowers, incense material, lighting of oil-soaked cotton vicks and camphor lighting, Naivedya etc. Worship by day is to be done to Surya Deva's idol and by the night through Agni Deva and facing East in the morning while facing west in the evening and night. At all these times, the worship is to be performed by thinking of an Eight Leaf Lotus with Surva in the center and reciting the mantra *Om kakholkhaya Swaha*. After the Services of Dhyana (meditation), Awahana (welcome), Naama Puja, Pushparchana, Dhupa, Deepa,

Naivedya, Vastra etc. 'Mudras' should be displayed viz. Vyoma Mudra, Ravi Mudra, Padma Mudra, Mahaswata Mudra and Astra Mudras. If the worship is carried out in this manner for a year with devotion and sincerity, then no diseases would reach that person anywhere nearby, no shortage of monetary funds would ever be felt, no possibility of disrepute or controversy would occur in life and no limitation of well being and success is faced ever. Lord Shri Krishna further described to son Samba the names of Surva Deva to be worshipped on each Saptami of in months of a year: In Magha month, he is worshipped by the name of 'Varuna'; in Phalguna month as 'Surya', in Chaitra as 'Vaishakha'; in Vaishakha as 'Dhata'; in Jeshtha as Indra; in Ashaadha as 'Ravi', in Shravana as 'Nabha'; in Bhadrapada as 'Yama', in Ashwin as 'Parjanya'; in Kartika as 'Twashta', in Margasirsha as 'Mitra'; and in Poushya as 'Vishnu'. After performing the Saptami Vrata year-long as above, 'Ratha Saptami' is to be executed on Magha Shukla Saptami, marking the seventh day of 'Uttarayana' or the northerly movement of Surya Deva in a year. Vernal equinox starting from Capricon or Makara symbolically reverses the direction of Surya's chariot from his southerly to northerly direction. The Charioteer Aruna is seated facing Surya Deva on the chariot drawn by seven horses representing seven colours the names of the horses being Jaya, Vijaya, Ajaya, Jayanti, Aparajita, Mahajaya, Nanda and Bhadra. Ratha Saptami also marks the birth day of Surya Deva, heralding the commencement of Spring Season celebrated as the season of harvesting and is celebrated as season of joy and auspiciouness all over Bharat. Surva Deva's chariot has one 'Chakra', three 'Naabhi' or Chakra fixer, five 'ares' or cutters and eight 'nemis' ((nails); the length of the Ratha is of ten thousand yojanas of length and width; Devas, Rishis, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Nagas and Rakshasas travel along on the Chariot on bi-monthly basis of change; Bhagavan Suryanarayana is always mobile day and night taking rounds of Sapta Dwipas. The names of the 'Saptaashvas' are If the Ratha is at Amaravati of Indra then it happens to be noon, Sunrise time at Samyamnipuri of Lord Yama, midnight at Varuna Deva's City called Sukha, and at Chandra Deva's Vibha Nagari the Suryasta / evening. Thus Sun God circumambulates the entire Universe daily. The directions are also determined by the movement of Surya Deva; similarly the degrees from zero to three hundred sixty as Surya moves to twenty, thirty, forty and so on till ninety by mid-day; Surya Deva's movement also decides the positiong of the Navagrahas (Planets); he decides the rotation of 'Rutus' or Seasons of Vasantha, Greeshma, Varsha, Sharad, Hemanta, and Sishira. Surva Deva's colours also are tranformed according to the Seasons, viz. Kapila Varna in Vasanta, furnaced gold in Greeshma, Sweta or white in Varsha / rainy season, Pandu Varna in Sharad Ritu, copper colour in Hemanta Ritu and Rakta Varna (blood red) in Sishira Ritu. [Incidentally there are seven notes of Music-Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Da and Ni; there are Seven Chakras in a human body viz.Mulaadhara, Swaadhishtana, Manipuraka, Anahata, Vishuddhi, Aagna, and Sahasrara; seven kinds of Sahitya, viz. Kaavya, Nataka, Alamkara, Purana, Itihaasa, Shastra and Smritis; and Seven Chhandas viz. Jayanti, Jagati, Usnik, Trishthup, Anushthup, Pankti and Bhubhruti].

Surya Deva's 'Ratha Yatra and 'Indrotsava' are propitious to the whole Universe and where ever these are celebrated there would be any famine, natural calamities, fear of robberies or political upheavals. On Margaseersha Shukla Saptami, if one takes a devotional bath and after Surya Puja offers 'Naivedya' of cooked rice with ghee and jaggery, the person concerned would be destined to reach Brahmaloka.

'Nadi Snaanas': On Poushya Shukla Saptami, holy bathings along with Veda Mantras in favour of Surya Deva, preferably coinciding Surya 'Abhishekas', would assume considerable significance at Prayaga, Pushkara, Kurukshetra, Naimisha, Pruthudak (Pehva), Shona, Gokarna, Brahmaavarta, Kushhavarta, Bilvaka, Neelaparvat, Gangaadwar, Kaalapriya, Mitravan, Chakra Tirtha, Rama Tirtha, Ganga, Yamuna, Sarasvati, Sindhu, Chandrabhaaga, Narmada, Vipaasha (Vyasanadi), Taapi, Shiva, Vetravati, Godavari, Payohni (Mandakini), Krishna, Venya, Shatadru (Satlej), Pushkarini, Kaushiki (Kosi) and Sarayu. The holy baths accompanied by worship of Sun God with devotion would certainly yield memorable results. After the baths in the Rivers and Abhishkas to Suryanarana 'Pratima', the Idols of Surya as well as those of Sanjna and Chhaya are transferred to a Chariot drawn by seven horses as also Aruna, the Ratha Sarathi, and with decorate the interior of the chariot with figurines of Tri Murthis of Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara, Dikpalakas and so on; the Ratha should be accompanied by Seven Brahmanas, signifying Sapta Rishis reciting Veda Mantras, as also Gandharvas denoting singers and dancers and taken around a

Temple / main roads of the Vllages/ Town ships etc. The Organisers, participants, Brahmanas and all who witness the Ratha Yatra would be blessed as their mere presence at the Event removes property, enhances health, great opportunities of Life and attainment of Suryaloka.

Brahmopadesha to Yagnavalkya Muni about Surya 'Naama-Stotras'

Lord Brahma's 'Upadesha' (Instruction) of Surya Deva's 'Naama Stotra' to Yagnavalkya Muni as follows:

Namah Suryaya Nityaya Ravayerkaaya Bhanavey

Bhaskaraya Mataangaaya Maartaandaaya Vivasvathey

Aaadityayaadi Devaaya Namastey Rashmimaliney

Divaakaraya Deeptaaya Agnaye Mihiraayacha

Prabhaakaraya Mitraaya Namasteyditi sambhavah

Namo Gopataye nityam dishaam cha patayenamah

Namo Dhaatrey Vidhaatrey cha Aryamno Varunaayacha

Puushney Bhagaaya Mitraaya Parjanyaayamshavey Namah

Namo Himakrutey Nityam Dharmaaya Tapanaaya cha

Harayey Haritaashvaaya Vishvashvya Pataye namah

Vishnavey Brahmaney nityam Thriambakaaya tathaatmaney

Namastey Sapta lokesha Namastey Sapta Saptaye

Ekasmaih Namastubhyameka chakra rathaaya cha

Jyotishaam pataye nityam Sarva Praana bhrutey namah

Hitaaya Sarvabhutaanaam Shivaayaarti haraaya cha

Namah Padmaprabodhaaya namo Vedaadi murtaye

Kaadhijaaya Namastubhyam Namastaaraa stutaayacha

Bheemajaaya Namastubhyam Paavakaayacha vai namah

Dhishanaaya namo nityam namah Krishnaaya nityadaa

Namostwaditi putraaya Namo Lakshyaaya Nityashah

Lord Brahma told Sage Yaagnavalkya that any person recites the above 'Dashapadi' both in the morning and evening, his / her desires expressed or otherwise would surely be fulfilled; if the person is improsoned or involved in any problem of dispute would be freed instantly and would be authorised for reaping the end-results of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha; he should be able to secure the best of his ongoing life as well as the forthcoming and by the grace of Ravi Deva should be able to overcome all difficultees in the day to day life.

Surya's Dwadasha Murtis and his Moderated Form (Stuti by Devas included)

Sumantu Muni informed King Shataanika that Samba, the son of Shri Krishna set up a Temple of Bhagavan Suryanarayana on the banks of the River Chandrabhaga where in the remote past Surya Deva performed 'Tapas' after creating Devas and human beings and also giving birth of himself to Aditi Devi as 'Adithya'; he also assumed Twelve other Murtis viz. Indra, Dhata, Parjanya, Pusha, Twashta, Aryama, Bhaga, Vivishwan, Amshu, Vishnu, Varuna and Mitra. Among these twelve Murthis, Indra was Chief of Devas ruling Amaravati and destroying Daityas and Danavas from time to time. Dhata being in the Status of Prajapati took up the task of Creation; Parjanya in the Form of Sun rays rained all over the Universe; Pusha is in the form of Mantras engaged for Prajaaposhana; Twashtha is present in the form of 'Vanaspati' and 'Aushadhi' (Vegetable Oils and Herbal Medicines); Aryama who provides protection and relief to humanity; Bhaga is in the form of Earth and Mountains; Viviswan in the form of Agni / Fire and is the cooking facilitator of food as also of the destroying power; the ninth name of Surya Deva is Amshu or of the form of Chandra Deva who provides coolness and pleasure of existence; Vishnu is the tenth name of Surya who constanly checks the evil forces in the World and slays Danavaas and establishes virtue from time to time by assuming Incarnations; Varuna is the eleventh appearance present in water as the source of life and fertility staying in Oceans, Rivers and various water profiles; and finally, Mitra or form of propitiousness and help to humanity. In whatever form he might be, Surya Deva is indeed the 'Karanam, Kaaranam and Karta' or the Act, Action and the Supreme Actor in the drama of Life! Bhakti (Devotion), Shraddha (fortitude) and Puja (Worship) sum up the meanings of human life! The corresponding Twelve Names of Aditya are stated to identify with the Twelve Months of a Year viz. Chaitra with Vishnu, Vaishakha with Aryama, Jyeshtha with Viviswan, Ashadha with Amshuman, Shravana with Parjanya, Badrapada with Varuna, Ashwin with Indra, Kartika with Dhata, Margasirsha with Mitra, Pausha with Pusha, Magha with Bhaga and Twashta in Phalguna. Surya Deva has thousands of Kiranas (Rays) of which four hundred rays, known as Chandana generate Vrishti or rains; three hundred kiranas of yellow colour provide coolness entitled Chandra; three hundred more rays coloured white bestowing Aushadhis, Swadha, and Amrit by which human beings, Pitras and Devas are all happy. The names of the twenty most important rays are stated to be Heti, Kiran, Gow, Rashmi, Gabhasti, Abheeshu, Ghan, Usnu, Marichi, Naadi, Deedhiti, Saandhya, Mayukha, Amshu, Saptarchi, Suparna, Kara and Paada.

DEVA STUTI: At the time of 'Pralaya' or the Great Destruction when darkness engulfed the Universe, the foremost materialisation was of 'Buddhi' (Intelligence) which led to 'Ahamkara' (Self-image), which in turn created the 'Pancha Bhutas' or Five Elements of Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Sky whose interplay led to the emergence of the Golden Egg containing Seven Lokas and Seven Oceans and Tri Murtis. A massive embodiment of Radiance appeared and the Devas extolled the Adi Deva as follows:

Adi Devosi Devanaam eeshwaraanaam Tameeswarah, Adikartaasi Bhutaanaam Deva Sanaatanah/ Jeevanam sarva satvaanaam Deva Gandharva Raakshasam,Muni Kinnara Siddhanaam tadhaivoraga pakshinaam/Twam Brahma twam Mahaa Devastvam Vishnustwam Prajaapatih, Vayurindrascha Somescha Viviswaan Varunastathha/

Twam Kaalah Srishtikarta cha hartaa Traataa Prabhustatha, Saritah Saagarah Shailavidhyudindra dhanushi cha, Pralayah Prabhuvaschaiva Vyaktaavyakta Sanaatanah/ Eshwaraatparato Vidyaa Vidyaayah Paratah Shivah, Shivaatparataro Devastwameva Parameswarah/Sarvatah Praanipaadastwam Sarvatokshi shiro mukhah,Sahsraamshustwam tu Deva Sahasrakiranasathaa/ Bhuraadi bhurbhuvahaswascha maharjanastapatasthaa, Pradeeptam deeptimannityam Sarvaloka prakaashakam/ Durnireeksham Surendraanaam Yadyapam tasya the namah /Sura sidhhir ganairjushtam Bhrugvatri pulahaadibhih, Shubham Paramamavyagram yadruupam tasya the namah/ Panchaateetsthitaam tadvai dashokaadasha eva cha, Arthamasamatikramyasthitam tatsuryamandaley, Tasmai rupaya the deva pranataam Sarva Devataah/Vishwakruth-Visha bhrutbhutamcha Vishwanarasuraarchitam, Vishwasthitamachintyam cha yadrupam tasya tey namah/ Param Yagnaatparam Devaatparam Lokaatparam divah, Duraatikrameti yah khyatastasmaadapi Paramparaat, Paramaatmeti vikyhatam yadrupam tasya tey namah/Avigneyamachintyam cha Adhyaatmagatamavyayam, Anaadi nidhanam

Devam yadrupam tasya tey namah/ Namo namah Kaaranakaaranaya Namo namah Paapavinaashanaaya, Namo Namo Vanditavandanaya Namo Namo Roga –vinaashanaaya/ Namo namah Sarva varapradaaya Namo namah Sarva balapradaaya, Namo Namo Gyaananidhey Sadaiva Namo Namah Panchadashaatmakaya/

(Hey Sanatana Deva, You are the foremost Creator and the Supreme Adi Deva; You are the Sourcer of Life of Devas, Gandharvas, Raakshasas, Munis, Kinnaras, Siddhas, Nagas, etc.; You are Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu; Prajapati ,Vayu, Indra, Soma, Vishvaswaan, Varuna and Kaala; You are the Creator, Destroyer and Preserver of the World; You are the Rivers, Oceans, Vidyut and Rainbows, Pralaya, Prabhava or cycle of birth and death; You are the comprehensible and incomprehensible; the Vidya/knowledge prompted by Ishvara, Shiva prompted by Vidya and Paramadeva prompted by Shiva; You are spread all over the feet, legs, eyes, head and face; Your thousands of blazing rays illuminate all over including the Lokas of Bhuh, Bhuvah, Swah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah, and Satya; You are not possible to vision even by Indra and all other Devas, yet provide propitiousness and Peace to Munis like Bhrigu, Atri, Pulaha, and many other Siddhas; Your basic Rupa or Form is just not possible to visualise by the Five / Ten / or Eleven Indrivas (Faculties);

We pray to that Form of Vishvasrashta, Vishvasthita and Vishvabhuta who is Unique, worshipped by Indra and all other Devas; You are the Holy Form of Yagnas, Devatas, Lokas and the Great Sky and even far beyond as You are Endless, inexplicable, and inexhaustible; and You are the reason of reasons, sinless and sin-destroyer, worshipped by the Highest of the Highest, Panchadashatmika and the bestower of the best of boons and Powers; We greet You with all humility and veneration!). As all the Devas prayed to

Surya Deva, the latter appeared and asked for the boon of considerably diminishing his conflagration and radiance; Surya Deva requested Vishvakarma to trim down his severity and with the Shakti so reduced be utilized for materialising Vishnu Deva's Sudarshana Chakra, Shiva's Shula, and various other 'Ayudhas'or weapons like maces, Vajras, Dhanush and arrows, and so on. Thus Surya Deva's extreme heat and illumination got reduced substantially and thus became some what less harsh and ruthless.

#### 'Vyoma' the 'Ayudha' of Surya and its 'Lakshanas' (Features)

Surya Deva's 'Ayudha' (Weapon) is 'Vyoma' with Four Shringas or Horns, like Varuna's 'Paasha', Bramha's 'Hunkaar' sound, Vishnu's Chakra, Triambika's Trishula, and Indra's Vajra. Within Vyoma are situated Eleven Rudras, Twelve Adityas, Ten Vishwa Devas, Eight Vasuganas and Two Ashwini Kumars. The Rudras are Hara, Sharva, Triambika, Vrishhakapi, Shambhu, Kapardi, Raivata, Aparaajita, Eshwar, Ahibrudhna and Bhuva; the Vasus are Dhruva, Dhara, Soma, Anila, Anala, Apu, Pratyusha and Prabhasa; Kratu, Daksha, Vasu, Sathya, Kaal, Kaam, Dhruti, Kuru, Shankumaatra and Vamana are the Vishvadevas; and Ashwinikumars are Naasatya and Dasna. Also Vyoma includes Saadhya, Tushita, Marut and other Devatas; Swayambhu, Swaarochisha, Uttama, Tamasa, Raivata, Chakshusa and the current Manu Vaivaswata (the future Manus being Arkasaawarni, Brahmasaavarni, Rudrasaavarni, Dharmasaavarni, Dakshasaavarni, Roucha and Bhoutya); Indras of the corresponding Manvantaras, viz. Vishnubhuk, Vidyuti, Vibhu, Prabhu, Shikhi, Manojava and Ojaswi (the future ndras being Bali, Adbhut, Tridiva, Susaatvika, Kirti, Shatadhaama and Divaspati); Saptarshis viz. Kashyapa, Atri, Vasishtha, Bharadwaja, Gautama, Vishwamitra and Jamadagni; Seven Marutganas viz. Pravaha, Aavaha, Udyuha, Samvaha, Vivaha, Nivaha and Parivaha along with seven each sub-Ganas; ThreeAgnis viz.Suryagni named Shuchi, Vaidyut Agni called Paavaka, and Arani which is produced by 'Manthana' or churning called Pavamaana; Progeny of thirty nine Agnis; Brahma Putras viz. Samvatsara, Parivatsara, Indratsara, Anvatsara and Vatsara; Three Pitras viz. Souma, Bahirshad and Agnishvatta; Nava Grahas of Surya, Soma, Bhauma, Budha, Guru, Shukra, Shani, Rahu and Ketu; fathers of the Grahas excepting Bhauma

whose originator being Bhu Devi) respectively being Kashyapa, Dharma, Chandra, Prajapati Bhrigu(father of Guru and Shukra), Surya, Simhika and Brahma.

Sapta Lokas are Bhu, Bhuvah, Swar, Mahar, Jana, Tapas and Brahma; the Ruling Deity of Bhu loka is Agni; that of Bhuvarloka where Marudganas stay the Deity is Vayu; Swarlok is the Place of stay for Rudra, Ashwini kumars, Aditya, Vasuganas and Devaganas and the Chief is Surya; in Maharlok Prajapatis are the Ruling Deities; the fifth is Janaloka where the residents are the donors of Bhumi; the Tapolok is the residing Place of Ribhu, Sanatkumar and Rishis like Vairaj; the Seventh is Satya loka where those who are rid of the cycle of birth and death and attained 'Mukti' and the Ruler is Brahma Himself. Deva, Danava, Gandharva, Yaksha, Bhuta and Vidyadharas are all the residents of Vyoma too. So are Maruts, Pitars, Agni and Grahas; that is the reason why, human beings must practise the worship of Vyoma. The names of Vyoma are Akash, Kha, Dik, Antariksha, Nabha, Ambara, Pushkar, Gagan, Meru, Vipul, Bila, Aapochhidra, Shunya, Tamas and Rodasi. There are Seven Samudras of Lavan (Salt), Ksheer (Milk-Sugar mix with cooked rice), Dadhi (Curd), Ghrita (Ghee), Madhu (Honey), Ikshu (Sugar cane juice) and Suswad (Sweet water). Six rain bearing Great Mountains are Himavan, Hemakut, Nishadh, Neel, Sweta and Shringvan, while the Central Mountain is called Maharajat. Mahendri, Agneyi, Yamya, Nairuti, Vaaruni, Vaayavi, Soumya and Ishaani are the Deva Nagars atop these Mountains. Above Prithvi is Lokalok Mountain and beyond it is Andakapaal; much beyond are stated to be the Places of Agni, Vayu, Sky etc. Far above are expected to be Bhagavan Surya. Underneath Earth are the under-Sea Lokas of Tala, Sutala, Patala, Talaatala, Atala, Vitala and Rasatala. Kanchana Meru Mountain is spread out in the Center of Earth at a height of eighty four thousand vojanas or approx. one hundred sixteen thousand km (@fifteen km per yojana). Meru has four 'Shringas' or towers named 'Soumanasa' made of Gold, 'Jyotisha' made of 'Padmaraaga', 'Chitra' made of 'Sarvadhatu' (All-metal) and 'Chandroujask' made of Silver. Surya Deva rises from the Soumanasa Shringa at Uttarayana and sets at Dakshinayana at Jyotishka Shringa. The Place in between the two Shringas is known as Vyoma where Surya Deva resides.

# Surya Deva cures Sambu's Leprosy

When Sambu the son of Shri Krishna had 'Kushthu Vyadhi' (Leprosy), he made sincere and elaborate prayers to Surya Deva saying that Surya Paramatma popularly called Aditya providing illumination all over the Universe was the embodiment of various Deities such as Achintya rupa Vishnu, Pitamaha Brahma, Rudra, Mahendra, Varuna, Akaash, Prithvi, Jala, Vayu, Chandra, Megha, Kubera, Vibhaavasu and Yama; that he was actually of the 'Mahadevamaya Anda' (Egg) whose brightness had spread all over the Universe; that he protects the Beings including Humanity and various other Species in the Creation; that he saves from human sufferings including Kushthu and other intractable diseases as also 'Angaviheenata' (Lack of Limbs); that he was the 'Pratyaksha' (Readily Visionable) Devata who could liberate from any physical ailments and that he should please cure his longstanding malady. Surya Deva was pleased with the prayers of great intensity by Sambu and appeared before him and by the mere touch of one of his rays got completely cured and provided a second birth to him. Surva Deva further desired Sambu to spread the message far and wide that prayers of mere Twenty names of his by any one in the humanity, or the entire Srishti comprising Devas, Rakshasas, Yakshas, Gandharvas or any sinner of any kind or classification with dedication would be readily be answered, as there was no need to rectite Sacred Veda Mantras and not even thousand names of Surya Deva; The most Sacred names of Surya Deva so suggested to Sambu are as follows: Vikartan (Who slashes any kind of dangers or difficulties); Viviswan(Prakasha Rupa), Maartand (who stayed for long in a Egg); Bhaskar, Ravi, Lokaprakashak, Shriman, Loka Chakshu, Graheswara, Loka saakshi, Trilokesh, Karta, Harta, Tamistra (Destroyer of Darkness); Tapan, Taapana, Shuchi or Purity, Saptaasyavaahana, Gabhasihast (Rays as his extended hands); Brahma and finally 'Sarva Deva Namaskruta'. Recital of these minimal Names of Surya Deva with utmost purity, dedication and sincerity would bestow excellent health and disease-lessness, fame and life's contentment and purposefulness.

## 'Tri Murtis' eulogize Surya's Virat Rupa and His Worship as 'Omkara' /'Vyoma'

At the beginning of Kalpa, Tri Murthis became victims of 'Ahamkaar' (Self-image) and when a gigantic form of luminosity appeared on the Sky, they were taken aback as to how this huge illumination emerged from! As the Great Light approached and dazzled their vision, the personification of Surya Deva in a 'Virat Rupa' (Collosal Form) got materialised, the Tri Murthis and Devaganas greeted it again and again with veneration.

Lord Brahma eulogized the Virat Swarupa of Surya Deva as follows:

Namastey Deva Devesha Sahasra kiranojjvala, Loka Deepa Namastestu Namastey
Konavallabha/Bhaskaraaya Namo nityam Khakholkaya Namo Namah, Vishnavey Kaalachakraaya
Somaayaamita tejasey/ Namastey Pancha Kaalaaya Indraaya Vasuretasey, Khagaaya Lokanathaaya
Ekachakra rathaayacha/ Jadvitaya Devaaya Shivaayaamita tejasey, Tamoghnaaya Surupaaya tejasaam
nidhaye namh/ Arthaya Kamarupaaya Dharmaayaamita tejasey, Mokshaaya Moksha rupaaya Suryaaya
Namo Namah/ Krodhalobha viheenaaya lokaanaam sthith hetavey, Shubhaya Shubharupaaya
Shubhadaaya Shubhhaatmaney/ Shantaaya Shantarupaaya Shanatayesmaasu vai namah, Namastey
Brahmarupaaya Braahmanaaya namo namah/Brahma DevaayaBrahmarupaya Brahmaney
Paramaatmaney, Brahmanye cha prasaadam cha vai kuru Deva Jatpatey/

(Deva Devesha! Loka Deepa! Kona Vallabha! You are the source of phenominal illumination to the whole World; You are all the Deities like Bhaskara, Vishnu, Kaalachakra, Soma, Kaala, Indra, Vasu, Agni, Khaga, Lokanatha rolled in one as the Ekachakri, bestowing propitiousness and positiveness all over; You are the Embodiment of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha; You are the Personification of Tranquility and Peace, devoid of anger, greed, jealousy and partiality; You are the Parabrahma Himself!)

## Lord Shiva complimented Surya Deva as follows:

Jaya Bhaava Jayaajeya Jaya Hamsa Diwakara, Jaya Shambho Mahaabaho Khaga Gochara Bhudhara/
Jaya Loka Pradipaaya Jaya Bhano Jagatpatey, Jaya Kaala —jayaayanta Samvatsara Shubhaanana/Jaya
Devaaditeh putra Kashyapaananda vardhanah, Tamoghna Jaya Saptesha Jaya Saptaashva vaahana/
Grahesha Jaya Kaanteesha Jaya Kaalesha Shankara, Artha Kaamesha Dharmesha Jaya Mokshesha
Sharmada/ Jaya Vedaanga Rupaaya Graha Swarupaya vai namah, Satyaya Sathya Rupaaya
Swarupaaya Shubhhaya cha/ Krodha lobha vinaashaya Kaamanaashaya vai Jaya, Kalmaasha pakshi
rupaaya Yati rupaaya Shaambhavey/ Vishvaya Vishva rupaaya Vishva karmaaya vai Jayah, Jayonkaara
Vashatkaara Swaahaakaara Swadhaamaya/Jayascha Megha rupaayacha Agni rupaaryamaaya cha,
Samsaaraarnava peetaaya Moksha dwara pradaaya cha/ Samsaara arnavamagnasya mama Deva
Jagatpatey, Hastaavalambano Deva Bhava twam Gopatedbhuta/

(Bhagavan Surya Deva! Victory to You the Cause of Universal Existence; You are the Ajeya or the Invincible, Hamsa or Swan like Veda Rupa, Divakara or the Day-Maker, Mahabaahu or the Mighty Handed, Bhudhara or the Holder of Earth, Gochara or the Readily Visible / the Transitor of Planets, Bhava, Khaga, Loka Pradeepa, Jagtpati, Bhanu, Kaala, Ananta, Samvatsara and Shubhaanana or the Auspicious-Faced, Victory to You!

You are the Cause of Happiness of Your Father Kashyapa, the Son of Devi Aditi, Saptaashwa vahana or the Rider of Seven Horses, Saptesha or the Master of the Seven, the Destroyer of Darkness, the Chief of Planets, the Lord of Illumination, Kaalesha, Shankara, the Facilitator of Chaturvarga viz. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha; You are the Vedanga Rupa, Graha Rupa, Sathya Rupa, Surupa, Destroyer of Anger and such other Enemies of Human Weaknesses, Kalmaasha pakshi Rupa and Yati Rupa; You are the Vishwa Rupa, Vishwakarma, Omkara, Vashatkara or the Controller and the Director of Actions, Swahakara / Swadhaarupa or the offerings to Agni homas; Ashwamedha rupa or the Sacrificial Horse Yagnas; Agni Rupa. Lord Surya, do kindly hold the hand and lead the World! Victory to You!

# Bhagavan Vishnu paid tributes to Surya Deva at his Virat Swarupa as follows:

Namaami Devadevesham Bhutabhavanamavyayam, Diwaakaram Ravim Bhaanum Maartaandam Bhaskaram Bhagam/ Indra Vishnum Harim Hamsamarka Lokagurum Vibhum, Trinetram ThraiksharamThriangam Trimurthim Trigatim Shubham/ Shanmukhaya Namo Nityam Trinetraya Namo Namah, Chaturvimshati Paadaaya Namo Dwaadasha paanaye/Namastey Bhupataye Lokaanam pathayenamah, Devaanaam pataye Nithyam varnaanam pathaye namah/ Twam Brahma Twam Jagannatho Rudraswam Prajaapatih, Twam Somastwam tathaadistyastvam omkaaraka eva hi/Brihaspatirbudhastwam hi twam Shukrastwam Vibhaavasuh, Yamastwam Varunastwam hi namastey Kashyapaatmaja/Twaya tathamidam Sarvam Jagatsthaavara jangamam,Twat eva Samutpannam Sadevaasura maanusham/ Brahma chaaham cha Rudrascha samutpanno Jagatpatey, Kalpaadou tu puraa Deva sthitaye Jagatonagha/Namastey Veda Rupaaya Ahorupaaya vai namah, Namastey Jnaanarupaya Yagnaaya cha Namo Namah/ Praseedaasmaasu Devesha Bhutesha Kiranojjvala, Samsaaraanava magnaanaam prasaadam kuru Gopathey, Vedaantaya Namo Nityam Namo Yagna kalaaya cha/

(Salutaions to You Devadevesha! You are popular by the names of Diwakara, Ravi, Bhanu, Martanda, Bhaskara, Bhaga, Indra, Vishnu, Hari, Hamsa, and Arka; You are Vibhu, Trinetradhaari, Thryaksharatmaka, Thryangatmaka, Trimurti, Trijagati; You have six faces, tewntyfour feet and twelve hands, the Chief of the Occupants of all the Lokas; Jagatswami! It is only You who is Brahma, Rudra, Prajapati, Soma, Aditya, Omkara, Brihaspati, Budha, Shukra, Agni, Bhaga, Varuna, and Kashyapaatmaja. You stretch out the entire Universe comprising all the mobile and immobile Beings; You are the Creator of Devatas, Asuras and Manavas; You are responsible for the materialisation of the World, its preservation and its termination when the Trimurthis were created too' You alone are the Vedarupa, Divasaswarupa, Yajna and Jnaanarupa; Be kind to us Kiranojjvala, Bhutesha, Gopatey, You are competely absorbed in the affairs of 'Samsara', the personification of Vedanta and Yagna Kalaa, Victory be with You!)

As Surya Deva was immensely pleased by the salutations and praises of Tri Murthis, He appeared before them in the Form of Great Illumination and bestowed the boons of Creating, Administering and Extinguishing the World to them respectively. They sought a favour from Surya Deva that since He was essentially a Mass of Heat and Fire without a Figure and Structure, He might please assume a tangible Form of a Murti (Idol) which would facilitate their worship to Him. Surya Deva replied that He could assume four kinds of Murti Swarupas, the first one being of Rajasa Guna signifying Braahmi Shakti which creates the Universe; the Second with Satvika Guna representing Vishnu Shakti being responsible for Preservation and Administration; thirdly with Tamasika Guna of Siva Shakti destroying the Evil, Sins and Immorality; and finally the Omkara which has both Akaara and Niraakaara Swarupas and devotees are advised to worship the last Form which has a 'Nirlipta'/ 'Samata'(Balancing) Energy. In fact, Surya desired that the best method of worship would be to direct it to 'Vyoma'. Thus Lord Brahma worshipped Vyoma at Pushkarini Tirtha, Vishnu did his Puja to Voyma through 'Salagrama' and Siva prayed to Vyoma from Gandhamadana Mountain. A person who reads or hears the Tributes to Surya by Tri Murtis as above would be bestowed by wealth, health, progeny, Vidya and contentment as also peaceful end of life resulting in Salvation.

# <u>Surya 'Aradhana' and 'Agni Homa Vidhi' - Prayers to Dikpalakas, Nava Grahas, Tri Murtis, Matrikas and Select Deities</u>

Lord Vishnu's carrier 'Garuda' approached Surya Deva's Charioteer 'Aruna' for the best form of 'Aradhana' (Worship) to solve 'Adhi-Vyaadhi'difficulties like diseases, problems posed by Grahas (Planets), hurdles posed by persons in Power and natural calamities. For instance Garuda was concerned by a curse since his wings were affected and he could not fly properly. Aruna assured that there could be no other remedy to tide the difficulty excepting to resort to the worship of Surya Deva, especially by

'Agni Homa' or 'Paavakarchan' which is highly rewarding. Aruna Deva agreed to help Garuda to perform the Agni Homa by first setting up Agni, preferably in a Temple of Surya, at the 'Agneyakona' on a clean ground purified by cow-dung and invoke Dikpalakas by offering 'Ahuti' of Ghee in Agni, by saying OM BHURBHUVAH SWAHAA and reciting the following Mantras:

Aarakta deha rupaya raktakshaaya Mahatmaney, Dharaadhaaraaya Shaantaaya Sahasraaksha Shiraayacha/Adho mukhaaya Swetaaya Swaahaa/ (First Aahuti)

*Urthwa Mukhaaya Swaaha (Second Ahuti)* 

Hemavarnaaya Dehaaya Iraayata Gajaayacha, Sahsraaksha shareeraaya Purvadishayunmukhaayacha/ Devaadhipaaya chendraaya vihastaaya shubhaayacha,

Purvavadanaaya Swaaha (Third Ahuti)

Deeptaaya Vyakta dehaaya Jwalaamaalaa kulaayacha, Indraneelaabha dehaaya Sarvaarogya karaachacha/Yamaaya Dharmaraajaaya dakshinaashamukhaayacha,

Krishnaambara dharaaya Swaaha (Fourth Ahuti)

Neelajeemuta varnaaya Raktaambaradharaaya cha, Muktaaphala shareeraaya

Pingaakshaaya Mahaatmaney/ Shuklavastraaya Peetaaya Divyapaasha dharaayacha,

Paschimaabhi mukhaaya Swaha (Fifth Ahuti)

Krishna pingala nethraaya Vaayavyaabhimukhaayacha, Neeladhwajaaya Veeraaya tatha Chandraaya vedhasey/

Pavanaaya Swaaha (Sixth Ahuti)

Gadaahastaaya Suryaaya Chitrastrargbhusanaaya cha, Mahodayaya Shaantaaya Swaaha adhipatayey tatha/

Uttaraabhimukhaya Mahaadevapriyaya Swaahaa (Seventh Ahuti)

Swetaaya Swetavarnaaya Chitraakshaya Mahaatmaney, Shaantaaya Shaanta Rupaaya Pinaakavaradhaariney/

Eshaanaabhimukhaaya Swaaha (Eighth Ahuti)

The seven 'Ahutis' into Agni in favour of Dikpalakas viz. Agni, Kubera, Indra, Yama, Varuna, Vayu and Eshana having been offered, then Om Bhur Bhuvah Swaha is recited lakh times and Nava Grahas are appeased by the following Shanti Mantras as follows:

Shantyartha Sarvalokaanaam tatah Shantikamaacharet, Sindhuraasana Raktaabho Rakta Padmaabhilochanah/ Sahasrakirano Devah Sapaaswarathavaahanah, Gabhastimaali Bhagavaan Sarva Deva Namaskrutah/ Karothu tey Mahashaanti Graha peedaa nivaaraneem, Trichakra rathamaarudhaapaam saaramayam thu yah/Dashaaswavaahano Deva Atreyaschaamrutastavah, Sheetamshu ramritaatmaacha Kshayavriddhi sananvitah/

Somah Somyena Bhaavena Graha peedaam Vyapohatu/ Padmaraaganibho Bhaumo Madhu pingala lochanah, Angaarakognisadrusho Graha peedaamVyapohatu/

Pushparaaganibho dehena paripingalah, Peetamaalyaambaro Budhah peedaanm vyapohatu/ Tapta Gauri Samkaasha Sarva Shaastra vishaarada, Sarva Deva Guru

Vipro haarthavarnavaro Munih/Brihaspatiriti khyata Astra Shaastraparaschah, Shaantena chetasa sopi Parena susamaahitah/ Graha peedaam vinirjyatya karotu tava shaanikam, Suryaarchanaparo nityam prasaadaadbhaaskarasya tu/ Himakundendru varnaabho Daitya Daanava pujitah, Maheswarastato

dheemaan Mahaa Sauro Mahaamatih/ Suryarchana paro nityam Shukrah Shuklanibhastadaa, Neeti Shastra paro nityam graha peedaam vyapohatu / Naanaa rupa dharo vyakta Avijnaatagatischayah, notpattir jaayatey yasya nodayapeeditirapi/ Ekachulodwichulascha trisikhah panchasulakah, Sahasrashira rupastu Chandra Ketu Ravih Sthitah/ Suryaputrogni putrastu, Brahma Vishnu Shivaatmakah, Aneka shikhirah Ketuh sa tyeh peedaa Vyapohatu/ Etai Grahaa Mahaatmanah Suryaarchana param sadaa, Shaantam kurvantu tye Hrushthaah Sadaakaalam Hitekshanah/ (With blood-red eyes, thousands of rays, seated on a Seven Horse drawn chariot, with Sindura-like blood red shine, greeted by all Devatas and destroyer of Planet-made obstacles, may Surya Deva bestow Great Peace on us! With cool rays and pleasant vision, Ambrose-like Soul and Sage Atri's son, may Chandra Deva destroy our Planet-made hurdles to us; With Pingala coloured eyes akin to Agni, may Bhumi Putra Mangala / Bhoumaya give us freedom from all our difficulties on account of Planets; may Budha who wears Peeta or Yellow clothes and of peaceful demeanour and mind, do eliminate our Graha-created predicaments to us; May Deva Guru Brihaspati who is an extraordinary Teacher and Guide to all Devas, do remove all our setbacks and save us; May Sukracharya the Rakshasa Guru, the Great Source of Guidance and Trouble Shooting to all negative Shaktis -who is proverbially known for advices that do indeed provide short-term gains of life- bless us with long duration of peace and happiness; May Shaneswara, the son of Surya Deva, who assumes various forms with uncertain ways of movements forward and backward as also the Planets of Rahu and Ketu provide us security from our complications of life and do kindly shield us from all our impediments.)

Thereafter, sincere prayers are to be conducted to Tri - Murthis as follows:

Padmaasanah Padmavarnah Padnapatranibhekshanah, Kamandaludharah Shreeman Deva Gandhrava pujitah/Chaturmokho Devapatih Suryarchanah sadaah, Suraajyeshtho Maha Tejaa Sarva loka Prajaapatih/ Brahma shabdena divyena Brahma Shantih karotumey// Peetambharo Deva Aatreyeedayitah sadaa, Shankha Chakra Gadaa paanih Shyamavarna chaturbhujah/ Yagna dehah kramo Deva Athrayeedayitah sada, Shanka Chakra Gadaa paanirmaadhavo Madhusudanah/ Suryabhaktaanvitho nityam vigatirvigata trayah, Suryadhyanaparo nityam Vishnuh Shaantim karotutey// Sashikundendu samkaashoVishrutaabhananairih.Chaturbhujev Mahaa Tejaah Pushpaarthakrita Shekharah/Chaturmukho Bhasmadharah Smashaana nilayah sadaa, Gotraarvishwa nilayastatha cha Kratu dushanah/ Varo Varenyo Varado Devadevo Maheswarah, Aditya deha sambhutah sa tey Shaantim karotu vai/ (Seated on Lotus, Lotus-coloured, Lotus-eyed, Kamandaludhari, worshipped by Devas and Gandharvas, the Supreme of Devas, Highly Lustrous, the Chief of all Lokas, engaged in his worship of Surva Deva, and engrossed in the Great Resonance of the Word of Brahma, kindly grant us Shanti (Peace) and provide shield to us! Wearing silken clothing and adorned by Shankhu, Chakra, Gadaa and Lotus on his four hands, Yajna Swarupa, Husband of Atrevi and engaged in the meditation of Surva Deva, hey Madhava, Madhusudana and Vishnu! Do confer us Shanti (Tranquility) to us always. Maheswara, You are decorated with Chandra Deva on forehead, Snakes embellished all over the body, the All-Pervasive, Resident of Burial Grounds, Destroyer of Daksha Yagna, the Ash-Sporting Bodied and Devadi Deva: we are beholden to you to endow us Peace and Well-being.)

Following the Prayers to Tri Murtis, the Procedure of 'Surya Aradhana' proceeds further with commendations to Matrikas, the most significant being, Brahmaani, Rudraani, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Indraani, Varaahi and Chamundi. May the Prayers grant 'Shanti'to those who pray to the Matrikas in particular and to humanity as a whole; the Prayers denote that Brahmaani possesses the splendour of Padmaraga jewel, carries 'Akshayamala' and 'Kamandalu', performing 'Aradhana' and giving Blessings to Surya; to Rudraani, also called as Maha Sweta who has the features akin to Moon, Snow and 'Kunda Pushpa', is seated on 'Vrishabha', holds a Trishula, with Four Hands and Three-Eyes, always immersed in the worship of Shankara; to Kaumari who has 'Sindura Varna', with mighty hands carrying a Shula, is fully ornamented, also called Shakti and seated on a Mayuri (Peacock); to Devi Vaishnavi donning 'Peetaambara vastras', with four hands clutching Chakra, Gada, Shankha and Padma (Red), worshipped by Devas and destroying 'Asuras' and bringing happiness to humanity by means of prosperity; to Indraani

mounted on Iravata elephant carrying the Vajra weapon, worshipped by Siddhas and Gandharvas, with thousand eyes spread all over her physique and is full grace of befitting the Queen of Heavens; to Vaaraahi with the nose of a 'Varaha' (boar), seated on a Varaha, holding the same weapons as Vaishnavi, with such massive strength that could lift up the weight of Earth in one forceful pull; and to the frightful Chamundi who is described as Ardhakosha Kati kshaama Nirmaamsa snaayubandhanaa. Karaalayadana Ghora Khadga Ghantoduta Sati/ Kapalamalini Krura Khatvangavara dhaarini, Arakta Pinga nayana Gajacharmaavigunthitaa/ (Devi Chamundi who is Slender-waisted, with Kankaala Swarupa or fleshless, lean and terrifying Figure; Karaala Vadana or of awe-inspiring face, at once overwhelming, scaring and cruel; the holder of self- indicted body- parts as also of an alarming bell and sword; full of blood and blood shot eyes and wearer of Elephant Skin). Besides there are Matrikas viz. Aakaash Matrikas, Loka Matrikas, Bhuta Matrikas, Vriddhi-Shraddha Matrikas, Pitra-Matru Matrikas of three previous generations and so on. May all the Matrikas impart Shanti (Peace) and Tripti (Contentment)! Other Deities to be propitiated include: Vinayaka (Ekadamshtrakato Devo Gaja vaktro Mahabalh, Naga Yagnopaveetena Naanaabharana bhushitah/ Sarvaartha Sampaduddhaaro Ganaadhyaksho Varapradah), Kartikeya (Kartikeyascha Rudrasya changodbhutah Sucharitraha, Kartikeyo Mahateja Adityavaradarpitah/ Shantih Karothutey nityam Balam Soukhyam cha Tejasaa/), Nandeswara (Shula hastho Mahaapragno NandeeshoRavi bhaavitah, Shantim karothu tey Shanto Dharmaam chamatimuttamam), and Devi Sarasvati (Bhu lokey tu Bhuvarlokey nivasanti cha ye sadaa, Deva Devaah Shubhaayuktah Shantim Kurvantu tey Sadaa/ Janalokey Maharlokey Paralokey gataascha yeh, tey Sarva muditaa Devaah Shaantim kurvantu tey sadaa / Sarasvati Surya Bhakta Shaant da viddhaatumey/) as also other Deities. Further more, Shanti is sought from Twenty Nakshatras (viz.Krittika, Rohini, Mrigashira, Ardra, Punarvasu, Pushya and Aslesha on the Eastern side of Surya Deva; Magha, Purva / Uttara Phalguni, Hasta, Chitra, Swati and Vishakha on the Southern side of Surya Deva; Anuradha, Jyeshtha, Moola, Purvashadha /Uttaraashadha, Abhjit and Shravan on the Wetern side of Surva Deva and Dhanistha, Shatabhisha, Purva / Uttara Bhadra in the Northern side of Surya Deva); Twelve Rashis viz. Mesha, Simha, Dhanu on the Eastern side of Surya Deva; Vrisha, Kanya, Makara on Surya's Southern side; Mithuna, Tula and Kumbha on Surya's Western side and Karka, Vristchika and Meena on the Northern side of Surya Deva; Sapta Rishiganas viz. Kashyapa, Galva, Gargya, Vishwamitra, Daksha, Vasishtha, Markandeya, Kratu, Narada, Bhrigu, Atreya, Bharadwaja, Valmiki, Kaushika, Vaatsya, Shalya, Punarvasu and Shaalankaayana-all engrossed in 'Surya Aradhana'and their blessings are vital for the purpose of seeking relief from illnesses and other 'Adhi-Vyadhi' troubles. Bhagavan Surya's devotion is also predominant among Daitya rajas like Namuchi, Mahabali Shankha karna and Maha Nath as also Hayagreeva, Prahlada, Agnimukha, Kalanemi were all Surya Deva's devotees and so were Virochana, Turvasu, Hiranyaksha, Sulochana, Muchukunda, and Raivatak; their Souls are immortal and capable of giving blessings for the welfare of devotees even now. Naga Shanti is yet another area of devotion by which the protection of Ashta Nagas who are eternally engaged in Surya Aradhana is sought. Takshaka, Karkotaka, Shankhapaala, Vasuki, Padma, Ananta, and Nagendra are all illustrious examples of the devotion and safeguard those who too are sincere in the meditation of Surya Deva. Naga Shanti ensures that the entire race of Naga Ganas would never trouble the devotees. Similarly, Surya Aradhana provides guarantee from any difficulties from Sacred Rivers, Yakshas, Mountains, Seas, Rakshasas, Pretas, Piscachas, Apsaras, cruel animals and all the rest. 'Souri Shanti' assures shield against not only illness, but also 'Grahopaghata,' durbhiksha, blindness, deafness or any other disabilities; physical, psychological, mental shortcomings etc. Garuda whose wings were hacked in the past performed the 'Shanti Vidhana' as advised Aruna Deva and he got the refurbished wings back; whoever reads or carefully follows the Procedure of 'Souri Shanti'would attain mental peace, excellent health, Yagna Phal and 'Papa Mukti' or purging of even unforgiveable sins.

# Formal Procedure of 'Arghya Pradaan' and 'Puja' to Aditya Deva

<u>Bhi</u>shma of Mahabharata fame expressed his doubt to Veda Vyasa as to why all the Devatas greet Aditya Deva foremost even before praying to Tri Murtis! Is Aditya really so important? Veda Vyasa mildly admonished Bhishma for this rather ridiculous doubt since at the beginning of Srishti when the Universe

was submerged in darkness; it was Aditya or the Very First Deity who was materialised to illuminate although he was provided a worldy Appearance as the son of Aditi and Kashyapa Muni afterwards. Tri Murtis worship Aditya not to mention of others! Bhishma's equally naïve question was expressed to Veda Vyasa as to why Rahu Devata was able to devour Surya Deva if he was described as so significant in the order of Priority and Surya Grahanas (Solar Eclipses happen from time to time! Veda Vyas replied that nobody could indeed devour Surya Deva; it is believed that as Rahu was desirous of entering the Viman carrying Amrit, a few drops spilt out from the Viman which almost scraped Rahu and made him immortal. But the fact of the matter is that Rahu is right under the Surya Bimba and it is a visual fallacy that the crossing of the two Planets of Surya and Rahu at specified and predictable timings gives an impression that Surya gradually disappeared for a while; the process of the mutual crossing of the two Planets concealed the appearance of Surva causing the 'Grahan' or Eclipse! Thus there was no question of Surya Deva being controlled by any force in the Universe since He indeed is the Super Controller of the 'Charaachara Jagat' or the Moveable and Immobile Objects of the World responsible for Creation / Destruction; the concepts of Days, Nights, Dharma, Adharma etc. are all his patented ones; and basically He is the be-all and end-all of everything literally! Indeed those who observe devoted worship to Bhakara achieve instant access to Shakti, Courage, Siddhi, 'Auyshadhi', Dhana-Dhanya, Suvarna, Sowbhagya, Arogya, Kirti, Putra and Poutra and Mukti!

Then Bhishma requested Veda Vyasa for guidance about the formal Soura Dharma Snaana Vidhi. At the outset, one has to apply 'Mrittika' from a Water Source like Sea, River/Waterbody, apply the same on the human body with the Mantra: Apavitrah Pavitrovaa Sarvaavasthangatopiva Yassmaret Pundareeksham sabaahyaabhyantara sshuchih (In whatever condition of cleanliness or otherwise that we are, may we remember Pundarikaaksha and secure out worldy on inwardly Purity); then, one performs the formal 'Snaana', remembering the Greatness of Surya Deva and reciting HRAAM HREEM SAAH, followed by 'Achamana' or sipping spoonful of water; later on continue with Tarpanas to Rishis and Pitaras; proceed with 'Sandhya Vandana' and utter the Hraam Hreem Mantra or Kakolakaya Namaha water while offering to Surya Deva. This formal 'Arghya Praddan' is followed by Surya Puja. After performing 'Kara Nyaas' and 'Anga Nyas' with Surya Mantras, set up Surya Pratima (Idol) on a designated platform over an 'Ashta Kamala' format; decorate with flowers, Gandha or Sandal Paste, incense sticks, Lighting Stands, Fruits and other Naivedya material and such other pre-puja arrangements. There after position Sarvatomukhi Devi in the middle and arrange on the Ishaana Kona the Ashta Surya Shaktis viz. Deepta, Sukshma, Jaya, Bhadra, Vibhuti, Vimala, Vidyuta and Sarvamukhi. These Shaktis are propitiated first: Avaahayaami, Sthapayami Pujayami Mantras be recited in favour of Shaktis viz. Udyutyam Jaatavedasam and Agnim Dutam (Yajur Veda). Then Bhagavan Surya is propitiated by the two Yajur Veda Mantras viz. Aa Krishnena Rajasaam and Hamsah Shuchishadam. Then again Deepta Devi's puja is performed by the Mantra *Apaptey tarakam*; Sukshma Devi is worshipped by the Mantra:

Adrusyamasya ketavom; Taranir Viswadarshatom is the Mantra for Jaya; Pratyangi Devaanaam is meant for Bhadra; Yena Paavaka Chakshaam in favour of Vibhuti Devi; Vidyameshim is the Puja Mantra in favour of Vimala Devi; similarly Amogha, Vidyuta and Sarvatomukhi are worshiped by appropriate Mantras. Then the important procedure of Puja of Surya Deva Pratima follows: with Ishe thvom Mantra Surya's Sirah Pujaami; Agnimeeleym Dakshina Hastaam Pujayaami; Agna Aa yaahim, Charanam Pujayaami; Aa Jighnam Pushpamala Samarpayaam; Yoge Yogem Pushanjali samarpayami; Samudra gaccham, Imam me Gangey and samudra Jeyshthaam angaraagaam snapayaami; then Snaanaas or Abhishekas with the following materials as per Mantras respectively:

Aa payaayaswam (Dugdha Snaan),Dadhi kraavrunno (Dadhi Snaan),Tejosi Shukram (Ghrita Snaan),Ya Aoushadhim (Aoushadhi snaan),Dwipaan (Udyurtan or lift up the Pratima), Maa Nastokey (Punah snaana or repeat Snaana),Vishno raraatam(Gandha jala Snaan), Swarna Dharmam (Paadya Mantra), Idam Vishnurvi Chakramey (Arghya pradaan), Vedosim (Yagnopaveeta),Brihaspatem (Vastra dwayam), Dhurasi Dhurvam (Dhupam along with Guggula), Sahasra sirshaa (Mastka or Head Puja),

Sambhaavayaam (Eyes), Vishvata Chakshuh(Saraanagyaani Pujayaami) and finally Shreescha tey Lakshmischatey/ The above is the Puja Vidhaana of Bhagavan Surya.

Thus Veda Vyasa stated emphatically to Bhishma that there need not be no misguided conceptions about the Absolute Supremacy of Surya Deva, that there could never be a better Well- Wisher of the enire World, that his Aradhana would be a key to appease any negative forces to humanity including the fear of Kings, thieves, Grahas, Serpents, diseases, poverty, natural disasters and the like; instead he would be a pro-active Entity to rally round all positive Shaktis taking hundred firm steps forward to ensure human success against even a faltering step taken by a person in reverence to him. A devotee's 'Aradhana' in his favour, especially on Sankranti, during Grahanas, on Sundays and other auspicious days by observing austerities, charities, Agni Karyas, Prayers, Surya Namaskaras, or just a sincere greeting to his Bimba so readily visible on the sky on daily basis would assure quality life in 'Iham' (this World) and 'Param' (Other World).

#### 'Agni Kunda Nirman' and 'Shodasopacharas' in 'Agni Puja'

Depending on the purposes for which 'Agni Karyas' are meant, or the number of 'Ahutis' or Offerings are decided, Agni Kundas are constructed accordingly and these are broadly of ten types viz. Chaukore, Vruth, Padma, Artha Chandra, Yoni Akrutika, Chandraakar, Panchakona, Saptakona, Ashtakona and Nava kona. Indeed, no 'homa' or Yagna is ever attempted without an Objective-either for a personal gain or for 'Jana Kalyan' or General Propitiousness or sometimes even negatively motivated! Also the number of 'Ahutis' (homas) might vary from modest numbers to hundred, thousand, Ayut, Lakh, Crore! Graha Shanti is the normal objective aiming at 'Shanti' and 'Pushti' or Peace and Well-Being; but when Yagnas are organised for General Objectives like Success in Battles, Eradication of Epidemics, Floods, Earth Ouakes etc. the number of Ahutis is to be at least ten thousand or even a lakh. But if homas are performed for Evil Purposes, the results might initially be fruitful, but in the long run, they tend to be selfdestructive! Agni Kunda has to be blemishless without impurities like hair, bones and excreta; the entire bhumi must be dug up deep, watered and seeded to ensure quick sprouting of seedlings. The Kunda area must be purified with Omkara, sprinkled with kusha grass water of a holy river preferably; in fact there are eighteen prescribed 'Samskaras' of Purifying Exercises before installing Agni in the Fire-Pit. At the time of Installation of Agni in the Kund, the Agni Beeja Mantra viz. 'ram' as also Shiva Beeja Mantra 'Sham' be recited to infuse Shiva Shakti into Agni along with sprinkling of Kusha grass water. This process ensures the fulfilment of the targetted objective of the Ahutis. Having installed Agni in the Kund, worship of Devi Bhagavati and Bhagavan is to be performed with 'Arghya', 'Paadya' and 'Achamaneeya'. The relevant Mantra to propitiate Agni is Pithru Pingala daha daha pacha pacha Sarvajnaajnaapaya swaaha/ Agni Deva is stated to utilise three of his 'Jihvas' (tongues) viz. Hiranya, Kankaa and Krishna (The Sapta Jihvas are stated to be Viswa Murti, Sphulingini, Dhumrayarna, Manojava, Lohitasya, Karaalaasya and Kaali, as described elsewhere). The Samidha material used for different kinds of Homas vary too; for example, in Ajyahoma Tri Madhu (Milk, Sugar and Honey) is used, likewise, Anna and Payasa, Gold, Padmaraga, Bilwa patras, Tilas (in Pitru homa), Candana, Agaru, Camphor, Gandha etc. are used in different types of Yagnas such as Naitthia Karma, Ikshu homa, Deva Homa, Padma homa etc. Full care must be taken while the specified material is utilised as other wise adverse effects might have to be faced!

Before taking up Agni Puja with Shodasopacharas, a devotee should invoke the Moola Devatha Trinetra Ishwara by offering red flowers. Then welcome Kamadeva, Indra, Varaaha and Kartikeya at the four entry points. The Sixteen Services to Agni Deva should be provided as follows: <u>Aasana Mantra:</u> Twamaadih Sarva bhutaanaam Samsaara -arnava taarakah Paramajyoti rupastvamaasanam saphalee kuru (Agni Deva! You are the uplifter and saviour of the humanity from the deep Oceans of 'Samsara' and also the 'Parama Jyoti'; do accept a Seat before we initiate our sincere Puja); <u>Prarthana Mantra:</u> Vaiswanara Namastestu Namastey Havyavaahana, Swaagatam tey Surashreshtha Shaantim kuru namostutey/

(Vaiswanara Deva! Havyavahana! We are beholden on your arrival and welcome sincerely; kindly grant us Peace); <u>Padya Mantra</u>: Namastey Bhagavan Deva Aaponarayanatmaka, Sarvaloka hitaarthaya Padyam cha prati – gruhnataam/ (Jala Swarupa Narayana! Accept water for washing your feet and bless us) Arghya Mantra: Narayana Paramdhaama Jyoti Rupa Sanatana, Gruhaanaarghya mayaa dattam Viswarupa Namostutev (Vishwa Rupa! Jyoti Rupa! Sanatana Deva! Paramdhaama! Narayana! My salutations to you; Please accept this 'Arghyam' being offered by me reverentially); Achamaneeya Mantra: Jagadaaditya rupena Prakaashayati yah sadaa, Tasmai Prakaasha Rupaaya Namastey Jaatavedasey/ (As you are resplendent in the Form of Aditya Rupa, Jata Veda, Prakasha Swarupa and Vaisvaanara, do oblige us by accepting this Achamaneeya water!); Snaaneeya Mantra: Dhananjaya Namasteystu Sarva Paapapranaashana, Snaaneeyam tey mayaadatam Sarva kaamaartha siddhaye/ (My greetings to You Janaardana! Kindly accept this holy water to bathe you in a formal manner and grant us accomplishment of various 'Siddhis' or Spiritual Achievement); Anga prokshana evam Vastra dhaarana Mantra: Hutaashana Mahaa baaho Deva Deva Sanaatana, Sharanam tey pragacchhaami dehi mey paramam padam/ (Devadeva! Sanaatana! Hutaashana! Mahabaaho! I am in your shelter. Kindly acknowledge this 'Anga Prokshana' or Sprinkling of water over Your Body Parts and also clothing); Alankara Mantra: Jyotishaam Jyoti Rupastvamanaadi nidhanaatchyuta, mayaadatthamalankaaram kuru Namostutey! (Agni Deva! You are such as would never step down from your high pedestal; You have neither begining nor end; You are the Parama Jyoti Rupa; my reverences to You; kindly accept these ornaments and 'Alamkaras' or beautifiers and oblige); Gandha Mantra: Deva Deva mudamyaanti yasya Samyak samaagamaat, Sarva doshopashaantyartha Gandheyam pratigruhyataam/ (Deva! All the Deities do calm down in Your august Presence; do accept this Sandal paste as a symbol of Your kind acceptance); Pushpa Mantra: Vishnustwamhi Brahmaa cha Jyotishaam Gatirishwara, GruhaanaPushpam Devesha Saanulepam Jagad bhavet/ (Devesha, You are Brahma, Vihnu and the route to Jyotisha and Eshwara; do accept these flowers since they would enhance the fragrance of the whole World); Dhupa Mantra: Devataanaam Pitrunaamcha Sukhamekam Sanaatanam, Dhupeyam Deva Devesha gruhnataam mey Dhanamjaya (Deva Devesha Dhanamjaya! You are the unique provider of happiness to Devatas and Pitras; please allow this 'Dhupa' to bring this aroma all over); <u>Deepa Mantra:</u> Twamekah Sarva Bhuteshu Sthavareshu Chareshu cha, Paramatmaa Paraakaarah Pradeepah pratigruhnataam/ (Paramaatma who is stretched all over among the Beings in the Universe! Your Profile is indeed outstanding and stupendous; please increase the splendour manifold by accepting this token Light and endowing us with happiness); Naivedya Mantra: Namostu Yagnapataye Prabavey Jaatavedasey, Sarvaloka hitaarthaaya Naivedyam pratiguhnataam/ (Yagnapati Jaataveda! You are the Almighty and the Supreme Source of Propitiousness; This Naivedya or offering of 'Anna Prashad'is being proffered to You for the contenment of the whole Universe); besides these there are more Services offered to Agni Deva such as Mantra Pushpam, Pradakhisna, Mangala Arati, Veda Parayana and Swasti. Purnahuti denotes the successful conclusion of any Agni Karya, without which the holy task remains inconclusive and fruitless. Recital of relevant Mantras at the Purnahuti normally covers 'Sapta tey'--, 'Dehi mey'--, 'Purnaa darvi'--, 'Punantum' etc. Purnahuti needs to be performed while standing, but never seated. Also, depending on the type of the Yagna, the relevant Mantras describing the concerned Rishis, Chanda and Devatas invoked would be essential. During the Japa-sessions, count of the necessary number of the Mantras is crucial too. The number of Ritvijas is also as prescribed. The purpose for which the Yagnas are performed should be fulfilled indeed, if executed as prescribed.

#### Over-view of Raja Vamshas of Satya, Treta and Dwapara Yugas

After covering the Brahma Parva and Madhyama Parva of the Bhavishyad Purana, Sage Suta addressed the Congregation of Munis headed by Shaunaka Muni at Naimisharanya as to the outlines of 'Pratisarga Parva'and provided an Over-view of the Kings of Raja Vamshas through the preceding Yugas viz. the Satya, Treta Yuga and Dwapara Yugas. During the second half of Brahma's age of his hundred years, that

is the third day of his fifty first Year, Vaiwaswa Manu was born in the Sweta Viraha Kalpa and the latter performed serious Tapasya; from his sneeze was born King Ikshvaku who was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. In the Royal lineage of Ikshvaku were born Vivikshu-Ripunjaya-Kakuthsu-Prithu-Adri-Bhadraaswva-Yavanaashva-Shraavasta-Kuvalashvya-Dhrudhashva-Nikumbhak-Sankatashvya-Prasenajit-Ravanaswya-Mandhaata-Purukutsa-Tridashvya-Anaranya-Prushadashvya-Vasuman-Tridhanva-Trayyaruni-Trishanku-Harischandra-Rohita-Haaritha-Chanchubhup-Vijaya and Ruk till the Third 'Charana'. There after the lineage continued till King Ruru and his son Sagara; the lineage stopped due to the curse of Kapila Muni and the Sagara sons were burnt. From the second queen was born Asamanjasa-Anshuman-Dilip and Bhagiratha who became universally popular as he brought Ganga / Bhagirathi from Heavens to secure salvation to the Sagara Putras. The lineage continued further from Bhagirath to Shrutasena-Naabhhaga-Ambarisha-Sindhudeepa and so on till King Sudarshan who married the daughter of Kashi Raja and became the unconquered Monarch of Bharata Khanda. Devi Kaali appeared in a dream and asked the King to leave for Himalayas along with his wife and family and Sages headed by Vasishtha, since very soon there would be a 'Pralaya' and the Akhanda Bharata would disintegrate into pieces and save a few islands of Earth of varying sizes, the rest of the 'Bhubhaag' would be submerged under water!

After the Pralay in Treta Yuga, King Sudarshan returned from Himalaya and revived Ayodhya Puri and thanks to the Divinely Cow Nandini and the Holy Sages. King Sudarshan ruled for thousands of years and in course of Time, his son King Dilip initiated a new generation and King Raghu heralded the Surya Vamsha or the Raghu Vamsha. King Raghu's grandson Dasharatha had the unique privilege of securing Lord Shri Rama, the 'Avatar' of Bhagavan Vishnu. Surya Vamsa dominated from Shri Ram's son Kusha downward for hundreds of generations thereafter and the Kings were by and large virtuous, engaged in Yagnas and Agni Karyas, charities and the preservation of Dharma. In the Third Segment of Treta Yuga, seeds were sown when Chandra Vamsa was initiated with the curse by Indra to send Chandra Deva to Bhuloka and the latter made Tirtha Raj Prayaga and performed relentless Tapasya and hundred Yagnas till Devi Bhagavati was pleased and sent Chandra back to Swargaloka. Chandra's son Budha married Devi Ila and King Pururava was born, signifying the beginning of the Chandra Vamsa. Pururava's son Ayu begot Nahusha who attained Indratva no doubt as Indra went into exile due to his Brahma hatya sin for killing Vritrasura; but Maharshi Durvasa cursed Nahusha to become an 'Ajagara' or a huge snake. Nahusha's son was Yayati and of the five sons of Yayati, three became the Rules of *Mlecchaas* and the other two were Yadu and Kuru. In the long lineage of Yadu and his son Kroshthi, was Maya Vidya who founded Pratishthanapura (Jhansi). In the long chain of Kings of Chandra Vamsa was Samvaran who pleased Surya Deva with his Tapasya and the Deva gave the hand of his daughter Tapati to Samvaran. As Pralaya terminated Treta Yuga, Surya Deva ordered that Samvaran and Tapati as also Maharshi Vasishtha and samples of Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaishya be saved. With the advent of Dwapara Yuga, Pratishthanapura (Jhansi) was revived with Samvaran as the King, Budha Vamsheeya King Prasena and later on Yadu Vamsheeya King Surasena ruled Mathura, and Mleccha Vamsheeya Smashrupala or Shishupala ruled Marudesha (Arab, Iran and Iraq). King Samvaran's long line of descendants climaxed with King Dushyanta and his Queen Shakuntala and their son Bharata whose lineage too lasted for thousands of years all over Bharat. Meanwhile, as per the order of Indra Apsara Ghritachi was sent to Earth and married Shakrahotra and their son was named Hasti. The latter rode Iravata with children and built a Nagar of large proportions which was named subsequently as Hastinapura. Again under instructions of Indra during the 'Third Charana' of Dwapara Yuga, another Apsara called Sukeshi was married to King Kuru who constructed Kurukshetra. In the lineage of King Kuru was born Shantanu whose son was Vichitraveerya. Pandu was the son of Vichitra veerya and Yudhishtar was the son of Pandu. As a repercussion of a mighty battle won by Daityas over Devas in the Universe, several Daityas who survived re-appeared in the Kingdom of Shantanu and the evil-minded Prince of Kuru Vamsha, Duryodhana became the rallying point of the Daityas, abetted by the weak and blind King Dhritarashtra. As Bhu Devi became increasingly intolerant of the predominance of wickedness, she approached Bhagavan Vishnu who assumed an Avatar (Incarnation) as Shri Krishna and played an outstanding role in

destroying the Evil forces at the climactic Great Battle of Maha Bharata at Kurukshetra. Pursuant the Battle, there was purge of the Evil and King Parikshith became the Emperor, followed by Janamejaya and Shataanika. The lineage though long was of weak Kings till Pradyot performed Mleccha Yagna. The Yagna was no doubt successful and earned the name of 'Mleccha hanta'. In fact, Kali himself along with his wife prayed to Bhagavan Narayana and sobbed that Pradyot made this Yagna and suspended our very existence. Bhagavan replied that through the earlier Yugas, Kali was ignored but surely the next Yuga would display the full blast and fury of Kali and as the time would roll on his upswing acts would assume ever greater intensity; Narayana assured Kali that a man named 'Aadam' and a woman called 'Havyavati' would promote the cause of Mlecchas at ever growing speed. As prophesied, gradually the strength of Mlecchas increased and that of 'Aryavarta' declined. At the fag end of Dwapara Yuga, the last King of Mlecchas named 'Nyuh' who was a devotee of Bhagavan Vishnu was advised to build a huge ship (Nyoha's Ark) to save a few. Meanwhile, there was continuous rain for forty days and all the Oceans overflowed together and Prithvi got sunk; but for a survivors who boarded the ship like Brahmavadi Muniganasa, representatives of the King Nyuh and specimens of fauna and flora. Only the 'Seeshina' named Mount of Himalayas lasted the Pralaya where the survivors stayed and slowly increased their poulation after the Great Destruction got spread out in fast stages.

#### The advent of Kali Yuga and the Ongoing Phases - Arrival of Gautama Buddha

In the initial years of Kali Yuga, the survivor Mlecchas gradually adopted responses to the new environs, new ways of life and even new language styles. For instance, earlier languages got corrupted and new expressions emerged; Vraja Bhasha, Prakruti, Sanskrit etc. got adapted from 'Gurundika' (English) which was also different from Mleccha Bhasha/ Yavani and new corruptions of various languages both in spoken and written scripts got adapted. For instance, Pitru (Father) became 'Paitar'; Bhatru became Bathar or Brother; Ahuti became Aaju; Ravivar as Sunday; Jaanu became Jain, Raviwar as Sunday; Phalguni as February and Shasthi as Sixty! Simultaneously, Places of Worship in Bharat like Ayodhya, Mathura, Kashi etc. lost their purity and Shabars, Bhills and robbers dominated. At the same time however, even after the first thousand years of Kali Yuga, quite a few pockets of Virtue, though not in the erstwhile pristine form, survived and semblances of Varashrama and devotion to Almighty did not get completely extinct yet. It is believed that a few Devatas continued to travel to 'Brahmaavarta' from Swarga loka that is where Ganga flowed. An illustrious Muni by name Kashyapa begot ten sons viz.Dikshit, Upadhyaya, Pathak, Shukla, Mishra, Agnihotri, Dwivedi, Trivedi, Pandya and Chaturvedi. Kashyapa prayed to Devi Sarasvati that Evil Forces had come to control the World and that she being the 'Loka Mata' must come to immediate rescue; in response Devi provided enlightenment to the Muni; he established a Kingdom, named after his son King Magadha apparently to resist the Evil Forces. Magadha Kingdom was segregated from Arya desha and was surrounded by Kalinga (Orissa) in Agneya or South East, Avanti in South, Aanart (Gujarat) in Nirruti or South West, Sindhu to the West, Kaikadesha in Vayavya or North West, Madra Desha in North and Kulinda in Ishaanya or North East. In the lineage of King Magadha was the famed Ajata Shatru.

The contemporary times of the Magadha Kings witnessed the emergence of Buddha Dharma set up by Goutama Buddha at Kapilavastu. The emphasis of Buddhism was on Truth, Virtue and Non-Violence as against the traditional Vedic Dharma and the consequential Rituals. Goutama's philosophy created high waves and eventually secured wide spread acceptance especiallly supported by Kings and large sections of common persons. It was in this lineage of Kings were Sakya Muni-Shuddhodana-Sakyha Singha-Buddhi Simha-Chandra Gupta. The last of the lineage mentioned set up Maurya Vamsa, was married to the daughter of King Sulub or Selukas of Parsi desha and followed Bouddha Dharma; his son was Bimbisara and the latter's son was the memorable Ashoka. It was after Ashoka's regime that a Brahmana of Kanyakubjadesha performed a powerful Brahmahotra Yagna on Abu Mountain and there were four Kshatriyas who were materialised from the Yagna Kunda viz. Pramar (Paramar) who was a Sama Vedi, Chapahani (Chauhan) who was a Krishna Yajurvedi, Trivedi (Gaharvar) a Shukla Yajurvedi and Pariharak who was an Atharva Vedi. These Kshatriyas defeated the descendants of Ashoka, reviving the

Veda-based Administration and diminished the dominance of Buddhists; Parihar established his Kingdom at Baghel khanda (Bundelkhand) with Kalanjara as its Capital; Chapahani or Chauhan occupied Rajaputana Kshetra (Delhi Nagar) and constructed Ajmer which represented 'Chaturvarnas' or Four Castes and Shukla occupied Aanarta Desha (Gujarat) and set up Dwaraka as his Capital. Stated to be the son of Ujjain's King Paramaditya of Paramar Dynasity, Vikramaditya who was a legendary Emperor who heralded 'Vikrama Samvat' (Vikrama Era) signifying his victory over Rudrasimha of the present Gujarat and virtual destruction of the Saka Kshatraka Dynasity. He maintained the Nine Gems in his Court (*Vikramaasya asthaney Navaratnaani Dhanvantarey Kshapanakomarasinha Shanku Vetalabhatta Ghatakarpa Kalidasah Khyato Vraraha Mihiro Nrupathessabhayam Ratnaani vai Vararuchi mava Vikramaasya*) viz. Dhanvantari, Kshapanaka, Amarasinha, Shankhu, Vetala Bhaata, Ghatakarpa, Kalidasa, Varahamihira and Vararuchi. [He was stated to have ruled most of Asia from the Eastern Arabia to China and North Korea and from Mongolia to Indonesia, subjugating and relieving the Earth of Barbarians like Shakas, Mlecchaas, Yavanas, Tursharas, Parasikas (Persians) and Hunas. That was indeed the Golden Era of Bharat!

## 'Satyanarayana Vrata' and Six 'Kathas' (Episodes) of His Glories

Satyavratam Satyaparam Trisatyam Satyasya yonim nihitam cha Satey, Satyasya Satyamrita Satyanetram Satyaatmikam twaam Sharanam prapannah/Antarbhavenanta bhavantamevahyatatya janto mrigayanti santah. Asantama pya ntyahimantarena Santam gunamtam kimu yanti santah/ (The objective of accomplishing Sacchinaananda Paramaatma is to perform Satya Narayana Vratam- which is the vehicle full of Truth, always absorptive of Truth, True-visioned and Truth-Souled; I seek refuge in Swami Satyanarayana! The fact that all human beings seek 'Satya Tatva' or the Consciousness of Truth is indeed transparent and patent; it is also clear that selfless dedication to Satya Narayana is the ultimate goal!)Vyasa Deva narrated that Sage Shounaka requested Sutha Maha Muni on behalf of a congregation of Munis at Naimisharanya as to which would be the most effective and none-too-complicated method of Realisation of Paramatma! Maha Muni Suta instanly took the name of Satyanarayana and prayed to him as follows: Navaambhojanetram Ramakelipaatram Chaturbaahu chaameekaram chaarugaatram/ Jagatraana hetum ripow dhumraketum sadaa Satyanaraayanam stoumi Devam (I pray to Bhagavan Satyanarayana who has the enchanting eyes of delicate and fully opened Lotus, who is deservingly playful with Bhagavati Lakshmi, who possesses four shapely arms and stunningly shimmering Physique of gold and the Unique Source of Might to shield the Universe against Evil Forces!) Shri Ramam Saha Lakshmanam Sakarunam Seetaanvitam Satvikam, Vaidehimukhapadma lubdha mathupam Poulasya samhaarakam/ Vandey Vandya padaambujam Suravaram Bhaktaanukampaakaram, Shatrughnena Hanumantaacha Bharatena sevitam Raghavam ( I salute with reverence Bhagavan Shri Rama who is the epitome of benevolence, whose lotus-like feet are always worshipped, who readily responds to devotees with mercy, who retains Lakshmana with Him and is accompanied by Devi Sita while benignly glancing at her lotus-like graceful face; who is worshipped by Shatrughna, Hanuman and Bharata; who is the destroyer of Poulastya, and the Symbol of Truth and Virtue as the Supreme of Devas). Sutha Maha Muni then proceeded to narrate the First Katha (Episode) of Devarshi Narada who having gone around the World in his periodic visits came down to Martya Loka (Bhu Loka) and felt sad that human beings were suffering a lot without any relief from their miseries; he approached Vishnu Deva and prayed for a solution to offer to the human beings who were constant targets of diseases, poverty, natural calamities and discontentment. Lord Vishnu replied instantly that the easiest and effective means of providing reprieve from human sufferings would be the sincere performance of Satyanarayana Vrata; genuine and heartfelt observance of this Vrata would indeed effect in endowing with wealth to the unfortunate, excellent children, Kingdoms to those who lost their positions, good quality vision to the blind, freedom to those who were imprisoned, courage to the frightened and fulfillment of one's wants long cherished. The brief procedure of executing the Vrata is to make a firm resolve to do so without

hindrances, keep a Tulasi Manjari in hands and pray to Shrihari as follows: Narayanam saandraghanaaya daantam, Chaturbhujam peetamahaarvaasasam/ Prasanna vaktram Navakanja lochanam, Sanandanaadyaika rupa sevitam bhaje/ Karomi the Vratam Deva saayamkaaley twadarchanam, Shrutva Gaadhaam twadeeyam hi prasaadam tey bhajaamyaham/ (Bhagavan Narayana! You possess dark-cloud complexion, grand four arms, tranquil appearance, attractive eyes like fresh lotus, and worshipped by Sanaka Sanandana and other well-known Sages; I am always dedicated in my sincere devotion to You and have determined to perform puja by this evening and then only secure your 'Prasad' (blessings). Thereafter, commence the formal worship with five 'Kalashas' and instal Satyanarayana 'Pratima' in gold or silver or as per one's convenience. The Puja would be according to 'Purusha Sukta Mantra vidhana' by way of the precsribed 'Shodasopacharas' viz.'Avaahayami' (Invocation), 'Suvarna Simha Samarpana (improvising a Golden chair), 'Padyam' (washing the Deity's feet), 'Arghyam' (providing water to clean His hands), 'Aachamaneeyam' (offering water for sipping), 'Suddhodaka Snaana' (bathing the Deity's Pratima with appropriate Mantra), 'Vastra Yugmam' (offering double clothing), 'Yagnopaveetam' (Providing the Sacred Thread), 'Gandham' (offering Sandal Paste), then 'Puja' by reciting the Names of Satyanarayana /Vishnu, either sixteen or hundred sixteen or thousand hundred sixteen, along with flowers or Tulasi leaves only by men and 'Akshatas' or rice grains mixed with turmeric powder, 'Dhupam' (Incense material), 'Deepam' or lighting of oil-soaked cotton vicks, 'Puspham' or a variety of fragrant flowers; 'Naivedyam' or a full meal as Prasada comprising 'Bhakshya' or Sweets and Savouries, 'Bhojya'or cereals and preparations, 'lehya' or items of tongue-licking type, 'Choshya' or items taken in as liquids and 'Paneeya' or drinks; 'Tambula' or betel leaves and betel nuts', 'Neerajanam' or camphor lighting shown to Deity with the accompanying sounds of bells, 'Matra Pupshpam' / Vedic Chanting, 'Pradakshina' or circumambulation, 'Saashtanga Namaskara' or reverential prostration along with 'Aparaadha Mantra' to say that the Puja so performed was incomplete with accepted mistakes and should be forgiven. The worship should climax with 'Chatram' or symbolic holding of umbrella, 'Chamaram' or symbolic fanning to the Deity, 'Nrittyam' or devotional ecstasy displayed in dance form, 'Geetam' or devotional singing in praise of Satyanarayana, 'Andolika' or symbolic swinging of Deity in a decorated swing; 'Ashwaarohana' and 'Gajaarohana' or symbolic rides of the Lord on horses and elephants and all other possible 'Upacharas' or Devotional Services devoid of capacity, devotion, 'Mantram' or requisite formallity and attention! At the End, the following Mantra be recited while performing 'Homa' or offering to Agnihotra atlest hundred and eight times, viz. Namo Bhagavatey nityam Satyadevaaya dheemahi, Chatuh Pradaatha daatrey cha Namastubhyam Namo namah (My humble salutations to You Satyanarayana to whom we meditate always; You are the Master and Donor of the Four Kinds of 'Purusha Arthaas' viz. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha'; do grant us the same to us too). By so saying, Devarshi Narada left for Satya loka with the resolve of performing Satya Narayana 'Puja' as soon as possible.

Suta Maha Muni then narrated Second Katha (Episode) signifying the 'Mahatmya' of Bhagavan Satyanarayana to the Sages who convened at Naimisharanya: In the city of Kashi, there was a pious, learned and poor Brahmana, called Shatananda with his wife and children, eking his livelihood by 'Yayavaara' or begging for rice from door to door. During his rounds of begging, an old Brahmana approached Shatananda and advised that instead of begging to look after his family, he should certainly perform the formal worship of Bhagavan Satyanarayana who was like a boat in the deep waters of 'Samsara'. By so saying the old Brahmana disappeared and there was a stunning and dazzling figure of Narayana Himself standing before Shatananda with Shankha, Chakra, Gada and Saranga! The Brahmana got utterly shocked, instantly prostrated and prayed to Bhagavan as follows: *Pranaami Jagannatham Jagat kaaranakaaranam, Anaatha naatham Shivadam Sharanyamanagham Shichim/ Avyaktam vyaktaam Yaatam taapatraya vimochanam, Namah Satyanarayanasya katrainamah Shuddha satvaaya vishvasya bhatrai, Karaala KaalaayaVishvasya hantrai namastey Jaganmangalaatma murtey/ Dhanyosmadya kruti Dhanyo bhavedya saphalomama, vangamanogocharo yastwam mama pratyaksha-maagatah/ Drishtim kim varnayaamyaho na jaaney kasya vaa phalam, kriyaaheenasya mandasya dehoyam phalavan kritah/ (Bhagavan Satyanarayana! You are the Cause and the Cause-Maker of the Universe, the Saviour of the* 

Hapless, the Provider of Propitiousness, the Last Resort of Shelter and Protection, the Epitome of Virtue, the Form of Purity and Auspiciousness, the Invisible yet Visible, the destroyer of the 'Tapatrayas' of Adhi Bhautika, Adhi Daivika and Adhyatmika Nature; the Designer and the Design of the Universe as well as its final Demolisher; the Unique Provider of the Best of the World; today I am the most contented as my life's unknown and impossible desire has been achieved and what is more that I have heard Your Voice; could there be a bigger miracle that very effortlessly this dream has really come true!) When asked by Shatananda as to the procedure of performing the Vrata, Bhagavan replied that there was no need for ample money to perform it, but it would involve endless devotion and sincerity of purpose. What ever daily earnings that might be secured on account of pleading for food that day would be sufficient, with which to fetch the Puja material required for sugar, milk, gandha, flowers, fruits, dhup / deepa, betel leaves and coconuts and after Puja, the Prashad be shared with Brahmanas, family members, neighbours, relatives and others irrespective of caste, creed and social status. Bhagavan further asked that the Vrata be popularised along with the details of the Procedure and the Mantras to be utilised for it among Kings, Merchants and all the Commoners so that they too would get the advantage. By so saying, the Lord disappeared and on the following day, Shatananda took a resolve to perform the Vrata to the best of his ability and on receiving double the amount than his daily earnings, secured the material as required and managed the Vrata very well. He strained every breath of his to popularise the purpose, procedure and reward of observing the Vrata and eversince then, Satyanarayana Vrata became popular all over since quick rewards started flowing in; thus there emerged universal acceptance and popularity of the most famous Satyanarayana Vrata. On his part, Shatananda attained recognition and social esteem not only in Kashi but all over wherever Hindu Faith prevailed and after his end his Soul got absorbed into Bhagavan. The Third Katha related to the King of Badari Khanda named Chandrachuda at Manipurak Nagara who was highly virtuous, soft spoken and popular among his Subjects. He was a devout 'Vishnu Bhakta'. But, the Mlecchas of Vindhya Desha attacked Chandrachuda who having been defeated in a fierce battle had to flee into forests and strayed into Kashi Nagara and discovered that the entire population was highly contented and enjoyed quality life deviod of diseases, untimely deaths, robberies and natural calamities. He then came to realise that the key to the all round happiness of Kasi was entirely due to the constant observance of Satya Narayana Vrata and that the Originator of this Sacred Vrata was a Brahmana called Sadananda (Shatanand) who had the Vision of Bhagavan Vishnu Himself. Chandrachuda approached Sadananda and secured his 'Upadesha' of the Format, Content, Method and the instant Fruit of the Vrata and immediately performed the Vrata sincerely. Bhagavan Satya Narayana appeared before the King and presented a powerful Sword to use against the Mlecchaas who had forcefully occupied his throne and Kingdom. The King thanked Sadananda profusely and having reassembled his army devastated six thousand Mlecchhas, retrieved his Kingdom and the lost prestige, thanks to the observance of Satya Narayan Vrata. Back to his throne, King Chandrachuda prevailed on all his Subjects to perform Satya Narayana Vrata as often as possible and before all Auspicious Tasks like Weddings, Birth days and Nama Karana functions were initiated and most definitely on every Purnima day of each month. The King ruled his Kingdom with great veneration for Satya Deva for sixty long years having built a new Capital and ultimately reached Vishnu loka leaving behind a great heritage of peace, prosperity and lasting fame. The Fourth Episode was of Bhills/ Nishadas (Wood cutters) who happened to visit Kashi Nagar to sell their wood, got lost in the City and approached the Hermitage of Vishnu Das (Shatananda) as they felt thirsty. They were impressed with an on-going worship in the Hermitage, even as Vishnu Das not only quenched their thirst but also encouraged witnessing the proceedings of Satya Narayana Vrata. The Nishads took the Prasad at the conclusion of the Vrata with humility and high devotion and tried to take leave of Vishnu Das. The latter enquired whether they would also like to perform the Vrata and the Nishads exclaimed that it was not possible for them to do so; they said that performance of a Puja was not only expensive but they were completely illiterate and could never observe this kind of a complicated Puja in their life time ever! Satyanarayana Vrata is neither expensive nor complicated; what is significant is the devotion and commitment rather than riches nor knowledge. This was made amply clear to the Bhills; he said that Lord Krishna while visiting Hastinapura did not accept the Chief Guest Status of Duryodhana but stayed in the humble cottage of Vidura instead! Krishna again took away the 'tandulakanas' (rice-fries) from Sudama (Kuchela) with affection and bestowed such wealth that was not in the reach of Kings even; similarly He was so close to the illiterate and innocent Gopas and Gopis but kept aloof from even Great Sages! Having said this, Vishnu Das prescribed a simple and straight-forward format of observing the Vrata and enabled the Bhills to perform the worship in an effortless and easy way which even unintelligent children could follow provided however their hearts were transparent and Bhakti was paramount. The community of Bhills was thus prompted and encouraged by Vishnu Das, whereby they started earning by the sale of wood and gained profits and confidence in course of time. Eventually, their devotion became intense and their life-style changed so much that took firm steps towards attainment Vishnu Loka!

The Fifth Episode centered on a Vaisya called Sadhu and his son-in-law. The famous King Chandrachuda of Manipuraka Nagar referred to in the Third Episode above was once performing Satva Narayana Puja along with a large number of followers, when a wealthy Vanika from Ratnapur landed by his ship filled up with considerable riches. When the highly decorated Puja Mandap, Sadhu enquired as to what was going on at that busy Place, he was told that Satyanarayana Vrat was being performed under the auspices of Chandrachuda Maharaj along with several other devotees. Sadhu was also interested as he had no offspring and thus joined the group and prayed to Satya Narayana to bless him with a child. The Sabhapati was conveyed of the wish of the Vanika and as though Bhagavan Himself approved the wish, the desire was approved but on the condition that soon after securing a child he should perform the Vrata in a manner that would become of the rich Vanika. In course of time, Sadhu's wife conceived and a female child was born. The Name-Giving Function was celebrated with great pomp and show of the wealthy Vanika and the baby was named Kalavati after consultations of her 'Kundalini'. The wife of Vanika reminded of Sadhu's promise that now that they were blessed with a child, the Vanika should recall the promise made by him to perform Satya Narayana Vrata. He kept on delaying the fulfillment the promise somehow. Meanwhile, Kalavati was growing into a fine girl and Vanika commenced searching for a suitable bridegroom; Ashta varsha bhaved Gauri Nava varsha cha Rohini, Dasa varsha bhavet Kanya tathah proudhaa Rajaswala (An eight year old girl is known as Gauri and a Nine Year old is Rohini, a ten year old is said to be a Kanya and Proudha having come of age suitable for marriage!). Thus Vanika Sadhu planned for Kalavati's wedding first rather than redeeming the promise made to Satya Narayana Deva. A suitable son-in-law named Sankhapati who was very rich too was selected as Kalavati's husband. After the wedding, Sadhu kept his son-in-law in his own house as his business partner and the joint business flourished well. On the reminder of Sadhu's wife about the promise to perform Satya Narayana Vrata, Sadhu postponed again till his daughter's securing a child. A few days later, Sadhu accompanied by his son-in-law undertook a business tour beyond River Narmada. They stayed out for long and the promise to perform the Vrata was almost forgotten. As though Bhagavan got angry about the callousness of Sadhu in redeeming his promise about the Vrata, the two-some of in-laws faced considerable difficulties in the business and on their return journey back home stayed at a Guest house overnight and at that very night there was a theft in the King's Palace and both Sadhu and son-inlaw got entangled as they were strangers there and got imprisoned; morever, there was expensive pearlnecklace found on the body of the son-in-law of Sadhu. While the two were languishing in the prison awaiting judgment for robbery, there was a theft in Sadhu's house at his native place and both Kalavati and daughter suddenly turned as paupers and were some how eking their existence. In the Sixth Katha, Suta Maha Muni explained that Bhagavan Vishnu could utilise the means of 'Tapatrayas'viz. Adhyatmika, Adhi Daivika and Adhi-Bhoutika forms to punish a human being when a person would go astray from 'Dharma'; in the case of Vanika Sadhu, the promise to execute Satya Narayana Vrata was wantonly ignored. Vishnu and his wife Lakshmi Devi had four sons viz. Dharma, Yagna, King and Thief and Lakshmi was equally fond of all of them. The charity given to Brahmanas and Guests is of the form of Dharma which targets Money; the Deva Yagna and Pitru Yagna are of the forms of Yagnas and in this case too Money is involved; a King who is responsible to safeguard both Dharma and Yagna also aims at Rajya Lakshmi and finally a 'Chor' (Thief) too is after Money in the final analysis. In the case of Vanika Sadhu, he was basically a Thief as he did not redeem his pledge to Satya

Narayana Himself and hence there were two thefts were involved-one by way of suspicion by the King and another a theft in Sadhu's own residence. Thus the victims of the unhappiness of Satya Narayana were all the members of Sadhu's family, thus analysed Suta Muni about the consequences. Be that as it might, Kalavati could not withstand her hunger and approached a Brahmana's house where a Vrata of Satya Narayana was being observed; she returned home late along with the 'Prashad' or the remains of the Offering to the Deity at the Puja. The mother was annoyed that Kavavati returned home late but as was conveyed by Kalavati that the delay was due to a Satya Narayana Vrata; Kalavati was then reminded of the lapse that occurred in not performing the Vrata and approached a past companion's house and begged money for performing the Vrata. Her companion replied that in the heydays of Kalavati, the latter gave a loan which would now be retuned. Thus, Kalavati perfored the Vrata as prescribed and Swami Satyanarayana was indeed satisfied. As a result, Vishnu Deva came into the dreams of the King who kept Sadhu and son-in-law in his custody; the former ordered the King to free the alleged prisoners, Sadhu and Shankhapati at once. Next morning the King called the Minister about the strange dream of Satya Narayana and his instruction to the King. The Minister called the Prisoners and found out their full antecedents. The King apologised to Sadhu, gave lot of money and freed them. Sadhu and son-in-law got back to their ship but even now there was no hint of remorse for not having performed the Vrata. Bhagavan took the form of a Hermit near the Ship and asked Sadhu and his son-in-law as to what was in the Ship. As a matter of fact there were many valuables forcefully taken by the King's soldiers from the Ship and since restored, besides many gifts from the King to them when released after their imprisonment. But Sadhu and son-in-law mocked at the Hermit and replied that the ship contained only dried leaves and grass and there was nothing worthy of donating to him. The hermit replied: 'Tadhastu' (So be it!). Sadhu and son-in-law really and literally discovered dried leaves and grass, instead of the valuables in the Ship! They were stunned and searched for the hermit and fell on his feet. The hermit reprimanded Sadhu by recalling all the incidents when Sadhu first encountered the 'Pratima' (Idol) of the Satya Narayana at the Palace of King Chandrachuda; he prayed for a child and pledged that he would perform Satya Narayana Vrata befitting his status but on getting a child he did not do so; he said that when the child grew of age and after her wedding, he would perform the Vrata but again he did not; he asked for lot of wealth which was also granted, but still he did not redeem the pledge; when he was imprisoned and sought help then too, did not; when he was let free from the prison and Bhagavan's help was sought even then he never thought that Bagavan gave the help; now too, he lied and said there was nothing for charity in the ship except grass and dried leaves! Sadhu the fell flat on his knees, displayed genuine shame and repentance and prayed as follows: Satya Swarupam Satyasandham Satya Narayanam Harim, Yatsatyatvena Jagatastwam Satyam twaam Namaamyaham/ Twanmayaa mohitat-mano na Pashyayantyatmanah Shubham, Duhkaambhodhou sadaa magnaa Duhkhecha Sukhamaaninah/ Moodhoham Dhana garvena Madaandheekruta lochanah, na jaane swaatmanah Kshemam kathampashyaami Mudhadhih/ Kshamaswa mamadouraatmyam tapodhaamne Hare Namah, Aajnaapayatmadaasyam me yena tey charanow smarey/ (Satya Swarupa! Satyasandha! Satya Narayana Bhagavan Hari! Human Beings tend to become victims of 'Maya' (Illusion) and get victimised with the thoughts that happiness is in the deep Oceans of 'Samsara' and seek to attain those momentary joys; persons like me become arrogant and ego owing to small amounts of wealth and imagine no end of themselves foolishly; You are well-known as ever-merciful to those who are repentant. Mahatma! Could You not provide me one chance of correcting myself to devote my entire Self at the lotus-like feet of ours!). Bhagavan Satya Narayana, the ever-compassionate replied positively and blessed the Vanika. A few days later, the ship of Sadhu sailed off and a message reached Kalavati that her husband was arriving ashore soon. She was so excited that the concluding part of the Satya Narayana Vrata being performed was ignored and did not even secure the 'Prasada' presented to Bhagavan as the 'Naivedya' and ran off to welcome the husband. But as soon as the ship was cited from a distance, she witnessed the horror of the sinking ship! Kalavati fell unconscious and after recovering her senses prepared herself to immolate in a Fire- Pit. As she was about to jump into the Fire, a Celestial Voice was heard saying that Kalavati who was already perfoming the Vrata did the unpardonable indiscretion of ignoring the Prasada and hence the calamity of the sinking ship, but if she went back to the house and took the Prasada with veneration, then

the situation might change for the better! Kalavati was ashamed of her and did the amends at once; the sinking ship stood up and got anchored safe. There was a happy reunion of the family. Indeed, none could ever ignore the Lord who is other-wise ever-forgiving, considerate and clement! In Kali Yuga, the most fruitful, effective and instantly result-oriented worship is indeed that of Satya Narayana Vrata, undoubtedly.

# Shalivahana and Ishamasiha (Jesus Christ)

After the demise of Vikramaditya of the Golden Age in Bharat, there were as many as eighteen Kingdoms named Indraprastha, Panchaala, Kurukshetra, Kampila, Antarvedi, Vraja, Ajmer, Marudhanva (Mawaad), Gurjara (Gujarat), Maharashtra, Dravida (Tamilnadu), Kalinga (Orissa), Avanti (Ujjain), Udupa (Andhra), Banga, Gauda, Magadha and Kaushalya. These Kingdoms were independent with separate languages, cultures, religions and life styles. Some of these Entities spread beyond Sindhu River and some even trans-Himalayas. It was at this time that Vikramaditya's grand son Shalivahana took over the sovereignty and controllled Shakas, Chinese, Bahmika, Kamarupa, Rome, and Khur desha. He allowed the cultures of Mlecchhas beyond Sindhu River and Aryavarta. Once Shalivahana saw a person on Himalayas who was very fair and handsome and asked him: Ekada tu Shakhaadisho Himatungaari Samaaya yau, Hunadeshaaya madhye vai giristhaana purusham shubhaanodaadarsha Balaram Rajah (The Controller of the Shakas (viz. Shatavahana) went towards the peaks of Himalayas in Hunadesha (near Manasarovar/ Kailash Mountain in Western Tibet). The person's complexion was of gold and robes were pure white.) Ko bharam iti tam Praaha su hovacha mudan vitah, Iisha pitrugam maam viddhi Kumaari garbha sambhavam (As the King enquired as to the Stranger's background, the reply was that he was the son of Isha and that he was born of a Virgin). Mleccha dharmasya vaktaram, Satyavata paraayanam/iti srutva Nripa Praaha Dharma ko bhavati matah/ (I am the promoter of the religion of Mlecchas and hold fast to the Principles of Absolute Truth; the King asked as what were the Principles!). In his reply, Ishaputra replied that when the Principles of Virtue got badly downgraded and Mlecchas were becoming barbarians, I took upon myself the responsibility of turning to be a Masiha / Messaih and assumed Prophethood. He continued to say: Mlecchasa sthapito Dharmo mayaa tacchrunu Bhupatey/ Maanasa nirmalaam krutwa malam dehe subhaasbham/ Naiganam apamasthya japeta nirmalam param, Nyayena Satyavachasaa manasyai kena manavah/ Dhyayena pujayedisham Surya mandala samsthitham, Achaloyam Prabhu sakshatathaa suryachalah sada/ (Ok King, the Principles that are intended to be set up among the Mlecchas are: Human Beings are subject to good and bad feelings. Hence, the body and the heart need to be purified; then the Deity whom You have in mind be meditated; Truth has to be uttered and practised, justice needs to be observed; the mind needs to be trained to concentrate and targetted on the Eternal Soul, situated in the Surya Mandala, since Sun-God and the Super Soul are just the same. As Paramatma is steady, Sun God too is firm and everlasting. One should therefore be truthful, and worship the Lord as manifested in the form of Surya.). Having heard this, Shatavahana bowed to Isha Putra, the Prophet Jesus Christ in admiration.

## King Bhoja and Prophet Mahammad

The tenth in the generation of Shalivahana was King Bhoja and he had to work hard to revive the values of the Shalivahana times which was indeed a bench-mark after of course was a historic record of the Golden Age of Vikramaditya. His Brahmana Guide, theorist and associate Kalidas was a renowned Poet whose works in the language of Sanskrit are unparalelled till date. Bhoja Raja extended his Kingdom far beyond River Sindhu upto Gandhar, Mleccha strong holds and several Kingdoms around Kashmir. It was at this time that among these Mleccha concentrations was Prophet Mahammad along with his growing number of followers. King Bhoja discovered among these Mkeccha holds that Lord Rudra was residing at an undisclosed Place and worshipped Him after bathing Him with Panchagavya (Cow milk, curd, urine, dung and jaggery) and Ganga. Lord Shiva appeared before Bhoja and instructed him to to yield to various means of traps in the surrounding areas as they were full of Piscachas, especially one 'Mahammad' whom

once before He gave boons in the past; instead Bhoja should visit Mahakaleswara which was full of Mlecchas where Arya-Dharma was extinct literally. As expected Mahammad met Bhoja and misdirected the King that the Deity at Mahakaleswara was subservient to him and shoud therefore follow his religion instead; Mahammad told that his religion. Kalidasa grew extremely angry ay what Mahamadi said and meditated the thousand 'Navaakhari' Mantra and by its potence, Mahammad got burnt and got converted as ash. Late in the night, the followers of Mahamad collected the ash and his Piscahak Soul paved way to a religion which cut the genitals of males, grew beard, ate meat of goat and cows, shouted on top of their vioce saying 'Allah' followed by prayers and were essentially iconaclasts or against 'Vigrahas'. As an anti-dote to the Mahammad religion, Bhoja intensified the promotion of Aryan Belief, Sanskrit / Prakritik languages to Brahmanas and Sudras respectively. After the demise of Bhoja Raja, there were ten weak Kings and gradually Agnivamsheeya Kings took over significance.

Kali Devata approached Bhagavan Janardana and complained that though the Lord assigned the duty to her to stall Dharma and initiate its weakening in the Kali Yuga and accordingly she created Mlechhas, but Agnivamsheeya Kings came to dominate and had been upholding Dharma. She said that in every household, there should be vices like wine drinking, gambling, craving for money, lust for women, thieving and the like. Lord Krishna smiled and replied that after the last of Agnivamsheeya Prithviraj Chouhan would be killed by Sahoddin (Mohammad Ghori) and after plundering the riches leave Bharat by installing Qutukoddin as the chief Ruler. As prophesied, Agnivamsheeya Kings did prosper before their obliteration.

## Glories of Agnivamsheeyas and the decline and fall of Hindu Dharma

Addressing the Rishis at Naimisharanya, Suta Maha Muni described the Agnivamsheeyas like Pramara, Chayahani and Parihaara. In the Southern Part of Bharat, Pramara became the King at Ambavati Nagara. In his lineage, Indrapal set up Indravatipuri (Indore), his son Malyavan established Malyavati Nagar and in this lineage Bindupal constructed Bindukhand. In the very lineage belonged to Kalpasimha who was childless and having taken bath at Ganga gave away in charity to well read Brahmanas a Place called Kalaap Kalaap which became renowned on Earth for a clan of Brahmanas who were extraordinary examples of Vedic Knowledge. Vayahani (Chapahani) was another Agnivamsheeya who established in Madhyadesha a Nagar called *Ajmer*, (literally meaning 'Aj' for Brahmana and 'Ma' for Lakshmi Devi (Ajasya Brahmano Maa cha Lakshmistatra samaagata, tayacha Nagaram Ramyamajameramatah smrutam). The son of Chapahani was Tomar who was a Shiva Bhakta and pleased by his worship, Lord Shiva granted Indraprastha Nagar to him. Tomar's youngest son was Chayahani (Chouhan) and in his lineage Jayasimha conquered Aryadesha and setup his Capital at Jayapura. It was in this lineage of Chapahani that Prithviraj Chouhan belonged to who established *Delhi* but Shahabuddin Ghori killed him and wrested power from the Agnivamsheeyas to firmly establish Muslim Rule thereafter. King Parihaar who was the other renowned Agnivamsheeya was the follower of Atharva Veda and destroyed lot of Buddhists and set up Kalinjar which became inaccessible to Mlechhas as the King worshipped Mother Kali which was eventually known as Kalikatapuri (Kolkata) and the neighbouring region was called Vanga (Bengal). In the lineage of Parihaar, Bhojavarma established Bhoja Rashtra, Shantivarma set up Shantipura and Nandivarma set up Gouda Rashtra (Dhaka) and another Place called Nadiha (Nadiya) or Vedaparayanapuri. Another successor Mahipati set up Urvimaya (Urmiya). Such was the significance of Agnivamsheeya Kings who constructed several famous Cities.

After Prithviraj who set up Delhi was killed by Mohammad Ghori, a Paisacha (Pathan) called Qutubuddin was appointed as the Ruler of Delhi. The Mleccha / Pathan Kings destroyed several Hindu Temples, Tirthas. Most of the Sages left Naimisharanya and moved over to Badarika Kshetra. After the Melecchhas, *Mukul (Mughal)* Vamshees followed suit; their King *Taimurlang* commanded Aryas to stop Murti Puja (Worship of Idols) sayin that 'Shaligrams' were mere stones, that Vishnu was non existent and the so-called Brahmanas and Rishis invented / scripted Vedas and Shastras to fool the gullible masses and perpetuate ignorance so that they would retain an upper-hand in the social system. Thus, Taimarlang threw away and destroyed Vigrahas of Deities and Shaligrams on hordes of camels to decorate the thrones

on which he and his successors sat on with vengeance and glee at the Taitthir (Taratar Desha). As Devas got agitated at these atrocities and approached Lord Indra, he threw his Vajrayudha and destroyed Tartar Desha completely and having retrieved some of the Shaligramas left them into the waters of *Gandaki River* so that at least a few of the Shaligramas would be recovered by the posterity. Subsequently Indra approached Brihaspati for advice; the Deva Guru disclosed that as 'Adharma' assumed high proportions, Vishnu, in the form of Surya Deva would be born in the form of Brahmana in Gouda Desha on the banks of River Gandaki at Shaktipura. On hearing this, Indra worshipped Surya Deva along with Ekadasha (Eleven) Rudras, Ashta (Eight) Vasus, and the two Ashwini Kumars at Prayaga in Magha Month as Surya entered 'Makara Rasi' under the guidance of Deva Guru. Surya Deva was pleased and having appeared before them all and gave away boons of a number of 'Acharyas'who (Leaders of Dharma Reviving Missions) would be born henceforth to revive the falling values of 'Dharma' and 'Nyaya'.

# Appearance of several 'Acharyas' (Teachers) to revive Hindu Dharma

As Sage Suta informed the congregation of Rishis, Deva Guru Brihaspati prophesied the appearances of several 'Acharyas' to preach and guide the Public as to how the age-old values of Dharma should be revived since those were in jeopardy as successive onslaughts of Mleccha and other alien Rulers tainted and tarnished Dharma. In Barhishmati (Bittur), there was a Brahmana named *Dhatru Sharma* who meditated to Lord Brahma for many years for good progeny. The Lord was pleased and gave a boon that a boy, a girl and a boy again would be born in succession. As per he boon, the three children were born and grew up to marriageable ages. Dhatru Sharma prayed to Tumbura of Gandharvas to bless suitable boy for the daughter and two pretty brides to the sons. Dhatru Sharma further prayed to Kubera Deva the Lord of Wealth to provide suitable ornaments and wealth to the son-in-law and the daughter-in-laws. Satisfied with the 'Ihika' (Earthly) life, the Brahmana meditated to Surya Deva for Salvation. Surya desired to ascertain as to which kind of Moksha was preferred by Dhatru Sharma viz. 'Salokya' achievable by 'Tapasya', or 'Saameepya' by 'Bhakti' (Devotion), or 'Saarupya' which was possible by 'Dhyana' or 'Sayujya' attainable by 'Jnaana'. Surya Deva provided Sayujya to Dhatru Sharma couple till the end of the Manyantara and commanded that the couple should be born again when Dharma would be in distress during the initial stages of Kali Yuga as Ishwarapuris as 'Kavya kartas' and Preachers of Vaidika Dharma.

At Mayavati Nagar (Haridwar), there was a Brahmana named *Mitra Sharma* who was a 'Kavya Priya' or the One fond of Literature, especially on Spiritual Matters, 'Vidya Parayana' (Highly erudite) and a 'Rasika' (Critic and Assessor of Good Writings). Once a King Kamasena from 'Dakshina Bharat' or Southern Part of Bharat visited Mitra Sharma along with the Princess Chitrini. Mitra Sharma liked her so much that he worshipped Surya Deva for long by reciting 'Aditya Hridayam' and taking baths in Ganga and finally Surya Deva asked King Kamasena in a dream of the latter to arrange for the wedding. After wedding, the couple was engaged in intense Aradhana (worship) of Surya Deva by observing Daily Vratas on copper plates in Surya Yantra by red blood flowers and enjoyed health and happiness. In course of time they attained 'Surya Sameepyata'.

In the further birth of Mitra Sharma and Chitrini at Kasi, Surya Deva was born as *Ramananda* who even at a very young age became a Gyani and after the demise of the parents, he turned out to be a 'Parama Bhakta' of Surya Deva. After became a Sanyasi, he spear-headed the task of reviving Dharma most rigourously and took to moral preaching and imparting Spiritual knowledge through a band of devoted followers who in turn taught the essence of Ramayana among the public. *Ramananda's disciples: Namdeva* was a reputed disciple of Ramananda who was born in 'Dehali' (Delhi)

to a young widow who was a devotee of Vishnu. In his past birth he was called Varuna of Varuna Deva's 'Amsa' and was the second of ten reputed sons known as Prachetas of King Prachinabarhi, having performed Tapasya in the middle of Oceans. Varuna was a committed devotee of Bhadra Kali. Namadeva

was a renowned 'Saankhya Yoga Parayana' (Practitioner of Saakmkya Yoga) and a Vishnu Bhakta, firmly believing that the entire 'Brahmaanda' was replete with Vishnu. He became a notable disciple of Ramananda along with Rankana-Yankana couple (Ranka-Banka), Kabira, Narasi Mehta, and Sadan Kasayi. The contemporary King of Mlecchhas *Sikandar* tested Namadeva's integrity and donated fifty lakh Mudras which was utilised for constructing the stone steps of Ganga River at Kashi Nagar; being a Yogi and Vishnu Bhakta, he brought back to life ten Brahmanas, five Kings, five Vaishyas and hundred cows that died on the banks of Ganges!

In the past, there was a Brahmana called Vishvanara who meditated for long to Brahma Deva for a child. As Brahma appeared, the Brahmana asked for an extraordinary boon viz. that Bhagavan Janardana Himself should be his son.Brahma replied that a son named Pavak would be born as the Chief of 'Ashta Vasus' and would be popular as *Vaishvanara* (Agni Deva) and his wife would be *Swaha Devi*. This Pavakamsha Vasu created from his face a person known as *Rankana* or Ranka and his wife was *Yankana* or Banka and both were the disciples of Ramananda were very pious; they earned their earnings by selling wood and from the same did several 'Dharma Karyas'.

Another disciple of Ramanada was *Sant Kabir* who was disowned by his Vaishya parents Dhanapalak and his wife as soon as the child was born as they apprehended that the birth was in 'Moolaganda Yoga' or the danger of keeping the child in their house which might risk the entire 'Vamsa'; they thus decided to leave in a forest. A childless 'Mussalman' couple-Ali and his wife- who were issueless pursuing the occupation of weavers at Kashi decided to adopt the child and called him Kabir. The boy on attaining the age of seven turned out to be a Vishnu Bhakta and was in the habit of calling Vishnu and Lakshmi at the midday of each day to eat Prashad daily. Local persons even considered Kabir as metally deranged to have invired the Deities for food! But gradually realising that Kabir cure diseases and boons, he became a Center of Attraction and popularity. *Narsi Mehta* was another disciple of Ramanada who was also a Vasu among the 'Ashta Vasus' in the previous birth of his; he was the fifth Vasu with the 'Amsa' of Dhruvathe Pole Star on the Sky. Narsi Mehta was a totally dedicated devotee of Lord Vishnu and it was believed that he had the visions of 'Rasaleelas' at Brindayana.

Yet another disciple of Ramanand was *Sadan Kasaayi* who was born from the 'Amsa' (facet) of Ashwini Kumars in the house of Shudras following the occupation of Kasayis or Goat killing and selling; they used to weigh meat on the Shaligram Balance. Sadan was an extraordinary devotee of his parents. He came under the influence of Kabir and Ramanand finally.

Nimbaditya: In Satya Yuga, there was a Brahmana named Aryama who was a staunch devotee of Surya Deva; he felt that lach of monetary support wasthe reason why 'Dharma Karyas' or Noble Deeds for the benefit of General Public could not be adequately executed such as construction of wells, water bodies, Choultries etc. and thus prayed to Surya Deva in Jyeshtha Month to facilitate him to take up such Public Tasks. Surya Deva appeared and presented him a 'Divya Mani' or a Celestial Provider of Wealth which yielded Gold on daily basis with which to perform Dharma Karyas. In Jyeshtha Month again, Devas worshipped Surya Deva at the end of Dwapara Yuga with a similar request this time to provide a boon to enable 'Deva Karyas' and to ward off the intensity of the impending Kali Yuga. Surya Deva responded positively and assured that Sudarshana Chakra would be born as Nimbaditya (Nimbikacharya) to restore the vanishing values of Dharma at a Place known as 'Tailanga' near Narmada. He further said that Narada Maharshi would teach the art of preaching and Nimbikacharya would propagate Dharma at Mathura, Naimisharanya, Dwaravati, Sudarshanaashram etc. As prophesied, a couple called Aruna and Jayanti Devi were blessed with Nimbaditya on Kartika Shukla Pournami when Chandra was in Vrisha Rasi; Krittika Nakshatra along with five Grahas was in 'Uccha Sthiti' or Upswing at Samyom Kala and Mesha Lagna time. At the time of birth, it was believed that Lord Brahma descended Prithvi to greet Surya's 'Amsa' (Facet) in the form of Nimbikacharya.

<u>Madhavacharya</u>: Deva Guru Brihaspati continued to narrate to Indra that in Treta Yuga at Ayodhya there was a Devopasaka Brahmana called *Shukra Sharma* who used to worship Ashvini Kumars, Rudra, Vasus, Surya and other Deities and the Devas were extremely pleased with his Pujas. Surya Deva advised Devas

that after the devotee attained Sayujya, he would be reborn at Bridavan in the form of a Brahmana as Madhava and his son would be Madhu, popularly known as *Madhavacharya or Madhvacharya*. His mission was to divert all those who digressed from Dharma due to evil influences back to focus on 'Vaishnava Shakti' and lead them to Bhukti and Mukti (Wisdom and Salvation).

Similarly in Dwapara Yuga, a Brahmana named Megha Sharma who carried on his subsistence from farming was a great Gyani and Vedaparayana; he spent one-tenth of his earnings on Pujas with admirable veneration. Once there was a severe 'Anavrishti' (drought) but for a limited area that Megha Sharma tilled. As all the other persons were affected, they approached the King Shantanu, who in turn requested Megha Sharma to suggest a solution. The Brahmana suggested that a month long worship of Surya Deva in Shravana Month be organised by engaging twelve well read Brahmanas by way of performing Japas, havans, tarpans, 'Samaradhanas' especially to Brahmanas and extensive charities. The King did likewise and by the grace of Surya Deva there were ample rains resulting in good crops and all round prosperity. Megha Sharma became quite popular among the neighbouring Kings as well who had similar drought conditions. Not only this but Megha Sharma's mere touch had magical effects and several persons of the Public including the King were healed of their long standing diseases; in fact Megha Sharma's magical touch imparted youth to the King and he ruled the Kingdom for several more years. Finally, when Megha Sharma attained Surva Loka and thence to Brahma Loka, Surva Bhagavan came in the form of 'Parjanya' and declared to Devas that in the Kaliyuga when Mlechha influence would become unbearable by badly hurting Vedic Principles then he would take the form of Shridhara Swami, the son of Veda Sharma and would intrepret Shimad Bhagavata and prevail on the sinning humanity to focus on the Veda way of life and thus stall the erosion of the values of Virtue.

In Kali Yuga itself, there was a pious Brahmana named *Pranshu Sharma* who was a 'Satyavadi' (Exponent of Truth) and 'Veda Shastra Parayana' (Scholar of Vedas and Shastras) making his ends meet by 'bhiksha' (entreating for foodgrains door-to-door). The 'Mayavi' (trickster) Kali accosted the Brahmana in the form of another Brahmana and tried to tempt him to say that there was a nice garden full of Kalinda fruits nearby and that he could eat as many as possible. Pranshu Sharma replied politely that unless he performed Puja and 'Naivedya' he would not accept the offer. However he accepted some fruits home. Kali then intercepted Pranshu Sharma in the disguise of the King of the Land and put him in prison saying that the Brahmana was a thief of the fruits. In the prison overnight, the Brahmana recited Suktas from Rig Veda in praise of Bhaskara Deva. The latter whispered in the ears of Brahmana that it was Kali Deva who offered the fruits in the form of a Brahmana and again as the King who imprisoned him; Bhaskara Deva further said that as Kali Yuga was arriving soon, Pranshu Sharma would be shifted to a safe place known as Kalinjar for his safety and after living there for some time he and his wife would attain Surya Loka and before the twenty eighth Kali Yuga, he would be reborn as *Vishnu Swami* to preach Vedas and Shastras to misguided human beings due to the powerful pressure of Kali Yuga so that he would offset the influence as a 'Parama Vaishnava Bhakta'.

At the behest of Brihaspati, Indra performed Surya Aradhana in Margasirsha month and Surya in the form of Pusha prophesied that in Ujjain, he would take give birth to one Rudrapashu couple as *Mihiracharya* (*Varahamihira*) and would revive Jyotisha Shastra which got tarnished due to the influence of Kali Yuga and the upper hand gained by Mlecchhas and Non-Believers of 'Nava Grahas' and their significance. But Rudrapashu was agitated that their child was born at 'Mula ganda Abhijit Yoga'expected to be an extremely inauspicious time of birth and after cutting the navel chord left a box containing the baby in a river nearby. But Rakshasas saved the child in the box which floated in the Sea near Lanka and gave it to Vibhishana the brother of Ravana the King of Lanka. As the child grew under the care of Vibhishana who felt that the boy was of 'Vishnu Amsa', he became an erudite scholar of Jyotisha Shastra including Jataka (Birth Chart), Phalita (Resultant Readings), Mukha Prashna (Face-Reading) and related disciplines. Finally Vibhishana arranged to despatch the boy to Bharata Desha as he felt that he was a Vaishnava who was not approved by King Ravana. In Bharata desha, Varahamihira made enormous fame as an

extraordinary Astrologer and revived Jyotisha Shastra at a time when Mlecchhas were unrelenting Non-Believers of Nava Grahas, Astrology and related skills.

As Indra worshipped Surya Deva in Pusha Month to ward off the evils of Kali in that Yuga, Surya Deva confirmed that he would be born as *Dhanvantari* in Kashi in the house of Kalpadadutta. Having mastered the Science of Ayurveda and its many facets including 'Chikitsa Shastra' or Allopathy saving humanity from becoming targets of diseases; 'Kalpa Veda'an off-shoot of Ayur Veda-Kalpa meaning human body; and 'Shastra Chikitsa' (Surgery), Dhanvantari shot up to fame all over Bharat. The King's son called 'Shushruta' became a disciple of Dhanvantari and mastered 'Shoushruta Tantra'- a Tantrik way of Healing.

A Brahmana named *Heli* in Pampapura was a master of 'Chatusshasthi Kalas' (Sixty four Arts like Painting, Music, Dance etc.) and practised 'Hasta Kala' and 'Vastu Nirmana Kala' (Handicrafts); he earned considerable profits and utilised for 'Surya Aradhana' by way of Yagnas, Pujas, Charities and 'Anna danas' or distribution of food to the Poor. He constructed a 'Jyoti Swarupa Stambha' (Pillar of Light) at Pampa Sarovara in the honour of Surya Deva who was pleased and blessed him with salvation at Surya Loka. He revived the Kalas whose glories were lost by the onslaught of Mlecchhas.

Surya Deva informed Devas that during the first chapter of Kali Yuga itself he would take the form of Jayadeva Kavi (Poet) to born to a Kunduki Brahmana in Vanga Desha (Bengal) who would be Heli as referred to above in his earlier birth. Jaya Deva did service to his parents and after their departure from life, he turned out to be a 'Vairagi' without life's attractions and a 'Bhakta' (Devotee) singing 'Bhajans' like a nomad. When he came of twenty three years of age, a virtuous Brahmana called Satyavrata dedicated his daughter Padmavati to Bhagavan Jagannatha and the Lord appeared in Satyavrata's dreams and directed him to wed her to a Vairagi Poet called Jayadeva who was of the Lord's own 'Amsa' (facet); when married the couple was happy. Jayadeva scripted 'Vedanga Nirruti'. He defeated a few notorius Sudra Writers in Prakriti language and revitalised the 'Panini' Shastra of Sanskrit Grammar. A few thieves prompted by Kali Yuga looted Jayadeva's property and valuablle donated by the King Dharmapal and cut off his hands out of jealousy. When the King saw him in this stage, he constructed a house suited to a handless person, Jayadeva scripted his magnum opus titled the immortal Geeta Govinda. In course of time, the wicked Shudra writers who cut his arms felt extremely apologetic and repentant and volunteered to the King to give a suitable punishment. But Jayadeva declined to give them a punishment and as the culprits cried relentlessly their heavy tears washed their arms of Jayadeva that were slashed and quite amazingly his hands reappeared again as a miracle of Surya Deva.

There was an extremely pious Brahmana named Vishnu Sharma near Saruyu River who led an exemplary and austere life with his wife and he used to seek 'Bhiksha' for their livelihood from house to house. When Vishnu Sharma went out of the house once, a kind hearted 'Sadhu' visited the house and touched by their poverty gifted away and left a 'Parasmani' to the house wife Vishnu Sharmi and said that the Mani (Jewel) would provide plenty of gold daily. But she did not dare to experiment in getting gold but waited her husband to return to the house. On return, Vishnu Sharma threw away the Parasmani on the banks of Sararu River nearby. The Sadhu returned to the house to ascertain whether the Mani was put to use. Vishnu Sharma coolly replied that he threw it away on the banks of Sarayu. The Sadhu was highly agitated as he performed Tapasya to Surya Deva for several years to secure the Mani and if he did not secure the same near the River, he would go in for self-immolation. When the Sadhu went in search of the Mani on the River Banks, he found not one but many such Paras Manis on the banks. The Sadhu was surprised and realised that it took him twelve long years in 'Shivaradhana' to secure this Parasmani, where as the Brahmana materialised dozens of them! Such was the spiritual prowess of Vishnu Sharma who like Surya Deva himself could dispel darkness of ignorance and egotism of the Sadhu who became a disciple of Vishnu Sharma instantly and spread the light of Spiritualism on the Earth which was heavily burdened with the pulls and pressures of Kali Yuga.

As Indra performed 'Aradhana' to Surya Deva in the Phalguna month, the latter entered Indra's body and materialised a Brahmana and Sachi Devi became a Brahmani. A boy who was born to the Brahmana couple was of Vishnu Kala in response to prayers by Devas to Vishnu Deva to offset the delusion and deceipt of the impending Kali Yuga. The boy as he grew was called *Shri Krishna Chaitanya Prabhu* and his innumerable followers were called 'Chaitanyas' who in turn created pockets of the Disciples all over. Bharat merging into viable groups preaching Dharma in the Vedic Route to offset as the anti-dotes against Mlecchhas.

Vaalmiki: Brihaspati addressed Devas to convey another prediction in Kali Yuga about a low class Brahmana called Mrigavyadha who used to make fun of Brahmanas and hunt animals and birds by sporting bow and arrows. He was in the habit of heckling and harassing all the passers by especially Tapasvis, Munis and Brahmanas by cutting their Sacred Threads ('Yajnopaveethas'). There was a hue and cry and Tapasvis complained to Lord Brahma who asked Sapta Rishis to counsel the Mrigavyadha and Vasishtha and other Rishis entered the jungle when the Vyadha shouted to say that he would beat them all; Vasishtha replied whether he would beat them only or destroy the entire clan of Rishis and Brahmanas! Then the Rishis asked him as to what would happen if his own clan were to be destroyed! On seeing the Rishis closely and got magnetised, the Mrigavyadha was not only frightened but also ashamed of his rude and ugly behaviour and fell on their feet with repentance. With folded hands he begged of the Rishis to show him a way by which his sins committed all along his life could be rid off. The Rishis found that he became a changed man now and with compassion gave him the Sacred Counsel of uttering 'Sri Rama Nama' continuously for years together; they said: Rama namahi tat jnyeyam Sarvaaghouga vinashanam (Rama nama itself would destrory all the sins). The Mrigavyadha now a fully transformed person did the Japa incessently as 'Maramaramara' and so on for thousand years: Marama -rametveyam sahasraabdam Jajaapa ha. This kind of Japa resulted in sprouting 'Aranya Utpalas' or Jungle Lotuses and hence the area became popular as 'Utpalaranya'. Thereafter Saptarishis visited the place where there was a 'Valmik' or thick bush and Mrigavyadha thus came to be popularly called 'Vaalmiki'. Vaalmiki Muni contributed to humanity the Immortal Epic of Ramayana with 'Ashtaadasa Kalpas' or Eighteen Divisions in poetry, by reading or hearing which a person would indeed fulfil the aspirations both in the current birth and further lives too.

# Advaita Philosopher Shankaracharya and disciples

In the current Manvantara of Vaivasvata, Brahma performed one Yagna in Utpalaranya in the beginning of Satya Yuga, when Devi Sarasvati arrived in the form of a River. Then Brahma created Brahmanas from his face, Kshatriyas from his arms, Vaishvas from his thighs and Shudras from his feet. Much earlier, he created Chandra the in-charge if Brahmanas, Surya, Kashyap, Marichi, Ratnakar Samudra Deva and Daksha. From Daksha's mind were born a number of girls in the forms of 'Kalas' on Earth by Vishnu Maya. Brahma also created twenty seven 'Nakshatras' (Stars) to Chandra, thirteen women like Aditi to Kashyapa and Kirti like other Kanyas to Dharma. As per Brahma's instruction, Daksha was made Prajapati and while every body else were obedient to him, Rudra was defiant and that was why Daksha denied the 'Havirbhaga' or the due from Yagnas meant for Rudra. Shiva got angry and created Verabhadra and Shiva Ganas viz. Trishara, Trinetra and Tripada also arrived. Veerabhadra and the Shiva Ganas frightened Devas, Munis and whoever else took part in the Yagna of Daksha; even Yagna Purusha ran away like a deer but Shiva took the form of a 'Kirata' (hunter) and tore off the limbs of the Yagna Purusha. Then Brahma intervened with his sweet words which somewhat pacified Shiva. As Surya Deva entered Tula Rasi, Rudra entered the form of Chandra, Brahma returned to Satya Loka and Veerabhadra was instructed by Shiva to enter the house of a Brahmana called Bhairavadutta. Once the most obnoxious Kali Yuga arrived he would be born to Bhairavadutta as Shankara Acharya. Even at a very age, Shankara took to 'Sanyasa' (Renunciation), became an unparalelled Scholar of Vedas and Shastras, scripted Shankara Bhashya and rescuscitated Shaiva Religion, Also, he popularised 'Advaita' discipline which affirmed 'Aham Brahmasmi'or "I am Brahma", 'Tripundra' (three cross-lines across the forehead with ash from Yagna kundas, or burnt cow-dung), 'Rudra Aksha Mala' and Panchakshara Mantra viz. Om

<u>Namasshivaaya.</u> He established the Advaita Philosophy with such very strong foundations that it continued in full swing till date.

Deva

Guru Brihaspati narrated how a number of persons became disciples of Shankaraacharya: There was a Brahmana called Ajagara who was a Gyani and devotee of Bhagavan Shankara; he satisfied Lord Shiva's Parthiva Linga and after a twelve year Tapasya Shankara granted 'Jeevan Mukti'. The Brahmana also pleased Sankarshana Deva by his worship and attained 'Sayujya' and thereafter became an ornament in the form of a Snake who had thousand hoods called Gouranga. The Sesha Naag Rudra subsequently was born into the house of Devatutta at Kashipura as *Giri Sharma* and became a disciple of Shankaraacharya. In Prayaga, a Brahmana named Nairrut who was poor, sorrowful and unfortunate. Once Brahmarshi Narada blessed him with 'Upadesha' and he pleased Lord Shiva with his year long worship; the Lord granted the Brahmana with Kubera-like wealth; he lived happily for long time and died. He was reborn as Vana Sharma and even at an early age of twelve became a Vedic Expert and conquered many Vidwans; subsequently he desired to learn Tatva Gyan and became a disciple of Shankaracharya. In Mahishmati there was a Shiva Bhakta named Vasu Sharma who desired to secure a male child and performed worship to Lord Shiva but there was no response; he even sacrificed his own body parts which too did not get response. Then he gave a sacrifice of a goat, when the Lord appeared and said that was actually not destined to secure a male child but granted on as an out of turn mercy. But the child was born with one foot like that of a goat and came to be called Ajaikapada. When Mritya Devata approached the son after a few years, there was a fierce battle between Ajaikapada and Mrityu; finally Mrityu was subdued and thus Ajaikapada was reputed as Mrityunjaya! In insulted Mrityu complained to Brahma Deva and along with Devas, but Brahma declared Ajaikapada as Rudra in when Surya Deva would enter Kumbha Rasi. As soon as this declaration of Brahma was given, Ajaikapada was born as Puri Sharma and having attained the status of a Veda Parayana defeated many Vidwans in wordy-battles and finally joined Shankaracharya as his disciple.

Ganesha and Dundi Ganesha: As Brahma Deva completed his full age of Brahma Years, there was Maha Pralaya and Maha Kali destroyed the Universe and became the only Entity all alone. Later on Prakruti Devi was materialised as Maha Gauri with five faces, ten hands and three eyes. On her forehead there was a very tiny and hazy vision of Paramatma who was a luminous, shapeless and inexplicable Particle and despite desperate efforts could not perceive the Undefinable. She prayed to that Parabrahma by straining with all her faces and eyes; Her Eastward Face produced 'Dhatu Shabdas' or the Sounds of Dhatus, the Southern Face discharged 'Prathyaya Shabda', the Western Face emitted 'Vibhakti Shabda', the Northern Face released 'Tigvibhakti Shabda' and the 'Urthva Mukha' or the Skyward Face emanated the sounds of 'Varna Matras' [all the Shabdas relating to Sanskrit Language Grammar]. Then the Parabrahma Swarupa provided a quick glimpse as an 'Avyakta Purusha' as His Origin was unknown since the Prakriti Swarupa was inconceivable too. From the left side of that Obscure Figure emerged an 'Ashtadasha' (Eighteen Handed) Maha Lakshmi; by visioning that Entity, the 'Swayambhu' Maha Kaali was astonished. She then witnessed the materialisation of an all pervasive Figure which was apparently Lord Brahma as he commenced Creation, the foremost being of water in the form of Rivers; the Lord took over Satya Loka. Meanwhile Maha Lakshmi greeted Maha Vishnu who appeared in two Major Parts viz. Raktanga on the left side and Gauranga on the right side. Both of them had four arms and equally powerful. Raktanga Ganesh is the Super Lord of Creation who is known as Lord Eshwara and Gauranga Ganesh is Niranjan whose meditation is performed by Yogis. It was stated that Lord Eshwara and Devi Parvati meditated to Ganesha some thousand years and on his appearance, the Eswara couples commended to Ganesha as follows: Namo Vishwa rupaya Ganeshaya Paratpaney, Chaturbhujaya Raktaya Yagnapurna karaayacha/ Vighna hantrey Jagatbhartrey Saravananda pradaayiney, Siddheenam patayey thubhyam nirdheenam patayenamah/ Prasanno bhava Devesha Putro bhava mama priyah (Our greetings to Vishnu Swarupa Ganesha! You are Four Armed, Raktavarna, Yagna Murti, Embodiment of Prosperity, the Creator and Preserver of the Universe, the bestower of happiness to one and all and Siddhipati; be pleased to become our child!) As they extolled Ganesha, he was materialised from Parvati and Devas celebrated. Surva putra Shaneswara also arrived and even at his cruel sight, the boy became

headless. There was a moment of awe at the incident and for twenty days the sliced head of Ganesha continued to glow as Surya entered Tula Rasi and was in Chandra loka. All the Devas were in a state of shock and Shani Deva cut off the head of an elephant and installed it on Ganesha's shoulders and Brahma who was pleased with Parvati's prayers fixed the elephant-head firmly on the arrival of Karkataka Rasi by Surya Deva. This was how Ganesha was resuscitated as the genuine son of Eshwara couples. It was in the same manner that a highly virtuous Brahmana couple too was blessed at Kashi Nagara with a son famous as *Dundi Raja* who became Shankarachaarya's disciple who authored 'Jaatakabharana', a Treatise on 'Phalita Jyotish'(the Fruitfulness of Astrology).

#### The origin of Ravana and Hanuman

Devi Mandodari was the daughter of Maya Danava the King of Tripura and after the Danava's death, she performed 'Tapasya' in a Cave of Vindhyadri to Maha Vishnu and attained Mukti. After her Salvation. two hundred MahaYugas elapsed and in the twelfth Satya Yuga of the current Vaivasvata Manvantara, Brahma's son Poulastya was blessed with a son Vishravasu. The latter married Kaikasi the daughter of Sumali the Daitya and begot Ravana and Kumbhakarna. Ravan was a 'Matru Bhakta' and Kumbhakarna was a 'Pitru Bhakta'. Both the brothers performed Tapasya and secured boons of invincibility against Devas and Danavas from Brahma. The Danava brothers fought a fearful battle with Devas and dislodged the latter from 'Swarga' and Devas in turn executed Tapasya to Lord Shiva for eleven years by way of 'Parthivarchana' and the Devas too secured boons due to which they became fearless too. Meanwhile, Kesari the son of Gautami Rishi and Kesari's wife Anjana secured a grand son named Hanuman with the 'Amsa' (facet) of Parama Shiva and Vayu Deva too was responsible in the birth of the boy. Mistaking Surya Deva for a red-coloured fruit, the boy was tempted to fly skywad tried to hold Surya Deva, as Indra threw his Vajra on Hanuman's body and Ravana tried to hold Hanuman's tail but Hanuman never left his firm hold of Surya Deva. Ravan kept on fighting for a year in vain and tried to wriggle out of Hanuman's powerful clasp. Meanwhile Rishi Vishrava arrived at the spot and eulogised Hanuman to release Rayana the terror of the Universe. There after Hanuman resided for long time at Pampapura on the banks of Pampa River as a strong fixture and was thus acclaimed as 'Sthanu'. Also since Rayana who had dictated the World and controlled Devas was humiliated by Anjaneva, his name and fame spread as Hanuman: Nighnanta cha Suraan mukhyan Ravanam Lokaraavanam, Nihanti Mushthirbhayah sa Hanumaaniti vishrutah. (Ravana who was in the habit of badly hurting Devas and related Demi-Gods and killing Vishnu- Bhaktas without mercy had thus been restrained badly and received a jolt by Hanuman; the 'Mushtighatas' or 'Hanus' (beatings of closed hand grasps) damaged Ravana was the reason why Hanuman was named as such. Lord Brahma informed Hanuman that during the twenty eighth Tretayuga's first Part of Vaivaswa Manvantara, Bhagavan Vishnu would take the Incarnation of Shri Rama and that he would achieve Rama's unreserved devotion to Hanuman and destroy the clan of Ravana, his cruel brothers and sinful sons. Subsequently, Hanuman would assume the form of a human being on Earth and live at the Manikarnika Ghat at Kashi as Bala Sharma and would become a disciple of Shankara Acharya and revive Tantra-Mantra Shastras as an anti-dote of the pull of Kali-Yuga.

# The Genesis of Ramanujacharya

At the beginning of Creation, Lord Brahma emerged from the top of a Lotus that sprang from the navel of 'Virat Purusha' and the Lord with four faces, two hands and feet wondered as to who he was. An inner voice whispered that he should perform Tapasya for thousand years and as Brahma opened his eyes, he found a four armed and fully ornamented Vishnu Murti with sky-blue body colour and Brahma was taken aback even as the Murti said that he was Brahma's son. But there was disblief on Brahma's contenance and there followed an argument. Just at that time a Jyotish Linga appeared which had no beginning or end. Brahma took the form of a Swan and Vishnu assumed the figure of a Boar and both went up and down the huge 'Linga' but to no avail. They both prayed to the Linga to reveal Himself. Bhagavan Bhava appeared before them and left for Kailasa and meditated in a 'Samadhi' (Trance) position for five Yugas. Meanwhile, a demon called Tarakasura did severe Tapasya and asked for a boon that excepting the son of

Shiva, none should be able to destroy him. Thus Devas prayed to Lord Shiva that he should soon wed the daughter of Daksha Prajapati; indeed Shiva married Sati Devi as prayed by Devas, but in course of time Daksha became jealous of Shiva and organised Daksha Yagna. An uninvited Sati Devi attended the Yagna, felt insulted and dedicated herself in the Homa Kunda; a furious Shiva created Virabharda who destroyed the Yagna. Sati Devi left her body but her Sacred Soul was transferred to the daughter of Himavanta and Menaka called Gauri or Parvati. Devas made efforts that Lord Shiva should wed and commissioned Ananga (Manmatha) to despatch the Love-Arrows on Shiva but the plan misfired and Ananga was burnt by the Third Eye of Shiva. Rati Devi made an appeal to Shiva that Ananga sent the arrows to enable Shiva's wedding for 'Loka Kalyan'so that Kumara Swami would be born and kill Tarakasura, that too at the behest of Devas and hence the killing of Manmatha was none-too-fair! Shiva cooled down and gave the boon that during the Vaivasva Manvantara's twenty eighth Dwapara Yuga, Sati would be reborn as the wife of the deceased Manmatha to Lord Krishna's son Pradyumna. The further happenings witnessed the holy wedding of Shiva and Parvati and Kumara Swami who was born of their union killed Tarakasura. Bhagavan Bhava's 'Amsa' was incarnated in the form of Ramanujacharya as the son of Acharya Sharma on the banks of the holy River Godavari and established Dwaita Discipline of Vedic Religion emphasising that 'Jeevatma' was entirely distinct from 'Paramatma' and established a new Philosophy as different from Shankaracharya's Advaita Philosophy that Jeevatma and Paramatma were one and the same, as the ephemeral human body ceased Jeevatma would merge with that of Paramatma.

# Emergence of Mughal Empire, Akbar the Great and celebrities of the Era

Suta Maha Muni continued to narrate to the Congregation of Munis at Naimisharanya as Sumantu conveyed prophesies for the distant future with suprising accuracy! As Hindu Dharma was once again got revitalised with various 'Acharyas' and their disciples like Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhavacharya, and Chaitanya Maha Prabhu to withstand the forces of several alien influences in Bharata the seat of Vedas and Shastras, Devas got an upper hand and King Bali of Daityas called Roshana and instructed him to go to Dehali (Delhi) in Bharat as the son of Timiraling (Taimurlang) with the name of Sarush and commence the task of destroying Vedamarga and its followers gradually. Sarush became the King of Dehali with the help of the Evil Forces backed up by Daityas and ruled there for five years. Babar was son of Sarush and strengthened the hold of the peace-loving and religious Hindus for twenty years either at Samarkhand or at Bharat as the Moghul dynasty came to reality. Babar's son 'Homaayu' (Humayun) who became the next King took a cruel stand against Hindus and created havoc among them. But another Mleccha King in the neighbourhood called 'Shekshak' (Shersha) defeated Humayun and ruled Dehali for five years. The fugitive Humayun and his brother Mukarram regrouped their army again and defeated Shersha and came back to poer at Dehali once again. In this see-saw of power stuggle between one Mleccha Humayun and another Mlleccha King Shersha, there was damage of several Idols of Hindu Gods and a descendant disciple of Shankaracharya called a Brahmana Mukund could not bear the scene of the destruction of Idols and immolated in a Fire Pit and twenty of his stadents too followed suit! Humayun who resumed his rule in Dehali Kingdom heard a celestial Voice that soon Humayun would be blessed with a Great Son of Mughal Empire called Akbar, literally meaning 'Ak' for 'Akasmat or 'per chance' and 'Var' or 'Vardaan' for a boon; the Vioce said 'Your son will be an exemplary, brave and fortunate Emperor who shaal not follow the Mleccha or Paishaachika route in his Enlightened Administration; the Vioce further said that Mukund Brahmana would be Akbar and his twenty disciples who immolated in Fire Pits out of frustration and agony since Mughul Kings destroyed Idols of Devas would reappear in the very Mughal dynasty! A completely transformed Humayunwas overjoyed the the Celestial Announcement and ordered charities all over the Kingdom. The beloved disciples of Mukund viz. Keshava, Madhava, Madhu, Devaapi, Somapa, Sura and Madana illuminated the Court as the Celebrities; Keshava as Gaansen or Tansen, Madhava as 'Vaijavak' or Baijbavara, Madhu as Haridasagayak, Devapi as Birbal who had the Mastery of Wit since he had the bounty of Devi Sarasvati, Somapa as Raja Mansingh, Sura as Bilva Mangala as Akbar's close companion, and Madana as Chandal who was a Nartak (dancer) and Kreeda Visharada or Expert in Games. While these Icons stayed in the

Court of Akbar, there were other famous personalities of Akbar's time: Shridhar as Tulasi Sharma or Tulasidas the exponent of Puranas who in previous birth was a Vaishnava Poet; Sripati in earlier birth as a follower of Madhvacharya appeared as the blind Poet Suradas famed for his memorable works of 'Krishna Leelas'; Shambhu in the erstwhile birth came into distinction as *Hari Priya* as an authority of Vishnu Bhakti; Varenya in his previous birth became Agrabhuk or Agradas as renowned 'Sant' (Saint); Madhuvrati in the earlier birth now famous as *Keelak* a Gyani, Poet reputed for Prosody and the Writer of Ramaleelas; Vimal of previous birth now known as Divakar, a Writer and Singer of Devi Sita's Life-Story; Devavaan became Keshava the Writer of 'Ramajyotsna'; Soma in the previous birth came again as Vyasadas who authored a Grandha titled 'Raha Kreeda'; Vardhan became Charanadas who not only scripted 'Gyana maala Grandha' and more so as a Technician of Rodasi Marg or the Skyward route; Vartak of earlier life as *Ratnabhanu* who was Jaimini Bhasha (Language) exponent and follower of Ropana religion; Ruchi of past life as disciple of Madhvacharya wrote 'Gaanamayi Leelas'in praise of Gods; Mandhata now reappeared as *Bhupati* who translated Maha Bhagavata in Hindi Language; Maankaar in earlier birth became Meera the daughter of Raja as an outstanding singer of Bhajans in praise of Lord Krishna as a keen follower of Madhvacharya. Emporer Akbar established a new Religion Din Ilahi which underlined the essence of all Faiths including Hindu, Islam, Bouddha and Christianity. He reigned as a Supreme Controller of the Empire for fifty solid years known for values of virtue, justice, humanism and inclusiveness. His son Saloma (Saleem) or Jahangir followed the great example of Akbar and Khurdak (Kusro Shaajahaan) ruled for ten years [who built the immortal Taj Mahal]. There was a power struggle among four brothers and the middle son Navarang (Aourangajeb) succeeded the throne; in his earlier birth he was a Daithya called Andhak. In his time, the Peace and Comfort among the masses disappeared and the autocrat King resorted to extensive damages to temples, Vigrahas (Idols), Salagranas, Shiva Lingas, and Ashrams. Under the oppressive rule of this Cruel and anti-Hindu tyrant, the Empire had to carry on under him for thrity nine long years.

## Prophesies on Some Highlights of Bharat thereafter

It was at that very time that Sevajaya (Chhatrapati Shivaji) a grand warrior subdued several small royalties and created Maharashtra; he also brought Aourangaieb under control and installed his son as the Mughal King. He extended his might in the Southern parts of Bharat. One valiant Mlecchha warrior called 'Phalaroosh' destroyed the once renowned Mughal Empire into pieces and ruled for ten years and his son Mahamad ruled for twenty years. Meanwhile, it was prophesied that one Nadar Shah Durrani from Khuraj (Iran) visited Bharat and plundered the traditional riches including the famous Peacock throne full of gold and high valued precious stones. Mahamad's son Mahamatsya was killed by Maharashtrians and the Great Mughal Empire was torn to pieces. In fact there was no binding force of a stature in Bharat and only local Principalities got mushroomed. Be that as it may, Shri Rama of Ramayana after vanquishing Rayana made possible many of dead 'Vanara' soldiers who fought valiantly to get back to life, the important ones being Vikata, Vrujil, Jaal, Burleen, Simhal, Jawa (Jaawa), Sumaatra (Sumatra), etc. He gave the boon to these Vanaras that quite a few Dwipas (Islands) far and near Lanka be occupied and that they would be Kings of these Islands and that Architect Jaalandhara would help construct and even their wives would be procured from among those Devakanyas liberated after Ravana's death. The 'Vanaras' were delighted at the happening and in course of time, the habitants of the Islands developed trade contacts with 'Garunds' (British) of the Western World, especially with Isha Putras (Khishtha, Ishu or Isamasiha). The inhabitants were Surya Deva worshippers and virtuous and honest people worthy of promoting overseas business and the King of the Western Dwipa of England called 'Vikata' and later on by his wife 'Vikatavati' or Victoria ruled over there by 'Ashta Koushala Marg' (under the Counsel of Parliament). The British Raj witnessed high prosperity by executing overseas business generation after generation with democracy (Rule of Citizens) with the hereditary Queen or King elected by a Prime Minister; the ninth Chief Representative of Gurunds was Mekal (Lord Macaulay) who administered the Raj with honesty for twelve years; he was followed by Laurdel (Lord Wavel) who ruled for thirty two years. Bharat was administered in separate Regions by various Rulers like Nagavamshheyas, Andhra vamsheeyas, Kaushala deshiyas, Saurashtra deshiyas, Naishadha desheeyas,

and Gurjara desheeyas. This situation continued till the British Rulers consolidated their grip over Bharat by 'divide and rule' concept till Swadesha Bharata witnessed innumerable twists and turns and beacame an integral Entity under the banner of 'Prajapalana' or Democracy. But meanwhile the inhabitants of Bharat belonging to innumerable sects, religions, languages and cultures have since emerged as a strong Democracy with a typical identity of its own.

#### Kali Yuga's second, third and fourth quarters and Avatara of Kalki

Suta Maha Muni told Shaunaka and other Munis that as Mlecchhas gained victory over the Dharmic Shaktis gradually Kali Yuga Devi was satisfied. Daityas who were stage managing the victory of Mlecchhas then constructed several 'Jalayanas' or Sea borne vessels to Harikhanda (China) where men were very strong as Devas intially but in course of a few years the 'Maya Yuddha' or the cunning and deceitful battles in which Daityas were well known the Harikhanda residents appealed to Mahendra for protection. Indra asked Vishvakarma to reinvent a 'Yantra' (Machine) by which persons of one part of the World would not be able to travel to another part. On receiving the hint Vishwakarma created a 'Bhrami-Yantra' by using which persons of one 'Khanda' or chunk of a Large Region could not freely travel to another 'Khanda' and also a kind of 'Vatsya' or a less potent Maha Vayu. This Vatsya would destroy Daityas, Yakshas and Piscachas and would protect the honest and Dharmic Brahmanas. This Vatsya gave shelter to all the Brahmans and other upright persons for a number of Years. This situation that enabled good persons was most unpalatable to Kali Yuga Devi and approached Daitya Raja Bali. Then Bali and Kalki Devi approached Narayana in the form of 'Vamana' who in turn enabled a Brahmana called Kama Sharma and his wife Devahuti on the banks of Yamuna River; he blessed that this couple would give birth to Bhoga Simha and Keli Simha. These two sons would stay in a Kreedavati Nagar and would carry out the wishes of Kali Yuga Devi, especially in the task of wide-spread 'Varna-sankara' or destroying the Rules of 'Varnashrama. Over two thousand years, the established Regulations made by Lord Brahma and the successive Manus would get thinner and thinner and by the Second Paada of Kali Yuga, Kali Devata would be happy to witness that the old Vedic values would be obliterated, that the Daityamaya human beings (fully soaked in Daitya activities) would be of two-and-half feet height, that their life span would be forty years maximum (as against hundred years now) and that they would be free like birds without any 'Karmic regulations! At the end of the Kali's second half there would neither by the institutions of marriages, nor Kingships, nor any social reformer and not even a Karma Karta! The World would be full of the progeny of Bhogi Simha and Keli Simha ane this kind of a situation devoid of customs and social norms woud prevail for one and quarter lakh years!! In the Third Quarter of Kali Yuga, the average age of human beings would be twenty six years maximum; Bhringha Muni along with his wife Saurabhi would create Kaulakalpa-named beings who would not hesitate to eat human beings/kinnaras. These new species of Kaulakalpas would resort to beastly affairs with mothers, sisters and daughters! They would be too sex-blinded and produce too many children and resort to affairs with co-males and animals! In the fourth phase of Kali Yuga the maximum age of humans would not exceed tewnty years and live like water-beasts and animals; hells like Tamistra and worse kinds of frightening Places of Retribution would be over-populated. As Yama Dharma Raja found that the influx of dead Beings was assuming alarming proportions, he and Chitra Gupta approached Indra Deva and later on to Brahma Deva and the latter declared that soon enough there would be an 'Avatar' (Incarnation) of Vishnu Deva as Kalki Deva; he would be fully armed with 'Kahdga' (Long sword) whose reach would be unimaginably long and widespread as also with a 'Kayacha' (Body-Cover) and 'Dhaal' or Protective Shield, mounted on a huge horse, travelling on 'Yoga Marga' for sixteen thousand years and would turn the entire 'Srishti' to ashladen devastation! At that time, there would be a cloud burst producing the Great Annihilation of the Universe under alarming and incessant rain called 'Pralaya'! That would be the fresh 'Srishti'heralding the new cycle of Yugas ab initio!!

# Narada's experience of 'Vishnu Maya'

In the Uttara Parva, Yudhishtara asked Shri Krishna to elucidate on 'Vishnu Maya' or the delusion which human beings are often subjected to as they were unable to resist the temptations. Bhagavan Krishna

replied that in the past Brahmarshi Narada too put a similar query and that he replied like-wise. He asked Narada to hold Krishna's little finger and follow what Krishna had to witness. There was an old Brahmana (Krishna himself!) called Yagna Sharma who had all the requisite accompaniments like a tuft, Yagnopaveeta, Kamandalu, Mriga charma or deer skin on which to seat, Kusha grass on his fingers and reciting Vedas. Narada visited Jambu dwipa with the scene of Yagna Sharma. The Brahmana visited the banks of River Vedavati in Vidisha Nagar; there was a Vaishya called Seerabhadra and the Vaishya extended all courtesies to the Brahmana and politely invited him for lunch. Bhagavan Krishna in the disguise of the Brahmana smiled and blessed the Vaishya saying that his business and farm-work might flourish. From there both Krishna and Narada moved on to Veni Village on the banks of Ganges and met a very poor Brahmana called Goswami. Krishna in disguise along with Narada too in disguise told the Brahmana that they were coming to that Place from a very far off area and would like to be their guest for food, shelter and night halt. Next morning while leaving, Krishna told his host that let his farm not produce enough food and let his family not secure children!! Narada wondered that while Krishna did not accept the Vaishva's food, nor his home comfort, but still he blessed him to let his business and farming flourish; but in the case of the miserably poor Brahmana with no recourse to fall back still managed to make the guests fairly well but Bhavan Krishna instead of blessing him to let his farming flourish and so should his family, did not bless the Brahmana at all! Krishna replied to Narada that while the well-to-do Vaishya did not have to exert to provide excellent food and luxurious bed to sleep in, where as the poor Brahmana went out of the way to provide maximum possible adjustments; the Vaishya deserved a blessing for more prosperity but the poor Brahmana dereserved Mukti but not worldly gains! Further on Shri Krishna took Narada to Kannouj and hastened to take bath in a lake in the Nagar. Narada emerged as a highly gorgeous and romantic 'Kanya' and Shri Krishna disappeared. Narada who forgot his memory attracted the attention of the Kanya and proposed marriage to her which the woman readily accepted; the wedding took place in a formal manner as a queen. She carried on with the duties of a house-wife and procured children and grand children and got fully engrossed in 'Samsara'. After a few years the King was defeated in a battle but the children and grand children were killed. The queen cried out hoarse at the tremendous loss that befell on the family and fainted. Krishna reappeared in the form of an elderly Brahmana woman and consoled the queen saying that the whole world was going on the steam of Vishnu Maya; there were lakhs of Kings and queens, thousands of Indras and nobody could ever predict what would happen next minute! The world was an illusion and to believe in its permanent nature would be futile and foolish; some persons would enjoy and at the same time some were victims of death; the world was a drama and human beings were 'dramatis personae'. So saying the elderly lady persuaded the queen to take bath in the same Lake where Narada took the bath at Kannouj earlier and as soon as he had the dip he came out as Narada again! Krishna told Narada that that was Vishnu Maya all about and disappeared!

### 'Paapa-Punya Phala Prapti' (Retribution and Reward)

Bhagavan Shri Krishna cautioned King Yudhishtara that each and every act of human beings-noble or otherwise-was duly recorded and punishments and recompenses are awarded by the Supreme Justice accordingly. Indeed, one's own conscience or moral voice within is normally the inward monitor of the actions. But depending on the differences of the 'Chitta Vritthi' (status of the conscience) - ranging from 'Sthula' (blatant or obvious), 'Sukshma' (concealed), and 'Ati Sukshma' (obscure) - the intensity of one's action is judged and evaluated. But Shri Krishna referred only to the tasks of 'gross' nature and not the quailified nuances. Normally there are three kinds of 'Manasika Paapaas' or mind-borne sins viz. mental aberrations centering on other women, objectionable thoughts about others and 'Kukarmas' (undesirable acts) detrimental to others. There are five kinds of 'Vachaka Paapaas' (tongue-borne) viz. 'Aniyantrita Pralaapas' (loose talk), 'Apriya Bhashana' (Undesirable talk), 'Asatya Bhashana' (False talks or Untruths), 'Para ninda' (accusations) and 'Pishunata' (back-biting / slandering). Four kinds of 'Kayaka Papaas' or body-based sins viz. 'Abhakshya bhakshan' (consuming the non-consumable), 'Himsa' (violence), 'Midhya kamasevan' (false living) and 'Paradhana-harana (stealing other's money). All these kinds of twelve tasks are blatantly qualified for retribution that are valid for entry to 'Naraka'. In respect

of those sinners who disbelieve, dislike or deride Vishnu of Maha Deva worst possible hells are opened. Those who commit the 'Maha Pancha Patakas' or the Five Greatest Sins viz. Brahma hatya (killing a Brahmana), Suraa paana (indulging in intoxicants), 'Asteya' Stealing Gold, Guru Patni Gamana (Sleeping with the Wife of One's own Guru) and who commend the earlier sins are also certain to enter 'Ghora Narakas'. Shri Krishna then described 'Upa Patakas' to Yudhishtara such as the following:

Declaring charity to Brahmanas and not keeping the word, steal the money of Brahmanas, possession of Great Ego, unwarranted anger, arrogance, ingratitude, mean-mindeness, excessive interest in other's affairs, jealousy of deserving and fortunate persons, plans to take away other women, sex with virgins, involving in business deals related to children, women and others, mismanage or misuse 'Stree dhana'or money pertaining to women, non-clearance of debts; criticise Devatas, Agni, Sadhus, cows, Brahmanas, Kings, Officials, Pativratas and all noble persons and so on. Those who have links woth the sinners are aslo considered as perpetrators. Those who commit sins by mistake or unwittngly could perform 'prayaschitta' (purification) with the approval of a Guru an elderly/experienced person. Those who perform sins by the thought, word and deed (Manasa Vachaa Karmnaa) are liable to experience retribution and equally are those who keep company to, or be a part of and approve the act knowinly or unwittingly by the perpetrator. In ther words, those who act, involve, approve or evidence the deed are all considered to be liable but for the degrees of involvement. In the Court of Justice of Yamapuri, the Lekhak (Writer)-in-Chief is Chitragupta who computes or maintains the Records of every individual. The stored fund of sins/ good deeds are stated to show with the details of punishments / rewards indicating the precise nature of offence, the places / time frames and all relevant data; this information is not only classified but has no interest / relevance to other parties! While 'Punyatmas' or those who have performed good tasks in life pass through the same distance at good speed and without much strain, the 'Papaatmas' struggle a lot by the wreched route full of thorns, gravel, stones, ups and downs, iron needles and mud; the passage would be full of fire, lions and such other cruel animals, snakes, scorpions, leeches, and frightening figures of Shakini, Dhakini and Piscachas. The unending route had no light, tree shades, and water. The Yamadutas drag the sinner bodies with blood, gaping wounds and dried tongues without break or rest and the situation of the dragged bodies would defy description! As the vision of Yamadharma Raja would get nearer, his visage spewed fire and just near him was Mrithyu Devata who like kaalagni was black, surrounded by 'Yama dutas' fully armed with innumerable weapons ready to destroy, and in the normal context a soul would be relieved by death but having arrived at the door of death itself, there could not be a death by shock but only be by thousands of shocks physically and mentally! In the seventh Patala there was pitch darkness in which twenty eight crore 'Jeevas' awaiting their sentence in their turns. Yamadutas instructed some of the Jeevas to hang up by huge trees upside down with iron chains binding their feet too tight; they were helpless excepting repenting their wrong actions as why they were stealing, keeping contacts with other women and making mockeries of Devas, Rishis and Brahmanas! The sinners are also pierced with hot-red iron nails and at the same time bitten by poisonous snakes; as and when the body wounds are slightly less painful they are forcibly opened and applied with salt and chillis! The 'paapatmas' are fried in boiling hot oils and after allowing the body parts become less hot, let dogs and cats bite the freshly cooked meat pieces of hands, fingers, leg pieces and brains! Those who resorted in their erstwhile lives ate 'Abhakshya Bhakshya' or the prohibited materials are forced to pull out their tongues. The Sinners who talked harsh and harassed their parents have to face hot fire balls and have the facial parts like ears, nose, eyes and cheeks fried part by part! Those who took food in utter disregard for guests are thrown into 'Asitalavan' Naraka. Yamdutas force those sinners to embrace molten hot iron pillars as punishment for experiencing other women, or unlawful bed-mates. Similarly those women who led unlawful experiences face the same kind of treatment of hot embraces! Similar experiences are meted out to those parts of body such as tongue for shouting and criticising, hands for beating others, kicking for legs, etc. Thus depending on the kind of sin committed, its intensity and impact, various permutations and combinations of retributions are made available. After the experiences so designed and executed are completed, then decisions are taken about the type of next

birth of the Jeeva as a tree or a worm, a bird, animal, reptile or if fortunate as a human being at a destination, status and future of the Jeeva once again.

# Significance of 'Vratas', 'Danas' and 'Snanas'

Keeping the aforesaid in keen view, every human being on earth needs to re-discover one-self and within the limited time available ahead in the current life resort to virtuous tasks so clearly described in various Scriptures that the delay to practise is the only factor and none else! Unfortunately, the pull of illusions, outward attractions, a state of indifference and non-chalance tend to slow down the process of selfawakening and the golden opportunity of the instant human birth is being unfulfilled and slipped by away! Let this not happen. The various ways of Self-Awakening range from good deeds, good behaviour and good words; at the other end of the balance are Japas, Tapas, Yagnas, Mantras, Tantras, Yogas, Sacrifices and several other means. The Holy Book of Bhavishya Purana prescribes Vratas related to specific aspects, targets, purposes and 'Vidhanas' or Procedures. A Vrata is a purified effort aiming at aligning the self with the Almighty as expressed in various nomenclatures, forms and features all belonging to the same, unique, everlasting and permanent Super Energy Known and Unknown, Very Far and Within the Self! One could put into practice a Vrata or as many as possible, since these are the shortcut routes to reach Paramatma by even one way and indeed even that one way could be the glorious Golden Route! The 'Uttara Parva' of Bhavishyottara Purana (as distinct from Bavishya Purana) is a compendium of Vratas, Danaas and Snaanas-an independent Attachment of the Main Bhavishya Purana. Some of the popular Vratas in the Attachment are mentioned below:

# Ananta Chaturdashi Vrata

Lord Krishna commended the Ananta Chaturdashi Vrata to Yudhishtara since the word 'Ananta' purports the concept of Time which was eternal and never ending. Just as Bhagavan was known by countless names as Vishnu, Jishnu, Hara, Shiva, Brahma, Bhaskara, Sesha and Ishwara, Ananta was another such name. In the days of yore, there was a Brahmana called Sumantu in the Vasishtha Gotra in Krita Yuga; he was married to Diksha the daughter of Bhrigu Maharshi and the new couples were blessed with a girl child named Sheila but unfortunately Diksha died soon. Sumantu remarried again Karkasha but she was vicious, cruel and mischievous. Sumantu was concerned about the marriage of Sheila. Finally he was able to fix up a wedding with Muni Kaundinya and Sumantu suggested that by way of family convention some gifts and money to be spared. But the reaction of Karkasa was highly negative and destroyed the material on the Marriage Platfom threw the new coulpes out! Kaundinya and Sheila were badly insulted and returned back to Kaundinya's abode by a bullock cart. By about the afternoon, they had to cross a river and Shiela noticed many women performing puja and enquired the details of the Vrata. She took bath and made a Mandala in which Anantha Swarupa was installed and worshipped with Gandha, Pushpa, Dhupa and Deepa. For Naivedya, Shiela cooked rice with normal condiments and ghee, half of which was given to Brahmanas along with Dakshina and the rest by way of Prashad. Sheila prepared a 'Thoran' (thread) mixed with turmeric powder with fourteen 'Grandhis' (knots), showed to Paramatma and tie up on left hand wrist for women and on right wrist on men and while winding up the Thoran, recite the following Mantra: *Anantha Samsara Maha Samudrey Magnaan Samabhyuddhara Vasudeva, Ananta Rupey* viniyojitatmahyananta rupaaya Namo Namastey/ (Vasudeva! I am drowning in this huge Ocean of Samsara; kindly liberate me from the depths of the Ocean and let me be absorbed me into you!). After fastening the Thoran, the couples ate the Prashad with full faith and got into their bullok cart back to their village but the erstwhile cottage got converted into a splendid Palace as by virtue of the Vrata of Ananta Chaturdashi; Ananta Swami smiled and bestowed such riches that neither Sheila nor Kaundinya could ever dream of! The normally modest and highly devoted Sheila gradually got intoxicated with the sudden arrival of prosperity; she called her step-mother Karkasi to their house and bragged about their unexpected fortune; just as Karkasi threw Sheila out of her house after her wedding with Sage Kaudinya, Shiela magnified negligible issues out of proportion and summarily threw Karkasi out with all her vengence. In fact, she neglected her daily worship of Bhagavan Ananta Rupa and her self-conceit assumed large poportions in the name of Social Status! Finally, she discarded the Fourteen-knotted

Raksha Thoran as a burden and nuisance. Her husband cautioned Sheila to behave more politely and her arrogance was replaced with ego, much less with modesty! The husband abandoned the Palace and his wife and shifed to Ashrams in Forests out of desperation. He started serarching for the Ananata Swarup's Idol which Sheila rejected wantonly. Muni Kaundinya started searching for the Idol from Place to Place; he adopted the life style of a Brahmachari, stopped taking food, always in the meditation of Ananta Deva and like a lunatic kept on enquiring of the Ananta Deva Vigraha; he asked a tree in a forest, a passing cow, the waterbody Pushkarini, and even a donkey! Since none responded about the whereabouts of the Idol, he swooned finally and was dumped in a remote corner of the forest unconciously. The Bhagayan was extremely pleased with the undying faith and pure hearted devotion of the Muni and manifested himself before the devotee who on regaining consciousness expressed his sin of neglect and utter disregard of the deity! He said most regrettably to pardon him for the unpardoanable: *Paapoham* paapakarmaahum paapaatmaa Paapa sambhavah, paahi maamPundareekaaksha Sarvapaapa harobhava, Adya mey saphalam janma jeevitam cha sujeevitam/ (Bhavan! I am the sin, the sinner and the personification of sin; is it possible for you the most merciful Pandarikaasha to absolve me of all my 'Paapas'! Then Bhagavan replied that tree which was a Brahmana never granted 'Vidya daan'; the cow which was a barren land in the past birth and thus became a cow; the water body Pushkarini in the earleir birth wasof two sisters Dharma and Adharma and their arguments were unending and hence their waves clash always and the donkey was an elephant in the past which was arrogant thus turned as a donkey! Such were the twists of fate! Meanwhile Sheila lost her fortune and regretted her grave mistakes. Both of them performed the Ananta Vrata again earnestly and regained riches but never left Ananta!

#### Shri Krishna Janmashtami Vrata:

King Yudhishtar requested Shri Krishna to give the essentials of Krishna Janmashtami Vrata and the Lord recalled that when the cruel King Kamsa of Mathura was killed by Janardana, Devi Devaki cried out by keeping Krishna on her shoulders and Vasudeva embraced both Krishna and Balarama and said that the momentous day of Kamsa's death had afterall arrived that he was able to witness the death scene by himself. The persons who surrounded the four of them were anxious to know as to when the posterity should be fittingly celebrate Krishna's day since there were many such remarkable days of his magnificence eversince his birth! Then Krishna replied that the best day of the celebration would be his birthday, the Janmashtami in Bhadrapada Krishna Paksha at midnight in the Rohini Star time as Surya was in Simha Rasi and Chandra was in Vrishabha Rasi (Simha rasi gatey Suryem gaganey jaladaakuley, MaasiBhadrapad –eshtabhyam Krishnapakshordharaatrakey, Vrishabha rashisthiteychandrey nakshatrey Rohinaayayutey). Krishna proclaimed that his birthday should be celebrated by perfoming the Vrata on this day at Mathura first and all over the World later on in each and every household. Yudhishtara asked about the procedure of the Vrata and Bhagavan Shri Krishna asserted that the performance of this Vrata would destroy the sins of the Karta's previous seven births. Praatah kruta nityakritah pragmukhoh Desakaalou samkeertya tatthatkaaley saptamaadi satvepi Prathana bhuta mashtami meya samkeertya Shi Krishna preethyartham Janmaashtami Vratam karishye:: ithi samkalpayet/ (After the morning ablutions, seated facing the East, a proper declaration be made to perform Krishna Janmaastami Vrata); an improvised 'Sutika Griha' or the birth place of the Lord be made and the Idol of Krishna with accompaniments like the 'Ayudhas' (Arms) and 'Abharanas' (Ornaments) be arranged along with the Idols of Devaki and Vasudava as also of Yashoda and Nanda, Balarama, and Devis Rukmini/ Maha Lakshmi and others; Vasudeva was of the Avatar of Kashyapa Muni, Devaki of Aditi, Balaram of Seshanag, Nanda of Daksha Prajapati, Yashoda of Diti, Garga Muni of Brahma and Kamsa of Kalanami. Decorated on these lines, a devotee would arrange with reverence for all the Puja requirements like 'Gandha', Camphor, Agarbatti, fruits and flowers, coconuts, butter, Akshata and 'Naivedya' as offering (Prashad). First of all, Devi Devaki be prayed to as follows: Gaayadbhih kainnaraadaihi Satatapariyrita Venu yeena nanaadair bhrungaadarshakumbha pramarakritakaraih sevyamaana Muneendraih/Paryankey swastrutey ya mudita ramanaah putrini samyagaastey, saa Devi Deva Mataa Jayanti Suvadana Devaki Kaanta rupaa/ (Salutations to you Mother of Bhagavan Krishna, Devi Devaki who is of the Avatar of Aditi Devi, in whose honour are several Kinnaras and other celestial

musicians are playing Venu, Veena and other musical instruments in praise of You and also many Munis carrying 'Mangala Kalashas' and 'Chamaras' to serve Deva mata Devaki of Aditi's 'Amsa'. Also some were engaged in praying to Devi Lakshmi with the Mantra: 'Namo Devyai Maha Devyai Shivaayai satatam namah' and also with the Mantras saying 'Om Devyai namah, Om Vaasudevaya namah, Om Balabhadraya namah, Om Krishnaya namah, Om Subhadrayai namah, Om Nandayai namah and Om Yashidayai namah to separate Pratimas. The Prayers are basically directed to Lord Krishna as follows: Anagham Vaamanam Shourim Vaikuntham Purushottamam, Vaasu Devam Hrisheekesham Madhavam Madhu sudanam, Vaaraaham Pundareekaasham Nrisimham Brahmana priyam, Damodaram Padmanaabham Keshavam Garudadwajam, Govindamachutam Krishna manantam aparaajitam, Adhokshajam Jagad beejam Sarva sthikyanta kaaranam, Anaadi nidhanam Vishnum Trilokesham Tri vikramam, Narayanam Chaturbaahum Shankha Chakra Gadaadharam, Peetaambara dharam Nityam Vanamaalaa vibhushitam, Sri Vatsaangam Jagatsethum Sri Dharam, Shri Patim Harim/ After the Prayers, Vedic Services are accorded by reciting the following Mantras: Yogeswaraya Yogasambhavaaya Yoga pataye Govindaaya namo namah –Snaanam samarpayami; YogeswaraayayYagna sambhayaaya Yagna pataye Govindaya namo namah: with this Mantra, perform Anulepana, Arghya, Dhupa, Deepa etc.; thereafter, Naivedya be performed and finally 'Deepaarpana' with the Mantra saying: Dharmaswaraya Dharma pataey Dharma sambhavaya Govindaya namo namah. On the same lines, other Idols like Chandra, Vasudeva, Devaki, Nanda, Yashoda and Bala Deva should be worshipped. At the time of Chandrodaya, Arghya be offered saying: Ksheerodarnava sambhuta Agni netra samudbhava, Grihaanaarghya Shashaankendo Rohinya sahito mama. At midnight, one 'Ahuti' of jaggery and ghee to Agni Deva be offered to Vasundhara and puja performed to Shashti Devi. On Navami morning an Utsav of Lord Krishna be done and bhojan to Brahmanas arranged and dakshina given to them saying 'Krishnome preeyataam' and also recite the Mantra: Ya devam Devaki Devi Vasu devadjeejanam, Bhoumasya Braahmano guptayi tasmai Brahmaatmaney namah/then the Braahmanaas bless saying Shantirasthu Shivam chaarastu. Lord Krishna told Yudhishtara that who ever did the Vrata on these lines would be blessed with good progeny, health, Dhana-Dhanya, Sadgriha, and long and contented life. At the Region where this Vrata is performed would never be subjected by Anavrishti (famine), earth quakes and such natural calamities, poverty, 'Akaala Mritu' or untimely deaths, widowhoods, misfortunes, robberies and quarrels.

### Madana Dwadashi Vrata

Yudhishtara desired to learn about the Madana Dwadashi Vrata from Bhagavan Shri Krishna, in the context of which Devi Diti the mother of Daityas gave birth to forty nine Marut Ganas. In the past, Vasishtha and other Sages described about the procedure of the Vrata. The 'Vratadhari' on Chaitra Shukla Dwadashi has to set up a pot full of white rice, decorate the pot with sandal wood paste and close the top with two pieces of white cloth and inside the pot keep seasonal fruits and sugarcane; this container might also be full of raw eatable material like pulses etc. as also a gold piece as per one's capacity. Over this pot be arranged a copper utensil full of jaggery / sugar cane juice and cover it with plantain leaves and sandal paste, agarbattis etc.; arrange for bhakti hymns and instrumental music overnight; give away the pot as a charity to a Brahmana the next morning; treat the Brahmana with good food and Dakshina and address the Brahmana to say that may Bhagavan Janardana be pleased this 'anushthan' or service. In this way every dwadasi the drill be followed and in the previous night, the Vratadhari should eat only 'Amlak phal' and sleep on the ground. On the thirteenth month trayodasi the pot should be given away with lots of grains, edible raw maretials like pulses, vegetables and fruits with jaggery, ghee etc. with a bigger copper vessel and gold ornament as charity, treat the Brahmana with good food, clothing and dakshina and of course lots of sugarcane! By so performing the Vrata for a year with sincerity, the worship bestows excellent progeny. Having performed the Vrata, Devi Diti asked a boon from Maharshi Kashyap that she should beget a child who would kill Indra. She took all kinds of precautions during her pragnancy period to protect the boy in all possible ways; she took care of food regulations, never allowed to become temperamental, took several precautions to be happy and protected herself from enemies. But in the very tricky hours of a late night and the small hours of the day, Diti was fast asleep when Indra by using his

Shaktis of Anima etc. entered Diti's garbha and sliced the embrio into forty nine pieces and at the time of delivery gave out as many children who were subsequently called the 'Maruganas'. And thus Diti's evil desire to kill Indra no doubt did not materialise but the Marud ganas were famous as virtuous joining the ranks of Devas!

### Muktabharana Saptami Vrata:

Bhagavan Krishna told that once Maharshi Lomesh arrived at Mathura and after comforting himself with the 'Atithya' or the status of an important guest, he enquired Devaki Devi as to how many of her boys met with instant killings by the cruel Kamsa; this saddened Devaki and wondered as why he was asking this strange question! The Maharshi explained that in the past, there was a Queen called Chandramukhi who too was unfortunate in losing her children like-wise and as she performed the Vrata her children who were dead for long got revived as a result of this sacred vrata! Lomesha Muni narrated further that there was a King of Ayodhya named Nahush and his queen Chandramukhi. The queen along with her companion Manamanika the wife of Raja Purohit went for bathing in Sarayu River. They noticed that several ladies were performing a Vrata and enquired of is importance. They all replied that the Vrata provided many fulfillments of their requests and the queen and her companion also decided to follow suit; after bathing in the River they were to worship to a Shiva-Parvati Idiol but after taking a vow that the concerned devotee women should always wear a golden thread on their right wrists, a ring be made on ring finger and that that they should never fail to perform daily pujas. But unfortunately one day when the Queen had to attend to some urgent Royal Tasks, she failed to turn up from her daily duties and missed the chance of worshipping Shiva and Parvati on the banks of Sarayu and her companion too did not. As there was a failure, the Queen became a monkey and har companion a hen. But both of them remembered their friendship and their failure to follow the Rules of the Vrata. In their subsequent births the queen became Ishwari of Malva desha and her companion was born as the wife of Purohit of the same King as Bhushana. After long gap of her wedding, Ishwari got a son but died when he was nine years old. But Bhushan's many children were growing fine. The queen got jealous and got Bhushan's sons killed. But Bhushan's sons were revived and the queen wondered how! Bhushan then explained that this was all due to the great Vrata called Muktabharan Saptami of Bhadrapada Shukla Paksha; on that day Shiva Parvati worship be executed by way of 'Atma Nivedan' or offering the self to them and a gold or a siver thread must be worn around the rightwrist always. The queen felt ashamed of her actions of killing Bhushan's sons who got revived and also neglecting the Vrata in the previous birth and performed the Vrata again sincerely by following the regulations most religiously again and regained happiness of begetting good children and brought fame to the King and the citizens.

### Go Vatsa Dwadashi Vrata

King Yudhishtar appealed to Bhagavan Krishna that in the Maha Bharata Battle thousands of soldiers, Kings and a number of Great Personalities like Bhishma, Drona, Kalinga Raja, Karna, Shalya, Duryodhana most of whom were close relatives died and Pandavas committed untold sins in the process and could there be a way out to raze down or at least mitigate the impact of the sins! Bhagavan Krishna replied that a highly potent 'Go Vatsa Dwadashi Vrata' would be the befitting answer to demolish the sins and explained the background and procedure of performing the Vrata. Several Tapasvis were busy with meditation atop the Mount of Namavratadhara and Bhagavan assumed the form of an old Brahmana who was shivering with age and carrying a stick to support, while Devi Parvati took a form of a cow. At the time of churning the Ksheera Sagara by Devas and Danavas, five renowned cows viz. Nanda, Subhadra, Surabhi, Susheela and Bahula. Among these were Lokamata Parvati was also stated to have emerged. The five Sacred Cows thus surfaced were given to the care of Maharshis Jamadagni, Bharadwaj, Vasishtha, Asit and Gautami. The six products of the Cows viz. Gomaya (dung), Rochana (Chhaj / foam), Mutra (Urine), Dugdha (Milk), Dadhi (Curd) and Ghrita (Butter) are all supposed to be Sacred. Gomaya is the beloved of Shiva and the source of Bilva Tree which is also considered as Shri Vriksha and is thus liked by Devi Lakshmi. Also Gomaya is the source of Lotus seeds. 'Gorochan' is extensively used for medicines and is known as a highly propitious material for many end-uses. Go mutra is the producer of

'Guggul'seeds which are nice to look at and have good smell. These guggul seeds are a part of food by Devas, especially of Shiva. All the useful seeds of the world are stated to be from Go Dugdha. Go Ghruta is the root of Amrit which satisfies the hunger of Devas. Is is well known that Brahmanas and Cows are the two most sought after species of 'Srishti'; the heart of Brahmanas is the seat of Veda Mantras, while that of Cows is the source of 'havis'. Cows are the origin of Yagnas so intimately conneceted with all Devas; cow horns represent in a coarse form both Brahma and Vishnu. On the top of the horns are situated with the Sacred Tirthas of the Universe. In the middle of the horns is Shiva's seat. Devi Gauri is seated on a cow's forehead; Kartikeva represents the nose and in both the nostrils are two Nagas viz. Kambal and Ashvatar; in both the ears are set by the two Ahwani Kumars; Chandra and Surya in the Eyes; Vasuganas are represented by the teeth; Varun in the tongue; Sarasvati in the kuhara; 'gandasthalis' represent Yama and Yaksha; both the Sandhyas in 'Aoushthas'; Indra in the Greeva; Rakshasas in 'Kakud'; on both the sides of Parshnis are 'dhows' and gangas represent four legs illuminated by Dharma! In the 'Prishtha bhaga' are Ekadasha Rudras; in all the 'Sandhis' are the seats of Varun; Sronitata is the seat of Pitras; in the Kapolas are human beings; Apana Vayu is the seat of Swaha Rupa; Go mutra has Ganga Herself; Go maya as Yamuna; the hairs of the cow's body represent thirty three crores of Devaganas; Udar has mountains and Prithvi and forests; Payodharas represent Maha Samudras; kheeradharas have clouds, rains etc; in Jathara a cow possesses 'Garhyapatyagni'; in its heart is situated with Dakshinaagni; in a cow's nech is set by 'Aahavaneeyagni' and in Taalu is the 'Sabhyagni'; Asthiyas have mountains and Majja is the seat of Yagnas. All the Vedas are also situated in the Cow itself! Bhagavan Krishna told Yudhishtara that once Lord Shiva asked a few Maha Munis to protect a Cow and calf for two days as he would return then. The Munis took extreme care of the cow. After a while a tiger appeared and started frightening the cow and calf. Enve the Rishigana got frightened and sought ways and means of taking away the attention of the tiger from the cow and calf; the calf out of fright started jumping up and down and made defeaning sounds. The Munis utilised a Sacred Bell, called Dhridhagiri, that Brahma gave the Munis to face such eventualities. The hooves of the Cow and calf got caught in a Shila (boulder) and even now the marks in the broken khuras (hooves) are evident with the struggle of the Shila, which indeed is Shiva Linga. From the skies Devas and Kinnaras praised Bhagavan Shankara who assumed the form of the tiger and the Cow was Devi Parvati. Those who visit River Narmada and touch the Shiva Linga at the Shambhu Tirtha should get rid of 'Brahma hatya mahapathaka'. Meanwhile, Maha Deva discarded the Vyaghra Rupa and appeared mounted on the 'Vrishabha' along with Devi Uma on his left side, Ganesha and Kartikeya and accompanied by him are Nandi, Mahakaal, Shringi, Verrabhadra, Chamunda, and Ghantaakarna, followed by Matrikas, Bhutas, Yakshas, Raakshasas, Devas, Danavas, Gandharvas, Munis, Vidyadharas, and Nagas as well as their wives.

On Sukla Paksha Dwadashi of Kartika Month, Munis performed a Vrata called 'Go Rupa dharini Devi Uma' named Nandini along with a calf. The Vrata was made popular by King Uttanapada and his wife Suniti. The King's another wife Suruchi made several attempts to kill Dhruva out of jealousy, and each time she made such efforts, Dhruva came out hale and hearty. Suruchi then asked Suniti as which magic was at work that each time Dhruva came out unscathed despite many attempts at his life. Suniti then explained that she was performing the Vrata regularly and Surchi also did the Vrata annd hence she was able to beget a son, her husband's esteem and the primary position in the kingdom after the King. Both the wives were happy in their own ways and Dhruva is visible in the skies till date as a Dhruvatara! The Procudure of the Vrata is ti take bath in a river or a water body, take one meal a day, and on the next afternoon worship a cow and calf with Pushpa, Gandha, Akshata, Kumkuma, Deepa, Urad-made Vada savoury and recite the Matra: Om Maata Rudraanaam duhita Vasunaam Swasaaditya anaam- amrutasya naabhih, pra nu vocham chikititushey janaaya Maagaamanaagaamadithim Vasishtha namo namah swaaha; provide grass and by touching the cow and the calf ask for pardon by the Mantra: Om sarva deva mayey Devi lokaanaam Shubha Nandini, Maatarmamambhilashitam saphalam kuru Nandini! The worship is thus concluded with providing water and performing prosration in reverence and eat siple food without using frying and sleep on the ground that night. Those who execute the Vrata as above would ensure safety of self, life partner and children, besides reaching 'Goloka' for a number of years.

# **BHAGAVATHA PURANA**

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#### ESSENCE OF MAHA BHAGAVATA PURANA

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# Essence of Maha Bhagavatha Purana

Inspired by the Great Narada Maharshi, the memorable Vedavyasa prepared immortal contributions to the posterity including Vedic Literature, Puranas and rendering of Bhagavatam. He gifted Bhagavatha Purana to his illustrious son Suka Maha Muni. King Parikshith, who was cursed by a Brahmin boy that he would die within a week's time, decided to live the next few days by seeking the Truth of Life and approached no less a person than Suka Maha Muni to preach the Great Essentials of Human Life within the shortest time available before his end. This background as to how Suka Maha Muni preached King Parikshith was narrated by Suta Maharshi to a holy congregation of Rishis (Sages) headed by Sounaka Muni who assembled at the Forest of 'Nimisharanya'. In his introductory address, Suta Maharshi referred to Lord Krishna as the all-pervading, all-knowing, and all-powerful Supreme Force. There are indeed countless teachings to comprehend the complexity of the Super Force, but the path of realisation continued to elude humanity, especially in the age of Kali Yuga, when human beings are short lived, lazy, misguided and unconvinced. That was the reason why Suka Maha Muni chose to highlight the essence of the Truth of Life in a simple form as compared to the intricacies of the Sacred Scriptures like Vedas; this occasion of King Parikshith's impending death provided an opportunity to do so.

#### **Illusion and Creation**

Suta Maharshi began with the concept of 'Maya' (Illusion) - the hard outer shell of body hiding the Interior Soul. 'Maya' is derived from Material Sources, which in turn, is associated with three features of the Super Force, viz. 'Tamas' (Ignorance), 'Rajas' (Passion), Sathva (Goodness). The examples of firewood, smoke and fire were cited to illustrate the three features to represent Brahma (Creation or Earth), Vishnu (Sustenance) and Eswar (destruction or the Final Negation of 'Maya'). The feature of 'Tamas' is akin to material wellbeing, characterised by women, wealth, power and evil. The 'Rajas' is akin to the effort of acquisition of knowledge, devotion, yoga and Sacrifice and the final feature, 'Satva' or 'Dharma' or the release of Inner Energy to align with the Super Force.

At the beginning of Creation, The Super Power or 'Purusha' expanded 'The Self' to concieve Brahma, who in turn created the Universe and innumerable manifestations of demi-Gods like Earth, Water, Light, Wind (Life), and the Sky; the Four Sons (Kumaras) known as Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanat Kumaras; the Boar which lifted Earth from the Bottom Regions; Narada, who collected 'Vedas'- Original Scriptures- and their Interpretation; 'Nara' and 'Narayana' the twin sons of King 'Dharma'; the Sage 'Kapila' who was the foremost of perfected beings who provided an exposition of creative elements, metaphysics and the secrets of the Universe; the Sage 'Atri'who taught about the subject of transendence; 'Yagna', the son of Prajapati Ruchi and his wife Akuti, whose son is 'Yama'; King Rasabha, the son of King Nabhi and Merudevi, who showed the path of perfection and controlled senses; King 'Pruthu'who cultivated land to yield all kinds of produces and made farm lands beautiful and bountiful; took the form of a Fish when the whole world was immersed in deep waters and protected Vaivasvata Manu on a Giant Boat; the Tortoise which bore the brunt of Mountain 'Mandhara' used as the churning rod of Ocean with 'Vasuki' the Great Serpent as the rope to finally generate 'Amrit', the Eternal Life Giving Drink sought by Demi-Gods and Demons; 'Dhanvantari', the Demi-God of Medicine;

'Mohini', the Supreme Enchantress who helped to bestow 'Amrit' to Demi-Gods and denied it to the Demons; as Lord 'Narasimha'- the Man-Lion manifestation who killed the deadly 'Rakshasa' King, 'Hiranyakasipu' and rescued Prahlada, the embodiment of Devotion to Lord Vishnu; as 'Vamana', the Dwarf- Brahmachari (Student) who sought charity for merely three steps of land from King Bali- who conquered the Three Worlds from Demi-Gods - and thus pushed the King down to 'Patala', the Under World; as Bhrigupati or Parasu Rama who fought twenty one bloody wars against 'Kshatriyas' or the clan of Kings who suppressed and tormented the Class of 'Brahmins'; as 'Vyasadeva', the son of 'Satyavati' and 'Parasara, who made Branches of 'A Single Veda' (which is 'Swayambhu' or Constituted On Its Own) into Four Vedas and many other ramifications; as Lord Rama- the Hero of Epic Ramayana, the Embodiment of Power and Justice, and as 'Maryada Purusha' or the Bench-mark of Nobility and Virtuewho annihilated 'Ravana' the Supreme Demon Warrier; as Lords Krishna and Balarama who vindicated 'Dharma' and 'Nyaya' against the vicious and unjust in a World of Evil, Jealousy and Selfishness, by ending countless Demons; as Lord Buddha the Enlightened who preached Non-Violence, Truth and Social Justice; and as 'Kalki'at the terminal part of 'Kali Yuga' who strode high on a white and flying horse with a powerful sword in hands by buchering the degenerated kings, animals and devils in the disguise of humans and sub- humans. Apart from these incarnations, the Super Power took to innumerable other manifestations as Sages, Demi Gods, 'Manus' or Leaders of each Manvantar or Long Capsules of Time ('Yugas'), 'Prajapaties' or Noble Kings, or Godmen.

The purpose of 'Avataras' or Incarnations of The Supreme Force or Mahavishnu was to re-establish and resuscitate Virtue, Justice and Values of Life, whenever or wherever disorder or disequilibrium appeared in the Universe. The Motto of The Supreme Lord is: Yada *Yadahi Dharmascha glanir bhavati Bharata*, *Thadaatmaham Srijaayami Sambhavami Yuge Yuge* (Hey Bharata, as and when Virtue is in jeopardy, I create the Self and appear again and again).

# King Parikshit and Brahmana boy's curse

At the close of the Great Battle of Mahabharatha, 'Duryodhna', the last wicked warrior fell on the ground with his thighs broken by 'Bhima'. 'Aswathama', the son of Drona, killed the sons of 'Arjuna' in sleep out of vengence. Arjuna hunted for Aswathama who had to utilise the Greatest Weapon 'Brahma Astra'to counter Arjuna who too used the same weapon back again to control Aswathama. But, as advised by Dharma Raja, the elder brother of Arjuna and close associate of Lord Krishna, let go of Aswathama, by cutting his hair and a Natural Jewel on his head, which by itself was a punishment. 'Bhisma Pitamaha, the Grand Old Grandfather figure of Kuruvamsa who was felled on the battle field but availed of his boon to die at his own volition, waited till 'Uttarayana' or the time for Sun's course towards northern hemisphere, and joined the Supreme Soul. Lord Krishna who returned to 'Dwaraka' City after the Great Battle had eventually ended His Incarnation and merged with His Own Super Power. That was the Memorable Close of the Greatest Epic of 'Maha Bharata'. As one Brahmastra released by Aswathama against Arjun was retaliated by another Brahmastra, the former Weapon would have affected the child in the womb of 'Uttara' (the war widow of 'Abhimanyu' and the daughter-in-law of Arjun) but for Lord Krishna's intervention. The Child, named Parikshith was the lone survivor of Pandava Family who eventually became the King. He was extremely pious and ideal as a benevolent King. He came across a Divine Cow once and declared herself as 'Dharma' or Virtue. It cautioned the King to watch out the impending danger as the near future would usher in the Era of 'Kali', full of vice, degeneration, injustice, and hatred. The Sacred Cow which had the reputation of walking well on its four legs would soon limp by a single leg and hop to barely move! The King's reputation as a philonthropher and noble came to be acclaimed far and wide. Once he went on a Royal Hunt in search of animals and having been exhausted, sought rest at the 'Ashram' (hermitage) of Samika Rishi who was in deep 'Tapas' (meditation). As the Rishi neither welcomed him nor was communicative, the King felt humiliated and placed a dead snake on the shoulders of the Rishi. The Rishi's son, Shringi, returned to the Ashram and saw the ugly sight. Out of immense anger, he cursed the King that within a week's time, a flying snake would kill him for his unpardonable indiscretion. On realising the severity of the Brahmana boy's curse the Rishi felt sorry for

the episode but it was too late to withdraw it. He repented the horrible incident but quickly braced up the situation by seating firmly on the bank of River Ganges and beseeched Suka Maha Muni to scoop out what all knowledge that he could muster and enlighten him within a matter of seven days and enable him to face death in full preparation. The word spread out and attracted several Sages, Thinkers, Devotees, Visitors and the Subjects of the Kingdom in growing streams. The King felt that his end would not only help himself but provide a colossal opportunity to the onlookers of being able to listen to the preachings by the Maha Muni Himself in person! Making a Pilgrim's journey to the Holy River Banks, illustrious Sages like Atri, Vasishtha, Bhrigu, Parasara, Visvamitra, Angira, Bharadwaja, Guatama, Dwipayana and the Globe trotter Narada himself made their visits. Besides, there were streams of Kings, Rajarshis, and demi-Gods quite apart from citizens of various other Kingdoms. King Parikshith himself sat composed, eganimous and ready to face the end, fasting on a mat unto death, having named his son 'Janamejaya' as the successor. On the other hand, Suka Maha Muni was a boy of sixteen years with spell-binding personality and a thunderous voice as if emerging from the heavens providing spontaneous replies. Incidentally, he had the nose of a parrot as his father, the Sage Vyasa who ignited wooden pieces to start a Sacrifice ('Yagna') -this act is known as 'Arani'- was momentarily tempted with a passing-by Celestial Damsel named Gritachi and his semen fell in the Arani, while a parrot flew across the Fire-Pit.

#### **Awareness of God**

King Parikshith addressed the foremost question to Suka Maha Muni as to what would bethe first step towars realisation of God. The reply was that in the normal life of any human being, there would be countless affairs engaging one's own attention like the need for earning livelihood, family matters, indulgence in material happiness and the concerns related to the well being of the self or the persons close. Thus there would hardly be time nor inclination to even remember the awareness of God except when confronted with circumstances forcing them to do so. Even if there is an under-current of God's consciousness, one tends to conveniently ignore or accord a low priority to the feeling of other wordliness or that of the Supreme Force above all of us. The moments of complete and concentrated surrender to Almighty are very few and far between. The Maha Muni thus asked the King as to what was the purpose of prolonged life without realising the objective of futile existence, even if the life were a success in the material context but devoid of the divine perception? The serious tasks to be taken to improve the awareness of God are well defined viz. to try to be lonely, gradually detach with material happenings of normal life, exercise self control in speech and action, practise introspection, withdraw the mind without thoughts other than of God, chant the Holy Word- OM- as often as possible, free the mind, control breathing process while performing 'Pranayama' and imagine / concentrate on the vision of Vishnu with His Limbs in a Huge Form of Almighty.

#### 'Virat Purusha' – the Primeval Force

Described as 'Purusha', the Primeval Force of Creation possesses countless heads, eyes and feet pervading the entire Universe, far beyond the miniscule level of human comprehension. He is Omnipresent, omniscient and omni-potent. He is immortal, intangible, and inexpressible. Whatever has been described, visualised or imagined by way of His Glory is far surpassed. It is stated in *Purusha Suktham*(a Vedic compilation of Hymns) that hardly one quarter of the Purusha is comprehended as the totality of His Creation and the rest of Him is unmanifested. From the manifested part sprang the 'Brahmanda' or the Cosmos, the countless forms of living or non-living species and the Five Elements (Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Sky) as also the Divine Architect, 'Visva Karma', The Master-Builder. The Gigantic and Collosal Manifestation of the Material World be likened with the Body of The Absolute Truth, wherein the concepts of Time-The Past, The Present and The Future-converge into One. Sages concieved the 'Virat Swarupa' or The Body comprising Various Limbs: The Bottoms of The Feet as 'Patala'; the Heels and Toes as the Planets named 'Rasatala'; Ankles as 'Mahatala' Planets; the Shanks as 'Talatala' Planets; The Knees as the 'Mahatala' Planets; the two Thighs as 'Atala' and 'Vitala' Planets; The Hips as the 'Mahitala' Planets and the Navel as the Inter-Space. The Chest of The Giant Body is likened to the Luminary Planetery System, The Neck as the 'Mahar' Planets; and The Mouth and Forehead are the

'Janas' and 'Tapas' Planetery Systems respectively. The Sages described the Topmost Planetary Structure comprising Thousand Heads as 'Satya Loka'; His Arms as Demi-Gods ('Devatas') conducted by 'Indra'as the Chief; the Ten Directional Sides as His Ears; the Physical Sound as Sense of Hearing; the Two Nostrils as Aswini Kumars; Material Fragrance as The Sense of Smell; His Throat as the Blistering Fire; His Eyepits as the Outer Space; Eye Balls as the Power of Vision (The Sun); Eye Lids as Day and Night; Eye Brows are the Places where Brahma and Super Personalities Reside; His Palate is the Director of Water 'Varuna'; and His Toungue is the Spring of Juices or the Sense of Taste; Cerebral Passage are the Vedas; His Jaws of Teeth are the Lord 'Yama', the Dispenser of Death and Justice; The Set of Teeth is the Art of Affection; His Smile is the most fascinating and deceptive Material Energy; Upper Portion of His Lips is Modesty; His Chin is the Craving and Thirst; His Breast is Religion and His Back Irreligion; His Genitals the Brahma or the Creator; His Two Testicles are Mitra-Varunas; His Waist is the Ocean; His Bones are the Hills and Mountains; The Veins of His Gigantic Body are the Rivers; His Body Hairs are Trees; His Breath is the Omnipotent Air; His Movements are Passing Ages; His Actions are the Reactions or the Three Modes of Material Nature; Hairs on His Head are the Clouds carrying water / rain; His Intelligence is the Supreme Cause of Material Creation; His Mind is the Moon or the Reservoir of all Changes; His Ego is Rudradeva; His Residence is Humanity; His Musical Rhythm is the Celestial Existence of 'Gandharvas' 'Vidyadharas' and Angels; and so on. The Face of the Gigantic Body is of 'Brahmanas', Arms are 'Khsatriyas', Thighs are 'Vaisyas' and Feet are under the protection of 'Sudras'. The 'Virat Purusha' has no beginning or end; is all powerful and all-prevading.

#### **Introspection**

Thus explained Suka Maha Muni the broad concept of 'Virat Purusha', beyond which there could be no other Reality and the rest a mere illusion. It is that 'Reality' which needs to be realised and deeply meditated to. This is the very the first step to Introspection. It is the Supreme Lord Who is in one's own Heart. The marginal pleasures of Life are short-lived and it is unfortunate and foolish to pursue such quickly vanishing joys of corporal nature. It is equally wasteful to work hard and get highly engrossed into such quickly evaporating material rather than pursue the substantive and ever lasting happiness. Indeed, strict regimen of resisting the free play of Five Sensory Features ('Pancha Indriya') is an intelligent way of channelising all the physical and mental energies in full force to achieve solid and everlasting bliss rather than chase inefficient and useless actions that would only land into disappointments and dejections at the end of one's own Life's journey. As such, it would be prudent to retain the minimum possible means of living and reject the unwanted and superfluous wants for which the labours to be put in are inversely proportionate to the gains secured. For example, adequate amount of money to eke out a living is good enough rather than seek immense wealth, which has no limit anyway. Sensual life to the desirable extent of procreating children is good enough rather than get entangled with endless conjugal life that has no limit but would lead to complicated health problems. Taking to the habit of drinking wine would certainly lead to the path of misery. Thus each desire should be properly weighed in terms of bare necessity rather than by a false feeling of so-called prestige, or status or Show. By such a frugal and most minimal existence, the unwanted chaff over the grain would make enormous room in terms of effort, time and purity of thought to concentrate on the imprint of The Supreme Self residing right within everybody's own heart admeasuring some six inches with a Miniature Replica of the 'Virat Purusha'. Then would commence the process of aligning the Miniature within and the Collossal Superforce all over, limb by limb, ie. hand by hand, head by head.

#### Yoga

The process followed by a 'Yogi' (Practitioner of Aligning the Miniature to the Maximum) is to commence the Limb By Limb Alignment from the Lotus Feet to the 'Brahma Randhra' or the Top Hole on the Head. The Yogi by virtue of his Scientific Knowledge and Perfection of Practice could extinguish the Material Desires and block the Life Force ('Prana Vayu' or Air) from the anus-hole upwards, while meditating or concentrating on the 'Virat Purusha'. While thus blocking, the Air is facilitated to be lifted from the foot-heels to the navel, to the heart, to the chest, and to the root of the palate. From there, Bhakti

Yoga commences the air travel to the middle of eyebrows from where retention of Life Force is a cut-off point Exercise. From then onward, the lifting of one's Self ('Atma') to the Cerebral Hole would aim at the Spiritual Path at the termination of Materialism and the Ultimate Merger with the Supreme. Further Travel to the Outer Space or 'Vaihayasas' over the Milky Way to 'Susumna', 'Vaisvanara' or the Planet of Fire to cleanse the Soul and higher still to 'Sisumara' - the Turning Point of the Entire Universe; to 'Mahar Loka' and further on to Vishnu Nabhi (Navel), known as 'Garbodha-Sayi Vishnu', to 'Satya Loka' or Brahma Loka and finally to 'Ananta' or the Great End or the Grand Beginning. Thus ended Suka Maha Muni's reply as to how best an intelligent person at the Cave of Death ought to conduct himself with hardly seven days to go before his Final End.

## **Simpler Approach**

Having thus quoted Suka Maha Muni about the Grand Phenomenon of Virat Purusha and the methodology of attaining that Spiritual Experience, Suta Muni was asked a simple question by Saunaka Muni: "The Spiritual level of Suka who replied and the knowledge level of the King who made the query about the First Step of Realisation of God are quite high. But, persons of average capacity might be baffled. As such, would there be a less complicated reply?"Suta Muni replied that unlike inanimate species like trees or animated beings like animals or human beings are blessed to think and placed better to use their sensory organs to their advantage; they could listen to the Stories of Almighty **unlike** serpents which have earholes; sing or chant the greatness of the Omnipotent unlike the tongues of frogs; bow down to the Omniscient unlike the head of a dead person; use the hands in the service of Omnipresent unlike in the case of decorated hands of the dead; the eyes to see the Manifestations of God in symbolic forms unlike the attractive plumes of a peacock; the legs that move forward to Temples and Holy places unlike tree trunks; the nose that experiences the fragrance of flowers or 'Tulsi' leaves decorating the Idols of God's Incarnations unlike that of an animal; the hair that experiences a spontaneous rise on hearing about the miracles of Vishnu unlike the hair of a goat or sheep; the mind that is in constant thought of the Supreme Force unlike in the case of a dead person and the heart that does not melt by the ecstasy of the Lord's very thought. Thus the First Step Towards Realisation of God is to practise utmost concentration and meditation on the basis of limb-by-limb alliance between a human being and God.

## **Creation by Brahma**

At this juncture, Maha Muni Suka quoted Sage Narada after ascertaining from Lord Brahma Himself about the process of further Creation by Brahma. After the Supreme Force created Him there emerged 'Brahma Jyoti'which created the Sun, Fire, Moon, Firmament, Planets and Stars. Then followed the Creation of the Five Basic Elements, the Vedas, the Matter, Knowledge and the Entirety. The Very Original Manifestations of Super Force created the Three Super Energies in Brahma (to create), Vishnu (to preserve) and Eswar (to destroy). To express His gratitude to the Super Force, Brahma, who emerged from the navel of Maha Vishnu over a lotus stem(whose depth could never be known), innovated the paraphernalia and ingredients to perform Worship to the Master and in the process were created the Sacificial Material, Veda Reciters or the Holy Sages, the Humanity and so on. But, Brahma reiterated again that the activities attributed to Himself, or Vishnu or Eswar are basically the Acivities of the Supreme Force Itself, reflected as the actions of the Proxy- Entities concerned. Brahma also referred to the First Incarnation of the Super Force, named 'Karanarnavasayi Vishnu who was the Master of Eternal Time, Space, Cause and Effects, Elements, Material Ego, Modes of Nature, Senses and Universal Form of the Super Force, while 'Garbhodayasayi Vishnu' is the Totality of Live Beings, moving or stationary. Brahma mentioned too about the Supreme Lord's Scheduled Incarnations with Specific Purposes. This was how, Sage Narada sought replies from Brahma about his doubts whether (a) there was a manifold manifestation of the Super Force as normally understood by the Existence of Triemvirate and (b) whether there was dualism of 'Atma' (Inner Self) of Human beings and other species and of 'Paramatma'. The replies were categorical to signify the firm belief that there is one and only one Super Force and the rest is an illusion.

# **Ten Stage Formation**

To several queries raised by King Parikshith after being engrossed with the content of the earlier replies, The Maha Muni Suka resumed his further preachings and described Creation of the Universe, its Sub-Creation, Planetery Systems, Protection by Almighty, the Momentum to Create, Alteration of 'Manus', the Science of the Super Force, Revisiting the Home, Return to God Head and Liberation. The basic elements used for Creation are the 'Pancha Bhootas' or Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Sky plus smell, taste, touch, sound, ears, eyes, nose, form, toungue, skin and mind – all totalling sixteen, the group of which is known as 'Sarga' and their combined interaction is named 'Visarga'. Obedience by mankind to the Fundamental Laws of Nature as prescribed and safeguarded by the Supreme Force (for eg. Planetery System) and enforcing Regulations such as the Discipline of Marriages, Family living, social life etc. by 'Manus' or The Period Heads who keep changing from time to time as the ongoing phenomena of Creation and Sub-creation of the Universe. The cause and momentum for creative activity in the Universe is provided by the Nature itself. The Science of the Super Force is a result of Self-propelling Action in terms of Incarnations or their Devotees. Revisiting the human abode by the Individual Soul into the physical bodies for temporary existence denotes the cycle of births and deaths. Return to God Head is the merger of Individual Souls into the Supreme Force, only to join the cycle of life once again. And Liberation is the Finality or the Final Truth. The Sum Substance of this Ten Stage Formation of the Universe was given by the Suka Muni based either on Vedic Inferences, or the Teachings of Great Sages or self-motivations.

The Muni further explained that the Supreme Force is not impersonal in the sense that an Individual Being or 'Nara and Narayana', not different from each other. Nara signifies Water and Narayana is the One Floating on Water. The Lord lying in 'Yoga Nidra' or Spiritual Slumber on Water manifests Himself all over the Universe and also releases energies to create the Controlling Entities, the Controlled Entities and Material Bodies, activities, time and modes. Narayana created sky from His Own Body as also the Sense Force, Mental Energy and Bodily Strength. The totality of these Three Formulations produced the Life Energy which paved the way for Mouth and Palate. Along side came, the features of hunger and thirst, tongue and taste, speech and digestion. The Ruling Planet of Fire was in place. The Lord's Nose and Nostrils produced respiration, smelling and the ruling planet of Air. Darkness was dispelled by the creation of Sun. Eyes gave vision and Ears provided the sense of hearing. Then followed the physical characteristics of matter as also feelings of sensations such as softness, hardness, warmth, cold, lightness and heaviness as experienced by skin and skin pores. Hands and legs and their parts like palms, feet and fingers as well as the strength and falicity of movement was provided by the agency of Lord Indra. Other organs and allied actions were organised too by the concerned controlling deities, such as the genitals for sex and procreation by Prajapathi; refuse evacuating organ by the controlling Deity, Mitra and so on. Thereafter, the Omnipotent Force created various other organs, sensations, functions and activities like the navel, abdomen, intestines, arteries, the nervous system, heart, lungs, kidneys and mind. The seven elements of human body, viz. the inner layer of skin, outer skin, flesh, blood, fat, marrow, bones and the Life Force Itself, are governed by the Five Elements of Universe or 'Pancha Bhoothas (Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Sky). Various sensations or action-reaction syndrome of individual existence are governed by Six Proactive Compulsions named the 'Arishat -Vargas' viz. Kama (Desire), Krodha (Anger), Moha ( Infatuation), Mada (Arrogance) and Matsara (Jealousy). The Inter-relationship of human beings- or for that matter of any of the varieagated species, whether animate or otherwise- and of the Super Force is strictly as per the Regulative Principles of the Supreme Power. There are no exceptions to espape results of past actions or 'Karma' from Brahma down-wards, including His sons like Daksha, Period Heads like Vaivasvata Manu, Demi-Gods like Indra, Surya, Chandra or Varuna; Great Sages like Bhrigu, Vyasa or

Vasishtha; Gandharvas, Vidyadharas, Asuras, Kinnaras, monkey-shaped Kimpurushas, Demons, Pisachas, Goblins, Ghosts, Human beings, all and any species of animate or inanimate nature. The cycle of births and deaths- creation and destruction-is an everlasting phenomenon of Existence.

## The Example of Vidura the Virtuous

After the abstractive discussion from the Higher Levels of Learning, Maha Muni referred to the memory of one of the less celebrated personalities of Maha Bharatha, Vidura, the able Priminster of Kauravas and the offspring of Veda Vyasa. Mahi Muni Suka inferred that a change of Topic was sought by the King to recall the Story of a noble person from his own clan, known for Virtue and Justice. Vidura was convinced that the Gang of Four, the 'Dushta Chatushtaya' comprising Duryodhana, Dussasana, Shakuni and Karna were all along giving a raw deal to their Cousins-Pandavas- and victimised them from time to time, starting from an attempt to kill Pandavas in a 'Lac Palace'; their disappearance till their Wedding with Draupadi; the division of the Kingdom between Kauravas and Pandavas; the 'Rajasuya Yaga'- or the Annoucement of Royal Supremacy by Pandavas and the jealousy of Kauravas versus Pandavas; the unjust Game of Chess which led Pandavas to lose their Kingship and a penalty of twelve years of forest life and a year's disguised existence in the Court of a lesser valued King Virat; the successful completion of the penalties by Pandavas and finally the refusal by Kauravas to restore their due share of the Kingdom to Pandavas. Apparently, Vidura did not like the villanny of Kauravas and the helplessness of Dhritarashtra, Bhishma and other Elders of Kauravas, including his own. Vidura thus hung his bow and arrows as a symbol of resignation and left Hastinapuram, the Capital of Kauravas on a pilgrimage, just while the Great Battle of 'Maha Bharat' was round the corner.

During his long duration of pilgrimage, Vidura visited those places of renown where Krishna spent long spells of time, as Krishna was his Hero, a Role Model and indeed his Godhead. He visited Ayodhya ( as the Holy place of Rama, viz. Krishna's earlier Incarnation), Mathura, Dwaraka and places around. Onwards, he visited 'Prabhasa' the once Glorious Capital of 'Yudhishtara' and travelled to perform rites to Vidura's own relatives who died of burns in bamboo houses catching fire, at various other pilgrimage points along the banks of River Saraswati. In course of his travels, Vidura met Uddhava, the childhood friend of Lord Krishna and discovered that the Great Battle was over and there were innumerable changes that had taken place thereafter. Lord Krishna Himself left for Dwaraka and provided spiritual solace to millions of His devotees. He ruled the hearts of His subjects for long number of years and finally left His Mortal Body. Uddhava provided a complete run of the scenario of the Post War happenings, including the Story of Pandavas on one hand and that of Lord Krishna and His Activities at Dwaraka. Both of the great devotees of Lord Krishna exchanged experiences and memories of Krishna's childhood, the series of miracles that happened from the stage of transfer of the baby from Mathura to Gokul across the River Yamuna on a rainy midnight, the various attempts made by Demons like Pothana, Sakatasur and Dhenukasur; display of the entire Universe in His mud-eating mouth to Mother Yashoda; the taming of Kaliya Serpent; the lifting of Govardhana giri by His little finger to destroy Lord Varuna's ego; the killings of Kamsa, Sisupala and several other Kings of Evil; the constant protection of the well-meaning Pandavas; the highly diplomatic dealings with wicked forces like Kauravas; the Great Vision of 'Virat Swarupa' to revive confidence to devotees and demoralise the egoistic and sinful.

Vidura's deliberations with Sage Maitreya on 'Maha Tatva'

Uddhava referred Vidura to meet Sage Maitreya on the banks of the Holy River Ganges, Sage Maitreya recognised Vidura not only as the worthy offspring of Vadavyasa but as Lord Yama, the demi-god of Death and the King of Justice in his previous birth. He was born in the earthly form owing to a curse of Mandanya Muni. Sage Maitreya explained the Concept of 'Maha Tatva'-the Great Philosophy- of the Fundamental Truth of 'Kaaranam' (The Cause), 'Karanam' (the Action) and the 'Kartha; (the Doer). The Cause and Effect are the formulations of Illusion (or fallacy) whereas the 'Doer' is the Truth or the Mighty Lord. Normally, one tends to imagine that an action is performed by a human being and the reason for doing so is one's own mental frame of mind. But that precisely is the false impression or wrong assessment of the actuality. It is our gross ignorance which leads us to the conjecture of the three features.viz. Reason, Action and End-result; indeed therse are just one and the same. Sage Maitreya further explained that the Falsity of human thinking was the resultant interaction of senses, as represented by Sky, Sound, Air, Light and Earth and the senses of touch, taste, hearing, seeing, thinking and so on got transformed further to Energy or Electricity and Timing or Time. The physical elements thus provide the end-results of material existence, sense of happiness, or material misery and so on. Subsequently, actions are taken as an interplay of the senses, timing, energy, speed and mind. Thus the cause and effect of actions are merely confused as have been executed on one's own, but not as a volition of the Almighty. The 'shell' therefore covers up and misleads the existence of the 'kernel', which indeed is The Truth. It is most irrational and even foolish to think that the so-called modern science and technology has been discovering various facets of human existence as a result of discoveries, knowledge and human endeavour and mental excellence! The First, Second and Third Person expressions of 'I' or 'We'; or 'you; as also 'He', 'She' or 'It' and 'They' in any human language are only for distinguishing individual existences in a typically social context but certainly not in the Macro-Form or in the Cosmic Sense.

The Concept of 'Mahatatva' having been propounded, Sage Maitreya described the principal features of 'Virat Swarupa' and how Lord Brahma responsible for Creation was born from the Lotus Head out of Lord's navel, the roots of the Lotus having been entangled with Millions of Hoods of 'Sesha Naga' (The Gigantic Serpent) bearing the brunt of the Lotus Stem. On top of the Stem were actually three trunks, on which were seated the 'Pancha Mukha' Brahma (The Five Headed Brahma visioning the Five Directions including the overhead view) and Two other Trunks representing the Gods of Preservation (Vishnu) and of Destruction (Shiva). Lord Brahma, who had the initial responsibility of Creation, made sincere prayers to the Super Energy as far and effective as he could describe the Latter, most humbly beseeched Him to guide him to initiate the process of Creation. The Super Lord provided the Radiance and Knowledge necessary to guide Lord Brahma as a result of which he was commissioned to take up the Task. As the Cosmic Manifestation of The Supreme Energy unfolded Itself, Lord Brahma was able to initiate the Process. There were Ten types of Maha Tatva: The first formulation was in regard to the Creation of 'Maha Tatva' or the sum and substance of Matter and its Ingredients and their interaction with 'Paramatma'- The Unknown, Permanent, All Pervading, Endless, and Imperishable. The Second one was 'Maya' (Illusion) which Material Sources, Its Awareness or Knowledge and Its Innumerable Manifestations or Activities were identified. The Third Creation related to the Insight or Observation or Discernment of Senses related to the Material Elements. The Fourth Creation is the Power of Knowledge and Capacity to Pursue and Practice. The Fifth Creation relates to the regulation and management of Mental faculties or in short of the psyche, of plus factors of goodness, devotion, calmness, selflessness or eqanimity. The Sixth Creation is the control of sinister feelings of anger, lust, infatuation, pride and ignorance. The fifth and sixth Creations are the displays of natural creations of Almighty either by way of developing the noble and virtuous impulses or by way of negating the mind -sets to control evil thoughts. The Seventh Creation is related to immovable objects like of trees, creepers, bushes, and flowers, fruits and other edibles/inedible. The Eighth Creation is of animals, birds, water-based items and a huge variety of bipeds, quadruples and crawling species specified or other wise. The Ninth Category of Creation has a distinct identity which is of human beings, at once angelic or devilish, happy or miserable, greedy and generous and above all, the highly complicated and complex entities that only Gods could

deal with! The Tenth Creation is of demi-gods, according to Bhagavatha Purana, are of eight categories (in addition to Prakritha and Vaikritha Creations): demigods; forefathers; 'Asuras' or Demons; 'Gandharvas' or 'Apsaras' or Angels; 'Yakshas' and 'Rakshasas'; 'Siddhas', 'Karanas', or Vidyadharas; 'Bhootas', 'Prethas' or 'Pisachas'; Superhuman Beings, Celestial Singers and Dancers.

# **Analysis of Atom and Time**

Mahatatva and Ten Creations having been described, Sage Maithreya proceeded to analyse the Concepts of Atom and Time to Vidura. An atom is the 'Paramanu' or the ultimate unit of Matter and this unit is indivisible further. The Matter comprising definable units of the atom goes into the creation of various bodies and the totality of such Material spreading over the Universe is measurable in terms of Space. The sum of Space occupied and the Movement of the Matter totals up to the Atomic Time. Thus the Matter, Space and Time are measurable. The Time Units are measured in terms of Trasarenus (a mix of three celestial atoms) and the duration of integrating three trasarenus is known is a 'triti'; hundred tritis make one 'vedha' and three vedhas make one 'lava', three lavas make one 'nimesha' or a blink, three nimeshas make one 'kshana', five nimeshas make one 'kashtha' or eight seconds and fifteen kasthas make one 'laghu' (two minutes); fifteen laghus make one 'nadika' or 'Danda' and six or seven Dandas make one fourth of a day or night; there are four 'praharas' ('Yamas') each in a day and in a night; and two fortnights, called 'Pakshas' and two pakshas on a month; two months each a season, and six months make one 'Ayanam' or two complete movements of a year by Sun- as 'Dakshinayan' from top to bottom and from bottom to top direction is known as 'Urttarayan'. Combination of a day and night, numbering 365, makes a year to human beings and their average life-time is one hundred years. On the other hand two solar movements a year of the humans beings measures up to a day and a night to demi-Gods.[ According to Vishnu Purana-Book I, Chapter III on Time Measurement Section, there are 15 twinkles of an eye make one Kashtha; 30 Kashthas one Kala; 30 Kalas one Muhurtha; 30 Muhurthas one Day (24 hours) and so on. According to Hindu Metric System Time (Kala vyavahara), a Paramanu is the normal interval time of blinking ie.four seconds; one Vighati is six Paramanus or 24 seconds approx.; one Ghadia is 60 Vighatis or 24 minutes; one Muhurtham is two Ghadias or 48 minutes; one Nakshatra Aho-Ratram ( Dawn to Midnight) is 30 Muhurthas. According to Lunar Metrics, a Lunar day or Thithi starts at the time it takes at the longitudinal angle between Moon and Sun by 12 degrees, the duration approximating from 19 to 26 hours; a Paksha (fortnight) about 15 days and a lunar month of 29.5 days providing time for Sukla Paksha and Krishna Paksha; A season or Rithu for 2 months, Ayanam for 3 Rithus and a year for 2 Ayanams.]

A human year is a day for Devas. Krita Yuga had a span of 4800 Divine Years; Thretha Yuga had 3600 Divine Years; Dwapara Yuga had 2400 Divine Years and Kali Yuga is 1200 Divine Years. All the four Yugas totalling 12000 Divine Years make one Maha Yuga. One thousand Maha Yugas make one Kalpa or a Day for Lord Brahma or 4320,000,000 human Years. Two Kalpas make a full day. Lord Brahma's one month has 259,200 million Human Years; one Year of Brahma has 3110,400 million human years; 50 years of Brahma is one Parardhha and two Parardhhas or 100 years make one Para or a Maha Kalpa (a mind-boggling 3110,400, 000,000 million human years). [Interestingly, we are now currently existing in the 28<sup>th</sup> Kali Yuga of the First Day of the First Year of the Svetha Varaha Kalpa, second parardha of Brahma, in the reign of Vaivasvatha Manu (the Seventh Manu in the Order). Kali Yuga (Iron Age) is stated to have begun on 17<sup>th</sup> February 3102 BC of Julian calendar. Each Cycle of Four Yugas has one day of Brahma, called Maha Yuga and 71 Maha Yugas are ruled by successive Manus.It is estimated that Brahma is 51 years old and has already lived 155 trillion years, since He took over!] During the First half of Lord Brahma's Existence, there were Two Kalpas viz. Brahma Kalpa (or when Vedas came up as 'Swayambhu' or on their Own) and Padma Kalpa (when the Incarnations of The Lord dominated). Now,

the Second Half of Lord Brahma's Existence has just begun, the Third Kalpa – The Varaha Kalpa- is now in progress.

#### **Further Creations of Lord Brahma**

Sage Maithreya had thus explained the Concepts of Time and Atom to Vidura and proceeded further to describe about which commenced with creating realities of Existence such as sense of death, selfdeception, anger, frustration, feeling of ownership and illusion. But the very first creation of negative impulses did not satisfy Lord Brahma and as such gave the birth to the Four Kumaras-Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanat and Sanatana. He asked the Kumaras to create their own progeny, but they declined to do so as they were in the practice of seminal flow upwards in their bodies. This had irritaed Lord Brahma and from the folding of His eyebrows, was born Rudra. Brahma designated a few places to reside Rudra the Chief of Demi-Gods, such as the heart, the senses, Prana Vayu (The Air of Breathing), and the Five Elements of Life. Brahma also gave Rudra eleven other names, viz. Manyu, Manu, Mahinasa, Mahan, Siva, Rithidwaja, Ugrareta, Bhava, Kala, Vamadeva and Drithavratha. He also created eleven Rudranis, viz. Dhi, Dhriti, Rasala, Uma, Niyut, Sarpi, Ila, Ambica, Iravati, Svadha and Diksha. But Rudra in turn produced progeny of furious nature and Brahma was upset that such progeny might create chaos and imbalance in Nature and thus forced Rudra to eternally practise penance therafter. Lord Brahma decided thus to create Ten sons: Narada (concieved from the thoughtfulness of Brahma, hence known to the posterity as 'Manasa Puthra'): Vasishtha from His Breathing: Daksha from a Thumb, Bhrigu from touch: Kratu from a hand; Pulastya from ears; Angira from mouth, Atri from eyes, Marichi from mind and Pulaha from navel. In addition, religion emerged from His breast, irreligion or sacrilege from His Back and death from Brahma's Living identity; lust and desire from the Heart; anger from eyebrows, greed from lips, power of communication from mouth; ocean from genitals; and all evil activities from anus, the seat of sin. Sage Kardama was born from Brahma's shadow. When Vak Devi or Sarasvati was born, Brahma was infatuated with her and when Prajapaties or His Sons, appealed to Him, He was ashamed of the evil design on her and manifested Himself as haze in darkness. Emerging from His Four Front Heads came out from His Mouths the Four Vedas-Rik, Yajur, Sama and Atharvana. Vedic Hymns, Ritual Mantras and Allied such Recitations too emerged from the Front Heads. The Fifth Head on the rear side came out Puranas and Historical Accounts of The Supreme Force thus envisioning the Past, Present and Future. Side by side, the various Sciences of Physiology and Medicine, Art and Architecture, Music and Dance, Astronomy and Gastronomy, Military and Finance and so on inclusive of all the' Chatur Shashthi' (or sixty four) types of Professions or their various specialisations were emanated. The Eight Categories of Fire Sacrifices and their methodologies of performance were descibed too, viz. Sodasi, Ukta, Purusi, Agnistoma, Aptoryama, Atiratra, Vajapeya and Gosava emerged from the eastern mouth of Brahma. From the other mouths were announced the Orders of 'Chaturvarnas' or the Four Caste System and Their 'Dharmas' or duties; the Thread Ceremony of Twice Born or the Brahmin caste, abstinence of sex, the duties of Four Stages of life, viz. Brahmacharya (Student life), Grihastha (Married Life), Vanaprastha ( Retired Life) and Sanyasa (Spiritual Life). Of the Retired Life, there are Vaikhanasas, Valakhilyas, Audumbaras and Phenapas. Pranava Omkara manifested from Lord Brahma's heart and the Gayatri Mantra came out of His skin. The 'usnik' or the method of literary expression of Vedic Hymns was created from His hairs of the Body, 'Tristup' from His flesh, 'Anusthup' from His veins, and 'Jagati' from bones. Of the alphabet words, Brahma created Consonants and Vowels from His Soul and Body respectively and the sensual activities as the Seven Notes of Music, Viz. 'Sa', 'Re', 'Ga', 'Ma', 'Pa' 'Da' and 'Ni'.

**Brahma's son Manu** ( also known as Swayambhu) married Satrupa and they had two sons Priyavrata and Uttanapada and three daughters viz.Ahuti, Devasuti and Prasuti. Ruchi, Kardama and Daksha were

married to the three daughters respectively. The offspring of Manu were added thus to the great humanity. Among the daughters of Daksha and Prasuti, Diti was one of the many daughters who was married to Sage Kasyapa. Sati was another sister of Diti and the former was Lord Shiva's consort. Diti gave birth to two Demon Kings, Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakashipu. In their previous lives, the Demon Kings were actually the Gate Keepers of 'Vaikuntha', the Abode of Lord Maha Vishnu. Although the Gates of Vaikuntha were never closed, the Two Gate Keepers, named Jaya and Vijay had stopped entry to the Renowned Kumara Brothers to approach Lord Maha Vishnu. The Boy-Rishis were Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanat Kumar and Sanatana. After protests to the Gate Keepers, the Boy-Sages gave them a curse to become ferocious King Demons born to Diti and Kasyapa; they however begged of the Kumaras to receive boons to get killed by Lord Vishnu Himself. That was the reason as to why, the Lord had to assume the Incarnations of Varaha, Narasimha and so on. As soon as Diti gave birth to the sons, there were natural calamities, planetery movement was odd, and there was a very high commotion the World over. As the Demon Brothers grew, the Heavens were the targets and the entire lot of demi-Gods trembled out of fright. The major casualities were the Earth and Oceans and the complete planetery system went out of gear, Lord Brahma who granted boons the the Demons himself had the taste of uneasiness and discomfort as the Earth was being rolled up as though it was like a carpet and was hurled into the depths of the huge Ocean by Hiranyaksha, the elder Demon King. That was the crisis when Lord Vishnu had to act. The boons granted by Brahma to Hiranyaksha excluded the detailed list of species of which there was the animal of a Hog that was ommitted. As such, the Lord discovered the loophole and took to the manifestation of a boar. His appearance as finger long, the Boar grew up in stature and strength occupying the Sky and Water, lifted the massive weight of Earth which sank deep in Mighty Water, and by Power and Energy displayed by Its Massive Tusks, a mighty push high from the Water, tossed up Earth in order and balance. The Most Invaluable Vedas and Innumerable and Priceless Sciptures handed by Lord Brahma to Humanity were retrieved and finally after a prolonged cosmic war between the Evil and Truth, massive destruction and recovery, Order and Chaos, the Demon King got annihilated. The very existence of Earth would have been jeopardised and the Scheme of Lord's Creation would have been falsified except for the gigantic effort made by the Super Force, in the Form of Varaha. Vidura enquired as to what followed, once normalcy was witnessed after the eventful extermination of Hirnayaksha. Maitreya replied that when the equilibrium of the modes of Nature got disrupted, there was a false ego and domination of 'Rajas' Guna which took the lead. Brahma evolved a shadow of illusion and formed five kinds of ignorance, viz.tamisra, andha misra, tamas, moha and mahamoha. The aspects of passion, sex and infatuation predominated. Simultaneously, there was gaining importance to ritual aspects of religion including meditation, concentration, austerity, and penance. This trend has set in motion the streams of passion and avarice on the one hand and the practices of Virtue as promoted by Manu and His progeny on the other.

#### 'Manu' and Progeny

Being inquisitive of the activities of Manu and His progeny, Vidura continued his queries to Sage Maitreya. Swayambhuva Manu had two sons, Priyavrata and Uttanapada, both of them governing territories of their own on the lines prescribed by Manu. The latter's daughter Devahuti was wedded to Sage Kardama, a perfectionist of eight-fold Yoga System. In fact, their union was so ideal that there could not be a better choice from either side. Besides being the daughter of Emperor Manu, Devahuti was an unparalelled beauty and Kardama was not only a Great Sage of Virtue but had actually experienced Lord Brahma's audience. The Wedding was performed by Manu with such great pomp and show that there were few parallels what with lavish festivities and celestial dances and music. The City of Barhispati in Brahmavartha was a shining example of material wealth and spiritual excellence and the Hairs from the Body of Lord Varaha who killed Hiranyaksha fell down and originated the crops of 'Kusa' grass used all over the Universe for seating Sages on mats and to utilise the material for all sacrificial purposes. The

bride is a paragon of rare grace and virtue and Sage of Kardama improvised by his Yogic powers, a massive Flying Palace, with Golden walls and floors studded with of precious stones and jewellery enabling to visit places any where in the Universe, as a gift to his wife! As blessed by Lord Brahma Himself, Kardama provided great conjugal happiness to Devahuti and blessed them with nine daughters with illustrious husbands: Kala to Marichi; Anasuya to Atri; Shraddha to Angira; Havirbhu to Pulastya; Gati to Pulaha; Kriya to Kratu; Khati to Bhrigu, and Arundhati to Vasishtha and Shanti to Atharva. As ordered by Lord Brahma again, the Couple of Devahuti and Kardama gave birth to Sage Kapila who would innovate and perfect the Sankhaya Yoga and many other Scriptures. In course of time, Sage Kardama left for the forests to pursue the Eternal Truth and Devahuti was in the care of her son, Kapila. Kapila guided his mother about the the naunces of the Yoga system and the content, methodology and intensive practice of devotional services which alone would enable move forward to self-realisation.

## Sage Kapila and Sankhya Yoga

In this context, Kapila enumerated the basic principles of **Sankhya Yoga.** Sankhya literally means counting the numbers. 'Prakriti' or Material Nature comprises specified twenty four manifested forms of Existence and provides the means of reaching the stage of 'Purusha' or the Super Energy. 'Atma' or The Soul is the twenty fifth form while the twenty sixth is of 'Paramathma' or the Super Soul. The conduit between the Material Nature and the Super Energy is 'Prardhana' or Prayer which possesses three modes of Nature viz. Goodness, Passion and Ignorance. It is the amalgam of Three Subtle Elements of the Astral or Comprehensible Body , namely False Ego, Intelligence and Mind; Five Basic Elements of Nature (Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Sky); Five Sense Objects (Sound, Taste, Smell, Touch and Sight); Five Knowledge Acquiring Senses (Nose, Tongue, Eyes, Ears, and Skin), and Five Working Senses (Voice, Legs, Arms, Reproductive Organs and Evacuating Organs). The Factor of Time is indeed the Binding Force of all the Natural Elements, Physical Elements, Internal Senses and Body Actions which has to coordinate with the 'Mahatatya'vis-a-vis Illusion and this is the Prayer all about!

# The Eight Stages of Yoga

'Yama' (Prohibitions and Restraints); 'Niyama' (Promotion of Virtues); 'Asana' (Posture of Seating, preferably 'Padmasana' ie.placing the right foot on left thigh and vice versa); 'Pranayama' (Breathing Excercises); 'Pratyahara' (Withdrawal of Senses); 'Dharana' (Concentration), 'Dhyana' (Meditation); and 'Samadhi' (Trance or Amalgamation of Mind on a single target). Thus Yoga is defined as the control of the contents of mind, stillness of thoughts, and Eternal Soul experiencing Its own Nature. [Patanjali Yoga or Rajas/Ashtanga Yoga is somewhat akin to 'Sankhya Yoga' in which Eight Limbs are utilised and is divided into four parts, viz. Samadhi (Trance), 'Sadhana' (Practice), 'Vibhuti' (Mystic Powers) and 'Kaivalya' (Attainment the Ultimate). In a way, Hatha Yoga is also related to Ashtanga Yoga by which the emphasis is on physical energy, while the accent is more pronounced on the alignment of physical power with that of Spiritual Focus]. Sage Kapila compared the Manifestation of Material Energy to a Super Egg of the Universe and the Innermost layer is 'Mahatatva' within which is the presence of Supreme Energy. In each of its inner layers- spread out one over another and getting thicker and thickerthere is an existence of various Materials. The outermost layer is Prarthana or Prayer and the outer shell is the Illusion or Maya. The peeling of layers one by one is indeed a process which has endless tribulations, but the process could and should commence from detachment from material manifestations, high intensity of devotion, and ever increasing comprehension of the Supreme Power. Practice of Yoga is not only the control of Physical components of the Body but the mind, the conscience, the Soul, the thought and action. But of course the regulation of daily life by way of avoiding the excesses of desire, envy, avarice,

and anger are essential. Promotion of Virtue, Nobility, Equanimity, Balance of Mind, Celibacy and Compassion and above all an awareness of God are the essential features of Yoga. Kapila too thus laid stress on the Limb-by-Limb alliance of human body and Material Existence on the one hand and the 'Vitat Purusha'.

# Geneological Order of Manu's Clan

Sage Maitreya made a diversion to Vidura about the Elder Daughter of Manu, Devahuti and son-in-law Kardama as also about their Son Sage Kapila. Manu's other daughter Ahuti was wedded to Prajapati Ruchi and their offspring were the son Yagna and daughter Lakshmi, the Consort of Lord Vishnu. Yagna was married to Dakshina who begot twelve sons. Manu's third daughter Prasuti wedded Lord Brahma's grandson Daksha, and the latter's daughter, 'Sati' was married to Lord Siva Himself. Among the nine daughters of Kardama and Devahuti who were all well placed, mention be made of Kala and Marichi whose sons were Kasyapa and Purnima. Anasuya and Atri Maha Muni were Soma, Dattatreya and Durvasa born with the blessings of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. Sage Atri performed such fierce 'Tapas' for hundreds of years, the Trinity appeared before him and blessed that they would be born with their own 'Amsas' or Reflections respectively. Simultaneously, the Trinity visited Anasuya's hermitage in the forms of Sages and asked for alms. The Great Lady realised in her spiritual vision that the three Sages were Lords Brahma, Vishnu and Siva themselves and forthwith converted them as three babies and placed them all together in a cradle, when the whole Universe was amazed at her own inner energies! Among Manu's another daughter, Sraddha and Sage Angira were born four daughters, viz. Sinivali, Raka, Kuhu and Anumati and two sons, Utathya and Brishapati, the Learned Scholar of demi-gods. Yet another daughter of Manu, Havirbhu, married Pulasthya who begot sons, Agastya (Daharagni) and Visrava; the latter was born to his two wives, Idavida whose son was Kubera the King of Yakshas and Kesini whose sons were Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Vibhishana, the Pauranic Characters of the Ramayana Epic. Gati married Pulaha and begot three Sage sons, Karmareshtha, Varian and Sahishnu; Krathu's wife Kriya gave birth to sixty thousand Sages, known as Valakhilas. Arundhati (Urja) and Vasishtha gave birth to Seven Sages and Chitti and Sage Atharva gave birth to Asvasira; Sage Bhrigu and Khyati begot Dhata and Vidhata and the latter who wedded Ayati and Niyati gave birth to Mrikanda and Prana respectively. From Mrikanda was born Markandeva and Prana's grandson was Sukracharya. Prasuti, another daughter of Manu was wedded to Daksha, the son of Lord Brahma. They got sixteen daughters of whom thirteen were wedded to Dharma Viz.Sraddha, Maitri, Daya, Shanti, Tusti, Pusti, Kriya, Unnati, Buddhi, Medha, Titiksa, Hri and Murthi and the thirteen were blessed respectively with sons (Subha, Prasada, Abhaya, Sukha, Muda, Smaya, Yoga, Barpa, Artha, Smritha, Kshema, Paraya, and finally Sri Nara Narayana). With the entry of Nara Narayana into the Universe, there were joyous celebrations all over among Sages, the Demi-Gods and even by Brahma Himself, quite apart from the Material Elements and the entire World of the Virtuous and the Seekers of the Supreme, as they all realised that an Incarnation of the Almighty had appeared to purge the Evil Forces from the earth. Besides the thirteen daughters of Prasuti who were married to Dharma, one daughter Svaha was wedded to Agni Deva and the couple gave birth to Pavaka, Pavamana and Suchi. Another daughter of Daksha was sent in the service of Pithru Loka.

## Sati Devi and Lord Siva

And the youngest and the sixteenth daughter of Daksha Prajapathi, 'Sati Devi', was married to Lord Siva. This was the most significant Event of the Yuga, which occurred as an unforgettable and extremely distressing episode that caused the most furious reaction of Lord Siva and made way to the destruction of the highly self-opinionated and haughty Daksha Prajapati and his 'Yagna'. The most painful tragedy was

of Sati Devi's invoking own Yoga power causing her demise. Since the time of the wedding of Sati Devi, Daksha felt insulted by the lack of artificial civil manners of Lord Siva and his dislike got snowballed as the latter was indifferent all along. But the Lord was highly fond of Sati Devi, quite ignoring Daksha's envy for him as the latter had in inferiority complex. Daksha organised a huge function ('Yagna') and did not deliberately invite the Siva couple, although in the Yagna, Lord Agni would have been invoked normally to takepart in the offerings to various demi-Gods and Gods, including Lord Siva. The entire Guest list of Gods downward the Sages and others were invited otherwise. Sati Devi felt extremely humiliated but got desirous of attending the Function especially to meet the family members. Lord Siva advised her not to go uninvited, but she insisted. While she attended the Fesivities, the father gave a cold reception to her and those who accompanied her like Nandi and a retinue of 'Pramadha- ganas', Lord Siva's personal entourage. In an Open House where all the invitees were being entertained, Sati Devi made a powerful address to her father and his party including Bhrigu Maharshi who too disliked Lord Siva. She said: "Even if there was no invitation, she made it to her own father's function as a gesture of goodwill, despite her dear husband (who is none else than the Lord of Destruction Himself) counselled against attending a function uninvited. Lord Siva had no ill will against Daksha, but the latter was highly envious of the Lord. Also, He liked her so immensely that He always called her as Dakshayani to please and respect her. But unfortunately, I have no right to exist as the daughter of Daksha who brought me to the World." By so saying, she seated herself in a Mystic Yoga Posture, raised her 'Prana Vayu' (Life Air) from the position of equilibrium near the navel upwards to heart and the Central point of eyebrows, known as ('Bhrookuti') and while imagining her head on Lord Siva's lap, released the Spiritual Air lit up with the Sacred Fire to merge with 'Paramatma'. The Entire Universe reverberated with the Sound of 'Om Namah Sivaya'. Even while the Spiritual Message of Sati's demise was known, Narada conveyed the news to Lord Siva formally. The Lord became highly incensed and pulled out a strand of hair banged down on earth, and out emerged a Powerful 'Bhoothnath, named 'Veera Bhadra'who was ordered to instantly destroy the site of the invalid and illegal Sacrifice Place ('Yagna shala'), eliminate those responsible for the purpose and wipe out all traces of the shameful Event. Veera Bhadra and his followers removed Daksha's head and burnt it in the Fire Place of the Sacrifice, tore off the moustache and of Bhrigu the Head Priest, caught 'Bhaga' by his eyebrows which were raised while reacting to a remark against Lord Siva, broke the teeth of Dantavakra who laughed at a wit against Siva, and similarly punished all those who heckled at the Function. The rest of the gathering ran helter-skelter for their own lives or limbs. Therafter Siva picked up the physical remains of Dakshayani on His shoulders, wandered and danced with fury the entire Universe, sending shock waves by way of earth tremors and oeanic tsunamis. Vishnu realised that the body of Sati had to be cut into 51 pieces by His discus representing as many letters of Alphabet in Sanskrit) and tossed them all over(now known as 51 'Shakti Peethas' or Sacred Temples). Brahma and Vishnu foresaw the tragedy and avoided attending the Yagna. They requested for mercy to Daksha and as a result provided life back to the latter by replacing his burnt head with that of the Sacrificial Goat. Also, Bhrigu's moustache and beard were replaced with those of the Sacrificial Goat's as also the gourged eyes of Bhaga were restored. The physical losses of other culprits were also suitably adjusted, thanks to Lord Siva's grace and kindness. In course of time, Sati Devi was reborn as Parvathi and was wedded to Lord Siva.

[ Details of Shakti Peethas: The Embodiment name, the Organ and the Place respectively as follows:-Indrakshi/Nagapoosani-Ankles-Jaffna( Sri Lanka); Mahishmardini-Eye -Sukkur/Karachi, Pakistan); Sunanda-Nose-Barisal,(Bangla Desh); Mahamaya-Throat-Amarnath/Kashmir; Siddhida/Ambika-Tongue-Jwalamukhi/Kangra/Pathankot; Tripurmalini-Left breast-Devi Talab/Jalandhar; Ambaji-Heart-Ambaji/Anand/Gujarat; Mahashira-Both Knees-Gusyeswari Temple/ Kathmandu / Nepal; Dakshayani-Right Hand-Manasarovar ( Tibet); Vimala-Navel- Jagannath Temple / Puri / Orissa; Gandaki Chandi-Temple-Muktinath Temple / Nepal; Bahula-Left Arm-Bahula /Katwa /Burdwan/West Bengal; Mangal Chandika-right wrist-Ujaani / Guskara/Burdwan; Tripura Sundari-Right Leg-Tripura; Bhavani-Right arm-Bharav Temple/ Sitakunda Station/ Chattakong District / Bangladesh;Bhramari-Left Leg-Trisota /Salbai

Village/Jalpaiguri /West Bengal; Kamakya-Genital Organ-Kamakya Temple /Guwahati (Assam); Jugadya-Great Toe (Right)-Khirgram / Burdwan District West Bengal; Kalika-Right toes-Kalighat / Kolkata; Lalitha-Hand Finger-Prayag/Allahabad; Jayanti-Left Thigh-Falizur Kalibadi / Falzur Paragana / Bangladesh; Vimla- Crown-Kirkeetkona / Murshidabad / West Bengal; Visalakshi-Ear Ring-Manikarnika Ghat / Varanasi; Sarvani- Back-Kumari Temple /Kanyakumari, Tamilnadu; Savitri- Ankle bone-Sthaneswar / Haryana; Gayatri-Two bracelets- Ajmer; Mahalakshmi-neck-Jainpur/ Sylhet Town /Bangladesh; Devagarbha-Bone- Kankalitala/ West Bengal; Kali- left buttock-Amarkantak / Madhya Pradesh; Narmada-right buttock-Shondesh, Madhya Pradesh; Shivani- right breast-Ramgiri/Chitrakuta /Urrar Pradesh; Uma-Hair ringlets-Bhuteswar Temple/ Vrindavan /Uttar Pradesh; Narayani-Upper Jaw Teeth-Suchindram / Kanyakumari, Tamilnadu; Varahi-Lower Jaw Teeth-Panchasagar Place, Haridwar; Arpana-Left Anklet-Karatoyatat, Sherpur/Bangla Desh; Sri Sundari-Right Anklet-SriParvat Hills, Srisailam, Andhra Pradesh; Kapalini/Bhimarupa-Left Ankle-Vibhash, Tumluk, West Bengal; Chadrabhaga-Stomach-Prabhas/Veraval near Somnath Temple, Gujarat; Avanti-Upper lips-Ujjain / Madhya Pradesh; Bhramari-Chins-Godavari Jansthan, Nasik/Maharashtra; Rakini or Visveswari-Cheeks-Kotilinga Temple, Rajamundry, Andhra Pradesh; Ambica-Left Feet Fingers-Birat/Bharatpur/ Rajasthan; Kumari-Right shoulder-Ratnavali / Hooghly Dt. West Bengal; Uma-left shoulder-Mithila on India Nepal Border; Kalika Devi-Tubular bones of the feet-Nalhati, Birbhum District; Jayadurga-both ears-Karnat (place unknown); Mahishamardini-portion between the eye brows-Bakreshwar near Siuiri Town/Dubrajpur; Jashoreswari-Palms of hands and feet-Ishwaripur, Bangladesh; Phullara-lips- Attahas Village, near Katwa Railway Station, West Bengal-Nandini-Necklace-Nandikeswari temple, Sainthia town, West bengal and Kottari-Brhamarandhra on the head-Hingula near Karachi, Pakistan. In all these Shakti Peethas, Goddess is accompanied by Lord Bhairava also, a manifestation of Lord Siva. The details given above are as per Mahapitha Purana.]

Sage Maitreya further narrated the details of the Geneology of Swayambhu Manu to Vidura, and described as to how the envy and haughtiness of Daksha Prajapati was demolished and how Sati Devi ended her life. Manu's two sons from Satarupa, were Uttanapada and Priyavrata, both of whom served as the Kings of their own Kingdoms independetly. Uttanapada had two wives-Suniti and Surichi- and the King was distinctly fond of Surichi. Once Rurichi's son Uttama kept his head on his father's lap when Surichi was present too and the King lifted the boy and made him sit on his lap very fondly.

# **Devotion and Realisation of Dhruva**

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

might. Narada was indeed impressed and provided guidance as to how the boy should take initial steps to assume the procedure. He asked Dhruva to purify himself with the water of River Yamuna, enter Madhubana on the banks and perform breathing excercises, gradually follow the 'Ashtanga'Yoga and develop high concentration on each of the Body Parts of Virat Swarupa, and lift up his inner energies in full alignment with the Supreme Energy.

Narada had subsequently taught Dhruva the process of conquering his hunger and thirst, anger and envy, avarice and desire, and gradual control of all material senses. He taught Dhruva the Parama Mantra, viz, *Namo Narayanaya Namaha*. In course of the intense concentration and alignment with 'Paramatma', Dhruva had discovered a 'Radiant Vision' and felt disturbed, and when his eyes were opened, there the 'Sakshatkar' or Actual Appearance of the Supreme Being was tangible. The Voice said that after the demise of his father, Dhruva would be the King, his cousin brother would be killed on a hunting exercise in a forest and his step mother would be deranged; Dhruva would rule for thirty six thousands of years as a just and noble King and finally reached the Sky as a pole star for ever, even above the Stars of Sapta Rishis! In his heart of hearts, Dhruva still got perturbed by the harsh words of Surichi which haunted his memory. He also had the feeling that whatever he was able to achieve in six months even Maharishis were perhaps not able to. But in courseof time he realised that it was foolish on his part on account of both the counts, since it was the Supreme Lord who was the cause, action and the'Doer'.

# Dhruva and his lineage

In the lineage of Dhruva, there came up a very cruel King, named Vena, (son of King Anga and Sumitha) who harassed not only his own Subjects but the Sages and the Virtuous. When the atrocities of Vena became unbearable, Sages cursed him and killed him to save the sins borne by Earth. As the Sages churned the dead body of Vena, and there came up a couple, named Prithi and his consort Archi. King Prithi mastered the discipline of Archana Bhakti and ruled his Subjects with kindness and affection. His farmers complained about Earth since for long, there were no crops at all. When Prithi decided to attack Earth, the latter replied that the carry over of Vena's sins was the reason of her infertility. She said that she would appear in the form of a cow and that he and his subjects could exploit the cow to the maximum. As a result, fertility of Mother Earth increased and the entire kingdom became prosperous. Prithi decided to perform, a series of 'Asvamedha Yagas' (Sacrifices of horses), as symbols of Superiority of his Kingship. As the hundredth Yaga was to be performed, Lord Indra got jittery, as his own Seat of Power might be a casuality. Indra stole the Sacrificial Horse, and as Prithi's son chased him, but Indra took the form of a hermit and disappeared. Finall, Prithi made a deal with Indra-a 'Sahasraksha'-to make him a 'Sahasrakarna', ie to grant the King the capacity of hearing as of thousand ears, since Prithi was desirous of hearing the complaints or requests of his Subjects from distances! Such was the noble nature of the King. In the lineage of King Prithi, there was a king named Prachin Barhi, who had several sons viz. **Prachetas** who were all great devotees of God Narayana and Lord was pleased to appear as Lord Siva. They asked Siva as to why He appeared instead of Lord Narayana.Lord Siva explained to them: 'Sivaya Vishnu Roopaya, Siva Roopaya Vishnavey' (Siva and Vishnu are just the same) and taught them Rudra Geet, which involved Animal sacrifices. When Prachetas performed the sacrifices, Narada intervened and said that it might be a sin to sacrifice animals as after all, they too had feelings of pain. Then Prachi Barhi was given a story by Narada in his connection: There were two brothers, Agyat and Vigyat. As Avigyat ordered Vigyat to leave away far, the latter shifed to a City and eventually married Puranjani. In their subsequent lives, Puranjani was born as a swan and recognised Agyat. Puranjani said that as two human beings earlier, they might have had different views as the former forced her husband, Vigyat, to shift away to the City of hers, but as swans both Agyat and herself were the same, as both have the same soul. The only difference was while Vigyat had to go away to a city Agyat did not. The City that Vigyat selected

was akin to a human body, the center of which was a stomach and there were nine gates-mouth, two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, and two oher organs. There were two courtiers, viz. mind and ego, both expressing the Self-ie. I, mine and me. There are five 'pranas' or life energies (Prana, Apana, Udana, Samana and Vyana). Kala Kanya or the old age is ready to attack the City (Human body) and her two brothers are Moha( attachment) and sorrow (soka). Kala Kanya is wedded to Varsha (a Year), three sixty five days as Gandharvas, Twelve Months as Warriors, and seven days as Ministers. Thus the body was wasted without knowledge of the essentiality of 'Karma Kanda' (Prescribed Duties) little realising that each unit of life was dwindling, without purpose and action. Thus Narada had cautioned that the passage of time without fruitful action and the awareness of time once lost could be never retrieved.

## Prajapati Priyavrata Travelled All over the Universe

Parikshith was engrossed with the stories of Prithi and Prachetas as also the several instances when Swayambhu Manu himself and generations thereafter were able to balance 'Grihasta Ashram' and alignment with Almighty and enquired of Suka Maha Muni about it. The Maha Muni gave the illustration of Manu's own son Priyavrata, who even as a child got enlightenment of 'Brahma Gyan'or the knowledge of the Super Energy and declined to marry. Then Manu had to admonish the son and advised him that not only Priyavrata was too young to be an ascetic and also human body was provided by the Lord to go through the process of a family and conjugal bliss and follow the set patterns of life viz. Balya ( Childhood), Brahmacharya (Student life), Grihastha (Family stage), Vanaprastha (Detachment) and Sanyasa (Renunciation). Through the wedded life, the struggle of Six facets of life (desire, anger, greed, attachment, pride and jealousy) ought to be faced in a gradual manner and the Rules of Life be followed, although avoiding excesses in respect of each of the facets. The Golden Rule of Grihasth Ashram is to follow the example of a dew drop on a lotus leaf. Eventually, Priyavrata had two wives and had thirteen sons, of whom seven became Prajapathis as the rest were celibate. Priyavrata himself followed an ascetic life, even during the course of the wedded life. He had the distinction of travelling by a chariot the entire Universe and divided it into seven segments, and appointed seven of his sons as the Heads of each Territory. The Seven Regions were named Jambu Dweepa, Pluksh Dweepa, Shalamali Dweepa, Kush Dweepa, Krounch Dweepa, Shaka Dweepa, and Pushkar Dweepa named after his sons.

# **Description of Planets**

Bhuloka is a Planet known as divided into Seven Parts, resembling a Lotus flower, each leaf with the names as above. Its lenghth and breadth is one million yojanas or eight million miles. Jambu Dweepa which is in the middle of the spiral of the Planet has a length and breadth of one hundred thousand Yojanas or 800,000 miles and is subdivided into nine regions. It is surrounded by saline water. Sumeru Mountain is like the pericarp of the lotus like Bhuloka and is the axis of Jambu Dweepa; its height is as much as the breadth of Jambu Dweepa ie. 100,000 yojanas or 800,000 miles. Pluksha Dweepa, named after Pluksha Tree, is around the Jambu Dweepa and is double the size of the former. It is surrounded by an Ocean of sugar cane juice which is also of the size of the Pluksha Dweepa. Its inhabitants- Hamsas, Patangas, Urdhvayanas and Satyangas live for thousand years and pray to Sun and Lord Vishnu; they are beautiful like demigods. Salmali Dweepa, named after Salmali Tree, is again double the size of the Pluksha Dweepa and has the Sura Sagara or the Ocean of Liquor around it, inhabiting Srutidharas, Vidyadharas, Vasundharas and Isadharas, all praying to Moon and Lord Vishnu. Among the seven Rivers of the Dweepa were Anumati, Sarasvathi, Sinevali, Raha and Kuhu and the seventh was the Home of Garuda praying to Lord Vishnu. Semi God of Moon created two fortnights, viz. Sukla Paksha and Krishna Paksha. Kusa Dweepa is again double the size of Salmali Dweepa ie. 800,000 yojanas (64,00,000 miles)

and is known for Kusa Grass, used for Sacred Rituals (Homams, Yagyas and all Holy Acts) and is appropriately surrounded by an Ocean of Ghee and the form of God of Fire (in mild form). It is inhabited by Kusalas, Kovidas, Abhiyuktas and Kulakas, corresponding to Jambu Dweepa's four castes-Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vyasyas and Sudras. **Krouncha Dweepa**, named after the Krouncha Mountain is surrounded by an Ocean of Milk and Butter and is the second form of Varuna or Water, again the size of Kusa Dweepa, ie. of the size of 1600,000 yojanas (124,80,000 miles), inhabited by Purushas, Rabhas, Vanikas and Devakas. **Shaka Dweepa**, named after Shaka treee providing fragrance all around, has the dual form of Vayu, or Air and is double the size of Krouncha Dweepa, inhabiting four castes-Ratavrata, Satyavrata, Danavrata and Anuvrata, all practising Pranayama and mustic Yoga. **Pushkara Dweepa** has 64,00,000 yojanas (51, 200,000 miles) surrounded by Sweet Water and is the Seat of Lord Brahma known as 'Karma Maya'. In the middle of the Dweepa is the Mountain Manasottara. Between the Mountains of Meru and Manasottara is so much distance as from Mountain Manasottara and Lokaloka Mountain. In other words, the distance between Mountain Meru to Mountain Lokaloka, is a quarter of the diametre of the Universe, (125,000,000 Yojanas or one billion miles).

**Lokaloka** is the border beyond which are the three other Lokas, viz.**Bhurloka**, **Bhuvarloka**, **and Swarloka**. On the top of Lokaloka, there are four Gajapaties controlling the planetary system on the four directions; They are Rishabha, Pushkara Chuda, Vamana and Aparajita. The distance from Lokaloka to Bhuvarloka is as much distance as from Meru to Lokaloka. That is a billion miles further. This space is named Aloka Varsha. Lord Sun is situated in **Anthariksha** in between Bhurlok and the Bhuvarlok. It is the Sun Planet which reveals the entire Universe from various directions and is thus the centre. Sun is the potent energy who is seen and felt to normal human beings and indeed the super indicator to all parts of the Universe, including the sky, the World, the higher planets and the lower planets.

Sukhadeva Maha Muni thus explained to King Parikshith that the entire Universe has a diameter of fifty crore yojanas or 4 billion miles. Like the grain of wheat, the lower part of the Universe topping the Earth is sliced half way of the upper part with Antariksha or the outer space as the divider. The Planet Of Sun is situated in the outer space moving forward from north to south (Dakshiyahana) and from south to north again (Uttarayana), emanating tremendous heat and light. The setting of Dakshinayana to Uttrayana is considered to be of significane as it heralds the six monthly movement influencing the trend of fortunes. As per the movement of Sun through the ecuador, or beneath it or above and from Tropic of Capricorn (Makara) to that of Cancer (Karkataka) and back, the zodiac signs are passed through too in a systematic manner and the duration of day and night too are short, equal or different. When Sun passes through Aries (Mesha) and Libra (Tula), days and night are equal. As Sun passes through the five Signs headed by Taurus (Vrishabha), the duration of day increases till Cancer and thereafter decreases by half an hour a day each month till Capricorn (Karkataka) in Libra, when day and night are equal again. When Sun passes through the Five Signs beginning from Vrisckica, the duration of days decreases compared to nights until Capricon and gradually increases month after month till they are equal in Aries. As a rule, till Sun travels north the nights become longer and when Sun travels south the days become longer. Sun travels around Manasottara Mountain in a circle. On the Mountain to the east of Sumeru is the Devadhani, the residence of Indra, the King of Gods; to the South is Samyami, the Abode of Yama Raja, God of Death; the West is Nimkolani of Varuna, the God of Rains/Water; and the north is Vibhavari the abode of Moon. Thravimava, named as the Chariot of Sun visits all the abodes of Indra, Yama, Varuna and Moon traverses all the Residences of these Gods covering the words 'Bhur Bhuva Swaha'at a speed of 27 million miles approx in one muhurta (30 muhurtas a day)! Interestingly, the Chariot of Sun God is 28 million miles long and seven million miles wide! Arunadeva, the Charioteer, controls the horses and sits in front of the Sun God, but looks backward to Sun. It is said that there might be thousands of rays of Sun, but the important ones are only seven, representing Seven Planets, Viz.Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn. But, as per 'Aditya Hridayam' Prayer: There are many more rays

which are important,viz. Esha Brahmecha Vishnuscha Sivah Skandah Prajapathih,Mahendro Dhanadah Kalo Yamah Somohyapampathihi, Pitharo Vasavassadhyah-yassvinow Maruto Manuh Vayur Vahnih Praja Prana Ritu Kartah Prabhakarah].

**Moon** travels faster than Sun. The distance between Sun and Moon is 100,000 yojanas (800,000 miles). In two lunar fortnights, Moon passes through a period of a Samvatsara or a year. In two and quarter days, Moon passes through a month of the Sun, or in one day, it passes through a fortnight of the Sun. Hence, the divergence of Solar and Lunar calculations and Calendars. As the Moon is waxing, it is a day for Gods and a night for Pitru Devatas. The waxing fortnight gradually diminishes the shine till the Moonfall day (Amavasya) and the waning Moon picks up the shine day by day till Moon-rise day (Pournami). Moon is known as 'Jeeva' (life-provider), or 'Manomaya' (mind-alerter) or 'Annamaya' (potency provider from herbs and plants), 'Amritamaya' (source of life to all) and 'Sarvamaya' (all pervading). From Moon to the **Group of Stars**, the distance is 200,000 yojanas (16 00, 000 miles). Headed by Abhijit, there are twenty eight Stars revolving on their own axis. Above the Group of Stars is the Planet of Venus (Sukra) almost of the distance from the Moon to the Group of Stars. It is a benevelont planet, especially as a provider of good rains and prosperity and moves at the same pace as Sun God. Mercury (**Budha**), the son of Moon is situated from Venus (16,00,000 miles) or 72,00,000 miles from Earth and this Planet too is benevolent excepting when not moving along with Sun, thus causing cyclones, excess or no rainfall and dusty storms. Equidistant from Mercury or 80,80,000 miles above Earth, is the Planet of Mars (Mangal), which is generally not considered favourable, travelling along with other planets every three fortnights and creates tensions. The Planet of Jupiter (Guru) is away from Earth by some 10,400,000 miles-again 16,00,000 miles away from the planet of Mars- is considered generally benevolent to Brahmins and Universe, unless takes a curved path in conjunction with other planets. Saturn, which is 12 million miles above Earth is also considered generally unhelpful. Normally, each planet is 16,00,000 miles apart from another planet, but the distance from Saturn to the Group of 'Sapta Rishis' or the Seven Sages is 8,800,000 miles from Saturn ie.20,800,000 miles from Earth. Indeed, the Seven Sages are always the great well wishers of the entire Universe. The Sapta Rishis, viz. Marichi, Angirasa, Atri, Pulsastya, Pulaha, Krathu, and Vasishtha born in Lord Brahma's thoughts to help in the act of Creation.(Reference Maha Bharatha; Shanti Parva). The Seven Sage Constellation of the Great Bear (Ursa Major) is indeed the great well wisher of the entire Universe. The Sapta Rishis circambulate around the Pole Star, or Dhruva Tara, which is as good as the Abode of Supreme Lord Himself and is prayed to by religious mortals and Gods alike.

### **Sisumara Planetary System**

Some 13,00,000 yojanas (10,400,000 miles) above the 'Great Bear' shines high the Pole Star and the Sisumara System' or the Great Machine, comprising the Stars and Planets, resembling a Dolphin in water. Scholars of the Science of Astronomy compare the Formation as an Illustration or an Image of The Supreme Almighty Vasudava Himself, as this 'Jyothi anekam' (Multi-Splendour par excellence) or 'Sisumara Samsthanam' (The Grand Wheel Establishment) is clearly visible on the Sky, and as the The Supreme Almighty is invisible anyway! In other words, it would never be possible to comprehend the Portrait of 'Virat Purusha', let alone by human beings but by Sages and even by Gods or Trinity too, but one could visualise the similarity of God- Head with the Sisumara and be contented with it atleast. The various planets and a multitude of Stars revolve around the Pole Star or the Dhruva Star, each moving around in theier own Orbits at their own heights and are not clustered due to law of gravity. The body of Dolphin-like Sisumara Chakra is coiled with its head downward, the Pole Star (Dhruva) at its tail, on the body of its tail are the Planets of demi-Gods viz. Prajapati, Agni, Indra and Dharma; the base of the tail are the Planets of Dhata and Vidhata; at the hip position are the Sapta Rishis; the right side of the Sisumara

Chakra are the Constellations of fourteen Stars beginning from Abijit to Punarvasu; on the left side of the coiled body are the Stars of Pushya to Uttarashadha, thus balancing the body with equal weight of the Stars; on the back side of the body is the Group of Stars known as Ajaviti and on the abdomen flows the Ganges that flows in the Sky (the Milky Way Galaxy), which is the home of Solar System with an estimated 400 billion Stars and planets and thousands of clusters and nebulae); on the upper chin of Sisumara is Agasti; on the lower chin Yamaraja; on its mouth Mars; Genitals Saturn; on the back of its neck Jupiter; on its chest the Sun and the core of heart Narayana Himself; within its mind the Moon; navel the Venus; breasts Aswini Kumars; within its life-air or Pranapana is Mecury; neck Rahu; all over body the comets and pores innumerable Stars. Thus Sisumara Chakra is a mini version of the Supreme Almighty Himself. [Vishnu Sahasranamam (Slokam 47 states: Anirvinnah Stavishtho bhur\_dharma yupo Mahamakhah/ Nakshatra nemi\_nakshatri Khshama Kshamah Samihanah. Anirvannah (He Who Is Never Unhappy); Stavishtho: (He Who Is Colossal); Bhuh: The Supporter Of All; Dharma Yupah: (He Who Is United With Dharma or Virtue); Maha makhah:

(The Greatest Yagna or Sacrifice leading to Moksha or Salvation); Nakshatra nemi: (He Who Makes the Stars Move or He Who Mobilises the Sisumara Chakra and along with it the Entire Universe); Nakshatri (The Driving Force of Sisumara); Kshamah: (He Who Is Most Competent); Kshamah: (The Non-Reduceable or The Remainder Entity After The Pralay Or The Final Deluge); Samihanah: (Regulator and Well –Wisher)] Suka Muni advised King Parikshith to recite the Sisumara Chakra Mantra as follows:etat uha eva bhagavathah vishnoh srava Devata mayam rupum ahah ahah sandhayam prayatah vagyatah niriksamana upatistheta namo jyotir-lokaya kalayanayanimisam pataye maha-purusayabhidhimahiti:etat-this; u ha--indeed; eva--certainly; bhagavatah--of the Supreme personality of Godhead; vishnoh--of Lord Visnu; sarva-devata-mayam--consisting of all the demi-gods; rupam--form; ahah-ahah--always; sandhyayam--in the morning, noon and evening; prayatah--meditating upon; vagyatah--controlling the words; niriksamanah--observing; upatistheta--one should worship; namah--respectful obeisances; jyotihlokaya--unto the resting place of all the planetary systems; kalayanaya--in the form of supreme time; animisam--of the demigods; pataye--unto the master; maha-purushaya--unto the Supreme person; abhidhimahi--let us meditate; iti--thus. The body of the sisumara, thus described, should be considered the external form of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Morning, noon and evening, one should silently observe the form of the Lord as the Sisumara-chakra and worship Him with the above mantra.

Planets. Beneath Sun-God, about 10,000 Yojanas (80,000 miles) is situated the Planet of Rahu, basically an 'Asura' who had surreptitiously taken drops of 'Amritha', the everlasting life-giving ambrosia while the Divine Drink was being distributed by 'Mohini'the Feminine Incarnation of Lord Vishnu after the churning of Oceans by Demi-Gods and Demons. Similarly Ketu was another clandestine benificiary of a few drops of 'Amritha' and both Sun and Moon were the Demi-Gods who complained about the distribution of 'Amritha' by Mohini, who had used the Sudarsani wheel to deform both Rahu and Kethu. As the latter were inimical to Sun and Moon, they cause periodical eclipses. Below Rahu by 10,000 Yojanas (80,000 miles) are Siddha Loka, Karana Loka and Vidyadhar Loka and below that level is the Sky, the Antariksha where Yakshas, Rakshasas, Pisachas and Ghosts reside and hover around. There is no movement of air beyond that level and the Planet of Earth is situated some 100 yojanas or 800 miles thereunder. Large birds like eagles and Swans can fly upto that limit.

Underneath the Earth are the Seven Lokas in the sub trerrain heavens named **Bilwa Swarga** and the eapanse of Earth equals the Seven Lokas, viz. Atala, Vitala, Suthala, Talatala, Mahatala, Rasatala and Patala. The residents are Daityas, Danavas and Nagas, all of them highly fond of material enjoyments, excellent living conditions and luxurious palaces, gardens and such other comforts. Wine, women, food

and various sensuous pleasures are common. There is no Sun, no concept of day and night, no light nor time and such other set regulations pertaining to weeks, months, years, or seasons. There is lot of illumination from the precious gems carried on the hoods of the Serpent residents. There are no physical ailments as the usage of herbs and vegetable based medicines is plenty. There is no bad odour of the body or surroundings. Feelings of poverty, frustration, disease and envy are alien and excepting at the set timings of death; life is worth living otherwise. In Atala, there is a Demon, named Bala who has perfected mystic powers and by simply yawning created three kinds of women, viz. Swarinis, Kaminis and Pumskalies, all of whom are very highly passionate and sexy. The women use intoxicants and a drug called 'hataka' ( cannabis Indica) to enjoy endless climaxes in love. Vitala is the Loka where Goblins, Ghosts and other followers of God Siva inhabit, and is strongly believed that the Lord is responsible for the Gold Mines and the consequent pleasures of possession of Jewellery. Sutala is the place of residence of Bali Maharaja, universally acclaimed as the King of Charity (stated to be still alive); it is well known that out of an apprehension of Lord Indra and other Demi-Gods, Lord Narayana Himself had to take the Incarnation as 'Vamana' and asked for three steps of land as Guru Dakshina and in the bargain, occupied the entire Universe with His three steps of land in charity, ie. one foot on the Earth, another the Skies and Heavens and the third on his head which was pushed down by Vamanadeva's big toe by eighty thousand miles to the Planet of Sutala. Talatala is another planet ruled by Demon Maya, who is noted for his expertise in sorcery and black magic. But Lord Siva, who is Tripurari and the Super Tantric Himself, destroyed the Kingdom of Demon Maya, who not only surrendered to the Lord but also pleased Him by his devotion subsequently and thus had the security of the Kingdom by Lord Siva Himself. Mahatala is the Planet underneath Talatala which is inhabited by many-hooded snake sons of Kadru and descendants, facing always a big threat from Garuda, the carrier of Vishnu. Underneath the Mahatala is Rasatala, which is inhabited by the most heinous and powerful snakes hiding in holes, as they were cursed by a messenger of Lord Indra not to stay open. Finally, Patala or Nagaloka is the abode of very ferocious clans of snakes headed by Vasuki. The inhabitants are multi-headed ones carrying precious gems on their hoods, some with five gems, some ten, some hundred and a few with thousand or more gems emanating radiance of extra-ordinary nature to such an extent that the gems of these 'nagas' light up the entire Bilwa Swarga or even beyond! Nearly 240,000 miles under Patala is the Incarnation of Vishnu, the enormous Lord Ananta with countless hoods, bearing the fantastic weight of the entire Universe. Also known as Lord Sankarshana, the Incarnation is worshipped by Lord Siva, who is the embodiment of 'Tamas' or darkness. The massive Universe is like a tiny mustard seed on just one of the thousands of hoods of Ananta. At the time of Pralay or the Final Destructin of the Universe, the Super Power or the Greatest and the Best Ananta makes a slight move between His Eye Brows and then comes out the Three Eyed Rudra who actually manifests 'Ekadasa Rudras' to perform the task of terminating the Universe. That is the Grand Finale as well as the Beginning of Creation afresh!

Commencing from the description of Priyavrata's (the Son of Manu's) chariot travel of Bhuloka and its organised division into Seven Regions, Maha Muni Suka thus provided to King Parikshith a brief glimpse of the Great Lord's Creation of the entire Universe, including the Loka loka, Bhur-Bhuvar- Swar lokas, the Planets, the Great Susumara Chakra / Wheel, the Sub- terranian Heavenly Planets and the Bilwa Swarga and the finality of the Universe's existence and re- creation. Now would be an **Account of Hellish Planets** that the Maha Muni delineated:

Depending on the positive or negative activities of human beings pursuing various material forces, in different of modes of existence like Virtue, Passion or Ignorance, the end results are reflected in the punishments or rewards prearranged. The punishments allotted are executed in the Hellish Planets, stated to exist in the intermediate space beneath Bhu Loka and Gharbodaya Ocean. There are an estimated 28 Narakas, including Tamisra, Ardhamisra, Raurava, Maha Rourava, Kambhipaka, Kalasutra, Asi Patravani; Sukuramukha, Andha Kupa; Karmibhojana; Taptasurmi; Vajra Kantaka; Vatarani; Pranarodha; Raktaksha

Bhojana and so on. The kind of cruelties inflicted on the sinners are not only severe but for long durations, some of these are for several years, depending on the severity of the sins. Some of the punishments stated are illustrative only. A person appropriating somebody's wife or illegally enjoying other's property or wealth is tied by Yamadutas and forcibly thrown, starved, blinded and tortured in Tasmira or Ardhamisra. Anyone who forces himself or family or others through cruel means to gain the self is thrown into Rourava or Maha Rourava by Rurus or a kind of Cruel Animals, known as Kravyadas and eat into the flesh of the victim. Cruel persons eating birds or animals for their tongue-satisfaction are fried in oil or roasted in Kumbhipaka. Killers of the Virtuous (Brahmins) are made to jump into Kala Sutra and are made to suffer from within and outside, in a very large red hot copper vessel with fierce fire lit from underneath as well as under scorching heat of the Skies for thousands of years. Those who are irreligeous or Atheists or those who obstruct others practising religeous life are forced by the Yamadharma Raja's followers down a hell named Asi-Patravana for fierce whipping with blood profusing on the body and forcing him to run fast around forests full of palm trees with sword like trunks and leaves. A hell named Sukaramukha is the designated place to squeeze blood out as though from a sugar cane crusher if a person torments or kills an innocent, especially if the tormenter or killer happened to be a person in authority. If a human being wantonly enjoys the hurting or killing of another being of any species and has no qualms of doing so is thrown into Andha Kupa- a dark dungeoun and be made to bite, suck, and eat by a variety of birds, animals, insects and reptiles. Robbing, thefts and victimisation attracts the Hell Sandasma especially valuables, Gold and Jewellery are concerned and tearing off the skin of the body and pushing red hot balls into the gaping wounds. Illegal sexual joy or rape pushes one into the *Taptasurmi* Hell and make the person to embrace the red- hot replica of the opposite party's metallic figure! If a person responsible for a duty of any kind-be it to family, Insitution, Public life and so on -is not performed conscientiously, the dafaulter is thrown into the River of Blood, Vaitarani-in which mighty Sea Animals like Crocodiles eat up the Sinner as also force him to swim in blood, mucus, urine, pus and rotten stink of bones and flesh. Tormentors or killers of animals including the pets are sent to the Hells named, Pudoda, Pranarodha or Visasana and have them tortured by cutting them into pieces and adding the pieces again. A human being forcing to lap the semen of opposite sex is sent to Lalabhaksha and is made to swim stinking semen streams for many many years; Corrupt Officials or persons in power are sent to Sarameyadhama and get them chased by brutal dogs of mighty strength; Drinking of liquour by higher classes of Society are sent to Anupana and force them to drink melted iron; Those who are proud and egoistic on account of birth, caste, education, wealth and so on are sent to the hell of Kshara Kardama and are thrown down head first from mountain tops to tumble and get hurt with scraches all over the body, resulting in deaths again and again.

King Parikshith expressed his unreserved gratitude to Maha Muni Suka that both the 'Nivrutti Marga' (Liberation Route) and Pravritti Marga (Natural Route) of realising the Supreme Force had been enlightened. Yet, the awareness of Godhead notwithstanding, human beings continue to indulge in sins and are not able to overcome temptations even though they sure know that death is inevitable and its aftermath is indeed hell-bent. The process of repeated sinning and atonement might be infructuous. As is often stated: prevention is far better and ideal than cure, just as an elephant having been cleaned up once tends to play with mud again and the process of sinning and atonement is endless; the real root needs to be axed; lest the plant of sin would grow again and again. Maha Muni Suka replied to the King: Indeed the crux of the problem lies in axing thr root, lest the plant of sin would grow again and again. In this context, Maha Muni provided a grand example as to how sincere atonement and complete surrender to the Almighty should be deemed as dismissal of temporary sins, as the real root is the axing the plant of sin, even before the plant grows well before it becomes a big tree!

## The Story of Ajamila

In this very connection, the Maha Muni narrated an apt illustration of a devout Brahmin, Ajamila from Kanyakubja. He was an embodiment of virtue, performing all ritualistic duties including daily Agni Homams as expected of an ideal married person. Once he visited a forest to collect fruits, flowers and samidhas and kusas (dry grass for Homams). He witnessed a highly provocative scene of a low-class Sudra male with a semi- nude prostitute in action and despite all his Vedic background could not overcome the temptation of possessing that woman as his keep in her own surroundings. He acquired gradually all shocking habits of drinking, gambling, stealing and so on, continued his sinful activities and abandoned his wife, children and aged parents. He realised rather late that his life was indeed ruined and no amount of atonement was justified. While dying however, he shouted the name of 'Narayana', the tenth son of his prostitute woman, out of great desire to fondle him. The Servants of Lord Yama who appeared at the scene of Ajamila's death sought to drag him with ropes to Yamaloka. At the same time, the followers of Lord Vishnu appeared too at the Scene as they heard a sincere shout of NARAYANA. An altercation between Yamadutas and Vishnudutas followed as to who could take Ajamila's soul, either to Hell or Vaikuntha. Having returned to Hell, Yamadutas explained the situation and Lord Yamaraja advised his dootas to lay off their hands from the dead person. Lord Yama said that a mere invocation of the pure Narayana was adequate from Ajamila's death bed, considering his excellent background, excepting the sinful phase of his life with the prostitute and thereafter. Further, Ajamila made the big shout of 'Narayana' at the time of his death with full atonement that was extraordinary and astonishing. Lord Yama compared the sinful phase of Ajamila was like an eclipse-period of his life and after the evil patch of his life, he returned to his earlier stage of purity and Godliness; as a piece of Char-coal covered by ash outside but is red hot inside.

# Narada cursed by reborn Daksha

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

### **Reborn Prajapati Daksha's Descendents**

Prachetasa Prajapati Daksha and Askini had sixty daughters, ten of whom were given in charity to Yamaraja, seventeen to Kasyapa, and twenty seven to Moon-God and two each to Angira, Krasasva, and Bhuta. Among those who were born from the daughters of Daksha were born to their next or further generations were Sankata, Swarga, Nandi, eight Vasus, viz. Drona, Prana, Dhruva, Arka, Agni, Dosha, Vastu and Vibhavasu. From Krittika, another wife of Agni were born Skanda and Karttikeya. From Angirasa and Vastu was born Viswakarma and from Bhuta and Sarupa were born ten million Rudras as well as Ghosts and Goblins. The next generation of Kasyapa were Vinata, Kadru, Patangi and Yamini. Vinata gave birth to Garuda, the Chariot of Lord Vishnu and Aruna, the Charioteer of Lord Sun; Kadru gave birth to snakes, Patangi from birds and Yamini to locusts. Among Kasyapa's wives were, Aditi, Diti, Danu, Kastha, Arista, Surasa, Ila, Muni, Krodhavasa, Tamra, Surabhi, Sarama and Timi. From Aditi were born Devatas viz. Vivasvan, Aryama, Pusa, Tvasta, Savitha, Bhaga, Dhata, Vidhata, Varuna, Mitra, Satru and Urukrama, while Vivasvans and his wife Samjna begot Yamaraja and River Yamuna as twins. Diti's daughter Rachana was married to Prajapati Tvasta and gave birth to Sannivesa and Visvarupa ( eventually, Visvarupa replaced Brihaspati). Danu's sons included Vivipara whose daughter Sarmishta was married to renowned King, Yayati, as also Vibhavasu, Kapila, Aruna, Puloma and Viprachitti whose wife Simhika gave birth to Rahu and one hundred Kethus. From Kasta were born animals such as horses; Arista gave birth to Gandharvas; Surasa begot Rakshasas and bad Spirits, Angels from Muni; Various creepers from trees from Ila; dandasuka and other serpents as also mosquitoes from Krodhavasa; Vultures, eagles and large birds from Tamra; Buffalos, cows and such other animals from Surabhi; acquatics from Timi and tigers, lions and such other ferocious animals from Sarasa.

## New Brihaspati Visvarupa teaches 'Narayana Kavacha' to Indra

Indra's Court is a master-piece of the Universe, with Indra as a cynosure, surrounded by several semi-Gods and seated along with him by Sachi Devi. Guru Brihaspati, the Great Guide and Teacher of all the Subjects of the Court was among the Principal Advisor. In this ideal setting unfortunately, Brihaspati felt humiliated by Indra, as due respect to a Spiritual Master was not paid to him as Indra started cutting short and interrupting the Guru often. In course of time, Brihaspati stopped attending the Court. Indra no doubt apologised to the Guru, but the Guru did not relent. Lord Brahma called Indra and reprimanded him for his follies and had to look for an alternative. At the request of Demi-Gods, Brahma then appointed Visvarupa, the son of Diti's daughter Rachana and Prajapati Tvasta. Lord Brahma suitably briefed Visvarupa and taught the basic principles of an Acharya (Teacher) who should consider Brahma as father, Indra as brother, Mercy as a sister, the planet of Earth as mother, guest as Agni and all living entities as Lord Vishnu Himself. He underlined the need for balancing the strength of Sukracharya, the Guru of Demons. Visvarupa taught the Narayana Kavacha (The Shield of Narayana) to Indra and Semi-Gods. Being seated properly, the intial mantra be recited viz. 'Apavitrah Pavitro va, Sarvavasthangatho piva, Yah smaret pundarikasham sa bahyahabhantara suchih, SriVishnu Sri Vishnu Sri Vishnu.' Thus purified, the Mantra be recited as: 'Om Namo Narayanaya' touching eight parts of the body systematically-feet, knees, thighs, abdomen, heart, chest, mouth and head- both in Utpatti Nyasa (Start-up) and Samhara Nyasa (Close-up), ie. in reverse order. The mantra is recited as 'Ya Narayanaya Namo Om'in the reverse order. The next mantra is: 'Om Bhagavatey Vasudevaya' by touching the four finger tips touching the joints of thumbs, starting from the right hand and then the left hand. The next mantra is recited as 'Om namo vishnave namah', by aligning Om with heart, 'Vi' with top of the head, 'sh'with eyebrows, 'na'with tuft (sikha'), 've'with eyes, 'na'with joints of body and 'mah' as a

weapon. While reciting the mantras, one should visualise the Supreme Lord seated on Garuda's back and with his eight arms Viz. conchshell, disc, shield, sword, club, arrows, bow and strings. The Narayana Kavacha protects in different forms of the Supreme Force, such as Matysa (Great Fish) from water, Vamana (The Dwarf) from all the three Worlds, Narasimha (Man-Lion) in forests and battle fronts, Varaha (The Boar) from the bottom of the Seas, Parasurama with axe from Unkind Kings and Mountains, Rama from tribulations in foreign countries, Narayana from false religious systems, Nara from unwanted pride, Dattathreya from mystic forces, Sanat Kumara from undue desires, Kurma (Tortoise) from hellish planets, Narada from worship offences, Dhanvantari from physical ailments, Rishabhadeva from extreme heat and cold, Yagna from defamations, Balarama from reptiles, Vyasa from ignorance, Buddha from laziness, Kalki from irreligion and so on. The 'Kavacha' provides protection to the devotees during day and night by Kesava, Narayana, Madhava, Govinda, Vishnu, Madhusudana, Hrishikesa, Padmanabha, Janardana, and Vasudeva. Similarly, the eight arms provide protection from all possible evils and ventualities. Narayana Shield is meant for each and every body, from Devatas to normal mortals. With the help of Narayana Kavacha, Indra defeated demons and rejuvenated the supremacy of Devas again.

# Visvarupa reborn as Vrittrasura

In course of time, Indra got suspicious of the intentions of Visvarupa, the newly appointed Guru of Devatas; although Visyarupa was the son of Prajapati Tyastha, his mother Rachana was the daughter of Diti whose credentials were of Demons. While performing 'Homams'/ 'Yagnas', he was in the habit of reciting the offerings to Fire God meant for Indra, Varuna and other Devatas loudly, but offered 'Ghee' (classified butter) secretly to demons as well. Also, Visvarupa who had three heads, used to consume 'Soma Ras' (Nectar) with one mouth, another with Wine and the third one with food. In a fit of rage, Indra killed Visvarupa, despite the knowledge that killing a Brahmin Priest would attract heavy penalty which was cleared by suitable means eventually..On learning what Indra did, Tvastha performed high-quality spiritual ceremonies with a view to avenge the death of his son. As a result, a huge, frightful figure emerged from the Fire-pit, who looked like capable of destroying the entire Universe. Tvasta named the giant demon as Vritra, as he was the product of enormous asceticism covering all the planetery systems. The entire army of Devas, headed by Indra, pulled out their collective strength pitted against the one man militia of Vritra to no avail. They had to, in fact, run in different directions in sheer self defence. Finally they made a group prayer to Lord Vishnu for a quick solution as Vritra was growing in power minute by minute. The divine response came that Sage Dadhichi could only help retrieve the ugly situation. The Sage assimilated spiritual knowledge and passed on the same to Asvini Devatas who attained the position of Jeevan Muktha (Liberation in life itself). The Mantras, including Narayana Kavacha was passed on to Prajapati Tvasta who in turn passed it on to his son Visvarupa too. The Narayana Kavacha fortified the body of **Sage Dhadhichi** and only the backbone of the Sage could help to put an end to Vritra. The Devas thus made a collective prayer to Dadhichi to spare his body for the noble cause of ending Vritrasura. Dadhichi consented and his back- bone was converted into a mighty Thunderbolt by the Divine Architect, Viswakarma. A ferocious battle followed then, when Satya Yuga was ending and Threta Yuga was being ushered in, as the entire force of powerful Demons headed by Vritrasura on one side and the mighty Demi Gods headed by Indra seated on 'Airavatha'- the Heavenly Elephant- fortified in his arms with the thunderbolt made out of Dhadhichi's back bone prepared by Viswakarma. Before using the Thunderbolt, Vritrasura became furious and fought Indra on one to one basis. He tormented and put Indra to shame. He taunted Indra to say that he made the heinous crime of killing a Holy Brahmin, Viswarupa and got away from the sin in a surreptitious manner. He cursed Indra and told that he was a coward and culpable. Without the Thunderbolt he would have been reprehensible. Vritrasura further said 'Almighty in His enormous Wisdom showed the way to kill me to stabilise order in the Universe and that the kind of death which has been awarded to me by Super Force Himself is my

reward and not a punishment, as He is the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer and His decision is ultimate.' By so saying Vritrasura invited the Thunderbolt to attain Salvation. Thus ended the memorable story of Vritrasura into the pages of the Great Puranas. When Vritrasura attained 'Moksha', all the Celestial Planets, Demi-Gods, Gandharvas and so on praised his valour, but Indra was the single being who was remorseful as he had the Guilt Complex to have killed two Brahmins, Visvarupa and Vritrasura. Indra's sinful reaction was chased by a feeling that a Chandala woman of old age suffering from untouchable diseases, till Indra ran away to Manas Sarovar, the abode of Goddess Lakshmi. When Demi-Gods, and Sages advised Indra to attain freedom from the sin to perform the Yagna of Asvamedha or Sacrifice of Horse in Vedic Method then only Indra got absolved of the sin.

#### Narada teaches 'Narada Pancharatra' to Chandraketu

But King Parikshith raised a pertinent question as to how a demon like Vritrasura was considered a great devotee of Lord Narayana, despite the fact he created havoc in the Universe and tormented Indra and Demi-Gods, even being a Brahmana? To this Maha Muni Suta narrated a story given by Narada as given by Sage Vadavyasa. There was a King named Chitraketu who was very benevolent and all his subjects were contented. He had a millon wives-all attractive but barren and could not bear a child. Once Sage Angira happened to visit the King who received him with considerable attention and veneration. As the Sage sat on the ground instead of the King's own throne, the King too sat on the ground and the Sage was pleased by the King's humility. The Sage performed a Sweet Rice Homam to bless the eldest wife of Chitraketu, Kritadyuti.In course of time they were blessed with a son. The King had endless joy and so did the entire Kingdom. But the other wives became too jealous and poisoned the child even when he did not grow many years. The King and Queen were overwhelmed with sorrow and became uncontrollable. Both Angira and Narada helped to console them. In fact, Narada by his mystic yoga power revived the child for a while who refused to recognise the Royal Couple as his parents. Narada thus exhorted the couple to get rid of the illusion of the child and the parents, and it was thus evident that once death takes place, the so-called sense of attachment ceases as well. Each species of the Lord's creation loses its identity and as per one's own till the actions of the destiny of an ensuing life begins either as a plant, a bird, an animal or a human being! Narada then blessed King Chitraketu with spiritual knowledge and taught the King about Brahma Samhita and Narada Pancharatra. Chitraketu performed most intense and intimate prayers to Lord Anantadeva for long and finally, the Lord was kind to have provided glimpses of Himself and the King attained fulfillment. Therafter Chitraketu became the Head of Vidyadharas and began travelling in outer space. During his travels he had the chance of viewing Lord Siva and Mata Parvati in a congregation of Siddhas and holy Sages, when they were in an embrace as they are 'Ardha-Nareeswaras'. Chitraketu did a foolish giggle to view the scene, even as Parvati was noticing it. She was clearly offended and instantly gave a curse that Chitraketu would be a demon. But, Lord Siva explained that Chitraketu was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and a sincere Vishnavite having absorbed the essence of Truth and Falsity and the concept of the Self and God, a rudiment of **Dvaitha or Dualism**, ie of a human and God. Basically God is one but the fine distinction made out is of a 'Bhakta'( Devotee) and Paramatma, instead of **Advaitha** stating 'Aham Brahmasmi' or 'I am God'. The paths to Super Soul are equally proven, while interpretations might vary'.

# Diti revengeful of Indra and 'Pumsavana' Sacrifice

Having given the background of Chitraketu and Vritrasura, Maha Muni Suka told King Parikshith that Diti, the mother figure of Daityas continued to harbour a strong feeling of revenge against Indra who killed many of her progeny. In this context, Suka Muni recalled about the descendants of her sister Aditi

and herself.Among the twelve sons of Aditi, Prasni (Savita's husband) who was the fifth son gave birth to Savitri, Vyahriti, and Trayi and nine sons, Agnihotra, Pasu, Soma, Chaturmasya and five MahaYagnas. The sixth son, Bhaga married to Siddhi gave birth to Mahima, Vibhu, Prabhu and daughter Asi. The seventh son, had four wives Kuhu, Sinivali, Raka and Anumati and they begot four sons, Sayam, Darsa, Pratah and Purnamasa. The eighth son, Vidhata married to Kriya gave birth to five Fire Gods, namely, Purusyas. The ninth son Varuna married to Karsini; Varuna gave birth to Valmiki from an anthill and Bhrigu was born to Karshini from Brahma. Agastya and Vasishtha were the common sons of Varuna and Aditi's tenth son Mitra. **Indra** was the eleventh son of Aditi, who was married to Paulomi. The last son was a dwarf Urukrama whose wife was Kirti. Sage Kasyapa and Kirthi begot the Great Dwarf Vamana, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

Diti and Kasyapa gave birth to Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha. Kayadhu (descendent of Dhanu) and Hiranyakasipu gave birth to Samhlada, Anuhlada, Hlada and Prahlada. The sister of the four brothers was Simhika, the mother of Rahu among the Nine Grahas (Planets) who had disguised and taken nectar from Mohini (Lord Vishnu's incarnation). Hlada and Dhamani gave birth to Vatapi and Ilvala; the latter tried a trick on Sage Agastya and cooked a ram (actually Vatapi) and planned to tear open Agastya's stomach after eating the ram; the Sage knew the trick and immediately ate the 'ram,' and said 'Jeernam Jeernam Vataipi Jeernam' ie. may Vatapi be disgeted comfortably. Thus digesting Vatapi, the ram, and the Sage oversmarted Ilvala. Prahlada was responsible for the killing of Hiranyakasupu by Lord Narasimha. Prahlada and Virochana gave birth to Bali, who was also punished by Vamana, the incarnation of Vishnu. Diti felt that Indra was responsible for several killings of her progeny including Hirayaksha and Hiranuyakasipu and thus her anger for Indra became intense. She thus requested her husband Kasyapa to bless her with a son who could kill Indra. Sage Kasyapa felt extremely sad that his wife was following a wicked route to bear her a son to kill Indra. He somehow desired that such an eventuality should never arise and planned to atleast prolong time for a year and asked Diti to follow very strict regime of personal sacrifice named 'Pumsavana'. During the year, Diti should not think ill of others, nor speak lies, nor hurt any body, nor eat flesh or fish, nor wear robes unwashed by herself, but worship Brahmanas, cows, and women with husbands and sons alive, in short follow a life of a hermit. Any discrepancy or deviation from the prescribed do's and don'ts would not only kill Indra but would become a friend and associate. The nephew Indra knew the intention of Diti, but pretended to help her in the Daily Worships by fetching flowers and fruits to Diti and such other services. At the time of Diti's delivery after a year, Indra who had yoga sidhis, like 'anima' and 'laghima' entered Diti's womb and with the help of his 'Vjara' (the Thunderbolt) cut the embryo into seven pieces and cut each piece to another seven pieces. Each of the fortynine pieces thus born became as many 'Maruts' who became demigods and thus Diti was purified of her envy and animosity of Lord Indra. Punsavana had thus become an important 'Vrata' (a sacred ritualistic practice of worship) by chaste women for one year with the help and active association of their husbands. During the bright half of month of 'Kartika' (falling during November-December), there should be an intense worship by both the husband and wife. On the last day of Moon-rise ( Purnamasi or Pournami), the climactic worship (pujas) should take place with friends and relatives participating in the event, under the guidance of Brahmanas, performing twelve oblations to Fire God with 'Ghee' in a ritualistic manner by chanting the Mantra: 'Om Bhagavatey Mahapurushaya Maha Vibhutaya Swaha'. During the entire preceding year too, the couple could -or at least either of them- observe the prescribed daily worships to Goddess Lakshmi and God Narayana., by chanting the Mantra. Sincere worship on these lines ought to bless the couple and their family good health, prosperity, name alround and happiness. The Vrath can be done my unmarried women to secure good husbands; those who have no husbands/ sons could perform for spiritual solace.

Was Vishnu partial to daityas?

In this context, King Parikshith enquired of Suka Maha Muni as to why Diti-or for that matter anybodymight have a doubt that Lord Vishnu had always appeared to have been partial in His treatment in favour of Indra and Demi-Gods vis-à-vis Demons, even when many of Demons worshipped the Super Energy; for instance, Vritrasura or Ravana or Hiranyaksha or Hiranya Kasipu and so on. What was more, when these very demon personalities were killed, they were blessed with salvation after death! Suka Maha Muni replied that Lord Vishnu is neither partial nor impartial, but just and kind always. He has no characteristics and is a 'nirguna' (devoid of materialistic qualities). On the other hand, all other beings are governed by the three major 'Gunas', viz. Satvika (Creative), Rajas (Upholding) and Tamas ( Destroying). Actions of the living beings are controlled by these 'Gunas'. When the Boy- Sages-Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanatkumara-desired to enter Lord Vishnu's Abode-Vaikuntha-the two Gate Keepers Jaya and Vijaya refused entry as the unclad boys looked undeserving of an entry to the hallowed Place, as the latter were governed by the 'Tamo-Guna'. The Boy-Sages cursed the Gate Keepers to become Demons for three consecutive births and what was worse to become the enemies of that very Lord Vishnu, whom they worshipped intensely; they felt that as the Gate-keepers of the Place they suffered from excessive 'Tamo Guna' and had thus be punished. Hence they were born as Demons in the three successive births as Hiranyakasipu and Hirayaksha, Rayana and Kumbhakarna and Sisupala and Dandavakra. Maha Muni gave the illustration of King Parikshith's recent example of his Grand Uncle Dharmaraja performing 'Rajasusya Yagna' (Sacrifice of Horse) at the end of which Lord Krishna was named as the Chief Guest and Sisupala brothers vehemently protested the honour to be bestowed on Krishna. Sisupala called Lord Krishna a fake and a cheat, who killed Kings like Kamsa and so on and was a timid person to have disappeared some eighteen times when he was challenged to fight.( The fact was that Krishna gave a promise to Sisupala's mother that He would tolerate one hundred mistakes against Himself and there after would kill Sisupala brothers.) As the hundredth blunder was committed at the Rajasuya congregation, Sisupala brothers were destroyed by the Lord Krishna's 'Sudarsana Chakra' (Discus). They attained 'Sayudja Mukthi', as originally, the Evil Persons were 'Vishnu Bhaktas', but due to the temporary aberration and the play of Tamo-Guna, they were cursed and punished but finally reached their original position.

## Hiranyakasipu and Prahlada

Continuing the story of the curse of Sage-Boys to the Gate Keepers of Vaikuntha, Suka Muni elaborated as to how Hiranyakasipu was enraged at the demise of his brother Hiranyaksha, when he sought to push the Planet of Earth into Patala loka and the Incarnation of Lord Vishnu as the Great Boar killed him. To avenge the death of his brother, Hiranyakasupu performed unprecedented austerities to please Lord Brahma. The relentlessness of the austerities was such that fire emerged from the Demon's ears and was spread over the entire Universe. The Five Elements were shaken up and Demi-Gods appealed to Lord Brahma to intervene. As Brahma finally appeared before the Demon, the latter solicited immortality as his desire. As that would not be possible since every being in Creation would have to perish, then the Demon asked for boons that he would be tantamount to immortality, ie he could be killed by no living entity, demi-Gods, any power in the Universe, and neither during day nor night. Thus having been empowered by the benedictions from Lord Brahma, Hiranyakasipu terrorised the entire Universe and insisted the he was God himself and as such be worshipped by one and all. His son Prahlada was a staunch devotee of Lord Narayana by birth and it became evident that the boy could not be stopped from worshipping the Lord. The Demon King engaged the sons of Guru Sukracharya, (the Head Priest of Demons), named Sanda and Amarka to use their entire patience and forbearance to convert Prahlada's psyche away from the devotion to Narayana but to no avail. Hiranyakasipu tried the essence of the Four known means of 'Sama' (Intense counseling or brain washing), 'Dana' (Material benefits), 'Bheda' (creating aversion

against Narayana and appealing for filial duties) and finally the use of 'Danda' (by creating scare of death or violence of extreme degrees). Prahlada became inflexible and took to extreme devotion of Narayana in the most desperate manner. So did the father who resorted to every possible means of killing the child. An exasperated Demon King finally asked the boy to show Narayana in a column of the Hall. Out came a roar of a frightful species of a mix of man-lion entity who placed the strong body of the Demon King on the Lord's thighs and tore of the Demon's body to pieces. Lord Brahma, Lord Siva, the entire congregation of Demi-Gods led by Indra and the Great Sages appeared to witness how 'Dharma' was revived as the destruction of the enormous Demon King was complete. It was possible for Prahlada alone to gradually bring down the huge fury of Lord Narasimha, Who was neither an animal nor a human being, nor any species of Brahma's creation and the time of destruction was neither day nor night but dusk time, as per the Demon's own charter of death wish! Hiranakasipu attained 'Sarupya Mukti' thereafter. Prahlada became a highly benevolent King subsequently.

# Varnashrama and Grihasti Dharma in Prahlada's Regime

Suka Maha Muni informed King Parikshith as to how Prahlada ruled his Kingdom with justice, virtue and as per Scriptures. Narada who was a witness to the manner in which King Prahlada reigned was explained in detail to King Yudhishtara. Prahlada had unreserved devotion to the Supreme Lord, profound knowledge of Scriptures, unparralelled wisdom essential for a Ruler

and most importantly a high sense of detachment devoid of material desires. Indeed these are the rarest of qualities that an ideal King could possess. Taking cue from the ideal governance followed by Prahlada, Narada defined ideal values of Varnashrama Dharma-the Four Class System- to ensure social values in a Society based on Spiritual Principles. Basically stated, the rudimentary observance of religeous regime demands tolerance, truthfulness, austerity, simplicity, control of mind and senses, celibacy, charity, contentment, and non-violence. These qualities are applicable to one and all. Among 'Dvijas' or twice born-intially by birth and subsequently after the Ceremony of wearing the Holy Thread – are the three categories viz. Brahmanas (the Class of Religious Practice), the Kshatriyas (the Class of Defenders of Dharma or Justice), the Vanijya Classs (the Business and Trading Class) have larger responsibilities of socio-religious nature. Brahmanas should have vedic knowledge and practice and possess the qualities of austerity, spirituality, self control, physical cleanliness, purity of thought and action and daily ritualistic worship. Kshatriyas ought to protect, preserve and enforce regulations of the society and ensure law and order. Vysyas are expected to business interests of the Society, including agriculture and allied activities. The fourth class are meant for servicing the general needs of the Society. But if one shows symptoms of a specific class, the person be accepted to the duties of that category, irrespective of **origin of birth.** The Veda Base in this connection is: YasyaYallakshanam proktum / Pumso varnabhiyyanjanam / yad anyaprapti drusyata / tat teniva vinirdisat – Yasya: of whom; yat:which; lakshanam: symptom; prokta: described ( as above); pumsah: of a person; varna abhivyanjakam: indicating the classification; yat:if; api:also; drusyeta: is seen; tat: that; tena: by that symptom; eva:certainly; vinurdiset: be accepted, [regardless of birth]. (Bhagavata Purana: Canto 7, chapter 11, verse:35)

King Yudhishtara requested Narada Maharshi to explain the life style of an ideal householder or 'Grihasti Dharma'. He must earn his livelihood honestly without being concerned about the end result. Constant contacts with Saintly persons; detachment and contentment without excessive possesion; treating the poor, the helpless, innocent children and animals with compassion; practising daily worship and devotion to the Supreme Lord as also Demi-Gods; performing periodical oblations to Fire God, as per Shastras are among the duties. Brahmanas are to offer rituals to forefathers during the dark period of

'Bhadra' month and ceremonies during Mahalaya Amayasya during Asyina month. One should perform Shraddha ceremonies on Makara Sankranti day ( when Sun moves upward to north) and/ or Karkataka Sankranti (when Sun travels to Southern direction) as also on Mesha Sankranti and Tula Sankranti. Ceremonies are also to be performed during Solar/Lunar eclipse days, Akhsaya Tritiya day, on the ninth lunar day of the bright moon phase in the month of Kartika and on the seventh lunar day of the bright phase of Moon in the month of Magha as also on the Janma Nakshatra days. Besides on the banks of Ganges and Yamuna, religious performances be done in temples or holy rivers, lakes or Sacred Places where Saintly persons live; for example, Pushkara lake, Kurukshetra, Gaya, Prayaga, Pulahasrama, Naimisaranya, banks of Phalgu river, Setubandha, Prabhasa, Dwaraka, Varanasi, Mathura, Pampa, Bindu Sarovara, Badarikasrama, Places where Narmada River flows, Chitrakuta and many other Places dotted all over in Bharata Desa or elsewhere where Lord Narayana is worshipped. In the pursuit of the four 'endprinciples' of 'Garhastya'viz. Dharma (Virtue), Artha (Wealth), Kama (Desire) and Moksha ( Salvation), there are materialistic activities mixed with the means of Adhyatmika (Introspection), Adhidivika (Devotion to the Lord) and Adhi Bhowtika (Physical Well Being). One is to be conscious of the 'Means' and the 'Ends'. Equally important is to safeguard the negation of the Principles viz. Vidharma or (Irreligion), Paradharma (Principles followed by others), Abhasa (False similarity of religion), Upadharma (parallel religion) and Chala Dharma (misleading innocent victims).

Thus ending the narration by Maharshi Narada to Yudhishtara regarding Varnashrama Dharma and Grihasti Dharma, Suka Maha Muni reverted back to his week-long recitation of Maha Bhagavata at the final stage of King Parikshith's life. Earlier, he described the process of Creation and 'Manvantaras'. As the first Manu -Svayambhu Manu- was retiring to the forests, the second and the third in the order, viz. Sarvochisa (Son of Lord Agni) and Uttama (Son of King Priyavrata) suceeded. Tamasa Manu was the fourth in the Manu lineage. (At present, the contemporary world is under the Rule of the Seventh Manu, viz. Vaivasvata Manu).

# Salvation of Gajendra the Elephant King

During the Tamasa Manu's period was born Lord Vishnu's incarnation, named Sri Hari- to Harini and Harimedha- who saved the Elephant King, Gajendra from the deadly grip of a crocodile. A massive mountain 'Trikuta' with an expanse of ten thousand yojanas (eighty thousand miles) was besides the River Gandaki, where Gajendra and his spouses as also a massive collection of elephant army were bathing on the banks of the River and another King of Crocodiles, along with its own group, caught hold of the Elephant King. The two animals were illustrious in their previous lives; the crocodile was the Chief of Gandharvas, named Huhu who was bathing with a party of women and angered Muni Devala by pulling his leg and the latter cursed Huhu to become a crocodile. Gajendra was Indradyumna, the King of Pandyas who too angered Sage Agastya and became an Elephant King. A fierce battle followed for thousand years which was joined by the armies of elephants and crocodiles, without overpowering neither of the battling animals. Gajendra was desperate but became exhausted physically, mentally and psychologically, while the crocodile being an animal of water was doubled up with energy and enthusiasm. By the grace of Lord Krishna, Gajendra remembered from the past birth as a King and recited the Mantra: Om Bhagavatey Vasudevaya in final desperation and made intense prayers to say that there was none else Who could save him, but Him. Lord Sri Hari alighted his 'Vahana' (Vehicle) of Garuda and on reaching the spot instructed His 'Sudarsana Chakra' (Disc) to slit the head of the crocodile. The curse of Sage Agastya ended and the Gandharva Chief attained Salvation. Gajendra who was a grand devotee in his earlier life too attained Moksha as blessed by Lord Sri Hari. [ Harihar Nath Temple, believed to have been built by Lord Rama when He visited the Holy Spot along with Sita and Laxman,

still continues to be a Pilgrimage Place, which is also visited by lakhs of persons witnessing the Sonepur Mela (Trade Fair), one of the largest Animal Fairs held every year near Patna].

# Mammoth Churning of Ocean for 'Amrith' (Nectar)

Proceeding with the narration to King Parikshith, Suka Mahamuni highlighted the Gajendra Moksha incident during the Tamasa Manu's regime, whereafter the fifth and sixth Manus viz. Raivata and Chakshusa ruled the Universe. It was in the sixth millennium of Chakshusa Manu that Lord Vishnu had incarnated as Ajita who was begotten to Vairaja and Devasambhuti; Ajita in the form of a tortoise was wandering in the Ocean of Milk carrying the Mountain Mandhara on His back and produced 'Amrit'by churning the Ocean. Parikshith became highly inquisitive about the famous story and requested the Muni to give full details. As the enmity and intense hatred between the Demi-Gods and Demons took unprecedented proportions, the Demi-Gods assembled on the top of the Sumeru Mountain to seek a solution. Lord Brahma instructed the Devas and Demons to resort to a temporary truce, till arrangements could be made to churn the Ocean of Milk to obtain Amrit, the Divine Drink to provide everlasting life.Garuda, the Vehicle of Lord Vishnu lifted the Mandhara Mountain and placed it into the Ocean as the churning rod. Vasuki the Giant Serpent coiled around the Mountain tightly; the head of the serpent was opted for by the Demons out of pride and the tail was taken by the Demi-Gods as the rope. As the Mountain was not stable and shaky, Ajita in the form of tortoise slid under the Mountain and provided the needed balance. Thus commenced the mammoth churning of the Ocean for 'Amrit'. Many Demons perished from the poisonous flames from the mouth of Vasuki. As the churning progressed, the Ocean was shaken up bringing out innumerable species underneath, black clouds emerged fast across the Sky and there was terrible turmoil alround. Suddenly, the Sky looked like breaking way, emitting unprecedented poisonous flames, 'Halahal', swiftly engulfing the entire Universe. The initial churning was terminated and Demi-Gods headed by Lord Brahma as well as the Demons screamed for help to Lord Siva to save the situation. They all prayed to Him that He was the original life force, the Maha Tatva, the Eternal Truth and the Omni Potent and He only could stop the annihilation of the Universe. In response to the desperate prayers by one and all, Lord Siva swallowed the 'Halahal' and retained it in His Throat to safeguard the Worlds within His other body parts. Thus known in the Sciptures; as 'Neela Greeva'-the Blue Throated, He protected the entire Universe and saved the act of Creation itself. As the process of churning resumed further, a number of Divine Figures commenced emerging: 'Surabhi' the Cow required for unending milk and products required for Sacred Rituals as oblations to Fire God by Sages; a Divine Horse, Utthaisvarya, as desired by King Bali of the Under World; the Divine Elephant 'Airavata' and eight She Elephants, which were desired by Indra to possess; Koustubha Mani and Padmaraga Mani-the jewels decorating Lord Vishnu's chest; 'Parijata Tree' to decorate the Celestial Gardens; then emerged Apsaras, the Divine dansueses to entertain Demi-Gods and Indra; the Goddess of Fortune, Lakshmi whom the Demi- Gods and Demons craved alike to possess but She Herself opted for Lord Vishnu Who is the ultimate Preserver of the Universe; then appeared the dame, Varuni, with voluptuous eyes who could control drunkards, whom King Bali opted for on behalf of the Demon World. Finally, a strong, stout, blackish and young person, known as Dhanvantari, the Physician of the Universe, whom both Demons and Demi- Gods agreed to share. But, the most awaited jar of Nectar noticed by the Demons was forcibly snatched away, to the disappointment of Demi-Gods. But, Lord Vishnu created a cover of 'Maya' (Illusion) and let the Demons fight among themselves for the sips of the Nectar. In the confusion, there appeared an outstanding beauty with most sonorous voice and dazzling figure, who was Lord Himself in the form of Mohini Murthi. She had mesmerised the Demons who fell in a spell and made them request her to do justice in equitably distributing the Nectar to all by turns. She made formations as per seniority and made them wait for turns. She started with the formations of the Demons, but by means of illusion had actually commenced the distribution among the Demi-Gods. Rahu a Demon somehow got into the camp of Demi- Gods and this was noticed by Sun and Moon, who complained the fact to Mohini Murthi

and immediately the Sudarsana Chakra severed Rahu's head, but since he drank the drops of Nectar already, Lord Brahma gave him the status of a Planet; but since then, Rahu became the enemy of Sun and Moon and torment them periodically by way of eclipsing them till date. At this juncture, Lord Vishnu revealed his identity and exhorted the Demons to mend their diabolic actions and take refuge in the Superior Energy instead of becoming slaves of the Eight Materialistic Vices, Viz. Kama (Desire), Krodha (Anger), Moha (Infatuation), Mada (Arrogance), Lobha (Avarice) and Matsara (Jealousy). He advised that in the ultimate analysis, only He would provide salvation which tantamounts to Eternity, which indeed the Nectar that they craved for.

## War by Demons with Demi-Gods

Lord Vishnu's exhortation to the Danavas fell flat on their ears; instead, they became more violent than before, especially as they were denied access to Nectar and got frustrated. Many demons like Taraka, Sumbha, Nisumbha, Jambha and Arista continued to terrorise Trilokas. They were also fortified with boons of invincibility from Lord Brahma on account of their intense prayers and harsh Sacrifices. Led by Indra riding Airavata the celesial Elephant, Demi-Gods like Vayu, Varuna, Agni, Sun, Moon, and various other planets, and associates retaliated. Sumbha and Nisumbha were annihalated by Goddess Durga Devi, Indra defeated Bali, Moon fought with Rahu, Brihaspati with Sukracharya, Lord Siva with Jambha, Sanaischara with Narakusura, Kartikeya with Taraka, Yamaraja with Kalanabha, Surya with hundred sons of Bali headed by Bana and so on. As Demon Kalanemi attacked Garuda, Lord Vishnu's disc severed his head as also those of Mali, Sumali and Malyavan, as these Demons became too powerful in the battle. Demi-Gods Varuna, Vayu and Agni chased and killed thousands of Demons like roaring lions to flocks of deer. After the battle ended, substantial Demon population, especially of those who claimed invincibility, got dwindled to a large extent. But the display of valour, scheming and determination in Deva-Danava War was an unparalelled spectatle witnessed never before nor later.

# Suka Muni's prophesies about future Manus

Maha Muni Suka prophesied the prospective Manu Prajapatis to King Parikshith as follows: While the seventh Manu was Siddhadeva, son of Vivasvan was in rule, the Great Battle of Devas and Danavas took place and Lord Vamana was born as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. But, when the eighth Manu, Savarni commenced the rule of the Universe, King Bali became Indra, as he defeated the earlier Indra and consequently Lord Vamana asked for the three feet in charity and pushed Bali down to Sutala which was more opulent than Indraloka, as Lord Vishnu was pleased with Bali's great quality of charity and thus made the latter contented. The ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth Manus would respectively be Daksha-Savarni, Brahma-Savarni, Dharma Savarni, Rudra-Savarni, Deva-Savarni and Indra-Savarni respectively. Suka Maha Muni also prophesied that the respective Indras in the ninth to fourteenth Manvantaras would be Adhbhuta, Sambhu, Vaidhrata, Ratadhama, Divaspati and Suchi. The total duration of the fourteen Manvantaras is a cycle of one thousand Maha Yugas or one Kalpa and two Kalpas make a full day/night of Lord Brahma ie.8,640,000,000 human years!Indeed, several changes happened during Lord Brahma's one day, comprising fourteen Manvantaras. During the Deva-Danava Battle, King Bali's life ended but was revived by Danava Guru, Sukracharya, the son of illustrious Sage Bhrigu. In a battle with Indra, King Bali defeated Indra again and hence the need for Lord Vishnu to take the incarnation of Lord Vamana to push Bali down to 'Sutala' and relieve him of the position/ title of Indra. This story was given in detail by Suka Maha Muni to King Parikshith. After reviving King Bali's life, Sukracharya and his disciple Brahmanas prompted King Bali to secure Spiritual Energies by way of performing a highly potent Sacrifice or 'Yagna', called Viswajit. Even as the most powerful Yagna, as

concieved and perfected by Sukracharya was in progress, the Heavens received shock waves and shadows of nemesis seeking revenge against Indraloka took substantive shape. With each helping of ghee served into the Fire-pit, a celestial Chariot took shape with horses and paraphernalia including armoury, arrows and equipment required for a battle never scripted in the past. No doubt, the fight planned by King Bali was not of the magnitude of the Battle of Devas and Danavas- where the entire strengh of Evil on the one hand and Virtue on the other which participated in full force of Demons and of Gods and Goddesses including Lord Siva, Durga, Kartikeya and Supreme Lord Narayana Himself- but was only with the aim of dislodging Indra and Demi-Gods from the Heaven. Thus this was like a territorial war between Bali and Indra. At the same time, the fight was tough enough since Demi-Gods had celestial powers and armoury like Indra's Thunderbolt and the sriking power of individual Demi-Gods, apart from the Nectar that they consumed assuring them of eternal life, if not of invincibility. As a result of the Yagna, powerful bows and arrows and other equipment of destruction known as 'Mantrastras' capable of attacking the counterpart arms of fight possessed by Agni (Fire-God), Varuna (Rain God), Vayu (Wind-God), Sun, Moon and various other planets were made available, and with the blessings of Sukracharya the battle ended with the clear defeat of Indra and his associate Demi- Gods. Thus entered Bali into the Heaven, when Indra and Demi-Gods were obliged to exit. Bali controlled Heaven, Earth and Antariksha besides the Sub-terrain world.

As Bali and followers were gloating over their victory and occupying the 'Titled- Chairs' of Indra and other Demi-Gods, the erstwhile holders of the honours were at large without refuge. The spectacle became unbearable to the Mother figure of Devathas, Aditi, who beseeched her husband Sage Kasyapa.He advised her to perform Payo Vrata or Sarva Yajna during the bright fortnight of Phalguna (February-March) for twelve days ending 'Dvadasi's ubsisting only on milk, worshipping the Supreme Power Narayana with Arghya/ Padya/ flowers/ incense material/ lamp lighting and prasada and such other rituals, observe Karma Kanda, Jnana Kanda and Upasana Kanda, meditate Him as having Two heads ( Prayaniya and Udaniya), Three Legs (Savana Traya), Four Horns (Four Vedas) and Seven 'Chandas' such as Gayatri Chanda, Anushtup Chanda, Usnik, Brihati, Pankti, Trishthup, Jagati, Atichhanda, Atyasthi, Atijagati, and Ativirath and other metered hymns. During the period, one should observe celibacy, sleep on floor, bathe thrice a day and so on. On the final three days ending 'Purnami', there would have to be oblations to Fire-God as per the instructions of Priests, organise 'Samaradhana' or sumptuous meals to one and all and satisfy the Brahmanas, especially the Spiritual Master (Aharya) and his assistants like Hota, Udghata, Adharvu and Brahma. Most importantly, distribute Vishnu Prasad liberally to low class persons, the Poor, the invalids and animals. Sincere performance of the Sarva Yajna ought to yield far reaching results by regaining the lost glories and attaining fresh rewards. This was the essence of Sage Kasyapa's advice to Aditi and her progeny. As advised the Demi Goddess Aditi performed the Vrata meticulously under the guidance and association of Sage Kasyapa and they were blessed by Narayana to take the incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

# Incarnation of Vamana and suppresion of King Bali

On Sukla Sravana Dwadasi-the twelfth day of the bright moon's fortnight —in the month of Bhadra was thus born as Lord Vamana to Aditi and Kasyapa Prajapathi at the most auspicious time. At His Thread Ceremony, the Dwarf Brahmin Boy shone with extraordinary radiance, when the Sun God uttered the Gayatri Mantra, Brihaspati gave the Sacred Thread, Kasyapa Muni a straw belt, Mother Earth a deer skin, Moon the 'Brahma danda' the representative rod of a Brahmachari, Aditi a cloth as 'kaupina' (underwear), Lord Brahma a Waterpot, Goddess Sarasvati provided a string of 'Rudrakshamala', the Seven Sages a Kusa Grass mat, the Presiding Deity of Sky an umbrella, and Demi-God of Wealth, Kubera, a bowl for beseeching alms.Lord Vamana attended the 'Asvamedha Yagna' (Horse Sacrifice

Function) organised by King Bali and the latter was pleased to grant the Brahmachari any wish, as he was the Chief of three fourths of the Universe! The Dwarf Boy asked for mere three feet of land! Guru Sukracharya got suspicious as the request was unusual, but King Bali dismissed the warnings of the Guru saying that if Lord Vishnu Himself made the desire, he would never hesitate, as after all, the Sage Dadhichi gave away his backbone and King Sibi a pound of flesh from his thighs, all for the benefit of the Universe. Guru Sukracharya made a last bid of entering the vessel to stop the flow of water as the symbol of giving away the three feet of place in charity to the Dwarf Brahmana by the King but the Lord was too clever for the Guru and pierced a grass piece (Kusa) into the latter's eye which got blinded forever. Thus concluded the ceremony of the charity, when the Lord expanded the body to strech his two feet- one on the Earth, another on the skies; as the third foot was not possible to be accommodated any where else-Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka- the King volunteered to place it on his head which was pushed down to the sub-terrain under-world of Rasatala. As the Lord was extremely pleased with the devotion of King Bali, He blessed him to reside in Rasatala as an Illustrious King, and transformed the Place as comfortable and glorious as the Heaven itself as per the order to Visvakarma. Indeed the place was on the soles of the feet of Lord Vishnu Himself! Therafter, the Demi- Gods regained their Titles and Thrones thus ending the temporary phase of Demons dominating the Heavens. Aditi was double greeted by Devatas and Lord Vishu Himself for her initiative and perseverance, Sukracharya was exonerated of his indiscretions by Lord Vishnu, and the balance of power was reverted back to the position of equilibrium and status quo ante in the Universe.

## Role of Satyavrata in 'Matsya Avatara'

Unfolding the Story of King Satyavrata and his role in the context of Lord's Incarnation as a Giant Fish, Suka Maha Muni informed King Parikshith that the former King would become the Seventh Manu as Sraddhadeva. The incident of the Incarnation of the Lord as Fish was recalled in this context since King Satyavrata was once paying offerings of water in River Kirtimala, a small fish appeared on his palms and requested him not to throw it back in the River as big fishes might swallow it and as such keep it safe in a pot. As the fish was preserved in a pot, it became too big for the successive containers and finally grew into a huge fish which filled in an entire Ocean. The giant fish being the Super Energy Narayana Himself asked the King to await a Mammoth Ship and that meanwhile he should collect samples of good human beings, flora and fauna to be loaded along with himself aboard while the Sapta Rishis (Seven Sages) would be already on it. The Giant Boat would be hooked on to the horns of the Fish Incarnation of the Lord and be propelled by Vasuki the collosal Serpent when the totality of the Universe would be submerged with water. Lord Brahma would have been awaken from his slumber by then since the Demon Hayagriva who stole Vedas and other Scriptures would be destroyed and gradually the Universe would be revived from the fury of water and Lord Brahma would resume the task of Creation afresh.

### **Present Manu Vivasvanta and his progeny**

As King Satyavrata became the Manu Viavasvata or Sraddhadeva, Maha Muni Suka gave an account of the progeny of Manu Vaivasvanta, son of Vivasvan and Samjna. The Manu and his wife Sraddha begot ten sons,viz. Ikshvaku, Narga, Saryati, Dishta, Dhrasta, Karusaka, Narisyanta, Prasadhra, Nabhaga and Kavi. Ikshvaku's lineage was Vikukshi- Sasada- Puranjaya-Kakukstha- Pruthu-Visvagandhi-Chandra-Yuvanashra and **Mandhata**. From another son of Manu was Saryati whose daughter was Sukanya wedded to Chyavan Muni. Mandhata's prominent son was Ambarisha. Purukusta (another son of

Mandhata) was married to Narmada of the sub-terranian clan, and the lineage included Tribandhama and Satyavrata, known as **Trisanku** whose lineage was followed by **Harischandra** and Rohita and after seven generations was born Sagara and his 60,000 sons-Ansuman-Dilipa and Bhagiratha. A few happenings of Vaivasvata Manu's progeny were interesting. Saryati, son of the Manu, who was a saintly person, who had a pretty daughter Sukanya. The latter went round a garden attached to the Hermitage of Sage Chyavana and by mistake pierced two shining earthworms with a thorn and as a result the entire group of soldiers' urine and stools were obstructed. This frightened the father and daughter who approached the Sage and apologised for the indiscretion and in a softer mood Saryati offered the daughter to the Sage. A few Aswini Kumars, who had the powers to convert old as youth, obliged the Sage with vigour and smartness. When Saryati visited the daughter, he admonished her to see her with a younger person. Sukanya clarified that the aged Sage was converted to a youth, thanks to the powers of Asvini Kumars! Nabhaga another son of Manu was also named Nabhaga and the junior Nabaga was in the father's footsteps. The father distributed his property to all the sons equally. The junior returned to his brothers for his share of the proprety and they cheated him to go back to their father. The father directed son Nabhaga to attend a great Sacrifice being held nearby and advised him to recite Vedic Hymns so that the planetary Demi-Gods would be pleased to give riches to him. The junior Nabhaga did exactly like what his father said and indeed the planetary heads were pleased to present substantial wealth. But a dark looking person objected to parting the wealth to the junior and asked the father Nabhaga to settle the issue. The father sided with the dark person and He was Lord Siva Himself who taught them the most significant route of self-realisation rather than material wealth.

King Ambarisha was the son of Nabhaga and he was a highly exalted devotee of Lord Narayana. Once, he and his queen performed a rigorous year- long 'Vrath' of Ekadasi and Dvadasi and after successfully completing with charities and food-festivals on the final day were about to break their fast when Durvasa and a large retinue of his disciples appeared unannounced. The King requested the Sage and retinue for food and the Sage agreed; they departed to bathe in the River Yamuna and perform the daily worship. Meanwhile, the time for breaking the fast was hardly a muhurta away and hence with the permission of the Brahmanas had a symbolic sip of the holy teertha (water). The Sage on return was in rage as he felt disrespected and created a demon with a trident to punish the royal couple. Ambarisha kept his cool and hardly got perturbed. Lord Narayana sent His Disc-the Sudarsana Chakra-which not only destroyed the demon, but also followed Durvasa who had to run for life. The Sage approached Indra and Demi Gods who expressed their inability to control the Disc, and so did Lord Brahma and Lord Siva. Durvasa approached Vaikuntha and beseeched clemency but Lord Narayana said that He was in the control of His devotees and as such he would have to entreat King Ambarisha only for pardon. Finally, the Sage Durvasa who cursed the devotee King Ambarisha had to seek forgiveness from Ambarisha himself!

Tracing the origin of Ikshvaku, the eldest son of Vaivasvata Manu, Suka Muni connected the lineage to King **Puranjaya** (Kakustha) who fought a war between Demons and Demi-Gods on behalf of Indra on the condition that Indra would take the form of a bull. Puranjaya rode on the hump of the Great Bull and hence Puranjaya's title was 'Kakustha' (hump of the Bull) as also Indravahana or the vehicle of Indra.In the family lineage of Puranjaya was born **King Yuvanashva**, who performed Indra Yagna to beget a child. During the Sacrifice days one night the King felt thirsty and entered the Fire Spot area and drank the Sacred Water meant to bless his wife a child. As the Brahmanas found the water pot empty, they were aghast that the King drank the Water and eventually, he got a child from his abdomen. The boy cried for milk and that was not possible from the father; Indra put his index finger in the child's mouth and thus saved him. The Boy was **Mandhata**, who became eventually an undisputed Emperor of the World comprising seven islands-'from where Sun rose to where it set'. He was a terror to Demon Ravana and other Rakshasas. [He was stated to have discovered Lake Manasarovar near Mount Kailash as he was reputed to have made penance at the banks of the Lake under the mountain range was named after him. It

was believed that there was a Serpent Mansion where Mandhata prayed and from a tree dropped fruits making big noises like 'Jam' and the area was known as 'Jambudweep']. Mandhata's wife Chatrarathi alias Bindumati was a pious lady who begot two sons, Purukutsa and Muchikunda and fifty daughters. Sage Saubhari an old person who lived twelve years under water in penance was tempted to marry as he found fishes having sex and procreating children. He hesitantly asked Mandhata to let him marry any of his daughters. Mandhata was reluctant as Saubhari was diseased and old, but could not disagree as the Sage might get furious; he told the Sage that his family custom was that all the daughters must marry the same person and that even one of them should not refuse the Sage. The Sage with his mystical powers transformed himself into a handsome youth and thus all the daughters agreed to marry him. The Sage made mansions for each of the girls. But, in course of time, Sage Saurabha realised that because of the fish in water, his entire Spiritual life was destroyed and although late in his life reverted back to a more introspective life eventually and intensified his devotion to Lord Vishnu.

While Ambarisha (son of Mandhata), Haritha and Youvanasva were the most important persons of the Mandhata dynasity, Purukutsa (another prominent son of Mandhata) married Narmada - sister of serpent brothers- and she took her husband to the Sub-Terrian Region, (Rasatala), as per the wish of King Vasuki and with the approval of Lord Vishnu to overcome erring Gandharvas. The lineage from Purukutsa was Trasaddasyu, Anaranya, Haryasva, Praruna, Tribandhana and Satyavrata or the wellknown **Trisanku** who kidnapped a Bahmana bride whose father cursed Trisanku to become a 'Chandala' or a very low class human being. Sage Visvamitra espoused the cause of Trisanku and sought to despatch him in his mortal body to Heaven, but when Demi-Gods kicked him down, Visvamitra created another Heaven (Trisanku Swarga) on the outer- space by the mystic powers of the Sage; it is said that Trisanku is still hanging upside down from Heaven.

## Harischandra an unparalled Example of Truth and Virtue

King Harischandra etched for himself a bench-mark of truthfulness and virtue in Indian mythology. As a result of egoistic quarrels between the two Great Sages of Visvamitra and Vasishtha, the former backed up Trisanku-the father of Harischandra, as the latter defended Harischandra due to his truthfulness and virtuosity. In course of time, as the quarrel became intense and climaxed in both the Sages cursing each other to become birds upto some time limit. King Harischandra ruled his Kingdom with honesty and justice for many years but he had no offspring and thus prayed to Lord Varuna, who agreed to bless him a child on condition of sacrificing the child in course of time. Each time, Varuna reminded of the Sacrifice, Harischandra kept on postponing on some pretext or the other. Rohita the son knew about the arrangement and fled away into forests to save the sacrifice. As Harischandra failed to fulfil the obligation, the King was attacked by dropsy. Rohita desired to return to his father. But Indra appeared as an old man and insisted on Rohita to go on pilgrimages. After a few years, another person as a substitute sacrifice was arranged and Harischandra was rid of the disease. The Sacrifice was performed by Harischandra and Varuna absolved the former of the obligation. [Apparently, the laws of Manu did not object to human sacrifices in those days!] Yet, Visvamitra continued to test Harischandra about his tenacity to keep up his mental equilibrium even under tough provocations; the Sage said that he dreamt of Harischandra's promise to donate the entire Kigdom to him! Harischandra proved his virtue by making the Sage's dream come true and left the Kingdom with his wife and son. He went to Kasi which was under the purview of Lord Siva and not out of the Kingdom donated. But the Sage appeared there and demanded 'Dakshina' (Fees) for a Sacrifice done by the King under the supervision of the former. To pay the amount, Harischandra had to sell his wife and son as also bonded himself to work at a burial place and repay the remainder debt in running instalments! His wife and son had to perform menial chores in their Master's house-hold and suffered unheard hardships. Once, the son was plucking flowers in the Master's

garden and died of a snake bite. With nobody to help, she carried the son's body to the Cremation where Harischandra could not even recognise the family. As of his duty, he demanded taxes for the cremation of the son's body and she had to sell her 'Mangal Suthra'-the Sacred Chain, the most precious possesssion of a married woman, to pay for the taxes. She had to cover the dead body with half of her Saree, and as she was to take away the rest of the cloth too to pay for the last rites, there were miracles. Lord Vishnu, Indra and Devas appeared and so did Sage Visvamitra who tested the King and the family to the lowest points of wretchedness and misery. Harischandra and his wife displayed unprecedented determination and tenacity to uphold Virtue and Self-sacrifice. The Son Rohitasya was brought back to life and was made the King, while Harischandra and wife Chandramati were provided instant places in Heavens. Visvamitra helped to populate the Kingdom and set examples of Dharma and surrender to Almighty. Harischandra's lineage after his son, Rohitasya was followed by sons Haritha-Champa-Sudeva-Vijaya-Bharuka-Vakra-Bahuka and Sagara (Sa-Gara ie born with poison, as Bahuka's co-wives tried to poison the boy's mother). Emporer Sagara performed Asvamedha (Horse) Sacrifice and Indra hid the horse which was discovered by the unruly 60,000 sons of Sagara, nearby the place where Sage Kapila was practising Sankhaya Yoga and when disturbed badly, the Sage burnt all of them into ashes by his power. Sagara's son by another wife, Asamanjasa or Ansuman pursued the search of the Sacrificial Horse and found the Horse where Kapila was in meditation. Ansuman begged of the Sage about the where- abouts of his cousins and was informed that the hooligans were burnt to death and could be brought back to life only when washed by the River of Ganges which could only be brought down to Earth from the Skies. The Sacrifice of Horse having been performed by Sagara, Ansuman began his devotion to Lord Siva to bring Ganges down to Earth. But neither he nor his father Dilipa could succeed in the mission. It was for **Bhagiradha** to purse the operation further.

# Bhagiradha a model of perseverance

If Harishandra gave an eternal memory in truthfulness and integrity, a person of the same dynasity proved as a role model in tenacity. His life's mission was to bring Ganges down to Earth from Heavens. Bhagiradha's prayers were indeed granted by Mother Ganges to the devotee but warned him that the force of the flow from the Heavens to Earth could be withstood by no less than Lord Siva Himself! Bhagiradha never stopped his grand endeavour and worshipped Lord Siva with ausretity and purity who agreed, not only because of the sincerity with which the devotee desired to fulfill the long-standing family wish but also owing to the reason of Universal advantage. The Lord assumed a massive body and controlled the force of the River flowing from Lord Vishnu's feet and bore the brunt of the impact on His head in His 'Jatajut' or twisted hairs and released but a portion of the Holy River. Bhagiradha directed the fiery flow by riding a fast Chariot and brought it to the place where the ashes of his forefathers were purified and their souls liberated to Heavens. Till date, humanity continues to be grateful to him for the ever lasting memory of his gigantic efforts in our reaping the fruits of his labour in the huge land-mass covering entire 'Aryavarta' (Northern India)!.

# Lord Rama the Epic hero and an Illustrious Incarnation of Lord Vishnu

From the lineage of Bhagiradha and against the background of stalwarts like Ikshvaku, Mandhata, Ambarisha, Harischandra and Sagara, as also in the immediate past of persons like Sudasa ( who was cursed by Sage Vasishtha to become a man-eater), Balika (who escaped Parasu Rama's axing spree of Kshatriya Kings and hence his names 'Nari Kacavacha'- hidden by women), Khatvanga-Dirghabahu-Raghu, Aja and Dasaradha, the father of Sri Rama-the Hero of Ramayana- and his memorable brothers Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna. Maha Muni summarised one of the most heartening Epic Stories of

Ramayana in great brevity as the largest part of humanity knew the nuances of each episode in it, irrespective of age and gender and is too popular to be over- emphasized. Lord Rama-the 'Maryada Purusha' is the unparalelled archetype hero of virtue, valour, maturity, discipline, dedication, discretion, and a model man to humanity. To his father he was a loyal son; to his mothers a person of genuine affection; to his brothers an inspirer; to his Gurus an obedient pupil of exception; to his relatives and friends a man of unfailing help; to the enemies of Virtue a demolisher; and to his followers and devotees a guiding star and provider. A multi-splendoured personality, Rama was an incarnation of Supreme Energy and indeed as an ideal human being having arrived in the midst of mankind.

Sri Rama followed Visvamitra to safeguard the Sacred Yagna undisturbed and in the process killed the wicked Tataki and Subahu and frightened away Maricha to flee; learnt Divine Powers to win Evil forces; relieved Devi Ahalya of Sage Gautama's (her husband's) curse to become a stone as Indra slept with her by trickery taking the form of Gautama; broke the famous 'Siva Dhanush' as a child play; married Devi Sita in 'Swayamvara' (bride's choice); lightened the ego of 'Parasurama' who destroyed the erring race of Kshatriya Kings by his axe in successive wars; followed paternal instruction to spend fourteen long years of 'Vanavas' (forest life) along with Devi Sita and followed by loyal brother Lakshmana; treated comother Kaikevi without any ill-feeling and caressed mothers Kausalva and Sumitra with affection; assuaged the hard feelings of Bharata and Shatrughna and persuaded the former to maintain Kingship; shared the affection and wiped away the genuine tears of the Subjects of 'Ayodhya', the Capital City; appreciated the service and devotion of devotee 'Guha', boatsman in crossing the River Sarayu; shared the joy of eating fruits partly bitten by the grand mother figure of Devotee 'Sabari'; relieved of a curse of punished Demoness 'Surpanakha', the sister of the Epic Villian Ravana, asking Lakshmana to disfigure her by cutting her nose and ears and carry the message of warning to him; annihilated thousands of Demons headed by Khara, Dushana and Trisira as despatched by Ravana as a sequel to Surpanakha's incident; inspired confidence in the fugitive Vanara Heir-Apparent Sugriva that Rama could kill by breaking Seven Huge Trees in a row with a single arrow; helped Sugriva to terminate the Powerful Vanara King Vali and installed the former as the King of 'Vanaras' (Monkey Brigade); received in immense measure the affection, loyalty and devotion of the illustrious Hanuman and of many other Vanara Warriors like Jambavanta and Angada; chased a golden deer ( disguised Demon Maricha) since Devi Sita desired to get the animal and when she crossed the 'Lakshman Rekha' (a line drawn by Lakshmana to safeguard her by fiery Mantras) she fell a victim of Ravana in disguise as an asetic who forcibly took her away to Lanka; found Devi Sita disappeared from the hermitage and along with Lakshmana searched for Sita in profound grief; found the Great Bird 'Jatayu', an eye witness to the cries of Devi Sita being carried away by Ravana; deputed Hanuman to cross over the Ocean, meet Devi Sita and to ransack entire Lanka; took the help of Sugriva, Hanuman and the full Monkey Brigade in crossing the Ocean across the 'Rama Sethu' built by the Brigade and the Divine Architect Visvakarma; welcomed Vibhishana, the virtuous brother of Rayana, into his camp; deputed peace emissaries to Rayana to return Devi Sita; and when the fight became inevitable a battle as fierce and decisive was fought which destroyed the Demon camp totally. No doubt, Ram's opposition could not be wished away as Demon stalwarts like the mighty Kumbhakarna, the wily Indrajit and innumerable experts of war like Kumbha, Nikumbha, Dhumrakesa, Durmukha, Surantaka and Narantaka besides Ravana himself proved tough to be destroyed. The Ten-headed Ravana who was a terror to the World was almost invincible, especially since his ten heads were sprouting again and again, till Vibhishana revealed that there was a deposit of life providing nectar in his abdomen. Finally the ultimate success was that of Dharma versus Adhrama and triumph of Truth and Virtue. Sri Rama and Devi Sita returned to Ayodhya when the celebrations were not only restriced to the Kingdom but to the entire humanity and indeed the whole Universe. The vast Kingdom of Rama was administered as a model to humanity and had gone down in the history of Earth as Rama Rajya! Even so, human nature being what it was even in Threta Yuga, there were stray voices in the Kingdom that Devi Sita stayed in Ravana's custody for long time and despite the so-called Fire Test ( Agni Pariksha) at Lanka, her existence like a 'Pati Vrata' (Pure wife) was suspect! Sri Rama being a

King of Virtue had to take the ugly decision to send away Devi Sita to forests even while she was in the family way and Sage Kanva provided refuge to her; Lava and Kusa, the twin boys of Rama and Sita were born and grew as experts of War Techniques under the guidance of the Sage. There was an altercation between the twins on one hand and Sri Rama's brothers on the other when the twins did not release the Sacrificial Horse as Rama performed the 'Asvamedha Yagna'. Finally Sri Rama himself came to fight the twins. Devi Sita had to reveal that Rama and the twins were related as father and sons. Finally Sita's mother, Bhudevi (Earth) absorbed Sita into her lap and the illustrious Ram-Sita's Golden Connection had ended, albeit temporarily as their incarnations as Vishnu and Lakshmi got revived again. Meanwhile, Rama observed celibacy and ruled for thirteen thousand years, before returning to Vaikuntha, thier own abode.

# Details of Chandra Vamsa – the Dynasty of Moon

Maha Muni Suka described the long lineage of Sri Rama, especially of Maharaja Kusa and his descendants and the Dynasty of Ikshvaku ended with the last King Sumitra, thus terminating the legendary 'SuryaVamsa' of Sun-God. The 'Chandra Vamsa' originated from Soma the Moon God. He was in charge of Brahmanas, drugs and illumination. Soma performed Rajasuya Yagna-the Sacrifice signifying his prominence and was proud. He desired Tara, the wife of Brihaspati, the Spirutual Teacher of Devatas and forcibly kidnapped her. Tara too liked Soma. While Sukracharya took the side of Soma, Indra and other Demi-Gods as also Lord Siva sided Brihaspati. Lord Brahma chided Soma, but already, Tara became pregnant. Brihaspati was indeed upset with the unchaste Tara and instead of cursing her, he said that after her death, he would not touch her ashes. Meanwhile an atrractive boy was born to Tara, named Buddha and the latter begot the famed Pururava. As Pururava was grown up, he fell in love with the Celestial dansuese Urvasi and Sun and Varuna cursed her to turn human. Urvasi came down to Earth and decided to stay with him, provided he took care of two lambs which also fell along with her from heaven. Gandharvas hid the lambs and Urvasi left Pururava in anger. He desired to perform Sacrifices to reach out Gandharva Loka as he was infatuated with Urvasi, but there was no concept of Karma Kanda for this purpose of a human to reach Gandharva Loka to fulfil his desire. As such, he inroduced the new practice, reached Gandharva Loka and had six sons.

# Parasu Rama, an paradigm of paternal devotion and destruction of Evil

In the lineage was born Jamadagni and his wife Renuka gave birth to their youngest son **Parasu Rama** or Rama with an axe. He destroyed the whole clan of contemporary Kings who were tyrants and cruel to their Subjects and also to believers in Almighty. The problem started with a King Kartaviryarjuna, who was puffed up with Sacred Powers like Anima and Laghuma [There are Eight Siddhis viz. *Anima: ability to reduce size; Mahima: to magnify the size to the biggest; Garima:to make any thing the heaviest; laghima:to make weightless; prakamyam:to realise anything desired; prapti: access to any where; vasitva: power to defeat; isitva: to secure supremacy]* He worshipped Lord Dattatreya and was blessed with one thousand hands. In fact, he was a terror to Ravana. He visited Sage Jamadagni's hermitage once, was impressed with the Celestial Cow, Kamadhenu and asked the Sage to gift it, which was refused. In the abscence of the Sage at the hermitage the King's men stole the cow and this infuriated the Sage as also Parasurama. The latter visited Kartaviryarjuna and in a fierce fight between the King and his men, Parasurama killed the powerful King. But in the abscence of Parasurama, Kartaviryuarjuna's sons killed the Sage and the brothers of Parasurama, but the latter killed ten thousands of the sons and in that very frame of mind destroyed the entire clan of Kshatriyas or the Kings during some twenty one wars. In another incident, Renuka the mother of Parasurama reached a River for bathing and found a Gandharva

King too bathing with his wives. She had a slight fascination of the Gandharva in her mind. This was noticed by Jamadagni and as she returned from the river-bed ordered her head to be chopped. Son Parasurama killed his mother with his axe instantly even as an evil- feeling of mind was felt by her. Sage Jamadagni appreciated the spontaneous action and asked for a boon to Parasurama and the latter requested that his mother and brothers be brought to life again. Such was the paternal devotion and fearlessness of Parasurama who re-established Dharma and valour. Reappearnce of Parasurama was prominently recognised in Ramayana, as Lord Rama won the hands of Sita Devi, after breaking the 'Siva Dhanush' (Lord Siva's own Bow) in a'Swayam Vara'- bride's own choice of securing a husband. An egoistic Parasurama challenged Sri Rama (apparently to repose confidence in Public mind about Sri Rama) and retired after being humbled by the latter.

# **Lineage of King Pururava**

King Pururuva had four sons, Ayu, Srutayu, Jaya, and Vijaya. Ayu in turn begot Yati, Yayati and four other sons- notably Kshatravardhana whose fifth generation son was Saunaka Muni. Yati was cursed by Indra to become a snake and thus Yayati was the next King and his progeny were Yadu, Turvasau, Dhurhyu, Anu and Puru. Pururuva's youngest son-Vijay-had important names in his clan like **Jahnu** who drank River Ganges in a sip, Puru, Gadhi and his daughter Satyavati married to Richika and their son Jamadagni whose son was Parasurama. Pururava's clan through generations included the son of Sumati, **Dushyanta** who was married to Shakuntala and their famed son **Bharata**. King Yayati, a Kshatriya by birth was married to **Devayani**, a Brahman and the daughter of Sage Sukracharya-the Guru of Rakshasas. This kind of wedding is known as Pratiloma, viz. a Brahmana Maiden wedding a Kshatriaya as against 'Anuloma' the vice-versa. The King also married Sarmishtha, the daughter of King Vrishaparva. Once when both the wives were bathing in a lake, Lord Siva and Parvati passed by and in hurry Sarmishtha coverd herself up mistakenly by the garment of Devayani, who rebuked the former. The reaction of Devayani was devastating referring to Caste relationships. Also, Devayani approached her father who reprimanded King Yayati and the King Vrishaparva. Sukracharya demanded that hence forth Sarmishta should be Devayani's slave and forbade Sarmishtha in Yayati's bed. In course of time Devayani got a child. Once when Yayati found Sarmishtha crying in a well in the garden; he sympathised with her, invited her into bed and she was concieved too. This infuriated Devayani as also Sukracharya and the latter cursed Yati to become old and impotent. As the King begged of the Sage's pardon, the Guru said that if any body could exchange youth with the King's old age, then the curse be waived. Yayati asked his sons one by one, but they argued that it was an absurd proposal; finally, the youngest son Puru accepted the request of his father. This was how, Pururava's youth was revived thanks to his son Puru's sacrifice. In this context, the Veda Base stated: *Uttamas chinthitam kuryat, Proktha-kari thu Madhyamat*, Adham'o-sraddhaya kuryat, Akartha Uccharitam Pithuh. ( A son who anticipates father's wish to fulfill is First class, one who takes action to his instruction is second class but who refuses compliance is noclass!

In the Puru Vamsa, **Dushyanta** was born to Sumati.He visited the Hermitage of Sage Kanva and found a pretty maiden **Shakuntala** who was abandoned by Menaka, the Celestial Danseuse born after her affair with Visvamitra. Dushyantha and Menaka were wedded as per the Gandharva Marriage Rule. After giving birth to a son named **Bharata**, Shakunthala took the permission of Sage Kanva and approached King Bharata, but due to a curse of memory loss, Bharata was not prepared to accept the wedding. A heavenly voice was heard that Shakuntala was indeed his wife. After his father's demise, Bharatha performed Horse Sacrifice and after defeating several Kingdoms, declared himself as an Emperor. He had three wives but as their sons did not resemble him they killed them! Bharat performed 'Marut Stoma' and the Demi-God Maruts presented him a son, named Bharadwaja. In the dynasty of Bharata, there was **King** 

Rantideva who was popular for charity. Once when food stuffs were available and they were about to eat, there came a Brahmana for charity; Rantideva gave away half of his share to the guest but soon the rest had to be given away to a beggar, to his dogs and a chandala.; he felt happy that he was able to overcome hunger and thirst in the process and Trimurthis appeared before him and blessed him with Salvation. It was to this illustrious lineage was born to Kuru the ancestor of Pandavas and Kauravas. From Kuru came Shantanu who was married to River Ganges and begot Bhishma and through his second wife Satyavati, a fisherman's daughter, begot Vichitraveerya. As the latter was sick, Vedavyasa requested to bless the birth of King Kasi's daughters Ambika and Ambalika as also of a Dasi or Sudri. While Ambika begot King Dhritharashtra, Ambalika gave birth to Pandu, and Sudri gave birth to Vidura. Dhritarashtra and Gandhari gave birth to hundred Kauravas headed by Duryodhana while Pandu married to Kunti who sought the help of Lord Yamaraja to bless the birth of Dharmaraja, Vayu to bless the birth of Bhima, Indra to bless the birth of Arjuna, and Aswani Devatahs to bless the births of Nakula and Sahadeva. The long lineage from King Yadu through Surasena to Krishna and Balarama was also interesting. King Surasena gave birth to Vasudeva and Kunthi. To Vasudeva and Devaki were born to Krishna and Balaram. Pandavas were born to Kunthi.

### MAHA VISHNU'S AVATAR AS KRISHNA

Lord Krishna was the central-figure of Maha Bhagavata; in fact He dominated the entire scene of Dwapara Yuga in human manifestation. He was an Incarnation of the Supreme Energy or the Primeval Force, believed in as Vishnu or Krishna, for the purpose of identification and for anchoring on as a target of one's pure thoughts and actions in multitudes of means ranging from simple prayers, devotion, rituals and Yoga to rigorous Sacrifices as per one's own belief. Thus identified, humanity is able to visualize the Supreme Power - ignorantly or in great faith- and gives a shape or form to the Unknown! It is that Krishna who approached the humans as a model figure with the best of limbs, features, speech, actions, reflexes and most of all as the Provider, Forgiver, Corrector and Sourcer. Krishna's birth was also shrouded in mystery. He made an appearance before the parents Vasudeva and Devaki (Prajapati Sutapa and Prashni in their earlier births) advised them to transfer Him from Mathura to Gokul across the River Yamuna to the place of Nanda and Yashoda as the latter just delivered a baby at the same time but was not aware whether it was a boy or baby due to labour pains. Earlier, the seventh Child of Devaki and Vasudeva was miraculously transferred to Rohini, another wife of Nanda. His maternal uncle Kamsa was afraid of death and killed the previous babies. He tried to smash the head of the eighth child who was Devi Durga Herself. She warned Kamsa from the Sky that the real killer of Kamsa was safe elsewhere. While Gokul of was rejoicing the birth of the boys and the cow-herd Chief Nanda and Yashoda and were busy with Jataka Karma (cutting the umbilical chords) and the year long Nandothsava celebrations, Kamsa was engaged in a massive search for babies born anew in his kingdom and ordered them to be killed. His investigators reached Gokul Village too and on witnessing the celebrations they confirmed the presence of the new born. The demoness Puthana who was engaged by Kamsa to kill babies visited Gokul and taking the form of a pretty lady entered Nanda's house. Neither various Gopikas nor Yasoda stopped her, as they were all impressed by her charm and innocent looks. She lifted the Child and put Him on her lap and desired to breast-feed Him. There was deadly poison around her nipple which was sucked by the Lord and even while she was crying for help her real demoniac face and body were twisted and displayed. The entire village got petrified at the shock but the Child was happy and playful. As the Child grew three months old, Nanda's household was busy performing the 'Uhthana' function of lifting the Child from cradle to shoulders. While Brahmanas were reciting Hymns (Mantras) and performing offerings to Fire God, there was busy activity alround with guests and relatives. The Child was kept in a make-shift bed under the shade of a cart in the court yard, surrounded by Gopikas, children and others. Playfully, the Child lifed one of His soft and tiny legs up as though He was fighting and throwing the cart and indeed the heavy cart was broken into pieces and the mortal remains of a huge monster (

'Sakatasur'- a cart demon) sent by Kamsa presented a ghastly sight. In another instance on a day Yashoda kept the Child on he lap when He was a year old and suddenly she realised that the Child was heavy like a mountain and she had to immediately put Him down on the ground. Almost then there was a fearful whirlwind and dust storm and there was darkness all around. The Child was not visible for a while. Gradually, the dust got settled and the entire Village could witness a massive heap of a Demon Trinivartha sent by Kamsa again and the demon's throat was choked and throttled.

On completion of a year, the two sons were named **Balaram and Krishna**. As they grew they were displaying charming tricks and playful mischief bringing ecstatic joy not only to the parents but to the entire village especially Gopikas (Maidens) with whom endless pranks were played like stealing butter, embarrassing them in several ways and enchanting them all differenly; in fact the life style of Gokula Village got transformed to that of a heaven and they were all blessed indeed!But there was an underneath devotion and spiritual awareness prevailing among the persons of Gokula and there was even a subconscious feeling that the two boys were not ordinary but incarnations of God. While the playmates were all playing once, Balarama who was elder complained to Yashoda that Krishna was eating earth, the mother found that Krishna's hands were full of dirt and she asked Krishna to open his mouth. Yashoda almost fainted to view the entire Universe in Krishna's mouth with fleeting visions of the Sky, Earth, mountains, oceans, and the planetary system. She was amazed to realise that Krishna was Vishnu Himself, but too soon she got out of that consciousness created by a transitory illusion (Maya) and started fondling the Kids as usual. Very often, Krishna looked so innocent that Yashoda discounted the pretty complaints made by Gopis against the lad either out of fondness or envy. As she got fed up one day, she tied Him to a grinding stone kept between twin trees, Yamala and Arjuna in their back yard and started her routine. After a while she heard big noises of falling trees and shrieking screams of Gopikas and there stood two personalities with radiance bowing before the boy Krishna; apparently the two were the opulent and conceited sons of Demi-God of Wealth, Kubera. Narada cursed the sons of Kubera- Nalakubara and Manigriva- to become the twin trees in the backyard of Nanda's house and await Krishna to release the curse.

Nanda and the elders of Gokula felt that weird incidents were happening in the Village and thus decided to shift to a lush green and fertile forest known as Brindavan. Indeed this area was far better, as there was a mountain Govardhan was also nearby. The Vraja Vasis were happier as their lives were more comfortable under His shade. Their crops were richer, climate was healthier and the Gopas and Gopikas had plenty of space to play, enjoy and venture out, in the excellent company of Balarama and Sri Krishna. The sonorous flute of Krisha, the ankle bell sounds of maidens, the joyful dances of men and women, and the social functions of the elders gave a highly romantic and contented atmosphere at the new environs But at same time, there were a number of incidents continued nevertheless, each fortifying the underlining faith and awe in Balarama and Krishna as super beings. Examples included the killing of **Dhenukasura** who mixed up with cows and calves of Bridavan; Bakasura, a fresh water wading bird, heron, with a long beak and a gigantic features who attacked Krishna who tore off the powerful jaws and beaks; Aghasura, the huge Python who devoured boys but Krishna entered its enormous mouth and saved them before killing; the fearful serpent Kaliya of lake Kalindi was unapproachable to human beings, animals especially cows, birds, fishes etc. which freely used to stray as the waters were fuming hot with poisonous flames. Krishna's playmates described the lake as entering into Hell gates. But He desired to teach a lesson to Kaliya and family who made an exclusive residence in the lake, often moving out of it in the surroundings, but for the fear of Garuda, the carrier of Lord Vishnu. Krishna however jumped into the lake and attacked the most obnoxious creature and subdued it after a fierce fight for days together. Nanda and Yashoda wanted to enter the lake out of desperation, but Balarama prevented saying that Krishna would emerge dancing on its hundred and one hoods. Indeed He did likewise and ordered Kaliya and family to quit the lake and enter the ocean and assured that His footprints would be recognised by Garuda

and as such there was no problem from the serpents to move out. In another instance, demon **Pralamba** disguised as a cow-herd boy and Balarama sensing it desired to play a game *Hirana Kreedanam* ( *carriers and passengers*) by splitting two parties-one headed by Krishna and another by Balarama. Pralamba disguised as cowherd boy had purposively lost the game so that he would carry away Balarama as he had won. Sitting on the back of the demon, Balarama squeezed the demon's body and sat on him as though as a mountain and thus killed him. Another incidence was Krishna's feat of lifting the mountain Govardhan Giri by His little finger, as Varuna the God of Rains was annoyed with the villagers as they did not perform the traditionl worship and lashed with devastating rains continously. Consequently, Varuna and Indra apologised the indiscretion of Varuna to Lord Krishna.

# Krishna's vigorous drive of Spiritual Love

By now the people of Vraja had not only recognised Krishna Consciousness fully but also practised various forms of Worship-be it Rituals, Yoga, Group Bhajans (Singing the hymns in praise of the Lord), 'Vrathas', meditation or 'Japa' (recite the names of Almighty). Indeed, Krishna Consiouness got spread over far and wide with the Vraja Bhoomi as the nucleus, not only among the humanity but all over the Universe, including the Planetery System, various Demi-Gods and the sub-terrain world. The 'Gopikas'women and maidens- of Vraja Bhoomi were specially blessed often participating in Ras Lilas or Community Dance Sessions of Ecstacy; the belief was that 'Gopikas' were actually Sages, availing opportunities of physical and Spiritual interaction with Narayana Himself, thereby attaining trances and oneness. To the married women of Vraja Bhoomi especially, the repeated advice from Krishna was that out of affection and faith for Him, they should not neglect their family duties; He said that women in general, away from their fathers, mothers, brothers, husbands and children should not be causes for their worries. He also said: Bhartuh susrusanam strinam paro dharmo hi amayaya / tat bandhunam cha kalyanah prajanam chanuposanam.( The highest religious duty of a woman is to sincerely serve her husband, behave well toward his family and take care of the children). The unanimous reply to Krishna's advice by all Gopikas was that indeed they ought to serve their families best, but in reality they would serve their families with the same dedication as their family would display to serve Almighty as well.[Padma Purana stated that Gopikas were either 'Sruti Charis' Personified Veda Scriptures) or 'Rishi Charis' (Sages of previous births) viz. Nitya Siddhas or Sahana Siddhas respectively, but not normal humans]. Even as Krishna continued His romantic escapades under the garb of Spiritual Activities, the buden on Earth was being reduced in destroying evil forces. Maha Muni Suka described to King Parikshith how the Bull Demon Arishta with a huge hump, mistaken as a mountain by the clouds, roared while scraping the ground with hooves and digging the Earth with horns and created havoc and how Krishna seized the animal by its horns and brought to it the ground and destroyed it. Another demon **Kesi**, a gigantic horse commissioned by Kamsa attacked Krishna with speed and fury from the high skies and met the same fate as with Arishta.

### Narada's futuriscic vision

Approaching Krishna the Supreme Form of Lord Narayana Himself to worship Him in solitude, Devarshi Narada described the unbelievable miracles of Krishna from his futuristic vision:Being the Supreme Energy of the Universe, which is His own volition to create and play with, Krishna is the Super Controller of Time-the Past, Present and Future. He descends on Earth to protect the virtuous and destroy the Evil; the destruction of Arishta and Kesi are tiny instances of His omni-potency. Thus Narada disclosed the future Events, as follows: 'Within two days now, Lord Krishna would witness the death of Chanura and Mustika, the man-mountain wrestlers and the massive elephant Kuvalayapida. The cruel

King Kamsa would be the next target. The annihilations of Demons Kalayavana, Mura, Sankha and Naraka would follow. Krishna would defeat Indra and present 'Parijata'- the Heavenly Tree to Queen Rukmini; marry many daughters of Kings after defeating them out of valour; deliver King Nriga from his curse; capture the jewel 'Samanthaka' from Jambavantha the Great Bear and marry Jambavati; revive and bring back the dead son of Sandipani Muni from the abode of Yama, the King of death; kill Poundraka, burn the City of Kasi; annihilate Dantavakra and the King of Chedi at Rajasurya Sacrifice; perform several other pastimes at 'Dwaraka' and emerge as the Charioteer of Arjuna at the Epic Battle of Mahabharata and after destroying many other Evil Forces lighten the burden of Earth!' Thus Narada provided to the posterity a sweep of events to happen in future as per his mystic powers. The details of the Events were described by Suka Mahamuni to King Parikshith. But some of the happenings are highlighted as follows in the following pages.

### Krishna's demolition of Kamsa and other Demons

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

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

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

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

agreed to Krishna becoming the Chief Guest; subsequently when Krishna, Bhima and Arjun visited Jarasandha's Palace in disguise as Bramanas to free the Kings, the three of them challenged him for a duel with any one of them and Bhima was chosen. Jarasandha was not getting killed for many days and Krishna hinted to tear Jarasandha's body by cutting branch of a tree and throwing up the pieces upside down in opposite directions. This was because a Rishi blessed King Brihadhratha (father of Jarasandha) for a child with a fruit which was cut into two half pieces and distributed to two of his wives, but they delivered a child in two pieces; the child was united by putting the two pieces of their body upside down by a Demoness named Jara and hence the name was Jara-sandha. After Bhima killed Jarasandha, some 21,000 Kings, defeated in wars and imprisoned, were liberated.]

# Rukmini abducted by Lord Krishna

Suka Maha Muni then narrated the exciting Story to King Parikshith about Lord Krishna's abduction of Rukmini and their wedding. Rukmini the elder daughter of Bhishmaka, King of Vidarbha and the elder brother Rukmi fancied Krishna to be her husband since her childhood. Krishna too had a longing for her.But Rukmi convinced his father that Sisupala the King of Chedi was the most suitable bridegroom for her. As this was not agreeble to Rukmini despite the pressure of Rukmi and her father, she sent a faithful Brahmana emissary with a confidential note to Krishna, requesting Him to abuct her preceding her Wedding with Sisupala, just after her scheduled worship at the 'Gouri Puja' at the Girija Temple. At the Wedding Ceremony, the Guest List included the Kings like Salva, Jarasandha, Dantavakra and Lord Krishna too. Fearing that Krishna, who proposed earlier to wed Rukmini, might create trouble at the Function, Rukmi as well as Sisupala prepared for any eventuality alerting their Armies; Salva, Jarasandha, and other well wisheres too readied their armies too. So did Balarama. Precisely when the Bride entered the Wedding Stage, Krishna took away Rumini like a surprise flash and both of them fled away in the Chariot of Krishna with the flag of Garuda atop. The armies of Sisupala and associates could hardly prevent the Glorious Abduction. Rukmi was unable to bear the insult and followed Krishna's chariot but was defeated and his moustache and beard were shorn by Krishna as a symbol of His victory. Subsequently, King Bhishmaka performed the wedding most appropriately. **Pradyumana** was born to Rukmini and Krishna and the son looked exactly like Krishna. When he was hardly ten days old, Demon Sambara kidnapped the child and knowing that he was the son of Krishna threw him in the Sea as a huge fish ate him but was safe in its belly. A fisherman caught hold of the big fish and presented it to the King Sambara who in turn gave it to Mayavati the head cook and cut it to find an attractive baby inside. Narada appeared and revealed the Story to Mayavati of Lord Rudra turning 'Manmadha' (Cupid) into ashes when he and Rati (Cupid's wife) aimed Floral Arrows. Lord Rudra gave boons that in their next birth, Cupid would be born as Lord Krishna's son Pradyumna and Mayavati as Rati. As Pradyumna grew as a youngman, Mayavati desired to marry him despite wide difference of age. Pradyumna was popularly known as 'Vyuha' as the Lord of Intelligence, along with three of His other names viz Vasudeva ( Lord of Consciousness); Sankarshana (Lord of Individuality) and Aniruddha (Lord of Intelligence). Eventually Pradyumna killed Sambara, married Mayavati and stayed with Rukmini and Krishna at Dvaraka.

Samantaka Mani ( Jewel), Satyabhama and Jambavati Secured

Maha Muni Suka narrated another episode to King Parikshith about double weddings to Krishna in a sequence. King Satrajit was an ardent devotee of Lord Surya and blessed him with a fantastic jewel, known as 'Syamantaka Mani' providing not only dazzling light like Sun God himself, but also yields eight 'bharas' (approx. ten Kg) of gold daily. Satrajit was overwhelmed with this incredible gift and desired to share the joy with Krishna whom he visited at His abode. Jokingly, Krishna asked Satrajit to spare the jewel for some time and was promptly declined. Satrajit's brother, Prasena, wore the rare jewel and visited hunting to a forest. A lion killed him and 'Jambavanta' the illustrious Bear of Ramayana killed the lion in turn and took it to his cave to let his baby play with it. As Prasena did not return from the forest for a few days, Satrajit asked Krishna whether he knew any thing about Prasena as he did not return back. There were stray doubts expressed in the neighbourhood about Krishna's credibility in the context. Krishna desired to vindicate His position and proceeded to the forest visited by Prasena and found his dead body and also that of a lion. He traced the foot steps of an animal to a cave and found a baby playing with the jewel. A huge bear entered and a fierce battle ensued for days together. As Krishna defeated the Bear, he felt that an ordinary human being could not be invincible against him and eventually recognised Krishna as another incarnation of Lord Rama or Lord Vishnu Himself. Intensive prayers were made by Jambavan and with humility and devotion he returned to Krishna the precious jewel as also offered his beautiful daughter Jambavati in wedding. On return from the forest, Krishna returned the jewel to Satrajit, who felt humiliated by suspecting Krishna and as an atonement returned the Jewel and requested Him to accept **Satyabhama** too as His spouse. Subsequently there were five other marriages by Krishna to Kalindi, Mitravinda, Satya, Lakshmana and Bhadra, besides of course, Rukmini, Satyabhama and Jambavati.

On hearing the unbelievable news that 'Pancha Pandavas' and mother Kunti were burnt in a Lac house constructed for them by King Dhritarashtra at the instance of 'Dushta Chatushtaya'

(the Four Villians of Kauravas) –indeed Krishna knew that He arranged their safe exit from the House-Krishna and Balarama left for Hastinapura to personally convey their condolences to the elders of Kuru Vamsa. Taking the advantage of their absence, Evil minded Satadhanvu, as instigated by Akrura and Kritavarma, killed Satrajit in sleep and stole the Syamantaka Jewel. Satyabhama was horrified at her father's demise and rushed to Hastinapuram to ask the Yadu brothers at once. As Satadhanvu and his instigators trembled at the news of the return of the brothers, Satadhanva kept the invaluable Jewel to the personal care of Akrura and fled fast for his life. Krishna and Balarama chased and killed the culprit but the Jewel was not recovered. Krishna returned to Dvaraka for the obsequies of Satrajit, while Balarama suspected Akrura and recovered from Akrura's dead body.

### The destruction of Narakasura (Bhaumika)

The end of notorious Bhaumika, the son of Bhumi (Demi-Goddess of Earth), is celebrated till date on the moon fall day preceding Kartika Month of eyery year as 'Deepavali'(The Festival of Lights). Krishna, accompanied by Satyabhama flew by Garuda to 'Pragjyotisha', Capital City of Bhaumasura [now in Assaam], surrounded by mountains and ramparts defended by fire, water and unmanned automatic weapons as also protected by 'Mura Pasha'- thousand miles-long deadly and sturdy wires as designed by Demon Mura. Krishna shattered the defence buttresses and blew His Panchajanya (Conch shell) with deadening reverberation as Demon Mura's frontal fortification was destroyed. When provoked, the Demon tossed his powerful club which was slashed by Krishna's Sudarsana Chakra into pieces and devastated Mura. Seven deadly sons of Mura, who had the knowledge of weapons as fully as their father, pounced in a group but Krishna's Supreme powers were no match and they too were cracked. Bhaumasura shot at his 'Sataghni'- the powerful disc with hundred blades- and later on with his mighty

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

## Aniruddha's wedding with Usha

Banasura, the grand son of the famed King Bali who gave the entire Universe in charity in lieu of three feet to Lord Vamana, was the father of daughter Usha who fell in love with Aniruddha, the son of Pradyumna and the grand son of Lord Krishna. Banasura was a dedicated devotee of Lord Siva, and the Lord awarded several invaluable benedictions to the Demon including powerful war weapons and thousand hands to relase the armaments simultaneously. Learning of the romance of his daughter with Aniruddha, the son of Pradyumana -the erstwhile Cupid who was burnt into ashes by Lord Siva's third eye- and the grand son of Krishna (Avatar of Lord Vamana), Banasura quashed the wedding proposal. Aniruddhha fought with Banasura as the latter tried to imprison Aniruddha. The fight led to Krishna and Siva face to face, as Banasura was an ardent devotee of Siva. Thus Aniruddha was pitted against Banasura, Pradyumna against Karthikeya, and Krishna against Siva. It appeared that this kind of situation was unprecedented. It also looked that the entire Universe was at a precipice, as mighty 'Astras' were exchanged and each one of them was sufficient to obliterate the Universe from existence. 'Brahmastra' by Siva was replied by another 'Brahmastra' from Krishna; 'Pasupatastra' from Siva was balanced by 'Narayanastra' of Krishna. The entire episode was ridiculous as the Super Powers realised sooner than later. Siva in His humility praised Krishna. Maya, the illusion was apparently at work. After mutual realisation, the battle got terminated and a subdued Banasura requested Aniruddha to wed Usha.

### Lord Krishna Kills Sisupala

At the invitation of King Yudhishtar to attend the **Rajasuya Yagnam** (Horse Sacrifice) being performed by Pandavas especially after the devastation of Jarasandha, Lords Krishna and Balarama arrived at Indraprastha, the new beautiful Capital City, built by Maya. As a climax to the Celebrations, a function was held to select the best personality who graced the 'Yagna'. Nobody wished to comment but Sahadeva, the youngest of Pandavas, proposed the name of Krishna. There was a near total approval of the proposal and King Dharmaraja initiated the procedure by inviting priets and Sages. Just at that time, King Sisupala, a great associate of Jarasandha since killed by Bhima, expressed displeasure at the selection of Krishna on the proposal of a mere boy, Sahadeva of Pandavas.He said that elders in age, experience, wisdom were available and there was no special qualification for Krishna excepting that He was a womaniser and a fraud, who ran away from Jarasandha twenty three times in succesive wars and his real capability in wars, duels, and dealings involving honesty and frankness were suspect. Sisupala critcised Krishna transgessing all limits of decency. Finally having counted the number of abuses hurled at Him, Krishna hurled His disc 'Sudarsana Wheel to slit Sisupala's neck. Sisupala was the son of King

Dhamaghosha and Srutadevi, the latter being the sister of Vasudeva whose son was Lord Krishna. In other words Krishna and Sisupala were cousins. When Sisupala was born, he was dark and ugly with three eyes and four hands. His parents had almost decided to disown him, but a voice from Heaven suggested not to do so as an Illustrious Person would soon fondle the child and snip out his extra limbs and he himself would also kill him. Krishna's aunt Srutadevi requested Him to postpone the killing of the child as far as possible. Krishna promised that He would wait till his hundredth abuse. Incidentally, Sisupala and Dantavakra were stated to be the Demons of 'Dwapara Yuga' born after the curse of Sanaka Kumara brothers to the Vaikuntha Gate Keepers Jaya and Vijaya. As a sequel to Rajasuya Yagna, there were two major developments: Firstly, the unbearable jealousy of Kauravas against Pandavas who became extremely prosperous and popular among the various contemporary Kings and worse than that, the extremely hurt pride of Duryodhana especially when Draupadi the wife of Pandava sons laughed out loudly when he fell straight into a water pool when he thought that there was no water but ground and when he lifted up his robes as there was no ground but a water body. Secondly, the battles of Sisupala's great friends-Salva, Dantavakra, Romaharshana, and Virutha were in the offing against Yadavas. While the seeds of jealousy were firmly sown in Duryodhana's mind leading to disastrous consequences for Pandavas thus leading to the Great Battle of Mahabharata, the destructive attempts by Sisupala's friends were almost instant. Salva secured earlier an everlasting air-vehicle from Lord Siva because of deep devotion and landed at Dyaraka when Krishna and Balarama were away at Indraprastha and overpowered Pradyumna who fled from the battle, as Salva presented illusory heads of Krishna and Balaram to him.On return, the Lords shattered the airship and Salva too. Dantavakra and his sons Romaharshana and Viruddha met the same fate. Thus the chapter of Sisupala's death was closed. Simultaneously, the run-up to Mahabharata Battle at Kurukshatra was picking up fast as the foul play of Dices between Shakuni on behalf of Kaurava sons on the one hand and Dharmaraja on behalf of Pandavas. The Battle shaping as an inevitable consequence, Lord Balarama being a neutral figure, especially since Duryodhana was his disciple and Krishna identified himself as Pandava's well-wisher, proceeded on a pilgrimage to Holy Places. His visits covered several holy places including Prayaga, Ganga, Gaya, Godavari, Srisailam, Venkata Hills, Kanchi, Madurai, Kaveri River, Srirangam, Setubandhanam, Rameswaram and Kanya Kumari. He reached Kurukshetra at the time when Bhima and Duryodhana were engaged in a duel with maces as almost terminating the Great Battle.

## Sudama, boyhood friend, honoured by Krishna

King Parikshith had a genuine marvel as to why, when and how the Supreme Power of Universe reaches out everywhere and anywhere to motivate the actions of each particle of Creation critically and objectively. Hereagain, the motive force of the 'particle' to act or not to act is provided by the Supreme Force Itself! In reply, Suka Muni narrated a story to exemplify as to how, each action of an entity is conditioned by the Supreme Force and why the entity concerned recieves its reward or punishment as the case might be. A boyhood friend of Krishna, named Sudama was a poverty stricken Brahmana with genuine vedic knoweldge and piety and his faithful wife had for years dinned into his ears that he should call on the famed Ruler of Bhojas, Vrishnis and Andhakas at Dvaraka, viz. Krishna who was also popular for His actions of charity. When extreme poverty hurt him so much that it ignored false notions of shyness or shame, one day Sudama decided to visit Krishna finally. His wife borrowed a fistful of flat rice from neighbours that was hidden in a dirty cloth. In the City of Dvaraka, Sudama felt it was impossible to reach Krishna, but the latter found Sudama easily and took him home. Krishna and Rukmini- God and Goddess Lakshmi-provided a dreamlike treat of services to him, which by itself was tantamount to abundant Spiritual Bliss. Krishna took away forcefully the dirty cloth hidden with the handful of flat rice as a gift to the Lord who ate half but Rukmini prevented eating the second half, presumably concerned of exceeding the benediction contemplated. Barring the display of friendship and exchange of nostalgic memories, Sudama returned back with empty hands and on way back felt satisfied fully with the

experience, although was apprehensive of his wife's possible reaction that he missed a golden opportunity! On reaching his home, Sudama was taken aback at the miracle that his wretched hut was transformed into a fulfledged Palace with heavenly luxuries! Muni Suka's explanation that the story of Sudama amply clarified the motivation of Super Force for every action. His extreme poverty would have been a result of his previous karma or action, his piety and high dedication to Almighty was his action, and the end result was a fruit of his action too; in all these cases the subtle motivation was received by Almighty and none else.

## **Vedas – Sourcing Material par Excellence of Supreme Energy**

While the narration of Lord Krishna's spititual pastimes was in full swing, King Parikshith raised a genuine query to Suta Muni viz. while Holy Scriptures like Vedas which might well describe the features of material desires and the means of conquering them, could Vedas describe the features and actions of the Unknown Primeval Force which was firmly declared as indesribable! The cause and effect inter-play of material manifestations of Super Force might thus be limited to that extent only but the Unknown by Itself might continue to be elusive and mysterious. Indeed the doubt was genuine and required attention. This philosophical exercise was cogitated and meditated upon by Ancient Sages for times immemorial. In this context, Narada approached Narayana Rishi who in turn got an explanation from the Kumara Brothers- Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanath. During the interregnum of the chain of destruction and creation of the Universe, Supreme Energy which was latent got revived 'suo motto' and was prompted by Vedas to reactivate the Creation of moving and non moving subordinate energies and also spread out the net of illusion (Maya) to combat the material energies! Vedas described the act of Creation by Supreme Energy as a sport between the material and spiritual potencies. The ancient Sages and Seekers conceived Super Energy as the clay with which the Universe was made of as multi faceted manifestation of the living entities. It was at the mercy of that Super Brahman, the unparrelled Source of Awareness, that the interaction of material and spiritual resources- Maya versus Maha Tatva-would be shaped. Those Seekers with lesser vision might worship the Supreme as present in the region of abdomen through the route of conquering material desires, while 'Aranis' or self starters percieve the Supreme at the region of heart upwards to head from where there would not be possibility of slippge to the level of falsity or Maya (Illusion). Thus gradual alignment of the self with Supreme Self would be the reply instead of allowing slippages to occur. Thus Narada was illuminated by Narayana Rishi about the Significance of Vedas as extensions of Supreme Energy as also the Sourcing Material for providing Spiritual Guidance to Universe.

# Maha Vishnu's 'Darshan' (Vision) to Krishna and Arjuna

In the context of Narayana Rishi, the legend of **Nara Narayana** assumes significance. Once, Great Sages performed a Vedic Sacrifice on the banks of River Sarasvati. A controversy engaged their attention about the issue as to Who should be the most appropriate worthy of devotion among the Trinity of Gods-Brahma or Maheswar or Vishnu. They deputed **Sage Bhrighu** to the Trinity to personally ascertain the fact and verify. Bhrigu visited his father Brahma first and felt insulted since Brahma did not treat him as a Sage but as a son and hence did not stand and greet. Siva no doubt embraced the Sage but he treated him only as a friend but not as a Sage. Later on, Bhrigu visited Vishnu who pretended to be busy with Maha Lakshmi initially (as the Sage kicked Him on His Chest where Lakshmi resides) but later on paid prayers, along with Lakshmi Devi. (In the process however Vishnu nipped Bhrigu's exrta eyes on his body). Thus the Grand Congregation decided Vishnu as the Head of the Trinty. Suta Maha Muni narrated the memorable episode in the life of Arjuna. A pious Brahmana in Dvaraka lost a just-born child and

reconciled himself as fate. Then he lost another child too and further children also were lost in succession. As the ninth child was still born, the Brahmana was wailing loud on the road- side and Arjuna happened to passby. The Brahmana out of frustration and anger shouted harshly on Arjuna and said that each time a child was dead he approached Ugrasena, Vasudeva, Balarama, Krishna, Pradyumna and others. But to no avail! Arjuna said that he would try to save the next child. He used his mystic powers, some of which secured from Indra as he was Arjuna's son, and guarded the area with diligence and attention. Unfortunately the result was negative and the tenth child too met the same fate. Arjuna took his 'Gandiva'( his own Bow and Arrows) with his full determination and travelled the entire Universe including the Planetery System and sub terrain lokas. As there was no clue yet, Arjuna decided to jump into Holy Fire pit as he could not keep up his promise to the Brahmana. Lord Krishna prevented him from doing so and asked Arjuna to join on His Chariot to ascertain as to what could have happened to the children of the Brahmana couple. They kept on going farther and farther till Krishna's Chariot horses-Saibya, Sugriva, Meghapushpa, and Balahaka- lost their way as there was complete darkness. The Sudarsan Chakra cut through the darkness as its effulgence showed the way and as the radiance was almost blinding, they realised that it was the phenomenon of Brahma Jyothi, the unparrelled Vision. There lied the Ananta-the mammoth Serpent-with thousand hoods with gems radiating fantastic light; on top of the hoods was lying Maha Vishnu comfortably with eight arms with ornaments Viz. conch shell, disc, bow and arrows, mace, the Kaustubh Gem and so on, along with His personal attendants headed by Sunanda and Nanda, His cohorts Pushti, Sri, Kirti and Aja and all His Mystic Powers. In such resonant and vibrant voice, Lord Maha Vishnu said that He was awaiting the arrival of Krishna and Arjun in search of the Brahmana boys who were purposively brought over there. Maha Vishnu asked Krishna and Arjuna to return after their assignments were over in their births, so that they should spread the message of Dharma (Virtue).

## Bhasmasura over-smarted by Lord Vishnu and burnt as ashes

As though to confirm the selection of Lord Vishnu as the Superior of the Triumverate, Suka Muni narrated the happening of Lord Siva's saving by Lord Vishnu. Accompanied by the Supreme Feminine Power 'Shakti', Lord Siva is an embodiment of Three kinds of Material Senses (Characteristics) or three 'Gunas' of Sattva (Emotion), Rajas (Authority) and Tamas (Ignorance). Thus Siva's reactions are instantaneous either as condemnations or blessings. On a spur of the moment that Lord Siva took the decision of giving away a boon to Vrikasura (Bhasmasura), the son of Sakuni-one of the Epic Villains of Mahabharata. The boon was that who ever touched the Demon's hand would be burnt to ashes! The Demon desired to experiment the efficacy of the boon by touching Lord Siva's Head itself! Lord Siva had to take to heels to save His own Head; he fled to various Demi-Gods and Lord Brahma. Finally, He reached Vaikuntha and Lord Vishnu seeing the gravity of the situation, created a Brahmana Student by His Mystic Maya (Illusion) who met the Demon gasping for breath as he was running and chasing Lord Siva. The Brahmachari stopped Vrikasura and asked him about the problem. The Boy said that whatever was assured from Lord Siva was fake as His earlier boons were never correct and the various boons of invincibility or deathlessness given to Demons were all futile as they were all killed any way. Even in the instant case, Lord Siva's boon would be a failure too. As a proof, the demon himself could put his hand on his head, the Brahmachari said. As a result, Bhasmasura was thus tricked and as soon as his hands were kept on his head, he was burnt to ashes. This ugly situation was thus avoided for Lord Siva.

# Great Rishis cursed 'Yadu Vamsa' to be destroyed

Taking a review of the substantial decrease of Earth's burden by way of innumerable killings of Evil Forces eversince Lord Krishna and Balarama were born and right from the stage of wily Poothana's obliteration, the Lords had a somewhat hesitant view in the context whether certain clans like those of Yadus were worthwhile continuing in existence. As a clan, the members were mere shadows without the Two of them, as after their exit from the earth was to take place sooner or later, the dynasty of Yadavas would be burden to the Earth! As though reflecting these views, some of the Yadu boys were playing at a pilgrimage centre, named Pindarika, as highly illustrious Sages were passing by. Out of mischief, one the boys dressed up as a pregnant woman and approached the Sages whether the 'woman' would deliver a male or female. The Great Rishis cursed the Yadu boys that the 'woman' would deliver neither a boy nor a girl but an iron club (a mace). The boys reported this incident to King Ugrasena who was afraid of the consequences. After scraching away the iron into pieces the remnants were thrown into the Sea and a fish swallowed the remainder iron lump and a hunter who caught the fish made an arrow with its pointer-end with the iron lump. In course of time following the curse, all the important personalities shifted to Prabasa Kshetra and the rest who remained back at Dvaraka destroyed each other themselves. . [Prabhasa is a holy place near Veraval Railway Station in the Junagadh region in Gujarat].

# Nine Yogindras provide replies to Maharaja Nimi to Spiritual queries

Once Maharaja Nimi, son of Ikshvaku desired to perform a Sacrifice and requested Vasishtha to be the Head Priest, but Vasishtha was busy performing another Sacrifice for Indra and therefore asked Nimi to wait till he returned. But Nimi performed the Sacrifice without waiting for Vasishtha, who cursed Nimi, but Nimi too gave a curse to the Sage. As a result of the curses, both of them were dead, but as Mitra and Varuna desired Urvasi in lust and from their thoughts of lust revived Vasishtha. As regards, Nimi Maharaja, his body was preserved till the completion of the Sacrifice which was already in progress and once the Yagna was over, the Brahmanas requested Demi Gods to revive his body already preserved. Nimi did not opt for the revival of the physical body but his spiritual body continued to exist. It was that spirirual body of Nimi, known as King Videha (without physical Body) performed Soma-Yagnya and was blessed with the presence of Nine Yogindras viz. Kavi, Havir, Anthariksha, Prabuddha, Pippalayna, Havirhotra, Drumila, Chamasa and Karabhanjana. (Their lineage was: Swayambhu Manu or Priyamvrata-Agnidhara-Nabhi-Rishabhadeva considered as the Plenary expansion of Lord Narayana Himself- one hundred sons, headed by Bharata of Bharata Varsha fame, including the Nine Yogindras). The Nine Yogindras, who were highly learned in Spiritual Science preaching the path of attaining Absolute Truth travelling naked all over the Universe, explained the Principles of Seeking the Truth to King Nimi alias Videha and those who attended the Sacrifice. The pointed queries made to the Nine Yogindras by King Nimi (Videha) were: 1)What is the highest good? 2) What are the Principles of Dharma and the general inclinations conditioning human beings like 'Svabhava' (one' own nature or behavior), Acharya' (Tradition), Speech pattern and other lakshanas' (Traits) of Elevated human beings? 3) What is the external energy of Super Power? 4) How does one disassociate from Maya or Illusion? 5) How is a Brahmana (Devotee) identified? 6) What is 'Karma' (means of devotion) and its two major forms viz. materialistc or Spiritual (Kamuka or seeking oriented and Nishkama or Oriented to Almighty only) 7) What are the various Incarnations /Extensions of God? 8) What is the destination of a non-devotee? 9) What are the ideal forms of worship suited to the four ages (Yugas)? Yogindras explained that relentless pursuit of material desires, arising out of ignorance and leading to fear as conditioned by one's own nature and nurture, tends to sideline or marginalise the Super Energy and Its Extension Forms or Incarnations aimed at the Four Yugas and even if a human being were to perform acts of devotional services these would invariably aim at desire-fulfilling ends and not Spiritually oriented. This vicious circle of cause and effect ought to be wrecked to yield to the path of Bhagavatha Dharma or the Discipline of Faith. Increase in the duration of devotional time, gradual detachment, and enhancement of Awareness of the Super Energy are the Golden Means required.

# Yogindras on Incarnations of Nara Narayan, Dattatreya and Hayagreeva

Yogindras also described the incarnations of Maharshis Nara Narayana and Datthatreya and their activities. Nara Narayana were born to Murthi, the daughter of Daksha Prajapati and Dharma who was born from the right breast of Lord Brahma. Indra was apprehensive that the Maharshi might not sidelight him and was infact afraid that he might as well usurp Heavens and as such sent Apsaras to Nara Narayana to spoil their meditation. Smilingly, the Maharshi despatched the Demi- Gods and Apsaras with a few gifts and Indra, who by then learnt of as Narayana's own Extension by Narada, reached the Maharshi of the sin that he performed and sought His blessings. Dattathreya, son of Atri Maha Muni was another incarnation of Super Energy that Yogindras made a special mention as the Ultimate Yogi and an 'Avadhuta' who was least concerned with clothes or even physical cleanliness and considered as an Amalgam of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. He was a mystic mendicant travelling far and wide with His cow and four dogs and a Master of Vedas and of high-level 'Tantra' practice. He was the pioneer of 'Kaanphota nathpanthi'or mystics with split-ears opposing Universal applicability of Moral Discipline. He had such illustrious followers like Goraknath and Matsyendranath. He also opposed Yoga for purposes other than for elevation of the self with the Supreme, known as Non-Yoga. Yet another incarnation of Vishnu, **Hayagreeva**, as the Horse Head by killing the demon 'Madhu' who stole Vedas, when at the end of His Day fell asleep and the Vedas were stolen. The Lord assumed the form of a Giant Fish and retrieved the Vedas from the depths of the Ocean. [Avataras are of two kinds: Vibhuti Avataras and Saakshath Avatars. Among the latter type are: Purusha, Lila, Guna, Manvantara, Yuga and Sakti-Avesa Avataras. The Avataras could be of temporary nature ('Vaibhava)'like Mohini, Vyasa, and Hamsa types or everlasting Avatars-'Prabhava' Avatars- like Rama, Krishna etc. Also there are three Vishnu Avataras viz. Karanodakasayi (Maha Vishnu), Garbodhakasayi (Pradyumna) and Kshirodakasayi (Aniruddha). Further, there are Bhaktavesha (Kapila Muni or Rishabha Muni) or Saktyavesh Avataras (Sesha Naga:Swa Seva Sakti; Ananta Deva (Bhudharana Sakti; Brahma: Srishti Sakti; Kumars:Gyana Sakti; Narada: Bhakti Sakti; and Parasurama: Dushta Damana Sakti and King Pruthu: Palana Sakti.

#### PRABHASA KSHETRA- 'UDDHAVA GITA' PREACHINGS BY LORD KRISHNA

Uddhava, a highly dedicated Devotee of Lord Sri Krishna, had the unique privilege of His teachings popularly known as **Uddhava Gita**, in the post-Prabhasa Yatra period and retirement of Yadu Leaders at the 'Prabhasa Kshetra'. Krishna conveyed that as a curse of Sages to some mischievous boys of the Yadu Vamsa, the entire dynasty would soon perish due to mutual fightings and that was why the Yadu elders preferred peaceful end of their lives. The Lord said that at the express request of Brahma that He to take to mortal life for the defined purpose of reviving Dharma (Virtue) and destroying the Evil and it was time to return to His Abode Vaikuntha thus ending His Incarnation along with His Plenary Part as Balarama. Seven days hence, the Ocean would submerge the City of Dvaraka and its inhabitants. In such critical situations only when close members of a family perished and acute pain was caused that a person realised the futility of existence and the way in which material forces outweighed against the will of God; even minimal attention to the Almighty would have lightened the heavy mental strain to counter attachments created Maya the Illusion.

# Avadhuta secured inspiration from Nature

In this context, the Lord quoted a Brahmana 'Avadhuta' who visited King Yadu and told him that in a state of complete aloofness from the Society, one could learn great lessons from Nature (The Five Elements of Earth, Sky, Fire, Wind and Water), from Sun and Moon, as also from his personal experiences of a pigeon, python, Sea, moth, honeybee, honey thief, fish, elephant, deer, a prostitute Pingala, kurara bird, child, girl, arrow maker, serpent, spider and wasp. The Avadhuta said that Spiritual Science was learnt in totality from these twenty four teachers as to how one could and should learn the art

of detachment and align the self with 'Paramatma'. From Earth, he learnt the lesson of patience, service to and welfare of others. From Air, he learnt, maintenance of human body by its vital energy, without carrying the aromas or the foul smell of surroundings and also without disturbing devotion to Almighty. Like the sky which is anywhere without being entangled with material attractions, the Avadhuta learnt keeping universal attractions away even in the thick of happenings. The Sky again is immune from the clouds, storms, mighty rains and floods and thus the Avadhuta learnt the knack of being calm without deviating from the target of the Supreme Energy. From Water, he learnt the washing of physical impurities and thereby ensuring cleanliness within. Fire taught the Avadhuta a whole lot of lessons ranging from cooking wholesome and simple food, illumination, worship by Homams, and burning of 'Shatvargas' – the six enemies of anger, desire, selfishness, attachment, meanness and jealousy. Moon taught the waxing and waning phases till eternity, cures diseases of body and brain and provides solace and peace to troubled humans, ideal for Spiritual devotion.. Moon and Sun, being the Superior Evidences of every-being irrespective of Time, taught the Brahmana an inexplicable presence of Almighty. From Sun, the Avadhuta learnt the tendency to give rains to and absorb water from Earth and thus give away material senses and absorb spiritual energies at appropriate timings. A **pigeon** leading peaceful family life developed excessive affection to wife and kids and as a hunter trapped the babies in a net while the parents searched food, the mother returned and got trapped too. Not able to overcome the pangs of attachment, the father pigeon volunteered into the net. Intense family attachments and extreme sex ruined the pigeon. An example of **python** waiting patienly for food for days together be emulated instead of being a glutton; Like the exterior of Sea, the outward appearance might look normal but be deep and fathomless without self importance. Unlike the rivers rushing into the Ocean in rainy season or presenting a dried up look in Summer, Oceans are always of same level and thus the lesson would be to practise equanimity and composure. The Avadhuta learnt from a moth, not to rush into flames of material attractions as a lusty person loses mental balance if a glamorous woman found his way. A honeybee taught a lesson to the Brahmana to collect essence of Scriptures flying from flower to flower, but not to store honey in a beehive to be taken away by a bee-hive keeper. Lessons were received by a deer attracted to the sweet music of horn by curiosity and getting caught by a hunter; a fish attracted to a bait of a net of the fisher man; an **elephant** desirous of mating a she- elephant and getting killed by more powerful elephants in competition; a **prostitute** named Pingala changing bed mates for money and finally realising the folly as more honourable means of earning were available without spoiling her physical health and possibly achieving far greater enjoyment by devotion to Almighty; a weak hawk with a meat piece but getting rid of it as attacked by stronger hawks giving momentary happiness by the riddance of the meat piece; a happy Child without anxitey and freedom comparable to that of an Avadhuta; a **young girl** husking rice, by removing bracelets with conch-shell bells on her hands to save noise and embarrassment in the presence of visitors thus using her common sense; an arrow maker making arrows with tremendous concentration to attain perfection of his job, even as the King of the land was passing by and watching beside him; a snake entering an anthill built by others by cleverness; a spider weaving out threads from its own mouth, expanding them, playing with them for a while, catching flies or other preys and finally destroying the threads indicating its playfulness and patience reflecting Almighty's own example of creation, expansion and destruction-a typical cycle of births and deaths; and finally by an example of a wasp which entered into a larva's (insect's) hive and the insect which was hiding in the hive for long time in meditation took the form and features of the wasp itself, signifying that a human being too could transform into the features of Almighty. These were the lessons that the Avadhuta absorbed from Nature; some by way of resisting temptations from material forces, some by absorbing the means of overcoming material attractions and others by attaining unity or oneness with the Supreme Energy! Detachment and devotion are the two watchwords of existence as stated by the Avadhuta who was **Lord Dattatreya Himself!** This was disclosed to the King of Yadu at the end by Dattatreya, told Krishna to Uddhava.

Detachment: Varasrama Dharma, Vidhis and Niyamas- Above all 'Satsanga'

Continuing His preachings to Uddhava, Lord Krishna defined the Practice of Detachment by way of Nivrutti or Pravrutti routes. Nivrutthi Marg would call for total abstinence and alignment of Self and the Supreme and Pravrutti Marg is by way of existence in the midst of material attractions controlled however by Regulative Principles, ie. 'Varnasrama Dharma' depending on a fourfold classification of Society viz. Brahmanas (Spiritual and Intellectual pursuits), Kshatriyas (Administration and Defence), Vaisyasa (Finance, Business and farming) and Sudras (Labourers and Artisans)-the Division being based on Profession, Vocation and their practice or aptitude. [The Veda Base referring to the aspect of 'practice or aptitude concepts' of the Varnasrama Dharma is: Yasya yallakshanam proktum / pumso Varnabhivyanjakam / yad anyaprapti drusyata / tat teniva vinirdisat. ( Srimad Bhagavata Canto7, Chapter 11, Stanza: 35), meaning there by: If one reveals symptoms of being a Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya or Sudra even if he has appeared in a different class, he should be accepted according to those symptoms of classification, regardless of birth.] Besides Varnasrama Dharma, the Regulative Principles prescribe 'Vidhis' or Moral Injunctions like refrain from meat eating (Ahimsa or non-violence and compassion for co-living beings), consumption of intoxicants (Purity consciousness), illicit sex (faithfulness/loyalty), and gambling (acquisition/austerity and sobriety). The Regulating Principles also prescribe certain optional 'Niyamas' or restraining / preventive measures viz. Internal and external cleanliness (Bahyantara Suchi), Doing the Rosary ('Japam'), penance (meditation), austerity, sacrifice, dependability, hospitality, worship to Almighty; Visits to Temples; and contentment. (Sage Patanjali's Sutras or Eight fold Observances are: 'Saucham' (Purity), Tapas (Penance), 'Swadhyaya' or Study, 'Santosha' (Contentment), 'Danam' Charity) and 'Eswara Pranadanam' (Dedication to Almighty). Akin and ancilliary to Vidhis and Niyamas, Lord Krishna highlighted certain Moral and Spiritual Values viz. humility, false prestige, laziness, possesiveness, indulgence, narrow mindedness, immaturity and ignorance arising out of lack of knowledge. To enable one's leading to the path of righteouseness, Lord Krishna underlined the guidance of a trustworthy Teacher or Guide. But despite all the efforts and access to appropriate Spiritual knowledge, the hard fact still would remain that factors beyond human control like Time, Situations, placements in one's own life, societal compulsions, locational contexts and the apparent sensitivities of disease, old age, birth and death chain and the like and as such one should atleast control the manageable factors as per the Regulative Principles prescribed. The main reason for this Minimum Programme would be that a very valuable human birth available with difficulty now might not be surefire or guarateed after the termination of the current one. Any postponement of the Exercise from one stage of existence to another would simply be hazardous since already the process commenced from Stage One of Life and would hardly suffice one's complete life span; hence the stress on the obvious before the end as death is certain while life expectancy is not. Lord Krishna gave the example of two parrots on the same tree, one on a spree of plundering the fruits and another denying the experience to itself. The intelligent one not getting tempted was like the person strong in restraint and caution. A discreet person never assumed ownership of an action as in the case of first person pronoun, 'I', but as a result of the sense objects arising out of modes of Nature. Like the Sky, Sun or Wind, the person with selfrealisation never confused Illusion for Reality. He is never angry or provoked, never negligent of worship and 'Satsanga' (Company of the virtuous and devoted), soft natured, equal minded, non possessive, respectful of others, compassionate and a conquerer of 'Shat Guna' (hunger, thirst, pain, illusion, old age and death). Krishna thus identified the detached person. At the same time, an ideal human being worships Sun through 'Surya Namaskaras', Fire (Agni) through Sacrifices, Water for purification, 'Vayu' (Air) for breath control by 'puraka' (inhaling), Rechaka (Exhaling) and 'Kumbhaka' (retaining) and 'Gayatri' Mantra and finally attain heights of nearness to 'Paramatma'.

Having elaborated the Concept of detachment thus, Lord Krishna laid immense stress 'Satsanga' (Union of Devotee and Krishna) as the most effective conduit to Himself. He stated that the way that Satsanga would lead to Himself, no other means like mysticism or 'AshtangaYoga', reading Scriptures, penances, Sacrifices, pilgrimages, Charity and such pious acts. Not only Demi-Gods and superior Class Celestial Beings, Sages and Godmen but even Demons, Low Category Humans, and even the wild species have all used the means of Satsang and achieved 'Mukti' (Salvation) from Me. Uddhava was therefore given the

considered preaching that moral and spiritual warnings and rituals would all be replaced by intense effort to forge the oneness of the self and the Supreme. Krishna compared life with a tree emerging from two seeds, (Sin and Purity), hundreds of roots (living entities), three patterns of 'Gunas (behavior)-Satva, Rajas and Tamas (Goodness, Passion and Ignorance), five upper trunks (Elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Sky); five lower trunks or sense organs (sound, touch, taste, smell and vision) and eleven 'Karmendrias' (Hands, legs, eyes, ears, mouth, nose, Genitals) and mind. There are two birds, viz. Jiva (human) and Paramatma (Krishna) and two fruits of misery and happiness, one opts for materialism and another like a Swan endeavours for eternal bliss. When Brahma's sons asked Almighty in the form of Hamsa (Swan): 'Who are you'?; Hamsa's reply was 'We are five-the FiveElements!'. When Kumaras asked asked the Swan once again, the reply was 'We are two; And That Is One Only'! This indeed is the Eternal Truth and that again is the Essence of 'Satsang' or the Company of One, not of Two!

# The Vedic Routes of Achieving the Union

As Lord Krishna having firmly established the Concept of 'Satsang' or the Attainment of Oneness, Devotee Uddhava desired to ascertain the efficacy of the Vedic Routes leading to the same goal. After all, various rivers lead to the Ocean finally! Hence, Uddhava requested the Lord about the Practice of 'Yoga' for Mystic 'Siddhis', 'Bhakti Yoga' and Idol Worship, 'Jnana Yoga' (Power of Knowledge) and finally 'Sanyasa Yoga' (Total Renunciation or 'Sat or Truth' plus 'Nyasa' or Alliance). Perfection of Yoga for securing Mystic 'Siddhis' is one route which ought not to be misused except for Union with the Supreme. There are eighteen such Siddhis of which a yoga perfectionist aligns with Almighty by eight of them and the rest ten are to be utilised for the good of humanity: Three of the eight Siddhis are 'Anima' to transform the Yogi's body as the smallest unit to enable it to worship in God's smallest form; 'Mahima' to worship Him in the Gross form by assuming the Yogi's body as the largest; and 'laghima' to worship in Him in his lightest form and convert the Yogi's form as the lightes. The rest of five are: 'Prapti'to acquire fixation of mind against material forces, 'Parakamya' to experience whatever is desired to be seen or heard; 'Isita' to control 'Gunas' (features) of Satvik, Rajas and Tamas and 'Isita' to secure the vision of the Lord, and 'Kamavasita' to obtain Supreme Happiness in worship to Him. Another ten Siddhis are freedom from hunger and thirst, distant hearing and vision (Doora Drishti and Sravanam), moving body as fast as mind, death as per wish, assuming any form as desired, witnessing pastimes of demi-Gods, accomplishment of desires by self, fulfilment of others' orders or as per the wishes of the self, entering another body and knowldge of past, present and future.

Lord Krishna referred to the Three Principles of Vedas or 'Trikanda': Upasana (Sacrifice, Song and Prayer), Karma or fruitive labour and Jnana (Spiritual Knowledge). In fact, Bhagavat Gita devoted six chapters each to Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga]. To those who are fed up with materialistic life and are not keen on performing the rituals prescribed by the Scriptures JnanaYoga is preferrable, while who have desires unfulfilled, Karma Yoga would be the answer. The third alternative for a person who is neither too materialistic nor averse to perform service to the Lord, the best suited is the via-media of Bhakti Yoga. The Ashtanga Yoga including the procedures of Yama, Nigama, Asana, Paryvayama, Pratyahara, Dharma, Dhyana and Samadhi calls for the Karma Yoga. Total surrender and dedicated devotion constitutes an elaborate procedure of worship to a nicely decorated and ornamented Idol with full paraphernalia of flowers, incense sticks, camphor, fruits, coconuts, honey, milk, yougurt (all-mixed Panchamrita), sandalwood paste, lamps for lighting ghee soaked vicks, Prasadas as offerings (Bhakshya', Bhojya, Lehya, Choshya and Paniyas), along with Vedic Hymns to describe 'Avahana' 'Argya', 'Padya', 'Achamana', 'Dhoopa', 'Dipa', 'Naivedya', etc.of 'Shodasopacharyas' (sixteen acts of service). The worship services include recitation of Vedic Prayers like Mantra Pushpam, Purusha Suktam and other Vedic Mantras. Penance by way of fasting, charity, 'Bhajans' (Group Singing and dance), 'Purana Sravanam' (hearing Puranas), visiting holy places and holy persons, performance of 'Vraths' or Sacrifices are all parts of the Bhakti Yoga. The Third Path of Jnana Yoga or the Spiritual Knowledge is the realisation of Prakriti or Maya and 'Purusha' or Paramatma as 'Avyaktam' (Unknown), 'Sasvatam' (Everlasting), 'Vishnu' (all pervading), 'Anantham' (Endless), 'Ajam' (Unborn), 'Avyaam'

(Imperishable). By logical deduction, commonsense or personal discernment, Spiritual Evidence and Self-Realisation, there is a firm conviction that the Universe has a beginning and an end. The impermanancy of all the contents of the Universe inluding the existence of the Creator Brahma, the Preserver Vishnu the the destroyer Siva (representing the Three Gunas) down the Planetary System, Demi-Gods, the entire Creation of life, let alone humanity is an extension and manifestation of that Unique Super Energy alone that exists far beyond the measures of Time, Material and Illusions. It is that finality of Truth which eludes Reality that a Jnani seeks to guess- be it by the Karma Route, or Bhakti, or Jnana Yoga or Siddhis that one targets to percieve finally! Hence the Quest for Truth and Meaning of Existence.

# Destruction of Yadu Dynasity and Krishna 'Niryana'

Thus summarising His Preaching, Lord Krishna asked Uddhava about further doubts, and the Devotee with a very grateful visage, tears rolling down and prostrating in a trance, replied whether darkness, frost, fear and ignorance could ever countenance the brightest Sun, face- to- face and still remain unenlightened! Krishna then instructed Uddhava to travel to Badrikasram on the banks of the Holy Alaknanda River and by observing regulations of a Hermit with fulfledged vigour await the Final Call. On noticing il-omens on the sky, Krishna also instructed His relatives, associates and wellwishers to proceed forthwith to Prabhatakshetra on the banks of River Sarasvathi to aviod the horrible termination of the entire Dynasty of Yadus by mutual destruction, as a result of the cursing of Sages with whom some of the misdirected youngters of Yadavas. The curse affected all the sub categories of the Dynasty including Dasarhas, Vrishnis, Andhakas, Bhojas, Satvatas, Madhus and so on. As the deadly hours neared, sons and fathers, uncles and nephews, sons in law and father in laws, brothers and brothers in law had slaughtered each other untill the last trace of the once glorious Yadus. The cane stalks on the beachside of the Ocean turned into fearful thunderbolts (since the particles of the iron mace which emerged from the stomach of the 'fake pregnant woman' and were ground and got scattered from the Ocean on the hay and canes) were used as killers for destroying mutually. Lord Balarama having witnessed the horrifying happenings all around sat in composure on the Ocean bed and by the power of Yoga lifted up Himself as His role in the Epic was over successfully and left the mortal remains. Lord Krishna Himself had seen the conclusion of Balarama and lied down under the shadow of a Pipal Tree with His right hand resting under head in full glory with complete ornamentation of Four Handed Form sporting His Conch shell, Sudarsan Wheel, Mace and Lotus as also His Kaustubha Jewel. His left foot toe attracted the attention of a hunter, Jara, as a bird's head and released an arrow on the target. As the hunter approached the target, he found to his greatest dismay and fear, that the targetted 'bird head' was Lord Krishna Himself! Krishna consoled the hunter who was bewildered with shivers that He Himself planned the accident on His own volition to facilitate the mortal termination of His Incarnation. His charioteer Daruka searching for the Lord found stupified Him lying in that state and on regaining his senses hurried to convey the unbelievable news to Pandavas. Meanwhile, Lords Brahma and Siva, leading Demi-Gods, full collection of Planetery Heads appeared at Prabhasa Kshetra, and Celestial Bodies showered flowers, Gandharvas sang welcome songs, and Sages of Top Order recited Vedic Hymns. It appeared that the normal movement of Time and Planets was somewhat disturbed. Lord's Own carrier Garuda appeared to carry Him to Vaikuntha. Arjuna supervised the rites of His mortal form of Paramatma who is Eternal and transferred the women and children of Yadus to Indraprastha the Capital of Pandavas and chose Vajra, a survivor of the Yadu clan as their King.

# Degradation of Further Dynasities and Kali Yuga

Maha Muni Suka traced from his futuristic vision of Dynasities to come including those of Magadhas, Pradyotana, Sisunaga (Mahanandi being a potent Ruler betrayed by a famous Brahmana named Chanakya), Maurya, Sunga, Kanva, Abira, Yavanas, Turuskas and Kulukilas. As the Kali Age moved on, there had been a continuous erosion of moral and spiritual values and blatant display of injustice, lawlessness and violence. Muni Suka also described the features of Kali Yuga of which the present Generation is a witness.[Indeed the present phase is hardly the first one, and future might reveal worse things; there are three more phases to follow!]

# King Parikshith passes away

Maha Muni Suka gave the last instructions to King Parikshith after a week long Discourse of Maha Bhagavata and advised him not to be afraid of death, for that would invariably follow the next birth in the long chain of human life and thus fortify himself to place himself at the Golden Feet of Maha Vishnu who is the Ultimate. Even as Suka Muni rose to leave the King who prostrated before the Muni expressing his deepest gratitude for his Golden Discourse, 'Taksha'the mighty snake arrived in the guise of a Brahmana and offered a lemon to the King. [Earlier, Taksha was requested by the Brahmana Boy to fulfil a curse to the King to die within a week; Taksha intercepted Sage Kasyap who was seeking to protect the King. Daksha challenged Sage Kasyap to revive a tree which got burnt by Daksha; the sage collected the ash of the burnt tree and revived it. Taksha pacified the Sage and requested him to let a curse of the Brahmana Boy be fulfilled and thus the Sage did not interfere in the matter] From the lemon given by Daksha in the Brahmin guise to King Parikshith came out a worm which took the shape of a huge serpent and from its bite died the King. Parikshith's son Janamejaya sought to take revenge on Daksha and conducted a powerful Sacrifice of snakes burnt in Agni Yajna. He desired Taksha too be burnt in the Sacrifice, but was informed that Indra was protecting Daksha and the revenge of Janamejaya's was such that he was prepared to even sacrifice Indra himself. Brihaspathi, Deva Guru prevented Janamejaya to perform the Sarpa Yajna further not only to become a victim of vengence and anger but also to maintain elological balance in the Creation process itself.

# **Original Propagation of Vedas**

After the discourse by Suka Muni to King Parikshth, who died of Daksha's snake bite and King Janamejaya's vengeful Sarpa Yagna and Brihaspathi's counsel not to pursue the Sacrifice, Sage Suta took over the further Discourse at Naimisaranya to a congregation of Rishis headed by sage Saunaka. He explained that the Vedic Sound 'OM'emanted from the Supreme Energy as the seed of all Vedic Hymns.Omkara emerged from the three original sounds of the alphabets- A,U and M. These three sounds represent three forms of Nature-Sat, Rajas and Tamasa; three Vedas-Rig, Yajur and Sama; three planetary systems-Bhur, Bhuvar, and Svah; and three functions of Universe-Creation, Sustenance and Destruction. Lord Brahma created other sounds of Alphabets, Consonants, and measurements and Time. The Sage Parasara and his spouse Satyavati begot Sage Vyasa, who was basically responsible to divide One Single Veda heard first from the four mouths / heads of Lord Brahma to four Separate Vedas and taught each of the Samhitas to separate Disciples: Rig Veda known as Bavrucha to Paila, YajurVeda known as Nigada was passed on to Vysampayana, Sama Veda known as Chandoga Samhita to Jaimini, and Atharva Veda to Sumantu. Paila gave two parts each to Bhaskala and Indrapramiti. Bhaskala passed on one part each to Bodhya, Yajnyavalka, Parasara and Agnimitra. Indrapramiti taught his part of the Samhita to Murdyuka. This was further taught by the latter to Devamitra and further in the line to Saubhari. Down the line, Sakalya added his own version of the Samhita and taught one half of it to Vatsya, Mudgala, Gokhaya and Sisira. Another disciple of Sakalya Jaturnya added a Vedic Glossary to the total collection of Rig Veda. There was however some problem in the evolution of Atharva Veda given to Sumantu. In his lineage, Sage Vysampayana and his disciples became authorities of the Veda. These disciples were known as 'Charakas', as they were under instuctions from their Teacher to relieve him of a sin to have killed a Brahmana. Thus one of his students Yagnavalkya suggested that he himself could perform a severe sacrifice to relieve of the Guru of the sin. Vysampayana grew angry and asked Yagnyavalka to vomit whatever was taught to him and get out. Yagnyavalkya approached Lord Brahma directly through hard penance and obtained valuble Yajur Mantras never known earlier and the Sage compiled fifteen new chapters known as Vajasniya Samhita, since Sun God personally delivered the new Mantras riding a horse and the hairs on the mane of the horse. The Yujur Mantras omitted by Yajnyavalka which were sought by other disciples assumed the forms of partridges and picked up the remains and hence the name of Titheriya Samhita which are popular till date. As regards Sama Veda, Jaimini who was taught by Vyasa Maha Muni, and the former taught the entire Veda into three parts, of which one part each was taught to his son Sumanthu, grand son Satvan as also to his disciple Sukarna. The three of them distributed their

parts to thousands of disciples some targetting the northern and eastern parts of Bharat mainly. Besides Vedas, there are Eighteen Puranas or historical records of Events highlighting Specific Instances through Ages and Yugas, underlining the interaction between Maya and the Supreme Energy. The Puranas are Brahma, Padma, Vishnu, Siva, Linga, Garuda, Narada, Bhagavata, Agni, Skanda, Bhavishya, Brahma Vivarta, Markandeya, Vamana, Varaha, Masya, Kurma, and Brahmanda.

## Vision of 'Virat Purusha'

In conclusion, Suta Muni sought to delineate The Supreme Energy in a Human Form to facilitate comprehension so that one could possibly target and concentrate on an Existence rather than a Concept or Abstraction. Apart from the Unmanifested Half, the 'Virat Swarupa' or the Collosal Body, has Earth as His Feet, Sky as His Navel, Sun as His Eyes, Brahma the Procreator as His Genital, Death as His Excretion, Moon as His Mind, the Heavenly Planets as His Head, Directions as His Ears, Demi Gods protecting the Planetary System as His Arms, Destruction and Fatality as His Eye-brows, Shame as His Lower Lip, Greed as His Upper Lip, Delusion as His Smile, Moonshine as His Teeth, Trees as His Bodily Hairs, and Clouds as His Hairs on Head. Now, the Description of His Bodily Ornamenation includes His Kaustubha Gem represents the Purity of Soul, the Srivatsa Mark as the Astonishing Radiance of The Jewel, His Flower-Garland as Material Energy comprising permutations and formulations of the Natural Feelings of Goodness, Passion and Ignorance.; vellow garments as the Vedic Meters; His Sacred Thread ('Yagnopaveeta') representing 'Omkara' or 'Pranava', His two Earrings the processes and practice of Yoga and Sankhya, His Crown denoting Protection and Fearlessness; 'Ananta' His Sitting Place being the unmanifested segment of His Existence; His Throne symbolic of Goodness originating from Religiosity and Knowledge; His Club/ Mace the Life Force or 'Prana' incorporating Sensory, Mental and Physical Energies; His Conch Shell the Element of wate; Sudarsana Disc His Element of Fire; His sword as the Element of Sky (Ether); Sheild standing for onslaught of Ignorance; 'Saranga' the Bow the Time; Arrow Filler the Sensory Organs; Arrows the Material Senses; His chariot an Assertion and Speed of Mind and so on. Sun Globe is the Place where one could worship the Almighty as He is the medium. He is in the Glorious Company of Lakshmi the Goddess of Prosperity. His Vehicle is Garuda standing for Threefold Vedas. The Chief of His Personal Associates, Vishvaksena is the personification of Tantras and His Gate Keepers headed by Nanda are the mystic powers like Anima, Mahima, Laghima and Siddhis.It is this Virat Purusha in a Permanent and Perfect Human Form with Physical Limbs signifying Transcendence and Sublimity that one craves to worship and amalgamate!

# **Summing Up**

Maha Bhagavatha is stated to be the 'Sumnum Bonum' of not only the Eighteen Puranas but is the Concentrate of Vedic Know-how. Basically addressed to a person awaiting death within seven days (with full awareness about its Timing), the narration is at once descriptive and devotional reminding the Readers at each step that the purpose of the Script is to underline the Might of the Super Force, the magnitude of what one could never comprehend, the Magnanimity of His Easy Accessibility, the Proximity to which one could reach, and the Possibility of even merger with Him, given the right means to do so.Maha Bhagavatam reveals just that viz. the Awareness arising out of Learning, persuade the Will and Resolution to act, perfect and fine tune the means to Reach and synthesize the Self with the Super Self.

OM NAMO BHAGAVATEY VASUDEVAYA NAMAH

# ESSENCE OF BHAVISHYA PURANA

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# ESSENCE OF BHAVISHYA PURANA

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## **ESSENCE OF BHAVISHYA PURANA**

Yo goshatam kanakashringamayam dadaati vipraaya Vedavidushe cha bahu shrutaaya,

Punyaam Bhavishyasukathaam shrunuyaat samagraam Punyam samam bhavati tasya cha tasya chaiva/ (The 'Punya' or the high merit of donating hundreds of cows with golden horns to Vidwan Brahmanas who are steeped in the knowledge of Vedas and other Holy Scriptures is accomplished by reading / hearing this Bhavishya Maha Purana).

[A 'Purana' literally denotes an account of the past History, but Bhavishya Purana is the History of the Future- a blend of the Past and the Future- occupying a distinct place among the Eighteen Maha Puranas. This Purana contains Brahma Parva, Madhyama Parva, Pratisarga Parva and Uttara Parva. The First Parva broadly describes the Major Deities of Vishnu, Shiva and Sun God as also methods of worship; the Madhyama and Prati Sargas deal with Rituals and Predictions of 'Future' reflecting the trends of Modern History and the Uttar Parva constitutes a hand book of religious faiths and Vratas. Considering the fact that this Purana was dated some time in the Fifth Cenury BC, the Predictions contained were so sound and accurate that they defied one's imagination!]

## Preface of the Purana

At a holy gathering convened by King Shataanik of Pandava Vamsa (clan) where a galaxy of illustrious Maharshis like Vasishth, Parashar, Jaimini, Yagnyavalkya, Goutam, Vaishampaayan, Shaunak, Angira and Bharadwaj were present, Veda Vyas along with one of his disciples Sage Sumantu made an entry and introduced the pupil as a highly competent Scholar and could be depended on to clear any of the King's doubts; the latter was interested in hearing of Bhavishya Purana which was originally recited by Brahma, then on to Maha Deva to Vishnu to Narada to Indra to Parashar to Vyasa and further down to Sumantu. The underlining Message in the Purana was that 'Sadachara Dharma' or Moralistic Virtue was the best way of life: *Idam swastyayatanam shreshthamidam buddhi vivardhanam, idam yashasyam satatamidam nih shreyasam param/* (This Purana is the most propitious, the enhancer of high quality virtue, reputation and 'Paramapadam' or Salvation.).

Sumantu prefaced that this Purana had five features viz. Sarga (Creation), Pratisarga (Secondary Creation) that preceded each Kalpa, Water and Earth; Vamsa, Manvantara and Vamsanuchara. There were also fourteen Vidyas viz. Four Vedas of Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva; six Vedangas viz. Siksha (Phonetics or Study and Application of Knowledge), Kalpa (Ritual), Vyakarana(Grammar), Niruti (Entymology or 'Utpatti' or the Production of Word-derivatives), Chandas (Meter or Prosody/Rhythemics of Verses), and Jyotisha (Study and Practice of Astronomy); 'Meemamsa' (Reasoning and or to perform a duty); Nyaya; (Justice); Purana and Dharma Shastra (The Guidebook on Virtue); additionally, there are four more Vidyas viz. 'Ayur Veda' or the Veda related to Longevity and Good Health, Dhanur Veda (The Martial Art of Bow and Arrows), Gandharva Veda (The discipline Fine Arts) and Artha Shastra (The discipline of Fine Arts) thus totalling Eighteen Vidyas.

Creation and Concept of Time

At the beginning of Creation, there was darkness all around and the Supreme Energy created 'Maha Jal' (the Great Water) first. 'Parabrahma'had his resting place (Ayana) in the water (Naara) and materialised Maya or Prakriti and as a result of the interaction, there was a Golden Egg out of which emerged Brahma. After persistent 'Tapasya' (meditation), Brahma created 'Bhumi' (Earth) from one part of the Egg and 'Akash' (Sky) from another; from the middle portion of the Egg was created 'Swarga' or the Celestial Region, Eight Directions, 'Samudra' or the Great Ocean, the 'Maha Tatvas' (Great Awareness or Consciousness of Elements) and the 'Charachara Srishti' or the Moveable and Non-moving Beings. After creating the Sky, he created Vayu (Air), Agni (Fire), Jal (water) and Prithvi. Brahma prescribed the names and tasks of each Institution or Entity. He created Devas and their 'Ganas' (troupes), the Yagnas like Jyothistomas; Grahas (Planets), Nakshatras (Stars), Nadis (Rivers), Samudras (Seas), Parvatas (Mountains), Concept of Time like Samvarsaras (Years), Masas (Months), Dinas (days), and Ritus ( Seasons). He created 'Shadvargas' viz. Kama (Desire), Krodha (Anger), Lobha (Greed), Moha (Infatuation), Mada (Ego) and Matsara (Jealousy); Dharma (Virtue), Adharma (Vice), Sukha (Happiness) and Duhkha (Grief) etc. Brahma created Brahmanas from his face, Kshatriyas from his hands, Vaishyas from thighs and Shudras fron his feet. He created Rig Veda from his Eastern Face which was received by Vasistha Muni; Yajur Veda from his Southern Head as secured by Yagnyavalkya Muni, Sama Veda from the Western Head achieved by Gautama Muni, Atharva Veda from the Northern Face obtained by Shaunaka Muni, and from his Upturned Face emerged Eighteen Puranas, Itihasas and Shastras. He divided his body on the right side to generate males and the left side to create women. He materialised a Virat Purusha or a Gigantic Male who performed Tapasya for long time to create Ten Prajapatis viz. Narada, Bhrugu, Vasishtha, Pracheta, Pulaha, Kratu, Pulastya, Atri, Angirasa and Marichi as also a number of Secondary Rishis. The he created Devatas, Munis, Daityas, Rakshasas, Piscachas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Pitras, Human Beings, Nagas, Serpents, and so on and set them all in their positions. Lightnings, Clouds, Rainbows, Dhumaketus, Ulkas, Thunders, Fishes, Animals, Birds, and moveable and non moveable objects. Eversince 'Srishti' or Creation commenced, Brahma's one day lasts till the end of a 'Kalpa' and at the end of his one day comes a 'Pralaya' (The Great Annihilation); Srishti is resumed by the next morning again. It is said that one 'Truti' makes one Nimesha, eighteen nimeshas a Kashtha, thirty kashthas one Kala, thirty kalas one Kshana, twelve kshanas one Muhurta, thirty muhurtas make a day and night, thirty day-nights make one month, two months one Ritu, three Ritus one Ayana, and two Ayanas a year. One day-night of Pitras equals one month of human beings; in other words, Shukla Paksha or a fortnight of humans makes a day for Pitras and Krishna Paksha a night. Satya Yuga comprises 4,800 Divya years or 17, 28,000 solar years; Treta Yuga comprises 3,600 Divya years or 12, 96,000 solar Years; Dwapara Yuga comprises 2,400 Divya years or 8, 64,000 solar years and Kali Yuga comprises 1,200 Divya years or 43,200 solar years; thus one Chatur Yuga or Maha Yuga adds up to 32000 Divya years or 43, 20, 000 solar years. One thousand years of Devas equals one day of Brahma and another thousand Divya years make Brahma's night; 12,000 Divya years make one Divya Yuga and 170 Maha Yugas make one Manvantara, while fourteen Manvantaras make one Brahma day.

'Samskaras' (Sacred Rites)

Vedas and Shastras prescribed forty kinds of 'Samskaras', relevant to Brahmanas among the 'Chaturvarnas' or Four Castes ranging from 'Garbha Dhaan'/ 'Rutusanti' (Impregnation); 'Pumsavana', a Sacred Rite after third month of Conception; 'Seemantrotrayan', literally meaning the parting of hair of the pregnant mother or the Rite performed in the sixth or eighth month of pregnancy; 'Jaata Karma or cutting of the navel-tube; 'Naamkarana' or giving a name to the child; 'Annaprasasna' giving the first morcel of food; 'Chooda Karma' or cutting the lock of hair of the baby; 'Upanayana'

( Sacred Rite of wearing Holy Thread and 'Upadesha' or Instruction of Gayatri Mantra); Four-folded Veda Vrata; Vivaha (Wedding); 'Pancha Maha Yagna' or the Sacrifices addressed to Devas, Pitras, Human

Beings, Pancha Bhutas and Brahma to satisfy them; 'Sapta Paaka Yagna Samstha' or Seven-folded Sacrifices of Cooked Materials viz.'Ashtakaadvaya', 'Paarvana', 'Shraavani', 'Aagrahaayani', 'Chaitri'/'Shulagava'and 'Aashvayuji'; 'Sapta havijna Samstha' or Seven-folded 'Havis' or oblations in Agni /Fire viz. 'Agnyadhaan', 'Agni-hotra', 'Darsha-Pournamasa,' 'Chaaturmaasya', 'Niruddha Pashu Bandha', 'Soutramani'; and 'Sapta Soma Samstha' viz. 'Agnishtoma', 'Athaygnishtoma', 'Ukthya', 'Shodashi', 'Vaajapeya', 'Atiraatra'and 'Aaptoryami; these are the Samskaras relevant to Brahmanas. The Brahmanas are expected to practise Eight 'Atma Gunas' or Self-oriented Features or Characteristics viz. *Anasuya Dayaa Kshaantiranaayasam cha Mangalam, Akaarpanyam tathaa shouchamaspuhaa cha Kuruduha!* (The seven salient features of Brahmanas are non-jealousy, Mercifulness, Forgiveness, unconcern, propitiousness, equanimity, inward and outward cleanliness and detachment). The Sacred Rites like Garbhadhaan, Pumsavan, Seemantotrayan, Jatakarma, Anna -praashana, Chuda karma and Yagnopapeet are meant of removing 'beeja-sambandhi' or Seed-related Doshas or Blemishes, whereas Vedaadhyana (Study of Vedas), Vratas or Pujas, Homams (Fire Rituals), Tri Vidya Vratas, Devarshi-Pitru 'Tarpanas' (Water oblations), 'Putrotpaadana', Pancha Maha Yagna and such other Jyotishtoma Yagnas are targetted to 'Brahma Praapti' or attaining Salvation.

Jaatakarma, a ritual for boys is performed along with Veda Mantras on the tenth day, or twelfth day, or eighteenth or on the completion of birth; the infant is taken out from the house either on the twelfth day or the fourth month and this act is called 'Nishkraman'. During the sixth month, 'Annaprashana' or first touch of food is performed; either during the first or third year his 'Mundan' or first hair-cut is done. In the fifth or eighth year Yagnopapeet Samskar is performed to Brahmanas; the sixth or eleventh year after birth for Kshatriyas, and during the eighth or twelfth year to Vaishyas. But this Sanskar is futile beyond sixteenth year for Brahmanas, twenty two years for Kshatriyas and twenty fourth years for Vaishyas; such persons are known as 'Vraatya' and are not qualified for wearing the 'Yagnopateeta', unless a Ritual called 'Vatsyashtom Yagna' is performed for 'Prayaschittha' or purification. Brahmanas are expected to perform 'Achamana' before taking up any Sacred Ritual, after cleaning hands and feet seated on a clean 'Asana' or Seat looking East or North, with the right hand on the right thigh, sipping spoonfuls of water reciting the names of Keshava, Narayana, Govinda and so on. The act of Achamana is not to be done while standing, conversing, looking sideways without concentration, or in a hurry and least of all while being angry or with a disturbed mind. It is stated that in a Brahmana's right palm are five 'Tirthas'viz. Deva Tirtha (on top of the four fingers excepting the thumb), Pitru Tirtha at the bottom of the pointing finger, Brahma Tirtha at the bottom of the middle wrist, Prajapatya Tirtha underneath the little finger and Soumya Tirtha at the center of the palm. Hence, all Achananas etc. related to Deva Karmas including 'Devarchana'/ Pujas of Devas or giving dakshina or 'daana' (charity) to Brahmanas are to be performed from the finger tops excepting the thumb; Tarpanas, Pinda daanas, or all acts related to Pitras are done from Pitru Tirthas; Achamana is executed from Brahma Tirtha or at the bottom of right palm above the wrist; Prajaparthya Tirtha area is utilised to perform all the propitious tasks involving Weddings, Upanayanas etc. and Soma Tirtha is utilised for certain other tasks like 'Kamandalu grahana' or accepting Holy Water Vessels or 'Dadhi Prashana' ceremonies. As Achamanas are carried out, the first sip of water signifies Rig Veda, the second sip for Yajur Veda, the third one for Sama Veda; later on when the right thumb touches the face, Atharva Veda is satisfied, when the lips are touched Itihaasas and Puranas are contented, when water is sprinkled on the head Bhagavan Rudra is gladdened, Rishiganas are happy as the tuft is touched, when both the eyes are touched Surya Deva is satisfied, touch of the nose satisfies Vayu Deva, ears satisfy the Ten 'Dishas' or Directions, and shoulders make Yama Dharma Raja, Kubera, Varuna, Indra and Agni Deva satisfied. Also, when Brahmanas perform Achamana, they should touch eyes with thumb along with Tarjani (fore finger), nose with thumb along with Anamika finger, face with thumb and Madhyama finger, ears with thumb and Kanishtha (little) finger, shoulders with all fingers, thumb with navel, and all the fingers with head; Angushtha is of Agni Swarupa, Tarjani Vayu, Madhyama Prajapati, Anamika is of Surya Rupa, and Kanishthika of Indra. Another precaution is that Brahmanas must perform Achamana involving Brahma Tirtha, Prajapatya Tirtha, and Deva Tirtha, but

not Pitru Tirtha. Also Achamana water should reach the heart in respect of Brahmanas, upto the 'Kantha' or throat in case of Kshatriyas, lip touch for Vaishyas and mere body touch for Shudras.

'Brahmachari Dharma' (Duties of Bachelor Life)

Having taught the basics like 'Suacha' (Purity), 'Aachaar' (Tradition), and 'Aachaman', Sumantu Muni proceeded to describe the method of teaching 'Vedadhyayana' after a Vidyarthi got seated on a Kushagrass-made mat, wore a 'Pavitra' made again of Kusha, performed three 'Pranayamas' or nasal exercises and recite 'Omkara'- the representation of Three Vedas by the words viz. Akara, Uukara and Makara, or AUM. Further, Gayatri's three 'Padas' or steps again taken from three Vedas were 'Bhuh, Bhuvah and Swaha', thus the integrated Tripada Gayatri viz. 'Om Bhurbhuvah Swaha'. Those who recite Gayatri Mantra for three years continuously and formally in the prescribed manner with devotion would take the form of 'Vayu' (wind) and fly with speed on the sky and attain Brahma Tatwa. The single word OM is Parabrahma and 'Pranayam' is itself a unique Tapas (meditation). There is no better Mantra than Savitri or Gayatri. 'Mouna' or avoidance of talking except the Truth, Tapasya, 'Havan' or formal obeisance to Fire God, Daan, and Yagna-related tasks might have implications of practice / shortcomings and might even be subject to diminishing significance; but recital of Omkar by way of 'Japa Yagna' of Pranava has an everlasting importance. While 'Upanshu Japa' with only the movement of lips and tongue without making the least sound is far more effective than Japa otherwise, 'Manasika Japa' (only in mind) is stated to be more Superior to Upanshu Japa; this is as valuable as 'Paka Yagna' comprising Pitru Karma, Havan and Bali Vaiswa Deva executed together in a formal manner and hence the utmost significance of Gayatri-Japa, which would be a must to Brahamanas!

Recital of Gayatri Mantra at 'Praathah Sandhya' or before Sunrise is very significant and so is 'Sayam Sandhya' or before Sun set till the appearance of Stars on the Sky. Praatah Sandhya is better performed while standing so that the sins of the previous night are demolished and contrarily Gayatri Japa before Sun set is effected while seated; the Place for carrying the Gayatri Japa should be secluded in Privacy, an open space or lonely banks of a river or water bodies and without 'Uccharana' or vocal utterance. A Brahmachari is expected to stay at the residence of a Guru, without comforts but with bare necessities; for example he is to sleep on Earth; perform service to Guru / Parents; by absorbing the know-how or the awareness of contempory happenings without reactions as mere water drops on a lotus leaf! Besides one's own Parents and his Guru (teacher), a Brahmachari has ten more Teachers viz. the son(s) of Guru, those who provide service, afford Knowledge and awareness of daily tasks, a Dharmic or a Virtuous; a Pavitra or a Puritan, 'Vishwasi'or a Confidant worthy of Trust, 'Shaktimaan' or a source of Physical Strength, an 'Udaar' or liberal-minded, 'Sadhu Swabhaav' or Gentleman and a person of his own clan. A Brahmana is stated to have three births, one from his mother, another after wearing Yagnopaveet and the third after taking 'diksha' (observance) of Yagna. At the time of 'Yagnopapeeta dharana', mother is Gayatri and 'Acharya' or the intiator is father; the latter too is the Guru since the Brahmachari is bestowed with the authority of learning Vedas or 'Vedadhyaayana' and heretofore, boy was as good as a Shudra. But, since then or after Gayatri's eligibility, a Brahmachari is bound by do's and don't's as that eligibility entails duties such as wear Mekhala skin, Danda, 'Vastras' (clothes) as presribed and of course the Yagnopapeet. He should always maintain purity, discipline, restraint and dignity. He ought to be involved with the use of flowers, fruits, water, 'Samidhas' or dry wooden pieces for Agni Homams, mrittika or the water-bed earth, kusha grass, and such other material for the use of Sacred Tasks.

Needless to emphasise that a Brahmachari should get rid of meat, madya (intoxicants), gandha or scented bases, flower garlands, violence, body-decoratives and scents, footwear, umbrellas, dance and music other than for religious purposes. The other 'taboos' include 'Asatya' (utterances of lies), 'Asteya' (stealing),

'Para Ninda' (criticism of others), company of women and involvement of 'Arishad -vargas' or the Six Enemies of human beings like desire, anger, greed, attachment, ego and envy. Whenever there is 'Guru Ninda' or criticism of Guru by others, be passive or aviod or close the ears. Thus a 'Vidyardhi' or a 'Brahmachari' has to euip and prepare himself in all the directions of moral life fully before he enters the hard core life of 'Garhastya' ahead! Before marriage, one has to realise that the two major corner-stones of wedded life are the kind of woman to marry and the utmost consideration of earning livelihood in a righteous way; mutual compatibility of man and woman by according equal status to each other is the key to perform 'Dharmika Vidhis' or the Duties of Virtue to accomplish the four essential ingredients of ideal human life viz. Dharma (Rectitude), Artha (Wealth / Well Being), Kama (Fulfillment of Desires) and Moksha (Salvation).

'Garhastya Dharma' (Virtues of Married Life)

Sumantu Muni enlightened the King Shataanik about the importance of Agnihotra (Fire-pit), 'Vratas' (formal Pujas with Vows), 'Upavasas' (fastings), 'Niyamas' (Self-control measures), Daanas (charities), Deva 'Stutis' (hymns of extolling) and Bhakti (Devotion) in the households of human beings, especially of Brahmanas. (*Vratopavasa niyamai naanaa daanaistatha Nripa! Devaadayo bhavantyeva preetaasteshaam na samshayah/viseshaadupavasena tithaih kila Maheepathey prretaa Devaadayastheshaam bhavanti Kurunandana/* 

It was the confirmed view of the Muni that a Brahmana household which had no Agnihotra was as bad as that of a home with a dead body. A home of a Brahmana Grihasta is incomplete without formally performing 'Pancha Yagnas'viz. Brahma Yagna, Pitru Yagna, Deva Yagna, Bhuta Yagna and Atithi Yana; these Yagnas are to be executed to ward off the 'doshas' or defects in each and every home arising out of 'Jeeva-himsa' being commited at five places viz. 'okhli' or mortar cum pounder; 'chakki' or grinder of corn into flour; 'chulha' or cooking stove; 'Jhaadu' or sweeper of floor; and water-pipe! Brahma Yagna denotes Veda- Adhyana (recitation) and Adhyapana (instruction); Pitru Yagna is to satisfy Pitras by 'Tarpanas' or water-based oblations, Shraddha Karmas etc.; Deva Yagna is dedicated to Devas by way of 'Havana karyas' or offerings of classified butter / ghee in Agnihotra so as to forward throug that medium to designated Devas through appropriate Mantras; Bhuta Yagnas as offerings to Balivaishva Deva; and Atithi Yagna or welcoming and hosting guests in the house holds. These regulations or Yagnas ward off the defects in a household.

'Vratas' on 'Pratipada', 'Dwiteeya' and 'Triteeya' 'Tithis'

Muni Sumantu described about the significance of performing Tithi-specific Vratas and procedures: By way of 'Upavasas' (fastings), one should consume milk on the Pratipada or the first day of a month; on the Dviteeya (Second) day only saltless food; on Triteeya (third) day rice with tilas (sesame seed); on the Chaturthi (Fourth) day only milk; on the Panchami (fifth) day, only fruits; on the Shashthi (Sixth) day, cooked vegetables only; on the Saptami (Seventh) day, only 'bilwaahaar' or wood-apple leaves; on the Ashtami (eighth) day, only barley be consumed; on the Navami (ninth) day only 'Anagnipaak' or uncooked edibles; on Dashami and Ehadashi (tenth and eleventh) 'ghrutaahar' or food with ghee; on Dwadashi (twelfth) day, 'kheer' or cooked rice and sugared milk; on Trayodashi (Thirteenth) day only 'Gomutra' or cow's urine; on Chaturdashi (fourteenth day) one could consume 'Yavaanna' or rice with Yava (Cumin seeds); on 'Purnima'

(Full Moon) day one should consume water with kusha grass and on 'Amavasya' (Dark Moon) day 'Havishya Bhojan' or normally Moong Dal, Til oil, Jeera and Tamarind. This type of 'Tithi Bhojan' for

one fortnight yields the fruit of performing ten Ashvamedha Yagna; for three/four months would give the reward of hundred Ashvamedha and Rajasuya Yagnas and the happiness of staying in Swarga for one Manvantara; and for one year of fastings, the stay in Surya loka is assured for fourteen Manvantaras. This 'Upavasa Vrata' could be performed by men, women of any 'Varna'.

On the *Pratipada* Tithi especially of Kartika month, worship to Brahma is executed to signify Brahma's Creation Process on that day in the Pratipadika Kalpa; Yagna, Tapas, Tirtha Snaan, Puja by Lotus and other flowers / fruits along with the traditional Sixteen Services like Abhishek (Bathing) of Pratima (idol) with milk, curd, honey and ghee with Veda Mantras; Dhupa, Deepa, Vastra, Aabhushana or ornaments, Naivedya and Daan of a Kapila Cow. Continous 'Japa' of Gayatri Mantra is a natural component of the Puja package. On Kartika Shukla Tithi specially, Brahma's 'Ratha Yatra' (Procession of the Chariot) be celebrated with the Idols of Brahma and Gayatri, followed by night-long 'Jaagaran' (Keeping Awake) with Recitation of Vedas and Puja on the following day would be performed with devotion. The resultant remuneration of this devotion would be the devotee's long stay at Brahma loka after life.

To signify the illustration of Sage Chyavan and his wife Sukanya during the second Kalpa, a significant Vrata known as Pushpa Dwiteeya is executed in Kartika Shulka month commencing from Dwiteeya for one year by eating only flowers of the season and by giving away Gold / Silver Flowers or atleast lotus flowers as charity to Brahmanas by which Ashvini Kumars would be pleased to bestow beautiful physiques of youth and good health. A young princess called Sukanya entered into a forest along with her friends and by mistake pierced into the eyes causing blindness of Chyavana Muni who was performing Tapas sitting behind a thick bush since she felt that the eyes were glittering worms and as a result the Muni cursed that the soldiers of the King whose daughter that the princess was, would suffer from the stoppage of their body excrements; the King apologised to the blinded Muni and to appease the latter's agony offered his daughter in wedding. Sukanya, a mere girl, suffered silenty about the wedding with an old Sage but the passing Ashwini Kumars (Celestial Physicians) over the sky understood the plight of the girl and blessed that her husband would be transformed to a handsome young youth. The Muni gave a boon in turn to Ashwini Kumars that they could be supplied Ambrosia (Amrit) as they were not eligible to secure it as Deva's Physicians but they were not Devas. There was an altercation between the Muni and Indra and finally the Muni by his Mantra Shakti made eligible to receive 'havis' from Yagnas as Devas and thus secured access to Amrit. Successful performance of this Pushpa Dwiteeya Vrata would facilitate the devotees concerned to reach heavens till the end of the 'Kalpa' and on return to Martya loka would bless them with excellent health, fame and family happiness.

On the *Dwiteeya* of Shravana Krishna Paksha, worship of Bhagavan Vishnu along with Devi Lakshmi by way of 'Ashunya Shayana' Vrata or *Phala Dwiteeya* is recommended to ensure that no married woman would become a widow and that she and her husband would not leave company of each other as long as they live with mutual fondness and happiness. The Vrata should commence with 'Vishnu Praarthana' or Prayer as follows:

Shrivatsadhharir chhreekaanta Shrivatsa Shripateyravyaya, Garhasthyam maa pranaamsham mey yatu Dharmarthakaamadam/ Gaavascha maa pranashyantu maa pranashyantu mey janaah/ Jaamayo maa pranashvantu mattho daampatya bhedatah,

Lakshmya viyujyeham Deva na kadaachidyatha Bhaganaan/ Tatha kalatra sambandho Deva maa mey viyujyataam, Lakshmyaa nashunyam varada yathaa tey shayanam sadaa,

Shayya mamaapya shunyaastu tatha tu Madhusudana/ (Hey Bhagavan Vishnu who adorns Srivatsa insignia and Lakshmi Devi's dear husband, kinldly protect our 'Garhastya' by fulfilling our desires of

Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha; please ensure that our family members, cows, womenfolk and all of us face any difficulty, that there should never be any diffrence of opinions; that we would never ever part with Lakshmi nor part with each other; our beds should never be empty, just as your bed should never part with Lakshmi Devi!). After praying Vishnu and Lakshmi, the couple performing the Phala Dwiteeya Vrata should consume only fruits in the nights and after the next morning Pujas donate variety of ripe and sweet fruits to Brahmanas along with clothes, suvarna (gold) and prized gifts. The Vrata is to be continued for four months likewise to ensure all round propitiousness and joy to the entire family.

At the beginning of the Third Kalpa, Devi Gauri prescribed *Mangala Gauri Triteeya Tithi Vrata* as conveyed to Yama Dharma Raja. Those women who perform this Vrata should always be happy along with their husbands, just as Devi Gauri enjoys her company with Lord Shiva. Unmarried girls ought to perform this Vrata sincerely to ensure securing ideal husbands. Widows too might perform the Vrat to ensure that there would not be widowhood in subsequent births. During the observance of this Vrata, consumption of salt ought to be avoided; in fact, a day before the Puja, the womenfolk should fast and on the day of the puja to Gauri Pratima (Idol), the fast might be terminated by night with saltless food; they should sleep near the Idol in the Puja Place itself; after the repeat Puja again on the subsequent day satisfy Brahmanas with Vastras, Dakshina and other gifts.

Devi Indrani carried out the Vrata and secured a virtuous son named Jayanta. Devi Arundhati did the Vrata and attained a high place as a Star on the Sky along with her husband Vasistha! Devi Rohini secured the best position among the co-wives of Chandra by the grace of Devi Gauri after executing the Vrata successfully. Thus the Triteeya Vrata is performed on the Third days of Vaishaka, Bhadrapada or / and Magha months.

Observance of *Akshaya Triteeya* in any of these months by donating Anna-Vastra-Bhojan-Suvarna and Jala after fasting and worship would bestow Akshaya (endless) benefits of Ruddhi (Prosperity), Buddhi (Intellect), Vriddhi (Enhancement), Siddhi

(Achievement) and Shri (Wealth)!

'Ganesha Chaturthi Vrata'-Origin, Procedure and Reward

Ganesha Chaturthi Vrata scheduled on Bhadrapada Shulka Chaturthi every year is a popular and auspicious function observed in several parts of Bharat by all the members of households and by all Varnas to ensure fulfillment of long standing desires, 'Vidya' (education), good health, wealth, longevity and most importantly clearance of obstacles and assurance of success as 'Vighneswara' is the Foremost Deity of Sanction to be appeased for the accomplishment of any task to be undertaken not only by human beings but even Devas, Rakshasas and even Trimurthis! Once Ganesha's younger brother, Kartikeya, was stated to have attempted the scripting of the characteristics of men and women but Ganesha seemed to have frustrated the attempts of Kartikeya who almost did the description of 'Purusha Lakshanas' but left the effort concerning the features of women. In fact, Kartikeya felt so angry that he pulled out one of the tusks of Ganesha. When Parameswara intervened and enquired about his own 'Purusha Lakshanas', Kartikeya described about Shiva that he was a 'Kapaali' and of none-too pleasant a visage, Shiva got irritated and threw away the Script in the Sea. Shiva commanded 'Samudra' (the Sea) to complete the Script of the Characteristics of Women and retrieve the Script of Kartikeya about men. Hence the Scripts were named 'Samudrika Shastra'. Even now, the Idols of Ganesha are presented as holding a part of his tusks with one of his hands! Another context which prompted Shiva to let Brahma authorise Ganesha to become the 'Gana Nayaka' and 'Vighna Rajah' was when even ordinary and often egoistic human beings in Krita Yuga had no bounds and barriers in performing deeds that they were not expected to do; also

there was no access to human beings to get bad dreams or omens so that they would realise forewarnings not to indulge in such avoidable activities. This was the reason why human beings had to be aware of warnings of impediments and non-achievements and as such all the beings in Srishti are made to realise perforce that there would never be a ready and unquestioned admittance to the gates of success, without proper propitiation of Vighna Deva.!

After comfortably seated on his throne, the Idol of Vighna Rajah is welcomed for initiating worship by the devotees with 'Snaan' or bathing with scented waters and 'Panchamritams' being the mix of milk, curd, honey, fruit-pulp and coconut water. While performing the 'Snaan'/'Abhisheka', the following 'Mantra' be recited: Sahasraaksham shata dhaaramrushibhih paavanam kritam, thena twamabhishinchaami paavamaanyaha punantutey/ bhagamtey Varuno raajaa bhagam Suryo Brihapatih, Bhagamindrischa Vaayuscha bhagam Saptarshayo daduh/ yatey Kesheshu dourbhaagyamseemantey yaccha Murdhani, Lalaatey karnayo rakshanoraapastadughnantu tey sadaa/ After the 'Mantra Snaan', the devotee should offer palm-ful of flowers by reciting the Mantra:

Rupam dehi yasho dehi bhagam Bhagavati dehi mey, Putraan dehi dhanam dehi Sarvaan Kaamaamscha dehi mey, Achalaam Buddhim mey dehi Dharaayaam Khyatimevacha /

(Hey Bhagavati, Kindly bestow to us attractive appearance, reputation, vivacity, ideal progeny, prosperity and fulfillment of all our desires; do grant me steady intellect and status in life!). Following formal worship to Ganesha, his Wives Buddhi (Wisdom) and Siddhi (Accompishment), Shiva, Devi Parvati, Devi Lakshmi, Surya, Kartikeya, and other Devas, Brahmanas are satisfied with Bhojan, Vastras, Dakshinas and Gifts.

While Ganesh Puja is performed on Bhadrapada Shukla Chaturthi regularly, there is basically no specific time of Tithi, Nakshatra and Maasa restraints. Like performing Devi Gayatri Mantra daily, Ganesha Gayatri too could be a daily recited Mantra, viz. *Mahakarnaaya vidmahey Vakratundaaya dheemahi tanno Dantih prachodayaat*; in fact worship of Vighneswara is a 'must' before any 'Puja' as prescribed in Vedic faith.

Specifically speaking however, Chaturthi in Bhadrapada Shukla Paksha has added significance since that day happens to be an auspicious day for Shiva worship too. That is also the day of devotion to a married woman's parents-in-law to achieve 'Sowbhagyata' or longevity of her husband and propitiousness to all the members of the family, since Puja on that day has the double advantage of Shiva and Ganesha. Further, worship on any Shukla Chaturthi coinciding with Bhoumavara (Tuesday) bestows contentment and pleasure, besides 'Soundaryata' (beauty and grace) to women, since that day signifies the Mangala Deva-the 'Tejas' of Shiva and Parvati transferred to Bhu Devi- who wears blood-red Vastras and of fiery nature- also popular as Kuja, Rakta, Veera and Angaraka.

'Naga Panchami' Vrata`-Origin and Procedure of Worship (Suggestions of anti-snakebite 'Auoshadhis' / Indigenous Medicines)

When Rakshasas and Devas undertook the task of churning the Ocean to seek the emergence of 'Amrit', several entities got materialised among whom was a Horse named 'Uchhaih Shrava' with a white body but black in hair. Kadru the mother of Nagas (Snakes) remarked to her 'Sapatni' (co-wife) Vinata that

Ucchhaih Shrava was white in body but black in hair, but Vinata replied that the horse was all white. The 'Sapatnis' took a bet and to prove her point, Kadru called her Naga sons to paint the horse hair white all over. The Naga sons did not to do so as it was immoral and an angry Kadru gave a 'Shaap' (curse) to her sons that after the Great Battle of Maha Bharata between Pandavas and Kauravas, a Pandava King named Janamejaya would perform a 'Sarpa Yagna' in which the entire 'Sarpa Vamsa' would be destroyed. The 'Naga Ganas' were afraid of their mother's curse and with the help of Vasuki approached Lord Brahma who assuaged their fears and said that 'Tapasvi'Brahmana called Astika, son of Jaratkaaru, would save a sizeable snake population from destruction. Lord Shri Krishna also confirmed the fact to Yudhishtara of Pandavas in the Epic of Maha Bharata that some hundred years hence King Janamejaya would perform 'Sarpa Yagna' or Sacrifice of Serpents to avenge the death of his father King Pareekshit who died of the bite of Taksha the most obnoxious serpent following a curse of a Brahmana son of a Sage in meditation for an insult caused by the King to the Sage by hanging a dead snake around the Sage's neck. The intervention of Astika to stop the Sarpa Yagna of burning crores of poisonous snakes in the 'Homaagni' or the Sacrificial Fire was held on a Panchami Tithi Day when the Snake Vamsa was rescued and that was why Naga Panchami, the fifth day of Shrayana Shuddha Fortnight came to be observed. Thus worship of poisonous Snakes on that day by way of washing and feeding them at their pits with milk as also performing formal Pujas with flowers, 'Dhup'by incense sticks, 'Arati' with camphor lighting or Oilsoaked cotton vicks, and Naivedya with 'Kheer' to the Serpent. Brahmanas recite Mantras like the following to protect the devotees: Sarva Nagaah preeyantam mey yey kechit Prithivithaley, yey cha helimarichistha yentarey Divi samstithah/ Yey Nadeeshu Mahanaga ye Sarasvati gaaminah, yey cha Vaapee tadagashu teshu sarveshu vai namah (May all Nagas whether on Earth, Sky, Swarga, in the Sun rays, Sarovaras or lakes, wells or other water bodies, be appeased as we greet these deities again and again). After the formal worship, Brahmanas are treated by good food commencing with sweets and savouries and by 'dakshinas' or cash and gifts. The 'Sarpa Vrata' is best observed in the Panchami Tithis of all the months by worshipping the Twelve leading Snakes named: Ananta, Vasuki, Shankha, Padma, Kambala, Karkotaka, Aswatara, Dhrita Rashtra, Shankhapaala, Kaaliya, Takshaka and Pingala. Sincere devotion to Naga Devas by peforming the Pujas would save the entire family of 'Naga Bhaya' or the Fear of Snakes as also of Snake bites to the entire generation of their lives. Nag Puja also bestows health, longevity, and great peace of mind.

Sage Sumantu quoted to King Shataani the conversation between Maharshis Kashyapa and Gautama about the features, appearances and types of serpents: During the Jeyshtha and Ashaadha months, serpents tend to very aggressive and the male /female variety turns into mutual union. During the rainy season, the female snake conceives and remains pregnant for four months and during the Kartika month delivers two hundred forty eggs but by the dispensation of Mother Nature only a very few remain intact. The mother snake retain the eggs for six months and seven days after their emergence, the baby serpents assume black colour. Normally the life span of a serpent is twenty years but it is a known fact that every day there is a threat of life to the reptile from peacocks, human beings, chakora birds, cats, pigs, scorpions, as also by cows, buffalos, horses and camels which kill the snakes by their horns and feet. After a bite, its poison gets immediately gets replenished. A serpent has two hundred feet enabling tremendous speed in mobility but in a stationary state not visible. It has a mouth, two tongues, thirty two teeth and four

extended teeth called makari, karaali, kaalaratri and yamaduti stated to signify Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra and Yama. There are eight reasons as to why a snake bites, viz. by way of hard weight, erstwhile enemity, fear, arrogance, hunger, speedy production of excessive poison, safety of its progeny and provocation. A snake bite is normally irrevocable causing death. But, depending on physical indications of the affected person, there certainly are 'Aoushadhis' which could do miracles!

Seven Stages of physical features as per the speed impact of the poison after the snake bite: In the first stage of the speed effect, the indication is 'Romancha' or stiffening of body hair; in the second stage, there would be excessive sweating; in the third stage, there wuld be body shiver; in the fourth stage hearing

capacity is affected; in the fifth stage, there would be hiccups or gulping sounds; in the sixth stage the neck gets dropped; in the seventh stage, poison gets spread all over the body.

If eye-vision is diminishing and the whole body has a burning sensation, then probably the skin of the poisoned person is affected; a pounded mixture of 'Aaak Jad', 'Apamaarg', 'Tagar' and 'Priyangu' in water should reduce the impact of the poison.

Since blood flow into the skin pores is spreading poison, the person feels excessively thirsty and might even swoon and hence cold items be provided with a grinding of 'Usheer' /'Khas', 'chandan', 'kuut', Tagar', 'Neelotpal', 'Sinduvaar Jada', 'Dhuter jad',

'Hing' (Asafoetida), and 'mircha' should help; if not: 'Bhatakatayya', 'Indrana jad', and 'Sarpagandhi' should be ground in a mix and administered; if this mix is also ineffective, grinding of Sinduvar and Hing powder be given as a drink with water; these powders could also be used as 'Anjan' and 'Lepa'.

If poison enters 'pitta' into blood, the patient jumps up and down, the body becomes yellowish, vision becomes yellowish too, the person gets thirsty and swooning; at this stage, a mixture of Peepul, honey, mahuva, ghee, 'thumba jad' and Indrayana Jad should all be ground together and along with Cow's urine made into a paste as powder, lepana and Anjana. If poison enters 'Kapha' due to Pitta, the body becomes stiff, breating becomes difficult, throat makes sounds, and 'lar' comes out of mouth; then 'Peepul, mirch, sounth, sleshmataka of bahuvara vriksha/tree and lodh and Madhusara' should be mixed (grinding) and an equal part with cow's urine and used as a lepana /anjana.

If poison enters Vaata with Kapha, the affected person's stomach gets bloated and vision gets blocked, then 'Shona (Sonagaachha) jad, Priyal, Gajapeepul, Bhaarangi, Vacha, Peepul, Devadaru, Mahuva, Madhusara, Sinduvara and Hing' should be powdered (grinding) in 'golis' and make the patient eat, as also use as lepana/anjana.

If poison enters 'Mazza' due to Vaata, the affected person gets blinded and all body parts get disfunctioned, then a mixture of ghee, honey, sugar with Khas, ane chandana be pounded and given as a drink, or administer its powder through inhaling.

If poison enters majja to 'marmasthaan', all body parts fail and the body drops on the Earth; by cutting the veins blood is not shown, then the ultimate medicine prescribed by Lord Rudra would be 'Mritasanjeevani Auoshadhi' viz. Peacock Pitta and Marajarika Pitta, Gandhanadi jad, Kumkum, tagar, kut, Kaasamarda's chhaal, Utpal, Kumud and Kamal all in equal parts along with Cow's urine be mixed (grinding) and use a nashya/anjana; by so doing Kalasarpa becomes a Hamsa (swan).

Sage Kashyapa advised humanity through Gautama Muni, that recital of the following Mantra especially after sincerely performing Naga Panchami Vrata on the Panchami Tithis of Shravana Shukla, Bhadrapada Shukla as also Ahwin Shukla months viz.

Om Kurukulley phat swaha. Recital of the Mantra is a Heavy Security Shield and no snake of any description would and could approach the devotee concerned.

## Skanda Shashthi Vrata

Kartika Deva's 'Avirbhaava' or Holy Appearance was stated to have occurred in Kartika Month on the Shashthi day of the Shukla Paksha (Fortnight), as Kritthika Devis enabled his birth; Bhagavan Shiva, Agni Deva and Devi Ganga had vital roles in the birth. Again, it was on the same Tithi of Shashthi that Kartikeya was conferred the Title of Deva Senapati. The Skanda Vrata is performed on both the Shukla and Krishna Paksha Shashthis of the month. On these days, the ground rules are to observe fasting (except

consume a few fruits), celibacy and sleeping on ground, and worship Kartikeya 'Pratima' (Idol) with 'Arghya Pradaana' or offering Water by the Mantra: *Saptarshidaaraja Skanda Swaahaapati samudbhava, Rudraaryamaagnija vibho Gangaagarbha namostutey, Preeyatam Devasenaaneeh sapaadayatu hrudgutam.* The Vrata proceeds with the worship of Skanda by flowers, ghee, curd and such other material. Brahmanas are to be satisfied with Bhojan, dakshinas and Vastra. By the grace of Skanda Deva, performance of this Vrata in a formal manner would bestow Siddhi (Achievement), Dhruti (Firmness), Tushti (Contentment), Rajya (Kingship), Ayu

(Longevity), Arogya (Health) and Mukti (Salvation). Kartikeya Vrata is performed on Shasthi day of Bhadrapada month also in the same manner and veneration as above. In fact, the Vrata is also observed on the Shashthi of Maragasirsha Shukla Month too.

It was in this context that Sumantu Muni emphasised that 'Vedadhyana' was indeed a pre-requisite of 'Vrata paalana', but the principal objective is 'Sadacharana' or Good Practice / Application of Values in the performance of Vratas; *Achaara heenan na punanti Veda yadyapyadheetah saha shatbhirangaih*, *shilpam hi Vedadhyanam Dwijaanam vrutam Smrutam Brahmana lakshmanam tu/* (Reating Vedas is no doubt an important requisite, since Vedas fom the framework but practice of what Vedas contained is the principal objective of Brahmanas.) Hence Practice of Vratas with sincerity is far more crucial than the knowledge of performing them.

## SURYOPAAKHYANA

Surya 'Mahatmya', 'Saptami Vrata': Method and Reward of 'Ratha Satpami'

It was on 'Saptami'Tithi that Bhagavan Surya made his initial manifestation to the Universe. His original Appearance inside a Holy Egg continued and from there itself, he grew and hence was called 'Martaanda'. He was wedded to the daughter of Daksha Prajapati, called Sanjna, and begot Dharma Raja, Vaivasvata and Yamuna Devi. But since Sanjna was unable to bear the heat and dazzle of Surya Deva, created from her shadow a similar substitute, called Chhaya Devi to proxy her and left for Uttarakuru Desha to perform Tapasya in the form of as a horse. Meanwhile, Chhaya Devi gave birth to Shaneswara and Devi Tapati, but aftersome time, Chhaya Devi's partial attitude to her own children and those of Sanjna came to be noticed; Yama Dharma pointed out to Chhaya Devi about the differential treatment and in course of the argument, Yama raised his right leg's ankle which was objected to by Chhaya and she gave a curse to Yama that if his feet ankles were placed on Earth they would be eaten by worms! As Dharma Raja complained to Surya Deva, the father assuaged the feelings of his son, who was in fact a specimen of virtue, saying that the 'shaap' of Sandhya Devi was not to be too harmful since, after all, worms might take away the flesh and blood of his ankle to Bhuloka but feet would be in tact any way. Sandhya was frightened and blurted the truth to Surya Deva that Sanjna materialised her to deputise her and the latter left to her father's place; Daksha told Surya Deva that Sanjna could not withstand his heat and had been performing Tapasya in the form of a horse at Uttarakuru. Surya requested Vishwakarma to reduce his heat and radiance and after assuming the forms of a horse approached Sanjna and by the mutual contact of the noses of Surya and Sanjana in horse forms were born Ashvini Kumars and Raivata. Since the Episode of Sanjna and Surya occurred on Sapta Tithi of Magha Shukla Paksha as above, the day is considered as most auspicious to signify the union the Couple. Those who perform the Saptami Vrata of Bhagavan Surya by keeping fast on Shashthi, the previous day as well as on that day till the dusk time,

perform formal Puja on Saptami, give away a good food with penty of Vegetables to Brahmanas along with Vastras, dakshina and gifts, and break the fast with the food observing silence during the night would be eligible to the fulfillment of desires, victory, and even Kingship. King Kuru observed this Vrata for several years at Kurukshetra on Magha Saptami and attained fulfillment of all desires. Kartika Shukla Saptami, Bhadrapada Panchami /Shashthi, Vaisakha Triteeya, and again on Ashvin Navami are also considered aupicious to observe the Vrata.

Lord Shri Krishna advised his son Samba that there could be no other Deity like Suryanayana since he could be sighted readily on the Sky. He said: *Pratyaksham Devata Suryo Jagatchhaykshu Divakarah*, *Tasmaadabhayadhika kaachiddevata naasti shaashvati/ yasmaadidam jagajjaatam layam yaasyati yatracha/* (Bhagavan Suryanarayana is the readily available vision to the eyes in the whole Universe beyond whom could be no other Deity; the entire 'Jagat' has emerged and also terminated only by him.) Time measurement is facilitated only by him since the earliest Satya Yuga; he is the unique cause for the Presence of Grahas (Planets), Nakshatras (Stars), Yogas, Karanaas, Rashis, Aditya, Vasu, Rudra, Vayu, Agni, Ashvani Kumaras, Indra, Prajapati, Dishas, Bhuh, Bhuvah, and Swah. Besides, he is the permanent 'Saakshi' (Evidence) of Mountains, Rivers, Samudra, Naga and all other 'Charaachara' or Stationary and Mobile Beings; the World wakes up with him and sleeps due to him; Vedas, Shastras and Itihasas

are never tired of praising him as Paramatma, Antaratma and such other truisms; he is present every where, he is eternal and he is all-knowing; and he is the only and distinctive refuge-point to every one always. Having said this, Lord Shri Krishna advised his son Samba about the method of regular and daily worship so demolish sins and 'Vighnas' (obstacles). Early morning, before Sun rise, one should complete the ablutions, bathing, wearing clean clothes and offering 'Achamana' or sipping of three spoonful water by reciting Kesavaya Swaha, Narayana Swaha, and Madhvavaya Swaha etc.and offer 'Arghya' (water with both the palms) to Suryanarayana by mentally reciting the 'Sakshaatkara Mantra' viz. OM KHAKHOL -KHAYA SWAHA; perform Tri-vidha Praanaayaama of Purak, Rechak and Kumbhak or the inhaling, holding and exhaling the four kinds airs viz. Vayavi, Agneyi, Mahendri and Vaaruni for attaining 'baahyaantara suddhi'or external and internal purity by means of 'Soshan', 'Dahan', 'Stambhan' and 'Plaavan' of one's body. Then, one has to integrate the 'Sthula' or the physical and 'Sukshma' or the miniscule 'Indriyas' or limbs. Thereafter one has to perform 'Anganyasa' as follows: OM KHAH SWAHA HRIDAYAYANAMAH, OM KHAM SWAHA SHIRASEY SWAHA, OM ULKAAYA SWAHA SHIKHAANAI VASHATU, OM YAYA SWAHA KAVACHAAYA HUM, OM SWAAM SWAAHA NETRATHRAYAYA AOUSHATU, OM HAAM SWAAHA ASTRAAYA PHAT. Thereafter, water is sprinkled on all the worship materials and performs the worship by way of all the Services including offerings of flowers, incense material, lighting of oil-soaked cotton vicks and camphor lighting, Naivedya etc. Worship by day is to be done to Surya Deva's idol and by the night through Agni Deva and facing East in the morning while facing west in the evening and night. At all these times, the worship is to be performed by thinking of an Eight Leaf Lotus with Surya in the center and reciting the mantra *Om kakholkhaya Swaha*. After the Services of Dhyana (meditation), Awahana (welcome), Naama Puja, Pushparchana, Dhupa, Deepa, Naivedya, Vastra etc. 'Mudras' should be displayed viz. Vyoma Mudra, Ravi Mudra, Padma Mudra, Mahaswata Mudra and Astra Mudras. If the worship is carried out in this manner for a year with devotion and sincerity, then no diseases would reach that person anywhere nearby, no shortage of monetary funds would ever be felt, no possibility of disrepute or controversy would occur in life and no limitation of well being and success is faced ever. Lord Shri Krishna further described to son Samba the names of Surya Deva to be worshipped on each Saptami of in months of a year: In Magha month, he is worshipped by the name of 'Varuna'; in Phalguna month as 'Surya', in Chaitra as 'Vaishakha'; in Vaishakha as 'Dhata'; in Jeshtha as Indra; in Ashaadha as 'Ravi', in Shravana as 'Nabha'; in Bhadrapada as 'Yama', in Ashwin as 'Parjanya'; in Kartika as 'Twashta', in Margasirsha as 'Mitra'; and in Poushya as 'Vishnu'. After performing the Saptami Vrata year-long as above, 'Ratha Saptami' is to be executed on Magha Shukla Saptami, marking the seventh day of 'Uttarayana' or the northerly movement of Surya Deva in a year. Vernal equinox starting from Capricon or Makara symbolically reverses the direction of Surya's chariot from his southerly to northerly direction. The Charioteer Aruna is seated facing Surva Deva on the chariot drawn by seven horses representing seven colours the names of the horses being Java, Vijava, Ajaya, Jayanti, Aparajita, Mahajaya, Nanda and Bhadra. Ratha Saptami also marks the birth day of Surya Deva, heralding the commencement of Spring Season celebrated as the season of harvesting and is celebrated as season of joy and auspiciouness all over Bharat. Surva Deva's chariot has one 'Chakra', three 'Naabhi'or Chakra fixer, five 'ares'or cutters and eight 'nemis' ((nails); the length of the Ratha is of ten thousand yojanas of length and width; Devas, Rishis, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Nagas and Rakshasas travel along on the Chariot on bi-monthly basis of change; Bhagavan Suryanarayana is always mobile day and night taking rounds of Sapta Dwipas. The names of the 'Saptaashvas' are If the Ratha is at Amaravati of Indra then it happens to be noon, Sunrise time at Samyamnipuri of Lord Yama, midnight at Varuna Deva's City called Sukha, and at Chandra Deva's Vibha Nagari the Suryasta / evening. Thus Sun God circumambulates the entire Universe daily. The directions are also determined by the movement of Surya Deva; similarly the degrees from zero to three hundred sixty as Surya moves to twenty, thirty, forty and so on till ninety by mid-day; Surya Deva's movement also decides the positiong of the Navagrahas (Planets); he decides the rotation of 'Rutus' or Seasons of Vasantha, Greeshma, Varsha, Sharad, Hemanta, and Sishira. Surya Deva's colours also are tranformed according to the Seasons, viz. Kapila Varna in Vasanta, furnaced gold in Greeshma, Sweta or white in Varsha / rainy season, Pandu Varna in Sharad Ritu, copper colour in Hemanta Ritu and Rakta Varna (blood red) in Sishira Ritu. [Incidentally there are seven notes of Music-Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Da and Ni; there are Seven Chakras in a human body viz.Mulaadhara, Swaadhishtana, Manipuraka, Anahata, Vishuddhi, Aagna, and Sahasrara; seven kinds of Sahitya, viz. Kaavya, Nataka, Alamkara, Purana, Itihaasa, Shastra and Smritis; and Seven Chhandas viz. Jayanti, Jagati, Usnik, Trishthup, Anushthup, Pankti and Bhubhruti].

Surya Deva's 'Ratha Yatra and 'Indrotsava' are propitious to the whole Universe and where ever these are celebrated there would be any famine, natural calamities, fear of robberies or political upheavals.On Margaseersha Shukla Saptami, if one takes a devotional bath and after Surya Puja offers 'Naivedya' of cooked rice with ghee and jaggery, the person concerned would be destined to reach Brahmaloka.

'Nadi Snaanas': On Poushya Shukla Saptami, holy bathings along with Veda Mantras in favour of Surya Deva, preferably coinciding Surya 'Abhishekas', would assume considerable significance at Prayaga, Pushkara, Kurukshetra, Naimisha, Pruthudak (Pehva), Shona, Gokarna, Brahmaavarta, Kushhavarta, Bilvaka, Neelaparvat, Gangaadwar, Kaalapriya, Mitravan, Chakra Tirtha, Rama Tirtha, Ganga, Yamuna, Sarasvati, Sindhu, Chandrabhaaga, Narmada, Vipaasha (Vyasanadi), Taapi, Shiva, Vetravati, Godavari, Payohni (Mandakini), Krishna, Venya, Shatadru (Satlej), Pushkarini, Kaushiki (Kosi) and Sarayu. The holy baths accompanied by worship of Sun God with devotion would certainly yield memorable results. After the baths in the Rivers and Abhishkas to Suryanarana 'Pratima', the Idols of Surya as well as those of Sanjna and Chhaya are transferred to a Chariot drawn by seven horses as also Aruna, the Ratha Sarathi, and with decorate the interior of the chariot with figurines of Tri Murthis of Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara, Dikpalakas and so on; the Ratha should be accompanied by Seven Brahmanas, signifying Sapta Rishis reciting Veda Mantras, as also Gandharvas denoting singers and dancers and taken around a Temple / main roads of the Vllages/ Town ships etc. The Organisers, participants, Brahmanas and all who witness the Ratha Yatra would be blessed as their mere presence at the Event removes property, enhances health, great opportunities of Life and attainment of Suryaloka.

Brahmopadesha to Yagnavalkya Muni about Surya 'Naama-Stotras'

Lord Brahma's 'Upadesha' (Instruction) of Surya Deva's 'Naama Stotra' to Yagnavalkya Muni as follows:

Namah Suryaya Nityaya Ravayerkaaya Bhanavey

Bhaskaraya Mataangaaya Maartaandaaya Vivasvathey

Aaadityayaadi Devaaya Namastey Rashmimaliney

Divaakaraya Deeptaaya Agnaye Mihiraayacha

Prabhaakaraya Mitraaya Namasteyditi sambhavah

Namo Gopataye nityam dishaam cha patayenamah

Namo Dhaatrey Vidhaatrey cha Aryamno Varunaayacha

Puushney Bhagaaya Mitraaya Parjanyaayamshavey Namah

Namo Himakrutey Nityam Dharmaaya Tapanaaya cha

Harayey Haritaashvaaya Vishvashvya Pataye namah

Vishnavey Brahmaney nityam Thriambakaaya tathaatmaney

Namastey Sapta lokesha Namastey Sapta Saptaye

Ekasmaih Namastubhyameka chakra rathaaya cha

Jyotishaam pataye nityam Sarva Praana bhrutey namah

Hitaaya Sarvabhutaanaam Shivaayaarti haraaya cha

Namah Padmaprabodhaaya namo Vedaadi murtaye

Kaadhijaaya Namastubhyam Namastaaraa stutaayacha

Bheemajaaya Namastubhyam Paavakaayacha vai namah

Dhishanaaya namo nityam namah Krishnaaya nityadaa

Namostwaditi putraaya Namo Lakshyaaya Nityashah

Lord Brahma told Sage Yaagnavalkya that any person recites the above 'Dashapadi' both in the morning and evening, his / her desires expressed or otherwise would surely be fulfilled; if the person is improsoned or involved in any problem of dispute would be freed instantly and would be authorised for reaping the end-results of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha; he should be able to secure the best of his ongoing life as well as the forthcoming and by the grace of Ravi Deva should be able to overcome all difficultees in the day to day life.

Surya's Dwadasha Murtis and his Moderated Form (Stuti by Devas included)

Sumantu Muni informed King Shataanika that Samba, the son of Shri Krishna set up a Temple of Bhagavan Suryanarayana on the banks of the River Chandrabhaga where in the remote past Surya Deva performed 'Tapas' after creating Devas and human beings and also giving birth of himself to Aditi Devi as 'Adithya'; he also assumed Twelve other Murtis viz. Indra, Dhata, Parjanya, Pusha, Twashta, Aryama, Bhaga, Vivishwan, Amshu, Vishnu, Varuna and Mitra. Among these twelve Murthis, Indra was Chief of Devas ruling Amaravati and destroying Daityas and Danavas from time to time. Dhata being in the Status of Prajapati took up the task of Creation; Parjanya in the Form of Sun rays rained all over the Universe; Pusha is in the form of Mantras engaged for Prajaaposhana; Twashtha is present in the form of 'Vanaspati' and 'Aushadhi' (Vegetable Oils and Herbal Medicines); Aryama who provides protection and relief to humanity; Bhaga is in the form of Earth and Mountains; Viviswan in the form of Agni / Fire and

is the cooking facilitator of food as also of the destroying power; the ninth name of Surya Deva is Amshu or of the form of Chandra Deva who provides coolness and pleasure of existence; Vishnu is the tenth name of Surya who constanly checks the evil forces in the World and slays Danavaas and establishes virtue from time to time by assuming Incarnations; Varuna is the eleventh appearance present in water as the source of life and fertility staying in Oceans, Rivers and various water profiles; and finally, Mitra or form of propitiousness and help to humanity. In whatever form he might be, Surya Deva is indeed the 'Karanam, Kaaranam and Karta' or the Act, Action and the Supreme Actor in the drama of Life! Bhakti (Devotion), Shraddha (fortitude) and Puja (Worship) sum up the meanings of human life! The corresponding Twelve Names of Aditya are stated to identify with the Twelve Months of a Year viz. Chaitra with Vishnu, Vaishakha with Aryama, Jyeshtha with Viviswan, Ashadha with Amshuman, Shravana with Parjanya, Badrapada with Varuna, Ashwin with Indra, Kartika with Dhata, Margasirsha with Mitra, Pausha with Pusha, Magha with Bhaga and Twashta in Phalguna. Surya Deva has thousands of Kiranas (Rays) of which four hundred rays, known as Chandana generate Vrishti or rains; three hundred kiranas of yellow colour provide coolness entitled Chandra; three hundred more rays coloured white bestowing Aushadhis, Swadha, and Amrit by which human beings, Pitras and Devas are all happy. The names of the twenty most important rays are stated to be Heti, Kiran, Gow, Rashmi, Gabhasti, Abheeshu, Ghan, Usnu, Marichi, Naadi, Deedhiti, Saandhya, Mayukha, Amshu, Saptarchi, Suparna, Kara and Paada.

DEVA STUTI: At the time of 'Pralaya' or the Great Destruction when darkness engulfed the Universe, the foremost materialisation was of 'Buddhi' (Intelligence) which led to 'Ahamkara' (Self-image), which in turn created the 'Pancha Bhutas' or Five Elements of Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Sky whose interplay led to the emergence of the Golden Egg containing Seven Lokas and Seven Oceans and Tri Murtis. A massive embodiment of Radiance appeared and the Devas extolled the Adi Deva as follows:

Adi Devosi Devanaam eeshwaraanaam Tameeswarah, Adikartaasi Bhutaanaam Deva Deva Sanaatanah/ Jeevanam sarva satvaanaam Deva Gandharva Raakshasam, Muni Kinnara Siddhanaam tadhaivoraga pakshinaam/ Twam Brahma twam Mahaa Devastvam Vishnustwam Prajaapatih, Vayurindrascha Somescha Viviswaan Varunastathha/

Twam Kaalah Srishtikarta cha hartaa Traataa Prabhustatha, Saritah Saagarah Shailavidhyudindra dhanushi cha, Pralayah Prabhuvaschaiva Vyaktaavyakta Sanaatanah/ Eshwaraatparato Vidyaa Vidyaayah Paratah Shivah, Shivaatparataro Devastwameva Parameswarah/Sarvatah Praanipaadastwam Sarvatokshi shiro mukhah.

Sahsraamshustwam tu Deva Sahasrakiranasathaa/ Bhuraadi bhurbhuvahaswascha maharjanastapatasthaa, Pradeeptam deeptimannityam Sarvaloka prakaashakam/ Durnireeksham Surendraanaam Yadyapam tasya the namah/Sura sidhhir ganairjushtam

Bhrugvatri pulahaadibhih, Shubham Paramamavyagram yadruupam tasya the namah/

Panchaateetsthitaam tadvai dashokaadasha eva cha, Arthamasamatikramyasthitam tatsuryamandaley, Tasmai rupaya the deva pranataam Sarva Devataah/Vishwakruth-

Visha bhrutbhutamcha Vishwanarasuraarchitam, Vishwasthitamachintyam cha yadrupam tasya tey namah/ Param Yagnaatparam Devaatparam Lokaatparam divah, Duraatikrameti yah khyatastasmaadapi Paramparaat, Paramaatmeti vikyhatam yadrupam tasya tey namah/Avigneyamachintyam cha Adhyaatmagatamavyayam, Anaadi nidhanam Devam yadrupam tasya tey namah/ Namo namah Kaaranakaaranaya Namo namah Paapavinaashanaaya, Namo Namo Vanditavandanaya Namo Namo Roga —vinaashanaaya/ Namo namah Sarva varapradaaya Namo namah Sarva balapradaaya, Namo Namo Gyaananidhey Sadaiva Namo Namah Panchadashaatmakaya (Hey Sanatana Deva, You are the foremost Creator and the Supreme Adi Deva; You are the Sourcer of Life of Devas, Gandharvas, Raakshasas, Munis, Kinnaras, Siddhas, Nagas, etc.; You are Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu; Prajapati ,Vayu, Indra, Soma, Vishvaswaan, Varuna and Kaala; You are the Creator, Destroyer and Preserver of the

World; You are the Rivers, Oceans, Vidyut and Rainbows, Pralaya, Prabhava or cycle of birth and death; You are the comprehensible and incomprehensible; the Vidya/ knowledge prompted by Ishvara, Shiva prompted by Vidya and Paramadeva prompted by Shiva; You are spread all over the feet, legs, eyes, head and face; Your thousands of blazing rays illuminate all over including the Lokas of Bhuh, Bhuvah, Swah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah, and Satya; You are not possible to vision even by Indra and all other Devas, yet provide propitiousness and Peace to Munis like Bhrigu, Atri, Pulaha, and many other Siddhas; Your basic Rupa or Form is just not possible to visualise by the Five / Ten / or Eleven Indriyas (Faculties);

We pray to that Form of Vishvasrashta, Vishvasthita and Vishvabhuta who is Unique, worshipped by Indra and all other Devas; You are the Holy Form of Yagnas, Devatas, Lokas and the Great Sky and even far beyond as You are Endless, inexplicable, and inexhaustible; and You are the reason of reasons, sinless and sin-destroyer, worshipped by the Highest of the Highest, Panchadashatmika and the bestower of the best of boons and Powers; We greet You with all humility and veneration!). As all the Devas prayed to

Surya Deva, the latter appeared and asked for the boon of considerably diminishing his conflagration and radiance; Surya Deva requested Vishvakarma to trim down his severity and with the Shakti so reduced be utilized for materialising Vishnu Deva's Sudarshana Chakra, Shiva's Shula, and various other 'Ayudhas'or weapons like maces, Vajras, Dhanush and arrows, and so on. Thus Surya Deva's extreme heat and illumination got reduced substantially and thus became some what less harsh and ruthless.

'Vyoma' the 'Ayudha' of Surya and its 'Lakshanas' (Features)

Surya Deva's 'Ayudha' (Weapon) is 'Vyoma' with Four Shringas or Horns, like Varuna's 'Paasha', Bramha's 'Hunkaar' sound, Vishnu's Chakra, Triambika's Trishula, and Indra's Vajra. Within Vyoma are situated Eleven Rudras, Twelve Adityas, Ten Vishwa Devas, Eight Vasuganas and Two Ashwini Kumars. The Rudras are Hara, Sharva, Triambika, Vrishhakapi, Shambhu, Kapardi, Raivata, Aparaajita, Eshwar, Ahibrudhna and Bhuva; the Vasus are Dhruva, Dhara, Soma, Anila, Anala, Apu, Pratyusha and Prabhasa; Kratu, Daksha, Vasu, Sathya, Kaal, Kaam, Dhruti, Kuru, Shankumaatra and Vamana are the Vishvadevas; and Ashwinikumars are Naasatya and Dasna. Also Vyoma includes Saadhya, Tushita, Marut and other Devatas; Swayambhu, Swaarochisha, Uttama, Tamasa, Raivata, Chakshusa and the current Manu Vaivaswata (the future Manus being Arkasaawarni, Brahmasaavarni, Rudrasaavarni, Dharmasaavarni, Dakshasaavarni, Roucha and Bhoutya); Indras of the corresponding Manvantaras, viz. Vishnubhuk, Vidyuti, Vibhu, Prabhu, Shikhi, Manojava and Ojaswi (the future ndras being Bali, Adbhut, Tridiva, Susaatvika, Kirti, Shatadhaama and Divaspati); Saptarshis viz. Kashyapa, Atri, Vasishtha, Bharadwaja, Gautama, Vishwamitra and Jamadagni; Seven Marutganas viz. Pravaha, Aavaha, Udyuha, Samvaha, Vivaha, Nivaha and Parivaha along with seven each sub-Ganas; ThreeAgnis viz.Suryagni named Shuchi, Vaidyut Agni called Paavaka, and Arani which is produced by 'Manthana' or churning called Pavamaana; Progeny of thirty nine Agnis; Brahma Putras viz. Samvatsara, Parivatsara, Indratsara, Anvatsara and Vatsara; Three Pitras viz. Souma, Bahirshad and Agnishvatta; Nava Grahas of Surya, Soma, Bhauma, Budha, Guru, Shukra, Shani, Rahu and Ketu; fathers of the Grahas excepting Bhauma whose originator being Bhu Devi) respectively being Kashyapa, Dharma, Chandra, Prajapati Bhrigu( father of Guru and Shukra), Surya, Simhika and Brahma.

Sapta Lokas are Bhu, Bhuvah, Swar, Mahar, Jana, Tapas and Brahma; the Ruling Deity of Bhu loka is Agni; that of Bhuvarloka where Marudganas stay the Deity is Vayu; Swarlok is the Place of stay for Rudra, Ashwini kumars, Aditya, Vasuganas and Devaganas and the Chief is Surya; in Maharlok Prajapatis are the Ruling Deities; the fifth is Janaloka where the residents are the donors of Bhumi; the Tapolok is the residing Place of Ribhu, Sanatkumar and Rishis like Vairaj; the Seventh is Satya loka where those who are rid of the cycle of birth and death and attained 'Mukti' and the Ruler is Brahma Himself. Deva, Danava, Gandharva, Yaksha, Bhuta and Vidyadharas are all the residents of Vyoma too.

So are Maruts, Pitars, Agni and Grahas; that is the reason why, human beings must practise the worship of Vyoma. The names of Vyoma are Akash, Kha, Dik, Antariksha, Nabha, Ambara, Pushkar, Gagan, Meru, Vipul, Bila, Aapochhidra, Shunya, Tamas and Rodasi. There are Seven Samudras of Lavan (Salt), Ksheer (Milk-Sugar mix with cooked rice), Dadhi (Curd), Ghrita (Ghee), Madhu (Honey), Ikshu (Sugar cane juice) and Suswad (Sweet water). Six rain bearing Great Mountains are Himavan, Hemakut, Nishadh, Neel, Sweta and Shringvan, while the Central Mountain is called Maharajat. Mahendri, Agneyi, Yamya, Nairuti, Vaaruni, Vaayavi, Soumya and Ishaani are the Deva Nagars atop these Mountains. Above Prithvi is Lokalok Mountain and beyond it is Andakapaal; much beyond are stated to be the Places of Agni, Vayu, Sky etc. Far above are expected to be Bhagavan Surya. Underneath Earth are the under-Sea Lokas of Tala, Sutala, Patala, Talaatala, Atala, Vitala and Rasatala. Kanchana Meru Mountain is spread out in the Center of Earth at a height of eighty four thousand vojanas or approx. one hundred sixteen thousand km (@fifteen km per yojana). Meru has four 'Shringas' or towers named 'Soumanasa' made of Gold, 'Jyotisha' made of 'Padmaraaga', 'Chitra' made of 'Sarvadhatu' (All-metal) and 'Chandroujask' made of Silver. Surya Deva rises from the Soumanasa Shringa at Uttarayana and sets at Dakshinayana at Jyotishka Shringa. The Place in between the two Shringas is known as Vyoma where Surya Deva resides.

Surya Deva cures Sambu's Leprosy

When Sambu the son of Shri Krishna had 'Kushthu Vyadhi' (Leprosy), he made sincere and elaborate prayers to Surya Deva saying that Surya Paramatma popularly called Aditya providing illumination all over the Universe was the embodiment of various Deities such as Achintya rupa Vishnu, Pitamaha Brahma, Rudra, Mahendra, Varuna, Akaash, Prithvi, Jala, Vayu, Chandra, Megha, Kubera, Vibhaavasu and Yama; that he was actually of the 'Mahadevamaya Anda' (Egg) whose brightness had spread all over the Universe; that he protects the Beings including Humanity and various other Species in the Creation; that he saves from human sufferings including Kushthu and other intractable diseases as also 'Angaviheenata' (Lack of Limbs); that he was the 'Pratyaksha' (Readily Visionable) Devata who could liberate from any physical ailments and that he should please cure his longstanding malady. Surya Deva was pleased with the prayers of great intensity by Sambu and appeared before him and by the mere touch of one of his rays got completely cured and provided a second birth to him. Surva Deva further desired Sambu to spread the message far and wide that prayers of mere Twenty names of his by any one in the humanity, or the entire Srishti comprising Devas, Rakshasas, Yakshas, Gandharvas or any sinner of any kind or classification with dedication would be readily be answered, as there was no need to rectite Sacred Veda Mantras and not even thousand names of Surya Deva; The most Sacred names of Surya Deva so suggested to Sambu are as follows: Vikartan (Who slashes any kind of dangers or difficulties); Viviswan(Prakasha Rupa), Maartand (who stayed for long in a Egg); Bhaskar, Ravi, Lokaprakashak, Shriman, Loka Chakshu, Graheswara, Loka saakshi, Trilokesh, Karta, Harta, Tamistra (Destroyer of Darkness); Tapan, Taapana, Shuchi or Purity, Saptaasyavaahana, Gabhasihast (Rays as his extended hands); Brahma and finally 'Sarva Deva Namaskruta'. Recital of these minimal Names of Surya Deva with utmost purity, dedication and sincerity would bestow excellent health and disease-lessness, fame and life's contentment and purposefulness.

'Tri Murtis' eulogize Surya's Virat Rupa and His Worship as 'Omkara' /'Vyoma'

At the beginning of Kalpa, Tri Murthis became victims of 'Ahamkaar' (Self-image) and when a gigantic form of luminosity appeared on the Sky, they were taken aback as to how this huge illumination emerged from! As the Great Light approached and dazzled their vision, the personification of Surya Deva in a

'Virat Rupa' (Collosal Form) got materialised, the Tri Murthis and Devaganas greeted it again and again with veneration.

Lord Brahma eulogized the Virat Swarupa of Surya Deva as follows:

Namastey Deva Devesha Sahasra kiranojjvala, Loka Deepa Namastestu Namastey
Konavallabha/Bhaskaraaya Namo nityam Khakholkaya Namo Namah, Vishnavey Kaalachakraaya
Somaayaamita tejasey/ Namastey Pancha Kaalaaya Indraaya Vasuretasey, Khagaaya Lokanathaaya
Ekachakra rathaayacha/ Jadvitaya Devaaya Shivaayaamita tejasey, Tamoghnaaya Surupaaya tejasaam
nidhaye namh/ Arthaya Kamarupaaya Dharmaayaamita tejasey, Mokshaaya Moksha rupaaya Suryaaya
Namo Namah/ Krodhalobha viheenaaya lokaanaam sthith hetavey, Shubhaya Shubharupaaya
Shubhadaaya Shubhhaatmaney/ Shantaaya Shantarupaaya Shanatayesmaasu vai namah, Namastey
Brahmarupaaya Braahmanaaya namo namah/Brahma DevaayaBrahmarupaya Brahmaney
Paramaatmaney, Brahmanye cha prasaadam cha vai kuru Deva Jatpatey/

(Deva Devesha! Loka Deepa! Kona Vallabha! You are the source of phenominal illumination to the whole World; You are all the Deities like Bhaskara, Vishnu, Kaalachakra, Soma, Kaala, Indra, Vasu, Agni, Khaga, Lokanatha rolled in one as the Ekachakri, bestowing propitiousness and positiveness all over; You are the Embodiment of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha; You are the Personification of Tranquility and Peace, devoid of anger, greed, jealousy and partiality; You are the Parabrahma Himself!)

Lord Shiva complimented Surya Deva as follows:

Jaya Bhaava Jayaajeya Jaya Hamsa Diwakara, Jaya Shambho Mahaabaho Khaga Gochara Bhudhara/
Jaya Loka Pradipaaya Jaya Bhano Jagatpatey, Jaya Kaala –jayaayanta Samvatsara Shubhaanana/Jaya
Devaaditeh putra Kashyapaananda vardhanah, Tamoghna Jaya Saptesha Jaya Saptaashva vaahana/
Grahesha Jaya Kaanteesha Jaya Kaalesha Shankara, Artha Kaamesha Dharmesha Jaya Mokshesha
Sharmada/ Jaya Vedaanga Rupaaya Graha Swarupaya vai namah, Satyaya Sathya Rupaaya
Swarupaaya Shubhhaya cha/ Krodha lobha vinaashaya Kaamanaashaya vai Jaya, Kalmaasha pakshi
rupaaya Yati rupaaya Shaambhavey/ Vishvaya Vishva rupaaya Vishva karmaaya vai Jayah, Jayonkaara
Vashatkaara Swaahaakaara Swadhaamaya/

Jayascha Megha rupaayacha Agni rupaaryamaaya cha, Samsaaraarnava peetaaya Moksha dwara pradaaya cha/ Samsaara arnavamagnasya mama Deva Jagatpatey, Hastaavalambano Deva Bhava twam Gopatedbhuta/

(Bhagavan Surya Deva! Victory to You the Cause of Universal Existence; You are the Ajeya or the Invincible, Hamsa or Swan like Veda Rupa, Divakara or the Day-Maker, Mahabaahu or the Mighty Handed, Bhudhara or the Holder of Earth, Gochara or the Readily Visible / the Transitor of Planets, Bhava, Khaga, Loka Pradeepa, Jagtpati, Bhanu, Kaala, Ananta, Samvatsara and Shubhaanana or the Auspicious-Faced, Victory to You!

You are the Cause of Happiness of Your Father Kashyapa, the Son of Devi Aditi, Saptaashwa vahana or the Rider of Seven Horses, Saptesha or the Master of the Seven, the Destroyer of Darkness, the Chief of Planets, the Lord of Illumination, Kaalesha, Shankara, the Facilitator of Chaturvarga viz. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha; You are the Vedanga Rupa, Graha Rupa, Sathya Rupa, Surupa, Destroyer of Anger and such other Enemies of Human Weaknesses, Kalmaasha pakshi Rupa and Yati Rupa; You are the Vishwa Rupa, Vishwakarma, Omkara, Vashatkara or the Controller and the Director of Actions, Swahakara / Swadhaarupa or the offerings to Agni homas; Ashwamedha rupa or the Sacrificial Horse Yagnas; Agni Rupa. Lord Surya, do kindly hold the hand and lead the World! Victory to You!

Bhagavan Vishnu paid tributes to Surya Deva at his Virat Swarupa as follows:

Namaami Devadevesham Bhutabhavanamavyayam, Diwaakaram Ravim Bhaanum Maartaandam Bhaskaram Bhagam/ Indra Vishnum Harim Hamsamarka Lokagurum Vibhum, Trinetram ThraiksharamThriangam Trimurthim Trigatim Shubham/ Shanmukhaya Namo Nityam Trinetraya Namo Namah, Chaturvimshati Paadaaya Namo Dwaadasha paanaye/Namastey Bhupataye Lokaanam pathayenamah, Devaanaam pataye Nithyam varnaanam pathaye namah/ Twam Brahma Twam Jagannatho Rudraswam Prajaapatih, Twam Somastwam tathaadistyastvam omkaaraka eva hi/

Brihaspatirbudhastwam hi twam Shukrastwam Vibhaavasuh, Yamastwam Varunastwam hi namastey Kashyapaatmaja/Twaya tathamidam Sarvam Jagatsthaavara jangamam,Twat eva Samutpannam Sadevaasura maanusham/ Brahma chaaham cha Rudrascha samutpanno Jagatpatey, Kalpaadou tu puraa Deva sthitaye Jagatonagha/

Namastey Veda Rupaaya Ahorupaaya vai namah, Namastey Jnaanarupaya Yagnaaya cha Namo Namah/ Praseedaasmaasu Devesha Bhutesha Kiranojjvala, Samsaaraanava magnaanaam prasaadam kuru Gopathey, Vedaantaya Namo Nityam Namo Yagna kalaaya cha/

(Salutaions to You Devadevesha! You are popular by the names of Diwakara, Ravi, Bhanu, Martanda, Bhaskara, Bhaga, Indra, Vishnu, Hari, Hamsa, and Arka; You are Vibhu, Trinetradhaari, Thryaksharatmaka, Thryangatmaka, Trimurti, Trijagati; You have six faces, tewntyfour feet and twelve hands, the Chief of the Occupants of all the Lokas; Jagatswami! It is only You who is Brahma, Rudra, Prajapati, Soma, Aditya, Omkara, Brihaspati, Budha, Shukra, Agni, Bhaga, Varuna, and Kashyapaatmaja. You stretch out the entire Universe comprising all the mobile and immobile Beings; You are the Creator of Devatas, Asuras and Manavas; You are responsible for the materialisation of the World, its preservation and its termination when the Trimurthis were created too' You alone are the Vedarupa, Divasaswarupa, Yajna and Jnaanarupa; Be kind to us Kiranojjvala, Bhutesha, Gopatey, You are competely absorbed in the affairs of 'Samsara', the personification of Vedanta and Yagna Kalaa, Victory be with You!)

As Surya Deva was immensely pleased by the salutations and praises of Tri Murthis, He appeared before them in the Form of Great Illumination and bestowed the boons of Creating, Administering and Extinguishing the World to them respectively. They sought a favour from Surya Deva that since He was essentially a Mass of Heat and Fire without a Figure and Structure, He might please assume a tangible Form of a Murti (Idol) which would facilitate their worship to Him. Surya Deva replied that He could assume four kinds of Murti Swarupas, the first one being of Rajasa Guna signifying Braahmi Shakti which creates the Universe; the Second with Satvika Guna representing Vishnu Shakti being responsible for Preservation and Administration; thirdly with Tamasika Guna of Siva Shakti destroying the Evil, Sins and Immorality; and finally the Omkara which has both Akaara and Niraakaara Swarupas and devotees are advised to worship the last Form which has a 'Nirlipta'/ 'Samata'(Balancing) Energy. In fact, Surya desired that the best method of worship would be to direct it to 'Vyoma'. Thus Lord Brahma worshipped Vyoma at Pushkarini Tirtha, Vishnu did his Puja to Voyma through 'Salagrama' and Siva prayed to Vyoma from Gandhamadana Mountain. A person who reads or hears the Tributes to Surya by Tri Murtis as above would be bestowed by wealth, health, progeny, Vidya and contentment as also peaceful end of life resulting in Salvation.

Surya 'Aradhana' and 'Agni Homa Vidhi' - Prayers to Dikpalakas, Nava Grahas, Tri Murtis, Matrikas and Select Deities

Lord Vishnu's carrier 'Garuda' approached Surya Deva's Charioteer 'Aruna' for the best form of 'Aradhana' (Worship) to solve 'Adhi-Vyaadhi'difficulties like diseases, problems posed by Grahas (Planets), hurdles posed by persons in Power and natural calamities. For instance Garuda was concerned by a curse since his wings were affected and he could not fly properly. Aruna assured that there could be no other remedy to tide the difficulty excepting to resort to the worship of Surya Deva, especially by

'Agni Homa' or 'Paavakarchan' which is highly rewarding. Aruna Deva agreed to help Garuda to perform the Agni Homa by first setting up Agni, preferably in a Temple of Surya, at the 'Agneyakona' on a clean ground purified by cow-dung and invoke Dikpalakas by offering 'Ahuti' of Ghee in Agni, by saying OM BHURBHUVAH SWAHAA and reciting the following Mantras:

Aarakta deha rupaya raktakshaaya Mahatmaney, Dharaadhaaraaya Shaantaaya Sahasraaksha Shiraayacha/Adho mukhaaya Swetaaya Swaahaa/ (First Aahuti)

*Urthwa Mukhaaya Swaaha (Second Ahuti)* 

Hemavarnaaya Dehaaya Iraayata Gajaayacha, Sahsraaksha shareeraaya Purvadishayunmukhaayacha/ Devaadhipaaya chendraaya vihastaaya shubhaayacha,

Purvavadanaaya Swaaha (Third Ahuti)

Deeptaaya Vyakta dehaaya Jwalaamaalaa kulaayacha, Indraneelaabha dehaaya Sarvaarogya karaachacha/Yamaaya Dharmaraajaaya dakshinaashamukhaayacha,

Krishnaambara dharaaya Swaaha (Fourth Ahuti)

Neelajeemuta varnaaya Raktaambaradharaaya cha, Muktaaphala shareeraaya

Pingaakshaaya Mahaatmaney/ Shuklavastraaya Peetaaya Divyapaasha dharaayacha,

Paschimaabhi mukhaaya Swaha (Fifth Ahuti)

Krishna pingala nethraaya Vaayavyaabhimukhaayacha, Neeladhwajaaya Veeraaya tatha Chandraaya vedhasey/

Pavanaaya Swaaha (Sixth Ahuti)

Gadaahastaaya Suryaaya Chitrastrargbhusanaaya cha, Mahodayaya Shaantaaya Swaaha adhipatayey tatha/

Uttaraabhimukhaya Mahaadevapriyaya Swaahaa (Seventh Ahuti)

Swetaaya Swetavarnaaya Chitraakshaya Mahaatmaney, Shaantaaya Shaanta Rupaaya Pinaakavaradhaariney/

Eshaanaabhimukhaaya Swaaha (Eighth Ahuti)

The seven 'Ahutis' into Agni in favour of Dikpalakas viz. Agni, Kubera, Indra, Yama, Varuna, Vayu and Eshana having been offered, then Om Bhur Bhuvah Swaha is recited lakh times and Nava Grahas are appeased by the following Shanti Mantras as follows:

Shantyartha Sarvalokaanaam tatah Shantikamaacharet, Sindhuraasana Raktaabho Rakta Padmaabhilochanah/ Sahasrakirano Devah Sapaaswarathavaahanah, Gabhastimaali Bhagavaan Sarva Deva Namaskrutah/ Karothu tey Mahashaanti Graha peedaa nivaaraneem, Trichakra rathamaarudhaapaam saaramayam thu yah/Dashaaswavaahano Deva Atreyaschaamrutastavah, Sheetamshu ramritaatmaacha Kshayavriddhi sananvitah/

Somah Somyena Bhaavena Graha peedaam Vyapohatu/ Padmaraaganibho Bhaumo Madhu pingala lochanah, Angaarakognisadrusho Graha peedaamVyapohatu/

Pushparaaganibho dehena paripingalah, Peetamaalyaambaro Budhah peedaanm vyapohatu/ Tapta Gauri Samkaasha Sarva Shaastra vishaarada, Sarva Deva Guru

Vipro haarthavarnavaro Munih/Brihaspatiriti khyata Astra Shaastraparaschah, Shaantena chetasa sopi Parena susamaahitah/ Graha peedaam vinirjyatya karotu tava shaanikam, Suryaarchanaparo nityam prasaadaadbhaaskarasya tu/ Himakundendru varnaabho Daitya Daanava pujitah, Maheswarastato

dheemaan Mahaa Sauro Mahaamatih/ Suryarchana paro nityam Shukrah Shuklanibhastadaa, Neeti Shastra paro nityam graha peedaam vyapohatu / Naanaa rupa dharo vyakta Avijnaatagatischayah, notpattir jaayatey yasya nodayapeeditirapi/ Ekachulodwichulascha trisikhah panchasulakah, Sahasrashira rupastu Chandra Ketu Ravih Sthitah/ Suryaputrogni putrastu, Brahma Vishnu Shivaatmakah, Aneka shikhirah Ketuh sa tyeh peedaa Vyapohatu/ Etai Grahaa Mahaatmanah Suryaarchana param sadaa, Shaantam kurvantu tye Hrushthaah Sadaakaalam Hitekshanah/ (With blood-red eyes, thousands of rays, seated on a Seven Horse drawn chariot, with Sindura-like blood red shine, greeted by all Devatas and destroyer of Planet-made obstacles, may Surya Deva bestow Great Peace on us! With cool rays and pleasant vision, Ambrose-like Soul and Sage Atri's son, may Chandra Deva destroy our Planet-made hurdles to us; With Pingala coloured eyes akin to Agni, may Bhumi Putra Mangala / Bhoumaya give us freedom from all our difficulties on account of Planets; may Budha who wears Peeta or Yellow clothes and of peaceful demeanour and mind, do eliminate our Graha-created predicaments to us; May Deva Guru Brihaspati who is an extraordinary Teacher and Guide to all Devas, do remove all our setbacks and save us; May Sukracharva the Rakshasa Guru, the Great Source of Guidance and Trouble Shooting to all negative Shaktis -who is proverbially known for advices that do indeed provide short-term gains of life- bless us with long duration of peace and happiness; May Shaneswara, the son of Surya Deva, who assumes various forms with uncertain ways of movements forward and backward as also the Planets of Rahu and Ketu provide us security from our complications of life and do kindly shield us from all our impediments.)

Thereafter, sincere prayers are to be conducted to Tri - Murthis as follows: Padmaasanah Padmavarnah Padnapatranibhekshanah, Kamandaludharah Shreeman Deva Gandhrava pujitah/Chaturmokho Devapatih Suryarchanah sadaah, Suraajyeshtho Maha Tejaa Sarva loka Prajaapatih/ Brahma shabdena divyena Brahma Shantih karotumey// Peetambharo Deva Aatreyeedayitah sadaa, Shankha Chakra Gadaa paanih Shyamayarna chaturbhujah/ Yagna dehah kramo Deva Athrayeedayitah sada, Shanka Chakra Gadaa paanirmaadhavo Madhusudanah/ Suryabhaktaanvitho nityam vigatirvigata trayah, Suryadhyanaparo nityam Vishnuh Shaantim karotutey// Sashikundendu samkaashoVishrutaabhananairih, Chaturbhujey Mahaa Tejaah Pushpaarthakrita Shekharah/Chaturmukho Bhasmadharah Smashaana nilayah sadaa, Gotraarvishwa nilayastatha cha Kratu dushanah/ Varo Varenyo Varado Devadevo Maheswarah, Aditya deha sambhutah sa tey Shaantim karotu vai/ (Seated on Lotus, Lotus-coloured, Lotus-eyed, Kamandaludhari, worshipped by Devas and Gandharvas, the Supreme of Devas, Highly Lustrous, the Chief of all Lokas, engaged in his worship of Surya Deva, and engrossed in the Great Resonance of the Word of Brahma, kindly grant us Shanti (Peace) and provide shield to us! Wearing silken clothing and adorned by Shankhu, Chakra, Gadaa and Lotus on his four hands, Yajna Swarupa, Husband of Atrevi and engaged in the meditation of Surva Deva, hey Madhava, Madhusudana and Vishnu! Do confer us Shanti (Tranquility) to us always. Maheswara, You are decorated with Chandra Deva on forehead, Snakes embellished all over the body, the All-Pervasive, Resident of Burial Grounds, Destroyer of Daksha Yagna, the Ash-Sporting Bodied and Devadi Deva: we are beholden to you to endow us Peace and Well-being.)

Following the Prayers to Tri Murtis, the Procedure of 'Surya Aradhana' proceeds further with commendations to Matrikas, the most significant being, Brahmaani, Rudraani, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Indraani, Varaahi and Chamundi. May the Prayers grant 'Shanti'to those who pray to the Matrikas in particular and to humanity as a whole; the Prayers denote that Brahmaani possesses the splendour of Padmaraga jewel, carries 'Akshayamala' and 'Kamandalu', performing 'Aradhana' and giving Blessings to Surya; to Rudraani, also called as Maha Sweta who has the features akin to Moon, Snow and 'Kunda Pushpa', is seated on 'Vrishabha', holds a Trishula, with Four Hands and Three-Eyes, always immersed in the worship of Shankara; to Kaumari who has 'Sindura Varna', with mighty hands carrying a Shula, is fully ornamented, also called Shakti and seated on a Mayuri (Peacock); to Devi Vaishnavi donning 'Peetaambara vastras', with four hands clutching Chakra, Gada, Shankha and Padma (Red), worshipped by Devas and destroying 'Asuras' and bringing happiness to humanity by means of prosperity; to Indraani mounted on Iravata elephant carrying the Vajra weapon, worshipped by Siddhas and Gandharvas, with

thousand eyes spread all over her physique and is full grace of befitting the Oueen of Heavens; to Vaaraahi with the nose of a 'Varaha' (boar), seated on a Varaha, holding the same weapons as Vaishnavi, with such massive strength that could lift up the weight of Earth in one forceful pull; and to the frightful Chamundi who is described as Ardhakosha Kati kshaama Nirmaamsa snaayubandhanaa, Karaalavadana Ghora Khadga Ghantoduta Sati/ Kapalamalini Krura Khatvangavara dhaarini, Arakta Pinga nayana Gajacharmaavigunthitaa/ (Devi Chamundi who is Slender-waisted, with Kankaala Swarupa or fleshless, lean and terrifying Figure; Karaala Vadana or of awe-inspiring face, at once overwhelming, scaring and cruel; the holder of self- indicted body- parts as also of an alarming bell and sword; full of blood and blood shot eyes and wearer of Elephant Skin). Besides there are Matrikas viz. Aakaash Matrikas, Loka Matrikas, Bhuta Matrikas, Vriddhi-Shraddha Matrikas, Pitra-Matru Matrikas of three previous generations and so on. May all the Matrikas impart Shanti (Peace) and Tripti (Contentment)! Other Deities to be propitiated include: Vinayaka (Ekadamshtrakato Devo Gaja vaktro Mahabalh, Naga Yagnopaveetena Naanaabharana bhushitah/ Sarvaartha Sampaduddhaaro Ganaadhyaksho Varapradah), Kartikeya (Kartikeyascha Rudrasya changodbhutah Sucharitraha, Kartikeyo Mahateja Adityavaradarpitah/ Shantih Karothutev nityam Balam Soukhyam cha Tejasaa/), Nandeswara (Shula hastho Mahaapragno NandeeshoRavi bhaavitah, Shantim karothu tey Shanto Dharmaam chamatimuttamam), and Devi Sarasvati (Bhu lokey tu Bhuvarlokey nivasanti cha ye sadaa, Deva Devaah Shubhaayuktah Shantim Kurvantu tey Sadaa/ Janalokey Maharlokey Paralokey gataascha yeh, tey Sarva muditaa Devaah Shaantim kurvantu tey sadaa / Sarasvati Surya Bhakta Shaant da viddhaatumey/) as also other Deities. Further more, Shanti is sought from Twenty Nakshatras (viz. Krittika, Rohini, Mrigashira, Ardra, Punarvasu, Pushya and Aslesha on the Eastern side of Surya Deva; Magha, Purva / Uttara Phalguni, Hasta, Chitra, Swati and Vishakha on the Southern side of Surya Deva; Anuradha, Jyeshtha, Moola, Purvashadha /Uttaraashadha, Abhjit and Shravan on the Wetern side of Surya Deva and Dhanistha, Shatabhisha, Purva / Uttara Bhadra in the Northern side of Surya Deva); Twelve Rashis viz. Mesha, Simha, Dhanu on the Eastern side of Surya Deva; Vrisha, Kanya, Makara on Surya's Southern side; Mithuna, Tula and Kumbha on Surya's Western side and Karka, Vristchika and Meena on the Northern side of Surya Deva; Sapta Rishiganas viz. Kashyapa, Galva, Gargya, Vishwamitra, Daksha, Vasishtha, Markandeya, Kratu, Narada, Bhrigu, Atreya, Bharadwaja, Valmiki, Kaushika, Vaatsya, Shalya, Punarvasu and Shaalankaayana-all engrossed in 'Surya Aradhana'and their blessings are vital for the purpose of seeking relief from illnesses and other 'Adhi-Vyadhi' troubles. Bhagavan Surya's devotion is also predominant among Daitya rajas like Namuchi, Mahabali Shankha karna and Maha Nath as also Hayagreeva, Prahlada, Agnimukha, Kalanemi were all Surya Deva's devotees and so were Virochana, Turvasu, Hiranyaksha, Sulochana, Muchukunda, and Raivatak; their Souls are immortal and capable of giving blessings for the welfare of devotees even now. Naga Shanti is yet another area of devotion by which the protection of Ashta Nagas who are eternally engaged in Surya Aradhana is sought. Takshaka, Karkotaka, Shankhapaala, Vasuki, Padma, Ananta, and Nagendra are all illustrious examples of the devotion and safeguard those who too are sincere in the meditation of Surya Deva. Naga Shanti ensures that the entire race of Naga Ganas would never trouble the devotees. Similarly, Surya Aradhana provides guarantee from any difficulties from Sacred Rivers, Yakshas, Mountains, Seas, Rakshasas, Pretas, Piscachas, Apsaras, cruel animals and all the rest. 'Souri Shanti' assures shield against not only illness, but also 'Grahopaghata,' durbhiksha, blindness, deafness or any other disabilities; physical, psychological, mental shortcomings etc. Garuda whose wings were hacked in the past performed the 'Shanti Vidhana' as advised Aruna Deva and he got the refurbished wings back; whoever reads or carefully follows the Procedure of 'Souri Shanti'would attain mental peace, excellent health, Yagna Phal and 'Papa Mukti' or purging of even unforgiveable sins.

Formal Procedure of 'Arghya Pradaan' and 'Puja' to Aditya Deva

Bhishma of Mahabharata fame expressed his doubt to Veda Vyasa as to why all the Devatas greet Aditya Deva foremost even before praying to Tri Murtis! Is Aditya really so important? Veda Vyasa mildly admonished Bhishma for this rather ridiculous doubt since at the beginning of Srishti when the Universe was submerged in darkness; it was Aditya or the Very First Deity who was materialised to illuminate

although he was provided a worldy Appearance as the son of Aditi and Kashyapa Muni afterwards. Tri Murtis worship Aditya not to mention of others! Bhishma's equally naïve question was expressed to Veda Vyasa as to why Rahu Devata was able to devour Surya Deva if he was described as so significant in the order of Priority and Surya Grahanas (Solar Eclipses happen from time to time! Veda Vyas replied that nobody could indeed devour Surya Deva; it is believed that as Rahu was desirous of entering the Viman carrying Amrit, a few drops spilt out from the Viman which almost scraped Rahu and made him immortal. But the fact of the matter is that Rahu is right under the Surya Bimba and it is a visual fallacy that the crossing of the two Planets of Surya and Rahu at specified and predictable timings gives an impression that Surya gradually disappeared for a while; the process of the mutual crossing of the two Planets concealed the appearance of Surva causing the 'Grahan' or Eclipse! Thus there was no question of Surva Deva being controlled by any force in the Universe since He indeed is the Super Controller of the 'Charaachara Jagat' or the Moveable and Immobile Objects of the World responsible for Creation / Destruction; the concepts of Days, Nights, Dharma, Adharma etc. are all his patented ones; and basically He is the be-all and end-all of everything literally! Indeed those who observe devoted worship to Bhakara achieve instant access to Shakti, Courage, Siddhi, 'Auyshadhi', Dhana-Dhanya, Suvarna, Sowbhagya, Arogya, Kirti, Putra and Poutra and Mukti!

Then Bhishma requested Veda Vyasa for guidance about the formal Soura Dharma Snaana Vidhi. At the outset, one has to apply 'Mrittika' from a Water Source like Sea, River/Waterbody, apply the same on the human body with the Mantra: Apavitrah Pavitrovaa Sarvaavasthangatopiva Yassmaret Pundareeksham sabaahyaabhyantara sshuchih (In whatever condition of cleanliness or otherwise that we are, may we remember Pundarikaaksha and secure out worldy on inwardly Purity); then, one performs the formal 'Snaana', remembering the Greatness of Surya Deva and reciting HRAAM HREEM SAAH, followed by 'Achamana' or sipping spoonful of water; later on continue with Tarpanas to Rishis and Pitaras; proceed with 'Sandhya Vandana' and utter the Hraam Hreem Mantra or Kakolakaya Namaha water while offering to Surya Deva. This formal 'Arghya Praddan' is followed by Surya Puja. After performing 'Kara Nyaas' and 'Anga Nyas' with Surya Mantras, set up Surya Pratima (Idol) on a designated platform over an 'Ashta Kamala' format; decorate with flowers, Gandha or Sandal Paste, incense sticks, Lighting Stands, Fruits and other Naivedya material and such other pre-puja arrangements. There after position Sarvatomukhi Devi in the middle and arrange on the Ishaana Kona the Ashta Surya Shaktis viz. Deepta, Sukshma, Jaya, Bhadra, Vibhuti, Vimala, Vidyuta and Sarvamukhi. These Shaktis are propitiated first: Avaahayaami, Sthapayami Pujayami Mantras be recited in favour of Shaktis viz. Udvutvam Jaatavedasam and Agnim Dutam (Yajur Veda). Then Bhagavan Surya is propitiated by the two Yajur Veda Mantras viz. Aa Krishnena Rajasaam and Hamsah Shuchishadam. Then again Deepta Devi's puja is performed by the Mantra *Apaptey tarakam*; Sukshma Devi is worshipped by the Mantra: Adrusyamasya ketavom; Taranir Viswadarshatom is the Mantra for Jaya; Pratyangi Devaanaam is meant for Bhadra; Yena Paavaka Chakshaam in favour of Vibhuti Devi; Vidyameshim is the Puja Mantra in favour of Vimala Devi; similarly Amogha, Vidyuta and Sarvatomukhi are worshiped by appropriate Mantras. Then the important procedure of Puja of Surya Deva Pratima follows: with *Ishe thvom Mantra* Surya's Sirah Pujaami; Agnimeeleym Dakshina Hastaam Pujayaami; Agna Aa yaahim, Charanam Pujayaami; Aa Jighnam Pushpamala Samarpayaam; Yoge Yogem Pushanjali samarpayami; Samudra gaccham, Imam me Gangey and samudra Jeyshthaam angaraagaam snapayaami; then Snaanaas or Abhishekas with the following materials as per Mantras respectively:

Aa payaayaswam (Dugdha Snaan),Dadhi kraavrunno (Dadhi Snaan),Tejosi Shukram (Ghrita Snaan),Ya Aoushadhim (Aoushadhi snaan),Dwipaan (Udyurtan or lift up the Pratima), Maa Nastokey (Punah snaana or repeat Snaana),Vishno raraatam(Gandha jala Snaan), Swarna Dharmam (Paadya Mantra), Idam Vishnurvi Chakramey (Arghya pradaan), Vedosim (Yagnopaveeta),Brihaspatem (Vastra dwayam), Dhurasi Dhurvam (Dhupam along with Guggula), Sahasra sirshaa (Mastka or Head Puja), Sambhaavayaam (Eyes), Vishvata Chakshuh(Saraanagyaani Pujayaami) and finally Shreescha tey Lakshmischatey/ The above is the Puja Vidhaana of Bhagavan Surya.

Thus Veda Vyasa stated emphatically to Bhishma that there need not be no misguided conceptions about the Absolute Supremacy of Surya Deva, that there could never be a better Well- Wisher of the enire World, that his Aradhana would be a key to appease any negative forces to humanity including the fear of Kings, thieves, Grahas, Serpents, diseases, poverty, natural disasters and the like; instead he would be a pro-active Entity to rally round all positive Shaktis taking hundred firm steps forward to ensure human success against even a faltering step taken by a person in reverence to him. A devotee's 'Aradhana' in his favour, especially on Sankranti, during Grahanas, on Sundays and other auspicious days by observing austerities, charities, Agni Karyas, Prayers, Surya Namaskaras, or just a sincere greeting to his Bimba so readily visible on the sky on daily basis would assure quality life in 'Iham' (this World) and 'Param' (Other World).

# 'Agni Kunda Nirman' and 'Shodasopacharas' in 'Agni Puja'

Depending on the purposes for which 'Agni Karyas' are meant, or the number of 'Ahutis' or Offerings are decided, Agni Kundas are constructed accordingly and these are broadly of ten types viz. Chaukore, Vruth, Padma, Artha Chandra, Yoni Akrutika, Chandraakar, Panchakona, Saptakona, Ashtakona and Nava kona. Indeed, no 'homa' or Yagna is ever attempted without an Objective-either for a personal gain or for 'Jana Kalyan' or General Propitiousness or sometimes even negatively motivated! Also the number of 'Ahutis' (homas) might vary from modest numbers to hundred, thousand, Ayut, Lakh, Crore! Graha Shanti is the normal objective aiming at 'Shanti' and 'Pushti' or Peace and Well-Being; but when Yagnas are organised for General Objectives like Success in Battles, Eradication of Epidemics, Floods, Earth Quakes etc. the number of Ahutis is to be at least ten thousand or even a lakh.But if homas are performed for Evil Purposes, the results might initially be fruitful, but in the long run, they tend to be selfdestructive! Agni Kunda has to be blemishless without impurities like hair, bones and excreta; the entire bhumi must be dug up deep, watered and seeded to ensure quick sprouting of seedlings. The Kunda area must be purified with Omkara, sprinkled with kusha grass water of a holy river preferably; in fact there are eighteen prescribed 'Samskaras' of Purifying Exercises before installing Agni in the Fire-Pit. At the time of Installation of Agni in the Kund, the Agni Beeja Mantra viz. 'ram' as also Shiva Beeja Mantra 'Sham' be recited to infuse Shiva Shakti into Agni along with sprinkling of Kusha grass water. This process ensures the fulfilment of the targetted objective of the Ahutis. Having installed Agni in the Kund, worship of Devi Bhagavati and Bhagavan is to be performed with 'Arghya', 'Paadya' and 'Achamaneeya'. The relevant Mantra to propitiate Agni is *Pithru Pingala daha daha pacha pacha* Sarvajnaajnaapaya swaaha/ Agni Deva is stated to utilise three of his 'Jihvas' (tongues) viz. Hiranya, Kankaa and Krishna (The Sapta Jihvas are stated to be Viswa Murti, Sphulingini, Dhumrayarna, Manojava, Lohitasya, Karaalaasya and Kaali, as described elsewhere). The Samidha material used for different kinds of Homas vary too; for example, in Ajyahoma Tri Madhu (Milk, Sugar and Honey) is used, likewise, Anna and Payasa, Gold, Padmaraga, Bilwa patras, Tilas (in Pitru homa), Candana, Agaru, Camphor, Gandha etc. are used in different types of Yagnas such as Naitthia Karma, Ikshu homa, Deva Homa, Padma homa etc. Full care must be taken while the specified material is utilised as other wise adverse effects might have to be faced!

Before taking up Agni Puja with Shodasopacharas, a devotee should invoke the Moola Devatha Trinetra Ishwara by offering red flowers. Then welcome Kamadeva, Indra, Varaaha and Kartikeya at the four entry points. The Sixteen Services to Agni Deva should be provided as follows: <u>Aasana Mantra:</u> Twamaadih Sarva bhutaanaam Samsaara -arnava taarakah Paramajyoti rupastvamaasanam saphalee kuru (Agni Deva! You are the uplifter and saviour of the humanity from the deep Oceans of 'Samsara' and also the 'Parama Jyoti'; do accept a Seat before we initiate our sincere Puja); <u>Prarthana Mantra:</u> Vaiswanara Namastestu Namastey Havyavaahana, Swaagatam tey Surashreshtha Shaantim kuru namostutey/ (Vaiswanara Deva! Havyavahana! We are beholden on your arrival and welcome sincerely; kindly grant

us Peace); Padya Mantra: Namastey Bhagavan Deva Aaponarayanatmaka, Sarvaloka hitaarthaya Padyam cha prati –gruhnataam/ (Jala Swarupa Narayana! Accept water for washing your feet and bless us) <u>Arghya Mantra:</u> Narayana Paramdhaama Jyoti Rupa Sanatana, Gruhaanaarghya mayaa dattam Viswarupa Namostutey (Vishwa Rupa! Jyoti Rupa! Sanatana Deva! Paramdhaama! Narayana! My salutations to you; Please accept this 'Arghyam' being offered by me reverentially); Achamaneeya Mantra: Jagadaaditya rupena Prakaashayati yah sadaa, Tasmai Prakaasha Rupaaya Namastey Jaatavedasey/ (As you are resplendent in the Form of Aditya Rupa, Jata Veda, Prakasha Swarupa and Vaisvaanara, do oblige us by accepting this Achamaneeya water!); Snaaneeya Mantra: Dhananjaya Namasteystu Sarva Paapapranaashana, Snaaneeyam tey mayaadatam Sarva kaamaartha siddhaye/ (My greetings to You Janaardana! Kindly accept this holy water to bathe you in a formal manner and grant us accomplishment of various 'Siddhis' or Spiritual Achievement); Anga prokshana evam Vastra dhaarana Mantra: Hutaashana Mahaa baaho Deva Deva Sanaatana, Sharanam tey pragacchhaami dehi mey paramam padam/ (Devadeva! Sanaatana! Hutaashana! Mahabaaho! I am in your shelter. Kindly acknowledge this 'Anga Prokshana' or Sprinkling of water over Your Body Parts and also clothing); Alankara Mantra: Jyotishaam Jyoti Rupastyamanaadi nidhanaatchyuta, mayaadatthamalankaaram kuru Namostutey! (Agni Deva! You are such as would never step down from your high pedestal; You have neither begining nor end; You are the Parama Jyoti Rupa; my reverences to You; kindly accept these ornaments and 'Alamkaras' or beautifiers and oblige); Gandha Mantra: Deva Deva mudamyaanti yasya Samyak samaagamaat, Sarva doshopashaantyartha Gandheyam pratigruhyataam/ (Deva! All the Deities do calm down in Your august Presence; do accept this Sandal paste as a symbol of Your kind acceptance); Pushpa Mantra: Vishnustwamhi Brahmaa cha Jyotishaam Gatirishwara, GruhaanaPushpam Devesha Saanulepam Jagad bhavet/ (Devesha, You are Brahma, Vihnu and the route to Jyotisha and Eshwara; do accept these flowers since they would enhance the fragrance of the whole World); Dhupa Mantra: Devataanaam Pitrunaamcha Sukhamekam Sanaatanam, Dhupeyam Deva Devesha gruhnataam mey Dhanamjaya (Deva Devesha Dhanamjaya! You are the unique provider of happiness to Devatas and Pitras; please allow this 'Dhupa' to bring this aroma all over); <u>Deepa Mantra:</u> Twamekah Sarva Bhuteshu Sthavareshu Chareshu cha, Paramatmaa Paraakaarah Pradeepah pratigruhnataam/ (Paramaatma who is stretched all over among the Beings in the Universe! Your Profile is indeed outstanding and stupendous; please increase the splendour manifold by accepting this token Light and endowing us with happiness); Naivedya Mantra: Namostu Yagnapataye Prabavey Jaatavedasey, Sarvaloka hitaarthaaya Naivedyam pratiguhnataam/ (Yagnapati Jaataveda! You are the Almighty and the Supreme Source of Propitiousness; This Naivedya or offering of 'Anna Prashad'is being proffered to You for the contenment of the whole Universe); besides these there are more Services offered to Agni Deva such as Mantra Pushpam, Pradakhisna, Mangala Arati, Veda Parayana and Swasti. Purnahuti denotes the successful conclusion of any Agni Karya, without which the holy task remains inconclusive and fruitless. Recital of relevant Mantras at the Purnahuti normally covers 'Sapta tey'--, 'Dehi mey'--, 'Purnaa darvi'--, 'Punantum' etc. Purnahuti needs to be performed while standing, but never seated. Also, depending on the type of the Yagna, the relevant Mantras describing the concerned Rishis, Chanda and Devatas invoked would be essential. During the Japa-sessions, count of the necessary number of the Mantras is crucial too. The number of Ritvijas is also as prescribed. The purpose for which the Yagnas are performed should be fulfilled indeed, if executed as prescribed.

# Over-view of Raja Vamshas of Satya, Treta and Dwapara Yugas

After covering the Brahma Parva and Madhyama Parva of the Bhavishyad Purana, Sage Suta addressed the Congregation of Munis headed by Shaunaka Muni at Naimisharanya as to the outlines of 'Pratisarga Parva'and provided an Over-view of the Kings of Raja Vamshas through the preceding Yugas viz. the Satya, Treta Yuga and Dwapara Yugas. During the second half of Brahma's age of his hundred years, that is the third day of his fifty first Year, Vaiwaswa Manu was born in the Sweta Viraha Kalpa and the latter performed serious Tapasya; from his sneeze was born King Ikshvaku who was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. In the Royal lineage of Ikshvaku were born Vivikshu-Ripunjaya-Kakuthsu-Prithu-Adri-Bhadraaswya-Yavanaashva-Shraavasta-Kuvalashvya-Dhrudhashva-Nikumbhak-Sankatashvya-Prasenajit-

Ravanaswya-Mandhaata-Purukutsa-Tridashyya-Anaranya-Prushadashyya-Vasuman-Tridhanya-Trayyaruni-Trishanku-Harischandra-Rohita-Haaritha-Chanchubhup-Vijaya and Ruk till the Third 'Charana'. There after the lineage continued till King Ruru and his son Sagara; the lineage stopped due to the curse of Kapila Muni and the Sagara sons were burnt. From the second queen was born Asamanjasa-Anshuman-Dilip and Bhagiratha who became universally popular as he brought Ganga / Bhagirathi from Heavens to secure salvation to the Sagara Putras. The lineage continued further from Bhagirath to Shrutasena-Naabhhaga-Ambarisha-Sindhudeepa and so on till King Sudarshan who married the daughter of Kashi Raja and became the unconquered Monarch of Bharata Khanda. Devi Kaali appeared in a dream and asked the King to leave for Himalayas along with his wife and family and Sages headed by Vasishtha, since very soon there would be a 'Pralaya' and the Akhanda Bharata would disintegrate into pieces and save a few islands of Earth of varying sizes, the rest of the 'Bhubhaag' would be submerged under water! After the Pralay in Treta Yuga, King Sudarshan returned from Himalaya and revived Ayodhya Puri and thanks to the Divinely Cow Nandini and the Holy Sages. King Sudarshan ruled for thousands of years and in course of Time, his son King Dilip initiated a new generation and King Raghu heralded the Surya Vamsha or the Raghu Vamsha, King Raghu's grandson Dasharatha had the unique privilege of securing Lord Shri Rama, the 'Avatar' of Bhagavan Vishnu. Surya Vamsa dominated from Shri Ram's son Kusha downward for hundreds of generations thereafter and the Kings were by and large virtuous, engaged in Yagnas and Agni Karyas, charities and the preservation of Dharma. In the Third Segment of Treta Yuga, seeds were sown when Chandra Vamsa was initiated with the curse by Indra to send Chandra Deva to Bhuloka and the latter made Tirtha Raj Prayaga and performed relentless Tapasya and hundred Yagnas till Devi Bhagavati was pleased and sent Chandra back to Swargaloka. Chandra's son Budha married Devi Ila and King Pururava was born, signifying the beginning of the Chandra Vamsa. Pururava's son Ayu begot Nahusha who attained Indratva no doubt as Indra went into exile due to his Brahma hatya sin for killing Vritrasura; but Maharshi Durvasa cursed Nahusha to become an 'Ajagara' or a huge snake. Nahusha's son was Yayati and of the five sons of Yayati, three became the Rules of *Mlecchaas* and the other two were *Yadu and Kuru*. In the long lineage of Yadu and his son Kroshthi, was Maya Vidya who founded Pratishthanapura (Jhansi). In the long chain of Kings of Chandra Vamsa was Samvaran who pleased Surya Deva with his Tapasya and the Deva gave the hand of his daughter Tapati to Samvaran. As Pralaya terminated Treta Yuga, Surya Deva ordered that Samvaran and Tapati as also Maharshi Vasishtha and samples of Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaishya be saved. With the advent of Dwapara Yuga, Pratishthanapura (Jhansi) was revived with Samvaran as the King, Budha Vamsheeya King Prasena and later on Yadu Vamsheeya King Surasena ruled Mathura, and Mleccha Vamsheeya Smashrupala or Shishupala ruled Marudesha (Arab, Iran and Iraq). King Samvaran's long line of descendants climaxed with King Dushyanta and his Queen Shakuntala and their son Bharata whose lineage too lasted for thousands of years all over Bharat. Meanwhile, as per the order of Indra Apsara Ghritachi was sent to Earth and married Shakrahotra and their son was named Hasti. The latter rode Iravata with children and built a Nagar of large proportions which was named subsequently as Hastinapura. Again under instructions of Indra during the 'Third Charana' of Dwapara Yuga, another Apsara called Sukeshi was married to King Kuru who constructed Kurukshetra. In the lineage of King Kuru was born Shantanu whose son was Vichitraveerya. Pandu was the son of Vichitra veerya and Yudhishtar was the son of Pandu. As a repercussion of a mighty battle won by Daityas over Devas in the Universe, several Daityas who survived re-appeared in the Kingdom of Shantanu and the evil-minded Prince of Kuru Vamsha, Duryodhana became the rallying point of the Daityas, abetted by the weak and blind King Dhritarashtra. As Bhu Devi became increasingly intolerant of the predominance of wickedness, she approached Bhagavan Vishnu who assumed an Avatar (Incarnation) as Shri Krishna and played an outstanding role in destroying the Evil forces at the climactic Great Battle of Maha Bharata at Kurukshetra. Pursuant the Battle, there was purge of the Evil and King Parikshith became the Emperor, followed by Janamejaya and Shataanika. The lineage though long was of weak Kings till Pradyot performed Mleccha Yagna. The Yagna was no doubt successful and earned the name of 'Mleccha hanta'. In fact, Kali himself along with his wife prayed to Bhagavan Narayana and sobbed that Pradyot made this Yagna and suspended our very existence. Bhagavan replied that through the earlier Yugas, Kali was

ignored but surely the next Yuga would display the full blast and fury of Kali and as the time would roll on his upswing acts would assume ever greater intensity; Narayana assured Kali that a man named 'Aadam' and a woman called 'Havyavati' would promote the cause of Mlecchas at ever growing speed. As prophesied, gradually the strength of Mlecchas increased and that of 'Aryavarta' declined. At the fag end of Dwapara Yuga, the last King of Mlecchas named 'Nyuh'who was a devotee of Bhagavan Vishnu was advised to build a huge ship (Nyoha's Ark) to save a few. Meanwhile, there was continuous rain for forty days and all the Oceans overflowed together and Prithvi got sunk; but for a survivors who boarded the ship like Brahmavadi Muniganasa, representatives of the King Nyuh and specimens of fauna and flora. Only the 'Seeshina' named Mount of Himalayas lasted the Pralaya where the survivors stayed and slowly increased their poulation after the Great Destruction got spread out in fast stages.

# The advent of Kali Yuga and the Ongoing Phases - Arrival of Gautama Buddha

In the initial years of Kali Yuga, the survivor Mlecchas gradually adopted responses to the new environs, new ways of life and even new language styles. For instance, earlier languages got corrupted and new expressions emerged; Vraja Bhasha, Prakruti, Sanskrit etc. got adapted from 'Gurundika' (English) which was also different from Mleccha Bhasha/ Yavani and new corruptions of various languages both in spoken and written scripts got adapted. For instance, Pitru (Father) became 'Paitar'; Bhatru became Bathar or Brother; Ahuti became Aaju; Ravivar as Sunday; Jaanu became Jain, Raviwar as Sunday; Phalguni as February and Shasthi as Sixty! Simultaneously, Places of Worship in Bharat like Ayodhya, Mathura, Kashi etc. lost their purity and Shabars, Bhills and robbers dominated. At the same time however, even after the first thousand years of Kali Yuga, quite a few pockets of Virtue, though not in the erstwhile pristine form, survived and semblances of Varashrama and devotion to Almighty did not get completely extinct yet. It is believed that a few Devatas continued to travel to 'Brahmaavarta' from Swarga loka that is where Ganga flowed. An illustrious Muni by name Kashyapa begot ten sons viz.Dikshit, Upadhyaya, Pathak, Shukla, Mishra, Agnihotri, Dwivedi, Trivedi, Pandya and Chaturvedi. Kashyapa prayed to Devi Sarasvati that Evil Forces had come to control the World and that she being the 'Loka Mata' must come to immediate rescue; in response Devi provided enlightenment to the Muni; he established a Kingdom, named after his son King Magadha apparently to resist the Evil Forces. Magadha Kingdom was segregated from Arya desha and was surrounded by Kalinga (Orissa) in Agneya or South East, Avanti in South, Aanart (Gujarat) in Nirruti or South West, Sindhu to the West, Kaikadesha in Vayavya or North West, Madra Desha in North and Kulinda in Ishaanya or North East. In the lineage of King Magadha was the famed Ajata Shatru.

The contemporary times of the Magadha Kings witnessed the emergence of Buddha Dharma set up by Goutama Buddha at Kapilavastu. The emphasis of Buddhism was on Truth, Virtue and Non-Violence as against the traditional Vedic Dharma and the consequential Rituals. Goutama's philosophy created high waves and eventually secured wide spread acceptance especially supported by Kings and large sections of common persons. It was in this lineage of Kings were Sakya Muni-Shuddhodana-Sakyha Singha-Buddhi Simha-Chandra Gupta. The last of the lineage mentioned set up Maurya Vamsa, was married to the daughter of King Sulub or Selukas of Parsi desha and followed Bouddha Dharma; his son was Bimbisara and the latter's son was the memorable Ashoka. It was after Ashoka's regime that a Brahmana of Kanyakubjadesha performed a powerful Brahmahotra Yagna on Abu Mountain and there were four Kshatriyas who were materialised from the Yagna Kunda viz. Pramar (Paramar) who was a Sama Vedi, Chapahani (Chauhan) who was a Krishna Yajurvedi, Trivedi (Gaharvar) a Shukla Yajurvedi and Pariharak who was an Atharva Vedi. These Kshatriyas defeated the descendants of Ashoka, reviving the Veda-based Administration and diminished the dominance of Buddhists; Parihar established his Kingdom at Baghel khanda (Bundelkhand) with Kalanjara as its Capital; Chapahani or Chauhan occupied Rajaputana Kshetra (Delhi Nagar) and constructed Ajmer which represented 'Chaturvarnas' or Four Castes and Shukla occupied Aanarta Desha (Gujarat) and set up Dwaraka as his Capital. Stated to be the son of Ujjain's King Paramaditya of Paramar Dynasity, Vikramaditya who was a legendary Emperor who heralded 'Vikrama Samvat' (Vikrama Era) signifying his victory over Rudrasimha of the present Gujarat

and virtual destruction of the Saka Kshatraka Dynasity. He maintained the Nine Gems in his Court (*Vikramaasya asthaney Navaratnaani Dhanvantarey Kshapanakomarasinha Shanku Vetalabhatta Ghatakarpa Kalidasah Khyato Vraraha Mihiro Nrupathessabhayam Ratnaani vai Vararuchi mava Vikramaasya*) viz. Dhanvantari, Kshapanaka, Amarasinha, Shankhu, Vetala Bhaata, Ghatakarpa, Kalidasa, Varahamihira and Vararuchi. [He was stated to have ruled most of Asia from the Eastern Arabia to China and North Korea and from Mongolia to Indonesia, subjugating and relieving the Earth of Barbarians like Shakas, Mlecchaas, Yavanas, Tursharas, Parasikas (Persians) and Hunas. That was indeed the Golden Era of Bharat!

'Satyanarayana Vrata' and Six 'Kathas' (Episodes) of His Glories

Satyavratam Satyaparam Trisatyam Satyasya yonim nihitam cha Satey, Satyasya Satyamrita Satyanetram Satyaatmikam twaam Sharanam prapannah/Antarbhavenanta bhavantamevahyatatya janto mrigayanti santah, Asantama pya ntyahimantarena Santam gunamtam kimu yanti santah/ (The objective of accomplishing Sacchinaananda Paramaatma is to perform Satya Narayana Vratam- which is the vehicle full of Truth, always absorptive of Truth, True-visioned and Truth-Souled; I seek refuge in Swami Satyanarayana! The fact that all human beings seek 'Satya Tatva' or the Consciousness of Truth is indeed transparent and patent; it is also clear that selfless dedication to Satya Narayana is the ultimate goal!)Vyasa Deva narrated that Sage Shounaka requested Sutha Maha Muni on behalf of a congregation of Munis at Naimisharanya as to which would be the most effective and none-too-complicated method of Realisation of Paramatma! Maha Muni Suta instanly took the name of Satyanarayana and prayed to him as follows: Navaambhojanetram Ramakelipaatram Chaturbaahu chaameekaram chaarugaatram/ Jagatraana hetum ripow dhumraketum sadaa Satyanaraayanam stoumi Devam (I pray to Bhagavan Satyanarayana who has the enchanting eyes of delicate and fully opened Lotus, who is deservingly playful with Bhagavati Lakshmi, who possesses four shapely arms and stunningly shimmering Physique of gold and the Unique Source of Might to shield the Universe against Evil Forces!) Shri Ramam Saha Lakshmanam Sakarunam Seetaanvitam Satvikam, Vaidehimukhapadma lubdha mathupam Poulasya samhaarakam/ Vandey Vandya padaambujam Suravaram Bhaktaanukampaakaram, Shatrughnena Hanumantaacha Bharatena sevitam Raghavam ( I salute with reverence Bhagavan Shri Rama who is the epitome of benevolence, whose lotus-like feet are always worshipped, who readily responds to devotees with mercy, who retains Lakshmana with Him and is accompanied by Devi Sita while benignly glancing at her lotus-like graceful face; who is worshipped by Shatrughna, Hanuman and Bharata; who is the destroyer of Poulastya, and the Symbol of Truth and Virtue as the Supreme of Devas). Sutha Maha Muni then proceeded to narrate the First Katha (Episode) of Devarshi Narada who having gone around the World in his periodic visits came down to Martya Loka (Bhu Loka) and felt sad that human beings were suffering a lot without any relief from their miseries; he approached Vishnu Deva and prayed for a solution to offer to the human beings who were constant targets of diseases, poverty, natural calamities and discontentment. Lord Vishnu replied instantly that the easiest and effective means of providing reprieve from human sufferings would be the sincere performance of Satyanarayana Vrata; genuine and heartfelt observance of this Vrata would indeed effect in endowing with wealth to the unfortunate, excellent children, Kingdoms to those who lost their positions, good quality vision to the blind, freedom to those who were imprisoned, courage to the frightened and fulfillment of one's wants long cherished. The brief procedure of executing the Vrata is to make a firm resolve to do so without hindrances, keep a Tulasi Manjari in hands and pray to Shrihari as follows: Narayanam saandraghanaava daantam, Chaturbhujam peetamahaarvaasasam/ Prasanna vaktram Navakanja lochanam, Sanandanaadyaika rupa sevitam bhaje/ Karomi the Vratam Deva saayamkaaley twadarchanam, Shrutva Gaadhaam twadeeyam hi prasaadam tey bhajaamyaham/ (Bhagavan Narayana! You possess dark-cloud complexion, grand four arms, tranquil appearance, attractive eyes like fresh lotus, and worshipped by Sanaka Sanandana and other well-known Sages; I am always dedicated in my sincere devotion to You and have determined to perform puja by this evening and then only secure your 'Prasad' (blessings). Thereafter, commence the formal worship with five 'Kalashas' and instal Satyanarayana 'Pratima' in gold or silver or as per one's convenience. The Puja would be according to 'Purusha Sukta Mantra vidhana' by way of the precsribed 'Shodasopacharas' viz.'Avaahayami' (Invocation), 'Suvarna Simha Samarpana (improvising a Golden chair), 'Padyam' (washing the Deity's feet), 'Arghyam' (providing water to clean His hands), 'Aachamaneeyam' (offering water for sipping), 'Suddhodaka Snaana' (bathing the Deity's Pratima with appropriate Mantra), 'Vastra Yugmam' (offering double clothing), 'Yagnopaveetam' (Providing the Sacred Thread), 'Gandham' (offering Sandal Paste), then 'Puja' by reciting the Names of Satyanarayana /Vishnu, either sixteen or hundred sixteen or thousand hundred sixteen, along with flowers or Tulasi leaves only by men and 'Akshatas' or rice grains mixed with turmeric powder, 'Dhupam' (Incense material), 'Deepam' or lighting of oil-soaked cotton vicks, 'Puspham' or a variety of fragrant flowers; 'Naivedyam' or a full meal as Prasada comprising 'Bhakshya' or Sweets and Savouries, 'Bhojya' or cereals and preparations, 'lehya' or items of tongue-licking type, 'Choshya' or items taken in as liquids and 'Paneeya' or drinks; 'Tambula' or betel leaves and betel nuts', 'Neerajanam' or camphor lighting shown to Deity with the accompanying sounds of bells, 'Matra Pupshpam' / Vedic Chanting, 'Pradakshina' or circumambulation, 'Saashtanga Namaskara' or reverential prostration along with 'Aparaadha Mantra' to say that the Puja so performed was incomplete with accepted mistakes and should be forgiven. The worship should climax with 'Chatram' or symbolic holding of umbrella, 'Chamaram' or symbolic fanning to the Deity, 'Nrittyam' or devotional ecstasy displayed in dance form, 'Geetam' or devotional singing in praise of Satyanarayana, 'Andolika' or symbolic swinging of Deity in a decorated swing; 'Ashwaarohana' and 'Gajaarohana' or symbolic rides of the Lord on horses and elephants and all other possible 'Upacharas' or Devotional Services devoid of capacity, devotion, 'Mantram' or requisite formallity and attention! At the End, the following Mantra be recited while performing 'Homa' or offering to Agnihotra atlest hundred and eight times, viz. Namo Bhagavatey nityam Satyadevaaya dheemahi, Chatuh Pradaatha daatrey cha Namastubhyam Namo namah (My humble salutations to You Satyanarayana to whom we meditate always; You are the Master and Donor of the Four Kinds of 'Purusha Arthaas' viz. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha'; do grant us the same to us too). By so saying, Devarshi Narada left for Satya loka with the resolve of performing Satya Narayana 'Puja' as soon as Suta Maha Muni then narrated Second Katha (Episode) signifying the 'Mahatmya' of Bhagavan Satyanarayana to the Sages who convened at Naimisharanya: In the city of Kashi, there was a pious, learned and poor Brahmana, called Shatananda with his wife and children, eking his livelihood by 'Yayavaara' or begging for rice from door to door. During his rounds of begging, an old Brahmana approached Shatananda and advised that instead of begging to look after his family, he should certainly perform the formal worship of Bhagavan Satyanarayana who was like a boat in the deep waters of 'Samsara'. By so saying the old Brahmana disappeared and there was a stunning and dazzling figure of Narayana Himself standing before Shatananda with Shankha, Chakra, Gada and Saranga! The Brahmana got utterly shocked, instantly prostrated and prayed to Bhagavan as follows: Pranaami Jagannatham Jagat kaaranakaaranam, Anaatha naatham Shivadam Sharanyamanagham Shichim/ Avyaktam yaktaam Yaatam taapatraya vimochanam, Namah Satyanarayanasya katrainamah Shuddha satvaaya vishvasya bhatrai, Karaala KaalaayaVishvasya hantrai namastey Jaganmangalaatma murtey/ Dhanyosmadya kruti Dhanyo bhavedya saphalomama, vangamanogocharo yastwam mama pratyaksha-maagatah/ Drishtim kim varnayaamyaho na jaaney kasya vaa phalam, kriyaaheenasya mandasya dehoyam phalavan kritah/ ( Bhagavan Satyanarayana! You are the Cause and the Cause-Maker of the Universe, the Saviour of the Hapless, the Provider of Propitiousness, the Last Resort of Shelter and Protection, the Epitome of Virtue, the Form of Purity and Auspiciousness, the Invisible yet Visible, the destroyer of the 'Tapatrayas' of Adhi Bhautika, Adhi Daivika and Adhyatmika Nature; the Designer and the Design of the Universe as well as its final Demolisher; the Unique Provider of the Best of the World; today I am the most contented as my life's unknown and impossible desire has been achieved and what is more that I have heard Your Voice; could there be a bigger miracle that very effortlessly this dream has really come true!) When asked by Shatananda as to the procedure of performing the Vrata, Bhagavan replied that there was no need for ample money to perform it, but it would involve endless devotion and sincerity of purpose. What ever daily earnings that might be secured on account of pleading for food that day would be sufficient, with which to fetch the Puja material required for sugar, milk, gandha, flowers, fruits, dhup / deepa, betel leaves and coconuts and after Puja, the Prashad be shared with Brahmanas,

family members, neighbours, relatives and others irrespective of caste, creed and social status. Bhagavan further asked that the Vrata be popularised along with the details of the Procedure and the Mantras to be utilised for it among Kings, Merchants and all the Commoners so that they too would get the advantage. By so saying, the Lord disappeared and on the following day, Shatananda took a resolve to perform the Vrata to the best of his ability and on receiving double the amount than his daily earnings, secured the material as required and managed the Vrata very well. He strained every breath of his to popularise the purpose, procedure and reward of observing the Vrata and eversince then, Satyanarayana Vrata became popular all over since quick rewards started flowing in; thus there emerged universal acceptance and popularity of the most famous Satyanarayana Vrata. On his part, Shatananda attained recognition and social esteem not only in Kashi but all over wherever Hindu Faith prevailed and after his end his Soul got absorbed into Bhagavan.

Third Katha related to the King of Badari Khanda named Chandrachuda at Manipurak Nagara who was highly virtuous, soft spoken and popular among his Subjects. He was a devout 'Vishnu Bhakta'. But, the Mlecchas of Vindhya Desha attacked Chandrachuda who having been defeated in a fierce battle had to flee into forests and strayed into Kashi Nagara and discovered that the entire population was highly contented and enjoyed quality life deviod of diseases, untimely deaths, robberies and natural calamities. He then came to realise that the key to the all round happiness of Kasi was entirely due to the constant observance of Satya Narayana Vrata and that the Originator of this Sacred Vrata was a Brahmana called Sadananda (Shatanand) who had the Vision of Bhagavan Vishnu Himself. Chandrachuda approached Sadananda and secured his 'Upadesha' of the Format, Content, Method and the instant Fruit of the Vrata and immediately performed the Vrata sincerely. Bhagavan Satya Narayana appeared before the King and presented a powerful Sword to use against the Mlecchaas who had forcefully occupied his throne and Kingdom. The King thanked Sadananda profusely and having reassembled his army devastated six thousand Mlecchhas, retrieved his Kingdom and the lost prestige, thanks to the observance of Satya Narayan Vrata. Back to his throne, King Chandrachuda prevailed on all his Subjects to perform Satya Narayana Vrata as often as possible and before all Auspicious Tasks like Weddings, Birth days and Nama Karana functions were initiated and most definitely on every Purnima day of each month. The King ruled his Kingdom with great veneration for Satya Deva for sixty long years having built a new Capital and ultimately reached Vishnu loka leaving behind a great heritage of peace, prosperity and lasting fame. The Fourth Episode was of Bhills/ Nishadas (Wood cutters) who happened to visit Kashi Nagar to sell their wood, got lost in the City and approached the Hermitage of Vishnu Das (Shatananda) as they felt thirsty. They were impressed with an on-going worship in the Hermitage, even as Vishnu Das not only quenched their thirst but also encouraged witnessing the proceedings of Satya Narayana Vrata. The Nishads took the Prasad at the conclusion of the Vrata with humility and high devotion and tried to take leave of Vishnu Das. The latter enquired whether they would also like to perform the Vrata and the Nishads exclaimed that it was not possible for them to do so; they said that performance of a Puja was not only expensive but they were completely illiterate and could never observe this kind of a complicated Puja in their life time ever! Satyanarayana Vrata is neither expensive nor complicated; what is significant is the devotion and commitment rather than riches nor knowledge. This was made amply clear to the Bhills; he said that Lord Krishna while visiting Hastinapura did not accept the Chief Guest Status of Duryodhana but stayed in the humble cottage of Vidura instead! Krishna again took away the 'tandulakanas' (rice-fries) from Sudama (Kuchela) with affection and bestowed such wealth that was not in the reach of Kings even; similarly He was so close to the illiterate and innocent Gopas and Gopis but kept aloof from even Great Sages! Having said this, Vishnu Das prescribed a simple and straight-forward format of observing the Vrata and enabled the Bhills to perform the worship in an effortless and easy way which even unintelligent children could follow provided however their hearts were transparent and Bhakti was paramount. The community of Bhills was thus prompted and encouraged by Vishnu Das, whereby they started earning by the sale of wood and gained profits and confidence in course of time. Eventually, their devotion became intense and their life-style changed so much that took firm steps towards attainment Vishnu Loka! The Fifth Episode centered on a Vaisya called Sadhu and his son-in-law. The famous King Chandrachuda of Manipuraka

Nagar referred to in the Third Episode above was once performing Satya Narayana Puja along with a large number of followers, when a wealthy Vanika from Ratnapur landed by his ship filled up with considerable riches. When the highly decorated Puja Mandap, Sadhu enquired as to what was going on at that busy Place, he was told that Satyanarayana Vrat was being performed under the auspices of Chandrachuda Maharaj along with several other devotees. Sadhu was also interested as he had no offspring and thus joined the group and prayed to Satya Narayana to bless him with a child. The Sabhapati was conveyed of the wish of the Vanika and as though Bhagavan Himself approved the wish, the desire was approved but on the condition that soon after securing a child he should perform the Vrata in a manner that would become of the rich Vanika. In course of time, Sadhu's wife conceived and a female child was born. The Name-Giving Function was celebrated with great pomp and show of the wealthy Vanika and the baby was named Kalavati after consultations of her 'Kundalini'. The wife of Vanika reminded of Sadhu's promise that now that they were blessed with a child, the Vanika should recall the promise made by him to perform Satya Narayana Vrata. He kept on delaying the fulfillment the promise somehow. Meanwhile, Kalavati was growing into a fine girl and Vanika commenced searching for a suitable bridegroom; Ashta varsha bhaved Gauri Nava varsha cha Rohini, Dasa varsha bhavet Kanya tathah proudhaa Rajaswala (An eight year old girl is known as Gauri and a Nine Year old is Rohini, a ten year old is said to be a Kanya and Proudha having come of age suitable for marriage!). Thus Vanika Sadhu planned for Kalavati's wedding first rather than redeeming the promise made to Satya Narayana Deva. A suitable son-in-law named Sankhapati who was very rich too was selected as Kalavati's husband. After the wedding, Sadhu kept his son-in-law in his own house as his business partner and the joint business flourished well. On the reminder of Sadhu's wife about the promise to perform Satya Narayana Vrata, Sadhu postponed again till his daughter's securing a child. A few days later, Sadhu accompanied by his son-in-law undertook a business tour beyond River Narmada. They stayed out for long and the promise to perform the Vrata was almost forgotten. As though Bhagavan got angry about the callousness of Sadhu in redeeming his promise about the Vrata, the two-some of in-laws faced considerable difficulties in the business and on their return journey back home stayed at a Guest house overnight and at that very night there was a theft in the King's Palace and both Sadhu and son-inlaw got entangled as they were strangers there and got imprisoned; morever, there was expensive pearlnecklace found on the body of the son-in-law of Sadhu. While the two were languishing in the prison awaiting judgment for robbery, there was a theft in Sadhu's house at his native place and both Kalavati and daughter suddenly turned as paupers and were some how eking their existence. In the Sixth Katha, Suta Maha Muni explained that Bhagavan Vishnu could utilise the means of 'Tapatrayas'viz. Adhyatmika, Adhi Daivika and Adhi-Bhoutika forms to punish a human being when a person would go astray from 'Dharma'; in the case of Vanika Sadhu, the promise to execute Satya Narayana Vrata was wantonly ignored. Vishnu and his wife Lakshmi Devi had four sons viz. Dharma, Yagna, King and Thief and Lakshmi was equally fond of all of them. The charity given to Brahmanas and Guests is of the form of Dharma which targets Money; the Deva Yagna and Pitru Yagna are of the forms of Yagnas and in this case too Money is involved; a King who is responsible to safeguard both Dharma and Yagna also aims at Rajya Lakshmi and finally a 'Chor' (Thief) too is after Money in the final analysis. In the case of Vanika Sadhu, he was basically a Thief as he did not redeem his pledge to Satya Narayana Himself and hence there were two thefts were involved-one by way of suspicion by the King and another a theft in Sadhu's own residence. Thus the victims of the unhappiness of Satya Narayana were all the members of Sadhu's family, thus analysed Suta Muni about the consequences. Be that as it might, Kalavati could not withstand her hunger and approached a Brahmana's house where a Vrata of Satya Narayana was being observed; she returned home late along with the 'Prashad' or the remains of the Offering to the Deity at the Puja. The mother was annoyed that Kavavati returned home late but as was conveyed by Kalavati that the delay was due to a Satya Narayana Vrata; Kalavati was then reminded of the lapse that occurred in not performing the Vrata and approached a past companion's house and begged money for performing the Vrata. Her companion replied that in the heydays of Kalavati, the latter gave a loan which would now be retuned. Thus, Kalavati perfomed the Vrata as prescribed and Swami Satyanarayana was indeed satisfied. As a result, Vishnu Deva came into the dreams of the King who kept

Sadhu and son-in-law in his custody; the former ordered the King to free the alleged prisoners, Sadhu and Shankhapati at once. Next morning the King called the Minister about the strange dream of Satya Narayana and his instruction to the King. The Minister called the Prisoners and found out their full antecedents. The King apologised to Sadhu, gave lot of money and freed them. Sadhu and son-in-law got back to their ship but even now there was no hint of remorse for not having performed the Vrata. Bhagavan took the form of a Hermit near the Ship and asked Sadhu and his son-in-law as to what was in the Ship. As a matter of fact there were many valuables forcefully taken by the King's soldiers from the Ship and since restored, besides many gifts from the King to them when released after their imprisonment. But Sadhu and son-in-law mocked at the Hermit and replied that the ship contained only dried leaves and grass and there was nothing worthy of donating to him. The hermit replied: 'Tadhastu' (So be it!). Sadhu and son-in-law really and literally discovered dried leaves and grass, instead of the valuables in the Ship! They were stunned and searched for the hermit and fell on his feet. The hermit reprimanded Sadhu by recalling all the incidents when Sadhu first encountered the 'Pratima' (Idol) of the Satya Narayana at the Palace of King Chandrachuda; he prayed for a child and pledged that he would perform Satya Narayana Vrata befitting his status but on getting a child he did not do so; he said that when the child grew of age and after her wedding, he would perform the Vrata but again he did not; he asked for lot of wealth which was also granted, but still he did not redeem the pledge; when he was imprisoned and sought help then too, did not; when he was let free from the prison and Bhagavan's help was sought even then he never thought that Bagavan gave the help; now too, he lied and said there was nothing for charity in the ship except grass and dried leaves! Sadhu the fell flat on his knees, displayed genuine shame and repentance and prayed as follows: Satya Swarupam Satyasandham Satya Narayanam Harim, Yatsatyatvena Jagatastwam Satyam twaam Namaamyaham/ Twanmayaa mohitat-mano na Pashyayantyatmanah Shubham, Duhkaambhodhou sadaa magnaa Duhkhecha Sukhamaaninah/ Moodhoham Dhana garvena Madaandheekruta lochanah, na jaane swaatmanah Kshemam kathampashyaami Mudhadhih/ Kshamaswa mamadouraatmyam tapodhaamne Hare Namah, Aajnaapayatmadaasyam me yena tey charanow smarey/ (Satya Swarupa! Satyasandha! Satya Narayana Bhagavan Hari! Human Beings tend to become victims of 'Maya' (Illusion) and get victimised with the thoughts that happiness is in the deep Oceans of 'Samsara' and seek to attain those momentary joys; persons like me become arrogant and ego owing to small amounts of wealth and imagine no end of themselves foolishly; You are well-known as ever-merciful to those who are repentant. Mahatma! Could You not provide me one chance of correcting myself to devote my entire Self at the lotus-like feet of ours!). Bhagavan Satya Narayana, the ever-compassionate replied positively and blessed the Vanika. A few days later, the ship of Sadhu sailed off and a message reached Kalavati that her husband was arriving ashore soon. She was so excited that the concluding part of the Satya Narayana Vrata being performed was ignored and did not even secure the 'Prasada' presented to Bhagavan as the 'Naivedya' and ran off to welcome the husband. But as soon as the ship was cited from a distance, she witnessed the horror of the sinking ship! Kalavati fell unconscious and after recovering her senses prepared herself to immolate in a Fire- Pit. As she was about to jump into the Fire, a Celestial Voice was heard saying that Kalavati who was already perfoming the Vrata did the unpardonable indiscretion of ignoring the Prasada and hence the calamity of the sinking ship, but if she went back to the house and took the Prasada with veneration, then the situation might change for the better! Kalavati was ashamed of her and did the amends at once; the sinking ship stood up and got anchored safe. There was a happy reunion of the family. Indeed, none could ever ignore the Lord who is other-wise ever-forgiving, considerate and clement! In Kali Yuga, the most fruitful, effective and instantly result-oriented worship is indeed that of Satya Narayana Vrata, undoubtedly.

### Shalivahana and Ishamasiha (Jesus Christ)

After the demise of Vikramaditya of the Golden Age in Bharat, there were as many as eighteen Kingdoms named Indraprastha, Panchaala, Kurukshetra, Kampila, Antarvedi, Vraja, Ajmer, Marudhanva (Mawaad), Gurjara (Gujarat), Maharashtra, Dravida (Tamilnadu), Kalinga (Orissa), Avanti (Ujjain), Udupa (Andhra), Banga, Gauda, Magadha and Kaushalya. These Kingdoms were independent with separate

languages, cultures, religions and life styles. Some of these Entities spread beyond Sindhu River and some even trans-Himalayas. It was at this time that Vikramaditya's grand son Shalivahana took over the sovereignty and controllled Shakas, Chinese, Bahmika, Kamarupa, Rome, and Khur desha. He allowed the cultures of Mlecchhas beyond Sindhu River and Aryavarta. Once Shalivahana saw a person on Himalayas who was very fair and handsome and asked him: Ekada tu Shakhaadisho Himatungaari Samaaya yau, Hunadeshaaya madhye vai giristhaana purusham shubhaanodaadarsha Balaram Rajah (The Controller of the Shakas (viz. Shatavahana) went towards the peaks of Himalayas in Hunadesha (near Manasarovar/ Kailash Mountain in Western Tibet). The person's complexion was of gold and robes were pure white.) Ko bharam iti tam Praaha su hovacha mudan vitah, Iisha pitrugam maam viddhi Kumaari garbha sambhavam ( As the King enquired as to the Stranger's background, the reply was that he was the son of Isha and that he was born of a Virgin). Mleccha dharmasya vaktaram, Satyavata paraayanam/iti srutva Nripa Praaha Dharma ko bhavati matah/ (I am the promoter of the religion of Mlecchas and hold fast to the Principles of Absolute Truth; the King asked as what were the Principles!). In his reply, Ishaputra replied that when the Principles of Virtue got badly downgraded and Mlecchas were becoming barbarians, I took upon myself the responsibility of turning to be a Masiha / Messaih and assumed Prophethood. He continued to say: Mlecchasa sthapito Dharmo mayaa tacchrunu Bhupatey/ Maanasa nirmalaam krutwa malam dehe subhaasbham/ Naiganam apamasthya japeta nirmalam param, Nyayena Satyavachasaa manasyai kena manavah/ Dhyayena pujayedisham Surya mandala samsthitham, Achaloyam Prabhu sakshatathaa suryachalah sada/ (Ok King, the Principles that are intended to be set up among the Mlecchas are: Human Beings are subject to good and bad feelings. Hence, the body and the heart need to be purified; then the Deity whom You have in mind be meditated; Truth has to be uttered and practised, justice needs to be observed; the mind needs to be trained to concentrate and targetted on the Eternal Soul, situated in the Surya Mandala, since Sun-God and the Super Soul are just the same. As Paramatma is steady, Sun God too is firm and everlasting. One should therefore be truthful, and worship the Lord as manifested in the form of Surya.). Having heard this, Shatavahana bowed to Isha Putra, the Prophet Jesus Christ in admiration.

# King Bhoja and Prophet Mahammad

The tenth in the generation of Shalivahana was King Bhoja and he had to work hard to revive the values of the Shalivahana times which was indeed a bench-mark after of course was a historic record of the Golden Age of Vikramaditya. His Brahmana Guide, theorist and associate Kalidas was a renowned Poet whose works in the language of Sanskrit are unparalelled till date. Bhoja Raja extended his Kingdom far beyond River Sindhu upto Gandhar, Mleccha strong holds and several Kingdoms around Kashmir.It was at this time that among these Mleccha concentrations was Prophet Mahammad along with his growing number of followers. King Bhoja discovered among these Mkeccha holds that Lord Rudra was residing at an undisclosed Place and worshipped Him after bathing Him with Panchagavya (Cow milk, curd, urine, dung and jaggery) and Ganga. Lord Shiva appeared before Bhoja and instructed him to to yield to various means of traps in the surrounding areas as they were full of Piscachas, especially one 'Mahammad' whom once before He gave boons in the past; instead Bhoja should visit Mahakaleswara which was full of Mlecchas where Arya-Dharma was extinct literally. As expected Mahammad met Bhoja and misdirected the King that the Deity at Mahakaleswara was subservient to him and shoul therefore follow his religion instead; Mahammad told that his religion. Kalidasa grew extremely angry ay what Mahamadi said and meditated the thousand 'Navaakhari' Mantra and by its potence, Mahammad got burnt and got converted as ash. Late in the night, the followers of Mahamad collected the ash and his Piscahak Soul paved way to a religion which cut the genitals of males, grew beard, ate meat of goat and cows, shouted on top of their vioce saying 'Allah' followed by prayers and were essentially iconaclasts or against 'Vigrahas'. As an anti-dote to the Mahammad religion, Bhoja intensified the promotion of Aryan Belief, Sanskrit / Prakritik languages to Brahmanas and Sudras respectively. After the demise of Bhoja Raja, there were ten weak Kings and gradually Agnivamsheeya Kings took over significance. Kali Devata approached Bhagavan Janardana and complained that though the Lord assigned the duty to her to stall Dharma and initiate its weakening in the Kali Yuga and accordingly she created Mlechhas, but Agnivamsheeya Kings

came to dominate and had been upholding Dharma. She said that in every house-hold, there should be vices like wine drinking, gambling, craving for money, lust for women, thieving and the like. Lord Krishna smiled and replied that after the last of Agnivamsheeya Prithviraj Chouhan would be killed by Sahoddin (Mohammad Ghori) and after plundering the riches leave Bharat by installing Qutukoddin as the chief Ruler. As prophesied, Agnivamsheeya Kings did prosper before their obliteration.

Glories of Agnivamsheeyas and the decline and fall of Hindu Dharma

Addressing the Rishis at Naimisharanya, Suta Maha Muni described the Agnivamsheeyas like Pramara, Chayahani and Parihaara. In the Southern Part of Bharat, Pramara became the King at Ambayati Nagara. In his lineage, Indrapal set up Indravatipuri (Indore), his son Malyavan established Malyavati Nagar and in this lineage Bindupal constructed *Bindukhand*. In the very lineage belonged to Kalpasimha who was childless and having taken bath at Ganga gave away in charity to well read Brahmanas a Place called Kalaap Kalaap which became renowned on Earth for a clan of Brahmanas who were extraordinary examples of Vedic Knowledge. Vayahani (Chapahani) was another Agnivamsheeya who established in Madhyadesha a Nagar called Ajmer, (literally meaning 'Aj'for Brahmana and 'Ma'for Lakshmi Devi (Ajasya Brahmano Maa cha Lakshmistatra samaagata, tayacha Nagaram Ramyamajameramatah smrutam). The son of Chapahani was Tomar who was a Shiva Bhakta and pleased by his worship, Lord Shiva granted Indraprastha Nagar to him. Tomar's youngest son was Chavahani (Chouhan) and in his lineage Jayasimha conquered Aryadesha and setup his Capital at Jayapura. It was in this lineage of Chapahani that Prithviraj Chouhan belonged to who established Delhi but Shahabuddin Ghori killed him and wrested power from the Agnivamsheeyas to firmly establish Muslim Rule thereafter. King Parihaar who was the other renowned Agnivamsheeya was the follower of Atharva Veda and destroyed lot of Buddhists and set up Kalinjar which became inaccessible to Mlechhas as the King worshipped Mother Kali which was eventually known as Kalikatapuri (Kolkata) and the neighbouring region was called Vanga (Bengal). In the lineage of Parihaar, Bhojavarma established Bhoja Rashtra, Shantivarma set up Shantipura and Nandivarma set up Gouda Rashtra (Dhaka) and another Place called Nadiha (Nadiya) or Vedaparayanapuri. Another successor Mahipati set up Urvimaya (Urmiya). Such was the significance of Agnivamsheeva Kings who constructed several famous Cities.

After Prithviraj who set up Delhi was killed by Mohammad Ghori, a Paisacha (Pathan) called Qutubuddin was appointed as the Ruler of Delhi. The Mleccha / Pathan Kings destroyed several Hindu Temples, Tirthas. Most of the Sages left Naimisharanya and moved over to Badarika Kshetra. After the Melecchhas, Mukul (Mughal) Vamshees followed suit; their King Taimurlang commanded Aryas to stop Murti Puja (Worship of Idols) sayin that 'Shaligrams' were mere stones, that Vishnu was non existent and the so-called Brahmanas and Rishis invented / scripted Vedas and Shastras to fool the gullible masses and perpetuate ignorance so that they would retain an upper-hand in the social system. Thus, Taimarlang threw away and destroyed Vigrahas of Deities and Shaligrams on hordes of camels to decorate the thrones on which he and his successors sat on with vengeance and glee at the Taitthir (Taratar Desha). As Devas got agitated at these atrocities and approached Lord Indra, he threw his Vairayudha and destroyed Tartar Desha completely and having retrieved some of the Shaligramas left them into the waters of Gandaki River so that at least a few of the Shaligramas would be recovered by the posterity. Subsequently Indra approached Brihaspati for advice; the Deva Guru disclosed that as 'Adharma' assumed high proportions, Vishnu, in the form of Surya Deva would be born in the form of Brahmana in Gouda Desha on the banks of River Gandaki at Shaktipura. On hearing this, Indra worshipped Surya Deva along with Ekadasha (Eleven) Rudras, Ashta (Eight) Vasus, and the two Ashwini Kumars at Prayaga in Magha Month as Surya entered 'Makara Rasi' under the guidance of Deva Guru. Surya Deva was pleased and having appeared before them all and gave away boons of a number of 'Acharyas' who (Leaders of Dharma Reviving Missions) would be born henceforth to revive the falling values of 'Dharma' and 'Nyaya'.

Appearance of several 'Acharyas' (Teachers) to revive Hindu Dharma

As Sage Suta informed the congregation of Rishis, Deva Guru Brihaspati prophesied the appearances of several 'Acharyas' to preach and guide the Public as to how the age-old values of Dharma should be revived since those were in jeopardy as successive onslaughts of Mleccha and other alien Rulers tainted and tarnished Dharma. In Barhishmati (Bittur), there was a Brahmana named *Dhatru Sharma* who meditated to Lord Brahma for many years for good progeny. The Lord was pleased and gave a boon that a boy, a girl and a boy again would be born in succession. As per he boon, the three children were born and grew up to marriageable ages. Dhatru Sharma prayed to Tumbura of Gandharvas to bless suitable boy for the daughter and two pretty brides to the sons. Dhatru Sharma further prayed to Kubera Deva the Lord of Wealth to provide suitable ornaments and wealth to the son-in-law and the daughter-in-laws. Satisfied with the 'Ihika' (Earthly) life, the Brahmana meditated to Surya Deva for Salvation. Surya desired to ascertain as to which kind of Moksha was preferred by Dhatru Sharma viz. 'Salokya' achievable by 'Tapasya', or 'Saameepya' by 'Bhakti' (Devotion), or 'Saarupya' which was possible by 'Dhyana' or 'Sayujya' attainable by 'Jnaana'. Surya Deva provided Sayujya to Dhatru Sharma couple till the end of the Manyantara and commanded that the couple should be born again when Dharma would be in distress during the initial stages of Kali Yuga as Ishwarapuris as 'Kavya kartas' and Preachers of Vaidika Dharma.

At Mayavati Nagar (Haridwar), there was a Brahmana named *Mitra Sharma* who was a 'Kavya Priya' or the One fond of Literature, especially on Spiritual Matters, 'Vidya Parayana' (Highly erudite) and a 'Rasika' (Critic and Assessor of Good Writings). Once a King Kamasena from 'Dakshina Bharat' or Southern Part of Bharat visited Mitra Sharma along with the Princess Chitrini. Mitra Sharma liked her so much that he worshipped Surya Deva for long by reciting 'Aditya Hridayam' and taking baths in Ganga and finally Surya Deva asked King Kamasena in a dream of the latter to arrange for the wedding. After wedding, the couple was engaged in intense Aradhana (worship) of Surya Deva by observing Daily Vratas on copper plates in Surya Yantra by red blood flowers and enjoyed health and happiness. In course of time they attained 'Surya Sameepyata'.

In the further birth of Mitra Sharma and Chitrini at Kasi, Surya Deva was born as *Ramananda* who even at a very young age became a Gyani and after the demise of the parents, he turned out to be a 'Parama Bhakta' of Surya Deva. After became a Sanyasi, he spear-headed the task of reviving Dharma most rigourously and took to moral preaching and imparting Spiritual knowledge through a band of devoted followers who in turn taught the essence of Ramayana among the public.

Ramananda's disciples: Namdeva was a reputed disciple of Ramananda who was born in 'Dehali' (Delhi) to a young widow who was a devotee of Vishnu. In his past birth he was called Varuna of Varuna Deva's 'Amsa' and was the second of ten reputed sons known as Prachetas of King Prachinabarhi, having performed Tapasya in the middle of Oceans. Varuna was a committed devotee of Bhadra Kali. Namadeva was a renowned 'Saankhya Yoga Parayana' (Practitioner of Saakmkya Yoga) and a Vishnu Bhakta, firmly believing that the entire 'Brahmaanda' was replete with Vishnu. He became a notable disciple of Ramananda along with Rankana-Yankana couple (Ranka-Banka), Kabira, Narasi Mehta, and Sadan Kasayi. The contemporary King of Mlecchhas Sikandar tested Namadeva's integrity and donated fifty lakh Mudras which was utilised for constructing the stone steps of Ganga River at Kashi Nagar; being a Yogi and Vishnu Bhakta, he brought back to life ten Brahmanas, five Kings, five Vaishyas and hundred cows that died on the banks of Ganges!

In the past, there was a Brahmana called Vishvanara who meditated for long to Brahma Deva for a child. As Brahma appeared, the Brahmana asked for an extraordinary boon viz. that Bhagavan Janardana Himself should be his son.Brahma replied that a son named Pavak would be born as the Chief of 'Ashta Vasus' and would be popular as *Vaishvanara* (Agni Deva) and his wife would be *Swaha Devi*. This Pavakamsha Vasu created from his face a person known as *Rankana* or Ranka and his wife was *Yankana* or Banka and both were the disciples of Ramananda were very pious; they earned their earnings by selling

wood and from the same did several 'Dharma Karvas'. Another disciple of Ramanada was Sant Kabir who was disowned by his Vaishya parents Dhanapalak and his wife as soon as the child was born as they apprehended that the birth was in 'Moolaganda Yoga'or the danger of keeping the child in their house which might risk the entire 'Vamsa'; they thus decided to leave in a forest. A childless 'Mussalman' couple-Ali and his wife- who were issueless pursuing the occupation of weavers at Kashi decided to adopt the child and called him Kabir. The boy on attaining the age of seven turned out to be a Vishnu Bhakta and was in the habit of calling Vishnu and Lakshmi at the midday of each day to eat Prashad daily. Local persons even considered Kabir as metally deranged to have invired the Deities for food! But gradually realising that Kabir cure diseases and boons, he became a Center of Attraction and popularity. Narsi Mehta was another disciple of Ramanada who was also a Vasu among the 'Ashta Vasus' in the previous birth of his; he was the fifth Vasu with the 'Amsa' of Dhruva- the Pole Star on the Sky. Narsi Mehta was a totally dedicated devotee of Lord Vishnu and it was believed that he had the visions of 'Rasaleelas' at Brindavana. Yet another disciple of Ramanand was Sadan Kasaayi who was born from the 'Amsa' (facet) of Ashwini Kumars in the house of Shudras following the occupation of Kasayis or Goat killing and selling; they used to weigh meat on the Shaligram Balance. Sadan was an extraordinary devotee of his parents. He came under the influence of Kabir and Ramanand finally.

Nimbaditya: In Satya Yuga, there was a Brahmana named Aryama who was a staunch devotee of Surya Deva; he felt that lach of monetary support wasthe reason why 'Dharma Karyas' or Noble Deeds for the benefit of General Public could not be adequately executed such as construction of wells, water bodies, Choultries etc. and thus prayed to Surva Deva in Jyeshtha Month to facilitate him to take up such Public Tasks. Surya Deva appeared and presented him a 'Divya Mani' or a Celestial Provider of Wealth which yielded Gold on daily basis with which to perform Dharma Karyas. In Jyeshtha Month again, Devas worshipped Surya Deva at the end of Dwapara Yuga with a similar request this time to provide a boon to enable 'Deva Karyas' and to ward off the intensity of the impending Kali Yuga. Surya Deva responded positively and assured that Sudarshana Chakra would be born as Nimbaditya (Nimbikacharya) to restore the vanishing values of Dharma at a Place known as 'Tailanga' near Narmada. He further said that Narada Maharshi would teach the art of preaching and Nimbikacharya would propagate Dharma at Mathura, Naimisharanya, Dwaravati, Sudarshanaashram etc. As prophesied, a couple called Aruna and Jayanti Devi were blessed with Nimbaditya on Kartika Shukla Pournami when Chandra was in Vrisha Rasi; Krittika Nakshatra along with five Grahas was in 'Uccha Sthiti' or Upswing at Samyom Kala and Mesha Lagna time. At the time of birth, it was believed that Lord Brahma descended Prithvi to greet Surya's 'Amsa' (Facet) in the form of Nimbikacharya.

<u>Madhavacharya</u>: Deva Guru Brihaspati continued to narrate to Indra that in Treta Yuga at Ayodhya there was a Devopasaka Brahmana called *Shukra Sharma* who used to worship Ashvini Kumars, Rudra, Vasus, Surya and other Deities and the Devas were extremely pleased with his Pujas. Surya Deva advised Devas that after the devotee attained Sayujya, he would be reborn at Bridavan in the form of a Brahmana as Madhava and his son would be Madhu, popularly known as *Madhavacharya or Madhvacharya*. His mission was to divert all those who digressed from Dharma due to evil influences back to focus on 'Vaishnava Shakti' and lead them to Bhukti and Mukti (Wisdom and Salvation).

Similarly in Dwapara Yuga, a Brahmana named *Megha Sharma* who carried on his subsistence from farming was a great Gyani and Vedaparayana; he spent one-tenth of his earnings on Pujas with admirable veneration. Once there was a severe 'Anavrishti' (drought) but for a limited area that Megha Sharma tilled. As all the other persons were affected, they approached the King Shantanu, who in turn requested Megha Sharma to suggest a solution. The Brahmana suggested that a month long worship of Surya Deva in Shravana Month be organised by engaging twelve well read Brahmanas by way of performing Japas, havans, tarpans, 'Samaradhanas' especially to Brahmanas and extensive charities. The King did likewise and by the grace of Surya Deva there were ample rains resulting in good crops and all round prosperity. Megha Sharma became quite popular among the neighbouring Kings as well who had similar drought

conditions.Not only this but Megha Sharma's mere touch had magical effects and several persons of the Public including the King were healed of their long standing diseases; in fact Megha Sharma's magical touch imparted youth to the King and he ruled the Kingdom for several more years. Finally, when Megha Sharma attained Surya Loka and thence to Brahma Loka, Surya Bhagavan came in the form of 'Parjanya' and declared to Devas that in the Kaliyuga when Mlechha influence would become unbearable by badly hurting Vedic Principles then he would take the form of *Shridhara Swami*, the son of Veda Sharma and would intrepret Shimad Bhagavata and prevail on the sinning humanity to focus on the Veda way of life and thus stall the erosion of the values of Virtue.

In Kali Yuga itself, there was a pious Brahmana named *Pranshu Sharma* who was a 'Satyavadi' (Exponent of Truth) and 'Veda Shastra Parayana' (Scholar of Vedas and Shastras) making his ends meet by 'bhiksha' (entreating for foodgrains door-to-door). The 'Mayavi' (trickster) Kali accosted the Brahmana in the form of another Brahmana and tried to tempt him to say that there was a nice garden full of Kalinda fruits nearby and that he could eat as many as possible. Pranshu Sharma replied politely that unless he performed Puja and 'Naivedya' he would not accept the offer. However he accepted some fruits home. Kali then intercepted Pranshu Sharma in the disguise of the King of the Land and put him in prison saying that the Brahmana was a thief of the fruits. In the prison overnight, the Brahmana recited Suktas from Rig Veda in praise of Bhaskara Deva. The latter whispered in the ears of Brahmana that it was Kali Deva who offered the fruits in the form of a Brahmana and again as the King who imprisoned him; Bhaskara Deva further said that as Kali Yuga was arriving soon, Pranshu Sharma would be shifted to a safe place known as Kalinjar for his safety and after living there for some time he and his wife would attain Surya Loka and before the twenty eighth Kali Yuga, he would be reborn as *Vishnu Swami* to preach Vedas and Shastras to misguided human beings due to the powerful pressure of Kali Yuga so that he would offset the influence as a 'Parama Vaishnava Bhakta'.

At the behest of Brihaspati, Indra performed Surya Aradhana in Margasirsha month and Surya in the form of Pusha prophesied that in Ujjain, he would take give birth to one Rudrapashu couple as *Mihiracharya (Varahamihira)* and would revive Jyotisha Shastra which got tarnished due to the influence of Kali Yuga and the upper hand gained by Mlecchhas and Non-Believers of 'Nava Grahas' and their significance. But Rudrapashu was agitated that their child was born at 'Mula ganda Abhijit Yoga'expected to be an extremely inauspicious time of birth and after cutting the navel chord left a box containing the baby in a river nearby. But Rakshasas saved the the child in the box which floated in the Sea near Lanka and gave it to Vibhishana the brother of Ravana the King of Lanka. As the child grew under the care of Vibhishana who felt that the boy was of 'Vishnu Amsa', he became an erudite scholar of Jyotisha Shastra including Jataka (Birth Chart), Phalita (Resultant Readings), Mukha Prashna (Face-Reading) and related disciplines. Finally Vibhishana arranged to despatch the boy to Bharata Desha as he felt that he was a Vaishnava who was not approved by King Ravana. In Bharata desha, Varahamihira made enormous fame as an extraordinary Astrologer and revived Jyotisha Shastra at a time when Mlecchhas were unrelenting Non-Believers of Nava Grahas, Astrology and related skills.

As Indra worshipped Surya Deva in Pusha Month to ward off the evils of Kali in that Yuga, Surya Deva confirmed that he would be born as *Dhanvantari* in Kashi in the house of Kalpadadutta. Having mastered the Science of Ayurveda and its many facets including 'Chikitsa Shastra' or Allopathy saving humanity from becoming targets of diseases; 'Kalpa Veda'an off-shoot of Ayur Veda-Kalpa meaning human body; and 'Shastra Chikitsa' (Surgery), Dhanvantari shot up to fame all over Bharat. The King's son called 'Shushruta' became a disciple of Dhanvantari and mastered 'Shoushruta Tantra'- a Tantrik way of Healing.

A Brahmana named *Heli* in Pampapura was a master of 'Chatusshasthi Kalas' (Sixty four Arts like Painting, Music, Dance etc.) and practised 'Hasta Kala' and 'Vastu Nirmana Kala' (Handicrafts); he earned considerable profits and utilised for 'Surya Aradhana' by way of Yagnas, Pujas, Charities and 'Anna danas' or distribution of food to the Poor. He constructed a 'Jyoti Swarupa Stambha' (Pillar of

Light) at Pampa Sarovara in the honour of Surya Deva who was pleased and blessed him with salvation at Surya Loka. He revived the Kalas whose glories were lost by the onslaught of Mlecchhas.

Surya Deva informed Devas that during the first chapter of Kali Yuga itself he would take the form of Jayadeva Kavi (Poet) to born to a Kunduki Brahmana in Vanga Desha (Bengal) who would be Heli as referred to above in his earlier birth. Jaya Deva did service to his parents and after their departure from life, he turned out to be a 'Vairagi' without life's attractions and a 'Bhakta' (Devotee) singing 'Bhajans' like a nomad. When he came of twenty three years of age, a virtuous Brahmana called Satyavrata dedicated his daughter Padmavati to Bhagavan Jagannatha and the Lord appeared in Satyavrata's dreams and directed him to wed her to a Vairagi Poet called Jayadeva who was of the Lord's own 'Amsa' (facet); when married the couple was happy. Jayadeva scripted 'Vedanga Nirruti'. He defeated a few notorius Sudra Writers in Prakriti language and revitalised the 'Panini' Shastra of Sanskrit Grammar. A few thieves prompted by Kali Yuga looted Jayadeva's property and valuablle donated by the King Dharmapal and cut off his hands out of jealousy. When the King saw him in this stage, he constructed a house suited to a handless person, Jayadeva scripted his magnum opus titled the immortal Geeta Govinda. In course of time, the wicked Shudra writers who cut his arms felt extremely apologetic and repentant and volunteered to the King to give a suitable punishment. But Jayadeva declined to give them a punishment and as the culprits cried relentlessly their heavy tears washed their arms of Jayadeva that were slashed and quite amazingly his hands reappeared again as a miracle of Surya Deva.

There was an extremely pious Brahmana named Vishnu Sharma near Saruyu River who led an exemplary and austere life with his wife and he used to seek 'Bhiksha' for their livelihood from house to house. When Vishnu Sharma went out of the house once, a kind hearted 'Sadhu' visited the house and touched by their poverty gifted away and left a 'Parasmani' to the house wife Vishnu Sharmi and said that the Mani (Jewel) would provide plenty of gold daily. But she did not dare to experiment in getting gold but waited her husband to return to the house. On return, Vishnu Sharma threw away the Parasmani on the banks of Sararu River nearby. The Sadhu returned to the house to ascertain whether the Mani was put to use. Vishnu Sharma coolly replied that he threw it away on the banks of Sarayu. The Sadhu was highly agitated as he performed Tapasya to Surya Deva for several years to secure the Mani and if he did not secure the same near the River, he would go in for self-immolation. When the Sadhu went in search of the Mani on the River Banks, he found not one but many such Paras Manis on the banks. The Sadhu was surprised and realised that it took him twelve long years in 'Shivaradhana' to secure this Parasmani, where as the Brahmana materialised dozens of them! Such was the spiritual prowess of Vishnu Sharma who like Surya Deva himself could dispel darkness of ignorance and egotism of the Sadhu who became a disciple of Vishnu Sharma instantly and spread the light of Spiritualism on the Earth which was heavily burdened with the pulls and pressures of Kali Yuga.

As Indra performed 'Aradhana' to Surya Deva in the Phalguna month, the latter entered Indra's body and materialised a Brahmana and Sachi Devi became a Brahmani. A boy who was born to the Brahmana couple was of Vishnu Kala in response to prayers by Devas to Vishnu Deva to offset the delusion and deceipt of the impending Kali Yuga. The boy as he grew was called *Shri Krishna Chaitanya Prabhu* and his innumerable followers were called 'Chaitanyas' who in turn created pockets of the Disciples all over. Bharat merging into viable groups preaching Dharma in the Vedic Route to offset as the anti-dotes against Mlecchhas.

<u>Vaalmiki:</u> Brihaspati addressed Devas to convey another prediction in Kali Yuga about a low class Brahmana called Mrigavyadha who used to make fun of Brahmanas and hunt animals and birds by sporting bow and arrows. He was in the habit of heckling and harassing all the passers by especially Tapasvis, Munis and Brahmanas by cutting their Sacred Threads ('Yajnopaveethas'). There was a hue and cry and Tapasvis complained to Lord Brahma who asked Sapta Rishis to counsel the Mrigavyadha and Vasishtha and other Rishis entered the jungle when the Vyadha shouted to say that he would beat them all; Vasishtha replied whether he would beat them only or destroy the entire clan of Rishis and Brahmanas! Then the Rishis asked him as to what would happen if his own clan were to be destroyed! On

seeing the Rishis closely and got magnetised, the Mrigavyadha was not only frightened but also ashamed of his rude and ugly behaviour and fell on their feet with repentance. With folded hands he begged of the Rishis to show him a way by which his sins committed all along his life could be rid off. The Rishis found that he became a changed man now and with compassion gave him the Sacred Counsel of uttering 'Sri Rama Nama' continuously for years together; they said: *Rama namahi tat jnyeyam Sarvaaghouga vinashanam* (Rama nama itself would destrory all the sins). The Mrigavyadha now a fully transformed person did the Japa incessently as 'Maramaramara' and so on for thousand years: *Marama -rametveyam sahasraabdam Jajaapa ha*. This kind of Japa resulted in sprouting 'Aranya Utpalas' or Jungle Lotuses and hence the area became popular as 'Utpalaranya'. Thereafter Saptarishis visited the place where there was a 'Valmik' or thick bush and Mrigavyadha thus came to be popularly called '*Vaalmiki*'. Vaalmiki Muni contributed to humanity the Immortal Epic of Ramayana with 'Ashtaadasa Kalpas' or Eighteen Divisions in poetry, by reading or hearing which a person would indeed fulfil the aspirations both in the current birth and further lives too.

# Advaita Philosopher Shankaracharya and disciples

In the current Manvantara of Vaivasvata, Brahma performed one Yagna in Utpalaranya in the beginning of Satya Yuga, when Devi Sarasvati arrived in the form of a River. Then Brahma created Brahmanas from his face, Kshatriyas from his arms, Vaishyas from his thighs and Shudras from his feet. Much earlier, he created Chandra the in-charge if Brahmanas, Surya, Kashyap, Marichi, Ratnakar Samudra Deva and Daksha. From Daksha's mind were born a number of girls in the forms of 'Kalas' on Earth by Vishnu Maya. Brahma also created twenty seven 'Nakshatras' (Stars) to Chandra, thirteen women like Aditi to Kashyapa and Kirti like other Kanyas to Dharma. As per Brahma's instruction, Daksha was made Prajapati and while every body else were obedient to him, Rudra was defiant and that was why Daksha denied the 'Havirbhaga' or the due from Yagnas meant for Rudra. Shiva got angry and created Verabhadra and Shiva Ganas viz. Trishara, Trinetra and Tripada also arrived. Veerabhadra and the Shiva Ganas frightened Devas, Munis and whoever else took part in the Yagna of Daksha; even Yagna Purusha ran away like a deer but Shiva took the form of a 'Kirata' (hunter) and tore off the limbs of the Yagna Purusha, Then Brahma intervened with his sweet words which somewhat pacified Shiva. As Surva Deva entered Tula Rasi, Rudra entered the form of Chandra, Brahma returned to Satya Loka and Veerabhadra was instructed by Shiva to enter the house of a Brahmana called Bhairavadutta. Once the most obnoxious Kali Yuga arrived he would be born to Bhairavadutta as Shankara Acharya. Even at a very age, Shankara took to 'Sanyasa' (Renunciation), became an unparalelled Scholar of Vedas and Shastras, scripted Shankara Bhashya and rescuscitated Shaiva Religion, Also, he popularised 'Advaita' discipline which affirmed 'Aham Brahmaasmi'or "I am Brahma", 'Tripundra' (three cross-lines across the forehead with ash from Yagna kundas, or burnt cow-dung), 'Rudra Aksha Mala' and Panchakshara Mantra viz. Om Namasshiyaaya. He established the Advaita Philosophy with such very strong foundations that it continued in full swing till date. Deva

Guru Brihaspati narrated how a number of persons became disciples of Shankaraacharya: There was a Brahmana called Ajagara who was a Gyani and devotee of Bhagavan Shankara; he satisfied Lord Shiva's Parthiva Linga and after a twelve year Tapasya Shankara granted 'Jeevan Mukti'. The Brahmana also pleased Sankarshana Deva by his worship and attained 'Sayujya' and thereafter became an ornament in the form of a Snake who had thousand hoods called Gouranga. The Sesha Naag Rudra subsequently was born into the house of Devatutta at Kashipura as *Giri Sharma* and became a disciple of Shankaraacharya. In Prayaga, a Brahmana named Nairrut who was poor, sorrowful and unfortunate. Once Brahmarshi Narada blessed him with 'Upadesha' and he pleased Lord Shiva with his year long worship; the Lord granted the Brahmana with Kubera-like wealth; he lived happily for long time and died. He was reborn as *Vana Sharma* and even at an early age of twelve became a Vedic Expert and conquered many Vidwans; subsequently he desired to learn Tatva Gyan and became a disciple of Shankaracharya. In Mahishmati there was a Shiva Bhakta named Vasu Sharma who desired to secure a male child and performed worship to Lord Shiva but there was no response; he even sacrificed his own body parts which too did not get response. Then he gave a sacrifice of a goat, when the Lord appeared and said that was actually not

destined to secure a male child but granted on as an out of turn mercy. But the child was born with one foot like that of a goat and came to be called Ajaikapada. When Mritya Devata approached the son after a few years, there was a fierce battle between Ajaikapada and Mrityu; finally Mrityu was subdued and thus Ajaikapada was reputed as Mrityunjaya! In insulted Mrityu complained to Brahma Deva and along with Devas, but Brahma declared Ajaikapada as Rudra in when Surya Deva would enter Kumbha Rasi. As soon as this declaration of Brahma was given, Ajaikapada was born as Puri Sharma and having attained the status of a Veda Parayana defeated many Vidwans in wordy-battles and finally joined Shankaracharya Ganesha and Dundi Ganesha: As Brahma Deva completed as his disciple. his full age of Brahma Years, there was Maha Pralaya and Maha Kali destroyed the Universe and became the only Entity all alone. Later on Prakruti Devi was materialised as Maha Gauri with five faces, ten hands and three eyes. On her forehead there was a very tiny and hazy vision of Paramatma who was a luminous, shapeless and inexplicable Particle and despite desperate efforts could not perceive the Undefinable. She prayed to that Parabrahma by straining with all her faces and eyes; Her Eastward Face produced 'Dhatu Shabdas' or the Sounds of Dhatus, the Southern Face discharged 'Prathyaya Shabda', the Western Face emitted 'Vibhakti Shabda', the Northern Face released 'Tigvibhakti Shabda' and the 'Urthva Mukha' or the Skyward Face emanated the sounds of 'Varna Matras' [all the Shabdas relating to Sanskrit Language Grammar]. Then the Parabrahma Swarupa provided a quick glimpse as an 'Avyakta Purusha' as His Origin was unknown since the Prakriti Swarupa was inconceivable too. From the left side of that Obscure Figure emerged an 'Ashtadasha' (Eighteen Handed) Maha Lakshmi; by visioning that Entity, the 'Swayambhu' Maha Kaali was astonished. She then witnessed the materialisation of an all pervasive Figure which was apparently Lord Brahma as he commenced Creation, the foremost being of water in the form of Rivers; the Lord took over Satya Loka. Meanwhile Maha Lakshmi greeted Maha Vishnu who appeared in two Major Parts viz. Raktanga on the left side and Gauranga on the right side. Both of them had four arms and equally powerful. Raktanga Ganesh is the Super Lord of Creation who is known as Lord Eshwara and Gauranga Ganesh is Niranjan whose meditation is performed by Yogis. It was stated that Lord Eshwara and Devi Parvati meditated to Ganesha some thousand years and on his appearance, the Eswara couples commended to Ganesha as follows: Namo Vishwa rupaya Ganeshaya Paratpaney, Chaturbhujaya Raktaya Yagnapurna karaayacha/ Vighna hantrey Jagatbhartrey Saravananda pradaayiney, Siddheenam patayey thubhyam nirdheenam patayenamah/ Prasanno bhava Devesha Putro bhava mama priyah (Our greetings to Vishnu Swarupa Ganesha! You are Four Armed, Raktavarna, Yagna Murti, Embodiment of Prosperity, the Creator and Preserver of the Universe, the bestower of happiness to one and all and Siddhipati; be pleased to become our child!) As they extolled Ganesha, he was materialised from Parvati and Devas celebrated. Surya putra Shaneswara also arrived and even at his cruel sight, the boy became headless. There was a moment of awe at the incident and for twenty days the sliced head of Ganesha continued to glow as Surva entered Tula Rasi and was in Chandra loka. All the Devas were in a state of shock and Shani Deva cut off the head of an elephant and installed it on Ganesha's shoulders and Brahma who was pleased with Parvati's prayers fixed the elephant-head firmly on the arrival of Karkataka Rasi by Surva Deva. This was how Ganesha was resuscitated as the genuine son of Eshwara couples. It was in the same manner that a highly virtuous Brahmana couple too was blessed at Kashi Nagara with a son famous as Dundi Raja who became Shankarachaarya's disciple who authored 'Jaatakabharana', a Treatise on 'Phalita Jyotish' (the Fruitfulness of Astrology).

#### The origin of Ravana and Hanuman

Devi Mandodari was the daughter of Maya Danava the King of Tripura and after the Danava's death, she performed 'Tapasya' in a Cave of Vindhyadri to Maha Vishnu and attained Mukti. After her Salvation, two hundred MahaYugas elapsed and in the twelfth Satya Yuga of the current Vaivasvata Manvantara, Brahma's son Poulastya was blessed with a son Vishravasu. The latter married Kaikasi the daughter of Sumali the Daitya and begot *Ravana and Kumbhakarna*. Ravan was a 'Matru Bhakta' and Kumbhakarna was a 'Pitru Bhakta'. Both the brothers performed Tapasya and secured boons of invincibility against Devas and Danavas from Brahma. The Danava brothers fought a fearful battle with Devas and dislodged the latter from 'Swarga' and Devas in turn executed Tapasya to Lord Shiva for eleven years by way of

'Parthivarchana' and the Devas too secured boons due to which they became fearless too. Meanwhile, Kesari the son of Gautami Rishi and Kesari's wife Anjana secured a grand son named Hanuman with the 'Amsa' (facet) of Parama Shiva and Vayu Deva too was responsible in the birth of the boy. Mistaking Surya Deva for a red-coloured fruit, the boy was tempted to fly skywad tried to hold Surya Deva, as Indra threw his Vajra on Hanuman's body and Ravana tried to hold Hanuman's tail but Hanuman never left his firm hold of Surya Deva. Ravan kept on fighting for a year in vain and tried to wriggle out of Hanuman's powerful clasp. Meanwhile Rishi Vishrava arrived at the spot and eulogised Hanuman to release Rayana the terror of the Universe. There after Hanuman resided for long time at Pampapura on the banks of Pampa River as a strong fixture and was thus acclaimed as 'Sthanu'. Also since Ravana who had dictated the World and controlled Devas was humiliated by Anjaneya, his name and fame spread as Hanuman: Nighnanta cha Suraan mukhyan Ravanam Lokaraavanam, Nihanti Mushthirbhayah sa Hanumaaniti vishrutah. (Ravana who was in the habit of badly hurting Devas and related Demi-Gods and killing Vishnu- Bhaktas without mercy had thus been restrained badly and received a jolt by Hanuman; the 'Mushtighatas' or 'Hanus' (beatings of closed hand grasps) damaged Rayana was the reason why Hanuman was named as such. Lord Brahma informed Hanuman that during the twenty eighth Tretayuga's first Part of Vaivaswa Manvantara, Bhagavan Vishnu would take the Incarnation of Shri Rama and that he would achieve Rama's unreserved devotion to Hanuman and destroy the clan of Ravana, his cruel brothers and sinful sons. Subsequently, Hanuman would assume the form of a human being on Earth and live at the Manikarnika Ghat at Kashi as Bala Sharma and would become a disciple of Shankara Acharya and revive Tantra-Mantra Shastras as an anti-dote of the pull of Kali-Yuga.

### The Genesis of Ramanujacharya

At the beginning of Creation, Lord Brahma emerged from the top of a Lotus that sprang from the navel of 'Virat Purusha' and the Lord with four faces, two hands and feet wondered as to who he was. An inner voice whispered that he should perform Tapasya for thousand years and as Brahma opened his eyes, he found a four armed and fully ornamented Vishnu Murti with sky-blue body colour and Brahma was taken aback even as the Murti said that he was Brahma's son. But there was disblief on Brahma's contenance and there followed an argument. Just at that time a Jyotish Linga appeared which had no beginning or end. Brahma took the form of a Swan and Vishnu assumed the figure of a Boar and both went up and down the huge 'Linga' but to no avail. They both prayed to the Linga to reveal Himself. Bhagavan Bhava appeared before them and left for Kailasa and meditated in a 'Samadhi' (Trance) position for five Yugas. Meanwhile, a demon called Tarakasura did severe Tapasya and asked for a boon that excepting the son of Shiva, none should be able to destroy him. Thus Devas prayed to Lord Shiva that he should soon wed the daughter of Daksha Prajapati; indeed Shiva married Sati Devi as prayed by Devas, but in course of time Daksha became jealous of Shiva and organised Daksha Yagna. An uninvited Sati Devi attended the Yagna, felt insulted and dedicated herself in the Homa Kunda; a furious Shiva created Virabharda who destroyed the Yagna. Sati Devi left her body but her Sacred Soul was transferred to the daughter of Himavanta and Menaka called Gauri or Parvati. Devas made efforts that Lord Shiva should wed and commissioned Ananga (Manmatha) to despatch the Love-Arrows on Shiva but the plan misfired and Ananga was burnt by the Third Eye of Shiva. Rati Devi made an appeal to Shiva that Ananga sent the arrows to enable Shiva's wedding for 'Loka Kalyan'so that Kumara Swami would be born and kill Tarakasura, that too at the behest of Devas and hence the killing of Manmatha was none-too-fair! Shiva cooled down and gave the boon that during the Vaivasva Manvantara's twenty eighth Dwapara Yuga, Sati would be reborn as the wife of the deceased Manmatha to Lord Krishna's son Pradyumna. The further happenings witnessed the holy wedding of Shiva and Parvati and Kumara Swami who was born of their union killed Tarakasura. Bhagavan Bhava's 'Amsa' was incarnated in the form of Ramanujacharya as the son of Acharya Sharma on the banks of the holy River Godavari and established Dwaita Discipline of Vedic Religion emphasising that 'Jeevatma' was entirely distinct from 'Paramatma' and established a new Philosophy as different from Shankaracharya's Advaita Philosophy that Jeevatma and Paramatma

were one and the same, as the ephemeral human body ceased Jeevatma would merge with that of Paramatma.

Emergence of Mughal Empire, Akbar the Great and celebrities of the Era

Suta Maha Muni continued to narrate to the Congregation of Munis at Naimisharanya as Sumantu conveyed prophesies for the distant future with suprising accuracy! As Hindu Dharma was once again got revitalised with various 'Acharyas' and their disciples like Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhavacharya, and Chaitanya Maha Prabhu to withstand the forces of several alien influences in Bharata the seat of Vedas and Shastras, Devas got an upper hand and King Bali of Daityas called Roshana and instructed him to go to Dehali (Delhi) in Bharat as the son of Timiraling (Taimurlang) with the name of Sarush and commence the task of destroying Vedamarga and its followers gradually. Sarush became the King of Dehali with the help of the Evil Forces backed up by Daityas and ruled there for five years. Babar was son of Sarush and strengthened the hold of the peace-loving and religious Hindus for twenty years either at Samarkhand or at Bharat as the Moghul dynasty came to reality. Babar's son 'Homaayu' (Humayun) who became the next King took a cruel stand against Hindus and created havoc among them. But another Mleccha King in the neighbourhood called 'Shekshak' (Shersha) defeated Humayun and ruled Dehali for five years. The fugitive Humayun and his brother Mukarram regrouped their army again and defeated Shersha and came back to poer at Dehali once again. In this see-saw of power stuggle between one Mleccha Humayun and another Mlleccha King Shersha, there was damage of several Idols of Hindu Gods and a descendant disciple of Shankaracharya called a Brahmana Mukund could not bear the scene of the destruction of Idols and immolated in a Fire Pit and twenty of his stadents too followed suit! Humayun who resumed his rule in Dehali Kingdom heard a celestial Voice that soon Humayun would be blessed with a Great Son of Mughal Empire called Akbar, literally meaning 'Ak' for 'Akasmat or 'per chance' and 'Var' or 'Vardaan' for a boon; the Vioce said 'Your son will be an exemplary, brave and fortunate Emperor who shaal not follow the Mleccha or Paishaachika route in his Enlightened Administration; the Vioce further said that Mukund Brahmana would be Akbar and his twenty disciples who immolated in Fire Pits out of frustration and agony since Mughul Kings destroyed Idols of Devas would reappear in the very Mughal dynasty! A completely transformed Humayunwas overjoyed the the Celestial Announcement and ordered charities all over the Kingdom. The beloved disciples of Mukund viz. Keshava, Madhava, Madhu, Devaapi, Somapa, Sura and Madana illuminated the Court as the Celebrities; Keshava as Gaansen or Tansen, Madhava as 'Vaijavak' or Baijbavara, Madhu as Haridasagayak, Devapi as Birbal who had the Mastery of Wit since he had the bounty of Devi Sarasvati, Somapa as Raja Mansingh, Sura as Bilva Mangala as Akbar's close companion, and Madana as Chandal who was a Nartak (dancer) and Kreeda Visharada or Expert in Games. While these Icons stayed in the Court of Akbar, there were other famous personalities of Akbar's time: Shridhar as Tulasi Sharma or Tulasidas the exponent of Puranas who in previous birth was a Vaishnava Poet; Sripati in earlier birth as a follower of Madhvacharya appeared as the blind Poet Suradas famed for his memorable works of 'Krishna Leelas'; Shambhu in the erstwhile birth came into distinction as *Hari Priya* as an authority of Vishnu Bhakti; Varenya in his previous birth became Agrabhuk or *Agradas* as renowned 'Sant' (Saint); Madhuvrati in the earlier birth now famous as Keelak a Gyani, Poet reputed for Prosody and the Writer of Ramaleelas; Vimal of previous birth now known as Divakar, a Writer and Singer of Devi Sita's Life-Story; Devavaan became Keshava the Writer of 'Ramajyotsna'; Soma in the previous birth came again as Vyasadas who authored a Grandha titled 'Raha Kreeda'; Vardhan became Charanadas who not only scripted 'Gyana maala Grandha' and more so as a Technician of Rodasi Marg or the Skyward route; Vartak of earlier life as *Ratnabhanu* who was Jaimini Bhasha (Language) exponent and follower of Ropana religion; Ruchi of past life as disciple of Madhvacharya wrote 'Gaanamayi Leelas'in praise of Gods; Mandhata now reappeared as *Bhupati* who translated Maha Bhagavata in Hindi Language; Maankaar in earlier birth became Meera the daughter of Raja as an outstanding singer of Bhajans in praise of Lord Krishna as a keen follower of Madhvacharya. Emporer Akbar established a new Religion Din Ilahi which underlined the essence of all Faiths including Hindu, Islam, Bouddha and Christianity. He reigned as a Supreme Controller of the Empire for fifty solid years known for values of virtue, justice,

humanism and inclusiveness. His son Saloma (Saleem) or Jahangir followed the great example of Akbar and Khurdak (Kusro Shaajahaan) ruled for ten years [who built the immortal Taj Mahal]. There was a power struggle among four brothers and the middle son Navarang (Aourangajeb) succeeded the throne; in his earlier birth he was a Daithya called Andhak. In his time, the Peace and Comfort among the masses disappeared and the autocrat King resorted to extensive damages to temples, Vigrahas (Idols), Salagranas, Shiva Lingas, and Ashrams. Under the oppressive rule of this Cruel and anti-Hindu tyrant, the Empire had to carry on under him for thrity nine long years.

### Prophesies on Some Highlights of Bharat thereafter

It was at that very time that Sevajaya (Chhatrapati Shivaji) a grand warrior subdued several small royalties and created Maharashtra; he also brought Aourangajeb under control and installed his son as the Mughal King. He extended his might in the Southern parts of Bharat. One valiant Mlecchha warrior called 'Phalaroosh' destroyed the once renowned Mughal Empire into pieces and ruled for ten years and his son Mahamad ruled for twenty years. Meanwhile, it was prophesied that one Nadar Shah Durrani from Khuraj (Iran) visited Bharat and plundered the traditional riches including the famous Peacock throne full of gold and high valued precious stones. Mahamad's son Mahamatsya was killed by Maharashtrians and the Great Mughal Empire was torn to pieces. In fact there was no binding force of a stature in Bharat and only local Principalities got mushroomed. Be that as it may, Shri Rama of Ramayana after vanquishing Ravana made possible many of dead 'Vanara' soldiers who fought valiantly to get back to life, the important ones being Vikata, Vrujil, Jaal, Burleen, Simhal, Jawa (Jaawa), Sumaatra (Sumatra), etc. He gave the boon to these Vanaras that quite a few Dwipas (Islands) far and near Lanka be occupied and that they would be Kings of these Islands and that Architect Jaalandhara would help construct and even their wives would be procured from among those Devakanyas liberated after Ravana's death. The 'Vanaras' were delighted at the happening and in course of time, the habitants of the Islands developed trade contacts with 'Garunds' (British) of the Western World, especially with Isha Putras (Khishtha, Ishu or Isamasiha). The inhabitants were Surya Deva worshippers and virtuous and honest people worthy of promoting overseas business and the King of the Western Dwipa of England called 'Vikata' and later on by his wife 'Vikatavati' or Victoria ruled over there by 'Ashta Koushala Marg' (under the Counsel of Parliament). The British Raj witnessed high prosperity by executing overseas business generation after generation with democracy (Rule of Citizens) with the hereditary Queen or King elected by a Prime Minister; the ninth Chief Representative of Gurunds was Mekal (Lord Macaulay) who administered the Raj with honesty for twelve years; he was followed by Laurdel (Lord Wavel) who ruled for thirty two years. Bharat was administered in separate Regions by various Rulers like Nagavamshheyas, Andhra vamsheeyas, Kaushala deshiyas, Saurashtra deshiyas, Naishadha desheeyas, and Gurjara desheeyas. This situation continued till the British Rulers consolidated their grip over Bharat by 'divide and rule' concept till Swadesha Bharata witnessed innumerable twists and turns and beacame an integral Entity under the banner of 'Prajapalana' or Democracy. But meanwhile the inhabitants of Bharat belonging to innumerable sects, religions, languages and cultures have since emerged as a strong Democracy with a typical identity of its own.

# Kali Yuga's second, third and fourth quarters and Avatara of Kalki

Suta Maha Muni told Shaunaka and other Munis that as Mlecchhas gained victory over the Dharmic Shaktis gradually Kali Yuga Devi was satisfied. Daityas who were stage managing the victory of Mlecchhas then constructed several 'Jalayanas' or Sea borne vessels to Harikhanda (China) where men were very strong as Devas intially but in course of a few years the 'Maya Yuddha' or the cunning and deceitful battles in which Daityas were well known the Harikhanda residents appealed to Mahendra for protection. Indra asked Vishvakarma to reinvent a 'Yantra' (Machine) by which persons of one part of the World would not be able to travel to another part. On receiving the hint Vishwakarma created a 'Bhrami-Yantra' by using which persons of one 'Khanda' or chunk of a Large Region could not freely travel to another 'Khanda' and also a kind of 'Vatsya' or a less potent Maha Vayu. This Vatsya would destroy Daityas, Yakshas and Piscachas and would protect the honest and Dharmic Brahmanas. This Vatsya gave

shelter to all the Brahmans and other upright persons for a number of Years. This situation that enabled good persons was most unpalatable to Kali Yuga Devi and approached Daitya Raja Bali. Then Bali and Kalki Devi approached Narayana in the form of 'Vamana' who in turn enabled a Brahmana called Kama Sharma and his wife Devahuti on the banks of Yamuna River; he blessed that this couple would give birth to Bhoga Simha and Keli Simha. These two sons would stay in a Kreedavati Nagar and would carry out the wishes of Kali Yuga Devi, especially in the task of wide-spread 'Varna-sankara' or destroying the Rules of 'Varnashrama. Over two thousand years, the established Regulations made by Lord Brahma and the successive Manus would get thinner and thinner and by the Second Paada of Kali Yuga, Kali Devata would be happy to witness that the old Vedic values would be obliterated, that the Daityamaya human beings (fully soaked in Daitya activities) would be of two-and-half feet height, that their life span would be forty years maximum (as against hundred years now) and that they would be free like birds without any 'Karmic regulations! At the end of the Kali's second half there would neither by the institutions of marriages, nor Kingships, nor any social reformer and not even a Karma Karta! The World would be full of the progeny of Bhogi Simha and Keli Simha ane this kind of a situation devoid of customs and social norms woud prevail for one and quarter lakh years!! In the Third Quarter of Kali Yuga, the average age of human beings would be twenty six years maximum; Bhringha Muni along with his wife Saurabhi would create Kaulakalpa-named beings who would not hesitate to eat human beings/kinnaras. These new species of Kaulakalpas would resort to beastly affairs with mothers, sisters and daughters! They would be too sex-blinded and produce too many children and resort to affairs with co-males and animals! In the fourth phase of Kali Yuga the maximum age of humans would not exceed tewnty years and live like water-beasts and animals; hells like Tamistra and worse kinds of frightening Places of Retribution would be over-populated. As Yama Dharma Raja found that the influx of dead Beings was assuming alarming proportions, he and Chitra Gupta approached Indra Deva and later on to Brahma Deva and the latter declared that soon enough there would be an 'Avatar' (Incarnation) of Vishnu Deva as Kalki Deva; he would be fully armed with 'Kahdga' (Long sword) whose reach would be unimaginably long and widespread as also with a 'Kavacha' (Body-Cover) and 'Dhaal' or Protective Shield, mounted on a huge horse, travelling on 'Yoga Marga' for sixteen thousand years and would turn the entire 'Srishti' to ashladen devastation! At that time, there would be a cloud burst producing the Great Annihilation of the Universe under alarming and incessant rain called 'Pralaya'! That would be the fresh 'Srishti'heralding the new cycle of Yugas ab initio!!

### Narada's experience of 'Vishnu Maya'

In the Uttara Parva, Yudhishtara asked Shri Krishna to elucidate on 'Vishnu Maya' or the delusion which human beings are often subjected to as they were unable to resist the temptations. Bhagavan Krishna replied that in the past Brahmarshi Narada too put a similar query and that he replied like-wise. He asked Narada to hold Krishna's little finger and follow what Krishna had to witness. There was an old Brahmana (Krishna himself!) called Yagna Sharma who had all the requisite accompaniments like a tuft, Yagnopaveeta, Kamandalu, Mriga charma or deer skin on which to seat, Kusha grass on his fingers and reciting Vedas. Narada visited Jambu dwipa with the scene of Yagna Sharma. The Brahmana visited the banks of River Vedavati in Vidisha Nagar; there was a Vaishya called Seerabhadra and the Vaishya extended all courtesies to the Brahmana and politely invited him for lunch. Bhagavan Krishna in the disguise of the Brahmana smiled and blessed the Vaishya saying that his business and farm-work might flourish. From there both Krishna and Narada moved on to Veni Village on the banks of Ganges and met a very poor Brahmana called Goswami. Krishna in disguise along with Narada too in disguise told the Brahmana that they were coming to that Place from a very far off area and would like to be their guest for food, shelter and night halt. Next morning while leaving, Krishna told his host that let his farm not produce enough food and let his family not secure children!! Narada wondered that while Krishna did not accept the Vaishya's food, nor his home comfort, but still he blessed him to let his business and farming flourish; but in the case of the miserably poor Brahmana with no recourse to fall back still managed to make the guests fairly well but Bhavan Krishna instead of blessing him to let his farming flourish and so should his family, did not bless the Brahmana at all! Krishna replied to Narada that while the well-to-do

Vaishya did not have to exert to provide excellent food and luxurious bed to sleep in, where as the poor Brahmana went out of the way to provide maximum possible adjustments; the Vaishya deserved a blessing for more prosperity but the poor Brahmana dereserved Mukti but not worldly gains! Further on Shri Krishna took Narada to Kannouj and hastened to take bath in a lake in the Nagar. Narada emerged as a highly gorgeous and romantic 'Kanya' and Shri Krishna disappeared. Narada who forgot his memory attracted the attention of the Kanya and proposed marriage to her which the woman readily accepted; the wedding took place in a formal manner as a queen. She carried on with the duties of a house-wife and procured children and grand children and got fully engrossed in 'Samsara'. After a few years the King was defeated in a battle but the children and grand children were killed. The queen cried out hoarse at the tremendous loss that befell on the family and fainted. Krishna reappeared in the form of an elderly Brahmana woman and consoled the queen saying that the whole world was going on the steam of Vishnu Maya; there were lakhs of Kings and queens, thousands of Indras and nobody could ever predict what would happen next minute! The world was an illusion and to believe in its permanent nature would be futile and foolish; some persons would enjoy and at the same time some were victims of death; the world was a drama and human beings were 'dramatis personae'. So saying the elderly lady persuaded the queen to take bath in the same Lake where Narada took the bath at Kannouj earlier and as soon as he had the dip he came out as Narada again! Krishna told Narada that that was Vishnu Maya all about and disappeared!

### 'Paapa-Punya Phala Prapti' (Retribution and Reward)

Bhagavan Shri Krishna cautioned King Yudhishtara that each and every act of human beings-noble or otherwise-was duly recorded and punishments and recompenses are awarded by the Supreme Justice accordingly. Indeed, one's own conscience or moral voice within is normally the inward monitor of the actions. But depending on the differences of the 'Chitta Vritthi' (status of the conscience) - ranging from 'Sthula' (blatant or obvious), 'Sukshma' (concealed), and 'Ati Sukshma' (obscure) - the intensity of one's action is judged and evaluated. But Shri Krishna referred only to the tasks of 'gross' nature and not the quailified nuances. Normally there are three kinds of 'Manasika Paapaas' or mind-borne sins viz. mental aberrations centering on other women, objectionable thoughts about others and 'Kukarmas' (undesirable acts) detrimental to others. There are five kinds of 'Vachaka Paapaas' (tongue-borne) viz. 'Aniyantrita Pralaapas' (loose talk), 'Apriya Bhashana' (Undesirable talk), 'Asatya Bhashana' (False talks or Untruths), 'Para ninda' (accusations) and 'Pishunata' (back-biting / slandering). Four kinds of 'Kayaka Papaas'or body-based sins viz. 'Abhakshya bhakshan' (consuming the non-consumable), 'Himsa' (violence), 'Midhya kamasevan' (false living) and 'Paradhana-harana (stealing other's money). All these kinds of twelve tasks are blatantly qualified for retribution that are valid for entry to 'Naraka'. In respect of those sinners who disbelieve, dislike or deride Vishnu of Maha Deva worst possible hells are opened. Those who commit the 'Maha Pancha Patakas' or the Five Greatest Sins viz. Brahma hatya (killing a Brahmana), Suraa paana (indulging in intoxicants), 'Asteya' Stealing Gold, Guru Patni Gamana (Sleeping with the Wife of One's own Guru) and who commend the earlier sins are also certain to enter 'Ghora Narakas'. Shri Krishna then described 'Upa Patakas' to Yudhishtara such as the following:

Declaring charity to Brahmanas and not keeping the word, steal the money of Brahmanas, possession of Great Ego, unwarranted anger, arrogance, ingratitude, mean-mindeness, excessive interest in other's affairs, jealousy of deserving and fortunate persons, plans to take away other women, sex with virgins, involving in business deals related to children, women and others, mismanage or misuse 'Stree dhana'or money pertaining to women, non-clearance of debts; criticise Devatas, Agni, Sadhus, cows, Brahmanas, Kings, Officials, Pativratas and all noble persons and so on. Those who have links woth the sinners are aslo considered as perpetrators. Those who commit sins by mistake or unwittngly could perform 'prayaschitta' (purification) with the approval of a Guru an elderly/experienced person. Those who perform sins by the thought, word and deed (Manasa Vachaa Karmnaa) are liable to experience retribution and equally are those who keep company to, or be a part of and approve the act knowinly or unwittingly by the perpetrator. In ther words, those who act, involve, approve or evidence the deed are all

considered to be liable but for the degrees of involvement. In the Court of Justice of Yamapuri, the Lekhak (Writer)-in-Chief is Chitragupta who computes or maintains the Records of every individual. The stored fund of sins/ good deeds are stated to show with the details of punishments / rewards indicating the precise nature of offence, the places / time frames and all relevant data; this information is not only classified but has no interest / relevance to other parties! While 'Punyatmas' or those who have performed good tasks in life pass through the same distance at good speed and without much strain, the 'Papaatmas' struggle a lot by the wreched route full of thorns, gravel, stones, ups and downs, iron needles and mud; the passage would be full of fire, lions and such other cruel animals, snakes, scorpions, leeches, and frightening figures of Shakini, Dhakini and Piscachas. The unending route had no light, tree shades, and water. The Yamadutas drag the sinner bodies with blood, gaping wounds and dried tongues without break or rest and the situation of the dragged bodies would defy description! As the vision of Yamadharma Raja would get nearer, his visage spewed fire and just near him was Mrithyu Devata who like kaalagni was black, surrounded by 'Yama dutas' fully armed with innumerable weapons ready to destroy, and in the normal context a soul would be relieved by death but having arrived at the door of death itself, there could not be a death by shock but only be by thousands of shocks physically and mentally! In the seventh Patala there was pitch darkness in which twenty eight crore 'Jeevas' awaiting their sentence in their turns. Yamadutas instructed some of the Jeevas to hang up by huge trees upside down with iron chains binding their feet too tight; they were helpless excepting repenting their wrong actions as why they were stealing, keeping contacts with other women and making mockeries of Devas, Rishis and Brahmanas! The sinners are also pierced with hot-red iron nails and at the same time bitten by poisonous snakes; as and when the body wounds are slightly less painful they are forcibly opened and applied with salt and chillis! The 'paapatmas' are fried in boiling hot oils and after allowing the body parts become less hot, let dogs and cats bite the freshly cooked meat pieces of hands, fingers, leg pieces and brains! Those who resorted in their erstwhile lives ate 'Abhakshya Bhakshya' or the prohibited materials are forced to pull out their tongues. The Sinners who talked harsh and harassed their parents have to face hot fire balls and have the facial parts like ears, nose, eyes and cheeks fried part by part! Those who took food in utter disregard for guests are thrown into 'Asitalavan' Naraka. Yamdutas force those sinners to embrace molten hot iron pillars as punishment for experiencing other women, or unlawful bed-mates. Similarly those women who led unlawful experiences face the same kind of treatment of hot embraces! Similar experiences are meted out to those parts of body such as tongue for shouting and criticising, hands for beating others, kicking for legs, etc. Thus depending on the kind of sin committed, its intensity and impact, various permutations and combinations of retributions are made available. After the experiences so designed and executed are completed, then decisions are taken about the type of next birth of the Jeeva as a tree or a worm, a bird, animal, reptile or if fortunate as a human being at a destination, status and future of the Jeeva once again.

### Significance of 'Vratas', 'Danas' and 'Snanas'

Keeping the aforesaid in keen view, every human being on earth needs to re-discover one-self and within the limited time available ahead in the current life resort to virtuous tasks so clearly described in various Scriptures that the delay to practise is the only factor and none else! Unfortunately, the pull of illusions, outward attractions, a state of indifference and non-chalance tend to slow down the process of self-awakening and the golden opportunity of the instant human birth is being unfulfilled and slipped by away! Let this not happen. The various ways of Self-Awakening range from good deeds, good behaviour and good words; at the other end of the balance are Japas, Tapas, Yagnas, Mantras, Tantras, Yogas, Sacrifices and several other means. The Holy Book of Bhavishya Purana prescribes Vratas related to specific aspects, targets, purposes and 'Vidhanas' or Procedures. A Vrata is a purified effort aiming at aligning the self with the Almighty as expressed in various nomenclatures, forms and features all belonging to the same, unique, everlasting and permanent Super Energy Known and Unknown, Very Far and Within the Self! One could put into practice a Vrata or as many as possible, since these are the short-cut routes to reach Paramatma by even one way and indeed even that one way could be the glorious Golden Route!

The 'Uttara Parva' of Bhavishyottara Purana (as distinct from Bavishya Purana) is a compendium of Vratas, Danaas and Snaanas-an independent Attachment of the Main Bhavishya Purana. Some of the popular Vratas in the Attachment are mentioned below:

### Ananta Chaturdashi Vrata

Lord Krishna commended the Ananta Chaturdashi Vrata to Yudhishtara since the word 'Ananta' purports the concept of Time which was eternal and never ending. Just as Bhagavan was known by countless names as Vishnu, Jishnu, Hara, Shiva, Brahma, Bhaskara, Sesha and Ishwara, Ananta was another such name. In the days of yore, there was a Brahmana called Sumantu in the Vasishtha Gotra in Krita Yuga; he was married to Diksha the daughter of Bhrigu Maharshi and the new couples were blessed with a girl child named Sheila but unfortunately Diksha died soon. Sumantu remarried again Karkasha but she was vicious, cruel and mischievous. Sumantu was concerned about the marriage of Sheila. Finally he was able to fix up a wedding with Muni Kaundinya and Sumantu suggested that by way of family convention some gifts and money to be spared. But the reaction of Karkasa was highly negative and destroyed the material on the Marriage Platfom threw the new coulpes out! Kaundinya and Sheila were badly insulted and returned back to Kaundinya's abode by a bullock cart. By about the afternoon, they had to cross a river and Shiela noticed many women performing puja and enquired the details of the Vrata. She took bath and made a Mandala in which Anantha Swarupa was installed and worshipped with Gandha, Pushpa, Dhupa and Deepa. For Naivedya, Shiela cooked rice with normal condiments and ghee, half of which was given to Brahmanas along with Dakshina and the rest by way of Prashad. Sheila prepared a 'Thoran' (thread) mixed with turmeric powder with fourteen 'Grandhis' (knots), showed to Paramatma and tie up on left hand wrist for women and on right wrist on men and while winding up the Thoran, recite the following Mantra: Anantha Samsara Maha Samudrey Magnaan Samabhyuddhara Vasudeva, Ananta Rupey viniyojitatmahyananta rupaaya Namo Namastey/ (Vasudeva! I am drowning in this huge Ocean of Samsara; kindly liberate me from the depths of the Ocean and let me be absorbed me into you!). After fastening the Thoran, the couples ate the Prashad with full faith and got into their bullok cart back to their village but the erstwhile cottage got converted into a splendid Palace as by virtue of the Vrata of Ananta Chaturdashi: Ananta Swami smiled and bestowed such riches that neither Sheila nor Kaundinya could ever dream of! The normally modest and highly devoted Sheila gradually got intoxicated with the sudden arrival of prosperity; she called her step-mother Karkasi to their house and bragged about their unexpected fortune; just as Karkasi threw Sheila out of her house after her wedding with Sage Kaudinya, Shiela magnified negligible issues out of proportion and summarily threw Karkasi out with all her vengence. In fact, she neglected her daily worship of Bhagavan Ananta Rupa and her self-conceit assumed large poportions in the name of Social Status! Finally, she discarded the Fourteen-knotted Raksha Thoran as a burden and nuisance. Her husband cautioned Sheila to behave more politely and her arrogance was replaced with ego, much less with modesty! The husband abandoned the Palace and his wife and shifed to Ashrams in Forests out of desperation. He started serarching for the Ananata Swarup's Idol which Sheila rejected wantonly. Muni Kaundinya started searching for the Idol from Place to Place; he adopted the life style of a Brahmachari, stopped taking food, always in the meditation of Ananta Deva and like a lunatic kept on enquiring of the Ananta Deva Vigraha; he asked a tree in a forest, a passing cow, the waterbody Pushkarini, and even a donkey! Since none responded about the whereabouts of the Idol, he swooned finally and was dumped in a remote corner of the forest unconciously. The Bhagavan was extremely pleased with the undying faith and pure hearted devotion of the Muni and manifested himself before the devotee who on regaining consciousness expressed his sin of neglect and utter disregard of the deity! He said most regrettably to pardon him for the unpardoanable: Paapoham paapakarmaahum paapaatmaa Paapa sambhavah, paahi maamPundareekaaksha Sarvapaapa harobhava, Adya mey saphalam janma jeevitam cha sujeevitam/ (Bhavan! I am the sin, the sinner and the personification of sin; is it possible for you the most merciful Pandarikaasha to absolve me of all my 'Paapas'! Then Bhagavan replied that tree which was a Brahmana never granted 'Vidya daan'; the cow which was a barren land in the past birth and thus became a cow; the water body Pushkarini in the earleir birth wasof two sisters Dharma and Adharma and their arguments were unending and hence their waves

clash always and the donkey was an elephant in the past which was arrogant thus turned as a donkey! Such were the twists of fate! Meanwhile Sheila lost her fortune and regretted her grave mistakes. Both of them performed the Ananta Vrata again earnestly and regained riches but never left Ananta!

# Shri Krishna Janmashtami Vrata:

King Yudhishtar requested Shri Krishna to give the essentials of Krishna Janmashtami Vrata and the Lord recalled that when the cruel King Kamsa of Mathura was killed by Janardana, Devi Devaki cried out by keeping Krishna on her shoulders and Vasudeva embraced both Krishna and Balarama and said that the momentous day of Kamsa's death had afterall arrived that he was able to witness the death scene by himself. The persons who surrounded the four of them were anxious to know as to when the posterity should be fittingly celebrate Krishna's day since there were many such remarkable days of his magnificence eversince his birth! Then Krishna replied that the best day of the celebration would be his birthday, the Janmashtami in Bhadrapada Krishna Paksha at midnight in the Rohini Star time as Surya was in Simha Rasi and Chandra was in Vrishabha Rasi (Simha rasi gatey Suryem gaganey jaladaakuley, MaasiBhadrapad –eshtabhyam Krishnapakshordharaatrakey, Vrishabha rashisthiteychandrey nakshatrey Rohinaayayutey). Krishna proclaimed that his birthday should be celebrated by perfoming the Vrata on this day at Mathura first and all over the World later on in each and every household. Yudhishtara asked about the procedure of the Vrata and Bhagavan Shri Krishna asserted that the performance of this Vrata would destroy the sins of the Karta's previous seven births. *Praatah kruta* nityakritah pragmukhoh Desakaalou samkeertya tatthatkaaley saptamaadi satvepi Prathana bhuta mashtami meva samkeertya Shi Krishna preethyartham Janmaashtami Vratam karishye:: ithi samkalpayet/ (After the morning ablutions, seated facing the East, a proper declaration be made to perform Krishna Janmaastami Vrata); an improvised 'Sutika Griha' or the birth place of the Lord be made and the Idol of Krishna with accompaniments like the 'Ayudhas' (Arms) and 'Abharanas' (Ornaments) be arranged along with the Idols of Devaki and Vasudava as also of Yashoda and Nanda, Balarama, and Devis Rukmini/ Maha Lakshmi and others; Vasudeva was of the Avatar of Kashyapa Muni, Devaki of Aditi, Balaram of Seshanag, Nanda of Daksha Prajapati, Yashoda of Diti, Garga Muni of Brahma and Kamsa of Kalanami. Decorated on these lines, a devotee would arrange with reverence for all the Puja requirements like 'Gandha', Camphor, Agarbatti, fruits and flowers, coconuts, butter, Akshata and 'Naivedya' as offering (Prashad). First of all, Devi Devaki be prayed to as follows: Gaayadbhih kainnaraadaihi Satataparivrita Venu veena nanaadair bhrungaadarshakumbha pramarakritakaraih sevyamaana Muneendraih/Paryankey swastrutey ya mudita ramanaah putrini samyagaastey, saa Devi Deva Mataa Jayanti Suvadana Devaki Kaanta rupaa/ (Salutations to you Mother of Bhagavan Krishna, Devi Devaki who is of the Avatar of Aditi Devi, in whose honour are several Kinnaras and other celestial musicians are playing Venu, Veena and other musical instruments in praise of You and also many Munis carrying 'Mangala Kalashas' and 'Chamaras' to serve Deva mata Devaki of Aditi's 'Amsa'. Also some were engaged in praying to Devi Lakshmi with the Mantra: 'Namo Devyai Maha Devyai Shivaayai satatam namah' and also with the Mantras saying 'Om Devyai namah, Om Vaasudevaya namah, Om Balabhadraya namah, Om Krishnaya namah, Om Subhadrayai namah, Om Nandayai namah and Om Yashidayai namah to separate Pratimas. The Prayers are basically directed to Lord Krishna as follows: Anagham Vaamanam Shourim Vaikuntham Purushottamam, Vaasu Devam Hrisheekesham Madhavam Madhu sudanam, Vaaraaham Pundareekaasham Nrisimham Brahmana priyam, Damodaram Padmanaabham Keshavam Garudadwajam, Govindamachutam Krishna manantam aparaajitam, Adhokshajam Jagad beejam Sarva sthikyanta kaaranam, Anaadi nidhanam Vishnum Trilokesham Tri vikramam, Narayanam Chaturbaahum Shankha Chakra Gadaadharam, Peetaambara dharam Nityam Vanamaalaa vibhushitam, Sri Vatsaangam Jagatsethum Sri Dharam, Shri Patim Harim/ After the Prayers, Vedic Services are accorded by reciting the following Mantras: Yogeswaraya Yogasambhavaaya Yoga pataye Govindaaya namo namah –Snaanam samarpayami; YogeswaraayavYagna sambhavaaya

Yagna pataye Govindaya namo namah: with this Mantra, perform Anulepana, Arghya, Dhupa, Deepa etc.; thereafter, Naivedya be performed and finally 'Deepaarpana' with the Mantra saying: Dharmeswaraya Dharma pataey Dharma sambhavaya Govindaya namo namah. On the same lines, other Idols like Chandra, Vasudeva, Devaki, Nanda, Yashoda and Bala Deva should be worshipped. At the time of Chandrodaya, Arghya be offered saying: Ksheerodarnava sambhuta Agni netra samudbhava, Grihaanaarghya Shashaankendo Rohinya sahito mama. At midnight, one 'Ahuti' of jaggery and ghee to Agni Deva be offered to Vasundhara and puja performed to Shashti Devi. On Navami morning an Utsav of Lord Krishna be done and bhojan to Brahmanas arranged and dakshina given to them saying 'Krishnome preeyataam' and also recite the Mantra: Ya devam Devaki Devi Vasu devadjeejanam, Bhoumasya Braahmano guptayi tasmai Brahmaatmaney namah/then the Braahmanaas bless saying Shantirasthu Shivam chaarastu. Lord Krishna told Yudhishtara that who ever did the Vrata on these lines would be blessed with good progeny, health, Dhana-Dhanya, Sadgriha, and long and contented life. At the Region where this Vrata is performed would never be subjected by Anavrishti (famine), earth quakes and such natural calamities, poverty, 'Akaala Mritu' or untimely deaths, widowhoods, misfortunes, robberies and quarrels.

### Madana Dwadashi Vrata

Yudhishtara desired to learn about the Madana Dwadashi Vrata from Bhagayan Shri Krishna, in the context of which Devi Diti the mother of Daityas gave birth to forty nine Marut Ganas. In the past, Vasishtha and other Sages described about the procedure of the Vrata. The 'Vratadhari' on Chaitra Shukla Dwadashi has to set up a pot full of white rice, decorate the pot with sandal wood paste and close the top with two pieces of white cloth and inside the pot keep seasonal fruits and sugarcane; this container might also be full of raw eatable material like pulses etc. as also a gold piece as per one's capacity. Over this pot be arranged a copper utensil full of jaggery / sugar cane juice and cover it with plantain leaves and sandal paste, agarbattis etc.; arrange for bhakti hymns and instrumental music overnight; give away the pot as a charity to a Brahmana the next morning; treat the Brahmana with good food and Dakshina and address the Brahmana to say that may Bhagavan Janardana be pleased this 'anushthan' or service. In this way every dwadasi the drill be followed and in the previous night, the Vratadhari should eat only 'Amlak phal' and sleep on the ground. On the thirteenth month trayodasi the pot should be given away with lots of grains, edible raw maretials like pulses, vegetables and fruits with jaggery, ghee etc. with a bigger copper vessel and gold ornament as charity, treat the Brahmana with good food, clothing and dakshina and of course lots of sugarcane! By so performing the Vrata for a year with sincerity, the worship bestows excellent progeny. Having performed the Vrata, Devi Diti asked a boon from Maharshi Kashyap that she should beget a child who would kill Indra. She took all kinds of precautions during her pragnancy period to protect the boy in all possible ways; she took care of food regulations, never allowed to become temperamental, took several precautions to be happy and protected herself from enemies. But in the very tricky hours of a late night and the small hours of the day, Diti was fast asleep when Indra by using his Shaktis of Anima etc. entered Diti's garbha and sliced the embrio into forty nine pieces and at the time of delivery gave out as many children who were subsequently called the 'Maruganas'. And thus Diti's evil desire to kill Indra no doubt did not materialise but the Marud ganas were famous as virtuous joining the ranks of Devas!

### Muktabharana Saptami Vrata:

Bhagavan Krishna told that once Maharshi Lomesh arrived at Mathura and after comforting himself with the 'Atithya' or the status of an important guest, he enquired Devaki Devi as to how many of her boys met with instant killings by the cruel Kamsa; this saddened Devaki and wondered as why he was asking this strange question! The Maharshi explained that in the past, there was a Queen called Chandramukhi who too was unfortunate in losing her children like-wise and as she performed the Vrata her children who were dead for long got revived as a result of this sacred vrata! Lomesha Muni narrated further that there was a King of Ayodhya named Nahush and his queen Chandramukhi. The queen along with her companion Manamanika the wife of Raja Purohit went for bathing in Sarayu River. They noticed that

several ladies were performing a Vrata and enquired of is importance. They all replied that the Vrata provided many fulfillments of their requests and the queen and her companion also decided to follow suit; after bathing in the River they were to worship to a Shiva-Parvati Idiol but after taking a vow that the concerned devotee women should always wear a golden thread on their right wrists, a ring be made on ring finger and that that they should never fail to perform daily pujas. But unfortunately one day when the Queen had to attend to some urgent Royal Tasks, she failed to turn up from her daily duties and missed the chance of worshipping Shiva and Parvati on the banks of Sarayu and her companion too did not. As there was a failure, the Queen became a monkey and har companion a hen. But both of them remembered their friendship and their failure to follow the Rules of the Vrata. In their subsequent births the queen became Ishwari of Malva desha and her companion was born as the wife of Purohit of the same King as Bhushana. After long gap of her wedding, Ishwari got a son but died when he was nine years old. But Bhushan's many children were growing fine. The queen got jealous and got Bhushan's sons killed. But Bhushan's sons were revived and the queen wondered how! Bhushan then explained that this was all due to the great Vrata called Muktabharan Saptami of Bhadrapada Shukla Paksha; on that day Shiva Parvati worship be executed by way of 'Atma Nivedan' or offering the self to them and a gold or a siver thread must be worn around the rightwrist always. The queen felt ashamed of her actions of killing Bhushan's sons who got revived and also neglecting the Vrata in the previous birth and performed the Vrata again sincerely by following the regulations most religiously again and regained happiness of begetting good children and brought fame to the King and the citizens.

#### Go Vatsa Dwadashi Vrata

King Yudhishtar appealed to Bhagavan Krishna that in the Maha Bharata Battle thousands of soldiers, Kings and a number of Great Personalities like Bhishma, Drona, Kalinga Raja, Karna, Shalya, Duryodhana most of whom were close relatives died and Pandavas committed untold sins in the process and could there be a way out to raze down or at least mitigate the impact of the sins! Bhagavan Krishna replied that a highly potent 'Go Vatsa Dwadashi Vrata' would be the befitting answer to demolish the sins and explained the background and procedure of performing the Vrata. Several Tapasvis were busy with meditation atop the Mount of Namavratadhara and Bhagavan assumed the form of an old Brahmana who was shivering with age and carrying a stick to support, while Devi Parvati took a form of a cow. At the time of churning the Ksheera Sagara by Devas and Danavas, five renowned cows viz. Nanda, Subhadra, Surabhi, Susheela and Bahula. Among these were Lokamata Parvati was also stated to have emerged. The five Sacred Cows thus surfaced were given to the care of Maharshis Jamadagni, Bharadwaj, Vasishtha, Asit and Gautami. The six products of the Cows viz. Gomaya (dung), Rochana (Chhaj / foam), Mutra (Urine), Dugdha (Milk), Dadhi (Curd) and Ghrita (Butter) are all supposed to be Sacred. Gomava is the beloved of Shiva and the source of Bilva Tree which is also considered as Shri Vriksha and is thus liked by Devi Lakshmi. Also Gomaya is the source of Lotus seeds. 'Gorochan' is extensively used for medicines and is known as a highly propitious material for many end-uses. Go mutra is the producer of 'Guggul'seeds which are nice to look at and have good smell. These guggul seeds are a part of food by Devas, especially of Shiva. All the useful seeds of the world are stated to be from Go Dugdha. Go Ghruta is the root of Amrit which satisfies the hunger of Devas. Is is well known that Brahmanas and Cows are the two most sought after species of 'Srishti'; the heart of Brahmanas is the seat of Veda Mantras, while that of Cows is the source of 'havis'. Cows are the origin of Yagnas so intimately conneceted with all Devas; cow horns represent in a coarse form both Brahma and Vishnu. On the top of the horns are situated with the Sacred Tirthas of the Universe. In the middle of the horns is Shiva's seat. Devi Gauri is seated on a cow's forehead; Kartikeya represents the nose and in both the nostrils are two Nagas viz, Kambal and Ashvatar; in both the ears are set by the two Ahwani Kumars; Chandra and Surya in the

Eyes; Vasuganas are represented by the teeth; Varun in the tongue; Sarasvati in the kuhara; 'gandasthalis' represent Yama and Yaksha; both the Sandhyas in 'Aoushthas'; Indra in the Greeva; Rakshasas in 'Kakud'; on both the sides of Parshnis are 'dhows' and gangas represent four legs illuminated by Dharma! In the 'Prishtha bhaga' are Ekadasha Rudras; in all the 'Sandhis' are the seats of Varun; Sronitata is the seat of Pitras; in the Kapolas are human beings; Apana Vayu is the seat of Swaha Rupa; Go mutra has Ganga Herself; Go maya as Yamuna; the hairs of the cow's body represent thirty three crores of Devaganas; Udar has mountains and Prithvi and forests; Payodharas represent Maha Samudras; kheeradharas have clouds, rains etc; in Jathara a cow possesses 'Garhyapatyagni'; in its heart is situated with Dakshinaagni; in a cow's nech is set by 'Aahavaneeyagni' and in Taalu is the 'Sabhyagni'; Asthiyas have mountains and Majja is the seat of Yagnas. All the Vedas are also situated in the Cow itself! Bhagavan Krishna told Yudhishtara that once Lord Shiva asked a few Maha Munis to protect a Cow and calf for two days as he would return then. The Munis took extreme care of the cow. After a while a tiger appeared and started frightening the cow and calf. Enve the Rishigana got frightened and sought ways and means of taking away the attention of the tiger from the cow and calf; the calf out of fright started jumping up and down and made defeaning sounds. The Munis utilised a Sacred Bell, called Dhridhagiri, that Brahma gave the Munis to face such eventualities. The hooves of the Cow and calf got caught in a Shila (boulder) and even now the marks in the broken khuras (hooves) are evident with the struggle of the Shila, which indeed is Shiva Linga. From the skies Devas and Kinnaras praised Bhagavan Shankara who assumed the form of the tiger and the Cow was Devi Parvati. Those who visit River Narmada and touch the Shiva Linga at the Shambhu Tirtha should get rid of 'Brahma hatya mahapathaka'. Meanwhile, Maha Deva discarded the Vyaghra Rupa and appeared mounted on the 'Vrishabha' along with Devi Uma on his left side, Ganesha and Kartikeya and accompanied by him are Nandi, Mahakaal, Shringi, Verrabhadra, Chamunda, and Ghantaakarna, followed by Matrikas, Bhutas, Yakshas, Raakshasas, Devas, Danavas, Gandharvas, Munis, Vidyadharas, and Nagas as well as their wives.

On Sukla Paksha Dwadashi of Kartika Month, Munis performed a Vrata called 'Go Rupa dharini Devi Uma' named Nandini along with a calf. The Vrata was made popular by King Uttanapada and his wife Suniti. The King's another wife Suruchi made several attempts to kill Dhruva out of jealousy, and each time she made such efforts, Dhruva came out hale and hearty. Suruchi then asked Suniti as which magic was at work that each time Dhruva came out unscathed despite many attempts at his life. Suniti then explained that she was performing the Vrata regularly and Surchi also did the Vrata annu hence she was able to beget a son, her husband's esteem and the primary position in the kingdom after the King. Both the wives were happy in their own ways and Dhruva is visible in the skies till date as a Dhruvatara! The Procudure of the Vrata is ti take bath in a river or a water body, take one meal a day, and on the next afternoon worship a cow and calf with Pushpa, Gandha, Akshata, Kumkuma, Deepa, Urad-made Vada savoury and recite the Matra: Om Maata Rudraanaam duhita Vasunaam Swasaaditya anaam- amrutasya naabhih, pra nu vocham chikititushey janaaya Maagaamanaagaamadithim Vasishtha namo namah swaaha; provide grass and by touching the cow and the calf ask for pardon by the Mantra: Om sarva deva mayey Devi lokaanaam Shubha Nandini, Maatarmamambhilashitam saphalam kuru Nandini! The worship is thus concluded with providing water and performing prosration in reverence and eat siple food without using frying and sleep on the ground that night. Those who execute the Vrata as above would ensure safety of self, life partner and children, besides reaching 'Goloka' for a number of years.

[Some of the popular Vratas were referred to other Puranas like Shri Rama Navami Vrata, Laksha Varti Vrata and Chitra Gupta Vrata in Skanda Purana; Ksheerabdhi Vrata in Bramhma Kaivarta Purana; Amavasya Somavati Vrata and Rishi Panchami Vrata in Bhavishotthara Purana, Shatavarti Vrata in Brahmanda Purana and Trikarti Vrata in Nrisimha Purana.]

### Brahma- Brahmanda-Bramha Vaivarta Puraanas

#### Preface

Paramatma who is the Personification of Purity and Permanence; who is devoid of features or characteristics like Existence, Birth, Growth, Evolution, Decadence and Destruction; the Unique and Singular Supreme Power as the Sthaanu Rupa manifested Maya Prakriti and thus created . Thus Brahama was responsible for the further creation. Purusha-Prakriti, Maha Tatwa-Kshetrajna, Brahmanda-Tri Murtis was the sum up of of the Essence of Brahmanda Purana. Brahma Vaivarta had underlined Shri Krishna as the Samsaara Karta and Bharta too.

#### 1. Brahma Purana

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#### **ESSENCE OF BRAHMA PURANA**

Yasmaadsarvamidam Prapancharachitam Maayaa Jagatjnaayatey, Yasmintishthati yaati chaantasamayey Kalpaanukalpey punah/Yaamdhyaatwaa Munah Prapancha rahitam vindanti Moksham dhruvam, Tamvandey Purushotthamaakhya mamalam Nithyam Vibhum nischalam/ Avikaraya Shuddhaaya Nithyaaya Paramatmaney, Sadaikarupa rupaaya Vishnavey Sarva Jishnavey/ Namo Hiranya Garbhaaya Haraye Shankaraayacha, Vaasudevaaya Taraaya Sarga sthitam karmaney/ Yekaaneka Swarupaaya Sthula Sukshmaatmaney Namah, Avyakta Vyakta Bhutaaya Vishnavey Mukti hetavey/ Sarga Sthiti Vinaashaaya Jagatoyojaraamarah, Mula Bhuto Namastasmai Vishnavey Paramaatmaney/

(May I pay my obeisances to Paramatma who materialises this Illusory Universe, preserves it and demolishes it Kalpa after Kalpa again and again; to whom Great Sages meditate to seek to visualise that imperceptible yet permanent Being; and to that everlasting and self-illuminated Truth called Purushotthama!)

(My homage to Paramatma who is the Personification of Purity and Permanence; who is devoid of features or characteristics like Existence, Birth, Growth, Evolution, Decadence and Destruction; the Unique and Singular Supreme Power manifested in Three Entities of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara representing the Tasks of Creation, Preservation and Termination; who is of the Realisable and Unknown Variations; the Gross and the Miniscule Forms and the Root-Cause of the Universe!)

### Primary and Secondary Creations by Paramatma / Brahma and Manvantaras

Maharshi Lomaharshana, the disciple of Vyasa Deva, addressed a mammoth Meet of Sages presided by Maha Muni Suta at 'Naimishaaranya' (where the 'Kala Chakra' or the Cycle of Time stopped as Kali Yuga made its appearance). He initiated discussion on Brahma Purana by the delineation of Universal Creation by the Supreme Energy of Paramatma as also his Alternative Power called Prakriti / Maya, which further materialised 'Maha Tatwa' or the Great Awareness. The Maha Tatwa made possible the

appearance of 'Ahamkara' or the Inherent Consciousness which identified a sense of belonging or Identity (Ego in Abstractness). This got transformed into 'Bhutas' or Entities.

In the *Sanatana Srishti*, the First Ever such Entity was created on its own and hence called 'Swayambhu' / Narayana who created 'Apo Naaraa' or the Radiant Water first and was thus known as 'Narayana' who floated on water. He deposited his 'Veerya' or virility as an indication of his resolve to create and as a result there appeared a Golden Egg and floated on the Radiant Water. 'Hiranya garbha' Brahma himself sat in the Egg for a year; the Egg had two parts viz. 'Diva'/Urthva Loka and 'Bhuva'/ Earth, the space in between being 'Aakaasha'. He then created 'Dasa Dishas' or Ten Directions viz. Uttara (North), Ishanya (North-East), Purva (East), Agneya (South-East), Dakshina (South), South-West (Nairutya), West (Paschima), North-West (Vayavya), Urthwa (Overhead) and Athodik (Underneath). Further, he created Kaala (Time), Manasa (Thought), Vaak (Speech), Kaama (Desire), Krodha (Anger), and Rati (Physical joy). Brahma then created Eleven Rudras (Mahaan, Mahatma, Matimaan, Bhishana, Bhayankara, Ritudwaja, Urthwakesha, Pingalaksha, Ruchi, Shuchi, and Kaalaagni Rudra) out of irritation and annoyance and further on the Sapta Rishis viz. Marichi, Atri, Angirasa, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasishtha as his mind-born sons. The Kumara brothers Sanaka, Sandandana, Sanat and Sanatanas were born too but they did not take up Srishti. Brahma created further Vidyut, Vajra, Megha, Rohita, and Indradhanush; Ruk-Yajur-Sama Vedas; Sadhya Devatas and smaller such creations like 'Pakshis'.

As the momentum of creation was very tardy, hence Brahma decided to divide himself into two, one as a male and another as female. The male manifestation was as Manvantara and that of female was as Shatarupa. The latter did penance for ten thousand years and was blessed with a husband named Swayambhu Manu, also known as Vairaja Purusha; each Manvantara comprises Four Maha Yugas. Manu and Shatarupa begot Veera, Priyavrata, and Uttanapada. Veera's daughter was Kanya who married Kardama Prajapati and the latter's sons were Samrat, Kukshi, Virat and Prabhu. Prajapati Atri adopted King Uttanapada who from his wife Sunrita gave birth to Dhruva, Kirtiman, Ayushmaan and Vasu. Dhruva and Shambhu gave birth to Slishta and Bhavya, while the former and Succhhaya begot Ripu, Ripunjaya, Vira, Vrukala and Vrukateja; Ripu and Brihati had their grandon Chakshusa Manu whose progeny included Kutsa and Puru, while Puru and Agneyi gave birth among others to Kratu, Angira and Maya. Anga and Sunitha – who was the daughter of Mriytu Devatha, gave birth to Vena Kumar and his son Pruthu.

King Vena and Prithu Chakravarti: When Vena became the King, he ordered that none should perform Yagnas to Devas but to himself. He was so coneited that he claimed himself as a symbol of bravery, victory and unparalelled knowedge. In fact, he enacted a strict Regulation and enforced it with force. For long time, the Subjects suffered him with great hatred and in course of time the Sages revolted and a day arrived when the latter imprisoned the King; Maharshi Atri, the Kula Guru Atri himself spearheaded the uprising. They churned the King's thighs and there emerged an ugly and frightful Kaala Swarupa who traced the origin of the King's provocative attitude despite his glorious ancestry of Atri Maharshi.Deva's and nobility; they pounded the Kala Swarupa who controlled the King Vena. On rubbing the right shoulder of Vena, there emerged a sparkling and imposing figure armed with bow and celestial arrows donning a 'Kavacha' (body cover), while Vena left for Swarga, as the newly materialised Pruthu saved Vena from a Naraka called 'Pluma'.

The new King Pruthu picked up unprecedented popularity as he proved to be an ideal and highly virtuous Administrator, endeared by Maharshis and commoners alike; there was no fear of 'Adhibhoutika, Adhyatmika and Adhidaivika' problems owing to physical ailments, mental tensions or natural calamities in the Society. This was the first King ever who performed Rajasuya Yagna. It was this illustrious Emperor who controlled the entire Bhumi (Earth), as the latter took the form of a cow, chased and forced her to provide ample milk to one and all in the way that they desired to receive: Pruthu himself milked the cow having converted Swayambu Manu as a calf and milked food grains where as in the regime of King Vena the staple food was fruits and flowers; all other Beings arranged their own representatives as the milkmen, calves and selected their own kind of material as milk; for instance, Rishis made Chandrama is

the calf, Brihaspati as the milkman, Tapomaya Brahma as the milk and Vedas as the container into which to fill up the milk; Devatas made Indra as the calf, Surya as the milkman and Pushtikaarak (highly healthy) food as the milk and a golden container; Pitru Devatas requested Yamaraja as the calf, Antaka Deva as the milkman and 'Swadha' in the form of milk into a silver container; Naagas selected Takshaka as the calf, Iravata Naag as the milkman and 'visharupa dugdha' (milk-like poison) into a 'thumba' container; Asuras appointed Madhu as their milkman, Virochana as the calf and 'Mayaaksheera' or milk in the form of 'Maya' (illusions) to fill up in an iron vessel; Yakshas preferred Kubera as the calf, Rajatanaabha Yaksha as the mikman, Antardhan Vidya as the milk in a 'kacchaa' vessel; Gandharvas opted for Chitraratha as the calf, Suruchi as the milk man, fragrance as the milk, and lotus as the vessel; Rakshasas desired the milkman, calf, milk and the container as Rajatanabha, Sumali, blood and Kapala respectively; Parvatas (Mountains) desired Meru as the milkman, Himalaya as the calf, 'Aoushadhis' as the milk, and a rock as a container; and 'Vrikshas' (Trees) chose Pluksha Tree as the calf, Shaala Vriksha as the milkman, milk cut from trees as also water as the milk and Palaasha as the container. This was how Maharaja Pruthu satisfied all species of Beings under his governance.

# The Origin of Aditya and an outline of Surya Vamsha

After the first Manu Swayambhu, the subsequent Manus were Swarochisha, Uttama, Taamasa, Raivata, Chakshusa and the current Manu Vaivaswata. The Manus to follow would be Saavarni, Bhoutya, Rouchya and four more Meru Savarnyas, thus totalling Fourteen Manus. As regards Vaivaswata, the back ground was that Maharshi Kashyapa and Daksha's daughter gave birth to Vivaswaan / Surya Deva and his wife Sanjna was the daughter of Vishwakarma; their progeny were Prajapati Shraaddha Deva or popularly called as Vaivaswaa Manu, Yama and Yamuna. As Devi Sanjna could not bear the tremendous heat and illumination of Surya, she materialised Chhaya Devi exactly like her and instructed her to serve Surya Deva in all possible ways and left to her father's house but since Vishwakarma pressurised her to return to Surya, she preferred to perform Tapasya in the form of a mare in far off mountain meadows. Meanwhile, Surya Deva without recognising a changed Chhaya Devi as different from Sanjna carried on normally and in course of time, they gave birth to Shanaischara and Saavarna.

As all the children grew up, the elder son Yama Dharma felt a noticeable change in the behaviour of Chhaya Devi and treated her own progeny of with partiality. In an argument with Devi Chhaya, Yama Raja had an argument with her and in a fit of anger raised his foot on her; she cursed Yama that his foot would fall away; Yama the eldest of the children for whom Surya had consideration and esteem convyed the entire incident to Surya Deva who enquired of the facts from Chhaya Devi who broke down and confessed the truth that she was not Sanjna Devi, that she materialised her shadow and so on. Surya approached Vishwakarma who too confirmed that Sanjna did return to his home after giving birth to two sons and a daughter, that she reprimanded her and sent her back to Surya and that he felt she returned to Surya again. In his celestial vision, Surya discovered that Sanjna assumed the form of a mare and had been performing meditation eversince. Surya Deva then assumed too the form of a horse and approached Sanjna the mare. As the mare sought to avoid the horse and turned around, she smelt the semen of the horse and then emerged two boys viz. Ashvini Kumaraas (named as Drasyulas or Naanyutas).

The episode ended happily as Yama Dharmaraja became the Head of Pitru Devas and Lokapalaka of 'Dharma' (Virtue) and 'Nyaaya' (Justice); Saavarana Prajapati was to become a future Manu still engaged in Tapasya atop Meru Mountain; Sanaischara became a powerful Planet; Yamuna turned out to be a River and Twashta or the 'Surya Bimba' (Sun Globe) when rubbed the particles of the periphery got converted as 'Vishnu Chakra' with which Vishnu Deva exterminated the evil Shaktis like Daityas.

Vaivaswa had nine sons viz. Ikshvaaku, Naabhaga, Dhrushta, Sharyaati, Narishyanta, Praamshu, Arishta, Karusha and Prushaghna. Once Vaivaswa performed one Yagna with the objective of begetting a daughter and Maharshi Mirtaavaruna was the Chief Priest; as the Maharshi offered a powerful oblation in the Agni Kunda, there emerged a maiden whom the Manu addressed as Ila and she took the permission of Matraavaruna and went near the Manu; the Manu blessed her, named her as Sudyumna and instructed her

to expand Manu vamsha. She met Budha Deva in marriage and gave birth to Puru; she gave birth further to three sons viz. Utkal (whose Kingdom was the present Orissa), Gaya (the Capital of Gaya desha) and Vinataashva. Puru's Kingdom was distributed into parts to accommodate the nine sons too. Ikshvaaku became the Ruler of Madhyadesaha. Ila and Sudyumna was one and the same but alternatively as a woman and as a man for each six months. Naashyanta's son was Shaka; Nabhaaga begot Ambarisha; Dhrishta and Karusha begot sons of the same name; Pramshu was issueless; Sharyati got twin children-a boy named Anarta and a girl Sukanya who was wedded to Chyavana Maharshi. Anarta begot Raiva, and the latter's son was Raivata, also known as Kakudmi who became the King of Kushasthala. Once Raivata accompanied by his daughter Revati visited Brahma loka and the latter was at that time engrossed in 'Gandharva Gaana'/ the songs of Gandharva; after the singing session, Brahma when told of the purpose of their visit viz. to bless his daughter of a suitable match for her, Brahma smiled and stated that during his visit to Brahma loka, Yugas rolled by but blessed Revati to return to their place and that she would definitely wed a Mahatma. On return, the father and daughter discovered a complete change of their Place in Dwapara Yuga and on making local enquiries found Balarama, the elder brother of Krishna as a suitable life-partner for Devi Revati; thus the age-difference of Balarama and Devi Revati was a full Yuga!

#### The illustrious Kuvalaashva became Dundhumaara:

Among the hundred sons of Ikshvasu, Vikukshi or Shashaad was famous; Vikukhis progeny were Yavanaashwa- then Shravasta-Brihadashwa and Kuvalaakshva. Dundhu was the most notorius Daitya of the times and Kuvalaakshva was the mighty opponent. The latter accompanied by his hundred strong sons and Maharshi Uttanka challenged Dundhu. The saviour of the Universe Vishnu entered the body of Kuvalaashva, even as there was a celestial Voice from the Skies saying that no doubt the demon Dundbhu was difficult to destroy but Kuvalaashva would certainly be killed. Since the demon had the boon of invincibility, Kuvalaashya asked his sons to dig up sea beds deep into drenches on the shores and having encircled the sea from sides attacked the demon to push him out from the water; thus exposed the water-resident Dundhu was pulled out and killed. Mahatma Uttanka blessed Kuvalaashva for the courage and war-tactics adopted by him and gave him the boons of glory, prosperity and Swarga prapti to his deceased sons in the battle. In the era of Kuvalaashva, his Administration was unprecedented as the Subjects were contented fully as social evils were few and far between and Dharma and Nyaya prevailed in full swing. It was in his lineage of progeny were born the stalwart Sovereigns like Yavanaashva-Mandhata, his sons Purukutsa, and Muchukunda.

### Satyavrata and Trishanku Swarga-Harischandra and Sagara:

Purukutsa's fourth generation King Tridhanva had a son Satyavrata as who as a Prince took away a commoner's bride from the 'Vivaha Mandala' (wedding place) by force and as per the advice of the Raja Guru Vasishtha, the Prince was socially ostracised; he lived in the outskirts of the City in the copmany of Chandala. But he saved Vishwamitra's wife and family from hunger. In gratitude the Sage on return from Tapasya kept the boy in his house and the King died, Satyavrata became the King with Vishwamitra as the Raja Guru. When Vishwamitra asked the new King for a boon, Satyavrata desired to enter Swarga with his own human body. Vishwamitra sacrificed a part of the fruits of his Tapasya and despatched him with his mortal self to Swarga. As Swarga did not allow his entry, the Sage as a prestige issue sacrificed considerable fruits of his Tapasya and created the Trishanku Swarga. Vasishta said that Satyavrata made three grave sins: firstly he as a Prince whose task was to enforce Justice and Virtue had erred by kidnapping a bride, secondly he stole a Sacrificial cow of Vasishta from one Yagna, killed and ate its meat and served it to an unsuspecting wife and children and finally tried to reach Swarga albeit by Vishwamitra's courtesy. Satyavrata's son was Harischandra, who was a standing example of Truth and Virtue, harassed by Vishwamitra to such an extent of selling himself, his wife and the resultant death and return to life of their son Rohita. It was in the lineage were born Harischandra, Rohita and Ruru whose grandson was Sagara.

# Sagara and descendant Bhageeratha:

Sagara born with poison (Sa+Gara); King Baahu was a victim of bad habits and King Haihaya occupied the throne of the former and Baahu and his wife Yadavi left for forest life. Baahu died even as Yadavi was carrying a child and prepared for 'Sahagaman' or suicide by jumping into the pyre / fire of the husband's dead body; but Yadavi was already poisoned by Baahu's second wife. Ourva Muni of Bhrugu Vamsha prevented the Sahagamana and rescued her into his 'Ashram'. It was in the Ashram that Yadavi gave birth to Sagara. The latter was brought up by the Muni, taught him Vedas and Shastras, trained him in military skills and blessed him with 'Agneyastra' (The Mantrik arrow of Fire). The accomplished Sagara defeated Haihayas, as also other opponent enemies like Shakaas, Yavanaas, Kambojaas, Paaradas and Pahlava ganas; not only he regained his throne but annexed the Kingdoms of the enemies as well.He performed Ashvamedha Yagna to celebrate his victories and deputed his sons who were sixty thousand strong along with the horse (Maharshi Ourva offered two options to the two wives of Sagara viz. Keshini and Mahati, one with a fruit with sixty thousand seeds and another with just one seed- one full of warriors and another as a Ruler; the one who accepted the big number was given a pot full of embriyos and the other had normal delivery). On way the sacrificial horse was lost; Sagara's sons dug up the sea suspecting that the animal was hidden under the Sea and thus the epithet of Samudra as 'Sagara'. The sons discovered Maharshi Kapila and as the sons harassed the Maharshi, they were all burnt off as ashes instantly excepting four. The elder son Amshuman gave birth to Dilip and the latter was blessed with Bhagiratha who made an all-out effort to bring Ganga River from Swarga to Bharat and the place where the ashes were lying so that the souls of his fore-fathers were redeemed; in this exercise Bhagirath went through such insurmountable obstacles at each step of his Tapasya to gain the confidence of Ganesha, Vishnu, Shiva and Devi Ganga herself! Since Bhagirath was wholly instrumental in this most distinguishing Act Ganga Devi was also known as Bhagirathi. The lineage of Bhagirath included Shruta, Naabhaga, and Ambarisha; thereafter there was a long lineage till Dulip, Raghu, Aja, Dasharatha, Shri Rama Chandra the Epic Hero who firmly stood tall in reference to the immortal Ramayana, his valiant son Kusha and so on. Such was the most glorious chapter of Surya Vamsha and Ikshwaku Vamsha which dominated the Global Scene in the History of Mankind through the two significant Satya and Treta Yugas!

# Manifestation of Chandra Deva and portrayal of his Vamsha

It was stated that Maharshi Atri performed Tapasya for thousand Divya (Divya) years and pushed up his virility upward in his physique during that period; that magnificent deposit got materialised in the form of drops from his eyes and spread out the outstanding illumination all over the Ten Directions. Realising this unprecedented development, Brahma Deva enabled it to take the Swarupa of Chandra Deva who was provided a chariot to travel across the entire Universe. Chandra was seated in the chariot and made twenty one full circles from Prithvi to the Great Samudra. In the process, the unique radiance when it touched Bhumi created 'Anna' (Food grains) and variations like seeds, 'Aoushadhis' (herbal medicines), water and Brahmanas whom he made the Chief. He also organised a mammoth Rajasuya Yagna, which was attended by the 'Who's Who' of the Universe, besides lakhs of Brahmanas to whom 'dakshinas'- Cash money and gifts were given in abundance; nine illustrious Women of universal repute arrived to serve to Chandra viz. Sini, Kuhu, Dyuti, Pushti, Prabha, Vasu, Kirti, Dhruti and Lakshmi. At the end of the Yagna, when Chandra was given 'Avabhruta Snaan' (Sacred bathing at the time of the Principal Sacrifice), he was worshipped by all the Devas and Rishis and he displayed extraordinary humility and honesty. But in course of time, he changed his attitude due to conceit, might and prosperity and committed the greatest sin of enticing his Guru's wife Devi Tara and both of them lived together, despite Brihaspati's warnings. Devas and Maharshis tried their best to prevent such an ugly siutation. Brahma himself chided his nasty and highly immoral activities and intervened but already Tara got pregnant; when confronted by Brahma, Tara confirmed that the child to be born was of Chandra's only. Brihaspati insisted that Tara's derlivery must not be in his residence and when born, Chandra named the child as Budha whom Brahma appointed as a ful-fledged Graha (Planet) as he was a highly accomplished Vidwan

of Vedas and Shastras completely devoid of Chandra's arrogance and selfishness; Budha's placement on the Sky was right opposite that of Chandra and understandably so!

Budha's son was Pururava who was a highly virtuous King and Apsara Urvashi enticed him and gave birth to Ayu, Amaavasu and six other sons. In the lineage of Amaavasu was born Jahnu who performed Sarpa Yagna; Devi Ganga approached Jahnu with a proposal to wed him and flooded the Yagna Shaala but Jahnu desired to marry Kaveri the daughter of Yavanaashva. Since Ganga insisted to marry Jahnu, he got tired of her and drank her up; the Maharshis present begged of Jahnu who agreed to revive her as his daughter and that was why the River was known as Jahnavi. Pururava's another son was Ayu and Ayu's eldest son was the famed Nahusha, who performed ninty nine Aswamedha Yagnas and nearly got the eligibility to Indratva. In fact, Brahma appointed Nahusha as proxy Indra, since Indra killed Vritrasura a Brahmana with the help of the backbone of Maharshi Dadhichi converted as Vajraadutha and disappeared as a fugitive in a lotus stem in Manasarovara. Nahusha gradually became arrogant and egoistic and asked Sachi Devi to serve him as his keep. Sachi Devi wanted to escape Nahusha and on his insistence asked Nahusha to come to her house by his own carrier as Iravata used to go to her by Indra and thus Nahusha also should come to her by his own distinct Carrier. Nahusha pushed aside a Palki of Maharshis and commanded Agastya Muni to lift the Palki quickly; Nahusha said Sarpa Sarpa, meaning thereby Quick Ouick. Agastya Muni felt that not only Nahusha blatantly took away his Palki and even had the audacity say Sapa Sarpa to the Muni to reach Sachi Devi's home. Agastya Muni purposively misunderstood Nahusha's Sarpa Sarpa and converted Nahusha as an Ajagara (python) and dropped and cursed the arrogant Nahusha from Indraloka to the thick forests in Bhuloka. On praying the Muni, Nahusha got a reprieve in the next Yuga when Yudhister would provide relief to the Ajagara'. When in Dwapara Yuga Pandavas were suffering 'Aranyavasa' following Yudhishter's losing fake chess game and one day in the Forest life Draupadi longed for a Saugandhika flower in a pond and asked Bhima to fetch to her; it was at that time the Ajagara coiled Bhima's body and when Draupadi ran for Bhima's rescue, Yudhistara gave correct replies to the difficult questions asked by the Ajagara, then Nahusha got Shapa Vimochana (Relief from Agastya's curse). As Nahusha got his python's form, Agastya helped Sachi Devi to search for Indra who hid himself in a lotus stem in Manasa Sarovara and brought Indra back to Swarga and sought Brahma's exoneration of committing Brahmahatya dosha, on the ground that though by birth Vritrasura was a Brahmana, he was an unpardonable demon responsible to commit countless killings of thousands of innocent persons.

Nahusha and his wife Viraja gave birth to Yayati among four other brothers. Yayati became the famed Emperor who defeated all the Kings in the World. Shukracharya the Danava Guru gave his daughter Devayani to Yayati who also married Sharmishtha the daughter of Vrishaparva, a Rakshasa. Devayani gave birth to Yadu and Turvasu, while Sharmishtha had Druhya, Anu and Puru. Indra was pleased to have gifted a divine chariot with such powerful horses that Yayati was able to cover the whole world within six days and nights. Having conquered the Earth, he divided the Seven Dwipas into five divisions and distributed among his sons. As he got a boon that he could regain his youth if any of his sons would agree to exchange their youth against his olde age, he was tempted to get back his youth again, since he was getting old already. He approached his edest son Yadu who declined the offer and so did all other sons except Puru who readily agreed. Yayati cursed Yadu and the others and accepted Puru's offer which enabled him to travel around and unravel the earthly pleasures for long. But finally he returned from his travels having found out that the ephemeral joys were endless like the Agni in a homakunda assuming larger proportions as per the ghee served into it, no human being could ever be satisfied with food, gold, ornaments and women and the more that a human being got lured into the whirlpool of life the worse that he would be dragged into it. Thus he realised that there could nerver be a better satisfaction than that of a spiritual life. By so confessing, he returned his youth to Puru and left for Vanaprastha / forest life in seek of Paramatma.

In the lineage of Yadu, there was on offshoot branch of Haihaya Vamsa into which the illustrious Kartaveerarjuna who too became a powerful Chakravarti having secured thousand mighty hands from

Indra Deva. He proved to be an ideal ruler providing shield and contentment to his citizens that was rare in human history. His valour was such that in an encounter with Ravanasura the Epic Villian of Ramayana, he imprisoned the Asura and Maharshi Pulastya had to request him to be released! But in course of time, Kartaveerya became too vainglorious and killed Jamadagni Maharshi since he did not give away his kamadhenu. Meanwhile, Agni Deva approached Kartaveerya to let him satisfy his thirst and gift a huge forest so that he could consume it; unfortunately for Agni and Kartaveerya the Ashram of Vasistha Maharshi was burnt off too and the Maharshi gave a curse to Kartaveerya that soon enough there would be an incarnation of Vishnu as Parashurama who would not only kill Kartaveerya but also exterminate the contempory Kshatriya Kings who had become so haughty and cruel towards Rishis, Brahmanas and the Subjects in gereral. Indeed the Curse of Vasishtha became a reality and Parashurama had uprooted the Kshatriya Kings in as many as twenty seven battles!

In the centuries-long ancestry of Kuru Vamsha, King Shantanu bore the brunt of the Kaurava dynasty as its key- figure. He and Devi Ganga gave birth to Deva vrata, popularly called Bhishma Pitamaha. He was so named since took a unique vow of celibacy and against the institution of marriage to facilitate the wedding of his father's deep desire to wed Satyavati alias 'Matsyagandhi' renamed by Maharshi Parashara as 'Yojanagandhi'; ther Maharshi took fancy for her while crossing a River as she-a fisherwoman- yielded to the Maharshi's request and he granted the boons to her that her body smell of fish would change to that of a Yojana-wide fragrance, that her virginity would be intact and that she would be the Queen a famous King.

As a result of this happening, a Vishnu Swarupa was born to Satyavati and Parashara as the most reputed Maharshi Veda Vyasa who had the singular distinction of scripting Ashtaadasha Maha Puranas, countless other Scriptures and of course the Immotal Epic, Maha Bharata. It was against this background that Shantanu fell for Satyavati who insisted that in the event of her wedding to the King Shantanu, neither his elderson Devavrata nor his progeny should claim rights of Kingship to the throne of Kaurava dynasty and thus the fierce vow taken by Satyavrata which got him the renown of Bhishma. Subsequently, Shantanu's son was named Vichitraveerya died an untimely death and as there was a threat of non-incumbency to the dynasty throne, Bhishma was invited to copulate his cousin's wives as per the exceptionally approved Niyoga Practice in vogue then; as a result, Vichitraveerya's widows Ambika and Ambalika begot Dhritarashtra (born blind as Ambika closed her eyes in the union out of fright of Veda Vyas) and Pandu (since Ambalika got pale out of horror at the sight of the Maharshi); both the women planned to depute their maid and normal and virtuous Vidura was born to her in the third attempt). Dhritarashtra married Gandhari and gave birth to hundred sons headed by Duryodhana and Pandu's wife Kunti gave birth to Yudhishtara from the Amsha of Yama Dharma, Bhima from the Amsha of Vayudeva and Arjun from the Amsha of Indra while Kunti bore a child even before her marriage by the Amsha of Surya Deva but out of fear left the child in a floating basket in a water flow which was found by a childless woman called Radha and brought him up thus known as Radheya or Karna since he was born with Karna-kundalas or ear-rings. As the Kauravas and Pandavas grew up with mutual ill feelings, fanned by Dhritarashtra on one side and Shri Krishna siding the virtuous Pandavas on the other, an inevitable Maha Bharata Battle climaxed and ended with bloodbath of Good and Evil forces with Krishna Bhagavan assumed a historic role, exemplifying his assurance of: Paritraanaaya SaadhunaamVinaashaaya Dushkrutaam, Dharma Samsthaapanaart -haaya Sambhavaami Yugey Yugey!.

#### Bharata, the Unique Karma Bhumi in Jambudwipa & an outline of other Dwipas

The entire Bhuloka (Earth) was divided into seven major Territories viz. Jambu, Plaksha, Shyalma, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaka and Pushkara surrounded by Sapta Samudras (Seven Seas) viz. Lavana (Salt), Ikshurasa (Sugar cane juice), Sura (wine), Ghrita (Classified Butter or Ghee), Dadhi (Curd), Dugdha (Milk) and Swadu Jala (Sweet Water). Prithvi is stated to have a lotus-like shape, each one of the angles situated with Sapta Parvatas (Seven Main Mountians) with Himavan, Hemakuta and Nishadha in South; Nila, Sweta and Shringvan in North, in the Center is Meru with a height of eighty four thousand yojanas, sixteen thousand yojanas of depth, thirty two thousand yojanas of circumference. Bharata Varsha,

Kimpurasha and Hari Varshas are to the south of Meru; Ramyaka Varsha is in North; Bhadraswa in East; and Ketumala in West. In Jambu Dwipa, there is Bharata Varsha above the Sea and below the Himalaya called Bharati with a width of nine thousand yojanas; this is known as Karma bhumi where Swarga and Moksha are accessible to those who are desirous and deserving. There are seven major Kula Parvatas / mountains in Bharat viz. Mahendra, Malaya, Sahya, Shaktiman, Ruksha, Vindhya and Pariyatra: Atah sampraapyatey Swargey Mukti tasmaatpraapyati vai, Tirvaktam narakamchaapichaapi yam thyatah purushah Dwijaah/ Itah Swargamcha Mokshamcha Madhyechaantey cha gacchati, Na khalvanyatra martaanaam karmabhumau vidheeyatey/ (It is in this Bharata from where attainment of Swarga becomes possible not only for human beings but even Pashu-Pakshis (animals and birds) with; 'Sakaama Sadhana' or Endeavors while in the materialistic world one could reach Swarga, whereas Nishkama Sadhana could even secure Moksha (Salvation). But negative results might be accrued in performing sins and would attract Narakas besides getting sucked into the whirlpool of births and deaths. There is no other place in one's life excepting in Bharata Varsha or the Karma Bhumi where such a possibility ever exists. Spread over an area of thousand yojans long from North to South, this hallowed land is divided into Nine Regions viz. Indra dwipa, Kasetutana also known as 'Upto Setu', Tamrayarna, Gabhastimaan, Nagadwipa, Soumya dwipa, Gandharwa dwipa, Varunadwipa and the Sea-surrounded ninth dwipa. To the east-ward of Bharata is the abode of Kiratas while the west-ward is of Yavanaas; inhabitants of the Central Region are Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishyas and Sudras whose professions are Yagnas, Yuddha, Vanijya and Seva (Sacrifices, Battles, Commerce and Trade and Service) respectively. In this Bharata, are of residents of Kuru, Panchala, Madhya desha, Purvadesha, Kamarupa (Assam), Poundya, Kalinga (Orissa), Magadha, Dakshina Pradesha, Aparanta, Sourashtra (Kathiyavad), Sudra, Abhira, Arbuda (Abu), Maru (Marvada), Malva, Pariyatra, Souveera, Sindhu, Shalva, Madra, Ambashtha, and Parasika. The Yugas of Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali are applicable only to Bharata Varsha and nowhere else. While Bharata is the Karma Bhumi practising Yagnas and Daanaas, compared to all other Countries in Jambu Dwipa are Bhoga / luxury-oriented. Atraapi Bharatam sreshtham Jambudwipey Maha Muney, Yatohi Karmabhuresha yatonyaa bhogamayah/ Atra Janmasahasraanaam Sahstrairapi Satthama, Yadacchillabatey Janturmaanushyam punyasanchayaat/ Gaayanti Devaah kila geetakaani dhanyaastu ye Bharata bhumibhaagey, Swargaapa-vargaaspada hetu bhutey bhavanti bhuyah Purushaa Manushyaah, armanya samkalpita tat phalaani samnasya VishnoParamaatmarupey/ (Bharata Varsha is the best of all the Places in Jambu Dwipa as the former is the Karma Bhumi compared to all other Deshas which are primarily pleasure-loving. It would be only after lakhs of births that one could secure a human life after storing considerable Punya; in fact, Devas sing hymns saying that those who take birth as human beings are blessed since they are born as Manavaas who had great opportunity to qualify to attain Swarga and Moksha by following a religious and disciplined life and by following Nishkaama Dharma or without strings of 'Plalaapeksha' or fruits of returns).

Plaksha Dwipa is double the size of Jambu Dwipa's one lakh yojanas under the Chief called Mehatidikh who had seven sons and the Kingship was surrounded by Seven major Mountains and Seven Rivers with the traits typical of Treta Yuga. Its inhabitants pray to Bhagavan Vishnu in the form of Chandra Deva. Compared to the salty taste of Sea water between Jambudwipa and Plaksha Dwipa, the taste was of Ikshu in the of intermediate region of Plaksha and Shalmala whose Chief was Vapushman and the latters's size was double that of Plaksha. Here again there are seven mountains with mines of jewels / precious stones and seven Rivers and in this Dwipa Lord Vishnu is prayed in the form of Vayu Deva. Like in Plaksha Dwipa, the inhabitants of Salmala too, Varnashrama is followed and the colours of persons in these Varnas are Kapila, Aruna, Peeta and Krishna are for Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras respectively. Sura Samudra earmarks the inter-region of Salmala and Kusha Dwipa whose size was double that of Salmala and Kusha's King is Jyotishman and the inhabitants are human beings practicing Varanashrama as also Daityas, Danavas, Devatas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Kinnaras and a great mix of Brahma's creation. They all pray to the Multi Faced Janradana. Ghrita Samudra (Classified Butter) partitions the Kusha and Krouncha Dwipas; the size of the Krouncha is double that of Kusha. Rituman is the King of Krouncha where again Varnashrama is observed and the counter-part Varnas are Pushkala,

Pushkara, Dhanya and Khyata corresponding to Brahmanas etc. Rudra Swarupa Janardana is the Deity revered in this Dwipa. Between Krauncha and Shaka Dwipas is the Dadhimandoda Samudra and the King of Shaka is Mahatma Bhavya, again with Seven Mountains and Seven Major Rivers as also seven Princes, where Siddhas and Gandharvas inhabit. Maga, Mahadha, Manasa and Mandaga are the corresponding Chaturvarnas. All the inhabitants of this Dwipa pray to Surya Swarupi Vishnu. From Shaka to Pushkara, the intermediate Samudra is of Ksheera and Pushkara which is double of Shaka is size is headed by Stravana and since it is a huge Dwipa, the King divided it to Mahavira Varsha and Dhataki varsha and the sons of the King awarded the two in their names after the two parts under his over-all control. These territories are mainly inhabited by human beings who have longevity of ten thousand years, devoid of illnesses and worries and of jealousies, fears, egos and crookedness; these humans as superior as Devas and Daityas and they are all devoid of Varnashrama as all the inhabitants are of equal status. The dividing line of Pushkara is surrounded by sweet water atop of which is Lokaloka Parvata, beyond which is stated to be of complete darkness; in fact, the Border of Pushkara of ten thousand yojanas, there were neither species nor life.

### Paatalaas (Bilwa Swarga); Ordeals of Narakas and Possibilities of Atonement

Renowned as Bilwa Swarga, the lokas underneath the Seas occupy as much an area as Prithvi; the span of Earth is seventy thousand yojanas, height too is as much. The expanse of Patalas too is as much; these lokas are Atala, Vitala, Nitala, Sutala, Talatala, Rasatala and Patalas and each of these lokas has an expanse of ten thousand yojanas. The colour of these lokas is black, white, yellow, red, grey and golden respectively. The inhabitants of these lokas are Daityas, Danvaas and Nagas. Having visited these lokas, Brahmarshi Narada called these Patalas as Bilwa Swarga and even better than Swarga. These lokas enjoy extreme illumination from the 'Manis' (diamonds) on the hoods of the Nagas; Narada said: the powerful rays of Surya Deva provide radiance but not heat during the days, while Chandra Deva gives brightness but not too much of coldness. The inhabitant serpents and Daityas revel in themselves with festivities and luxurious delicacies of food, wine and intoxication for long hours of time without concerns and worries. They enjoy good time by way of swims in Sarovaras, rivers and lotus-ponds and deal with all kinds of valuable possessions. Underneath these Lokas shines Bhagavan Vishnu's 'Tamoguna Rupa' as Sesha Naga named as Anantha, worshipped by Siddhas, Devatas, Devarshis and Daityas alike. Lying under the entire Universe, the mighty Sesha Deva bears the brunt of the Prithvi and the 'Charaachara Jagat'.

Narakaas: Underneath the Paataalas are the Narakas where sinners are thrown into. These Narakas are: Rourava, Shoukara, Rodha, Taana, Vishasana, Mahajjwaala, Tapta kumbha, Mahalobha, Vimohana, Rutiraandha, Vasaatapta, Kurmeesha, Krumibhojana, Asipatravana, Laalaabhaksdhya, Puyavbaha, Vahnijiwala, Adhahshira, Samdamsha, Krishna sutra, tama, Swabhojana, Apratishta, Avichi and so on. All these are under the control of Yama Dharna Raja and these hells are highly frightening as they administer sharp weapons, fire and poison and send shivers in the veins of the targeted sinners. Providing false evidences, speaking with partiality and blatant lies are liable to reach Rourava Naraka. Bhruna Hatya (killing an unborn child while in Garbha), Guru Hatya (killing one's own Preacher), killing a cow and terminating a person by obstructing breathing would attract 'Ghora Rourava Naraka'; drunkards, Brahma hatya, stealing gold, and keeping company of such sinners are consigned to Shoukara Naraka. Murdering Kshatriyas and Vyashyas, Gurupatni sangama, sahodari sangama, and killing Rajaduta or Messenger of royalty would attract Tapta kumbha Naraka; selling contraband like hot drinks and intoxicants and deserting ones' own followers would consign the sinners to Saptaloha Naraka. A person seeking and performing union with daughter and daughter in law is consigned to Mahaajjwala Naraka; those who insults or uses harsh language the Guru or Gurujana, insulting and criticizing Vedas, or selling Vedas and Scriptures, enticing and taking advantage of destitutes, the helpless or the mentally unsound are banished to Shabala Naraka; thieves and those who perform character-assassination of others are destined to Vimoha Naraka; those who display dislike to Devas, Brahmanas and parents are directed to Kumbhibhakshya Naraka; Persons who consume food even before Naivedya to Devas, Pitras and Guests are shunted to Lalabhakshya; those who manufacture arrows and devices to kill are destined to Vedha

Naraka, while who produce Khadgas and Ayudhas (swords and weaponry) are sent away to Vishaana; Brahmanas who accept daanaas in connection with evil-oriented tasks, say to appease 'Kshudra Devatas' or those who encourage ineligible persons to perform and those who make a profession of misleading astrology to cheat gullible persons go straight to Adhomukha Naraka. Brahmanas by birth practice dealing in the trade of meat, lac, 'til' or black sesame seed, salt and intoxicants are sent to Krumipuya; also those Brahmanas in the trade of cats, chicken, goats, dogs, birds and pigs are banished to the same Krumipuya naraka. Such Brahmanas who are in the profession of theater / acting / drama / dance; boating; eat the food of fallen women; carriers of contraband material, accept bribes; maintain cows, buffalos and similar animals to eke livelihood; go to bed with wives especially on Sacred days; put other's houses on fire and involve in the murders of friends are all diverted to Rudhirandha Naraka. Those human beings who resort to the murder of brothers are thrown into Vaitarini River.

Maharshi Lomaharshana narrated many other sins committed by human beings and the details of the Narakas to which they are consigned to. At the same time, the Maharshi suggested the possible Prayaschittaas (atonements) to mitigate the impact of sins committed by human beings; Swayambhuva Manu and other Great Rishis stated that for bigger sins bigger atonments and smaller indiscretions minor atonements were suggested. All such atonements were of the nature of 'Tapasya' and the best Tapasya would inded be in the form of memorizing the thoughts of Bhagavan Shri Krishna: Praayaschittaanya sheshaani Tapah karmaatmakaani vai, Yaani teshaamaseshaanaam Krishnaanusmaranam param/ krutey Paapaanutaapo vai yasya pumsaha prajaayatey, Praayaschittham tu tasyaikam Hari samsmaranam param/ Praatarnisha tathaa sandhyaa madhyaanaadishu samsmnaran, Narayanamavaapnoti sadyah Paapakshayam Narah/ Vishnu samsmaranaat ksheem samasta klesha samchayah, Muktim prayaati bho vipraa Vishnostasyaarnu keertanaat/ Vaasudevey mano yasya Japa homaarchanaadishu, Tasyaantaraayo Viprendraa Devendratwaadikam phalam/ (Having committed sins, the best atonements in the form of Tapasya are to recite the name of Shri Krishna always. Those who practice the name in the morning, midday, evening and night would instantaneously secure relief from the sins. Bhagavan Narayana's 'smarana' (memory) and 'Kirtana' (singing of Hymns) would facilitate the dilution, gradual relief and access to "Mukti" finally. The time sent in Japa, Homa, and Archana would indeed be the firm steps to eligibility of Moksha. There could be no better accesses to Swarga and even to Moksha by the unique Mula Mantra of Vaasudeva).

# 'Bhur-Bhuva-Suvaadi lokas' (Planetary System) and 'Sishumaara Chakra'

Maharshi Lomaharshana described the Celestial World stating that the full expanse of Bhuloka (The Globe) has the advantage of illumination by Surya and Chandra. From Prithvi, Surya is above by one lakh yojanas and so is Chandramandala by another lakh yojanas from Surya, while Nakshatramanadala is above Chandra by another lakh yojanas. By a distance of two lakh yojanas each from Nakshatra mandala are Budha (Mercury), Shukra (Venus), Mangala (Mars), Brihaspati (Jupiter) and Shanaischara (Saturn). From Saturn by another lakh yojanas is situated Sapta Maharshi Mandala and by an addition of lakh yojanas is Dhruva Mandala which is the central point of Jyotirmandala. Beyond Dhurva is Maharloka where 'Mahatma Purushas' reside with a longevity of one 'Kalpa' or Brahma's one day (While each human year is a day for Devas, twelve thousand Deva years make one Maha Yuga ie the sum of Four Yugas comprising 4800 Deva years of Satya Yuga, 3600 Deva years of Treta Yuga, 2400 Deva Years of Dwapara and 1200 years of Kali Yuga. One Kalpa is a day to Brahma and two Kalpas make his a day/night. Brahma's life span is hundred years or two pararthas, each Paraatha being one Maha Yuga.) Maharloka's expanse is one crore yojanas, beyond which is Janaloka, the residing place of Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanat Kumaras-the illustrious Brahma Manasa Putras and that Loka has an expanse of two crore yojanas. From Janaloka is situated Tapoloka which is four times bigger in size where 'Ashareera'/Videha (body less) Viraja and other Devatas reside. On the further higher plane is Satyaloka which is six times bigger than the Tapoloka and the residents there are Siddhas who cross the barriers of 'Punarjanma and Punar mrityu' or the eternal cycle of birth and death. In sum, the territory between Bhumi and Suryaloka is called Bhuvarloka; beyond this between Bhuvarloka and Dhruva loka is

Swarloka, thus comprising the Trilokas viz. BHUR-BHUVAS-SUVAH'. Vidwan Yogis call the intermediate regions of the Trilokas as Kritaka (subject to destruction), Akritaka (Avinashi or indestructible) and upto Maharloka is Kritaakritaka. Beyond these Tribhuvanas is 'Janashunya' and is indestructible and perpetual. Together with the Nether world of 'Sapta Pataala lokas', the whole Universe is thus known as Brahmanda.

Eta dandakataahena tiryagurthvamathas thatha, Kapitthasya yathaabeejam Sarvatovai samaavritam/
Dasottarena payasaa dwijaaschandam cha tadvrutam, sa chaambu parivaarosow Vahninaa veshtito
bahih/ Vahnista vaayunaa vauyurviprastu Nabhasaavritah, Akaasoopi Munisreshthaa Mahataa
pariveshtitah/ Dasottraraanya seshaani Vipraaschaitaani Saptavai, Mahaantamcha samaavritya
pradhaanam samavasthitam/ Anantasya na tasyaantah samkhyaanam chaapi Vidyatey,
Tadantamasamkhyaakam pramaanaanepi vai yatah/ Hetubhutamaseshasya Prakrutih saa Paraadwijaah,
Andaanaamtu Sahasraanaam Sahasraanya —yutaanucha/ Eedrusaanaam tathaa tatra kotikoti
shataanucha, Daarunyagniryathaa tailam tileytadvatsumaa niha/ Pradhaanevasthito Vyaapee
chetanaatmani vedeanah, Prathaanam cha pumaamschaiva sarva bhutaanu bhutayaa/ Vishnu shaktyaa
Dwija sreshthaa dhrutow samshrana dharninow, tayossaiva Prithakbaaveyu kaaranam
samshrayasyacha/

(This Brahmanda was like Kapittha or Wood Apple cut into two equal pieces and was enclosed by its outer covers; ten times of this Egg was surrounded by water which was shrouded by Agni(Fire) and the latter created Vayu (Wind) and with their mutual interaction generated Akaasha (Sky). All the three entities viz. Water, Fire and Sky materialized Maha Tatwa which blanketed or veiled the Universe. In course of time the Maha Tatwa took the proportion of ten times larger magnitude and led to the existence of Paraaprakriti which in turn was the 'Pradhana Hetu 'or the Principal Root Cause of Prapancha (Five Elemantal) 'Srishti' which was unending and innumerable as manifested in crores of Shapes and Forms. In other words, Purushatva Shakti and Praakrita Shakti are mutually intertwined and the entire Universe was occupied as the all-pervasive Vishnu Maya. Just as the first ever seed resulted in plants and trees which created further seeds and further trees, Avyakrita / Avyakta Prakriti (Self-generated) displays the 'Prathama Spandana' or Prime Vibration or Motif to Srishti. Sa cha Vishnuh Param Brahma yatah Sarvamidam Jagat, Jagacchha yo yatra cheda yasmin Vilayameshyati/ Tad Brahma Param Dhaama Sadasatparam padam, Yasya Sarvamabhedena Jagadetat -charaacharam/ Sa yeva MulaprakrutirVyakta rupee Jagaccha sah, Tasminneva layam sarvam yaati tatra cha tishthati/ Kartaa kriyaanaam sa cha ijyatey kratuh sa yeva takkarma phalam cha yat, Yugaadi yasmaachha bhaveydaseshato Harerna kinchidyatirikta masti tat/ (Bhagavan Vishnu is Para Brahma who is the Creator of the 'Sarvamidam Jagat' or the Totality of the Universe, the Preserver and the Destroyer; he is the "Paramdhama Swarupa" (the Ultimate Destination); the Truth and the Falsity too are his own; he is not exclusive of the 'Charaachara Jagat' or the Moving and Immovable World; He is the Undefinable 'Mula Prakriti' and the Evidently Recognisable Manifestation in the Form of the Universe in its multitude of variations; He creates, conserves and terminates and the 'Karta' of All Actions; He is the Yagna, the Yagna Karta and Yagna Phala; indeed since the Yugas and everything else is materialized by Shrihari himself.

Lomaharshana Maharshi then explained about the Sishumara Chakra which is in the shape/ form of a dolphin representing Bhagavan Narayana, in whose tail position is Dhruva who rotates on its own axis but also makes all the Planets like Surya and Chandra as also Nakshatra Mandali all tied together by a thread swept by Vayu Deva. Bhagavan Narayana himself is stated to exist in the heart of this Dolphin Swarupa; indeed Bhagavan is the 'Adhara' or grip of Devas, Asuras and human beings. Surya absorbs radiant water through his powerful rays for eight months and during the rainy season rains heavily during the rest of the Year facilitating one and all to produce grains which in turn preserves the World and sustain humanity by courtesy of Vayu; 'Abhras' (clouds) are formed on the sky by the interaction of Jala, Vayu and Agni and the clouds absorb and store water which bring rains filling up Seas, Rivers, Sarovaras and various waterbodies. Chandra Graha, who was responsible for the generation of food grains, 'Auoshadhis' (medicines) and all the ingredients of healthy life ensures the wide-spread of the ingredients to make

available to the 'Charaachara Jagat' resulting in the growth of life to not only human beings, animals, birds, and other species but also trees, mountains, and such immovable. Thus Surya is the prime power to initiate the process of rains; while Surya is the initiator to commence the benefitting circle, Dhruva is the fulcrum of Surya and all other Devas but Dhruva Star itself is hinged on Sishumara Chakra which again is Narayana Himself!

[Sishumara, like a dolphin, is coiled with head down with Dhruva at the tail, on top of the tail are Prajapatis, Agni, Indra, and Dharmaja; at its hip position is with Sapta Rishis, body hair with Stars, upper chin with Agastya, lower chin Yama, its mouth Mars, genitals Saturn, back of neck Guru, heart Vaasudeva, life air Mercury, beneath it Rahu and Ketu the sub-heaven planets and 'Sisumara Samsthana' is Bhagavan!]

#### 'Surya Mahatmya': Avatarana, Dwadasadityas, Konaarka and Worship ('Suryaashtottara' included)

Brahma was stated to have affirmed that Bhagavan Surya was the soul of each and every body in the Lord's creation, as Surya was the Devata of Devatas. All the formal 'Ahutis' (Oblations) in Agni Deva have to reach Surva and then to the respective Devatas. Surva has the greatest role of absorbing water from various sources including Akasha Ganga and provides rains due to which the life-giving 'Anna' (Food) to one and all. None else is responsible to regulate 'Kaalamaana' (Time) commencing from the count of Kshanaas, Muhurtas, days, nights, Pakshas (fortnights), 'Maasaas' or months, Samvatsaras, (years), Rithus, and Ayanaas (half years) and this would never be possible but for the punctuality of Surya, and no other Devata could ever be capable of! How could one comprehend as to when treeswould yield fruits and flowers without the sense of Ritus! How could one calculate when to sow and when to reap! In the same way, Swarga Vasis too get attuned to time calculations as to how and when various tasks were scheduled; for instance, even Brahma has to abide by the procedure of Srishti and Yama has to await the appropriate time to terminate! Also, the respective 'Amsaas' of Surya Deva tend to dominate each month, such as Vishnu Rupa in Chaitra month, Aryama in Vaishakha month, Vivaswaan in Jyeshtha month, Amshumaan in Ashaadha month, Parjanya in Shraavana month, Varuna in Bhaadra month, Indra in Aswin month, Dhata in Kartika month, Mitra in Agahana month, Pusha in Poushya month and Twashta in Magha and Phalguna months. Additionally the names of Dwadasha Adityas are Aditya, Savita, Surya, Mihira, Arka, Prabhakara, Martaanda, Bhaskara, Bhanu, Chitrabhanu, Diwakara and Ravi. Thus twenty Survas are popular. Brahma assured Maharshis and Munis that one needed to recite the following names of Surya and would indeed be not necessary to recite the Surya Samasra naamaas! The following are the most sanctified twenty one namaas: Vikartano Viviswaancha Martanda Bhaskaro Ravih, Loka prakaashakah Shrimaan lokachakshur -maheswarah/ Lokasaakshi Trilokeshaha Kartaa Hartaa Tamishrahaa, Tapanastaapana -schaiva Shuchih Saptaashwayaahanah/ Gabhasti hasto Brahma cha Sarvadeva Namaskrutah Ekavimshati rityesha stava ishtavah sadaa Raveyh/ (Vikartana, Viviswaan, Martanda, Bhaskara, Ravi, Loka Prakaashaka, Shrimaan, Lokachakshu, Maheswara, Loka Saakshi, Trilokesha, Karta, Harta, Tamishraha, Tapana, Taapana, Shuchi, Saptaashwa vaahana, Gabhasti hasta, Brahma, and Sarva Deva Namaskruta are the Sacred Naamaas). Surya Deva would be extremely pleased by his 'Stuti' with these naamaas and bestow to the Reciters with excellent health, Dhana Vriddhi, and Yasha Prapti. Recital of these naamaas at the time of Sun Rise and Sun Set would demolish one's own sins on account Manasika (Mental), Vaachika (Vocal), Shaareerika (Physical) and Karmajanita (arising of deeds) sources.

Explaining the birth of Surya, Brahma recounted that Daksha Prajapati had sixty celebrated daughters of whom thirteen were wedded to Kashayapa Muni, who begot by Aditi the whole lot of Devas; by Diti were born Daityas, by Danu were born danavas; by Vinata the vamsa of birds like the famed Garutmant; and 'Sthaavara Jangamas' or Immobile and Moving species other than human beings. Aditi's progeny viz. Devas were born out of Satvika Guna, while Daitya, Danava, and such other negative children were born of Rajasika and Tamasika Gunaas. As Aditi gave birth to Surya Deva, she eulogized him as follows: Namastubhyam Param Sukshmam Sumupunya bibhrateytulam, Dhaama Dhaamavataameesham Dharmaadhaaram cha Shaswaram/ Jajataamanupa karaaya Twaaham Stoumi Gopatey, Aada daanasya

yadrupam teevram tasmai Naaamyaham/ Graheetumashtamaasena kaalenaambumayam rasam, Bibhraataswa yadrupamati teevram nataasmi tat/ Sametamagnisomaabhyaam Namastasmai Gunaatmaney, Yadrupa mrugyajuh saamnaa maikyena tapatey tawah/ Viswametattrayi samjnam Namastasmai Vibhaavaso, yattu tasmaatparam rupa motyuktvaabhi samhitam/ Asthuulam Shulamavam Namasttasmai Sanaatana/ (My greetings to you! You possess a very pure and unique Form of effulgence as the Lord of Radiance and the Hold of Illumination of everlasting nature! Keeping in view the huge advantages arising out of your existence to the whole Universe, may I offer my sincere reverences to you! I salute that magnificent yet fierce Form of yours especially when you seek to absorb water from Prithvi for eight long months. Surva Deva! Your Swarupa is a mix of Rik-Yajur-Saama Vedas all rolled in one with the symbol of 'Trayi Sanjna' and even more than that of the OM sound which denotes both the 'Sthula' or gross and the 'Sukshma' or miniscule)! Pleased by her prayers, Surya asked Aditi to ask for a boon and the latter made an appeal to Surya that Daityas had been stealing the Yagna Phala which was actually due to Devas and as such Surya might please give birth to her as the elder brother of Devas and bless her to be born to her and destroy the Daityas. Surya agreed to do so and as a gesture of her gratitude, Aditi took to extreme penance by observing Kruchhu and Chandrayana Vratas but her husband Kashyapa was angry that she was killing the child in her garbha by such severe Vratas; he said: Kim maarayasi garbhandamiti, Nityopa Vaasini! (Hey Aditi, the ever fasting woman! Why are you destroying the embriyo!). In reply Aditi shouted back to Kashyapa saying: Saachatam Praaha Garbhanda metatpasyeti Kopanaa, Samaaritam vipakshaathaam Mrityu deva bhavishyati/ (Look at my Garbha! His is not destroyed indeed, but is going to destroy the enemies); by so saying, she relieved her Garbha and a huge mass of Radiance was materialized. Meanwhile, there was an 'Akashavani' (Celestial Voice) resounded to say: Maaritam tey yatah prokta meta dandam twayaaditeyh, Tasyaanmuney sutastyeyam Martaandobhyo bhavishyati! (Kashyapa Muney! You apprehended that the embriyo might be killed, but it would surely kill these who steal the 'Havishyas' viz. Asuras! It was at that time when Martanda was generated from Aditi Garbha that Asuras challenged Indra and Devatas and were instantly burnt off into ashes by his fierce looks.

Brahma Deva commended the great significance of Suryaaraadhana and stated: Bhava Suddhih Prayoktavya Niyamaachara samyuktaa, Bhava shuddhayaa kriyatey yatthasswargam saphalam bhavet/ Stutijjapyopahaarena pujayaapi Vivaswatah, Upavaasena Bhaktya vai Sarva Paapaih pramuchyatey/ Pranidhaaya shiro bhumyaam namaskaaram karoti yah, Tatkshanaatsarva Paapebhoymuchyatey naatra Samshayah/ Bhaktiyukto Naroyosou Raveh kuryad pradakshinam, Pradakshani krutwaa tena Saptadwipaa Vasundharaa/ Suryam manasi yah krutwaa kuryaad vyoma pradakshinaam, Pradakshneekrutaastena Sarvam Devaa bhavanti hii/ (Those who pray to Surya Deva with mental discipline and devotion by performing Upavaasa (Fasting), Stavan (Eulogy), Japa (continuous nama smarana), Upahara Samarpana or offer of gifts, Puja or formal 'shodasopacharas' or the prescribed s sixteen services like Avaahana (Invocation), Aasana (Seating), Snaana (Holy bathing), Pushpa-Phala-Dhupa-Deepa-Naivedyaa - Arati, Swasti, Bhojana, and Brahmana Dakshina, as also Bhajana (Group singing) would instantly demolish sins and acquire positive fruits. Those who seek to vision Surya Bhagavan by keeping their heads upside down the Earth and lift up their bodies would also attain positive benefits undoubtedly. Those who perform 'Surya Pradakshina' (Self-Circumambulation) of Akaash (Sky) carrying Sapta Dwipas by their mind would be executing 'Parikrama'to all the Devas)! Those who observe fasting on Shashthi / Saptami with single Bhojana a day as also perform Puja in the prescribed manner as outlined above with devotion secure the fruit of executing an Ashvamedha Yagna. On Shukla Paksha Saptami, possibly coinciding with a Sunday, performances of Snaana, Daana, Tapa, Homa, Puja and Upavasa would have considerable impact in fulfilling desired objectives. Any 'dharmic karya' aimed at Surya Deva would assure that there would be no 'daridrata' or poverty and 'Anarogya 'or illnesses in the entire Kula / Vamsha of the family. Those who would paint Sun Bhagavan's temple with white, brown or yellow colours and decorate the walls of the Temple with all sand possible alternatives would fullil all their wishes. Those who light lamps with ghee or sesame / gingelly oil and offer to Surya deva would have their eye sight excellent and none in his Vamsha would ever be blind, especially if they

perform Deep-Daana. Such Deepa Daana in temples, cross-roads or public places is blessed with prosperity. Anybody who steals lit-up deepas or spoils them is sure to have adverse effects like imprisonment, family loss and dispatch to dark narakas. Early morning offers of water to Surya become eligible for Siddhhis. Observance of Aditya Vrata by reciting hymns like Aditya Hridaya by standing from sunrise to sunset facing Surva Deva would have far reaching effects of immense Punya. Also, Arghena sahitam chaiva Sarva saangam pradaapayet, Udaye Shraddhaa Yuktah Sarva Paapaaih pramuchyatey/ (Offering water with devotion and faith at Sunrise time and performing 'Saangopanga'or prostration and daana would yield excellent results, especially in demolishing sins. Arghya or water along with Agni, Aakasha, Bhumi, Surya Pratima and Pindi or platform of the Pratima is to be offered to Surya with sincerity to reap far reaching benefits. In fact, worship to Surya Deva at the Uttaraayana and Dakshinaayana timings (when the course of Surya changes from South to North and vice versa) would have very significant effects of far reaching benefits. Any charity in the dedication of Surya like Chhatra (Umbrella), Dhwaja or Pataka (Flags) and Chavara (hand fan with which to please a Deity) would result in a lakh-fold advantage to the donor. Maanasam vaachikam vaapi kaayajam yaccha dushkrutam, Sarvam Surva prasaadena tadasesham yyapohatih/ Ekahenaapi yad Bhaanoh pujaayaa praapyatey phalam, Yadhokta dakshinairviprairna tat kratushatairapi/ (Bhagavan Surya awards the gift of trouncing offences committed by way of Sharirika or Physical, Vaachika or spoken and Manasika or thought-wise media. Even a day's worship with all the inputs like Snaana, Shodasopachara, Daana and Stuti would excel the observance of several Yagnas).

Brahma desc ribed Aditya Mahatmya by saying that as soon as Surya Deva emerges on the horizon early in a day, his powerful rays destroy darkness and the Unique and Readily realizable Deity (Pratyaksha Devata) on the Sky who has neither beginning nor end; the indestructible and everlasting Aditya grows by the day with ferocity and temperature, spreading heat all across the Tri Bhuvanaas, creating-preserving and terminating the 'Charaachara Jagat'. He is Dhata, Vidhata, and the root-cause of Srishti; Surya Mandala is everlasting and eternal; he is the Father of Pitruganaas and the Supreme Deva of Devas. Countless Yogis who leave their 'Bhoutika Dehas' (mortal bodies) have their Souls carried by Vayudeva and get absorbed into Him; Renowned Grihasti Yogis like King Janaka, Vaalakhilya like Brahmavaadi Maharshis, Veda Vyasa like Vaanaprastha Rishis and Shuka Deva like illustrious Veda Vedaanga Brahma Yogis and innumerable such Maha Yogi Purushas were all the memorable entrants into Suryamandala.

Prajapatis had all divided their 'Tejas' or Inner Radiance and paved the way to materialization of Dwadasa Adityas viz. Indra, Dhata, Parjanya, Twashta, Pusha, Aryama, Bhaga, Vivaswaan, Vishnu, Amshuman, Varuna, and Mitra; Surya Deva got spread all over the Universe by these Twelve Forms. Indra is the 'Prathama Murti' of Surya Deva who is the Chief of Devas and the Prime Enemy of Daityas. Dhata is second Amsha of Surya being the Prajapati the Creator of Prajas. Parjanya is the third name whose major function is to absorb water from all possible sources and meterialise clouds. The Fourth Amsha of Surya is Twashta the unique embodiment of Vanaspatis and Aoushadhis (vegetable oils and herbs / medicines respectively). Pusha represents Pushti or excellent health and physical well being as existent in 'Anna' or food. Aryama is the sixth Form of Surya Deva who symbolizes all the Devas in the form of Vayu. As is existent in the form of Aishwarya / prosperity and the Physique of humanity, Bhaga is the seventh Amsha of Surya. The eighth Form of Aditi Putra is Vaiwasvaan as existent in Agni (Jatharaagni) responsible for digesting the food consumed by all living beings. The ninth Amsha of Sun God is Vishnu who is 'Sarva Vyapi' the Omni Present and all – pervading. Amshuman is the tenth Murti of Surya Deva who provides the aspect of everlasting joy to humanity and all other species of Srishti. The eleventh Amsha of Bhaskara is in the Form of Varuna who exists as Jala /Water and preserves and sustains life to all Beings of Creation. Finally, the Twelfth Rupa of Surya Deva is Mitra, who exists in the form of friend, philospher and guide to the entire Universe, performing Tapasya on the banks of Chandra River and wishing and enabling the Totality of 'Charaachara Jagat' to source happiness and contentment.

Dwadashiva pruthaktena taani vakshaamaseshatah, Adityah Savitaa Suryo Mihirorkah Prabhaakarah/ Maartando Bhaaskaro Bhanuschitra Bhaanu Divaakarah, Ravirdwaadashabhisteshaam Jneyah Saamaanya naamabhih/ Visnurdhaataa Bhagah Pushaa Mitrendrou Varunyornamaa Vivaswaa namsumaam Twashtaa Parjanyo Dwaadashah smritaah/ Ityetey Dwadasha –adittaah pruthaktena Vyavastithaah, Uttishthanti Sadaahyetey maasthairvaa Dasabhih kramaat/

(Normally Surya Deva's names in vogue are Aditya, Savitru, Surya, Mihira, Arka, Prabhakara, Martanada, Bhaskara, Bhanu, Chitrabhanu, Divakara, Ravi and so on. But the additional names are Vishnu, Dhata, Bhaga, Pusha, Mitra, Indra, Varuna, Aryama, Vivasvata, Amsuvan, Twashta and Parjanya. Vishnu shines with twelve hundred rays in Chaitra Maasa, Aryama with thirteen hundred rays in Vaishakha Maasa, Vaivaswata in Jyeshtha Maasa with fourteen hundred raus, Amsuaan shines with fifteen hundred rays in Ashadha, Parjanya in Shravana Maasa with fourteen hundred rays, Varuna in Bhadrapada Maasa with as many rays as the previous month, Indra Swarupa Surya with twelve hundred rays in Kartika Maasa, Mitra in Margasirha month with the same as in the previous month, as Pusha in Poushya Maasa with nine hundred rays, as Bhaga in Magha and Twastha in Phalguna with eleven hundred hundred rays in each case. The number of Surya Kiranas would be on the ascent in Uttaraayana and on the descent in Dakshinaayana. Daily recital of the above Twenty Names of Surya Deva at both the Sandhya timings would fetch the fruits of excellent health, prosperity, reputation and recognition.

' Sanatana Rahasya': Sage Narada having performed Tapasya asked Mitra Deva as to why the latter being the Omniscient, Omni Present and Omni Potent Overlord of the Universe, revered by Chaturashramas, Chatur Yugas and Chatur Varnas, besides all the Devaas, Danava-Daithya-Rakshas and Pitras still adored some distinct Entity himself! Mitra Deva sensitized Nara as follows: 'Narada! There is a Supreme Power which exists in the Universe-or rather the Universe exists in that Supreme Powerwhich is 'Sukshma' (the miniscule yet mammoth), 'Avigneya' (Unrecognaisable), 'Avyatka' (Unvisionable), 'Achala' (Immovable), Dhruva (Fixed), 'Indriya Rahita' (Devoid of Limbs and Senses), 'Vishaya rahita' (feature less), 'Antaratma' (The Supreme Inner Conscience) called 'Kshetrajna', the 'Adi Purusha', the 'Hiranya Garbha', 'Vishwaatma', 'Sharva', 'Akshara', devoid of Tri Gunas of Satvika-Rajasika-Tamasika nature. That Supreme Shakti is at once Saguna, Nirguna, Vishwa Rupa, and Jnaanagamya and Sarvavyapi: Vasannapi shareereshu na sa lipyeta karmabhih, Mamaantaraatma tava cha ye chaanyey dehasamsthitaah/ Saryeshaam Saakshibhutesow na graahyah kenichat kyachit. Saguno Nirguno Vishvo Jnaanagamyo hyasow smritah/ Sarvatah Paanipaataantah sarvatokshishiromukhah, Sarvatah Shrumaamllokey Sarvamaavrutya tishthati/ (Heads of one and all in Srishti are his Unique Head; hands, shoulders, feet and all other body parts are his own of every person and of various other species are his of own as well. He is Unique Paramatma manifested in myriad forms multiplied.) It is that Parama Shakti which is at once in a cognizant, perceivable and ready Form with the 'Amsha' of the Self is Surya Deva. Brahma gave Upadesha to Narada by the recitation-power of which one would be free from ill-health, unfulfilled desires, poverty and ignorance of knowledge!

# Konaaditya Mahatmya:

Brahma informed the great Sages about the significance of Konaaditya, a hallowed Place in Dakshina Bharata Varsha in Ondradesha (the present Orissa) on the banks of the Eastern Sea in the Northern Part of Viraja Mandala, there were Brahmanas whowere Tapsvis, Yogis, highly venerated Veda Swaadhyaayis and 'Shatkarma' Practitioners, while Kshatriya, Vyashya and Shudra Varnaas too observed the respective Varna Dharmas. A strong popular belief prevailed in the Region that a Temple there on the Seashore was an extraordinary Abode of Konaaditya, bestowing boons to fulfill their desires and ambitions from the worship with reverence and faith. Early morning snaanas in the Sea are followed by Abhishekas, offerings, Surya Stutis and Tarpanas to Devas, Rishis and deseased ancestors as a part of the 'Suryaaraadhana' (worship). On the banks of the Samudra, the devotees normally are seated facing Surya in the East, a copper plate is placed with red chandana and Sea water, an Ashtadala Kamala (Eight-leafed lotus) is prepared and decorated with Lotus-leaves with rice grains, tila seeds, red chandana, red flowers and Kushaa grass; then the process of worship would include 'Nyasa' or unification of one's body and soul by way of Anganyaasa and Karanyaasa and perform Dhyana first by invoking Surya in the Center of the Ashtadala, Agni in Agneya, Nirruta in Nirutya, Vayu in Vayavya and Ishaana in Ishaanya. This would

be followed by welcoming Surva from the Sky and performing Avahana (Invocation), Aasana (Seat), and Sthapana (Settling). The Mantra-yukta Puja would commence with the display of 'Sumukhi Samputi Mudras' by the devotee's fingers; snaana is performed; Surya is imagined as seated on white Ashtaadasa Kamala with yellow eyes and red coloured body, two hands and red-robes and then prayers are followed. The procedure of Puja includes Anganyasa in coordination with the Directions (Dishas) as follows: Hraam Hridayaayanamah-Agni koney; Hreem Sirasey Namah Nairryuttye; Hroom Shikhaayai Namah Vaayavye; Hraim Kavachaayanamah Ishaaney; Hraom Netraayanamah Madhya bhaagey; Hrah Astraayanama Chaturdikshu Iti/ Then would follow offerings of Arghya, Gandha, Dhupa, Deepa and Naivedya and before the close of the Puja there would be Japa, Stuti, Namaskara and Mudras and Visarjanma. Indeed, Brahmanaas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras as also women and children offering handful of Sea-water without the formal worship to Konaaditya are blessed with the fulfillment of their own desires; let alone those who worship as per procedure who reap multiple benefits and attain Suryaloka after life! Worship to Surya on Saptami Days is highly commended; this bestows mukti from physical ailments, Dhana to the needy of it, Vidya to Vidyarthis and good Santaana (progeny) to those whon aspired for it. Those who perform 'aaraadhana', especially at Konadithya in Ondra desha at Sun Rise and Sunsets, Chaitra Shukla Paksha days, Samkraanti days or at the Uttaraayana and Dakshinaayanas, Vishu Yoga timings, Sundays, or at other 'Parva Dinaas' would indeed be blessed for fulfilments of their wishes.

#### 'Suryaashtottara naama'

Brahma stated that when the 'Sthaavara-Jangamas' (Moving and Immobile Beings) were all destroyed and the Universe was submerged in darkness, and Samashti Buddhi or Maha Tatwa (The Great Awareness) was generated from which Pancha Maha Bhutas of Earth, Water, Illumination, Air, and Sky were materialized; a Huge Egg appeared on Water afloat in which Trimurtis of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara were present and so did Sapata Lokas, Sapta Dwipas, Sapta Samudras, Sapta Maha Parvataas (Seven Lokas, Continents, Oceans and Mountains). That was the Time when a Formidable Mass of Radiance and Radiation appeared as Adi Deva named Surya Deva and Tri Murtis paid homage to him as follows:

Adidevosi Devaanaiswaryaayachha tameeshwarah/ Adikartaasi Bhutaanaam Deva devo Diwaakarah/ Jeenanah Sarva bhutaanaam Devagandharwa Raakshasaam, Muni kinnara sidhhaanaam tathaivoragapaksheenaam/Twam Brahmaa twam MahadevastwamVishnustwam Prajaapatih, Vaayustindrascha Somascha Vivaswaan Varunastathaa/ Twam Kaalah Srishti kartaacha Hartaa Bhartaa tathaa Prabhuh, Saritah Saagarah Shailaa Vudyudindra Dhanuumshicha/ Pralayah Prabhavashaiva Vyaktaavyaktah Sanaatanah, Ishwaraatparato Vidyaa Vidyaayaah Paratah Shivah/ Shivaatparataro Devasatwameva Parameswarah/Sarvatah Paanipaadaantah Sarvatokshishiromukhah/ Sahasraamshuhu Sahasraasyah Sahasracharanekshanah, Bhutaadi Bhurbhuvah swascha Mahah Satyam Tapojanah/ Pradeeptam Deepanam Divyam Sarvaloka prakaashakam, Durnireeksham Surendraanam yadrupam tasyatey namah/ Sara Siddhaganairjushtam Bhrugyatri Pulahaadhibhihi, Stutam Paramayyaktam yadrupam tasyatey namah/ Vedyam Vedavidaam nityam Sarva jnaana samanyitam, Sarva Devaadi Devasya yadrupam tasyatey namah/ Viswakrudwiswa bhutam cha Vaiswaarara suraarchitam, Viswasthita –manithyam cha yadrupoam tasyatey namah/ Param Yajnaatparam Vedaatparam Divah, Paramaatmebhikhyaatam yadrupam tasyatey namah/ Avigneyamanaalakshyama dhyaanagatamavyayam, Anaadinidhanam chaiya yadrupam tasyatey namah/ Namo namah Karana Kaaranaaya Namo namah Paapa vimochanaaya, Namo Namastey Ditijajaardanaaya Namo namo Roga vimochanaaya/ Namo namah Sarvavarapradaaya Namo Namah Sarva Sukhah pradaaya, Namo namah Sarva dhana pradaaya Namo namah Sarva matihpradaaya/

#### Brahma Deva further stated:

Om Suryoryamaa Bhagatwashtaa Pushaarkah Savitaa Ravih, Gabhastimaanajah Kaalow Mrutyutdhaataa Prabhaakarah/Prithivyaapascha Tejascha kham Vaayuschja paraayanam, Somo Bruhaspatih ShukroBudhongaaraka Yeva cha/ IndroVivishvaadeeptaamshuh Shuchih Sourihi Sanescharah, Brahmaa Vishnuscha Rudrascha SkandoVaishravano yamah/ Vaidyuto Jaatharaagniraindhanastejasaam Patih, Dharmadhwajo vedakartaa Vedaango Vedavaahanah/ Krutam Tretaa Dwaaparascha Kalih Sarvaamaaraashrayah, Kalaakashtha muhurtaascha Khapaa Yaamataasthathaa Kshanaah/ Samvatsarakaroswattah Kaalachakro Vibhaavasuh, Purushah Shaaswato Yogi Vyaktaavyakta Sanaatanah/ Kaalaadhyakshayah Prajaadhyasho Vishvakarmaa Tamonudah, Varunah Saagaromschascha jeemutoo jeevanorihaa/ Bhutaashrayo Bhuta patih Sarva loka namaskrutah, Srashtaa Samvartako Vahnih Sarvassyaadiralolupah/ Anantah Kapilo Bhaanuh Kaamadah Sarvato mukhah, Jayo Vishaalo VaradahSarva Bhutanisheyvitah/ Manah Suparno Bhutaadhih Sheeghranah Praanadhaaranah, Dhanvantarir Dhumaketuraadi Devoditeyh Sutah/ Dwaadashaatmaa Ravirdakshah Pitaa Maataa Pitaamahah, Swargadwaaram Mokshadwaaram Trivishtapam/ Deha Kartaa Prashaantaatmaa Vishvaatmaa Sukshaatamaa Maitreyah Karunaanvitah/

(Bhagavan Surya! You are the Adi Deva. As you are the High Epitome of Iaishwaraya or Affluence, you are the Ishwarya (Highest) of all Devas; the Prime Creator of Creation too and the Preserver of the Principal Elements / Maha Bhutas, Devatas, Gandharvas, Raakshasaas, Munis, Kinnaraas, Siddhaas, Nagas, Birds and so on; You are the Trimurtis, Pajapatis, Vayu, Indra, Soma, Viviswaan, Varuna, Kaala; Srishti Karta, Dharta, Samharta; You are the Rivers, Seas, Mountains, Vidyutcchakti (Electricity), Indra Dhanush (Rainbow), Pralaya (The Great Devastation), Vyaktaavyata (Seen and Unseen) Sanatana Purusha (The Fore- Most Being), the Most Evident Supreme Energy; You are the Physique and its limbs; the Thousand Kiranas or Rays, with Thousand Faces, Eyes, Feet and the Chief Cause of the Causes; You are the Embidiment of Bhuh, Bhuvah, Swaha, Mahah, Janah, Tapah, and Satya; Your Effulgence is such that even Devas could never vision it clearly, let alone human beings; Devatas and Siddhas as well as Maharshis like Bhrigu, Atri, Pulah etc. are constantly engaged in Praises for you; You are the Vishwa Vyapak or Prevading the Totality of Universe; You are the Swarupa (Form) of Yagnas, Vedas, beyond Lokas and Dyulokas; Avigneya, Alakshya, Achintya, Avyaya, Anaada, and Anata (Unknown, Untargettable, Undefinable, Everlasting, Symbolic of Pure Ecstacy, and Unending); My Greetings to you the Cause, Causation and the Causer; the Unique Sin-Demolisher; the Destroyer of Daitya Peeda, Roga Peeda and Samasta Peedas and the bestower of boons, happiness, contentment, prosperity and above all Uttama Buddhi (Outstanding Noble Mentality).

### Brahma further eulogized Surya Deva as follows:

(Om Surya, Aaryama, Bhaga, Twashta, Pusha (Sustainer), Arka, Savita, Ravi, Gabhastimaan or the Possessor of High-beam Rays; Aja or birthless; Kaala, Mrityu, Dhata or the one who is the Prime Hold; Prabhakara or the Embodiment of Glow; Prithvi, Aapa or Water; Teja, Swa or Sky; Vayu, Parayana the Unfailing High-Form of Protection; Soma, Brihaspati, Shukra, Angaraka, Indra, Vivi swaan, Deeptaamshu or the Provider of Prakasha Kiranaas; Shuchi or the Symbol of Purity; Sauri or the Surya Putra Manu; Shanaischara, Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Skanda, Vaishravana (Kubera), Yama, Vaidyuta or the Origin of Vidyut Shakti; Agni, Jatharaagni or the In-Fire of Physique; Iandhana (the form of Firewood); Agni, Tejahpati, Dharmadwaja or the Insignia of Virtue; Veda Karta, Vedaanga, Veda vaahana, Krita (Satya Yuga), Treta, Dwapara, Kali Yugas; Sarvaamaraashraya; Time Units viz. Kala, Kaashta, Muhurta, Kshapa or Night Time Unit; Yaama or Prahara and Kshana; Samvatsara kara, Asvattha, Kalachakra, Vibhavasu or Agni; Purusha, Shaaswata, Yogi, Vyaktaavyakta / Percievable and Imperceivable; Sanatana, Kaalaadhyaksha or the Presiding Deity of Time; Prajaadyaksha, Vishwakarma, Tamonuda or the banisher of darkness; Varuna, Saagara, Amsha, Jeemuta (Clouds), Jeevana, Ariha the destroyer of Enemies; Bhutaashraya, Bhutapati, Sarvaloka namaskrita or He who is respected by all Lokas; Srashta, Samvartakaagni (Pralayaagni); Alolupa (Alobha); Ananta, Kapila, Bhanu, Kaamada (Fulfiller of desires); Sarvatomukha or the Possessor of Faces in all directions; Jaya, Vishaala, Varada the Provider; Sarva bhuta nishevita, Mana, Suparna (Garuda), Bhutaadi, Sheeghraga; Praanadharana, Dhanvantari, Dhumaketu, Adideva, Aditi putra, Dweaadashaatmaa or the Form of Twelve Suns; Ravi, Daksha, Pita, Maataa, Pitaamaha Swargadwara, Prajaadwaara, Miokshadwara, Trivishtapa or Swarga;

Dehakarta, Prashaantaatma, Vishwaatma, Vishvatomukha, Charaacharaatma, Sukshaatma, Maitreya and Karunaanvita (Ever Merciful).

### Devastation of Daksha Yagna and humiliation of Daksha

(Daksha's Prayer to Maha Deva as 'Shiva Sahasranama' included)

At the time of the wedding of Uma Devi and Mahadeva, Brahma extolled Parama Shiva as follows: Namah Parvata Lingaaya Parvatesaayatey Namah, Pavanavegaaya Virupaa yaajitaayacha/ Namah klesa vinaashaaya Daatrey cha Shubha sampadaam, Namo Nila Sikhandaaya Ambikaa pataye Namah/ Namo Bhairava rupaaya virupa nayanaayacha, Namah Sahasra netraaya Sahasra charanaaya cha/ Namo Deva vayasyaaya vedaangaaya Namo namah, Vishthambhanaaya Shakrasya baahvor vedaamkuraacha/ Charaacharaayapataye shamanaaya Namo namah, Namah Kapaala maalaaya Kapaalasutra dhaariney/ Namah kapaala hastaaya Dandney Gadiney Namah, Namah-strailokya nadhhaya Pasuloka rataayacha/ Namah khatvaanga hastaaya Pramataarthi Haraayacha, Namo Yagna shiro hastrey Krishna keshaapahaariney/ Bhaganetra nipaataaya Pushnordanta Haraayacha, Namah Pinaakashulaasi khadga mudgara dhaaniney/ Namostu Kaala Kaalaaya Triteeyanayanaayacha/ Antakaanta kriteychaiya Namah Parvatavaasiney/ Suvarna retasey chaiva namah Kundala dhaariney, Daityaanaam Yogha naashaaya Yoginaam Guravey namah/ Shashaankaaditya netraaya Lalaata nayanaayacha, Namah Smashaana rataey Smashaana yadadaayacha/ Namo Daiyata naathaaya Triambikaaya Namo namah, Grihasta saadhavey nityamjatiney Brahmachaariney/ Namo Mundaardha Mundaaya Pashunaam pataey namah/ Saliley Tapyamaanaaya Yogaiswarya pradaayacha/ Namo Shaantaaya daantaaya Pralayotpatti kaariney, Namonugraha kartreycha Stithikartrey Namonamah/ Namo Rudraaya vasava Adityaayaashviney namah, Namah Pitreytha Saamkhyaaya Vishvedevaaya vai namah/ Namah Sharvaaya Ugraaya Shivaaya Varadaayacha, Namo Bheemaaya Senaanye Pashunaam Patayenamah/ Shuchaye Vairihaanaaya Sadyojaataaya vain amah, MahaaDevaaya Chitraaya Vichitraaya cha vai namah/Pradhaayaaprameyaaya Karyaaya Kaaranaayacha, Purushaaya namastestu Purushoyaachha karaayacha/ Namah Purusha samyoga Pradhaana guna kaariney, Pravartakaaya Prakruteyh Purushasya cha Sarvashah/Krutaa krutasya Satkartrey Phala Samyogadaaya cha, Kaalajnaaya cha Sarveshaam Namo Niyama kaariney/ Namo Vaishamya kartrecha gunaanaam vritti daayacha, Namastey Deva Devesah, Namastey Bhutabhaavanah/ Shiva Sowmya mukhodrushtam Bhava Sowmyohi nah Prabho!

(Our salutations to Maha Deva who has the Form of Parvata Linga / Mountain like Linga and Parvateswara / the Supreme of Mountains whose speed is like that of Wind; whose Form is Fearful and Invincible, the instant demolisher of all difficulties; and bestower of prosperity; the adorner of blue clothing Ambikapati with wind as his Form and of myriad Swarupas with thousand eyes and feet; the Deva Deva, Vedanga Swarupa; the Supreme Lord of Charaachara or the Mobile/Immobile Creation; the Wearer of Skulls as garlands and by his hands; the Lord of Trilokas; the Khatvaanga Hasta or he who holds an expurgated part of his body by his hand; the reliever of the difficulties of Pramathaganas; the Yagna Swarupa; Krishna Keshaapaharini; Bhaganetra Hara; Pinakashula-Asi-Khadga-Mudgara Dhaarini; Kaalaa Kaalaa, Triteeya Netraa, Anatakaantakrita, Parvata Vaasa; Daityanaashaaya; Chandra-Surya Netra; Forehead long Eyed Deity; the Playful Resident of Smashaans or burial grounds bestowing boons as the Three Eyed Deveshwara; Triambakaaya; the much married Grihasti yet practising Brahmacharya or bachelorhood; Mundaartha Mundaaya; Pashupati; Yogeswarya Pradaaya; the Great Meditator inside water; the Provider of Wealth by way of Yoga; the Controller of Indrias or of Physical limbs; the Great Energy responsible for Creation and Decadence; the Symbol of Kindness providing for Universal Preservation; Shankara! You have several formulations like Ekaadasha Rudras, Ashtaa Vasus, Dwadasha Adityas, and two Ashvini Kumars; You are the Father of all Lokaas; Sankhya described by Sankha Purusha; Viswadeva, Sharva, Ugra, Shiva, Varada, Bhima, Senaani, Pashupati, Shuchi, Vairahanta, Sadyo jaata, Mahadeva, Chitra, Vichitra, Pradhaana, Aprameya, Karya and Kaarana / The Cause and the Causation; the Purusha and Prakriti and the Provider of Trigunas; the provider of results of kruta kaaryas

or tasks performed / karma phalas; Kaala jnaaya; Niyama kaariney or the Enforcer of Regulations; Prabho Deva Devesha!)

Pursuant to the wedding of Sati Devi with Maha Deva, Daksha Prajapati developed dislike for Parama Shiva which evolved into hatred as the son-in law was always on the move as a 'digambara' / uncovered and nude in the company of frightening Pramatha ganaas, Bhuta-Preta-Piscachaas and resided in 'Smashanaas', Mountain Caves and such disgusting Places. But Devi Sati was indeed aware that Maha Deva was the Supreme and Unique! Once while noticing that several Devas and their consorts were flying away by their chariots and other means of transport to attend Daksha Yagna, Devi Parvati felt small as to why he was not invited and Mahadeva explained that he did not have any role since he was not to get a portion of the offerings in the Homa; however Daksha ought to have invited him as he was indeed the Yagna Swami and all the Devas, Danavas, Yakshas, Gandharvas and all the Beings in the Universe take pains to please him. Thus Bhagavan Shankara made an angry frown and a massive fire was materialized that created a ferocious Bhadrakaali in the Form of an aggressive and powerful lioness who was instructed to destroy Daksha Yagna. Simultaneously he recalled Veerabhadra from the Smashaana Bhumi (Burial Ground) with the same instruction and the latter created a multitude of Rudra Ganaas who all charged the Yagna and wrecked it totally. As Devas, Rishis and all the guests ran away out of fright, a highly shaken up Daksha Prajapati who was humiliated and demoralized begged of mercy from Virabhadra who ordered him to run upto Shiva's refuge only. The frightened Daksha ran up to Maha Deva and prostrated before him while sobbing and praying to him as follows:

- 1) Namastey Deva Devesha Namastyendhaka -sudana, Devendratwam Balashreshtha Deva Daanava Pujita/ Sahasraaksha Virupaksha Tryaksha Yagnaadhipapriya, Sarvatah Paanipaadastwam Sarvatokshishiromukhah/ Sarvatah Shrutimaamllokey Sarvamaavrutya tishthasi, Shankha karno Mahakarnah Kumbhakarnornavaalayah/ Gajendra karno Gokarnah Shatakarno Namostutey, Shatodarah Shataavartah Shata jimvah Sanaatanah/ Gaayanti twaam Gayatrino archantyantyarkamarkinah, Deva Daanaya goptaa cha Brahma cha twam Shatakratuh/ Murtimaamstwam Mahaamurthih Samudrah sarasaam nidhih, Twayi Sarvaa Devataahi gaavo goshtha ivaasatey/ Twattah Shareerey pashyaami Somamagnim jaleswaram, Adityamatha Vishnum cha Bramhaanam sa Bruhaspatim/ Kriyaa Karana Kaaryecha Kartaa Kaaranameyyacha, Asaccha Sadasacchaiya tathaiya Prabhayaapyayou/ Namo Bhavaaya Sharvaaya Rudraaya Varadaayacha, Pashunaam Patayechaiva Namostwandhaka ghaatiney/ Trijataaya Triseershaaya Trishulavara dhaariney, Triambakaaya Trinetraaya Tripuraghnaaya vai namah/ Namaschandaaya Mundaaya Vishwachandadharaayacha, Dandiney Shankha karnaaya Dandi Dandaaya vai namah/ Namordha Chandikeshaaya Shushkaaya Vikrutaaya cha, Vilohitaaya Dhumraaya Nilagreevaaya vai namah/ Namostwapratirupaaya Virupaaya Shivaayacha, Suryaaya Surya pataye Suryadhwaja pataakiney/ Namah Pramatha naashaaya Vrushaskandhaaya vai namah, Namo Hiranyagarbhaaya Hiranya kavachaaya cha/ Hiranya krutachudaaya Hiranyapataye namah, Shatru ghaataaya Chandaaya Parna shankhashayaacha/ Namah stutaaya stutaye stuuyamaanaaya Vai namah, Sarvaaya Sarva bhakshaaya Sarva bhutaantaraatmaney/
- 2) Namo homaaya Mantraaya Shukla dhwaja pataakiney, Namonmayaaya Nyaayaaya Namah Kilikilaaya cha/ Namastwaam shamaanaaya shayitaayotthitaaya cha, Sthitaaya Daavamaanaaya kubjaaya kutilaaya cha/ Namo nartana sheelaaya Mukhavaaditra kaariney, Badhaapahaaya Lubdhaaya Geetavaaditra kaariney/ Namo Jyeshthaaya Shreshthaaya Balapramadha -naayacha, Ugraaya cha Namo Nityam Namascha Dashabaahavey/ Namah Kapaala hastaaya sita bhasma priyaayacha, Vibhishanaaya Bhimaaya Bhishma Vrata dharaaya cha/ Naanaa Vikruta Vaktraaya Khadga jimhogra damshtriney, Paksha maasa lavaarthaaya Tumbi Veenaapriyaayacha/ Aghora ghora rupaaya Ghoraaghora taraaya cha, Namah Shivaaya Shantaaya Namah Shantatamaaya cha/ Namo Buddhhaya Shuddhaaya Samvibhaaga Priyaaya cha, Pavanaaya Patangaaya Namah Saankhya -paraaya cha/ Namaschandaika ghantaaya Ghanataajalpaaya Ghantiney, Sahasrashata ghantaaya Ghanataa maalaa priyaya cha/ Pranadandaaya Nityaaya Namastey Lohitaaya cha, Humhumkaaraaya Rudraaya Bhagaakaara priyaayacha/

- 3) Namopaaravatey Nityam Girivrikshapriyayacha, Namo Yagnaadhipataey Bhutaaya Prastutaayacha/Yagnavaahaaya Daantaaya Tathyaayacha Bhagaayacha, Namastataaya Tatyaaya Taatinipataye namah/Annadaayaannapataey Namastwanna bhujaayacha, Namah Sahasrasheershaaya
  Sahasracharanaayacha/ Sahasrodyutashulaaya Sahasra nayanaayacha, Namo Baalaarkavarnaaya
  Balarupa dharaayacha/ Namo Baalaarka rupaaya Kaalakreedanakaaya cha, Namah Shudhhaaya
  Buddhaaya Kshobhanaaya kshayaaya cha/ Tarangingita Keshaaya Muktakeshaaya vain amah, Namah
  Shatkarma nishtaaya Trikarma niyataayacha/ Varnaashramaanaam Vidhivatpruthagdharma pravartiney,
  Namah Sreshthaaya Jyeshthaaya Namah Kalakalaayacha/ Sweta pingala netraaya
  Krishnaraktekshananaayacha, Dharma kaamaartha mokshaaya krathaaya krathanaayacha/ Sankhyaaya
  Sankhya mukhyaaya yogaadhipataye namah, Namo Rathyaadhirathyaaya chatushpatha pathaayacha/
- 4) Krishnaajinottareeyaaya Vyaala Yagnopaveetiney, Ishaana Rudrasanghaata Harikesha Namostutey/
  Thrayambikaayaambikaanaatha Vyaktaavyakta Namostutey, Kaalakaamada kaamaghna dushtodvrittha
  nishudana/ Sarvagarhita Sarvaghna Sadyojaata Namostutey, Unmaadana shataavarta Gangaatoyaadra
  murdhajah/ Chandraadha samyugaavardha meghaavarta namostutey, Namonnadaanakartrey cha
  Annadaprabhavey Namah/ Anna bhoktrecha goptrey cha twameva Pralayaanala,
  Jaraayujaandajaaschaiva swedajod -bhijja eva cha/ Twameva Deva Devesha Bhutaagraschaturvidhah,
  Charaacharasrashtaa twam pratihartaa twameva cha/ Twameva Brahmaa Vishwesha Apsu
  Brahmavadantitey, Sarvasya Paramaa yonih Shuddhaamsho Jyotishaam nidhih/Ruksaamaani
  Tathongkaara —maahustwaam Brahmavaadinah,Haai haayi Harey Haayi huvaahaaveti vaasa krut/
  Gaayantitwaam Surasreshthaah Saamaga Brahma vaadinah, Yajurmaya Rungmayascha Saamaatharva
  yutastathaa/ Pathyasey Brahmavaadbhistwaam ganaih, Brahmanaah Kshatriyaa Vaishyaaha Shudraa
  Varnaaschamaascha ye/ Twamevaashrama sanghascha Vidyustanitamevacha, Samvatsaraswamrutavo
  maasaa maasaartha mevecha/ Kalaa kaashthaa nimeshaascha Nakshatraani yugaanicha, Vrishaanaam
  Kakudam twam hi gireenaam shikharaanicha/
- 5) Simho mrigaanaam cha patayastakshakaananta bhoginaam, Ksheerado hyudadheenaam cha Mantraanaam Pranavastathaa/ Vajram sraharanaam cha vrataanaam Satyamevacha, Twamevecchhaa cha dweshascha Raago Mohah Shamah Kshamaah/ Vyavasaayo dhrutirlobhah Kaamakrodhau Jayaa Jayou, Twam Gadee twam sharee chaapi khatvaangee mudgaree tathaa/ Chhethaa Bhoktaa Prahartaacha netaa mantaasi no matah, Dasha lakshana samyukto Dharmorthah kaama eva cha/ Induh Samudrah Saritah Palvalaani saraamsicha, Tataavalyastrunoushadhyah Pashavo Mriga Pakshinah/ Dravya karma gunaarambhah Kaala pushpa phalapradah, Adischaantascha madhyascha Gayatryonkaara eva cha/ Harito lohitah Krishno Naalah Peetastathaarunah, Kadruscha Kapilo Babhruhu Kapoto matsyakastathaa/ Suvarna retaah vikhyaatah Suvarnaschaapayo kutah, Suvarna naamaah cha tathaa Suvarnapriya yevacha/ Twamindrascha Yamaschaiva Varuno Dhanadonilah, Utphullaschitra bhaanushca Swarbhaanurevacha/ Hotram Hotaacha Homyam cha Hutam chaiva tathaaprabhuh, Trisouparnastathaa Brahmanyajushaam Shata Rudriyam/ Pavitramcha Pavitraanaam Mangalaanaamscha Mangalam, Praanascha twam Rajascha twam Tamah Satvayutastathaa/ Paanopaanah Samaanascha Udaano Vyana evacha, Unmeshascha Nimeshascha Kshuthrut jhrumbha tathaiva cha/ Lohitaangascha Damshtree cha Mahaavaktro Mahodarah, Shuchiromaa Haricchashruurdhya keshaaschalaachalah/ Geetavaaditra nrithyaango geetavaadanaka priyah, Matsyojaalo jalojyayyo Jalavyalah kuteecharah/ Vikaalascha Sukaalascha Dushkaalah Kaala naashanah, Mrutyuschaivaakshayontascha Kshama Maayaa karotkarah/ Samvarto Vartakaschaiva Samvartaka balaahakou, Ghantaaki Ghanti Chudaalo Lavanodadhih/
- 6) Brahmaa kalaagnivakrascha Danidi Mundastridanda dhruk, Chaturyugaschatur Vedascha turhotraschatushpathah/ Chaturaashramyanetaa cha Chaturvarna karaschahum, Ksharaaksharah Priyo dhurto Ganairganyo Ganaadhipah/ Raktamaalaambara dharo Gireesho Girijaapriyah, Shilpeeshah Shilpinah Shreshtha Sarva Shilpi pravartakah/ Bhaganetraantakaschandah Pushno Dantavinaashanah, Swaahaa Swadhaa Vashatkaaro Namaskaara Namostutey/ Goodha vratascha Goodhascha Goodha vrata nishevitah, Taranastaaranaschaiva Sarva Bhuteshu taaranah/ Dhaataa Vidhaata Sandhaataa Nidhaataa

Dhaarano Dharah, Tapo Brahmacha Satyam cha Brahmacharya tathaarjavam/ Bhutaatmaa Bhutakrudbhuto Bhutabhavya bhavodbhavah, Bhurbhuvah swaratischaiva Bhutohyagni Maheswarah/Brahmaavartah Suraavartah Karmaavartha Namostutey, Kaamabimbavirhantaa Karnikaarastraja priyah/ Gonetaa Goprachaaras —cha Govrusheswara vaahanah, Chaturmukho Bahumukho Raneshwabhimukhah sadaa/ Hiranyagarbhaha Shakunirdhanadortha patirviraat, Adharmahaa Mahadaksho Dandadhaaro Ranapriyah/ Tishthan Sthirascha Shtaanuscha Nishkampascha Sunischalah, Durvaarano Durvishaho Dussaho Duratikramah/ Durdharo Durvesho Nithyo Durdarpo Vijayo Jayah, Shashah Shashaankanayanah Seetoshnaha Kshutrushaa jaraa/ Aadhayo Vyaadhayaschaiva Vyaadhihaa Vyaadhipascha yah, SahyoYagnamrigha Vyaadho Vyaadheenaamaakarokarah/ Shikhandi Pundarikascha Pundarikaavalokanah, Dandadhruk Chakradandascha Roudra bhaagaavinaashanah/

- 7) Vishapomrutapschaiva Suraapah Ksheerasomapah, Madhupaschaapaschaiva Sarvapascha Balaabalaha/ Vrishaangavaahyo Vrishabhastathaa Vrishabha lochanah, Vrishabhaschaiva Vikhyaato Lokaanaam Lokasamskrutah/ Chandraadityou Chakshushi tey Hrudayam cha Pitaamahah, Agnishtomastathaa deho Dharmakarma prasaadhitah/ Na Brahmaacha Govindah Puraana Rishayo na cha, Mahaatmyam Veditum Shaktaa Yathaatathyena tey Shivah/ Shivaayaa Murtayah Sukshmaastey Mahyam yaantu darshanam, Taabhirmaam Sarvato raksha pitaa putramiyairasam/ Rakshamaam Rakshaneeyoham tawaanagha Namostutey, Bhaktaanukampee Bhagavan Bhaktaschaaham sadaatwayi/ Yah Sahasraanyanekaani Pumsumaavritya durdishaam, Tishthatyekah Samudraantey sa mey goptaastu nithyashah/ Yam Vinidraa Jitaswaasaaha Satyasthaaha Samadarshinah, Jyotih Pashyanti yunjnaanaastasmai Yogaatmaney Namah/ Sambhakshya Sarvabhutaani Yugaantey Samuopasthitey, Yah shetey Jalama –dhyasthatam Prapadyombushaayinam/Pravishya vadanam Raahoryaha Somam pibatey nishi, Grastyarkam cha Swarbhaanurbhutwaa Somaagnirevacha/ Angushtha maatraah Purushaa Dehasthaam Sarbva Dehinaam, Rakshantu tey cha maam nithyam nityam chaapyayayantu maam/Enaapyutpaaditaa garbha Aapo Bhaagagataascha ye, Teshaam Swaahaa Swadhaachaiya Aapunuvanti swadanticha/ Harshayaanti na hrashyanti Namastebhyastu nithyashah/ Ye Samudrey Nadidurgey Parvateshu Goshtheshu Kaantaara gahaneshucha/
- 8) Chatushpateyshu Rathyaasu Chatwareshu Subhaasucha, Hastaswarathashaalasu Jeernodyaanalayeshu cha/Rasaatala gataayechaye cha Tasmaatparam gataah, Namastebhyo Namastebhyastu Sarvashah/ Sarvastwam Sarvago Devah Sarvabhuta patirbhavah, Sarvabhutaantaraatmaa cha teyna twam na nimantritah/ Twameva chejyasey Deva Yagnorvividha dakshinaih, Twameva Kartaa Sarvasya tena twam na nimantritah/ Athavaa maayayaa Deva mohitah sukshmayaa tava, Tasmaattyu kaaranaadyapi twam mayaa na nimantritah/ Praseeda mama Devesha twameva sharanam mama, ,Twam gatistwam pratishthaa cha na chanyosteeti mey matih/
- 1)My salutations to you Devadeva, destroyer of Andhakaasura, Devendra, Balashreshtha who is worshipped by Devas and Danavas alike; You are Sahasraaksha or thousand eyed, Virupaaksha or with frightening looks, Trayksha or with Three Eyes, Shankha Karna or conchshell-like ears, Maha Karna or of enormous ears, Kumbha Karna akin to a vast pot, Arnavaalaya or whose residence is huge like an ocean, Gaja Karna/ Gokarna Karna or with elephant ears / Cow's ears; Shata Karna or ears in hundreds; Shatodara or hundred bellied; Shataavarta or surrounded by hundreds of bees; Shata jihva or hundred tongued; Gaayanti or Gayatri devotees singing of Shiva'; Surya bhaktaas worship Shiva in Surya rupa; Deva Daanavaas worship Shiva with equal devotion; You are Murtimaan, Maha Murti, deep and abundant like Samudra; all the Devas reside in you and vice versa; we vision in your physique Chandra, Agni, Varuna, Surya, Vishnu, Brahma, and Brihaspati; You are the Kriya, Karana, Kaarya, Karta, Kaarana, Asat, Sadsat, Utpatti, Pralaya, Bhava or Srishti Karta, Sharva, Rudra or the tormentor, Varada, Pashupati, Killer of Andhakaasura, Trijata, Triseersha, Trishula dhaari, Traimbaka, Trinetra, and Tripura naashaka. My obeisance to You Mahadeva! Chanda the highly irritated, Munda the head shaven; Vishwachanda dharaaya, Dandi, Shankha Karna, Dandidanda or Dandi dharana/ Danda (Punishment) giver, Artha Chandikeshaaya or Artha Naareeswara; Sushka or emaciated, Vikruta, Vilohita, Dhumra and

Neelagreeva. You are Apratirupa or of Unique Form; Virupa; Shiva or of Kalyana / Mangala Rupa or of Propitious Form. Surya deva carries the Flag and Insignia of Yours; You are the Supreme Chief of Pramatha ganas; the Hiranya garbha Brahma wearing Hiranya Kavacha or Body Shield made of gold and the Hiranyapati or the Prime Master of Gold representing Wealth and Prosperity; the Shatru ghaati or the demolisher of enemies and a Symbol of Fury resisting Injustice and Viciousness; you are the Stuti Swarupa or the Target of all the acclamations and exaltations by one and all; Sarva Swarupa or the Representation of the entire Universe; Sarva Bhakshi or the Great Devourer; your Dwajapataaka or the Bannerflag of Everlasting Victory is of the Pure White Color. Maha Deva!

- 2) You are the Homa / Oblations into Agni and also the Mantra with which to invoke Devas and Devis. My greetings and sincere reverences to you always while asleep, awaken, waking up after sleep, while walking, standing or running, or performing nritya or dance and so on. You possess the Forms of Sreshtha (The Highly Distinguished) and the Jyeshtha or the Senior- most; You are the churner of Shakti epitomised; the Ten Handed; Kapaala dhaari; fond of white coloured ash to smear the body; Vibhishana, Bhima, Bhishma Vrata, the Assumer of various repulsive Forms with sword- like tongue and hideous teeth; You are the Time in various units like Paksha-Maasa-Lava and Kshana; the Ghoraghora and Ghoratara Swarupa yet a High Representation of Shanti and Mangala; the benchmark of Shuddha, Buddha and Samvidhanapriya or Purity, Acumen and the Great Provider; You are the Pavana (Wind), Surya and Saankhyaparayana or the Wizard of Sankhya Yoga; You are the Ghanta or the Superlative Bell-its wearer with its magnificent Dhwani and Reverberation; the punisher of Beings for their evil deeds; the Nitya or the Perpetual Lohita Rupa in the habit of making hums like Huum Huum; and Bhagakaara priya Rudra who is unsurpassable.
- 3) My reverences to you Mahadeva! You have a soft corner for Mountains and Forests full of huge trees; You are the Yagnadhipati, Bhuta-Vartamaana-Bhavishya Rupa or of the Form of Past-Present and Future; the Yajna vaahaka Jitendriya or the Controller of Human Limbs and senses; Satya Swarupa; Bhaga, Tataa-Tataapara- Tataani Pati or the Banks of Waterbodies including the Oceans; You are the Annadata, Anna pati, and Annabhogi too or the bestower of food, the King of Food and also the enjoyer of Food; he who possesses thousand Mastakas / heads and thousand 'Paadaas' feet as also Sahasra Shula/ thousand tridents and Sahasra Netras /thousand eyes; the Bakarkavarna / of the hue of Uprising Sun and Bala Swarupa or of the Form of a child; Maha deva! You are the emblem of Shudda / Cleanliness, Buddha / Grandeur; the Kshobana / the Provider of decay with Kshaya rupa or the Feature of bringing about dissolution with Kaal / Time as his puppet or child plaything; Parama Shiva! Your hair curls are dedicated with the forceful waves of Ganga and your hair tresses are fully freeflung and open; You are always engaged in Shatkarma Nishtha (viz. Sandhya Vandana or Gayatri Japa as prescribed and other Brahmanic duties, Adhyayan / Study of Spirituality, Adhyapan / Teathing Spirituality, Yajana or performing and enable others to perform Sacrificial Fires, Daana / Charity and Pratigrahana /accepting danas); Trikarmanataya or engaged in the Three Tasks of Srishti-Paalana-Samhaarana /Creation-Preservation-Destruction; You are the Supreme Organiser and Administrator of Chaturvarnas of Brahmana-Kshatriya-Vaisya and Sudra Varnaas; and Ashramas of Brahmacharya- Grihasta-Vanaprastha and Sanyaasa and thus the Facilitator of Dharma Pravritti; You possess eyes of varied colours like white, yellow, black and red; You are the Icon of Purushaarthaas Dharma, Artha, Kaama and Moksha as also of the Symbol of Kratha / Destruction, Krathana (Samhara Kartha), Saankhya Yoga and Saankhyamukhya; You are the Charioteer of those who deserve to be driven towards the Prime Chaurasta / Four-Road Cross:
- 4) You wear black skin as your outside shroud and a serpent as your Yagnopaveeta or the Holy Thread; Ishaana Deva! You are the Swarupa of Ekadasha Rudras /Eleven Rudras; Harikesha / who assumes Pale Yellow Hair style; Vyaktaavyakta Swarupa, Amabika -anaatha; Trinetradhaari; Kaala Kaamada Kaamaaghna or the Emblem of Time, Desire and its Destroyer; Dushodvrutta Nishudana or the Slayer of the High Form of Evil Forces; you are the Sarvagarhita / the target of those who could never be gauged, the Sarvaghna (Sarva Samhaaraka), and Sadyojaata; He who could convert any body as mentally imbalanced and encircled with hundreds of such persons; who keeps Ganga on his head; called as

Chandrartha samugaavarta or he who is encircled by Chandra and Meghaavarta or surrounded by clouds; the Provider of Anna / Food and the Lord of those who provide Anna to others; the Annabhokta and Anna Rakshaka /The Great Consumer of Food and its Protector; You are the Pralaya kaaleena Agni or the Gigantic Fire at the Time of the Universal Annihilation; Devadeveswara! You are the Unique Form of Four kinds of Praanis or Beings viz. Jaraayuja (who wear out with passage of Time like human beings, animals etc); Andaja or are born out of Eggs like birds; Swedaja or those which are born of sweat like worms; and Udbhijja or spring out of soil / Earth; You are also the Srashta and Pratiharta / the Creator and Discharger of Charachara Jagat; You are Vishveswara, Brahma as also the Brahma of Mahajala Swarupa; Sudhaamshu / Moon and the Deposit of Jyotisha; Brahmavaadi Maharshi calls You as Ruk-Saama and Omkaara; Brahmavetthas who recite Saamagaana Ruchas / stanzas like 'Haayi Haayi Harey Haayi Huvaa Haaveti' are always engaged in your commendation; You are the Yajurveda, Rukveda, Sama Veda and Atharvana Veda; Brahmavetthaas are immersed in the Adhyayan or study of Kalpas and Upanisdhads extolling you; You are the Chaturvarna of Brahmana-Kshatriya-Vaishya and Shudras; You are the sparkle of Lightning, resound of clouds; Time Units like Samvatsara, Ritu, Maasa, Paksha, Kala, Kaashtha, Nimesha, Nakshatra and Yugas are all of Shiva Rupa; You are also the Vrishabha Kakud (Bull's hump) and Giri Shikhara (Mountain Peak) alike.

5) Maha Deva! You are like the Lion among animals; Takshaka and Sesha Naga among the Serpents; the Ksheera Sagara among the Oceans; Pranava among the Mantras; Vajra among the Shastras; and Satya Narayana among Vratas; You are the Icchaa (Desire), Dwesha (Dislike), Raaga (Affection), Moha (Infatuation), Shanti (Peace), Kshama (Patience), Vyavasaaya (Strong Decision), Dhairya (Courage), Lobha (Greed), Kaama (Passion), Krodha (Anger), Jaya (Victoy) and Paraajaya (Defeat); You are the Armoury like Gada, Baana, Dhanush, Khatvaanga, and Mudgara; You are the Chhettha (Expurgator), Bhettha (disintegrator) and Praharta (Striker or Attacker); Neta (Chief), Mantaa (Convincer), Manukta (the Persuader); Dasaguna, Dharmaartha Kaama Moksha Swarupa; You are of the Swarupa of Indu, Samudra, Nadi, Palvala or small pond, Sarovara, Lata or creeper, grass, Anna / Food, Pashu, Mriga, and birds; You are also Dravya (Money), Karma / Deeds, and Gunas; You are the Provider Fruits and Flowers as per Seasons; The Maker of the Beginning, the Middle and the End as also the Gayatri and Omkaara Swarupa; You constitute the colours of Green, Red, Black, Blue, Yellow, Kapila, Babhru, Kapota, Shyama and so on; you are the Suvarnaretha or Agni; popular by the name of Gold and as fond of Gold; Devadeva! You are Indra, Yama, Varuna, Kubera, Vaayu, the incandescent Agni, Swarbhanu or Rahu and Surva; the Havana Hota, Hotra or Havan, Homya or worshipped as Homa, Huta or Havi and Prabhu; you are the Trisouparna Rucha or Three leafed Stanza and Yagurveda's Shata Rudriya or the One who is worshipped by various Devas, Danavas, Dikpalakas, Nava Grahas, Rishis, Bhuta-Preta-Piscachas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Rakshasas, Manavas, Mountians, Nagas etc; You are the Most Sacred and Hallowed, the Mangala among Mangalas or the Most Propitious; the Pancha Praanaas viz. Praana, Apaana, Samaana, Udaana, and Vyana; the Three Gunaas of Satva, Rajas, and Tamogunas; Unmesha-Nimesha or Opening and Closing of Eyes; the Hunger and Thirst; You are Lohitaanga or of Red coloured Murti; Damshtri or the one with Damshtras / tusks; Maha Vaktra or Huge Faced; Mahodara or Big bellied; Shuchi Roma or of Sacred body hairs; Haricchamashru or yellow moustached and bearded; Urthva Kesha or of lifted up head hairs; the Sthaavara-Jangamas or Moveable and Immobile Beings; Geeta-Vaadya-Nritthaanga or of Song-Music-Instrumental and Dance Forms; Parameswara! You are the Emblem of Music and Dance; you are the Matsya, Jala or its Life-Providing water and Life-taker viz. the jaal or the net; Maha Deva! None could ever win over you; You are the Water snake residing in water and lonely Grihasti or the much married family person; indeed You are the Form of Vikaala or the Negative Time, Sukaala or the Positive Time, Dushkaala or Bad Time; and Kaala naashaka or the destroyer of Time; You are indeed the Mrityu, Akshaya or Everlasting and Anta or the Terminator; the Kshama or of Endless Capacity; Maya and of the all-pervading Beams of Luminosity; You are the Samvarta or Pralaya Kaala, Vartaka or of the Everlasting Vidya; Samvartaka or of Pralaya Kaala and Balaahaka or Clouds; Since you wear a Ghanta or big bell, you are popular as Ghantaki and Ghanti; You sport a tuft on the back of head and the entire Samudra of salt water is of your Swarupa.

6) You are Brahma having Kaalaagni on his face, with shaven head and as an ascetic wearing a Tridanda; you are of the Form of Chatur Yugas of Satya-Treta-Dwapara and Kali; Chatur Vedas of Ruk-Yajur-Saama and Atharvana; Chaturhotra or four kinds of 'Hotaas' (Conductors) at Yagnas and the meeting point of Chatushpathas or Four Roads; the Regulator of Chaturaashramaas of Brahmacharya-Garhastya-Vaanaprasatha and Sanyaasa; and of Chaturvarnas of Brahmana-Kshatriya-Vaishya and Shudras. You are the representation of Kshaya (Dissolution) and Akshaya (Permanance), Priya (Affection), Dhurta (Disgust), Gananeeya (Distinguished) and Ganapati; You adorn red-bead necklaces and red clothing; the Swami of Mountains and Vaani / Voices; the Master of Shilpakaaraas, the Shilpa Sreshthi and the Trainer of Shilpis; being of extremely angry profile, you have broken the teeth of Pusha (Sun God); You are the manifestation of Swaha (offerings to Agni or by water), Swadha (oblations to Pitras), and Vashatkara (Personification of Vedic Sacrifice); You are the 'Goodha Vrata' or the worship by way of Vrata or prescribed way of Puja and Goodha / with a hidden conternt and aim; the Performer of Goodha Vrata and the target of those who perform the Goodha vrata; You are the Swarupa of 'Tarna'or Moksha as also the Taarana or Provider of Moksha; You are the Movement of the Inner Soul of all Beings; the Dhata or the one who holds; the Vidhata or the destiny maker, Sandhaata or the Germinator, Dharana (the hold), Dhara or he who provides the hold; You are the Tapas or Meditation, Brahma or the Supreme Creator, Satya or the Eternal Truth; Brahmacharya (the Celibacy), and Arjiva or the Symbol of Saralata /Softness; You are the Bhutaatma or the inner soul of one and all; the Sourcer of the Bhutaatmaas; Bhuta Swarupa; the Originator of Bhuta-Vartamaana-Bhavishya; the Bhurloka-Bhuvarloka- Swarloka, the Bhutaatma, Agni and Maheswara; You are thde Brahmaavarta-Suraavarta and Kaamaavarta; the destroyer of Kamadeva Vigraha; You are fond of Karnikaara /Kanera flower garland wearer; indeed you are the Goneta, Gopracharaka or the Sanchalaka of Indriyas and Goswami who rides over Nandi Deva. My Prayers to you Paramatma! Protection of Trilokaas is entirely in your holy hands; you are Govinda or Gorakshaka, Gopaalaka or the safeguard of cows, and Gomaarga or the safe passage of cows; indeed you are the Akhanada Chandraabhimukha or the One with Eternally Moon-Faced Supreme Being of Extreme Pleasantness; You are indeed the faceless, or with a face none too attractive, or with four faces or of multiple faces or with a face ever peaceful and sport full in the midst of battles! You are Hiranya -garbha Brahma, Dhanada the Provider of wealth, Dhana Swami, Viraat Purusha, Adharmahaa or the demoplisher of viciousness, Maha Daksha, danda dhaari and Yuddha Premi; You are Tishthan or Ever Standing or Seated firmly; Sthira or Ever-Steady, Sthaanu or fixed, Nishkampa or Never Shaken, Nischala or immobile, Durvaaran or avoidable with great difficulty; Durvishaha or Unbearable, Dusshah or difficult to tolerate, Duratikrama or unsurpassable; you are not possible to hold nor bring under control, Durdamya or unmanageable, always victorious as the personification of success; You are like a hare, Chandra is your eyes; You are the symbol of extreme cold and oppressive heat; You are hunger, thirst, old age, Adhi or of Mentally / Psychologically disturbed and Vyadhi or physiologically unhealthy and at the same time the promoter and demolisher of diseases; you are the icon of tolerance; the Yagnarupi, Shikhandi or the wearer of Peacock feathers; Pundarika or of Kamalarupa dhari; Danda dhaari, Chakra danda and Roudrabhaagaa Vinaashanah or he who had the names as Danda, Chakra and Roudra bhaaga.

7) Indeed you are Great Consumer of Amrit, Visha, Dudha, Soma, Madhu, Jala or any drink alike with equal ease. You are the Vrishabha Swarupa as you to stride the Bull of Dharma / Virtue; your eyes resemble those of a Vrishabha and in fact you are popularly worshipped as a Vrishabha all over! The whole Universe is engaged in your Sanskaara or worship by way of Puja and Abhisheka. Maha Deva! Your two Eyes represent Chandra and Surya, your heart is of Brahma Swarupa, Agnishtoma is like your Body, and Dharm Karma is your Shringaara or ornamentation. Brahma, Vishnu and Sanaatana Rishis are unable to assess the real image of you! May I be blessed with your very kind Darshan in the form of your highly auspicious Sukshma Rupa? May I be granted protection from my attackers just as a father would as I do indeed deserve safety as I have overcome of my ego that led me into arrogance and ego; I prostrate before you with humility and sincere veneration as I am fully purged of my unpardonable short-comings, while innumerable Yogeswaras are in constant endeavor to discover the splendid and illuminated Parama

Tatwa of Yours steeped into Satvikaguna. I seek your forgiveness Maha Deva as at the Time of Pralaya You resort to Yoga Nidra as Jalashaayi when the entire Universe is submerged and is under surrender seeking your asylum. When Chandra drinks Amrit from inside your mouth in the form of Rahu, Surya too gets sustenance from you by assuming the Form of Ketu and in the Form of Agni as Soma Swarupa, I seek shelter in you. May you provide me sanctuary as you exist in all the Beings as thumb-like figures of Jeevatma and to me too grant the same kind of benevolence! I salute your Mangalamaya Shivarupa as all the human beings enter their Garbhas are provided with Swaha or Pushti / Growth and Swadha or Swadhishta Rasa by you and once the Jeevaas are out, you make them cry and laugh intermittently! To that Paramatma who manifests and permeates the Srishti among Samudras, Rivers, Unreachable Places, Parvataas, Caves, Vrikhsas, Forests, Agamya sthalaas, Sky routes, Cross roads, Streets, Sabhas, Gajashaalaas, Ashva shaalaas, Ratha shaalaas, Vaatikaas, old houses, Pancha Bhutaas, Dishaas or Directions, Sub-Directions, between Indra and Surya, Chandra and Surya and in Sub-Terrain Bilwa Swarga viz. Rasatala and other lokas etc. I kneel down in admiration and devotion as I salute you again and again!

8) Bhagavan! You are Sarva Swarupa, Sarvavyaapi, Sampurna Bhuta Swami, the Cause of Creation, the Antaraatma of Sarva Bhutaas; that was why I did not send any Invitaion to you the Yagna that was organized by me; indeed You are the Chief Deity worshipped in any Sacrifice as you are the Outstanding Supreme Power most adulated; I was in fact covered by Maya when I erred and ignored you. Please, Please, do very kindly forgive me Devadi Deva as you are my Gati, Pratishtha and my strong conviction that being a personification of Mercy You will definitely forgive me: *Paseeda mama Devesha twameva sharanam mama, Thwam Gatistwam Pratishtha cha na chaanyesteeti mey matih*/

Needless to say that the ever compassionate Maha Deva pardoned Daksha Prajapati and blessed him to attain Shiva 'Saameepya'. Those who read or recite or think deeply about the Text of the Shiva Sahasranaamaa with its meaning and context shall most certainly accomplish auspicious tidings, long life, and excellent health. Those who aspire for fame, Swarga Prapti, Aishwarya / Wealth, Vidya and Victory should achieve the objectives. Those who are distressed by illnesses, difficulties, fear of various kinds would attain quick reliefs. Obstacles created by Yaksha, Piscacha, Naaga, Vinaayaka, and Thieves are assured of safeguards and instant protection. This confidential Stotra in which Daksha poured his heart out and pleased Maha Deva for his earnestness and devotion could be read, recited and understood by any body with dedication, be it by women, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Vidyarthis, Shudras or of any faith whatsoever, especially by Brahmanaas on Parva Dinaas of Festival Days would be blessed with contentment in life and Shiva Loka Prapti after life!

<u>Ekaamra/ Purushottama Kshetras and King Indradyumna's Temple of Jagannatha ('Kaarunya Sthava Varnana' /Vishnu Stotra included)</u>

Maharshi Lomaharshana narrated to the Sages assembled at Naimisharanya under the leadership of Suta Maha Muni about the significance of Ekaamra and Purushotthama Kshektras as told by Lord Brahma himself originally. Ekaamra Kshetra had as much of popular belief and reputation of Varanasi with Koti Shiva Lingas and eight Tirthas where at the beginning of the present Kalpa there was stated to have been a huge mango tree and hence the name of Ekaamra (literally meaning Mango orchards). It was also stated that the sacred waters of various Tirthas, Rivers, Sarovaras, Pushkari, Tataakas and Vapis, besides the Oceans surrounding Bharata Desha were collected by Devatas and poured into the famed Bindudsara Tirtha where Tribhuvaneswara (Bhuvaneshwar of Orissa) Lingaabhisheka was performed. Since then Agahana / Margaseersha Krishna Paksha Ashtami has been the day when devotees undertake Tirtha Yatra to the Temple when they take sacred bath in the Bindusarovara and at the time of Vishu Yoga perform Tila tarpanas to Devataas, Rishis, and Pitras to attain the Ashva Yaaga Phala. It has been the belief that Tarpanmaas and Pitru Pinda Daanaas / charities to learned Brahmanas at the timings of Grahanaas or Solar and Lunar Eclipses, Vishuva yogas, Samkranti, Ayanaarambhaas, and such other significant Festival Days would yield hundred fold fruits of similar acts in oher Kshetras. Thereafter, devotees should enter the Temple and perform Abhisheka, and Puja with Bilwapatra, Lotus and other flowers along with

the chanting of Vedic and Tantrika Mantras and 'Shodashopachaaraas'/ Sixteen Services with Gandha, Pushpa, Phala, Chandana, Dhupa, Deepa, Naivedya, Upahaara, Stuti, Saashtaanga Pranaama, Geeta-Vaadya, Nritya, Japa, Namaskaara and Pradakshina. From the Temple in the Four Directions of Paschima, Purva, Dakshina and Uttara are situated Kshetras some two and half yojanas away, of which Bhaskareshwara Linga is the most significant as also other Kshetras. There had also been several other Tirthas not far from Ekaamra Kshetra. Towards the East Coast near the Samudra in the Utkala Desha was the famed Purushottama Kshetra where the all-pervading Jagannatha resided; Brahma Deva stated that besides himself, Shiva, Indra, Agni and other Devataas set up their residences as also Gandharvas, Apsaraas, Pitras, Yakshas, Vidyadharas, Siddhaas, Rishis, also Prajapatis, Garuda, Kinnara, Naaga, Vedas, Shastras and Itihaasa Puranaas were all present and the Place which got sanctified further with Purushotthama's presence too had acquired unique significance. Those who would visit this extraordinary Tirtha and get the Darshan of Purushotthama would never ever enter Yamaloka but be safe on Swargapatha.

The illustrious and highly virtuous King Indradyumna of Malwadesha with Avantika (Ujjain) as his Capital City on the banks of the Sacred River Kshipra was famed as a unique Administrator with such qualities that his subjects followed Varnaashrama, lived with peaceful contentment and prosperity without fear or ill-health and respectful of values of Dharmik life viz. Dharma-Artha-Kaama-Moksha. Already in Avantika, there had been for times immemorial a Mahaakala Temple of Trinetradhaari Maha Deva whose darshan and worship had proven fulfillment of the wishes of lakhs of visiting devotees. Besides the Sacred Kshipra and several water bodies, there also was a Shivakunda, an instant sin-demolisher, in the vicinity of Mahaakala and devotees who bathed in it; offered Tarpanas to Devas, Rishis and Pitras and entered the Temple to worship Mahaakaala with Lingabhisheka, Pushpa, Gandha, dhupa, deepa, naivedya and pradakshinas were blessed with Ashwamedha Yagna Phala, paapa-mukti and Shivaloka prapti. There was also Govinda Swami Temple which when visited and worshipped, the fruits are stated to relieve the souls of twenty one previous generations. Besides, there also was the Temple of Vikrama Swami whose darshan ensured Swarga Prapti as the King was conducting regular discussions of Itihaasa- Puranas, Shastra-Vedanga deliberations and so on and even Indra and Deva-Devis were stated to attend the Pravachanas!

The King had a long standing ambition to build an unparelelled and world famed Temple of Jagannadha with the Idols of Krishna, Balarama and their sister Subhadra where regular and formal worship should be organized with Snaana, Daana, Tapa, Homa and Deva Darshana every day for generations who would seek Moksha to crowds of devotees. With a view to identify a suitable Place for building a Huge Place of Jagannadha as envisaged by the King, the latter undertook a Yatra, with elephants, horses, chariots, and soldiers and the Public towards the southern direction ending the Eastern Sea-coast.

It was at this juncture that the Sages at Naimisharanya interrupted the narration of Maharshi Lomaharshana as to how such most Sacred and appropriate Purushotthama Kshetra was selected by the King Indradyumna? In reply to the query, the Maharshi quoted Lord Bramha that Devi Lakshmi asked Janardana on the same issue and the latter asserted as follows since he had the vision of the future: 'Purushottama Tirtha would for sure one of the most celebrated Tirthas, where Devas, Daityas, Danavas and Marichi-like Maharshis were indeed aware already; he further said that on the Southern Sea-coast there would be a mammoth Vata-Vriksha (Banyan Tree) in a large area of ten yojanas and that would be the most ideal Place for developing Purushotthama Kshetra. This massive Vata Vriksha was in place already and did not get swept away by water even at the Kalpaantara and Sages and Yogis meditated under the Tree and dissolved severest sins like Brahmahatya of previous births. To the north of of that Vata Vriksha was situated a Keshava Temple already and from it, there was a Massive Mahal which was indeed the Dharmamaya Abode of Swayambhu Vishnu by praying whom devotees were making a beeline to Vaikuntha! By realizing this, Yama Dharma Raja approached me (Vishnu) and I assured Yama Deva that this specific Pratima would be hidden by me.'

King Indradyumna crossed Mahanadi on the either sides of which the lands were fertile, Brahmanas were pious engaged in Yagnas, Homas, worships, fastings and Swadhyaas; Varnaashramas were flourishing and the King came to realize that the destination was reached where the Temple task was to be taken up. He ordered his Samanta Rajas nearby to let the building material arrive, Shilpis were ordered to arrive to quicken the making of various Idols and the Astrologers were summoned to fix up suitable dates of various stages of construction. Efforts were intensified to locate the famed Swayambhu Purushotthama Vigraha which was misplaced from the Keshava Temple. As advised by Raja Purohitas and Panditaas, the King performed Ashwamedha Yagna. Simultaneously the Temple Construction was completed too. But there was no trace of the Purushottama Pratima yet and the King was terribly worried and prayed to the Lord at length:

Vaasudeva Namastestu Namastey Moksha Kaaranaa, Traahi maam Sarva Lokesha Janmasamsaara saagaraat/ Nirmalaambara samkaasha Namastey Purushotthaama, Sankarshana Namastestu traahi maam Dharanidhara/ Namastey Hemagarbhaaya Namastey Makaradhwaja, Ratikaanta Namastestu traahi maam Shambaraantaka/ Namastenjana samkaasha Namastey Bhaktavatsala, Aniruddha Namastestu traahi maam Varado bhava/ Namastey Vibhudaavaasa Namastey Vibhudapriya, Naraayana Namastestu traahi maam sharanaagatam/ Namastey Balinaam Shreshtha NamasteyLaangalaayudha, Chaturmukha Jagaddhaamatraahimaam Prapitaamaha/ Namastey Neela meghaabha Namastey Tridashaarchita, Traahi Vishno Jagannaatha magnam maambhava saagarey/

(Vaasudeva, Moksha Kaarana! Save me from the cycle of birth and death; you are like the clean and clear Sky; my salutations to you Purushottama the best of Beings, Sankarshana who attracts the Universe, Dharanidhara the Holder of Earth's total weight, the Golden- bellied or the Shaaligraama Shila, the Makaradwaja or the Flier of the Flag of a Crocodile on yout chariot; Ratikanta or the Swarupa of Manmatha who is an embodiment of Charm and beauty; Shambraantaka or the destroyer of Shambaraasura; Anjana Sankaasha or of Shyamala / light blue colour; Bhaktavatsala or He who is considerate to devotees; Varadaayaka or the Bestower of Boons; Aniruddha; Vibudhaavaasa and Vibudhapriya or He who rests with and fond of Devas; Natayana or He who lies on a Huge Water sheet in Yoga Nidra; I crave for your indulgence and refuge; You are of the Swarupa of Balarama the Symbol of Strength; You are the Halaayudha; Charurmukha; Jagaddhaama; Prapitaamaha, Neela Meghaaya, Tridashaarchita, Vishnu and Jannaadha; I am fully drowned in the Ocean of Samsara; do lift me up and save me!

King Indradyumna continued his prayer to Jagannadha as follows: You are the annihilator of the invincible Daitya Hiranyakashipu as the incarnation of Nrisimha whose vision was like that of Pralayaagni; save me! You were the Avatar of Maha Varaaha who lifted up Bhudevi from the cluthes of Daitya Hiranyaaksha from Rasatalala; lift me up from the deep and distressful Ocean of Samsaara; You are the incarnation of Krishna who arrived on Bhumi to terminate innumerable Raakshasaas and Evil Forces and revived Dharma in various Forms of yours like Balarama; You are of the Swarupas like Garuda, Dikpaalakaas and so on and my salutations to one and all; Do bestow on me the boons of Dharma, Artha, Kaama and Moksha; You may be of myriad Forms but the Advaita or the Singular and Unique;

Ekastwam hi Harey Vyaapi Chitaswabhaavo Niranjana, Paramam, tava Rupam yadrupam Bhaavaabhaavavivarjitam, Nirlepam Nirgunam Shreshtham Kutastamachalam Dhruvam!---Kadaa Manushya Lokegha Kadaa Tiryaggateshucha, Jalayantrey yathaa chakrey ghatee rajju nibandhanaa/ Yaatichyortham tathaa madhey bhraman gacchaami yogatah, Evam Samsaara chakreysminbhairavey Romaharshaney/ Bhramaami suchiram kaalam naantam pashyaami karhichit, Najaaney kim karomyadya Harey Vyaakulitendriyah/ Shoka trishnaabhi bhutoham Kaandisiko vichetanah, Idaaneem twaamaham Deva vihvalah Sharanam gatah/ Traahimaam Duhkhatam Krishnamagnam Samsaara Saagarey, Kripaam kuru Jagannaatha Bhaktam maam yadi manyasey!

(Deva! I am not aware of when I shall be in Naraka or Swarga; when would I be on Bhumi and when as an animal or a bird! I have been in the cycle of birth and death just as a string around a pot, once on top and once on bottom as a mechanical appliance lifting water from a well in the 'Kalachakra' and there does not seem to be an end to the 'Bhramana' or unending revolution; I am at a complete loss to realize as to when is the termination of this endless cycle as a I am victimized as a 'Kandiseeka' or a migrant/ distressed wanderer from one life to another. Bhagavan Krishna! Kindly liberate me from these unending and repetitive flights in the pursuit of everlasting mirages!)

As the King Indradumna prayed on the above lines, Jagannatha was pleased and granted darshan in the pure-hearted dreams of the King; the Lord who was in His full Form with Shankha-Chakra-Gada and Saranga directed the King to reach the Sea shore in the early morning time all alone with an axe in hands into the Sea which would give way to lead him to reach a place where he would sight a Maha Vriksha and without any hesitation cut the Tree; while cutting it, Jagannadha said that the King would discover a fabulous 'Vastu' and should consider that Vastu as the Pratima of Jannaatha for installation in the Temple awaiting the installation. The King was overwhelmed with the vision of Paramatma in the dream, recited Vishnu Mantra and Vishnu Sukta, reached the Sea Shore with extreme devotion and did exactly as directed; he found the Maha Vriksha, cut it into pieces and found Bhagavan Vishnu and Vishwakarma in the Forms of two Brahmanas; the latter interrogated the King as to why the latter was cutting the Tree and the King replied smilingly and with extreme veneration that he was directed by the Adyanta Rahita Bhagavan Jagannaathaa Himself! The Brahmanas complimented the efforts of the King and one of them directed the other Brahmana to prepare the Pratimas on the lines prescribed by Him saying:

Krishnarupam param shaantam padmapatraayatekshanam, Srivatsa Koustubha dharam Shankha Chakra Gadaadharam, Gouraangam Kshira varnaabhaam dviteeyam Swastikaankitam/ Laangalaastradharam Deva manantaakhyam Mahabalam, Deva Daanava Gandharva Yaksha Vidyaadharoragaih/ Na Vigjnaatohi tasyaantasteynaananta iti smrutatah, Bhagineem Vaasudevasya Rukmavarnaam Sushobhanaam/ Triteeyaam vai Subhadraamcha Sarva Lakshana Lakshitaam!

(Bhagavan Shri Krishna is of extreme peaceful visage; his eyes are large and sparkling like a lotus; his chest is adorned with the Emblem of Srivatsa and with Koustubha jewel; and his hands are decorated with Shankha, Chakra and Gada. The Second Idol of Bhagavan Balarama should be of milk-like Gaura Varna; of Swastika Chihna / Signage; with Hala/ plough as his Ayudha named Ananta or Interminable / Endless, whom none could decscribe including Deva- Daanava-Gandharva- Yaksa-Vidyadhara-Nagas! The third Pratma would be of Subhadra the sister of Vaasudeva and Balarama whose sacred Physique was golden and auspicious!) As soon as the description of the features of the Three Idols was given, the Junior Brahmana materialized the Pratimas exactly on the lines; first of Balabhadra, then of Vaasudeva and finally of Devi Subhadra. Then the King asked the Brahmanas as to who they were precisely- were they Devataas o Yakshaas, Vidyadharaas, Ahwini kumars are Brahma and Vishnus! Bhagavan replied that he was not a Devata, Yaksha, Indra, Brahma and Rudra, but might be as well construed as Vishnu himself! As the latter's identity was revealed, the King was non-plussed and broke down into ecstatic bewilderment and implored him as follows:

Shriyahkaanta Namasteystu Shripatey Peetavaasavey, Shreeda Shreesha Shri Nivaasa Namastey Shreeniketana/ Adhyam Purushameeshaanam Sarvesham Sarvatomukham, Nishkalam Paramam Devam Pranatosmi Sarvatomukham, Nishkalam Paramam Devam Pranatosmi Sanaatanam/ Shabdaateetam Gunaateetam Baavaabhaava Vivarjitam, Nirlepam Nirgunam Sooksham Sarvajnam Sarvabhaavanam/ Praavrunmegha prateekaasham Go Brahmana hitey ratam, Sarveshaameva goptaaram vyaapinam Sarva bhaavinam/ Shankhachakradharam Devam Gadaa musaladhaarinam, Namasye Varadam Devam Neelotpaladala chhivam/ Naga paryankashayanam Ksheerodaarnava shaayinam/ Namasyeham Hrisheekesham Sarva papa harim Harim/ Punastwaam Deva Devesham Namastye Varadam Vibhum, Sarva LokeshwaramVishnum Moksha Kaaranam -avyayam/

(Lakshmikanta! Peetaambara dhari! Shrinivasa! I greet you the Adipurusha, Ishaana, Sarveswara, Sarvatomukha or He visions in all directions; Nishaka, Sanatana, Parama Deva, Shabda-Gunaateeta or He who is beyond the reach of Sound or Features; devoid of Bhava or Abhava / belief or non-belief; Nirlepa, Nirguna, Sukshma, Sarvajna, and Saviour; Your Form is dark like the clouds of Rainy Season; You are always engaged in the safety of cows and Brahmanas; Sarvajna or the Omnisient and the Supreme Creator; You are the Highest Deity with Shanka-Chakra-Gada-Musala ready to save; the Ever Provider to one and all; Sesha Shaayi; Hrishikesha; Sarva Paapa Haari; Moksha Kaarana, Sarva Vyapi Vishnu; my obeisances to you Sarva Lokesha!).

The King then asked for the boon of attaining Vishnupada which was impossible even for Devaasuras, Gandharvas, Yaksha, Siddha, Saadhyta, Vidyaadhara, Naaga, Guhya, Kinnara, Parama Yogis and Maharshis. Lord Jagannatha not only granted the boon and also blessed him to continue the Kingship for nineteen thousand years to ensure the observance of worship at the Purushottama Kshetra; he also materialized an Indradyumna Sarovara to immortalize human memory of the most illustrious King as long as Jagannatha's Presence in the Purushottama Kshetra would continue. It is stated that a devotee would accomplish Great Punya /Fruit by worshipping Lord Jannaatha at Purushotthama Kshetra by observing strict devotion and fasting on Jyeshtha Shuddha Dwadashi as he or she would acquire by standing upright with devotion for seventy thousand years at Kurukshetra by stringent austerity. Even a passing Darshan of the Shikhara of the Purushottama Temple from a disdtance would demolish Sarva Paapaas of the Past and Present.

### 'Markandeyopakhyana' - Darshanaas of Pralaya Bala Mukunda, Shiva and Krishna

At the time of Pralaya or the Great Annihilation at the Kalpaantara, Chandra, Surya and Vayu faced nearextinction as also of the Sthaavara-Jangamaas /moveable and immobile Beings. That was the time when Pralaya kaala Surva became too fierce and there were cloud-bursts and severe lightnings. Pralayaagni surrounded the entire Universe and there were indeed no survivors, except Markandeya who was struggling to swim against the hurricane and thunder storm. Suddenly he heard a whisper-like voice which said: come near the Vata Vriksha and come to my refuge! The Maharshi wondered as to where the feeble voice emerged from. He was astonished as he looked up the high and sprawling Banyan where he visioned a charming Balarupadhari Krishna Bhagavan with four hands armed with Shankha-Chakra-Gada-Saranga with peacock feathers on his golden Kireeta, Vanamaala, sparkling ear-rings and Koustubha Mani! Markandeya was highly refreshed from his physical exhaustion and fatigue as he visioned the fantastic appearance but continued to ruminate it as a false hallucination! He rubbed on his eyes repeatedly in utter disbelief. Then came the profound voice saying: My child, you are too tired; come near to me for solace and enter into my body for soothing relaxation. On hearing the Celestial Voice of Bala Gopala, the Maharshi turned motionless and speechless and entered Bala Krishna's face as though in a state of stupor and blankness and gradually entered in Paramatma's belly where he saw for himself Pancha Bhutas, Sapta Lokas of Bhur-Bhuvar-Swar-Mahar-Jana-Tapas and Satya; Sapta Paataalas viz. Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Pataala, Rasaatala and Mahatala; Sapta Dwipas viz. Jambu, Plaksha, Shaalmala, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaaka and Pushkara; Sapta Samudras, Sapta Parvatas, Indra and other Devas, Siddha, Chaarana, Naga, Muni, Yaksha, Apsara and finally the Charaachara Srishti! Markandeya gradually recovered semi-consciousness and extolled Bala Mukunda as follows:

Devadeva Jagannatha Maayaa Balavapurdhara, Traahimaam Chaaru Padmaaksha Duhkhitam Sharanaagatam/-----Tavodarey cha Devesa mayaadrushto charaacharam, Vismitoham vishannascha traahimaam Purushotthama/ Samsaaresmin -niraalambey praseeda Purushotthama Praseeda Vibhudhassreshta praseeda vibhudapriya/ Praseeda vibhudhaamnaatha praseeda vibhutaalaya, Praseeda sarva Lokesa Jagat Kaarana Kaarana/ Praseeda Sarvakruddeva Praseeda mama Bhudhara, Praseeda salilaavaasa praseeda Madhusudana/ Praseeda Kamalaakaantya Praseeda Tridasheswara, Praseeda Kamsakesighna praseedaarishta naashana/ Praseeda Krishna Daityaghna praseeda danujaantaka, Praseeda Mathuraavaasa Praseeda Yadunandana/ Praseeda Shakraavaraja Praseeda varadaavyaya, Twam Mahi twam Jalam Devah twamagnistwam sameeranah/ Twam nabhastwam

Manaschaiva twamahankaara eva cha, Twam Buddhih Prakrutischaiva Satvaadyaastwam Jagatpatey/
Purushastwam Jagadvyaapi Purushaadapichotthamah, Twamindrayaani Sarvaani Shabdaadyaa
vishayaah Prabho/ Twam Dikpaalascha Dharmaascha Vedaa Yagnaah sadakshinaah, Twamindrastwam
Shivo Devastwam Havistwam Hutaashanah/ Twam Yamah Pitruraardevah twam Rakshaadhipatih
Swayam, Varunastwamapaam Naathah twam Vaayustwam Dhaneswarah/ Twameesaanas
twamanantastwam Ganeshascha , Shanmukhah Vasavastwam tathaa Rudraaptwa maadityaascha
khecharaah/ Daanavaastwam tathaa Yakshaastwam Daityaah Samarudganaah, Siddhaas —charapsaraso
Naagaa Gandharwaastwam sa Chaaranaah/ PitaroVaakakhilyaascha Prajaanaam patayochyuta,
Munayastwamrushi ganaastwa maswinou Nisaacharaah/ Anyaascha Jaatayastwamhi yatkinchitjeeva
sanjnitam, Kinchaatra bahunoktena Brahamaastamba gocharam/ Bhutam Bhavyam Bhavishyam cha
twam Jagatsa charaacharam, Yatthe rupam Param Deva kutasthamachalam dhruvam/
Brahmaadyaastanna jaananti kathamanyelpamedhasah, Deva Shuddhaa swabhaavosi Nityastwam
Prakrutey parah/ Avyaktah Shaaswatonantah Sarvavyaapi Maheswarah, Twamaakaashah parah Shaanto
Aaajastwam Vibhuravyayah/

(Deva Deva! Mayaa Baala Murtidhara! Padmaaksha! Kindly save me as I am shattered. I have visualized the 'Charaachara Jagat' in your belly. I am indeed shocked and frightened. Please show me mercy as I am in a confused situation. You are the cause of existence. You are the Pancha Bhutaas of Earth-Water-Light and heat-Air and Sky; You are the Ahamkaara or Self-Recognition and Ego; You are the Maha-Tatwa and Buddhi; the Prakriti; You are the Triguna Swarupa or of Satwa-Rajo-Tamo Gunaas; You are the Dikpaalakas or the Chiefs of the Ten-Direcrtions; the Ashtaa Vasus; Ekaadasha Rudras; Dwadasaadityas; Gandharvas; Devas and Danavas; Forty Nine Marudganaas; Pitru Devataas; Vaalakhilyaas; Prajaapatis; Sapta Rishis; two Ashvinis; Unimaginable number of Jeevas; the Visionary of Brahmaadi Beings; Bhuta-Bhavya-Bhavishya Rupa; and 'Kutastha' beyond imagination of even Brahma downward; the Nitya-Suddha-Buddha-Mukta-Swarupa; Avyakta- Shaswata-Ananta-Sarva Vyapi-Maheswara-Shanta and Aakaasha Rupa).

As Markandeya completed his Stuti of Bala Mukunda, the Maharshi sought clarification from Bhagavan about Maha Tatwa, Maya and Bhagavan and the latter smiled and stated: Even Brahma and Devas could not comprehend about the Concepts but keeping in view the Supreme Pitru Bhakti, Deva Bhakti and the high-order of Brahmacharya of the Muni, the Lord granted the greatest dispensation to the Sage by way of 'Sakshaatkaara' and safety at the Pralaya; Bhagavan then outlined his clarifications in brief: At the beginning of Srishti, he created water and called it as *Naara* and since my *Ayana* or Nivaasa / residence was the Naara, Bhagavan was named as Naara-Ayana or Naraayana; Bhagavan Narayana was the Supreme Creator, the Sanaatana or the Most Ancient, Avinaashi (Indestructible), and Srashta and Samharta; He said that he was Vishnu, Brahma, Indra, Kuybera, Pretaraja Yama, Shiva, Chandrama, Prajapati Kashyapa, Dhata, Vidhata and Yajna. He stated that his Face was Agni, his Feet were Prithvi, his eyes were Surya and Chandra, Dyuloka his Mastaka or Head, Akaasha and Dashaas his ears, his sweat the Jala; the whole Universe was his Body, the Sky, Directions and Vayu. Veda Vidwans performing Deva Yagnaas worship Him only. He bore the brunt of the Universe in the form of Sesha Naga who in turn carried the weight of Samudras, Parvatas and so on; as the Varaha Rupa he salvaged the sinking Prithvi all by himself from Rasatala; He assumed the Form of Badabaagni to absorb Sea Water and gave it back in the Form of Rains from the Meghas; from his face were born Brahmanas, shoulders and hands were created the Kshatriyas, Vaishyas from his highs and Sudras frm his feet; from him were created Jnaanarupi Sanyaasis, Jijnaasus, and Adhyatmika Vettas; He was the Script- Maker of Ruk-Yajur-Sama and Atharva Vedas; He was the Samvartaka (Code-Creator) Jyoti, Samvartaka Agni, Samvartaka Surya, and Samvartaka Vayu; the millions of Nakshatras /Stars on the Sky were his body hairs; the Oceans full of Ratnas and the Dasha-Dishaas were also own Form; the concepts of Satya, Daana, Tapasya and Ahimsa were all his creations; and the Antah- karana or the Inner Conscience of all Beings was also his own Form. Bala Mukunda further clarified that when ever Dharma or the Outlines of Virtuous Existence / Behaviour prescribed by Him got disturbed or distorted to extreme situations, He himself assumed Avatars or Incarnations as per the required exigencies to destroy the Evil Forces and restore Dharma

again: Yadaa yadaahi Dharmasya Glaanir bhavati Sattama, Abhyuttaana —madharmasya tadaatmaanam Srujaanmyaham/ Having heard this, Markandeya was indeed thrilled and Bhagavan asked whether the Maharshi had any other clarification required. Markandeya replied that there had been a feeling about the Supremacy of Narayana versus Shiva and to dispel this doubt for the benefit of the posterity, he proposed to build a Temple of Shiva. Bala Mukunda smiled and stated that he had already taken pains to clarify that there was indeed only one Supreme Shakti named as Narayana or Shiva, or Brahma or Indra or Devis, or Devatas or of myriad other Rupas but the cover of Maya made different interpretations, while indeed the Supreme Energy was one and only one despite ill-advised classifications made by human beings on the basis of various Forms, Names, Features, Gunas, Sex, and so on; indeed these men and women ascribed to various Deities either with ill-founded and misleading judgments or to serve their own selfish gains or by sheer ignorance of realities; although Vedas and Vedangas explained and highlighted specific aspects of that Supreme Force, the Public got confused and believed 'the woods for the forest'.

Bhagavan thus said: Yadetparamam Devam Kaaranam Bhuvaneshwaram, Lingamaaraadhana -arthaaya naanaa bhaava prashaantaye/ Mamaadishidena Viprendra kuru sheeghram Shivaalayam, Tatprabhaavaacchiva lokey tishthatwam cha tathaakshayam/ Shivey Samsthaapitey Vipra mama Samsthaapanam bhavet, Naavayorantaram kinchideka bhaavou dwidhaa krutou/ Yo Rudrah sa swayam Vishnuryo Vishnuh sa Maheswarah Ubhayorantaram naasti Pavanaakaashayoriva/ Mohito naabhi jaanaatiya yeva Garudhadhwajah, Vrishabhaadhwajah sa yeveti Tripuraghnam Trilochanam/ Tavanaamaankitam tasmaakkuru Vipra Shivaalayam, Uttarey Deva Devasya kuru teertham Sushobhanam/ Markandeya hrudo naama Naralokeshu Vishrutah, Bhavishyati Dwija shreshtha Sarva Paapa pranaashanah/

(Hey Vipra! You must soon build a Temple in which Parama Shiva Linga should be set up for the Aradhana of Bhuvaneswara who was the cause of the Universe so that you would be blessed in Shiva Loka for ever. Indeed setting up a Shiva Linga would be as good as establishing my Pratima. There was no diffentiation in Shiva and Vishnu whatsoever as they were of the same Tatwa like that of Akaash and Vayu. Those ignortant of this reality was like those disrespecting Garudadhwaja and Vrishadhwaja. Hence, I instruct you to soon construct a Shivalaya to firmly establish the fact that Hara and Hari were just the same; I shall then materialize a Sarovara to be named as 'Markandeya Hlaadam' at the North of the Temple in which sincere bathing would demolish the person taking Snaana in it would be fully rid of the past sins and gain propitiousness.)

By so saying, Bala Mukunda blessed Markandeya and disappeared.

### Pancha Tirthas - Mahatmya and Puja Vidhana

Brahma Deva briefed the formal procedure of worship at Pancha Tirthas (Indradyumna Sarovara, Markandeyahlada, Akshaya Vata, Sweta Madhava and Samudra) viz. Snaana, Daana, Darshana and Puja of Parama Shiva and Vishnu Rupas to the Munis at Naimishaaranya as conveyed by Suta Muni. On entering the Markandeya Hrida, a devotee should face Northern Direction and perform three dips in water navel- deep, reciting the following: Samsaara saagarey magnam Paapagrasta machetanam, Traahi maam Bhaganetraghna Tripuraarey namostutey/ Namah Shivaaya Shaantaaya Sarva paapa haraayacha, Snaanam karomi Devesha mama Nashyatu paatakam/ (Bhaganetra Naashaka Shiva! Tripuraasura Shatru! Shanta Swarupa! I am deeply engaged in Samsaara; protect me from my sins and grant me benevolence). After the Snaana, formal Tarpana should be performed to Devas, Rishis and Pitras; then the devotees should enter the ShivaTemple, perform three Pradakshinas, recite Markandeswaraaya Namah and Mula Mantra / Aghora Mantra and invoke Paramashiva with the following: Trilochana Namastestu Namastey Shahi Bhushana, Traahi maam twam Virupaaksha Mahadeva Namostutey/ Aftrer formal worship was concluded the Shiva Linga, then three parikramaas be performed to a Vata Vriksha by saying: Om Namo-Avyakta Swarupaaya Mahaa Praaya kaariney, Mahdrasamopavishtaaya Nyagrodhaaya Namostuey/

Amaratwam sadaa kalpey Hareshchaayatanam Vata, Nyagrodha Hara mey paapam Kalpavriksha Namostutey/

Pradakshinas of the Vata Vriksha Vishnu Rupa and Garuda Rupa signifying the Paralaya Vata Vriksha of Bala Mukunda would yield the Mahaphala of Mukti from Brahmahatyaadi paatakaas, besides bestowing the Ashwamedha Yagna Phala. Following the Vata Vriksha Parikrama, the devotee would then feast his /her eyes with the darshana of Shri Krishna, Balarama and Devi Subhadra: first worship Balabhadra reciting the hymn: Namastey Haladhrugraama namastey Musalaayudha, Namstey Revatikaanta Namastey Bhaktavatsala/ Namastey Balinaam Shreshtha namasty Dharaneedhara, Pralambaarey Namostu traahi maam Krishna purvaja! Pursuant to Babhadra Puja, the devotee would then be engrossed with the recital of Dwadashaaksharan Mantra viz. Om Bhagavatey Vaasudevaaya and execute the formal Puja to Shri Krishna Deva with Gandha-Pushpa-Dhupa-Deepa-Phala- Naivedya-Kirtana- Natya and Pranaamas, followed by the following: Jaya Krishna Jagannatha Jayasarvaagha naashana, Jaya Chanura Keshighna Jaya Kamsa nishudana/ Jaya Padma Palaashaaksha Jaya chakra Gadaa- dhara, Jaya Nilaamubuda shyaama Jaya sarva Sukhaprada/ Jayadeva Jagatpujya Jaya samsara naashana, Jayalokapatey naatha Jayayaanchaa phalaprada/ Samsaara saagarey ghorey nissarey duhkha pheniley, Krodhagraahaakuley Roudrey Vishayodaka samplavey/ Naanaarogormikaliley mahaavarta sudustarey, Nimagnoham Sura shreshta Traahimaam Purushotthama/ Evam Prasaadya Devesam Varadam Bhaktavatsalam, Sarva Paapa haram Devam sarva kaama phalapradam/ Peenaamsam Dwibhujam Krishnam Padmapatraayatekshanam, Mahoraskam Mahabaahum Peetavastram Shubhaananam/ Sankhachakra gadaa paanim Makutaangada bhushanam, Sarva lakshana Samyuktam Vanamaalaa vibhushitam/ Any person performed Krishna Stuti as above would indeed accomplish the fruits of Ashvamedha Yagnaas and Sarva Tirha Darshana- Veda-Yagna-Daana-Vrata-Niyama-Tapasya and Brahmacharya! Finally, a devotee should pray to Subhadra Devi as follows: Namastey Sarvage Devi namastey Shubha Soukhyadey, Traahi maam Pancha Patraakshi Katyaayani Namostutey/ A devotee would thus complete the darshanas of Subhadra Devi too.

### Nrisimha, Sweta Madhava and Matsya Madhava Mahatmyas

Bhagavan Nrisimha Deva as Man-Lion Swarupa had been a significant resident Deity of Purushotthama Tirtha after the extermination of the Demon Hiranya Kashipu; the Bhagavan's mere presence ensured the orderly existence of human beings in the pursuit of the Chaturvidha Purushaarthaas of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Mokshas; in fact, Bhagavan Nrisimha had been always assuring the safety of the entire 'Charaachara Jagat' viz. the Beings of Marthya, Swarga and Pataala lokas. To all the 'Nrisimha Upasakaas' practising a hermit- life by eating leaves, fruits and material grown under-ground like potatoes etc.; drinking natural water and meditating Nrisimha Deva in forests and forsaken Places, there would be nothing impossible to accomplish in life and beyond. Any human being performing meditation to Nrisimha on Shukla Dwadashis by the Nrisimha Mantra twenty lakh times would have nothing else to ask for as the devotee would become replete with success and virtue, besides demolishing Maha Patakaas even.

Krutwaa padakshinam tatra Narasimham Prapujayet, Punya Gandhaadirdhupaih pranasya shiraasaa Prabhu/ Karpura chandanaaktaani jaatee pushpaani mastakey, Pradadyaaannara Simhasya tatha siddhihi Prajaayatey/ Bhagavan Sarvakaryeshu na kwachitprati hasyatey hanyatey, Tejahsodhum na shaktaahssyurbrahma Rudraa dayassuraah/ Kim punardaanavaalokey Siddha Gandharva Maanushaah, Vidyaadharaa Yakshaganaah sa Kinnara Mahoragaah/ Manrtam yaa naasuraanhantum Japanteykenya sadhakaah, Tey Sarvey Pralayam yaanti drushtwaadityaagni varchasah/ Sakrujjaptam tu kavacham divyam rakshateyt -sarvamupadravam, Dwirjaptam Kavacham Diwyam rakshatey Devadaanavaat/ Gandharwaah Kinnaraa Yaksha Vidyaadhara Mahoragaah, Bhutaah Piscaachaa Rakshaamsi ye chaney paripandhanah/ Trijaptam kavacham Divya mabhedyam cha Suraasuraaih, Dwaadasa -abhyantarey chaiva yojanaanaam Dwijotthamaa/

(After Pradakshina, devotees should perform the 'Shodasopachaaraas' or the Sixteen Services of Aavaahana- Asana-Pratimabhisheka-Vastra- Yagnopaveeta-Pushpa-Phala- Gandha- Dhupa-Dipa-Mantra Pushpa-Naivedya-Taamboola- Geeta- Vaadya-Nrittha-and Swasti. Chandana and Pushpa should be placed on the heads of the devotees so that they attained complete satisfaction of the worship. Indeed, even Rudra and Brahma would be unable to withstand the 'Tejas' of Bhagavan Nrisimha, not to mention of Danava- Siddha- Gandharva and Maanavas. Asuras had been in the habit of practicing Abhicharika Mantras but simple meditation of Nrisimha Mantras should not only save the targets of such Mantras but destroy the practitioners of such worships. Recitation of Nrisimaha Kavacha twice a day would ward off all Evil Spirits and demolish all obstacles created by Danava- Yaksha-Bhuta-Preta-Piscachas and even of Devas; recitation of the Kavacha thrice would fortify the practitioners some twelve Yojanas away and even Suraasuraas could never create any physical ailments, mental dis-satisfactions and psychological imbalances. In fact, mere 'Smaran' or thought of Nrisimha at the times of battles, difficulties, lonely places, fright of thieves / bandits or tigers, peril of life, poison, fire and water hazards, threat of Royalty or Authorites, fear of Sea, distress by Grahas, physical ailments would provide instant liberation and safety. Darshan of Nrisimha Deva would assure such relief as the early day break would dispel all kinds of troubles and tribulations. Dedication to Nrisimha by any class of Society-be it Brahmana or Kshatriya or Vaishya or Sudras or women -is highly fruitful while formal pujas would guarantee fulfillment in life and Vishnu loka later.

Lord Brahma then narrated the legend of Sweta Madhava Mahatmtya to the next generation as conveyed by Suta Maharshi to the congregation of Munis. There was a valiant King named Sweta in Satya Yuga who was famed for Dharma, Satya, and Daanas. His Praja was of the normal longevity of ten thousand years and there were no untimely deaths of age, disease, or natural calamities. Unfortunetely once, there was a premature death of a child of Muni Kapala Gautama, who took the body to the Royal Court and the King declared that if he failed to bring the child back to life within a week from Yama Loka, then he would enter a Fire-pit for self-immolation! King Sweta worshipped Maha Deva with a lakh of Nila Kamalaas with tremendous dedication and reverence and the latter along with Devi Parvati gave darshan and as a proof of Sweta's sincerity and directed Yama Dharma Raja to revive the Muni's son to life. Subsequently, King Sweta administered his Kingdom without any problem for thousand years. In course of time, the King performed Keshavaaradhana and Vrata as per Vedic precriptions and undertook a pilgrimage to Purushottama Tirtha on the East Coast and had a Darshan of Lord Jagannaatha, Lord Balarama and their Sister Devi Subhadra to his heart's contentment. It was at that time, he decided to build a Temple dedicated to Sweta Madhava and having prepared a Pratima he did the Pratishtha of the Lord in great veneration and faith with a month's mouna vrata, fastings, celibacy, 'dwadashaakshara' mantra japa, daily pujas, homas; 'jagaaranas' and collective prayers, Stutis and Purana Pravachanas. At a crowing grand- finale function, the King prostrated before the Pratima of Sweta Madhava and recited a Stuti as follows:

Om Namo Vaasudevaaya Namah Sankarshanaaya cha, Pradyumnaaniruddhhaaya Namo Naraayanaaya cha/ Namostu Bahurupaaya Viswarupaaya Vedhasey, Nirgunaayaapr -arkyaaya Shuchaye Shubhra karminey/ Om Namah Padmanaabhaaya Padmagarbhod -bhavaaya cha, Namostu Padmavarnaaya Padmasaastaayatey Namah/ Om Namo Pushakaraakshaaya Sahasra -akshaaya meedhushey, Namah Saharapaadaaya Sahasrabhujamaanvaye/ Om Namostu Varaahaaya Varadaaya Sumedhasey, Varishthaaya Varenyaa Sharanyaayaachyutaaya cha/ Om Namo Balarupaaya Balapadmaprabhaaya cha/ Balarkasoma netraaya munjakeshaaya dheematey/ Keshavaaya Namo Nityam Namo Naraayanayecha, Madhavaaya Varishthaaya Govindaaya Namo Namah /Om Namo Vishnavey Niyam Devaaya Vasuretasey, Madhusudanaaya Namah Shuddhaayaamshu dharaayacha/ Namonantaaya Sukshmaaya Namah Shri Vatsadhaariney, Trivikramaaya cha Namo Divyapeetaambaraayacha/ Srishti Kartrey Namastubhyam Goptrey Dhaatrea Namo Namah, Namostu guna bhutaaya Nirgunaaya Namo Namah/ Namo Vaamana Rupaaya Namo Vaamana Karmaney, Namo Vaamana Netraaya Namo Vaamana vaahiney/ Namo Ramyaaya Pujyaaya Namostavyaktarupiney, Aapratarkyaya Shuddhaaya Namo bhaya haraayacha/ Samsaaraarnavapotaaya Prashaantaaya swarupiney, Shivaaya Sowmya Rupaaya

Rudraayottaranaayacha/Bhayabhanga ktrutey chaiya Bhayabhoga pradaaya cha, Bhayasanghaata rupaaya Bhavasrishtikruteynamah/ Om Namo Divyarupaaya Somaagniswasitaayacha, Soma Suryaamsu keshaaya Go Brahmana hitaayacha/ Om Namah Rukswarupaaya Padakramaswarupiney, Ruksutaaa Namastubhuam Nama Ruksaadhanaayacha/ Om Nano Yajushaam Dhaatrey Yajoorupa dharaayacha, Yajurya -ajyaaya jushtaaya Yajushaam patayenamah/ Om Namah Shripatey Deya Shridharaayay Varaacha, Shriya Kaantaaya Daantaaya yogi chintyaaya Yoginey/ Om Namah Saama Rupaaya Saamadwani varaayayacha, Om Namah Saama Sowmyaaya Samayoga videy namah/ Saamnecha Saamageetaaya Om Namah Saamadhaariney, Saam Yagna videy chaiya Namah Saamakaraayacha/ Namastvatharva sirasye Namotharva swarupiney, Namostwadharvapaadaaya Namotharva karaayacha/ Om Namo Vajra Sirshaaya Mathukaitabhja ghaatiney, Mahodadhi jalasthaaya Vedaaharana kaariney/ Namo Deepti Swearupaayua Hrishisheekeshaaya vain amah, N amo Bhagavatey tubhyam Vaasu devaaa tey namah/ Narayana namastubhyam Namo Loka hitaayacha, Om NamoMoha naashaaya Bhava bhanga karaayacha/ Gati pradaaya Namo namo bandha haraayacha, Thrailokya tejasaam Kartrey Namastejasswarupiney/Yogeswaraaya Shuddhhaaya Raamaayottaranaayacha, Sukhaaya Sukha Netraaya Namassukrutadhaariney/ Vaasudeyaaya Vandyaaya Vaamadeyaaya yainamah, Dehinaam deha kartey cha Bhedabhangakaraayacha, Devairvandita dehaaya Namastey Divyamouliney, Namo Vaasanivaasaaya Vaasavyavaharaayacha/ Om Namo Vasukartrey cha Vasuvaasa pradaayacha/ Namo Yagna Swarupaaya Yagnesaaya cha Yoginey/ Yatiyoga karesaaya Namo Yagnaanga dhaariney, Sankashanaaya cha Namah Pralamba Mathanaayacha, Meghaghosha swanotteerna vegalaangalka dhaari]ney, Namostu Gnaaninaam Gnaana Naraayana paraayana/

(Om! My greetings to you Vaasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Narayana! You have several Rupas like Vishwa Rupa, Vidhata, Nirguna, Atyarka, Shuddha, Shubha Karma, Padmanabha, Padmagarbodhbhava, Pusharaaksha, Sasraaksha, Meedhusha / Shiva Swarupa, Padmavarna, Sahasrapaada, Sahasrabhuja, Varaaharupa dhaari, Varada, Subuddhi, Varishtha, Varenya, Sharanaagata rakshana, Achyuta, Balarupadhaari, Balasurya, Chandrarupa, Keshava, Narayana, Madhava, Varishtha, Vishnu, Nitya, Vasureta, Madhusudana, Suddhaamsudhara, Ananta, Suksha swarupa, Shrivatsadhaari, Trivikrama, Divyapeetaambara, Srishti karta, Guna Swarupa, Nirguna, Vamana Rupa, VamanaKarmaney, Vaman netra, Vamanavahana, Ramya, Pujya, Avyata Swarupa, Atarkya, Shuddha, Bhayahara, Samsara Sumudra Taarana, Parama Shanta, Chaitanya Swarupa, Shiva, Sowmya Swarupa, Rudra, Uddharakarta, Bhavabhangakara or Samsarasamharakara, Bhavabhoga prada, Bhavasanghaatakara, Bhava Stishti Karta, Divyarupa, Somaagnivayurupa, Chandra Surya Kirana Kesha, Go-Brahmana Hita, Om Rukswarupa, Padakrama Swarupa, RukVedastuta, Ruksaadhana / Ruchajapasaadhaka, Yajurveda dhaatrey, Yajurupadhara, Yajurveda mantraaraadhya, Shripati, Deva, Lakshmipriya, Yogadhyeyi, Yoga; Om Saama swarupa, Shreshtha Saamadhwani, Saama / Shaanta bhava, Sowmya, Saamayogi, Saama Vedokta Yagna Swarupa; Atharva Sirsha, Atharva Swarupa, Atharvapada, Atharva-kara, Vajraseersha, Madhukaitabha ghaataka, Maha Saagara Shayana, Vedodhhaara, D eepti Swarupa, Hrishikesha, Vaasudeva, Narayana, Lokahita, Mohanaashaka, Vishwa samhaara kaari, Prabho, Utttamagati Pradaaya, Bandhahara, Trilokatejokara, Tejaswarupa, Yogeswara, Shudda, Raamaayottarana, Sukha Swarupa, Sukha Netra, Sukritadhara, Vaasudeva, Vandya, Vaamadeva, Utpattikarana, Bhedadrishti bhangakara, Devairvandita Deva, Divya Makutadharanakara, Vaasanivaasaaya, Vaasavyavahaaraaya, Vasukarta, Vasuvaasa prada, Yagna Swarupa, Yagneshaaya, Yatiyogakaraa, Yagnaanga dhara, Sankarshana, Pralambhmathana, Meghavaani gambheera, Prachandavega halaayudha Balarama, Jnaana Swarupa, and Narayana! Highly pleased by the Stuti, Sweta Madhava granted Vaikuntha to the King which was impossible to accomplish even to Devas, Siddhaas, Maha Munis and Parama Yogis; he also awarded the boon to bless the Temple where Sweta Madhava's Sacred Idol was set up would be named as Sweta Ganga Tirtha and the Sweta Gangaajala sprinkled on a devotee's head by the end of Kushaa grass would bestow access to Swarga after death and darshan of the Idol would secure full contentment.

Brahma Deva then continued the Mahatmya of Matsya Madhava Samudra which was not far away from Sweta Madhava Kshetra. Marjana Vidhi or the Method of Snaana / Bathing especially on Jyeshtha Purnima coinciding with Jyeshtha Nakshatra was stated to be of far-reaching consequence in the

Samudra. After initial 'Achamana' and recital of Ashtakshara Mantra viz. OM NAMO NARAYANAYA, recalling that Narayana (Naara/water and Ayana / Residing Place) was floating in Yoganidra and signifying that Matsyaavatara of Narayana salvaged Bhudevi from Rasatala, a devotee in the Samudra must perform *NYASA* or coordination of the Mantra and Karapushtha or from hands to back as follows: OM shabda with left foot, NA with right foot, MO with left kati and NA with right Kati or waist, RA with Naabhi or navel, YA with left shoulder, NA with right shoulder, YA withnMastak or head, to be followed by total NYASA down to upper physique from Hridaya-Sides-back-and upward. Now, ANGANYASA or the Mantra and Body Parts vas follows: Govinda with East, Madhusudana with South, Sridhara with West, Keshava with North, Agneya with Vishnu, Madhava with Nirruti, Hrishikesha with Vayavya, Vamana with Ishana, Vaaraaha with Adhomukha, and Trivikrama with Urdhvamukha. Thereafter, a devotee should recite the Mantra:

Twamagnirdeepadaam Natha retoghaah kaamadeepanah, Pradhaanah Sarvabhutaanaam Jeevaanaam Prabhu-ravyayah/ Amrutasyaaranitwam hi Devayonirapaam Patey, Vrujinam Hara Sarvam Namostutey tey/

(Jagnaatha! You are Agni, the Provider of Veerya and the Light of Good Wishes; You are the Foremost all the Beings and the Unique of Indistructibility. Samudra! You are the generator of Amrita and of Devatas alike. Do kindly mitigate my sins; Tirtharaja! My greetings to You.) After Snaana thrice, recite Aghamarshana Sukta, perform Achamana, Pranayama, Sandhyopaasana, Gayatri Mantra, Surya Namaskaraas and Pradakshinaas, Swadhyaaya seated towards East, Deva /Rishi Tarpana followed by Tila Tarpana to Pitru Devatas, Shraadhha and Havan. After these tasks, prepare on the Samudra Tata / Seashore an Ashtadala Mandala or Eight-Leafed Lotus shaped square reciting Ashtaakshara Mantra and perform the formal Puja, with the Upachaaraas or Services of Avahana / Bhagavan Pratima's Invocation, Aasana or Seat, Arghya /water, Padya / wash of feet, Madhuparka, Achamaniya or offer of water, Snaana /bathing, Vastra, Vilepana of Gandha, Yagnopaveeta or the Sacred Thread, Alamkaara with jewellery, Dhupa, Deepa and Naivedya with Bhakshya-Bhojya- Lehya-Choshya and Paaniyas. Each of the Services to Jagannatha must be accompanied by the relevant Mantra and the Mula Mantra of Om Namo Narayanaya namah. In the Ashta dalas of the Lotus Vasudeva would be worshipped in the Eastern Leaf, Sankarshana in the Southern Leaf, Pradyumna in the Paschima, Aniruddha on the Uttara Dasha, Varaha in the Agnikona, Narasimha in the Nairuti Dasha, Madava in the Vayavya and Trivikrama in the Ishhana dasha; Guruda in the front of the Astaadala Kamala, Chakra in the Vaamabhaga, Shankha in the Dakshina Bhaaga, Maha Gada again with Chakra, and Dhanush/ Shaaranga along with Chakra; again Khadga on the left, Tarakas on the right and so on.

Formal Pujas would also be done to Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirruti, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera, Ishaana, Ananta and finally to Brahma. The Mula Mantra to dominate the whole Puja would be Om Namo Narayanaaya Namah. The Worship on these lines at the Pancha Tirtha afore mentioned viz. Indradymna Sarovara, Markandeya hlada, Akshayavata, Jagannatha Mandira, and Matsya Madhava Samudra would destroy the sins of the devotees and fetch the Maha Punya of performing Ashwamedha Yagna!

## Quick Review of Bharata Varsha's Prominent Tirthas

Lord Brahma asserted that Purushottama Tirtha was indeed the best rated among all the Tirthas in Bharata Varsha where a human being ought to stay for a year or a month or atleast visit once in a life time and imbibe as much of Brahma Vidya as possible to perform Puja, Japa, Homa, Daana and Tapasya in favour of Yogeswara Shri Hari and most certainly avoid further involvement of the vicious circle of life-death-and life again! The Munis at Nimisha expressed gratitude for the narration of the Mahatmya of this Tirtha Raja and desired however about the other significant Tirthas on Bharata Varsha, keeping in view the obvious limitations of movement from various other regions of the Trilokas. Thus Brahma outlined some of the other significant Tirthas in the Karma Bhumi of Bharata. Within Himalayas and Vindhyas there were twelve *Deva Sambhava Nadis*/ Rivers materialised by Devas of utmost importance which were closely associated with Brahma-Vishnu-Maheswaras-six of them from Himalayas to Vindhyas viz.

Bhagirathi, Narmada, Yamuna, Saraswati, Vishoka and Vitasta and six more from Vindhyaparvata to Dakshina Samudra viz. Godavari, Bhimarathi, Tungabhadra, Krishnaveni, Tapi and Payoshni. Of these *Asura-Sambandha Nadis* viz. Gayasura, Kollasura, Vrittha, Tripura, Andhaka, Hayamurtha, Lavanasura, Namuchi, Shrinka, Yama, Patalaketu, Maya, and Pushkarasura. Then there were *Rishi-Sambhava Nadis* viz. Prabhasa, Bhargava, Agasti, Nara Narayana, Vasishta, Bharadwaja, Goutama and Kashyapa. These Tirthas apart, there also were *Illustrious Manushya Sambhava Nadis* in the memory of Ambarisha, Harischandra, Maandhata, Kuru, Kankhala, Bhadraashwa, Sagara, Ashwayupa, Nachiketa, Vrishaakapi, and Arindama. Countless other Rivers, Sarovaras and Tirthas dotted the length and breadth of Bharata Varsha but Brahma Deva mentioned the more popular ones. Following was a concised version of the more significant ones highlighted by Brahma:

Mahadaitya Bali was the invincible enemy of Devatas who were dislodged out of Swarga but significantly enough was full of Dharma, Guru Bhakti, Satya /Truthful, Tyagaseela and Satparipalaka, but above all the Parama Bhakta of Bhagavan Vishnu! The fugitive Devas approached Bhagavan Vishnu for a solution. Vishnu Deva stated that no force in the Lokas could ever possibly subdue King Bali but he would assume soon an Incarnation of Vamana Deva / a midget and win him over with Satyavachana, Dharma and steadfast Vishnu Bhakti. At an Yagna being conducted by him, King Bali granted the 'smallest' and 'innocuous' wish to Vamanadeva of charity of a 'mere' three feet of place for Tapasya as he was not fond of riches, or anything else. Despite the silent protest of Daitya Guru Shukraachaarya that the Vamana was a fake Brahmachari and was actually Lord Vishnu Himself, Bali Chakravarti who was indeed aware of it and most willingly performed the charity by Jala-Sankalpa or the proposal signifying the Daana as Vamana Deva expanded his physique and occupied the entire Universe with two of his feet and having materialized the third foot pushed the King and his consort to Rasatala to be contented to rule the Sub-terrain Sapta Lokas. The Mantrayukta Sankalpa Jala fell on the feet of Vishnu where Meru Parvata was situated and got distributed in four directions on Bhumi; the southward sprinkle fell on Bhagavan Shankara's head stored in his Jataajuta or his twisted hair, the westward sprinkle fell in Vamana Deva's Kamandulu, the Upward sprinkle was accepted by Vishnu and the East-bound scattering reached Devatas, Pitras and Lokapalakas!

### Gautami Ganga (Godavari) Mahatmya

As Bali Chakravarti's some of the Sankalpa Jala to donate the proverbial Three Feet to Vamana Deva fell on Shiva's jataajuta, there were too recipients of that Sacred Water on Earth viz. a Maharshi called Gautama and King Bhagiratha of Surya Vamsha. Thus Ganga from Shiva Jatajuta took two manifestations, one as Ganga and another as Gautami. While Bhagirathi Ganga's origin as was materialized by King Sagara's descendant Bhagiratha and his tenacious efforts by meditation to Vishnu, Ganga Devi and Parameswara was well described in various Puranas, detailed account was provided in Brahma Purana about Gautami Ganga or the Dakshina Ganga. When Gautama reached atop Kailasha Mountain, he extolled Parama Shiva and the latter was pleased with the Maharshi's Tapasya, Bhakti, Vrata and Stuti and gave Darshan to Gautama.

As Mahadeva asked the Maharshi as to what was his wish, Gautama requested Bhagavan that a part of Ganga that was absorbed in Shiva jatajuta be please spared to fall on Brahmagiri so that in the interest of devotees who crave for a Sacred River, Ganga the Great Purifier should flow at least before enter the Sea and the Public would get a chance to sanitise themselves of their sins atleast at that Place. Shiva readily agreed to Gautami's request in Public interest in that Region and affirmed that Gautami Ganga would most certainly be a very popular and Sacred River; as the prayed to Parama Paavani Ganga to descend from Maha Deva's jataajuta, he first took her to wash Bhagavan Traimbeskeswara's feet and requested Bhagavan to prescribe the Puja Vidhi of Bhagavan.

At the outset a devotee was required to perform Nandimukha Shraddha, satisfy Brahmanas with Bhojana Dakshinas, and take holy bath in Godavari, distribute Vastras and cash to Sadhus and the Poor and practice japa- homa- Puja as prescribed and thus complete the Tirtha Yatra with the Parama Manthra OM

Namassivaaya with veneration and faith. Also perform Snaana and Puja at the Confluence Points of Trishna, Bhimarathi and Tungabhadra. Maha Deva blessed the sprawling Gautami and hailed it as his personal favourite with several names such as Maheswari, Ganga, Gautami, Vaishnavi, Godavari, Nanda, Sunanda, Kamadayani, Brahma Teja Samaaneeta and Sarva Paapa Pranashini.

Brahma described to Narada Muni about various Sacred Tirthas that came up on the banks of the long Gautami Ganga: Vaaraahi Tirtha at Triamabaka Kshetra was the gift of Varaahaavatara of Vishnu who killed a Raakhasa named Sindhusena who defeated Indra and other Devas and obstructed the performance of Yagnas-the life line of Devas, the fruits of which were discarded in Rasatala; the blood of the Daityas, Danavas and Rakshasas headed by Sindhusena was washed in the Rasatala Ganga and Maha Yagnas were conducted again where Vaaraaha Titha was originated. Another Tirtha called Kushaavarta came to be formed in Triambaka to enable worship to Pitra Shraarthas and Tarpanas that emerged from Nilaparvatas in the Region popularly known as Nila Ganga. Kapota Tirtha had the back- ground of a hunter who was in the habit of killing several animals and caged many birds for his food daily; once he was caught badly in severe rain and rested under a Banyan Tree when he saw a male bird on the tree recognized a female bird in the hunter's net; as the male bird found that the hunter was shivering with cond and suffering the pangs of hunger. The female bird inside the net requested the male bird on the tree to collect figs and some fire from a distance by its beak holding a fig and thus producing a fig-lit fire to jump in and satisfy his hunger and warm up his body- shiver from the fire! The hunter was ashamed of his past killings and was taught a lesson as he prayed to Mahadeva to absolve him of his past sins and converted himself as a saint eventually. Later on as he died, Bhagavan granted the Kapota, the Kapoti and the Hunter-converted as Saint and a Sacred Titha came up as a Symbol of Sacrifice by the Kapota birds and the penance of the Hunter! The Kapota Tirtha snaan is till date known as a Provider of Ashwamedha Yagna Phala and Salvation.

The origin of *Dashaashwametha Tirtha* was that a King called Bhouvan desired to perform Ten Ashwamedha Yagnas simultaneously and engaged Kashyapa Muni for the purpose but there were some hurdles or other although tried many Tirthas like Prayaga and Kashyapa made an appeal to Brahma who recommended Gautami banks in Dakshina Bharata and finally succeeded performing the Ten Yagnaas side by side and after successful completion organized Anna daanaas to lakhs of poor persons and gave away Brahamana daanaas. It is stated that till date the Tirtha continued to be famed for Yagnas and Annadaanas and those who performed sacred bathings at the Tirtha would secure Yagna Phalas.

The background of *Paishacha Tirtha* on the banks of Godavari related to Kesari the illustrious follower of Shri Rama along with other Vaanaraas of Kishkindha headed by Sugriva. Kesari had two wives viz. Anjana and Adri, both being Apsaras cursed by Indra to become a female monkey and a female cat respectively in the form of Mountains. But for their faces both the women had attractive physiques. As both the Devis approached Agastya Muni the latter blessed thm and Devi Anjana gave birth to Hanuman Deva with the blessings and Amsha of Vaayu Deva and Devi Adri gave birth to a King of Piscachaas with the blessings and of Nirruti Deva. The Paishacha Tirtha thus came to name and fame and not far from it known as Hanuma Tirtha and Vrishakapi Tirthaa which enjoyed considerable popularity as Hanuman had been a symbol of intrepidity, invincibility and unflinching loyalty who continued to be an Ever-living and legend in the Immortal Epic of Ramayana.

Brahma affirmed that *Pancha Tirtha* was the Point of Confluence of his own progeney viz. Savitri, Gayatri, Shraddhaa, Medhaa and Saraswati and these were all connected to Bhagavati Ganga; snaanaas in Pancha Tirtha, followed by Pujas and Daanaas would fully relieve several problems and insurmountable difficulties are overcome as though those never existed.

All along the banks of Gautami Ganga were dotted several Tirthas of renown due their association of Devas, human beings, Maharshis and of Rakshasaas, Apsaras, who were all the Great Devotees of the Almighty despite their erstwhile past or because of it. Such

Tirthas included Kshudhaa Tirtha, Ahalya Tirtha, Ashva Tirtha, Bhanu Tirtha, Aruna-Varuna sangama, Garuda Tirtha, Govardhana Tirtha, IndraTirtha, Rumna Vimochana Tirtha, Chakra / Dadhichi Muni Tirtha, Pancha Tirtha, Pururava Tirtha, Naga Tirtha, Maatru Tirtha, Avighna Tirtha, Sesha Tirtha, Shanaishchara Tirtha, Soma Tirtha, Dhanya Tirtha, Vidarbha Sangama and Revati Sangama Tirthas, Shri Rama Tirtha and so on. All these Tirthas provide multiple benefits of self-confidence, courage, knowledge and sin-demolishing.

# Kandopaakhyana: Vishnu Stuti included

The famed Kandu Muni in the Purushottama Kshetra was a rare example of Dharma, Satya and Veda Vedanga Kushala / expert, always engaged in Vratas, Upavaasaas / fastings, niyama or discipline, Mouna, and Tapasya. Lord Indra was concerned that the Muni might be a threat to Indratwa and asked an Apsara named Pramlocha to arrtact and entice him. Initially she was reluctant to take up the mission as the Muni might give her a curse but Indra praised her capabilities to shake away the mental balance of such great Munis as per her past record, more so since he asked Kama Deva and Vasanta Rithu to assist in her mission. She descended from Swaga and requested the Muni to allow her to assist him in his daily worship even as the Vasanta Ritu and Kama Deva were at work in disturbing his feelings. Gradually the Muni got attracted and even neglected his daily duties of Sandhyavandana, Homa, Japa, Puja, Swadhyaaya of Vedas, fastings and so on. With the passage of time, he got so entangled that he kept on requesting him to stay for more time as and when she proposed to go back to Swarga. Once he asked her casually as to how long she had been in his company and she replied that she had been there for nine hundred seven years, six months and three days! The Muni got a severe shock, cursed her that he neglected his duties, cursed himself as he became a victim of Kama Piscacha, threw her out, repented deeply and performed concentrated Tapasya by way of pitched up fastings and intolerable physical sacrifces. He reached Jagannatha and prostrated before him with prayers, sobbings, appeals and even threats of self-sacrifice. Finally Lord Jagannadha responded with his hallowed Darshan, keeping in view the erstwhile life of Kandu Muni of Dharma and Satya. The Muni was mesmerized at the live appearance of Deva Deva in his full glory with four hands ornamented by Shankha-Chakra-Gada-Saranga / Dhanush, wearing Peetaambara attire, and seated on Garuda Deva, Veda Vyasa described the daze of Kandu Muni and quoted the latter's mumblings as follows:

Paramparam Vishnurapaara paarah Parah Parebhyaha Paramartha Rupah, Sa Brahma Paarah Parapaara bhutah Parah Paranaamapi Paara Paarah/ Sakaaranam Kaarana Samshritopi tasyaapi hetuhu Parahetu hatuh, Kaaryopi chaisha Sahakarma Kartru-----Rupairanekairava teeha Sarvam/ Brahmaprabhurbrahma sa Sarva bhuto Brahma Prajaanaam Patirachyuto sow, Berahmaavyayam Nityamajam sa Vishnurapaksha —yaadwairakhilaira sangah, Brahmaaksharamajam nityam yadaasow Purushotthamah, Tadaa raagaadayo doshaah prayaantu prashamam mama/ (Vishnu is the Kaarana or the Cause; he is also the Cause of the Tanmaatraas or features of Pancha Bhutas. He is the feeling of Self-Consciousness or Ahamkaara which results in Maha Tatwa; Paramatma is also the root-cause Maha Tatwa. He is the Kriya Rupa or the Basic Form of Action, the Act and the Actor! He is the Veda-Vedanga Swarupa, Veda Nirvaahaka, the Prabhu of Prabhus; Paramatma, Brahma paarah or beyond Brahma; Avyaya-Nitya-Shadbhaava Rahita or devoid of Kama Krodhaadi bhaava; May I bend my knees to that Purushottama to eradicate my Gunaas of Raaga and Dweshas).

As Lord Janannadha asked Kandu Muni to secure a boon, the Muni got confused and prostrated by breaking into an ecstatic Stuti as follows:

'Narayana Harey Krishna Shrivatsaanka Jagatpatey Jagadbija Jagaddhaama Jagadsaaks Namo Namostutey/ Avyaktaha Jishnoh Prabhavah Pradhaanaha Purushotthamah, Pundareekaaksha Govinda Hrishikesha Namostutey/ Hiranyagarbhaha Shri Naathaha Padmanaabhjah Sanaatanah, Bhugarbhaha Dhruvah Ishaanah Hrishikeshah Namostutey/ Anaadyantaamrutaajeya Jayatvam Jaataam Varah, Ajitaakhanda Shri Krishna Shrinivaasa namostutey/ Parjanya Dharma Kartaacha dushpaara duradhishthita, Duhkaarti naashanah Harey Jalashaayinnamostutey/ Bhutapaavyakta Bhutesha

Bhutatatvairanaakula, Bhutaadi vaasah Bhutgaatmanbhutagarbhah Namostutey/ Yajnaha Yajyanyajnadharah Yajnadaata -abhayaabhayapradah, Yajnagarbhaha Hiranyaangah Vrishnigarbhah Namostutey/ Kshetrajnah Kshtrabhrutkshetri Kshetrahaa Kshetrakrudwashi, Kshetraatmankshetra rahita Kshetrasrashtey Namostutey/ Gunaalayah Gunaavaasah Gunaashrayah Gunaavahah Gunabhoktuh Gunaaraamaha Gunatyaaginnamostutey/ Twam Vishnustwam harishachakreetam Jishnustwam Janaardanah, Twam bhutastwam vashatkaarastwam bhavyastambhavatprabhuh/ Twam bhuta krutastwamavyaktastwam bhavobhuta brudbhddhavaan, Twam Bhuta bhaavano Devastwaamaahuraja meeswaram/ Twamanantaha krutajnastwam Prakrutistwam Vrishaakapih, Twam Rudrastwam Duraadharkshastvamoghastwameeswarah/ Twam Vishwakarmaajishnustwam Twam Shambhustwam Vrusaakrutih, Twam Shankarastwamushanaatwam Satyam twam tapojanah/ Twam Vishwa jetaatvam Sharmastwam Sharanyastwamaksharam, Twam Shambhustwam Swayam bhutaschatwam Jeyshthastwam paraayanah/ Twamaadistwam omkaarasatwastwam praanastwamisrahaa, Tama Parjanyaswam Prathita Vedhaastwam Sureswarah/ Twamruyajuh Saama chaivatwanammatobhavaan, Twamagnistwam cha Pavanastwastwamaapova sudaa bhavaan/ Twam Srashtaa twam bhoktaa hotaatwam cha havih kratuh, Twam Prabhustwam Vibhhuh Shreshthastama lokapatirachyutah/Twam Sarva Darshanah Shrimamstwam Sarva damanoriha, Twamahastwam tathaa raatristwaa maahuvatsaram Budhaah/ Twam kaalastwam kalaa kaashthatwam Muhurtah Kshanaa Lavaah, Twam Baalastwam tathaa vriddhatwam Pumaa Stree Napumsakah/ Twam Vishwa Yonistwam chakshutwam Vedaangastwamavyayah, Twam Shaaswatatastwa -majitastwamupendas twamamuttamah, TwamVeda Vedastwam Dhaataa Vidhaataatwam Samaahitah/ Twam Sarva Vishwa Sukhadastwam Vedaangam Twamavyayah, Twam Veda Vedastwam Dhataa Vidhaataastwam Samaahitah/ Twam Jalanidhiraamulam Twam Dhaataatwam Punarsasuh, Twam Vaidyastwam Dhrutaatmaacha twamateendriya gocharah/-----Namastey Sarva Lokesha, Namastey Kamalaalaya, Gunaalaya Namastestu Gunaakara/ Vaasudevah Namastestuh Namastestu Surotthama, Janaardana Namestestu Sanaatana/ [The meanings of the above Stuti are self*explanatory*)

Pleased by the Stuti, Bhagavan besowed Mukti to Kandu Muni and said: Bhaktosi mey Muni sreshtha maa maaraadhya Nityasah, Matprasaadaadhruvam Moksham Praapsysi twam sameehitam/ Madbhaktyaa Kshatriyaa Vaisyaah Striya Shudraanthya jaatijaah, Praanuvantivaraam Siddhim kim punastwam Dwijotthama/ Shwapaakopi cha ma Bhaktah Samyakshradhaa samanvitah, Praapnotimabhimataam Siddhimanyashaam tatra kaa tathaa/

(Muni Shiromani! You are my Bhaktaa performing my Araadhana always. Due to my grace, you will attain Moksha for sure. Any of my Bhaktaas of any Varna or Kula-be they Kshatriyas, Vaishyaas, women or Shudras or even the lowest class-should indeed be granted Parama Siddhi, provided they prove their sincerity and dedication; there need not be any doubt on this count. Even a dog-meat eater of proven devotion, commitment and Shraddha are dear to me).

Yeh patheycchrunuyaadwaapi kathaam Kandormahaatmanah, Vimuktah Sarva Paapebhyah Swargalokamsa gachhati/ (Those who read or hear about Kanda Muni's story would have their sins demolished and attain Swarga).

### Shri Krishna Charitra in brief

Shri Vyasa addressed the Congregation of Munis at Naimisharanya as follows:

Namaskturwaa Sureshaaya Vishnavey Prabha Vishnavey, PurushaayaPuraanaahya Shaswata - avyayaayacha/ Chuturvyuhaatmaney tasmai Nirgunaaya Gunaayacha, VarishthaayaGarishthaaya Varenyaamitaayacha/ Yajnaayaangaakhilaangaaya Devaadvaireepsitaayacha, Yasmaadanuaram naasti yasmaannaasti bruhattaram/ Yena Vishwamidam Vyaaptamajeena Sacharaachatam, Aavirbhaava tirodhaana drushtaadrushta vilakshanam/ Vadanti yatktrushtamiti tathai vyaapyupa samhrutam, Brahmaneychaadi Devaaya Namaskrutya Samaadhinaa/ Avikaaraaya Suddhaaya Nityaaya Paramaama, Sadaika Rupa Rupaaya Jishnavey Vishnavey Namah/ Namo Hiranya Garbhaaya Haraey Shankaraacacha, Vaasudevaaya Taaraaya Sarga Sthityanta kaariney/ Yekaaneka Swarupaaya Sthula

Sukshaatmaney Namah, Avyakta Vyakta Bhutaaya Vishnavey Mukti hetavey/ Swargasthiti vinaashaanaam Jagatoyo Jaganmayah, Mula Bhuto N amastasmai Vishnavey Paramaatmaney/ Aadhaara bhutam Vishvasya —apyaneeyaamsa Maneeyasaam, Pranamya Sarva Bhutastha -machyutam Purushottamam/ Jnaana Swearupa matyantam nirmalam Paramaarthatah, Gamdevaartha Swarupena bhraanti darshanatah sthitam/ Vishnum grasishnum Vishwasya sthitou sargey tathaa prabhum, Anaadim Jagataameesha maja makshaya vyayam/

(My salutations to Sureshwara who is the root-cause of Srishti, Vishnu, Purana Purusha, Saashvata, Avyaya, Chaturvyuhatma Nirguna and Guna Swarupa, Varishtha, Garishtha, Varenya, Amita, Chatur Vyuhaatma; Yajnaanga, and Sarvaanga; I greet that Nirvikaara who is the tiniest and the biggest in stature; he who has no features like birth, old age or termination; he is present all over or everywhere; he is Hiranyagarbha or of the golden egged Brahma; he is the Vyaktaavyakta Rupa; Samasaara taarana; Muktihetu; Jnaana Swarup; Nirmala; Bhranti drushyatama; Sarga Sthiti Samhara Kaarana; Avyaya; Ananta; Akshaya, and Aja!). As Bhu Devi approached Brahma and Devas and stated that Agni was the Guru (Mentor) of Gold, Surya was the Guru of Cows and Narayana was her own Guru and she therefore have to make a supplication to Narayana that the burden on her was assuming highly unbearable proportions as Bhumi was under such pressure that she might collapse! The much hatred and cruel Kamsa -who was Daitya Kalanemi in his earlier birth and killed by Vishnu in the past- along with hundreds of Asuras like Arishta, Dhenuka, Keshi, Pralamba, Naraka, Sundasura, Banasura, and so on with their own Senas of Akshouhinis of soldiers adept and trained in warfare were stalking the Earth without fear or opposition and Adharma, Anaachaara, and Anyaya were the order of the day).

The ever-merciful Janardana heard the wailings and prayers of Bhu Devi and agreed to descend on Earth for Dharma Samsthapana, Dushkrua Vinaashanna and Sadhu Paritraana ( *Yadaa yadaa cha Dharmasya glaanih samupajaayatey, Abhutthhaana madharmasya tadaatmaanam srujasya sow*); he reminded Brahma, Bhu Devi and Devas as to how Dharma was revived in the past by assuming various Incarnations:

Bhutvaapuraa Varaahena tundey naapo virasyacha, Ekayaa damshtrayotkhaataa Nalineeva Vasundhdaraa, Krutwaa Nrisimha Rupamcha Hiranyakashipur -hatah/ Viprachitti mukhaaschaaney Daanavaa vinipaatitaah, Vaavanam rupamaasthaaya Balim samyamya maayayaa/ Trilokyam kraantavaaneva vinirjatya Diteyh sutaan, Bhrogorvamshey samutpanno jaamadagnyah prataapavaan/Jaghaana Kshatriyaanraamah piturvadha manusmaran, Tathaatri tanayo bhutwaa Dattaatreyah prataapavaan/ Yogamashtaanga -maachakhaavalarkaaya Mahaatmaney, Ramodaasharathirbhutwaa satudevah pradaamamaan/ Jaghaana Ravanam sankhey Trilokyasya bhakankaram, Yadaachai –kaarnavey supto Devadevo jagatpatih/ Sahasrayuga paryantam Naagaparyakago vibhuh, Yoga nidraam samaasthaaya swye mahimni Vyavasthitah/ Trailokya -mudarey krutwaa Jagatsdthaavara Jangamam, Janalokagataih Siddhaih stuyamaano Maharshibhih/

(In the past as Varaha Deva with his single 'damshtra' spilled over deep waters up and pulled up Bhudevi from Rasatala as though he plucked a lotus flower; He incarnated as Nrisimha Deva and devastated Hiranya Kashipu and also demolished Viprachitta and many other powerful Daanavas; He took to the Form of Vaamana (midget) and by using his powers of Maya secured three feet of Place and measured Tri Lokaas in the bargain; He as Bhargava Rama the son of Muni Jamadagni took revenge as Kartaveeryaarjuna killed the Muni and uprooted the Kshatriya clan of Kings for their evil deeds; He assumed the Avatar of Dattatreya the son of Atri and as the Supreme Yogi taught and trained Mahatma Alarka the nuances of Ashtaanga Yoga; and in Treta Yuga as Dasharatha Nandana Shri Rama liquidated the most obnoxious Daanava Raavana, Kumbhakarna and his son Indrajit and restored Dharma and Peace on Earth. As the entire Srishti was affected at the Pralaya Time and the Universe was submerged in water, Deva deva Jagatpati lies on water in Yogik sleep on Seshanaaga and retains the Sthavara Jangamaas or the Movable and Immovable Beings in his belly as the Great Maharshis were never tired of extolling and praying to Him).

Brahma, Bhu Devi and Devas expressed their gratitude at the assurance of Bhagavan Vishnu that Vasu Deva and Devi Devaki would beget seven children and the eighth child would by the Parama Purusha as Lord Shri Krishna; a Celestial Voice alerted Kamsa the brother of Devaki that the last child who would be Bhagavan Himself would kill him. Instantly, Devaki and Vasudeva were imprisoned so that he could kill the infants as soon as were born. Bhagavan instructed Yoga Nidra as follows: As per my orders, you proceed to Pataala and facilitate the birth of the first six sons (these were stated to be the sons of Hiranyakashipu); the seventh child would be of the 'Amsha' of Sesha Naga and his embryo should be transferred from the Garbha of Devaki to that of Rohini the second wife of Nanda Gopala-the first wife being Yashoda- and as the embriyo of Seshaamsha would be born due to transfer or Garbha Sankarshana from Devaki to Rohini he would be eventually called Sankarshana. As regards the seventh garbha of Devaki, it would be believed that it was not materialized due to the fright of Kamsa the King of Bhoja: Saptamo Bhojarajasya bhayaadrodho -parodhatah, Devakyaah patoto garbha iti loko vadishyati! Then Bhagavan continued the instruction to Yoga Nidra: I would be born to Devaki on Shravana Bahula Ashtami during the rainy season at midnight and as per my prompting Vasu Deva would cross Yamuna which would actually be in spate but the River would give way to Vasudeva to carry my Bala Rupa on his head safely and keep me in Yashoda's bed who along with Nanda Gopala would believe that a boy was born to them and not a female child and that would be You Yoga Nidra! whom Vasudava would bring back to Devaki's bed; the Sacred Task of exchanging me and You from Devaki's bed to Yashoda and vice versa would all be executed under a thick shroud of Vishnu Maya which would get the Dwarapalakas lulled to sleep, the doors of the prison and the chains of the Vasudeva couple would be freed and so on till the operation of Krishna Janma would be perfected. Kamsa would eventually try to hit you as the female child and you should fly away to Antariksha where Indra would pay respects to you as my own sister where after you shall kill Shumbha Nishumba and several Daityas in different places and timings in varying Rupas; You would be worshipped by different names: Twam Bhutih Sannatih Keertih Kantirvai Prithivi Dhritih, Lajjaa Pushtirusha yaacha kaachinadya twameva saa/ Ye twaamaaryeti Durgeti Vedagarbhey Ambiketicha, Bhadreti Bhadra Kaaliti Kshemya Kshemamkareeti cha/ Praatas chaivamaparaahnecha stoshyam tyaanamramurtah, Teshaam hi Vaanchitam Sarvam Matprasaadaad bhavishyati/ (Yoga Nidra Maya! You are the Bhuti, Samnati, Kirti, Prithivi, Dhriti, Lajja, Pushti, Usha and many other Namadhari; Devotees would bend down their heads in reverence in the mornings or mid days and address you by various names such as Arya, Durga, Vedagarbha, Ambika, Bhadraa, Bhadra Kaali, Kshemya, Kshemankari and so on and their wishes would all be fulfilled due to my benevolence; Devi! Do as I have asked you.) The entire proceedings as instructed by Vishnu Deva unfolded to perfection: Devas extolled Devaki Devi as Swaaha Devi, Swadhaa Devi, Vidya Devi, Sudhaa Swarupini; as Jagadadhaara Janaaddana was born at midnight, mild thunders were heard and lightnings were noticed; Devas showered fragrant flowers and Vasudeva and Devaki were in trance to witness Vishnu in full form with four hands duly armed and ornamented and Vasudeva said: Jnaatosi Deva Devesha Shankha Chakra Gadaadhara, Divyam Rupamidam Deva Prasaadenopa samhara (Devadeva! I am thrilled to witness your Swarupa with Shankha-Chakra-Gada, but do wind up this Form-as Kamsa would torment us if he came to know about this Darshana); Devaki alson said: Swarupa with Shankha-Chakra-Gada, but do wind up this Form-as Kamsa would torment us if he came to know about this Darshana); Devaki also said: Yonanta rupokhila Vishwa rupo Garbheypi lokaanvapushaabibharti, Praseedataamesha sa Devadevah Swamaayayaavishkruta Balarupah/ (Devadeva, may we be blessed to witness your Balarupa as were are spelled and even frightened, mainly because of Kamsa). Bhagavan replied that both of you prayed to me that I should be born to you and I have now fulfilled your request and my promise! As Kamsa had arrived meanwhile and sought to hit the baby with a powerful club, Yoga Maya flew off from his hands displaying her real form with eight hands fully armed and laughing away in frightening and loud voice: Kamsa! What if you tried to hit me! Your killer has already taken his solid position elsewhere quite safely and the time of your ruin is not too far!) As this incident happened Kamsa got extremely disrupted and called his confidants Keshi, Dhenuka, Putana, Arishta and others to search for the Ashtama Putra of Vasudeva and Devaki. He felt there was no point further in imprisoning the latter as the Ashtama Putra was stated to be elsewhere and thus let them free while the couple felt relaxed that the child was safe with

Nanda and Yashoda who were enjoying the company of the new arrival to their hearts's content. Meanwhile Rakshasi Putana scented the existence of Vaasudeva in Gokula and having taken the form of a youthful and respectable maid arrived at Yashoda-Nanda's house and gave milk from her chest to the child snipped her nipple and the Mayavi died at once. There was a commotion in the house and of the neighborhood at this unusual threat to the child. Garga Muni then performed the Baka Samskaras of Namakarana etc. As Krishna and his elder brother Balarama grew up gradually as inseparable companions, Yashoda and Rohini went into raptures and so did the neighborhood at the playful pranks and acts of the growing kids along with friendly groups of Gopas and Gopikas and the entire Village of Gokula witnessed a virtual experience of a fairyland with daily excitement and experiences! The 'Venu naada'/ flute music of Krishna became such an intense lure of all the residents of Gokula irrespective of age, sex and Varnas; even animals and birds especially of the plentiful number of cows of the village and the villagers whose staple occupation was centered to the Gopalas. The Village Head Nanda Gopala's illustrious sons became the cynosure of all the eyes and it looked that Swarga descended to Gokula. But soon the tranquility of the Village got disturbed by the frequent attacks of Asuras like Shakaaasura and Dhenukaasura and Nanda Gopa, Yashoda, Rohini, Krishna-Balaraamas shifted to Brindavana along with a sizeable number of Gokulites. But Krishna Leelas or the miracles of Lord Krishna continued such as Kaaliya Mardana, Pralambaasura Vadha, Govardhanodhharana, Arishta Vadha, Kesi Vadha and so on.

## Raasakreedaa Vilasa was an integral part of Krishna Leelas.

One cool moon night of Sharat Month, Lord Krishna felt like relaxing by the play of his flute and groups of Gopika maids gathered as they got attracted to the music. As one maid followed him in a trance, another Gopika was mesmerized by looking at his countenance forever!; yet another could not resist the temptation of addressing him as Krishna! Krishna! One youthful maid touched his body with hesitation; another restrained herself since her father-in-law was not far away but closed her eyes imagining her caressing his cheeks. While Krishna suddenly disappeared from their midst, they experienced the pangs of Viraha (separation) and as his Darshan was available again on a tree-top or a nearby water pond teasing them with his celestial lyrics of flute, they made a bee-line to reward themselves with his enchanting appearance ensuring that he would not fly away encircled him with watchful eyes! This started the concept of Raasaleela in huge circles as they gave him the feeling of one-to-one familiarity as some dancing away with him, some hugging him and some others experiencing 'Tadaatmyta' or a feeling of unification or oneness. As the Rasakreedas were gaining speed and climaxes, the Gopikas were in such ecstasy and frenzy that they were transported to the Swarga of Self-Realization beyond the stages of Saameepya and Saamaikyata. Despite the warnings of fathers, father-in-laws, and husbands, the Gopikas were after Krishna and Krishnatwa or Krishna Tatwa, which was accessible only to Parama Yogis! Indeed the intense feelings of Pure and Sacred Love that Gopikas experienced with Paramatma Krishna was far, far beyond the barriers of physical interaction but of Supreme Heights of Salvation!

Feeling restless and confused with the paranoia and mania of Krishna, Kamsa dispatched Mahatma Akrura as his emissary to ostensibly invite Krishna and Balarama to Mathura to a social evening followed by a Dhanush Yagna as a part of Utsava of Mathura; his inner feeling was to kill Balarama and Krishna, especially the latter, by engaging them in a Mallayudha or a friendly wresting match with professional wrestlers Mushti-Chaarunas, little realizing that the so-called Friendly Visit of Balarama-Krishnas versus the wrestlors would be Kamsa's last evening. Akrura considered this prospect as God-sent since it was an opportunity to vision, converse and inter-act the Parama Devas! As the chariot of Akrura approached the banks of River Yamuna in Brindavana, he was suddenly confused to see for himself the two brothers relaxing on an afternoon by sheer fortune- one was the Mightiest Maha Sesha Naaga who bore the brunt of the Universe and other the Paramatma Himself! He became speechless and dumb and after gradual recovery of senses broke into an ecstatic eulogy with his raised hands saying:

Om Namo Vaasu- devaaya Namassankarshanaayacha, Pradyumnaaya Namastubhyamaniruddhhaa –tey Namah/ Tanmaatra rupineychintya Mahimney Paramaatmaney, Vyaapineynaika rupaika swarupaaya Namonamah, Shabda rupaayateycinthya havirbhataaya tey namah, Namo Vigjnaana Rupaaya Paraaya

Prakriteyh Prabho/ As Akrura conveyed the Invitation of Kamsa to visit Mathura and as the news spread out like fire, the most disappointed were the Gopikas, more than the parents of Balarama-Krishna and it was problem to control the feelings of the Gopis assuring them that after-all the separation was for a few days only. Having entered the city of Mathura, Krishna-Balaramas preferred walking and advised Akrura to return home. As the brothers were strolling on Mathura roads, the citizens were surprised to see the strangers, started whispering trying to figure them out and gradually identified them as the famed Krishna-Balaramas even as crowds got collected to see them, talk to them and were mesmerized them. On way the brothers had encounters with a Washerman whom they requested to lend them for two pairs of dresses to suit their body-colours and he was extremely impolite and boorish, apparently puffed up by the support of the royalty of King Kamsa; in a provocative language he made uncivil aspersions on the parentage of the brothers and unable to gulp it, hit the Rajaka to ground and selected the clothes of their choice. On seeing this scene, a Gardener carrying fresh flower garlands enquired of the brothers and having learnt about them offered charming garlands which were ornamented the graceful necks of Balarama-Krishnas. He prostrated before them and on realizing their antecedents prayed to them; Krishna blessed the gardener and blessed him with contentment and prosperity in his on-going life and Divya Loka Prapti thereafter. The brothers also had an encounter with a Kubja carrying Angaraaga Chandana for the personal use of Kamsa; she offered the Chandana to them and pleased the brothers with her politeness and frankness; Lord Krishna decided to help her by using his 'Ullapana Vidhi Vidya' (the procedure of setting right the Kubjatwa or bone-reconstruction) held her chin up with his two fingers as she was straightened and became shapely; the miracle was witnessed by the throng of followers and there were acclamations all around. Kubja Devi invited Balarama Krishnas to her residence nearby and worshipped them. Thereafter the brothers proceeded to Dhanushaala and by Krishna's light lift of the famed Dhanush (Bow) which was unusually heavy and a proud possession of the Royal ancestry broke into two pieces resulting in the reverberating sound all over the city of Mathura; Kamsa realized that Akrura had brought Balarama Krishnas on hearing the huge sound and alerted the Mahout of Kuvalayapeeda and Mallayuddha experts Chaanura, Mushtika and Toshala. The mahout of the elephant was ordered to train to trample the brothers at the entry point itself so that the eventuality of terminating them by the wrestlers in full public view might not arise. Kamsa then waited for the next Sunrise with hope against hope and night-long sleepless excitement that his arch enemy Krishna would finally be destroyed. Next day at the appointed time Balarama and Krishna arrived at the Rangamanch which was packed up to witness the Utsava / Celebration with Kamsa in the throne and the Saamanmta Rajas or the Subservient Kings, Kamsa's Ministers, Officials and Royal soldiers besides huge public. At the entry point itself Kalalaya charged suddenly and the ever vigilant Krishna Balaramaas who had extraordinary hind-sight and forethought pounded the Giant elephant with their fists and the animal succumbed to instantaneous death while the mahout ran away for life. The brothers entered the gates with smiles as though nothing was amiss, greeted the staggering crowd as the latter stood up screaming Jaya Jaya Krishna, Jaya Balarama as they were indeed aware of the magnificence of the Guests. There were announcements to the Public indicating that the two boys would entertain the Public even as the wrestler Chamura arrived in the Wrestling Ring while jumping and Mushtika came in while playing a cymbal. By now the Public became aware that Rama Krishna brothers felled the gigantic and infamous Kuvalayapeeda whose task had been to trample those who were the targets of royal punishments! The Malla Yuddha commenced and the tiny brothers looked no match to the mammoth figures of the colossal and ferocious Chanura-Mushtika-Toshlaks. Krishna and Balarama started their playful pranks of dodges and escapes, running around and under the massive legs of the champions and provided comic relief to the boisterous shouts of delighted masses. The mighty wrestlers got fed up with the 'hide and seek' strategies of the exasperating moves of the boys, tried to lift them up and in the process slipped down while the equally impatient Balarama Krishnas jumped up on the shoulders of the wrestlers and battered their heads as the latter's enormous bodies crashed down the floor with resounding sound of thuds. A dazed public fell silent and the remaining wrestlers in the ring who were to be the stop gap ones to provide rest to the principal ones ran away out of fright. Kamsa shouted to say that let the cow-herd boys be thrown out, sinner Nanda be imprisoned at once, and those supporters of Yadava community who were shouting in favour of Krishna

Balaramas be brought to book, their cows and properties be confiscated. Krishna smiled and jumped up from the wrestling arena to Kamsa, threw down his Swarna Kireeta / golden headgear, pulled his long hair to floor him, throttled him and mercilessly dispatched him to Naraka loka. Later on Krishna Balaramas prostrated before their parents and declared Kamsa's father Ugrasena who too was imprisoned for long, as the King again. The brothers then received formal education from Guru Sandeepa in Veda Vedangas, Shastras, Dhanur Vidya, and 'Rana Neeti' or the nuances of Warfare-all in a matter of sixty days. As a Guru dakshina, they brought back Sandeepa's son who got drowned in Prabhasa Kshetra Samudra by praying Samudra Deva who stated that an Asura named Panchajana of the shape of a Shankha / conchshell kidnapped and killed the Guruputra; after killing Panchajana, he secured a powerful Shankha called Panchajanya from the bones of the demon by sounding which enemies retreat at once; asked Balarama to go fight with Yamaraja and finally brought back the dead boy back to life and gifted the dead son to the Guru!

As a sequel to Kamsa Vadha, King Jarasandha of Magadha Desha, the father-in-law of Kamsa, visited Mathura to mitigate the sorrow of his daughters Asti and Prapti and attacked Mathura to defeat the new King Ugrasena or indirectly provoke Krishna; Jarasandha was a very powerful King with a sena of twenty three Akshouhini soldiers. Krishna came to the rescue of the new Mathura King and successfully defended him from Jarasandha. But the latter attacked Mathura again and again and finally surrounded it when he also forged alliance with a Yavana King Kaalayavana and brought in his soldiers too. One fine morning, Krishna walked out of the fortress of Mathura attracting the attention of Kaalayavana who followed Krishna and entered a mountain cave which was pitch dark inside; Krishna cleverly hid himself and Kaalayayan mistook somebody lying asleep as Krishna; that was Mahatma Muchikunda who had been in slumber from the time of the previous 'Kalpa'; by the design of Krishna Maya, Kaalayavana trampled Mahatma Muchukunda who got disturbed from his long rest and by the 'Krodhaagni' or the sharp fiery looks of Muchiknda, Kaalaayavana turned into a heap of bhasma /ash; Krishna introduced himself as the Vaasudeva of Yadu Kula of Chandra Vamsha to Muchukunda who got the boon of long slumber and whosover saw him when disturbed would be burnt to ashes and else would be seen thereafter would be Paramatma himself! Gargya Muni gave the boon to Muchukunda to secure the Vision of Deva Deva in the Twenty Eighth Drapara Yoga in the Form of Shri Krishna as result of the yeoman services to Devas in the context of battles with Daityas without sleep for innumerable years.

As Krishna and Balarama abandoned Mathura and shifted to Dwaraka on the west coast of Bharata Varsha, Balarama wedded Devi Revati the daughter of Prajapati Raivata, [although the age difference was stated to be as much as a Yuga, since the Prajapati of Treta yuga took his daughter to Brahma for a suitable match and Brahma suggested Balarama, but as Raivata and Revati reached Bharata Varsha, Dwaraka was re-built for Yadavas by Krishna and Balarama in the Dwapara Yuga!] Shri Krishna eloped with Rukmini Devi -of Lakshmi Devi's partial incarnation-at the nick of time by her forced wedding with Shishupala despite her desire for Krishna; Rukmi the brother of Rukmini forced the wedding with the instigation and active support of Jaraasandha, Shishupala, Poundraka, Dantavaktra, Vithuratha, Shaalva and such others evil-mined enemy Kings who were all executed by Krishna eventually. Rukmi attacked Krishna and so did the soldiers of the enemy kings but the invincible Krishna took away as she was deeply in love with him. Rukmi took a vow not to enter Kundinapara City of Vidarbha Kingdom if he did not subdue or kill Krishna in the battles before the famed Rukmini- Krishna Elopment! Krishna and Rukmini holy wedding took place at Dwaraka with great pomp in the presence of the parents, foster parents, Balarama, Rukmini's father Bhishmaka. Krishna and Rukmini gave birth to Pradyumna of Manmatha's Amsha or Part- manifestation; Pradyumna was kidnapped even on the sixth day of his birth by Shambharaasura but having realized that boy was Krishna's own son, threw the child in the Sea and a fish ate up the child who survived due to the 'jatharaagni' in the stomach of the fish. A fisherman netted the fish and along with other fishes took it to Shambhara –asura as gift. The Asura sent the fishes to the Kitchen where a house maid called Mayavati was the manageress of the Kitchen who cut a fat fish and found to her great surprise a cute child and wondered as to a child got into the fish! Narada Maharshi appeared and told her that the boy was Paramatma Shri Krishna and Lakshmyaamsi Devi Rukmini's own

child and Shambharaasura kidnapped him even as a six-day old child but threw him in Sea as he came to realize the reality but was devoured by a big fish which was gifted back to the Asura and that was the background! Mayavati brought up the child with intense care and as he grew up fell in love with him as he came up as a handsome and intelligent youth. On coming to know the past, Pradyumna challenged the Asura and killed him. Both Mayadevi and Pradyumna approached Krishna and Rukmini as Krishna knew that Mayavati was Rati Devi herself and Pradyumna was Manmatha who was turned to ashes as he and Rati together sought to apply Pushpa Baanaas / flowery arrows on Shiva to speed up Deva Deva's wedding with Devi Parvati for the benefit of mankind to facilitate the birth of Skanda!

Besides Rukmini, Shri Krishna's Chief Queens were Kaalindi, Mitravinda, Satya the daughter of Nagnajita, Jambavati, Bhadra, Satyabhama the daughter of Satraajit. Besides, as sixteen thousand more Kanyas released by the prisons of Narakaasura, who was terminated by Bhagavan, prayed to Krishna to wed them and he accepted them too.

Indra approached Shri Krishna at Dwaraka and sensitized him about the endless evil acts of Narakaasura who was the notorious son of Bhu Devi stationed at Pragjyotishapura. He had been harassing Devas, Siddhas and various Kings and forcibly taking away their daughters; he stole the chhatra / umbrella of Varuna Deva which provides rains to the world; he carried away the Mandara Mountain's peak which yielded precious stones and diamonds; my mother Aditi's ear-rings which provided Amrit always were stolen away; and he was also demanding the Celestial Elephant Airavata. Krishna then mounted Garutmanta, the Vahana of Vishnu and reached Pragjyitishapura which had an expanse of hundred yojanas encircled by thick and impregnable iron railings which were cut through by the Sudarshana Chakra. The most powerful Muraasura and his seven thousand strong Veera Putras defended the fortress of Bhoumaasura. Muraasura's defence was snipped off and the sons were slashed by the mighty Chakrayudha like flies on a massive outbreak of fire. Then Krishna attacked Bhouma and a ferocious battle ensued with the sea-like Daityas who were mighty, wily and none-easy to control. After a prolonged war, Krishna finally commanded his Sudarshana Chakra which sliced the Asura's body into two.

As soon as Naraka fell down, Bhu Devi returned Aditi's sacred Karna Kundalaas to Aditi and addressed Vaasudeva as follows: *Yadaahmudhrutaa Naatha twayaa Sukara Murtinaa, Tatsampara bhuvah putraastadyaama mayya jaayata/ Soyam twaaiva dattemey twaayaiva vinipaatitah---Twam Kartaa cha vikartaacha Samhartaa Prabavovyaha!* (Deva! When you saved me in the Avataara of Varaha, this son was born to me; he was given and was killed by you--- You are the Creator as also the Destroyer!)

As the Mission of Narakaasura Vadha was concluded, Krishna and Satyabhama visited Nandanavana in Swarga and desired to take away the Celestial Parijata Tree to Dwaraka, but Sachi Devi objected and so did Indra and after a brief altercation between Sachi Devi and Satyabhama, followed by a war-like situation between the respective husbands, Indra realized his indiscretion and gifted Parijata to Satyabhama and stated that he would not be ashamed to get defeated by Paramatma who was responsible to Sarga-Samhaara and Sthiti:

Sakala Bhuvana murteyrmurti kalpaa su sookshmaa, Vidita Sakala Vedairjnaayuatey yasya naanyaih/ Tamajakruta meesam Shaswatam Swecchayainam, Jagadupakriti maadyam kovijetam samarthah! (He is Sakala Bhuvana Swarupa and the Suksmaati Sukshma rupa; He who is not comprehensible by Sakala Vedas; Who in the Universe could overcome him as he is Aja, Shaashvata and the Foremost to help and provide to one and all). In reply, Krishna replied: Devendra! You are a Devata but Satyabhama and I are mere human beings and we cannot possibly argue with you! You have Iravata the Celestial Elephant, you also possess Vajraayudha and indeed Parijata would appropriately be in your possession only in Swarga's Nandanavana. Devendra replied: Prabhu! Why are you taunting me that you are a mere Manava as Maya overcame me for a while and ruined my ego which was fanned further by Sachi Devi; I have now learnt the lesson the hard way. It is with your grace that we have come to enjoy our luxuries. Kindly

accept this Parijata to be planted in Devi Satya's garden. Finally the Tree was brought to Prithvi as the proud possession of Satyabhama and its fragrance got spread out all over Dwaraka!)

Shri Krishna Niryaana was the climax of the termination of Yadukula that got initiated by a few playful Yadu Kumaraas at Pindaraka Tirtha who dressed the son of Jambavati called Saambu as an expectant woman and asked a group of Rishis to ascertain whether the woman would deliver a boy or a baby! The Munis under reference included Kanwa-Narada and Viswamitra who from their Divya drishti realized the hoax of the fake garbhini and said in anger that the woman would deliver neither a boy nor a girl but a 'Musala' or a lump of an iron instead and that would result in the destruction of Yadu Vamsha! The Yadava Boys were stunned at the reply and reported the matter to Ugrasena! Saambu did deliver a Musala which was pounded as powder but the remainder bit was thrown into the Sea and it was devoured by a fish and a fisherman called Jara caught hold of the fish and as he cut it he found a sharp iron piece which he kept for subsequent use.

Meanwhile, a few Devas appeared before Krishna and prayed to him as follows: 'Devaadi Deva! Indra has asked us as well by Ashtaavasus, Marud Devatas , Rudras , Saadhyas and Adityas that at our instance you had very kindly assumed an incarnation and lightened the enormous burden on Earth by demolishing innumerable Danavas and other Dushta Shaktis for a long hundred years and over and the Three crores of Devas are now at peace; we request you to know your mind as to how to proceed further'. Bhagavan replied: 'I am fully aware of my next move; I have already initiated the process of Yadava destruction as considerable annihilation of the enemy forces of the virtuous Pandavas including the killing of Jarasandha besides of Kauravas was concluded too. As I have still to complete the task of terminating Yadavas as I brought them to Dwaraka,that bit of task too once concluded, I shall be freed of my mortal responsibilities and return to Vaikuntha'.

So saying, Krishna made arrangements by dispatching Uddhava to Badarikaashrama on Gandhamaadana Parvat to Naranarayana Maharshi Ashrama where he would secure Siddhi after the close of his life. Select Yadavas including himself, Baladeva and elders like Ugrasena, Vasudeva left for Prabhasa Kshetra along concerned Devis; remaining Yadavas most of got dead drunk killed each other including Pradyumna, Saamba, Kritavarma, Satyaki, Aniduddha, Pruthu and Akrura by using the high grown sea beach grass roots which sprouted from the powder of the Musala delivered from Saambu's garbha thus terminating Yadu Vamsha; the elders including Balarama etc who left for Prabasa Kshetra took resort to Yogic ends and finally Krishna and the famed charioteer Daruka remained.

Imagining a resting Krishna's moving feet behind a tree bush as deer, Jara Vyaadha who recovered an iron left-over bit from the fish caught in the Sea, sharpened his arrow and shot at the Lord's moving feet and ashamed to do so but the ever merciful Krishna bestowed him Siddhi. Krishna then sent Daruka to convey the news of Krishna Niryana to his dear disciple Arjuna to perform the obsequies of himself, of Balarama and the illustrious Yaduveeras; Rukmini and Krishna's wives performed Krishna Sahagamana or sacrificing themselves in the a same Fire with which the mortal human form of the Avatara succumbed.

As Arjuna was totally drowned in uncontrollable grief and distress, Veda Vyasa assuaged his inner and core-emotions said: Bhagavan Krishna arrived as a human being along with us all as a Marga darshaka or a moral teacher to prescribe and guide us about the virtuous the innate values of life and to uproot the evils of the Society that Daityas and many in the form of Human beings came to adopt; now that the burden of Bhu Devi got lightened Paramatma took up the need and the deed; since the noble reason and requirement were fulfilled, he put the World back on its heels and disappeared, since Jatasya Maranam Dhruvam!

### Shraaddha Kalpa Varnana

At the Naimisha forest at the congregation of Munis, they requested Veda Vyasa to explain in brief the procedure of Shraaddha Karma: and the latter explained as follows: those who belonged to the Vranaas of Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaishyas were required to perform Shraaddhaas as per their own Kula Dharma

according to the prescribed 'Veda Mantrocchaarana'. When done by only Women and Shudras, the relevant Mantras were not to be recited nor Agni Homas while doing Shraaddhas on their behalf. The hallowed places where Shraddhas could be performed included Tirthas like Pushkara, Holy Temples, Mountian tops, Sacred Places, Holy Rivers, Sarovaras, Sangamas, Sea shores, own residences, Holy Tree root bottoms, and Yagna Kundas. There are three kinds of Shraddhhaas viz. Nitya, Nimittika and Kaamya Shraaddhas. At Jaata Karma and such other occasions, Abhudaayika or Vriddhi daayika Shraaddha too is required to be performed. When Surya is in kanya Rasi, Saaddhaas are best performed for fifteen days: Padyami Shraddhaas bestow Dhanalaabha, Vidiya Pashu sampada or the benefit of cattle, Tadiya Putras, Chaturthi Shatru Naashana, Panchami Aaishwaryaprada, Shashthi Loka Pujya, Sapatami Ganaadhipatya, Ashtami Jnaana prada, Navami Stree Labha, Dashami Sarvaabhistha, Ekadashi Veda Sampannata, Dwadashi Vijaya Labha, Trayodashi Santaana Vriddhi and Deerghaayu, Chaturdashi Shraaddha blesses those who perform to appease the Souls of those who died in battles and Amavaasya Shaaddhyaas provide all-round well-being. Gaya Shraaddhas would yield long term benefits, especially when performed with jaggery, honey and black 'tilas', since Pitru Devas would look forward to such opportunities to their 'Vamseeyas'; they crave for tarpanas in the rainy season of Magha-Phalguna months and Gudaanna / Rice-Jaggery Payasas mixed with honey; they hope that atleast one son might turn up at Gaya to offer Pinda Pradaana and that was their desire when alive to procure many sons; they wished that at least one kanyaa daana or one Nila Vrishabha Utsarga might be executed! Pitru Shraaddha during Krittika Star provides paasage to Swarga; Rohini Nakshathra gives good progeny; Mriga Shira Nakshatra Shraaddha gives Tejas, Ardra secures Shourya; Purvasu Kshetra darshana prapti, Pushyami Akshayadhana, Aslesha purnaaryrdaaya, Magha Santaanapushti, Purvaphaluni sowbhaayga, Uttara phalguni uttama santaana, Hasta Shraaddha yields Shasrtra vidya phala, Chitra secures tejas and santaana, Swaati Vyaapaara laabha, Vishakha putraprada, Auradha Nakshatra Shraaddha provides Chakravartitwa, Jeshtha gives Aadhipatya, Moola excellent health, Purvaashadha gives fame and name, Uttaraahaashaadha demolishes grief and troubles, Shravana provided Shubha lokas, Dhanisdhtha dhana samruddhi, Abhijit gives knowledge Vedas, Shatabhisha Vaidya Siddhi, Purvabhadra gives goat-sheep sampada, Uttaraabhadra provides Go Sampada, Revati Rajata samruddhi, Ahwavi Ashwa Sampatti, and Bharani nakshatra shraaddha provides ''Deerghaayuraarogya'; thus Gaya Shraadha at any time during any Nakshatra bestows all kinds of auspicious tidings! When Surya is in Kanya rashi, those who offer Shraaddhha Pindaas would fulfill all their desires as Pitras look forward to them; in fact the entire fornight during this Mahalaya Period, Tarpana Pinda Pradaanaas are stated to be of high value resulting in Raajasua -ashwamedha Phalaas. Shraaddhas are to be offered at this time with water, leafy vegetables and 'kanda mulaas' or ground sprouted ones only. Devotees would do well in performing such Shraaddhaas as Surva enters Uttara-Hasta Nakshatra timings; such offerings when Ravi would enter Hasta in Vrishchik Raasi, but beyond Vrischika raashi, Pinda pranaanaas are not only counter-productive but might have adverse effects as Pitru Devas might even curse them for belated offerings!

Also, Shraaddhaas need to be performed during Ashtakaas, Manvantaraas, and Anvashtakaas; Ashtakaas are known as Krishna Paksha Ashtamis of the months of Pousha, Maagha, Phalguna and Chaitra. Manvantaraas denote Ashadha Shukla Dashami, Shraavana Krishna Ashtami and Bhadra Shukla Triteeya, since Utsavaas / celebrations were organized at these Manvantaraas. Anvashtakaas signify the Navamis followed by the Ahtakaas. Abhuyudayas denote the above three categories of Ashtakas-Manvantaraas-Anvashtakaas as these are first and foremost addressed invoke Maata- Pitaamahi- Pramitaamahi and then by Pita-Pitaamaha-Prapitaamaha. In other words, Maatru Varga would be addressed first, followed by Pitru varga and finally to *Mataamaha- Pramitgaamah- Vriddha Mataamaha*. Shraaddhaas are also required to be performed at Grahanas or Solar-Lunar Eclipses, Vyatipatas, Surya-Chandrama Sangamaas, Janma Nakshatraas, and Graha Peedaavasaras; these Shraaddhaas are to be Paarvana Shraaddhaas. At the timings of Aayana -kramana or change of Dakshinatana-Uttaraayana as also the two Vishus (or when Surya reaches the line when the day-night calculations are equivalent) as also on Samkraanti day, vidhi purvaka Shraddhas need to be performed in a full-fledged form, but minus Pindapradaada. Shraaddhhas are required to be performed on Vaishakha Shukla Triteeya and Kartika Shukla Navami as per the

Samkraanti Vidhi; again on Bhadra Shukla Trayodashi and Magha Amavasya days, Paayasa Shraadha or Cooked rice in boiled sweet milk should be offered to Pitru Devaas. When ever a VedaVetta or Nityaagnihotriya Brahmana arrives at a Brahmana's house, then too a Shraaddha would better be given. On the days of death of one's own parents Shraaddhhas are required to be performed in a fulfledged manner every year including to Pitru devatas and Vishva Devatas separately.

Prati Samvararam Kaaryam Maataa Pitrormrotey hani, Pitruvyasyaapya putrasya Bhraatur Jyeshthasya chaivahi/ Paarvanam Devapuryam syaadekoddhishtam Surairvinaa, Dyuodevey Pitrukaaryea Treenakaikamubhayatravaa/ (On the day of the passing away of one's own father or mother, one has to perform Ekoddishta Shraaddha; if father's brother had no male issue then too the Ekoddishta Shraaddha be performed. In the Parvana Shraaddha, Vishva Devas are to be invoked first and their puja is to be performed. But without Vishvadevas in Ekoddishta Shraaddha, Brahmanas are arranged in Deva Pitru Shtaanaas and worshipped. In the Deva Kaarya, two Brahmanas are to be arranged and for Pitru Karyaa three Brahmanas; Or at least one each of the Karyas are required as minimum. Pretajeeva deeds to be kept in the form of a Pinda ón Bhumi beneath Kushaa grass with black Tilas and water. Brahnanaas would get shuddhi on the eleventh day of the demise, while Kshatriyas get purified on the thirteenth day, Vaishyas on the sixteenth day and Shudras on the thirty first day. On the termination of Sutaka or Asuddhi, Brahmanas should perform Ekoddishta Shraddha on the twelfth day, after a month, after Traipaksha or three weeks and every month thereafter for a year. Then the action of 'Sapindeekarana Paarana Vidhhana' must be followed, when the departed Soul would abandon the 'Pretha Swarupa' and attain the status of 'Pitru Devatva'. The Pitaras are of two types viz. Amurtaas (Formless) and Murtimaan (with Form). Naandimukhaas are stated to be Formless and Paarvanaas are Murtimaans.

Now, the procedure of Sapindeekarana is as follows: In the context of Sapindeekarana, Vishwa Devaas are not invoked, only one 'Arghya'/ water is given, no Agnikarana or invocation of Agni is done, four Patras or small vessels are used with Tilodakaas or water with black Tilas and chandana; three of the Paatras are to invite to three generations of forefathers and one for the Preta: *Paatratraye pretapaatraadarghyam chaiva prasechayet, Yesamaanaah iti japanpurva -vacchhesha maacharet/* ( while reciting the Mantra 'Yenamaanaah', the Kartaa should perform 'Jala Prokshana' (sprinkle of water); even in respect of the diseased women the same procedure of Ekoddhishta should be adopted, but no need for Sapindeekarana is required in respect of women without children and the concerned relatives of husband or her own brothers could take up the task of Shraaddha. In case, there is none, the King becomes responsible as he would be the relative to all the prajaa who are helpless and execute all the related actions including the annual Shraaddhaas. Even related women could assume the charges, provided no Mantras are recited.

Nitya Naimitthika Shraaddhas are as follows: Nitya Sh raaddha would follow Sapindeekarana, when the departed father would join the ranks of the earlier three generations viz. the Karta's departed father, grand father and the great grandfather who would all be the 'Pinda bhuks''; actually, seven previous generations of the Karta would be eligible for the fruits of the shraddha: *Pindasambandhino hyetey vigjneyaah Purushaatrayah*, *Lepa sambandhinaschaaney pitaamah pitaamahaah/ Prabhrutyuktaa -strayasteshaam yajamaanascha saptamah*, *Ityesha Munibhih proktah sambandhaha Saapta Pourushah/* But those who were beyond the three earlier generations viz. those of Sapta Pourushaas of four further earlier generations would be satisfied with the particles of 'Anna' or rice grains spread along and around the leaf above the kushagrass on which three pindas are placed in a line; the water drops from the clothes after taking bath by the Karta would provide relief to those who might have turned as Piscachas; those who might have been born as trees would be satisfied too by the water drops from the body of snaana of the Kartha; and those who might have been born as Pashu-Pakshis would be satisfied from the water drops while performing prokshana around the pindas in the process of worship. As the bhojana of the Brahmana bhoktas would be complete, the water drops to wash the hands and feet of the Bhoktas would relieve those who might have been born otherwise. Thus each Shraaddha would liberate the Souls of Seven

Generations and none indeed would be dis-satisfied in the 'Kula' for seven generations! Those who perform Shraaddhaa even by the low caste human beings with Shraddha or Faith would relieve the misery of the departed Souls, while those Brahmanaas who are virtuous observing daily tasks would indeed be responsible for the certain salvation of the ancestors. Now, the Bhahmanas who are selected as bhoktas must also have proper qualfications; they should preferably be Veda vettaas, maatru-pitru bhaktas, Acharyas, Panditaas, father-in-laws, brothers-in-law, Purana TatvaVetta, and such others. Those who are selected as the representatives of Vishwadeva Pitraas too should be equally learned. The Kartha should feed such ideal Brahmanas as would indeed alleviate the miseries of the departed ones and hence the care for the selection. The services provided to the bhoktas are as good as those given to the departed parents or others concerned. In this context, Vastra daanana was emphasized: Vastraabhaavey kriyaanaasti yajgnaa Vedaastapaamsicha, Tasmaadwaasaamsi deyaani Shraaddha kaaley viseshitah/ Kauseyam kshaama kaarpaasam dukulamahatam tathaa, Shraaddheytwetaani yo dadyaat kaamaanaapnoti chottamaan/ (Without the charity of Vastraas, no task of Shraaddhha would be complete; in fact, no sacred task like Yagnaas, Vedaas and Tapaas would be complete without Vastra daanaa. More particularly so, in respect of Shraaddhhaas as Pitru Devas would not be appeased otherwise. Silk Vastraas or at least new cotton Vastraas constitute a definite input in Shraaddhas. Yathaa goshu prabhutaasu vatso vindati maataram, Tathaannam tatra Vipraanaam janturyatraavasishthatey/ Naama gotrancha mantraascha datthamannamnayantitey, Aapiye nidhanam praaptaas trupistaanupatishthatey/ (Just as a calf reaches its mother's udder on a group of cows, Anna daana to Brahmanaas too is an inclusive input in Shraaddhaas to enable the relief of the departed Souls; recitation of Naama-Gotraas in the formal medium of Mantras would reach the fruits of Shraaddhaas to the concerned Vamsha-Gotra-Naamaas so that the respective categories are satiated.) The relevant Mantra further states: Deataabhyah Pitrubhyascha Mahaa Yogibhy yevacha, Namah Swadhhaayai Swaahaayai Nithyameva bhanantiti, Adhaavasaaney Shraaddhasya traavruttvaa japettadaa, Pinda nirvahaney vaapi japedevam samaahitah/ Kshipramaayaanti pitaro Raahshasaah pradravanti cha, Preeyantey trishu lokeshu Mantroyam taarayatyuta/

(My obeisances to Pitraas and Devataas; to my homage to Swadhaa Devi and Swaahaadevi; May these be always with me; This Mantraa must be recited thrice at the time of Pinda-Nirvahana of while performing the Task of Pindaas as also at the time end of the Shraadda. The recitation of this Mantra would instantly respond to the Pitra Devas and the Rakshasaas would run away; the Tri Lokas would be satisfied and the Performer would fully bless with salvation. Offering away the Pindaas to Agni in the Homakunda would bless the Karta would secure Bhoga Vriddhi or enhance pleasures; offering the Pindas to the Karta's wife would result in Putra Prapti; offering them to Cows would ensure 'Tejovriddhi'; immerse the pindaas would increase Keerti /fame; feeding them to crows would provide long life; and some Pandits stated that 'Pindaagraas' or tops of the Pindaas should be lifted.

Tasmaatsam Pujayet bhaktya swapitruunvidhivannarah, Kaamaanabhhepsinsakalaan —paadaatma vimochanam, Vasuun Rudraamstathaadityaan Nakshatra graha taarakaah/ Preenayanti Manushyaanaam Pitarah Shraaddha tarpitaah, Aayuh Prajaam Dhanam Vidyaam Swargam Moksham sukhaanicha/ Prayacchanti tathaa Raajyam Pitarah Shraaddha tarpitaah, Tathaapahaarnah Purvaahnaat pitruunaamatirichyatey/ Sampujya Swaagateynaitaan sadanebhyaagataandvijaan, Pavitra paaniraachaantaa nasaneyshupa —vesayet/ Shaadhham krutwaa vidhaanena sambhojya cha Dwijottamaan, Visarjaeyt priyaanyukaa pranipatya cha bhaktitah/ Aadwara manugacchhecchaa gacchhedan moditah,Tato nitya kriyaamkuryaad bhojayeccha tathaa tithheen/ Nithya kriyaam pitruunaamcha kechidicchanti Sattamaah/

(As the Shraddha Karta is anxiously awaited by the concerned Pitru Devaas, he should worship them with faith and devotion as prescribed so that the desires of Karta are fulfilled; the Ashtaa Vasus, Ekaadasha Rudraas, Dwadasha Adityas, Nava Grahas and Nakshatraas would all be satisfied with the Shraaddhhas and bestow long and healyhy life, good progeney, prosperity, Vidya, over-all fulfillment and Swarga. As 'Aparaahna'or mid-day is the appropriate time, the Kartha should welcome the Brahmanaas with

devotion, make them feel comfortable and conduct the proceedings with perseverance and fortitude, perform the duties till the end and then take the Nitya Karmas after duly sending them off with reverence).

In conclusion, Veda Vyasa Maharshi assured: Aajaaramaacharedyastu Pitru medhha shritam Narah, Ayushaa dhana putraischa vardhastyasu na samshayah/ Pitrumedhaadhyaaya mimam Shraaddha kaaleshu yah pathet, Tadannamasya pitaroshnanti cha tri-yugam dwijaah/ Yevam mayoktah Pitrumedha kalpah paaaapahah punyavivaddhanascha/ Shrotavya yesha prayatainaraihscha shraaddeghachainaapyanu keertayet/ (Those who observe the traditions of Pitrumedha Kalpa, are blessed with Dhana-Dhanya-Ayuraarogya- Putra Poutra-Vardhana. Those who read 'Pitrumedha-adhyaa' of this Purana, would be blessed with the contentment of Pitru Devatas of the past three yugas! The recitation or patient hearing of the contents of the Adhyaaya itself would bestow the boon of demolishing sins and of and ushering propitiousness).

Sadaachaara Varnana / Principles of Righteous Way of Living (Samvatsara Abdika Vidhi, Varnaashrama Dharma, Dharmaadharma Vidhi and Maha Tatwa Nirnaya highlighted)

As Vyasa Maharshi explained the general manner in which Brahmanas are expected to perform their duties towards Devas and Pitru ganaas with Havya-Kavyas or oblations to Agni and other tasks of virtue, the Munis requested the Maharshi to outline the rudiments of 'Sadaachaara' or the fundamentals of Ideal Values of Virtuous Life viz. or the Worthy Principles of Moral Conduct / Good Behavior. *Grihastena Sadaakaarya maachaara pari-rakshanam, Nahyaachaara viheenasya bhadramatra paratravaa, Yagna daana tapaaseeha Purushasya na bhuyatey, Bhavanti yah sadaachaaram samullanghya pravartatey*/

(Grihastaas or family-persons ought to observe and protect Sadaachaara Pravartana as those without it would neither have 'Iham' / the contentment of current life or 'Param' of post-life; to those who neglect the principles of Sadaachaara are not eligible to the fruits of Yagna- Daana-Tapas). Grihastaas are expected to follow the basic principles of Dharma-Artha and Kaama during the first three quarters of one's life and in the last quarter of life to activities pertaining to Moksha. Also, half of one's expected span of life is to be spent with the deeds oriented to Nitya-Naimittika Karmas or daily and occasional tasks of virtue; the persons concerned might perform such deeds as to involve Bharana-Poshana or sustenance and ful-fillment of family needs. But the last quarter of life should be exclusively spent on activities aiming at the collection of 'Mula Dhana' of fruits meant for the aftermath of life. In oher words, 'Dharmaacharana' or practice of Virtue has to be an under-current in the Samsaara Sagara in all the phases of life, especially in the last quarter of life. Care must be taken that each of the 'Purusharthas' should not be contradictory to each other. In other words, Dharma should propel such Artha that should not inhibit Dharma; Kaama should not defeat the aspect of Dharma and Artha and likewise Moksha has to be a logical conclusion of the preceding Purusharthas:

Paraspara anubandhaamscha sarvaanetaanvichintayet,Vipareetaanubandhaamscha budhyadhvam taandwiojottama/ Dharmo Dharma anubandhaartho Dharmaana atmaartha peedakah,Ubhaabhyaam cha dwidhaa kaamam teyna thou dwidhaa punah/

A dutiful person has to wake up at the Brahma muhurtha time and think of Dharma and Artha, leave the bed, perform the morning ablutions and commence Sandhya Vandana even when Stars are visible on the Sky. *Asatpralaapamanrutam Vaakpaarushyam cha varjayet, Asacchaastra -masadwaada masatpeyvaam cha vai Dwijaah*/ (Blabbering lies, talking offensibly, taking resort to arguments of Nastik nature, reading wrong books and writings, giving service to vicious persons must be avoided at any cost. Keeping mental control, daily Havan in the morning and evening should be done dutifully; never try to look at Surya at the Sunrise and Sunset; combing the hair, looking at the mirror, cleaning the teeth, and executing Deva Tarpana must be done well before the Sunrise; avoiding ablutions at Public places, Tirthas and Kshetras; looking at, talking to and touching girls during menses periods; indulging in ablutions in water bodies must be avoided let alone bathing with women; leaving hairs, rotten food, ash, coal, threads, ropes, metallic material and any other offensive materials oaught not to be throne in running water and worse in

still waters. Men and women of virtue should never take food before worshipping Devas, Parents, Guests and elders or those with illnesses; eat food observing silence and not moving about; never unduly criticise food preparations; never consume nor accept food from the plates of others; never ever spread rumours; never touch-let alone use the seat, bed, vessels, and personal belongings of persons with questionable credentials; never wear single vastra in the worship of Deities, or reverences to Gurus and elders; never urinate in water, fire and in Public places; never bathe or sleep in nudity even in closed places; never apply oil while taking baths; never face Brahmanas, Cows, Agni, Surya, Chandra and Nakshatras; avoid to perform ablutions facing north in day time and south in the nights; give way politely to Brahmanas, Officials, elders, women in confinement, persons with illnesses, handicaps, drunkenness, loose character women, those who help, children, the arrogant, and generally the avoidable; perform parikrama of temples, elders, Gurus, trees and road junctions from the right side; never wear other's clothes, jewellery, shoes and paadarakshaas; never take head bath with oil on Chaturdashi, Ashtami, and Pournami; never shake feet nor lift hands up; never press one foot with another foot; never brag nor belittle others either on one to one basis or worse still in public; never insult the poor, the ugly, the mentally unstable, the intoxicated, and such other abnormal persons; never give punishment to anybody except sons or Sishyas only with a view to reforming or correcting but never with pre-conceived views, arrogance or vengeance; never drag chairs or cots or any furniture items with feet; never sleep facing north and west but keep the head to south or east; never apply chandan etc. without taking bath; never wear torn clothes; never eat food with dropped hairs, ant or flies-eaten, or seen by dogs; do not eat with salt kept separately on a plate; never sleep after sun-rise or at sun-set timings; never eat food without taking bath, without properly seated, while in the food or half-asleep; without being attentive or half-heartedly; take food in the morning or evening without taking bath; never sleep in bed with unknown women: Paradaaraa na gantavyaah purushena vipaschitaa, Ishtaapurttaayushaam hantree paradaaraa gatirmrunaam/ Na heedrusha manaayushyam lokey kinchana vidyatey, Yaadrusham Purushasyeha paradaaraabhimarshanam/ (Noble men would never resort to Para Stree Sangama and those who did so would not only lose their image, conscience, mental peace and longevity); one must perform 'Achamana' before Sandhya-Devaagni-Pitru Karya-Guru Vandana-Puja-Bhojana timings with clean, foamless, and bad-smelling water facing Dakshina or Uttara / South or North; while performing Achamana, one should avoid five kinds of 'mruda' or earth viz. just outside water bodies, from the backyard of one's own home, near a mouse's hole, or near around a bath room place and near a water-well; the Achamana should be done after washing hands and feet, and three or four times, twice after wiping eyes, ears, face, nose, lips and head; while doing Achamana, there should not be sounds of slurpings, coughs, sneezes, spittings, gas and if the latter happen then touch right ears and look upward to see Surya Deva and repeat Achamana thrice; do not rattle teeth, pound body parts, and avoid all kinds of mannerisms; never practise Swadhyaya of Vedas, or Sacred Mantras while eating, travelling, walking and lying down; avoid marriages of girls of seven generations before on the paternal side and five generations before on the maternal side; Kshura Karma (hair cut) should not be done facing north and the avoidable dates for the task are Chaturthi, Navami and Chaturdashi; do worship Devas in the early morning hours, pre-noon to Gurus and human beings and mid-day to Pitru-Devas; never sleep during day time, much less unite with wife; rajaswala women should observe four nights of menses and observance of five nights would assure Purushatwa in next birth; in any case, observing aloofness from husband for five nights would be rercommended; manwoman unity on even nights after menses would bless male progeny, and on un-even nights, female progeny. Such unity on festival days the progeny would end up in the birth of Adharma Santaana, while in the Sandhya timings would result in napumsakas; never cut jokes in respect of Devatas, Vedas, Dwijaas, Sadhus, Gurus, Pativratas, Yagnaas, Tapaswis and Parivratas; never make friends with mentally retarded, arrogant, stupid, corrupt, characterless, immoral, extra-polite, extravagant, reckless, antagonistic, Asamartha / incapable, impolite, ungrateful, argumentative, cantankerous and irritable; but give respects to Sahrudayas or Good-natured, Yagna dikshitas, Rajas, Snatakas or those who have completed studies in Gurukula, and father-in-law and provide them all considerations.

# Samvatsara Abdika Vidhi:

One should sincerely perform house-hold duties especially in the context of Samvatsara Abdikaas. After ushering in the Brahmanas with reverences, perform Archana at the Vaiswadeva Sthaana or the Place for Pitras; then at Deva sthaanaas or Four Places for worship to Agni, Prajapati, Griha Devataas and Kashyapa, followed by the fifth Ahuti or oblation of Ghee to the above Devas respectively. These oblations would be followed by Bali Puja; in this Puja there would be three vessels – one pertaining to Parjanya or Varuna first; second to Abdevata or Jala /Water and third to Bhu Devi; in these three Places, Bali or offerings of cooked rice as small portions should be offered in three manika paatras or earthen patras; then the offerings of the Bali portions should be addressed to Vaayu in ten directions of East, West, South and North and the repesctive Sub –Directions. Thereafter, Bali is addressed to Brahma, Antariksha, and Surya. In the Northern Direction balis are addressed to Vishwa Devas and Vishjwa Bhutaas; and to further north bali is offered to Usha and Bhupati. Thus far the Deva Puja; this would be followed by Pitru Puja in Apasavya position of Yagnopaveta: Swadhaa cha sama ityuktwa Pitrubhyaschaiva dakshiney, Krtuwaapasavyam Vaayavyaam yakshmaitattheti sampadan/ Annavasesha misram vai thoyam dadyaadyathavidhi, Devaanaancha tatah kuryaad Braahmanaanaam Namaskriyaa/ (While changing the direction of Yagnopaveeta to Praacheena direction from the normal position of left to right, the Karta has to recite the Mantra viz. SWADHAAYAINAMAH facing the Pitaraas in the Dakshina disha; then the Mantra viz. YAKSHMAI TATTEY should be recited and leave water in the Vayavya direction. After changing the position of the Yagnopaveeta in the normal position of Savyam, the Karta has then to perform Namaskara with folded hands to Devas and the Brahmanas representing Devas.

Now the descripton of Tirthas: On the right hand thumb's upper portion of any person there is a line stated to be the 'Brahma Tirtha' situated and from there only the Achamaneeya or sipping of water is to be done; the place where the tarjani or the pointing finger touches the middle portion of the right thumb is known as the 'Pitru Tirtha' where the tarpanas or water oblations and Pinda-pradaanas are to be executed from that place. The finger tops are known as 'Deva Tirtha' and all tarpana and other duties addressed to Devas are to be performed from that place; the little finger is the representation of 'Prajapati Tirtha' and Prajapati-oriented Tarpanaas and other tasks are to be done from this little finger.

Other do's and dont's by way of 'Sadaachaara Pravartana' were described by Veda Vyasa as follows: Agni and Jala are not to be handled simultaneously; feet should not be drawn before Devas, Gurus, Parents and Brahmanas; looking at a cow milching a calf should not be gazed at; drinking water by palmful hands should be shunned; long duration delays of urination and defecation must be avoided; Agni should not be blown with mouth. A place of living where the following provisions are non-existent are better be left for good: Yatra Vipraa na vastavyam Yatra nnaasti chatushtayam, Runa pradaataa Vaidyascha srotriyah sajanaa Nadee, Jita bhrutyo Nrupo yatra Balavaan Dharma tatparah, Tatra nityam vaseytpraagnah kutah kunrupato sukham/ (One should desert a Place where there is no lender of money, a Physician, a virtuous Brahmana, a running water body and a King who is unable to control his subordinates).

As regards the kind of Bhojan that one should consume, any fried items kept for long or even any type of food ought to be avoided. Any items so stored for more than two days, especially made of wheat and fried in oil or ghee should be refrained from consumption. Each time an item used for cooking or eating made of stone, gold, silver, cloth, utensil etc. must be washed. Utensils in which fried items are prepared wouldget cleaned by hot water. If and when rotten food is consumed, fasting on three following nights should purify the person conerned. Coming into contact by touch with a woman in menses, of a new born baby, a chandala or a dead body must necessarily take head bath. A Brahmana touching a wet bone must also get purified by a bath, but coming into touch a dry bone should perform Achamana or sipping spoonful of clean water and look up Surya Deva or a cow-face. Never cross human cough remains, urine and excreta, and such impurities and if one did itby mistake, the feet as also the padarakshas must be washed. Never see or converse with women in menses, fallen women, women in conception, napumsakas, nude persons, chandala, and those who carry dead persons and if done so by mistake, one must look at

Sun and sky. Personal concact with inedible food, mendicant, cat, donkey, chicken, an abandoned person, chandala, pig, or any such questionable matter or person would be absolved only with bathing. Performance of Nityakarma should not be disturbed at any cost and any infringements would call for Prayaschitthaas or atonements by 'Maranashoucha' or 'Jananashoucha'!

### Ashuchi-Shuchi Vidhhana:

Ashoucha is observed by Brahmanas for ten days, Kshatriyas for twelve days, Vaishyas for fifteen days and Shudras for one month. Then Ashoucha is terminated as per 'Shastrokta Karmas'as prescribed. Even before the Ashuchi Suddhi, there would be a 'Mritaka daaha samkaara' (assuaging the thirst of the departed soul or 'pretatma') to be observed by Sagotris or those whon have the same Gotra, by visiting / bathing twelve water bodies on the first, fourth, seventh, and ninth days after the demise. On the fourth day of the demise, the burnt bone remains of the ashes of the body are to be collected from the burial ground and this procedure is called 'Asthi Sanchayana' and there after the remains are immersed in a Sacred River for 'Asthi Nimajjana'. 'Samaanodaka Purushas' are freed from Ashuchi after the prescribed tenth day.

On the arrival of a child, the father has to take vastrasahita snaana. After the Janana Ashuchi, Brahmana-Kshatriya-Vaishya and Shudras are freed from the Ashuchi on the tenth, twelfth, fifteenth and thirtieth days and after observing the 'Shastrokta Dharma', Shanti Homa- Puja- Namakarana-Bhojana-Daana and other formalities are observed. Such indeed is the Sadaachaara-Pravartana: *Dharmaartha Kaamam sampraapya paratreyaha cha shobhaanam, Idam rahasya maayushyam dhanyambuddhi vivardhanam/ Sarva Paapaharam Punyam Shripustyaarogyam Shivam, Yashah keertipradamnruunaam Tejobala vivarthanam/ Anushtheyam sadaa pumbhihi Swargasaadhanamuttamam, Brahmanyaih Kshatriyairvaishyaih Shudraaischa Munisattamaah!n (Sadaachaara Pravartana on the above lines by Brahmana-Kshatriya-Vaishya and Sudras would indeed bestow the benefits of Dharma-Artha- Kaama-Moksaha as this indeed is the secret message of Ideal- Living which demolishes all types of Sins, besides providing recognition, longevity, prosperity, good health, all-round fulfillment!* 

Mentioning the major Principles of Righteous Living, Veda Vyasa descibed Varnaashram Dharmas as follows: About Brahmanas: Dayaadaana tapo Deva Yagna Swaadhaaya tatparaihi, Nityodaki bhaveydwipraha kuryaacchaagni parigraham/ Brahmanas are required to practise Daana, Daya, Tapas, Deva-Pitru Yagnas, Swaadhyaya; they should be 'Nityodakis' or undaunted by Snaanas irrespective of seasons and 'Agnopaasakas' or engaged in the pracice of Agni Karyaas. They might perform Yagnas on behalf of others also to eke their livelihood. They should teach Vedas to sishyas / students and could accept 'Daana Pratigraha' as a part of their 'Shat Karmas' as prescribed. Sarvalokahitamkuryaanaahitam-kasyachid-Dwijaah, Maitri Samasta-tatveshu Brahmannyosttamamam dhanam/ (Brahmanaas are required to work for the general welfare and well being of the Society as a totality and indeed this should be the basdic Dharma of any Brahmana.) Kshatriyas: This class is to defend and administer the Society, promote its interests, facilitatate Yagnas and the Virtuous Tasks; punish the Evil interests and ensure peace and prosperity. Vaishyas: This class has to perform Pashu paalana, Vaanijya, Krishi / Vyavasaaya or farming; equally importantly Vaishyas have to perform certain duties of Yadhyana, Yagna, Daana, Dharma, Nitya Naimittika Karmas, Anushthaana, Brahmana Poshana and Kraya Vikraya. Shudras are expected to serve the earlier Varnaas in the execution of their respective duties and at the same time observe Sarva Bhuta Daya, politeness, diligence, truthfulness, patience, capacity to withstand the vagaries of seasons, friendliness and equamimity. Veda Vyasa also mentioned 'Aapaddharmaas' of Brahmanas rendering Kshatriya Dharmas, Kshatriyas assuming the duties of Vaishyas and so on. [Maha Bhagavata Purana provided escape clauses in the context of Varnaashrama Dharma: Yasya yallakshanam drusyata tat teniva vinirdisat/ In other words: the aspects of aptitude and practice may be endorsed; as such the Principles are of general regulative nature while in practice, the updated considerations of 'Desha-Kaala-Maana Paristhithis' would indeed prevail].

Referring to Varna Sankarana or slippages of VarnaDharma, Veda Vyasa quoted Shivaa: BrahmanyamDevi dushpraaptam Visargaadbrahmanam Shubhey, Kshatriyo Vaishya Shudroavaa Nisargaaditimaymatih Karmanaadushkryuteyneh Sthanaadrushyatisadwijah, Shreshtham Varnamanupraapyata smaadaakshipytey punah/ Sthito Brahmandharmerna Brahmanyamupajeevati, Kshatriyo vaadha Vaishyovaa Brahma bhuyam sa gacchati/Yasya Vipratwamutsrujya Kshatra dharmaannishavatey, Brahmanyatsa pari bhrashtah Kshatra yonau Prajaayatey/ (Devi! Brahmanatwa is not easy to attain and is was my arrangement to let human beings be created as per their 'Swabhavaas' or characteristics. But some Brahmanas leave their natural instincts and slip down in their actions; they tend to adopt Kshatriya Dharma and thus get born as Kshatriyas); in the same manner, Vaishyas also slip down as Shudras. Yastu Shudraha swadharmena Jnaanaa Vijnaana vaancchuchih, Dharmajno Dharma niratah sadharma phalamasnutey/ (Shudra might be as a Shudra himself adopt the Dharma of Brahmana and pursue Jnaana-Vijaana- Vidhana then he would get Brahmatwa Siddhi) and pursue Jnaana-Vijaana-Vidhana then he would get Brahmatwa Siddhi). Brahma's decision as per Brahma-Vaakya or Veda pramana is that Brahmanas ought not to consume Ugraanna, Ganaanna, Shraaddhaanna and Shudraanna and if a Brahmana while dying had that kind of Anna in his Jathara / belly would be destined to be reborn as a Shudra; conversely, a Shudra who attained Brahmanatwa in his ongoing life had the type of Brahmana Bhojana as his jatharaagni would be reborn as a Brahmana and that would be Mahadeva's dispensation: Yasyaannenaavaseshena jathareymriyatey Dwijah, Taam Taam yonim vrajedvipro yasyaannamupajeevati! (Whatever may be the Varna in which a person dies with that kind of Jatharaagni has in his /her belly, that person would be reborn with the typical characteristics of that Varna!). The reported view that Parama Shiva expressed-as conveyed by Veda Vyasa was: Na yonirnaapi samskaaro na Shrutirnacha santatih, Kaaranaani Dwijasttvasya vrutthamevatu vidheeyatey/ (It is not by birth, upbringing, knowledge of Vedas and by the Offspring that a person possesses, but Brahmanatwa is a decisive factor merely on one's own behavior, conduct and actions)!

Dharmaadharma Nirupana: Parama Shiva further delineated to Devi Parvati about those who had Trikarana Shuddhi, Indriya Nigraha, and Ahimsaacharana (Clealiness of Body-Mind-Heart; Control of Senses and Non-Violence). They are eligible to Swarga if they had no desire for other's money except for one's own well earned; if they did not react to other women except one's own lawful wife while treating truly and heartily the others as his mothers, sisters and daughters; if they serve all the Beings with fellow-feelings of warmth and consideration; if they would hurt none directly or indirectly by way of speech, thought or action; if they were always engaged in charity, humility with noble actions, Tapasya, 'Bahyaantara Shuchi' or cleanliness physically and internally; if they were truthful to themselves or their conscience as also transparent in their deeds; if their way of conversation was clear without hidden meanings, convincing, sweet, soft, and endearing without harshness, and arrogance or uppishness; if they were Jnaanavaan, dayaavaan and Kshamaavaan or with maturity, merciful, and forgiving; if they avoided sinners, known rogues and confirmed offenders; if they were full of dedication and devotion to Devas, respectful to Gurus, Vidwans and Elders; and in short their natural instincts were ideal and deserving emulation.

Asked by Devi Parvati as to how the Aayurdaaya or life-span of a Human Being was determined, Parama Shiva explained that every person would have to necessarily reap the fruits of one's own actions; some would be extremely crude, arrogant and cruel resorting to violence in the past births as also in the ongoing life and the compounded effect would result in the longevity of the current Janma. Paapena karmanaa Devi ukto himsaadhibhuryutah, Ahitam Sarva Bhutaanaam heenaayurupajaayatey/ Shubhena karmanaa Devi prouni ghaata vivarjitah, Nikshistra shastro nirdando na himsati kadaachana/ Na ghaata yati no hantighnantam naivaamunodatey, Sarva Bhteshu Sasneho yathaatmani tathaaparey/ Edrushah Purusho nityam Devi Devatwamasnutey, Upapannaan Sukhaanbhogaan sadaashnaati mudaayutah/ Athaachenmaanushey lokey kadaachidupapadyatey, Esha Deerghaayushaam maargah suvruttaanaam su karmanaam/ Praani himsaa vimokshena samudeetatah/ (Those who were in the habit of committing sins and resorting to 'Himsa', they would not only be detested generally but would be subject to

'Ayuksheena' or decreasing life-span; conversely those who led a life of merciful and cordial nature would gain nlong life but derseve Devatwa . Shunning violence is the key to longevity!)

Devi Parvati asked Maha Deva further as to what type of Karmaas / deeds and Daanaas / charities would have to be performed to upgrade a person to Swarga Loka and the latter replied as follows: A person with such desire should respect Brahmanas; feed the needy with Bhakshya-Bhojya-Anna-Paaneeyas and Vastraas; consruct or be an instrument to cause construction of Yagna Mandapas, Dharmashaalaas, water bodies, wells and 'Sabha Mandapaas' for public utility; execute Nitya-Naimittika Karmaas with fortitude and faith; and give away in charity of Aasanaas, Shayanas, Dhana-Dhanya-Vastu-Vaahana-Griha-Vastras. Those who could afford to give away particularly the needy, the helpless, the beggars, the blind, the depressed and tha have-nots turn away their faces or wantonly avoid them and those greedy, miserly, arrogant and non-believers of God would be by the turn of Kaala Chakra would definitely be paid back in their own births or in the subesequent ones but they should surely be in the opposite placements.

Maha Deva explained to Devi Parvati further about Vaachika Dharma Swarupas:

Aitmahetoh paraarthey vaa Adharmaashrita meyvacha, Ye mrushaa na vadanteeha tey Naraah Swarga gaaminah/ Vrutyartham Dharma hetorvaa kaama kaaraatthadhaivacha, Anrutam ye na bhaashantey tey Naraah Swarhagaaminah/ Shlakshnaam Vaaneem Swacchha varnaam mathuraam paapa varjitaam, Swagateynaabhi bhaashantey naraah Swarga gaaminah/ Parusham ye na bhaashantey katukam nishthuram tathaa, Na paishunyarataah Samtastey Naraah Swarga gaaminah/ ishunam na prabhaashantey Mitrabhedakaram tathaa,para peedaakaram chaivatey Naraah Swarga gaaminah/ Ye varjayanti parusham paradroham cha Maanavaah, Sarva Bhuta samaadaantaastey Naraah Swarga gaaminah/ Shathapralaapaa dwirataa viruddha pari varjakaah, Sowmya pralaapino nithyam tey Naraah Swarga gaaminah/ Na Kopaadvyaharantey ye Vaachaam hridaya daarineem, Shantim vindati ye kruddhaastey Naraah Swarga gaaminah/ Yesha Vaanee kruto Devi Dharmah Sevyah sadaa Naraih, Shubha Satya Gunaarnityam Varjaneeyaa mrushaa budhaih/ (Never ever tell Asatya or Untruth either for one's own sake, for the sake of others, for the sake of life's betterment, for the sake of Dharma or even for the sake of one's own life. Never converse with harshness and insolence, nor create misunderstandings and carry tales; the language to be used has to be sincere, soft, heartfelt, and without causing offence: such persons would indeed find their way to Swarga; this indeed the Vaachika Dharma Swarupa! Only such persons whose language is not mixed with Parushata, Nishthurata, Paishunyata, Mitrabheda karana, Paradroha karana, Shatha pralaapana, Hridaya daaruneeta and parapeedaakara!)

Yet another clarification sought by Devi Parvati from Maha Deva was in respect of Maanasika Karmaas: Maanaseyneha Dharmena Samyukaah Purushaahsadaah, Swargam gacchaanti Kalyaani! Tanmey keertayatah shrunu/ Dushpraneetena Manasaa Dushpranee- taantaraakrutih, Naro badhyeta yeneha shrunu vaa tam Shubhaananey/ Aranye vijaneynyastam paraswam drusyatey yadaa, Manasaapi na gruhnanti tey Naraah Swrgagaaminah/ Tathaiva paradaaraanye kaamavrutthaa rahogataah,Manasaapi na himsanti tey Naraah Swarga gaaminah/ Sharum Mitramcha ye nithyam tulyena manasaa naraah, Bhajanti Maitryam Samgamya tey Naraah Swarga gaaminah/ Shrutavanto dayaavantah shuchayah Satyasangaraah, Swairarthaih parisamthushtaastey Naraah Swarga gaaminah/ Avairaaey twanaa yaasaa Maitra chittarataah sadaa, Sarva bhuta dayaavantastey Naraah Swarga gaaminah/ Jnaatavanrtah kriyaavantah Kshamaavantah Suhrutpriyaah, Dharmaadharma vido nityam tey Naraah Swargagaamionah/ Shubhaanaashumaabhaan aam cha Karmanaam phalasanchaye, Niraakaamkshaascha ye Devi tey Naraah Swarga gaaminah/ Paapopetaan varjayanti Deva Dwija paraah sadaa, Samuthhaanamanu praaptaastey Naraah Swarga gaaminah/ Shubhaih Karm,a phalaairdevi mayaitaa parikeertitaah, Swarga maarga paraa bhuyah/

(Devi! Following are the Maanasika Dharmaas that are the factors of accomplishing Swarga: A person who should control his mind so as to get rid temptations of even discovering ready availability of huge sums of somebody else's money in a lonely jungle! Even in loneliness, the person should not get disturbed with the thoughts of other women; he should observe absolute equanimity with all human

beings and concentrate on Veda Shastraadhyana with intense feelings of mental strength, cleanliness and truthfulness with reflective thoughts of segregating Dharma and Adharma and Shubha and Ashubha, without aspiring for returns or fruits of such thoughts and deeds. The person concerned has to purge the heart of mind-driven sinful aberrations but should sustain the thoughts of the Supreme Truth and Energy.)

Finally, Parama Shiva affirmed: *Karma paasha nibaddhaanaam naraanaam duhkha bhaaginaam*, *Naanyopaayam prapashyaami Vaasudevaatparam dwijaah/ Ye pujayanti tam Devam Shankha chakra gadaadharam, Vaangmanaha Karmabhih samyaktey yaanti paramaam gatim/ Kim teshaam jeeviteyneha pashuvaccheshti teynacha, Yeshaam na pravanam chittham Vaasudevey Jaganmaye/ (All the human beings who were tied tight with Karma paashaas and the resultant distress have one and only one unique source viz. Vaasudeva, the Shankha Chakra Gadaa dhara; he should be worshipped with 'Manovaakkaaya karmas' or with mind, tongue and deeds to take steps forward to Moksha; of which avail is there like animals engaged always in eating and sleeping if a maanava fails to worship Bhagavan Krishna!)* 

Pitaamahaadapi parah Shaswatah Purusho Harih, Krishno jaambunadaabhaso vyabhrey Surya yi voditah/ dasabaahurmahaa tejaa Devataarinishudanah, Shri Vatsaanko Hrishikeshaha Sarva Davaivata Pujakah/ (Far superior than Brahma and everlasting is Shri Hari, Vaasudeva or Shri Krishna who shines like the dazzling and magnificent Surya as he is emerging on a cloud-less clear Sky with ten hands and a glorious Srivatsa as the Supreme Lord of Devas). Whosoever takes refuge in Vaasudeva would be the beloved of the entire Deva Samuha including Brahma and Parama Shiva; it is that Bhakta of Vaasudeva who has nothing beyond to crave!

<u>MahaTatwa Nirnaya:</u> In an endeavour to outline even a misty profile of the Supreme Power, Maharshi Veda Vyasa expressed as follows:

Yattadavyakta majara machintya maja mavyayam, Anidresya rupam chaa paani paadaatya samyutam, Vittam Sarvagatam nityam bhuta yoni makaaranam/ Vyaaptam Vyaaptam yatah sarvam pasyanti suurayah, Tadbrahma paramam dhaama taddhyayam Moksha kaamskshibhih/ Shruti Vaakyoditam Sukshmam tadvishnoh paramam padam, Utpattim Pralayam chaiva Bhutaa-naamaagatim gatim/ Vetti Vidyaamavidyaam cha sa vaachyo Bhagavaaniti, Jnaana Shakti balai –shwarya veerya tejaamsya seshatah/ Bhagavadcchabda vaachyaani vinaa heyairgunaadibhih, Sarvaani tatra bhutaani vasanti Paramaatmani/ Bhuteshucha sa Sarvaatmaa Vaasudevastatah smrutah, Bhuteshu vasatey yomtarva samtyatra cha taaniyat/ Dhaataa Vidhaataa jagataam Vaasudevastatah Prabhuh, Sa sarvabhuta prakrutirgunaamscha doshaamscha sarvaa na gunohyateetah/ Ateeta Sarvaavaranokhilaatmaa tenaavrutam yadbhuvanaantaraalam, Samasta Kalyaana Gunaatmakohi Swashakti leshaadruta bhuta sargah/Icchhaagruheetaabhi matoru dehah Samsaadhitaasesha jagaddhito sow, Tejo balaishwarya Mahaavaridhah Swaveerya shaktyaadi gunaaika raashih/ Parah Paraanaam Sakalaana yatra kleshaadayah santi Paraa Pareshey/ Sa Eashwaro Vyashti samashti rupo-avyakta swarupah Prakatah swarupah, Sarveshwarah Sarvadruksarva vettaa samasta shaktih Parameshwaraakhyah/Sanjnaayatey yena tadastadosham Shuddham Param Nirmalamekarupam, Samdrushyatey Vyaapyatha gamyatey vaa tatvajnaana magjnaanamatonyaduktam!

(That Para Brahma Tatwa is Avyakta / Inconceivable, Ajara or Ageless, Achitya or Unimaginable, Avyaya or Indestructible, Anirdeshya or Undefinable, Arupa or Formless, Apaani paada or devoid of hands and feet, Sarvagata Satya or Eternal Truth, Bhutayoni vyaapyavyaapya or omnipresent among all Beings which is presumably comprehensible only by a handful Tatwa Vettas; It is that Superlative Tatwa who is Vishnu; It is that Unknown Prime Energy which Creates, Sustains and Teminates as also possessive of the awareness of the Process of Evolution and the unique capability to distinguish Vidya or Avidya / knowledge or ignorance. It is that Paramatma who has no features, characteristics, impurities or blemishes but is replete with the Magnificent Shat-Shaktis viz. Jnaana-Bala-Ishwarya-Veerya-Tejo-Yasho Shaktis. It is that Sarvaatma and Parama Tatwa- who is acclaimed by Brahma himself in reply to Maharshis as Vaasudeva; He is the Architect and Builder of Sarva Jagat; He is the root cause of the Mula Tatwa or the Prakriti, far beyond the concept of Existence, yet an integral component of Existence. A

miniscule atom of his unimaginable Shakti is responsible for the Vyavastha-Sthiti-Laya of the unending series of 'Bhuvanaantaraalaas' or the Universes. He is the 'Tejo Balaiswarya Mahaavarodha Swaveerya Shaktaadi Gunaika Raashi'; He has the Identity of the Vyashti / Uniqueness and Samashti / Totality; He is the Avyata Swarupa as also the Prakata Swarupa / the Unintelligible and yet Perceptible Form; Sarveswara-Sarvadradhta-Sarva Shaktiyuta and Parameswara; He is also Parah-Paraanaam-Paraapareshaa or Farther-Beyond-and Farther Beyond! It is that distinct, pure, transparent, spotless, unpolluted, Wholesome, Outstanding and Singular Entity which is conceived as Maha Tatwa. It is only that which is recognised as 'Jnaana' or the Knowledge and Perception leading any one to that Maha Tatwa or providing clues about that Utmost Ultimate and the rest indeed is 'Agjnaana'!)

### Phalashruti of Brahma Purana

Maharshi Lomaharshana concluded the Sacred Brahma Purana: *Idam Gruhasthaih shrotavyam Yatihirbrahmachaaribhih, Dhana soukhya pradam nrunaam pavitram paapa naashanam/ Tathaa Brahma parairviprairbrahmanaadaih susamyataih, Shrotavyam suprayatnena samyak-shreyobhikaankshibhi/ Praapnoti Braahmano Vidyaam Kshatriyo Vijayam raney, Vaishyastu dhanamahshayyam Shudrah sukhamavaapnuyaat/ Yam yam kaamabhidhyaayan shrunoti purushah shuchih, Tam tam Kaamamavaapnoti Naro naastyatra samshayah/* 

(This Brahma Purana is worthy of hearing by Brahmachaaris, Grihastaas, and Yatis as it is Sacred and bestower of Prosperity, Happiness and demolisher of all kinds of indiscretions and sins. Brahmanas who seek Brahma Tatwa must hear this Purana particularly as provides them the wherewith all and Vidya; Kshatriyas listening the Purana would be equipped by intrepidity to achieve victory; Vaishyas would reap profits and wealth and Shudras would secure living comfort and pleasure. Whatever desires are sought by the readers or listeners of the Purana, those very wishes would be readily fulfilled). The Pathana-Shravana-Manana (reading, hearing and reflecting) about the Brahma Purana would serve as a gate-way to accomplishing the 'Chatur Vidha Purushaarthaas' aspired by all human beings viz. Dharma-Artha-Kaama and Mokshas. The Purana would indeed inspire to create and add to the fund of virtues and lessen the heaps of sins already collected by way of Prarabdha and Sanchita or the Cumulative and Accounts. This Purana should fetch the Punya / Fruits of performing fasts, snaanaas and pujas at several Kshetras like Prayaga and Pushkara; executing Agnihotra Homas dutifully for a year; securing Darshana-Pujas of Bhagavan Shri Krishna at the Temple of Mathura after taking bath in the Sacred River of Yamuna on Jyeshtha Shukla Ekaadashi; obtaining the result of Hari Kirtaana with dedication and attachment for years together; and getting access to the road leading to Vaikuntha. On days like Eakadashi and Dwadashi if the recital of the contents of Brahma Purana were arranged by a learned Brahmana, the persons organising, participating or arranging the Shravana would be blessed by Bhagavan Shri Krishna:

This Purana would confer reputation, longevity, happiness, fame, strength, energy, and well-being; it averts bad dreams and makes one's life and existence worthwhile and contented. Those who recite or read or study the contents of Brahma Purana with patience and diligence would certainly have their dreams get translated to realities; a person who is suffering from diseases would soon get healthy; get freed from imprisonments if custodial; if facing serious threats of physical or mental nature the person gets doubly reassured of relief and liberation; in case a person is associated with the Brahma Purana any way, especially with fond memories of the past including those of purva janma or with cherished aspirations related to the self, wife, progeny, and relations in the context of achievements and reputations would be fulfilled sooner than later!)

#### ESSENCE OF BRAHMANDA PURANA

-Introduvtion- Purusha-Prakriti, Maha Tatwa-Kshetrajna, Brahmanda-Tri Murtis - Maha Pralaya, Vishnu as Yagna Varaha and Process of Brahma's Creation -Birth of Rudra and Brahma names Ashta Vibhutis of Shiva - Agni Vamsha, Profile of Pitras, Daksha Yagna and Sati's self immolation - Sapta Dwipas, spotlight on Bharata, Sapta Urthva and Adho Lokas - Traditional Astronomy, Solar System and Kaala Gamana Time Calcutation Mystery of Jyotish Mandala, Sishumara, Dhruya, Clouds and Grahas Rudimentary Concepts for the Study of Jyotisha - 'Haalaahala' and Nilakantha, Shiva as Fire Column and Shiva Linga - Outlines on yagnas, Rishis and Vedas - Highlights of Kashyapa Vamsha: Conflict of Virtue and Evil - Skanda's birth, Pitru Vamsha and Shraaddhas ( Nakshatra Shraaddha Phala-Parashurama: a) Bhargava Rama Tapasya b) Kartaveeryarjuna and his invincibility c) Trailokya Vijaya Mantra Kavacha d) The Unique Krishnaamrita Ashtottara Stotra e) Battle of Bhargava Rama and Karta Veerya f) Encounter of Bhargava and Ganesha, Face off by Parvati - Lalitopaakhaana: a) Why Maha Purusha could not overcome Paraa Shakti (Prakriti)? b) Indra's dethronement, Lakshmi's Exit from Swarga & Atonements c) Ksheera Saagara Mathana and Mohini Avatara d) Origin of Bhandaasura e) Lalitodbhavana, Stuti by Devas and Wedding with Shiva f) Lalita Devi's Vijaya Yatra g) Bhandasura Vadha, Victory Commendation and revival of Manmatha h) Construction of Shri Pura 64 Kanchi Kamakshi Charitra - Lalalita Sahasra Naama Stotra (with Meanings) - Phala Shruti of Lalitaasahasra naama - Shri Lalita Trishati Naama Stotra

#### ESSENCE OF BRAHMANDA PURANA

Namonamah Kshaye Srishtey sthitow Satwamayaayacha, Namo Rajastamah Satwatrirupaaya Swayabhuvey, Jitam Bhagavataa tena Harinaa Lokadhaarina/ Ajena Vishwa Rupena Nirgunena Gunatmana/ Brahmaanam Loka kartaaram Sarvajnamapa- raajitam, Prabhum Bhuta Bhavishyasya Saampratasya cha Sampratim/ (Our Salutations to You Swayambhu the Self Materialised who assumes Satva Guna at the time of Devastation, Creation and Preservation of the Universe; yet, You too assume the Tri-Gunas of Rajas-Tamas-Satva Gunas. Our homage to Bhagavan Srihari the Unborn, All-Pervasive, Trigunatmika yet Nirguna devoid of any features. Indeed, You are the Creator of the Lokas, the Omni-Scient and the Almighty who is totally seized of the Past, Present and the Future).

## Purusha and Prakriti, Maha Tatwa and Kshetrajna, Brahmanda and Tri Murtis

Sincerely greeting Veda Vyasa the Vishnu Swarupa and the Illustrious Scripter of Maha Puranas, Suta Muni addressed a congregation of Rishis at Nimaisharanya (Naimisha Forest) where the rim of Dharma Chakra or the wheel of Virtue fell down crashed indicating the heralding of the Kali Yuga; an alternative explanation was that Bhagavan Vishnu destroyed the Evil Forces in a Nimisha or a Minute of Time. The Muni paid his obeisances to Paramatma and stated: Dhanyam Yashasyamaayushyam Swargeym Shatrughna mevacha, Keertanam Sthirakeertinaam Sarveshaam Punyakarmanaam/ Yasmaat Kalpaayatey Kalpah Samagram Shuchaye Shuchih, Tasmai Hiranya garbhaaya Purushaayeshwaraayacha/ Ajaaya Prathamaayaiva Varishthaaya Prajaasrujey, Brahmaney Loka tantraaya Namaskrutya Swayambhuvey/ Mahadaadyam Viseshaantam Savairupyam salakshanam, Pancha Pramaanam Shatshraantam Purushaadhishtitam cha yat/ Asamyayat pravakshyaami Bhutasargamanuttama, Avyaktam Kaaranam yattannityam Sadasaatmakam/ Pradhaanam Prakritim chaiya Yamaahusttatwachintikaah, Gandha rupa rasai heenam shabdasparsha vivarjitam/ Jagadyonim Maha Bhutam Param Brahmasanaatanam, Vigraham Sarvabhutaa -naamavyaktamabhavaktila/ Anaadyantamajam Sukshmam Trigunam Prabhavaapyayam, Asampratikamajneyam Brahma yatsadamatparam/ Tasyaatmanaa Sarvamidam Vyaapta -maseettamoyam, Gunasaamey Tadaa tasmannibhayaanta tamomayam/ Sarvakaaley Pradhaanasya Kshetrajnaadhishtitasya vai/ Gunabhaavadbhaasamaaney Maha Tatwam babhuva ha/ (We are indeed fortunate that we are going to

hear the narration of this Brahmanda Purana. Whoso ever follows this narration would ensure that the Vamsha of the person concerned would achieve fame, longevity, destruction of enemies and Swarga. It was that Paramatma Brahma, the Pradhaana Purusheshwara, the Swayambhu or Self Born, the Undefinable and the Everlasting- materialised Prakriti of 'Sat-Asat' or of Real-Falsity nature with Pancha-Pramaanaas like Pratyaksha, Anumaana, Agama, Kevalaadi Proofs and Shat-Shraanta or Six Types of Vehicles; this Prakriti is devoid of Gandha-Rasa-Sparsha or Smell-Taste-Touch; Indeed that Prakriti is the Cause of Creation; the Sanatana or the Most Ancient, the Everlasting Form of the Universe; the Unknown, All-Pervading, Sarva Bhutaanaam, Sukshmam or the Minutest, Trigunam of Satwa-Rajas-Taamasa. As there was no illumination before Srishti, Prakriti was of Tamo Guna but as the thought of Srishti Illumination emerged and that indeed was the Kshetrajna, named Maha Tatwa; It was that MahaTatwa that inspired Satwa Guna and Maha Srishti!).

The transformation of Maha Purusha and his 'alter-ego' Prakriti ie the Kshetrajna and Maha Tatwa led to the **Brahmanda** or the Golden Egg in which sat the Four Faced **Hiranya Garbha-**Brahma, the Creator. Within the Golden Egg, are situated Seven Lokas, Prithivi, Seven Samudras and Seven Dwipas, Massive Mountains and Thousands of Rivers. Within the Golden Egg are the Sun, Moon, Stars, Planets, Wind and Lokaloka. While there is an enclosure of water as huge as ten times more around the Golden Egg, there is ten times more of Tejas or Radiance surrounding the water. Ten times larger than the enclosure of Illumination is of Vayu (Wind). Around the the enclosure of Wind is that of Ether (Akaasha or the Sky) which is ten times more of Wind. Even enveloping the enclosure of 'Nabhas' or Ether is that of 'Bhutadi' (Ahamkara or Ego) and that too ten times larger. Yet another enclosure to Bhutadi is ten times more of Nabhas, but that of 'Mahat' is equally bigger to Bhutadi. Filnally, Mahat is surrounded by 'Pradhana' or the Supreme. Thus there are seven enclosures around the Cosmic Egg viz. water, radiance, wind, ether, Bhutadi, Mahat and the Pradhana the Unknown; all these 'Avaranaas' cling to each other.

# Maha Pralaya, Vishnu as Yajna Varaha and Process of Creation by Brahma

To start with, Pradhana Purusha manifested the two characteristics of Satwa Guna, one to sustain the Universe and another to dissolve it; then followed the Rajo Guna coming to play an equal role: Shasvataah Paramaa Guhyaah Sarvatmaan Shariranah, Satwam Vishnu Rajo Brahma Tamo Rudrah Prajapatih/---Yeta yeva Trayoloka Yeta yeva Trayo Gunaah, Yeta yeva Trayo Veda Yeta yeva Trayognaha/ Parasparaanvayaa hyotey Parasparanuvrataah, Parasparena vartintey prerayanti parasparam/ (The Trinities are Everlasing and mysterious; their Physiques and Souls are manifested; Satwa Guna is represented by Vishnu, Rajo Guna by Brahma and Tamo Guna by Rudra. - They alone are the Three Lokas, Three Gunas, Three Vedas and Three Agnis viz. Ahavaniya, Garhapatya and Dakshina. These Entities have mutual inter-association, mutual attachment, mutual help, mutual union and mutual inter-dependence). Thus the Self-born Pradhana Purusha has Three Swarupas as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. Some times as Brahma he creates the Lokas, some times as Vishnu he sustains and some other times as Rudra he demolishes. Brahma kamala patraahshah Kaalo jaatyanjanaprabhah, Purushah Pundareekaaksho Rupena Paramaatmanah/ Ekadhaa sa Dwidhaa chaiva Tridhaacha Bahudhaa Punah, Yogeshwara shariraani karoti vikarochita/ Naanaakruti kriyaarupaamaashrayanti Swaleelaya, Tridhaa yadurtatey Lokey tasmaatriguna muchyatey/ (Paramatma displays some times as Brahma with lotus petal like eyes, Kaala Deva Rudra has the sparkle of his eyes always and Vishnu has lotus eyes. Like wise Paramatma has a single Rupa, some times as two, or three or innumerable; the Supreme Lord makes physical variations of sizes, shapes, activities, complexions and features; it is a pastime for Bhavan and came to be called a Trigunatmika.

At the Kalpantara Pralaya or the Great Extermination of the Universe, the whole World got submerged in deep water as 'Ekarnava' or a single sheet of Water and the 'Sthaavara Jangamaas' or the Mobile and Immobile Beings were all submerged, then Para Brahma called **Narayana**, who was of 'Sahasraaksha, Sahasrapaat, Sahasra Shirsha' or of thousand eyes, feet and heads, was resting on the huge surface of water: *Apo Naara iti proktaa Apo vai Nara Sunavah, Ayanam tasya taah proktaastena Narayanah smritah/* ('Apah' denotes 'Nara' or water; 'Naaraas' or the children or waves of 'Nara'; and Nara is a

Being or Entity; Nara plus Ayana is Narayana as he who rests on Samsara or water). Narayana sought to locate Prithvi (Earth) deep down in water and assumed Varaahaavatara or the Incarnation of a Huge Boar like a mountain with ten yojanas of girth and hundred yojanas of height (one Yojana being 12 km), with a body of cloud-like complexion and extreme radiance of many Lightnings, Fire and Sun; making thunderous and high-pitched sounds and having broad shoulders, sharp fangs, white teeth and pointed nails. The **YajnaVaraha** is described as follows: *Diksha Samaapteeshtim damshtrtah kratu danto* Juhuumukhah, Agni jihvo darbha romaa Brahma seersho Mahatapaah/ Veda skandho havirgandhirhavyakavyaadi vegavaan, Praagvamsha kaayo Dyutimaan naanaa Dikshaabhiranvitah/ Dakshinaa hridayo Yogi Shraddhaa satwa -mayo Vibhuh, Upaakarma ruchischaiva pravagyaavarta bhushanah/ Naanaachhandogati patho guhyopanishadaasanah, Maayaapatnisahaayo vai Giri shringamiyocchrayah/ Aho raatrekshana dharo Vedanga shriti bhushanah, Aajya gandhah struvastundah Samaghosa swano Mahaan/ Satyadharma mayah Shrimaan Karma vikrama saskrutah, Prayaschitta nakho ghorah Pashujaanurmahaamakhah/ Udgaadaantro Homa Lingah Phala beeja mahoushadheeh, Vaadyantaraatmasatrasya naasmikaasomashonitah/ (The Yagna Varaha took up the diksha or Initiation of the Kratu or the Sacifice with his 'damshtras' or curved fangs and teeth holding the 'Juhu' or the crescent shaped wooden ladle with which to make the offerings of ghee; Agni was his tongue to lap up the Sacrifice; Darbha grasses were the Varaha's hairs; Brahma one of the Chief of 'Ritviks' or the Brahmanas performing the Sacrifice was comparable to Varaha Murti's Head; Vedaas were his shoulders; his body-aroma was his 'havis' or the Sacrificial Offering; the Havya and Kavya or the offerings to Devas and Pitru Devas respectively consituted his body-speed with which the Sacrificial Offerings were made; the 'Praagvamsha' or the East-bound Chamber in which the guests at the Sacrifice were seated was Varaha's kaaya or the spacious physique; He was highly radiant and capable of accepting several Dikshas like the one being performed; He was the Master of Yoga full of Shraddha and Satwa or Sincerity and Resolve; he had Upakarma or extra study of Vedas and an expert in 'Pragvargya' or the Introductory Ceremony to the long-duration Soma Sacrifice; his 'Avarta Bhushana' or the ornamental and circular curls of the boar chest; the representation of various 'Chaandas' or Poetic Meters as his pathway; Upanishads as his seat; his able asistance is Maya as his spouse; his height was that of a mountain peak; his eyes representing Sun and moon and day and night; Vedangas and Shritis were his ear-ornaments; his body smell was that of 'Ajya' or the Ghee offering; Sruva or the sacrificial ladle is like his snout or muzzle; his voice was like the high pitch of the chanting of Saama Veda hymns; 'Udgata' or the elongated Sama Veda hymn was like his entrail or intestines; homa was his Linga or Symbol; fruits and seeds are his testicles; the altar of sacrifice was his heart; He was an Epitome of Satya Dharma and Soma Rasa was his own blood.) Thus Yajna Varaha Deva, as Nasika Soma sonita, dived deep into waters and lifted up Earth, allocated waters into Oceans and Rivers on Earth, materialised Mountains to stabilise the waters thus allocated, broadly created Sapta Dwipas on Earth, materialised Bhurbhuva -ssuraadi Lokas and their inhabitants on the same pattern as in the previous Kalpas before the Great Pralaya.

Brahma then meditated for long before taking up Srishti and Avidya or Ignorance came to emerge in Five Forms viz. *Tamo Moho Maha Mohastaamisrodhyandha Sanjnitah*/ (The five Knots of Avidya were Tamas, Moha, Maha Moha, Tamisra and Andha Misra viz. Darkness, Delusion, Great Delusion, Pitch Darkness and Blind Darkness)

Brahma Deva desired to intitiate Creation and meditated; as there was darkness all around, he made the First'Abhavika Srishti' of aimless and causual nature and the result was of purposeless vegetation around mountains and trees; the thought of the Second 'Tiryaksrota' or a Zig-zag channel / flow (srota is a flow and tiryak is wavery) flashed in his mind and the persons produced were ignorant and egoistic. Brahma then meditated further and the result was of 'Satvika' or 'Urthwa Srota Srishti', the Third in the Series of Creation; the Superior and Divine Beings thus created were highly virtuous, ever-happy, truthful and full of Satva Guna and they were Devas, whose Chief Mentor was Brahma himself. This Srishti was no doubt very satisfactory and Brahma was contented but he felt that there should also be the Fourth Creation of an 'Arvaak (Abhimuka) Srotas' titled 'Sadhaka Sarga' with a mix of Satvika and Rajasika nature with Tamasika features as well; the end products were Siddhas, Gandharva-like Beings and Manushyas. The

Fifth Creation is titled Anugraha (Blessings) Sarga comprising four divisions viz. Viparyaya (Loss of Awareness), Shakti (Strength), Siddha (Accomplishment) and Mukhya (Principal); in other words Persons in these categories have little consciouness to begin with , gain strength, reach the Goal and then join the blessed category but they all are in the cycle of births and deaths. The Sixth Category related to the Bhutaadi Srishti of Creatures and Elements.

Put it differently: Para Brahma's first Creation was that of 'Mahat' or The Primary Principle; the Second was that of Tanmatras called Bhuta Sarga; the Third was Vaikarika Creation or Aindria Srishti relevant to Sense Organs as Prakruta creations evolved by full consciousness and fore-knowledge; the Fourth Category was Mukhya Sarga related to the Creation of Immobiles; the Fifth was of Tiryak Srota of animals and lower species; the Sixth was Urthva Srota of Divine nature viz. Devatas; the Seventh was of Arvak Srota or Sadhakas including Manushyas; and the Eighth was of Anugraha Sarga as per the four classifications afore-mentioned. The Ninth category was of Kaumara Sarga of the Manasa Putras of Brahma viz. Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanaatana and Sanat Kumaras of extreme brilliance but were 'Viraktaas' or dis-interested in and dis-associated from the Deed of Creation as they excelled in the quest of Paramatma.

The subsequent Srishti related to 'Sthaanaatmas' or Deities of their own Positions like Water, Fire, Earth, Air, Sky, Antariksha / Ether, Swarga, Diks (Directions), Oceans, Rivers, Vegetables, Medicinal and other herbs and medicines, Kaala Pramana of Measures of Time, Days and Nights, Weeks, Fortnights, Months, Years, Yugas, Maha Yugas and Kalpas. Brahma then created Devatas, Pitru Devas, Nine Manasa Putras named Bhrigu, Angira, Marichi, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Daksha, Atri and Vasishtha who were acclaimed as Nava Brahmas. He created Rudra from his anger; created the concepts of Sankalpa (Conception), Dharma (Virtue) and Vyavasaya (Endeavour and Enterprise). Out of the Pancha Praanaas or Five branches of Life's breath viz. Praana-Udana- Vyaana-Samana-and Apaana, Daksha was created from the speech, Marichi from the eyes, Angirasa from the head, Bhrigu from the heart and Atri from the ears, all from Brahma's Praana Vayu; besides Pulastya from Udana Vayu, Pulaha from his Vyana Vayu, Vasishtha from his Samaana Vayu and Kratu from Apaana Vayu. Brahma continued Srishti of Devas from his mouth, Pitras from his chest, human beings from his organ of generation, Asuraas from his buttocks; Brahmanas from his face, Kshatriyas from his chest, Vaishyas from his thighs and others from his feet. He also created lightning, thunder, clouds, rainbows, Mantras of Rig-Yajur-Saama Vedas, Yaksha-Piscacha-Gandharva-Apsara-Kinnara-Raakshaas; birds, animals, reptiles and seeds.

While on the topic of Srishti, Suta Maha Muni made a diversion on **Kalpaas and Manvantaras.** [If Brahma's age is hundred years, a day and night of his is a Kalpa (stated to be 8.67 billion years) comprising 28 Manvantaras; each Manvantara has 71 Maha Yugas and each Maha Yuga has 4.3 million years. (Satya Yuga is stated to be of 40 percent of Maha Yuga, Treta Yuga 30 percent, Dwapara Yuga 20 percent and Kali Yuga is 10 percent) But between each Manvantara, there is stated to be a gap of four yugas called Yuga Sandhi, while the intermediate time between Kalpas is Prati Sandhi. Each Kalpa has two parts: Purvaartha and Parartha. We are now in Varaha Kalpa (there are stated to be of thirty such Kalpaas) and Vaivaswara Manvantara while Brahma's age is calculated as 51 years and the first night!]

As Brahma spent his thousand Yugas long first night, he found water all around and resurrected Earth again -and on the broad lines of what Varaha Swarupa indicated- materialised formally the Chatur Lokaas, Sapta Dwipas and Sapta Samudras. He revived the Srishti of Antariksha, Sun, Moon and other Planets, Pitras, Time, Yugas, Purusharthas of Dharma-Artha-Kaama-and Mokshas. From his first face of the 'Chaturmukha', he created Gayatri, Ruks, Yagni related Agni shtoma etc; Veda Vangmaya, Veda Chhandas, and various Agni-Karyas; from his Southern Face were generated Yajur Veda, Traishthub Chhandas; Panchadasa Stomas and Brihat Stoma; from his western face emerged Saama Suktaas, Jagati Chhandas, Papta dasa Stoma; Atiraatra of Jyotishthoma etc; from Brahma's fourth Face emerged Atharva Veda, Anushtub and Vairaaja Chhanda etc. Through out the Yuga Periods, there were countless species of Creation were materialised of 'Charaachara' or mobile and Immobile nature, defying description.

Brahma continued his Manasika Srishti or Mind-Born Creation and as a result were generated Pancha Karthas viz. Rudra, Dharma, Manasa, Ruchi and Akriti, all illustrious in their own right in the context of 'Prajaa Rakshnana' or Safety of the Public. As and when 'Aoushadhis' became short of supply and availability, Rudra Deva came to recscue and recreated the material and the grateful Bhaktas make offerings to him by the herbs and medicines in gratitude; when shortages of these were felt, Rishis and Brahmanas perform Vanaspati Homas from material placed in Three Kapaalaas or Plates along with three kinds of Mantras of Chhandaas viz. Gayatri-Trishtup and Jagati and that was why Rudra was called Traimabika or he who was worshipped from three 'Ambakaas' or Kapaalaas or Plates. Dharma the next Creation of Brahma had been a Promoter of Virtue which revived Man Kind and other Significant Species; Manas (Knowledge), Ruchi (Shraddha /Faith) and Akriti (Beauty) were the other Entities assisting Dharma as they respectively denoted Mind, Interest and Physique. By applying Tamasika Guna, Brahma desired to put to use the traits of Dharma and halved his body into two and created Shata Rupa or of Hundred Forms and the latter was indeed virtually the mother of humanity. After severe Tapas for thousands of years Shatarupa was blessed with a famed husband viz. Swayambhu the First Manu who too was of Brahma's own 'Amsha'or variation; their progeny were two sons viz. Priyavrata and Uttanapada (father of the the reputed Dhruva) and two daughters viz. Akuti and Prasuti. Akuti was married to Ruchi Prajapati whose sons were Yajna and Dakshina. Prasuti was married to Daksha Prajapati whose thirteen daughters viz. Shraddha, Lakshmi, Dhriti, Tusthi, Pushti, Medha, Kriya, Buddhi, Lajja, Vasu, Shanti, Siddhi and Kirti were wedded to Dharma; the rest of them and their husbands were as follows: Sati-Rudra, Khyati-Bhrigu, Sambhuti-Marichi, Smriti-Angirasa, Priti-Pulaha, Kshema-Kratu, Sannati-Pulastya, Anasuya-Atri, Urja-Vasishta, Agni-Swaha and Swadha-Pitaras.

### Birth of Rudra Deva and Brahma names Ashta Vibhutis of Shiva

Brahma meditated for a son as renowned and powerful as himself and found a boy name Nilalohita on his lap: Ruroda suswaram ghoram nirdahanniva tejasaa, Drushtwaa rudatam sahasaa Kumaram Nilalohitam/ Kim rodishi Kumareti Brahmaa tam pratyabhashata, Sobraveedyehi mey naama prathamam twam Pitamaha/ Rudrastwam Deva naamaasi sa ityuktto rudahpunah, Kim rodishi Kumaareti Brahmaa tam pratyabhashata/ Naama dedi dwiteeyam mey naama iktyuvaacha Swayambhuvam. Bhavastwam Deva naamnaasi ityukttah sorudatpunah/---- (As the child cried so terribly as though he would burn himself with his radiance, Brahma asked him as to why was he crying so much the child asked Brahma to give him a name first and Brahma replied that the child would be named Rudra. The child continued to cry and when asked by Brahma as to why the child continued to cry, the latter asked Brahma to give a second name as **Bhava**.) As this process of crying continued, Brahma gave the child further names as Sharva, Ishaana, Pashupati, Bhima, Ugra and Maha Deva. The Child then stopped crying but desired that the Eight Names given to him as Nilalohita be serialised with their inner meanings and Brahma explained as follows: Tato Visrushtaastanava yeshaam Naamnaa Swayambhuva, Suryo Jalam Mahi Vaayurvahnir –aakaashameyvacha/ Dikshitaa Braahmanaschandra ityevam teyshtadhaa tanuh, Teshu Puiyaswa Vandascha Namaskaarascha yatnatah/ (Then Swayambhu Brahma decided the seriatim of the Names depending on the significance of Surya, Jala, Bhumi, Vaayu, Vahni, Akaasha, Dikshita Brahmana and Chandra; these are the Ashta Tanus or Eight Forms worthy of salutation and worship without fail).

Among these Eight Swarupas, Rudra would be likened as Surya whose radiance is unparalleled and should never be seen at the time of Sunrise or Sunset; Brahmanas should take their bath and on securing external and internal purification must perform Sandhya Vandana at both Sun Rise and Sun Set as also recite Gayatri, and Ruk-Yajur-Saama Veda Suktaas and Surya worship which tantamounts to Rudra Puja. Recital of Ruk-Suktas should be done at the Sun Rise and that of Yajussukta at mid-day besides Gayatri Japa during thrice a day. None should pass urine before the un God. Rudra's physical Feature of per his Prathama Tanu is stated to be Roudri, his wife's name is Suvarchala and his progeny is Shani.

The Second Form of Shiva is Bhava and his position among the series of Ashta Tanus is in 'Apas' or water; Jala is the Life Provider and Preserver. As Sarva Bhutaas are sustained by Shiva, in his Bhava Swarupa. None should attempt to turn water impure by mala-mutra varjana, vivastra-snaana, nishthinana

or spitting. As Water has the nature of flow, its speed should not be restricted as the natural feature is to reach Samudra which is its beloved. However, as Munis identified Medhya Jala (Pure water) or Amedhya Jala (Contaminated water), the latter variety must be discarded. The Third Form of Ishwara is Sharva and his prescribed position is Bhumi whose strong strengh and stamina entered Shiva's bones and Bhumi is thus called Sharva too; any tilled land or under the shade of trees, none should desecrate in any manner lest he or she would certainly attract the wrath of Sharva. Devi Vikeshi is Sharva's wife and Angaraka his son. Ishana is the fourth name of Nilalohita and is served by Vaayu or Wind. Vaata is the regulation of Shiva; it provided Pancha Pranaas to Ishana. None should wind as being mild or furious and also none should pollute it with poisons nor go against its natural speed. Those who respect air respect Ishana himself; Wind needs ro be respected with Yajnas and Sacred deeds or else Ishana could play havoc with the severity of hurricanes and blizzards. Ishaana's wife is called Shiva and his sons are Manojava and Avignaatagati or Speed of Mind and of Mysterious Movement. Pashupati is the fifth Swarupa of Shiva; his designated form and features are of Agni. No person should play with fire, dump impurities into it and cross it or seek to warm up feet or hands in cold climate as it would strike back the person concerned; the fiery element is full of Pashupati's instincts and thus requires veneration. Indeed Agni burns of every one after death and at the same time burns off food in digestion; Pashupati too is a preserver as also a Destroyer. Swaha Devi is Pashupati's wife and his son is Skanda. The sixth name of Maha Deva is Bheema and as soon as Brahma announced Nilalohita's name, Akakasha entered Siva's body at once and like Shiva, Aakasha too is Omni Present encasing the totality of Universe. The Ashta Diks or the Eight Directions are stated to be his wife and Swarga his son. Any sin committed by a person is recorded by Aakasha; the least one should is to refrain from throwing Mala-Mutras, and open-to-Sky copulation. Ugra was the seventh Swarupa of Nilalohita and his regulatory control is of a Dikshita Brahmana or a Brahmana who practises the Ashtanga Yoga of Yama-Niyama-Asana- Pranaayaama- Pratyaahara-Dharana- Dhyana-Samadhi. Chaitanya or Enlightenement of a Model Brahmana thus entered Shiva's personality as soon as his name was announced by Brahma as Ugra or the Epitome of Rigorousness and Ruthlessness as a Dikshita would never err nor lapse. Most appropriately, his wife's name and nature are Diksha and his progeny is called Santana or Virtuous Offspring.

The Ashtama Tanu or Vibhuti / Body variation of Shiva is named Maha Deva with Chandra as the regulatory control signifying coolness and placidity and no sooner that Brahma assigned the name of Maha Deva to Shiva than Chandra entered his heart and thus gave the epithet of Shashidhara to Shiva. As Chandra controls Brahmanas, Auoshadhis (herbs) and Trees, Brahmanas are to be revered and herbs and trees are to be given special consideration on Amavasyas and Purnimas, besides festival days or special occasions in any family. Since Chandra is the Cool Mind of Shankara in his benevolent Form, Maha Deva is worshipped for securing boons on such days of speciality. His wife's position is of Rohini and of son's is of Budha in the context of Shiva's vibhuti as Maha Deva.

# Agni Vamsha, Profile of Pitras, Sati's self-immolation and Daksha Yagna destroyed

Agni is one of the beloved 'Manasa Putras' of Brahma Deva. He married Daksha Putri Devi Swaha and their sons were Pavamana, Shuchi and Pavaka. Pavamana (Garhapatyagni) is created as a result of 'Arani' or churning, Pavaka (Dakshinaagni) is devised by Vidyut or lightning and Shuchi (Ahavaniya) is based on the Solar source or from Surya- hence called Souraagni. Pavamaahana's son was Kavyavahana meant for Pitras; Pavakas's son is Saharaksha and that category of Agni is relevant to Raakshasaas; and Shuchi's Agni is called Havyavahana meant for Devas. Brahma's elder son was Brahmadattaagni who bestowed Loukikaagni to the world and Brahamadattaagni's son was Vaishwaanara; he carried Havya to Devas for long and merged it in Pushkara Samudra; that Loukikaagni was secured by one Adhravana and subsequently came to be known as Adharvanaagni.

From the lineage of Adharvana came Samsya and Shuka. Samsya had two sons viz. Savya and Apasavya. Samsya was celebrated by the posterity of Brahmanas and to keep his memory everlasting merged 'Aavaniyaagni' in the waters of sixteen rivers so that the following generations of Brahmanas could invoke that Agni from the River waters to perform Yagnas on the banks of the select sixteen rivers of

Bharat viz. Kaveri, Krishnaveni, Narmada, Yamuna, Godavari, Vitasta, Chandrabhaga, Iravati, Vipasha, Kousiki, Shatadru, Sarayu, Sita, Sarasvati, Hraadini and Paavani. The illustrious Samsya established Agni Dhaamas called Dhishnas and those who maintained the Dhaamaas came to bo be known as Dhishnas too. Their generations classified some of the Agni Karyas as 'Upastheyaas' or those which could be retained such as Vibhu, Pravaahana, Anirgha etc and some others as 'Parityaktavyas' or discardable. In addition, a few were added to the list of Upastheyas since such Agni Karyaas were 'Anirdeshyas' or unforeseen and 'Anivaryaas' or inevitable. For eg. Vaasavi Agni is practised in some of the Vedis in Northern Parts of Bharata; this Vasavi has eight branches viz. Barhisha (Hotriya Agni Havya vaahana), Pracheta (Samsahaayaka), Vishwadeva (Brahamanachhaamsi), Avabhrutaagni originating from Varuna; Hradayaagni or Jatharaagni relevant to food items, Badabaagni emerging from deep Seas, and the most popular Saharakshaagni for the fulfillment of House-holders or Grihastis.

Apart from the above, there are other Agni Karyas such as Rakshognis for Raksha/Kavacha or Shields, Kaamaagnis for fulfillment of specific wishes, and so on. There also are Agni titled Surabhi, Vasuratna, Naada, Haryaswa, Rukmavaan, Pravagya, and Kshemavan –all the progeny os Shuchi Deva. Needless to mention Abhicharika Agni Karyas of negative nature with the objective of harming others to benefit the Kartas. Thus there are Agni Karyass of various nature: Nitya, Naimittika, Kaamya, Prayaschaattika, Abhicharika, and Daivika.

Srishti of Pitaras: After creating Devas, Asuras and Human Beings, a satisified Brahma desired to create Pitaras and recalled the Veda Sukta: Rutavah Pitaro Devaah (Srishti should include Rithus-Pitras-Devas) and thus created Pitras from his flanks; they were of two categories viz. 'Agnishvaattaas' and 'Barhishads'. The former type were neither 'Grihastis' nor performers of Yajnas. The obvious preference was to create 'Barhishads' who were 'Ahitaagnis' and also Soma sevakaas. As regards 'Rithus' or Seasons, Chaitra and Vaisakha Months are oriented to Rasa or the Juice of Life; Jyeshtha and Ashadha are prone to Shringara or Love; Shravana and Bhadrapada are disposed to Jeeva or Activity and Alacrity; Ashviyuja and Kartika lean towards 'Swadhaatwa' or other-wordliness and penance; Margasirsha and Pushyami are not helpful while Maagha and Phalguna are conducive for introspection and Tapasya. [Thus the pairs of the months aforementiond are known as Ritus or Seasons viz. Vasanta (April-May). Greeshma (May-June), Varsha (July-Aug), Sharat (Sept-Oct), Hemanta (Nov-Dec) and Sishira (Jan-Feb)]. The identification of Ritus is a per the calculation of Kaala or Time viz. Nimesha-Kala-Kaashtha-Muhurtha-Day-Night-Tithi-Paksha-Maasa-Rithu or Two Maasaas- Ayana or Three Ritus viz. Uttaraayana and Dakshinaayana and Samvatsara or Year. As Brahma was the Creator of Ritus, Ritu Putraas are Human Beings, Quadrupeds, Birds, Reptiles and Trees and all these species are subject to 'Artavaa Lakshanaas' ie Ritu Dharmas or Seasonal changes. For eg, women are subject to Rajasa Pravritti or menstruation. Similarly Nature, Trees, Creepers, Flowers, Fruits, Crops, Rains, Summer-Winter changes are all subject to Seasonal Changes in every year. Such 'Artavaas' or Seasonal changes are considered as fathers, the Ritus are to be considered as a grand-father and each Samvatsara is considered as a great-grand father; this indeee is the suble conection of Ritus and Pitras! Hence the inter-connection of Seasonal Changes brought about by Kaala or Time with Pitaras is proved significantly.

Devi Swadha and Pitras had two daughters viz. Mena and Dharani; both of them were Maha Yoginis. Pitaras as stated earlier were Agnishwaats and Barhisdhads; Mena was the Manasika Putri of Agnishwaats and Dharani was the Manasika Putri of Barhidshads. Mena was wedded to Himavan and they begot Mainaka and Ganga; Mainaka's son was Krauncha in whose name Krauncha Dwipa was set up. Ganga was married to Lavanodadhi. Dharani the daughter of Barhishads wedded Meru and they gave birth to Mandara with Divya Auoshadhis and also three daughters named Vela, Niyati and Ayati. Ayati maried Dhata and Niyati wedded Vidhatra while Vela or Sea shore wedded Sagara (Ocean). The couple of Vela and Samudra gave birth to Suvarna and the latter who wedded Prachinbarhi gave birth to ten sons and they were called **Pachetasas** who were champions of Dharurvidya.

The ten Prachetasas were the father-figures of **Daksha** who was cursed by Traimbika in the Chakshsa Manvantara. The origin of the curse was as follows: Among the daughters of Daksha, the eldest was Sati

Devi who was wedded to Rudra; but Rudra never bowed his head to Daksha the father in law since Rudra never bent to any body. Daksha took it to his heart and started ignoring Sati and of course Rudra. He invited to his house all the younger sisters of Sati along with their husbands like Vasishtha, Atri, Bhrigu, Kratu, Maricha and so on. As the was singled out, Sati felt humiliated and said: Asatkrutya Pitarmaam twam krutavaanasi garhitam, Aham jyeshthaa varishthaa cha twam maam satkurta mayi si/ (Father! You have dishonoured me and it does not behove of you to have done this as I am your eldest daughter). Daksha replied that these daughters of mine are far superior to you and their husbands are well versed in Vedas, Yogis and excellently behaved unlike your husband Rudra who is arrogant and highly selfopinionated and thus there is no comparison between you and other daughters of mine! Sati Devi replied: Vangmanahkarmabhiryasma –adadrushtam maam vigarhasey, Tasmaattyajaamyahamimam deham taata tavaatmajam/ -- Yatraahamapupadye cha punardehena bhaswataa, Tatraapyahamasambhutaa Sambhutaa dhaarmikaadapi/ Gaccheyam Dharma patneetwam Traiyambakasyaiwa Dheematatah, Tatraivaatha samaaseenaa yuktaatmaanam samaadadhey/ Dharanaamaasa chaagneyeem dharanmaam manasaatmanah, Tatah Atmasamyutthosya Vaayuna samudiritah, Sarvegebhoy vinihsrutya Vahnistwaamk bhasmasaatkarot/ (Since you have harassed me verbally, mentally and physically although I possess no such defects, I am leaing this body you gave me. Whenever I shall be born again with a lustrous body as Ayonija or otherwise, I will again indeed be the wife of Lord Traimbaka only. By so saying, Devi Sati sat in a yogic posture and united her soul to Paramatma and as she resorted to Agneya Dharana she let her physical limbs burn off by fire which got turned into ash). Suladhaari heard about the incident and was infuriated with Daksha and the Maharshis who were praised by Daksha. Rudra Deva shouted on Daksha that due to his hatred for Rudra, Sati was insulted and immolated herself; that was why in the beginning of the next Vaivaswata Manvantara, Daksha would be reborn as a King as the son of Prachetasaas as Daksha again and would seek to perform one Yajna which would be totally destroyed by Rudra. Daksha gave a return curse to Rudra that since the Rishis who were his sons-in-law were also involved in Rudra's curse, they would not agree to provide 'havis' in Daksha's future yagna to Rudra as per the established practice. Rudra had the last word saying that as soon as the Rishis would touch the Pavitra Jala at the future yagna, they would not only lose their status to worship Rudra again and also would not hace access to Swarga and would have to stay in Bhuloka itself till the end of Satya Yuga. Indeed as per the mutual curses, the subsequent birth of Daksha took place as the son of Prachetasaas again as a King decided to perform another Yagna which was destroyed by Rudra and the Maharshis like Bhrigu who assumed roles in that Yagna lost their access to Swarga and worse still they could not worship Rudra till the end of SatyaYuga.

## Sapta Dwipas with spot-light on Bharata, Sapta-Urthvalokas and Sapta-Adholokas

Priyavrata, the grand son of Swayambhu Manu appointed his sons as the Kings of Seven Dwipas viz. Agnidhra to Jambu Dwipa, Methatithi to Plaksha Dwipa, Vapushman or Vasu to Shalmala Dwipa, Jyotishmaan to Kusha, Dyutmaan to Krouncha, Hayva to Shakha Dwipa, and Savana to Pushkara Dwipa. Referring about Jambu Dwipa specifically, Suta Muni explained that it had an area of hundred thousand yojanas surrounded by salt sea with clusters of rocks full of heavy deposits of minerals and precious stones with huge population and bountiful nature dotted by six major Mountain chains named Nila, Nishada, Sweta, Hema-kunta, Himavan and Shringaman. Himaalayas are always covered with snow, Hemakuta has abundant deposits of gold, Nila has blue sapphires, Nishadha is picturesque and aweinspiring, Sweta is white and Shringaman is full of Mounts with peacock-feather colours and also deposits of gold. But Meru beyond the King of Mountains in between two circular ranges was stated to be the visiting place of Deva ganaas, Gandharvas, Yakshas and Apsarasas; it is surrounded by four Bhuvanas or Deshas viz. Bhadrashwa to East, Bharata to South, Ketumala to West and Kurus to the North of Meru.

Before elaborating on Jambu Dwipa, Suta Maha Muni provided a spotlight on **Bharata Varsha** where Swayambhu like Fourteen Manus appeared and extensive Praja-Srishti was facilitated. This indeed is popularly noted as Karma Bhumi where the impact of Good and Bad deeds is experienced and carried

forward; this again is the Birth Place of Vedas, Vedangas like Astrology, Astronomy, various branches of Literature, 'Chatusshaasthi Kalaas' or Sixty Four Kalas or Arts, etc. The uniqueness of Bharata Varsha is common Vedic culture and faith with marginal adaptations. The Original Bhrata Varsha was stated to comprise nine divisions viz. Indra Dwipa(Andamans?), Kesharumata (Malaya?), Tamravarna (Sri Lanka?), Gabhatimanta, Nagadwipa, Sowmya, Gandharva, and Varunya; the ninth part was stated to have been submerged in the Seas even at the time of conceiving Brahmanda Purana! Enclosed three sides with Oceans, Bharata Varsha has an estimated distance of Nine thousands of Yojanas (1 yojana= 12km) from the Origin of Ganga to Kanyakumari at the southern tip of Bharat approx. Around the Bharata Varsha the surrounding Regions are stated to be predominated by Mlecchas: Kiraataas to the East, Yavanas to the West, while the hinter land comprised Brahmana, Vaisya and Kshariyas and by and large Varnaashrma Policy of Brahmana- Kshatriyas-Vaishyas continued to be the pattern obtaining till date with Brahmanas engaged in Sacred Deeds like Yagina-Yaagas, Vratas, and abstinence; Kshatriyas with defence and Order in the Society and Vaishyas with money accounting. There are seven Kula Parvatas viz. Mahendra, Sahya, Shuktimanta, Rishya, Vindhya and Pariyatra. Also thousands of other Mountains whose Shikhiraas or Mountains were peculiar such as Mandara, Vaihara, Durdura, Kolahala, Mainaka, Vaatamdhama, Nagagiri, Paandura, Tunga -prasta, Krishna Giri, Pushpagiri, Ujjayanta, Raivataka, Shri Parvata, Chitrakuta and Kuta shaila and innumerable smaller mountains. Also countless Rivers existed like Ganga, Sindhu, Saraswati, Shatadru, Chandrabhaga, Yamuna, Sarayu, Iravati, Vitasta, Gomati, Kausiki, Gandaki, Maha Nadi, Kshipra, Brahmaputra, Avanti, Narmada, Godavari, Krishnaveni, Tungabhadra, Kaveri, and thousands of others providing drinking water, bathing and enabling Yagjnas, Homas, Pitru Karyas, Tirtha Yatras and incounty river-travel.

Quite a few legends abound about the significance of various Mountains and Rivers in Bharat. In fact historic and religious events were ascribed to most of the mountains and rivers such as Ganga, Yamuna, Sarasvati, Godavari and of Himalayas, Kailasa, Sahya, Vindhya, Rishyashringa and so on. The Epic Hero of Ramayana, Shri Rama was stated to have covered Dandakaranya in Mid-Bharat by foot and did miracles especially in killing Asuras and Rakshasas. To north of Sahya Mountain where River Godavari flowed, Shri Rama was reputed to have built Govardhana Nagar and planted plants of Aoushadhis especially near Bharadwaja's Ashram; this was just an example in the current Brahmanda Purana. The broad spectrum of population in the length and breadth of Bharat ranged from Anga-Vanga-Chola-Bahlika-Abhira- Panchalika- Gandhara-Yavana-Sindhu Souveera-Kekaya-Kambhoja-Kashmira-Chola-Pandya-Pulinda-Vaidarbha-Kakatiya-Andhra- Maharashtra-Kerala-Saraswata-Kirata- China- Tushara and so on and most of them governed by the Varaashrama of Brahmana-Kshatriya- Vaishya and others. All of them were motivated by the 'Chaturvidha Purushaartthaas' of Dharma, Artha, Kaama ans Mokshas or Virtuous Living, Earning Livelihood, Fulfillment of Desires and Salvation!

Bhugola s was mentioned above was divided into Seven Territories viz. Jambu, Plaksha, Shalmala, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaka and Pushkara surrounded by Sapta Samudras (Seven Seas), viz.Lavana (Salt), Ikshurasa (Sugar cane juice), Sura (Wine), Ghrita (Ghee), Dadhi (Curd), Dugdha (Milk) and Swadujala (Sweet water).

Jambu Dwipa: To the Southern side of Meru Mountain and the North of Nishadha, there was a huge and age-long Jambu Tree called Sudarshana whose Jambu Fruits (Rose Apple) constantly trickled in a River which turned in the same colour and taste of water. The Tree was stated to be of eleven hundred Yojanas high. The significance of that Tree, fruits and juice was such that Siddhas and Charunas got readily attracted it and the juice bestowed to them the qualities of Youth and excellent health causing neither old age nor death. The fruit also produced a kind of Gold called Jambunada which was used as ornaments to Devas. The Jambu River flowed all around Meru and became the biggest attraction or Yaksha, Gandharva, Apsara, Rakshasa, Piscachaas too. Kailasa Mountain was another facsination of the Region. Kubera the Chief of Yakshas and Apsaras were stated to reside on the Mountain which was also the home of herbs and medicines, apart from wild and cruel animals. Parama Shiva is stated to reside on Kailasha along with Devi Parvati and had been a hallowed Parvata. Manasa Sarovara had been the most consecrated Lake

where Siddha Ganas had always believed that bathig in the Lake and Parikrama of the Mountain were most certain steps to attaining Kailaasa / Ishwara Prapti.

**Plaksha Dwipa:** is double the size of Jambu Dwipa's one lakh yojanas under the Chief called Mehatidikh who had seven sons and the Kingship was surrounded by Seven major Mountains and Seven Rivers with the traits typical of Treta Yuga. Its inhabitants pray to Bhagavan Vishnu in the form of Chandra Deva. Compared to the salty taste of Sea water between Jambudwipa and Plaksha Dwipa, the taste was of Ikshu(Sugar cane juice) in the of intermediate region of Plaksha and Shalmala whose Chief was Vapushman and the latters's size was double that of Plaksha. Here again there are seven mountains with mines of jewels / precious stones and seven Rivers and in this Dwipa Lord Vishnu is prayed in the form of Vayu Deva.

Like in Plaksha Dwipa, the inhabitants of **Salmala Dwipa** too, Varnashrama is followed and the colours of persons in these Varnas are Kapila, Aruna, Peeta and Krishna are for Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras respectively. Sura (Wine) Samudra earmarks the inter-region of Salmala and **Kusha Dwipa** whose size was double that of Salmala and Kusha's King is Jyotishman and the inhabitants are human beings practicing Varanashrama as also Daityas, Danavas, Devatas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Kinnaras and a great mix of Brahma's creation. They all pray to the Multi Faced Janardana. Ghrita Samudra (Classified Butter) partitions the Kusha and Krouncha Dwipas; the size of the Krouncha is double that of Kusha. Rituman is the King of **Krouncha** where again Varnashrama is observed and the counter-part Varnas are Pushkala, Pushkara, Dhanya and Khyata corresponding to Brahmanas etc. Rudra Swarupa Janardana is the Deity revered in this Dwipa. Between Krauncha and **Shaka** Dwipas is the Dadhimandoda Samudra and the King of Shaka is Mahatma Bhavya, again with Seven Mountains and Seven Major Rivers as also seven Princes, where Siddhas and Gandharvas inhabit. Maga, Mahadha, Manasa and Mandaga are the corresponding Chaturvarnas. All the inhabitants of this Dwipa pray to Surya Swarupi Vishnu.

From Shaka to **Pushkara**, the intermediate Samudra is of Ksheera and Pushkara which is double of Shaka is size is headed by Stravana and since it is a huge Dwipa, the King divided it to Mahavira Varsha and Dhataki varsha and the sons of the King awarded the two in their names after the two parts under his over-all control. These territories are mainly inhabited by human beings who have longevity of ten thousand years, devoid of illnesses and worries and of jealousies, fears, egos and crookedness; these humans as superior as Devas and Daityas and they are all devoid of Varnashrama as all the inhabitants are of equal status. The dividing line of Pushkara is surrounded by sweet water atop of which is **Lokaloka** Parvata, beyond which is stated to be of complete darkness; in fact, the Border of Pushkara of ten thousand yojanas, there were neither species nor life.

**Urthwa Lokas:** As a part of the Cosmic Egg beyond the Lokaloka, Suta Muni described as follows: Lokaardha samhitaa Lokaa niraalokastu bhahyatah, Lokavistaaramatram tu dhyuloh sarvataa bahih/Paricchinnah samantaascha udakenaavrutastu sah, Alokaatparatas -chaapi hyandamaavrityatishthati/ Andastyaantastwamey Lokaah Saptadwipaascha Modini, Bhurlokotha Bhuvarlokah Swarlokostha Mahastathaa/ Janastapastathaa Satyametaavaam lokasangrahah,, Etavaaneva Vigineyo Lokaantaschaiva yah Parah/

(All the Lokas which possess illuminaton are within the ambit of knowledge and the rest are all unkown and full of darkeness; that portion which is circumscribed all around by water was within the Golden Egg and is stated to contain the **Bhur-Bhuvar- Swar-Mahar-Jana-Satya-Tapo Lokas**. Knowledge of those Lokas is not clear. One could only guess that these Lokas were lit up by Chandra at the beginning of Shukla Paksha in the West in the shape of a Pot just as Brahmanda was also surmised as an Egg.)

The Brahmanda was stated to have surrounded by solidified water called 'Ghanodadhi' which was held by 'Vanoda' or a mass of solidified water and was encircled by Illumination all round in the shape of a Fiery Iron Ball, and Akasha or Ether grasps the Ganodadhi. *Bhutaadischa tathaakaasham Bhutaadischyaapyasau Mahaan, Mahamcha sopyanantena hyavaktena tu dhaaryatey*/

Anantamaparivyaktam dashadhaa Sukdshmamevacha, Anantamakrutaa tmaanaadi nidhanam cha yat/ Anityam Parataghoram anaalambam -anaamayam, Naikayojanasahaastram Vipakashtamanaavrutam/

(The Bhutaadi or The Cosmic Ego or Maha Ahamkara or simply stated as Ghana Vaata or Solidified Air supported by Akaashaa was called the Infinite Principle or Mahaan; it was that Ayvakta or Unknown, Ananta or Endless, Aghora or Uncontaminated, Niraadhara or Unsupported, Avikara (Featureless), Sukshma (Subtle) and Avikarana (Unchanged and Undistorted).

Adholokas: As Bhu Devi the Divine Goddess is the Mother of all Living Beings, 'Aapas' or water is stated to be endless and so are Vayu, Agni and Akasha. Underneath Bhumi are the Nether Worlds viz. Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talaatala, Rasatala, Mahatala and Patala. The soil in Atala is stated to be of black soil, of Vitala the ground was of palewhite, Sutala of blue, Talatala of yellow colour, Rasatala of gravel covered ground, Mahatala of Rocky Ground and of Patala of Gold. The Palaces of Asuras of Namuchi the enemy of Mahendra, besides of other demons like Mahananda, Kabandha, Bhima, Suladanta, Dhanjaya, Nagendra were all glittering exampes of opulence and material happiness in Atala and other Lokas. In Sutala were the noted Daitya-Rakshasa-Serpent Kings like Mahajambha, Karbandha, Hayagriva, Nikumbha, Bhima, Suladanta, Dhananjaya, Nagendra, Kalia and so on. Shankha, Gomukha, Kakutpada, Asvatara, Kambala, Takshaka stayed at Vitala; Prahlada, Taraka, Puranjana etc were in Rasatala; Kalanemi, Gajakarna were in Mahatala; and among other illustrious serpents Maha Sesha was in Patala.

Sesha Deva with his mighty and huge physique with thousand hoods ornamented with outstanding diamonds emitting unprecedented effulgence is stated to bear the brunt of the Entire Universe from Urthva Lokas, Bhumi and the Nether worlds and worshipped by Devas, Danavas, Siddhas and all other celestial beings alike!

The Adholokas are called Bilwa Swarga which provided unparalleled physical and material happiness unavailable in Swarga even. The invaluable 'Manis' (diamonds) like those worn on the hoods of the huge serpents provided such illumination to all Nether Lokas. The population of these Lokas are stated to lead such unbelievable luxuries and joy that Maharshi Narada who visited these Lokas were totally impressed. He stated that the most powerful Surya Deva bestowed only radiance and not his heat while Chandra gave only brightness but not chilliness. The inhabitants of Bilwa Swarga always revelled in delicacies of food and wine with sophistication and style of living as they were least concerned of day-to- day difficulties; they spent long spells of time in bathing swimming in scented Sarovaras and Ponds and Narada stated that Vishnu's Tamoguna was in full display at the Bilwa Swarga!

## Traditional Astronomy, Solar System and 'Kaalamana Ganana' (Time Calculations)

The area which is covered by Sun and Moon constitutes that which brightens the Sapta Dwipas, Sapta Samudras and half of Earth, the other half remaining dark. Again, *Avati trinimaan lokaan yasmaadsuryah paribhraman, Avidhaatuh prakaashaakhyo hyavanaatsa Ravih smruta/* (The 'Dhaatu' or the root of the word 'Avi' means illumination and protection; thus Surya is called Ravi). The word 'Mahi' or 'Mahi Tatwa' means Bhumi or Earth and the sub continent of Bharat is roughly reckoned as Earth; the Solar Disc measures nine thousand yojanas (one yojana is 12 km) and its circumference is three times more. The circumference of Moon is stated to be thrice of Sun.

The total size of Earth is fifty crore yojanas and Meru Mountain is situated at the half point of Earth. Considering the elevation of Meru, the radius of Earth is stated to be eleven crore thirty seven lakh or the surface of Earth. Taking into account the revolution of Earth up to the sky and stars, the distance of the Earth and Sky are stated to be equal. All the Seven Dwipas on Earth as also the Seven Upper Lokas of Bhur-Bhuvar-Swar-Janar-Mahar-Tapas-Satya etc. lokas are all included in the 'Paryasa' or 'Bhramana' (Revolution) since they are all in the Cosmic Egg as under an Umbrella. In the revolution all the Lokas are tightly tied together; while the contents of the Cosmic Egg is stabilised with solidified Oceans, each Loka is stuck to each other and thus Earth too is stuck similarly with the solidified water. The solidified water is surrounded by solidified Tejas or Illumination. The Solidified Tejas is surrounded by Solidified

Air. The solidified air is futher surrounded by Sky which in turn is bounded by Bhutadi which again is enclosed by 'Mahat' and finally Mahat is bordered by Pradhana or the Infinity! Thus the entire Universe is a comprehensive and cohesive Totality!

[Brahmanda Purana-in fact, Puranas in general-believe that the Brahmanda (Cosmic Egg) is protected by sheaths or coverings of Pancha Bhutas or Gross Elements of Earth-Water-Fire-Air and Sky; Earth is protected by solidified water; in the second layer by Agni; further by Air; further again by Sky; beyond which be the Concepts of Bhutadi or the Ahamkara or Ego being the Consciousness of Self as also the 'Mahat' or the High Significance, beyond is Pradhana or the Unknown. All the above Beings are stated to be a Composite Manifestation of the Supreme Unknown].

Meru Mountain was considered as the focal point of Traditional Astronomy. The East of Meru and on top of Maanasa was stated to be the Mahendrapuri where 'AshtaaVasus' whose Chief was Lord Indra were staying and that place was all decorated with gold. To the Southern side of Meru again on the top of Manasa was the abode of Lord Yama the son of Vaivaswata Manu and that Place was known as Samyamana Puri. To the West of Meru again atop of Manasa, Lord Varuna was the abode of a Place called Sukha Nagari. To the North of Meru on Manasa Mount was the Vibhavari Nagari of Lord Soma. On the four corners of the rear North of Manasa were situated the Four Lokapalakas to preserve Dharma and Nyaaya to the mankind. In 'Dakshinayana' or the Southern Transit the course of Sun's forward direction to South would be like an arrow released as he would take various Luminary Devatas along with him: By the time Surya would reach Amaravati of Indra by mid-day, he would have reached Samyamapuri of Yama, when Vanuna's Sukha Nagari would be mid-night and Soma would be nearing dusk time. When Surya would reach Samyamana by mid-day at his peak, it would be Sun Rise at Sukha Puri of Varuna, Sun Set at Mahendri Nagar and midnight at Vibha Nagar of Chandra. If persons experience afternoon at those in South East (Agneya), or South and East, those in South West or Nirruti would experience Sun in forenoon. To persons in North, Sun's position is experienced at later part of night where as to those in North East or Ishanya, it would be in the earlier part of night. When Amaravati experienced midnight, Yama Nagari felt that Sun was setting in the Evenings. At Soma's Vibhavari Nagar, Surva's position would be mid-day but he would have already risen up in the early morning and at Yama's Samyamana it would be midnight. Thus Surya rises and sets at different places at different timings.

Surya is stated to traverse one hundred and eighty one thousand yojanas in a 'Muhurtha'. Nimeshas make one Kashta; thirty Kashtas make one Kala; thirty Kalaas make one Muhurta and thirty Muhurthas make a day and night). If Surya proceeds towards South or in Dakshinayana, his speed increases and whirls around in the middle of the firmament. At Manasottara Mountain, the 'Vishu' (Equinox) is situated in the middle; the circumference of Surya is Nine crores and forty five lakh yojanas. Returning from South to North (Uttarayana), Sun is stated to remain in the Equinox and travel further to Milk-Ocean and then Surya's circumference is stated to be three crore and eight thousand yojanas. When Surya is in the constellation of Shravana and Uttaraashadha traversing the Regions upto Shaka Dwipa, the magnitude of Sun is estimated at a crore and Eighty of vojanas approx. The divisions of Planetary system are Aja Vithi (Southern) or the Naga Vithi (Northern) comprising constellations of Stars; the divisions of star-constellation of Moola-Purvashadha-Uttaraashaadha are born in Aja Vidhi while the constellations of Ashvini-Bharana-Krittika are born in Naga Vidhi. During Dakshinayana, Sun covers thirteen and half constellations of Stars in twelve Muhurtas due to his speed; but in Uttarayana, he covers the same constellations in eighteen Muhurtas. It is said that the central area of a Potter's wheel goes slower and in the same way Sun traverses slower and in the navel of the wheel, it goes further slower ie thirteen Muhurtaas! During one daytime, the first part is called Usha / Sandhya, the second one is Praatahkaala, the next is Madhyaahna and the next part is of Aparaahna and then Sayaahkaala. At the times of dawn and dusk, it was stated that crores of demons are bent on devouring Surva Deva but the Vakakhilya Sages protect Surya deva; besides, Brahmanaas perform Sandhya Vandana and Gayatri Japa to overcome the demons. On a Vishuvat day (Equinox) the day as well as night are of exactly same measure of Time but

from there after Dakshinayana nights get lengthened while during Uttarayana, the daytime gets elongated. Vishuvat Time or Equinox is between Sharad and Vasanta Ritus. That would be the time when Moon is of uniform 'Kalaas'. Brahmanda Purana gives a detailed account of 'Kaala gananaas' or Time Calculations related to Soura (Surya), Sowmya (Chandra) and Naakshatra or Stars. It was at this Vishu Time, that 'daanaas' are required to be performed to please Pitru Devas. Since Vishu is considered as most auspicious to Devas too, special Danaas are required to be given to learned Brahmanas.

It is good to learn of 'Kaalamaana ganana' or the calulations of Time as also certain other aspects; for instance: 'Uuna Maasa' (month of shorter count), Adhika Maasa (month with longer month); Kala, Kaashtha, Muhurtaka; Purnamaasi (Full Mon), Amavasya (New Moon); Sinivaali or Kuhu the days when Chandra rekha was not seen at all; and Raaka and Anumati (differentiated nights) unseen on Purnima (Full Moon); Amavasya mixed with 14<sup>th</sup> Tithi of the next Paksha or fortnight is Sinivali while Amavasya which merges with the first of next Paksha is Kuhu (in both the cases worship of both Sinivali and Kuhu would bestow wealth); Purnamaasi mixed with the 14<sup>th</sup> Tithi is Anumati while that mixed with the first of next Paksha is Raakha (in these cases too, worship would bestow good progeny and fame). Another facet worth noting is that Uttarayana months are: Magha, Phalguna, Chaitra, Vaishakha, Jyeshtha and Ashadha are of Uttarayana while Shravana, Bhadrapada, Aswiyuja, Kartika, Margashira and Pushyami are of Dakshinayana.

## Mystery of 'Jyotishmandala', 'Sishumara', Dhruva, Clouds and Chariots of 'Grahaas'

Asked as to how the various planets and luminaries revolved on the Sky on their own without any clash or confusion and whether some divine hand was performing the act so aptly, Suta Maha Muni replied: Bhuta sammohanam hyotadvadato mey nibodhata, Pratyakshamapi drushyam cha sammohayati yatprajaa/ Yoham chaturdisham pucchey Shaishumarey vyavasthitah, Utaanadada Putrosou medhibhuto Dhruvodivi/ Sa vai bhraamayatey nityam Chandraadityo grahaih sah/ Vaataaneekamayairbandhair Dhruveybandhaani taani vai, Teshaam Yogascha bhedascha Kaalaschaarastathaiva cha/ Astodayou tathotpaataa Ayaney Dakshinottarey, Vishuvadgrahavarnaashcha Dhuruvaatatsarvam pravartatey/ Varshaa gharmo himam Raatrih Sandhyaachaiva dinam tathaa, Shubhaashubham prajaanaamcha Dhruvaatsarvam prayartatey/ (Indeed this is a mystery that defies imagination although the entire humanity visions and feels it. There is a Sishumara-literally meaning the killing of a Child- or a Dolphinlike Formation on the Sky and at the end of the animal's tail is situated **Dhruva**, the illustrious son of Prajapati Uttanapada [who as a boy of tender age felt hurt as to why he could not be seated on his father's lap while his step brother could, apparently beacause his father liked his step mother more than his own mother; out of anguish the boy resorted to rigourous Tapasya and pleased Vishnu Deva who blessed Dhruva to make him a Pole Star on the sky]; Dhruva became the fulcrum of all the planets and Stars bound to him by the might of Vayu Deva thus controlling all the Luminaries; all the Celestial Beings like Sun- Moon-other Planets are thus controlled by Dhruva). Clasped firmly by rows of winds thus, Dhruva regulates the movements of the luminaries and their cohesion, differences, timings, schedules, risings and settings; forebodings, Dakshinaayana-Uttaraayana-Vishuvats/ Equinoxes and Solistices. Dhruva is also responsible to rainfalls, high temperature, snowfalls, days and nights, twilights, and so on. Prompted by Dhruva, Surya Deva receives water from various sources by the aid of his powerful rays, passes it on to Chandra Deva and with the interaction of the Powerful Wind God materialises clouds and thus create rains and the emergent water to one and all. Thus water is recycled and again and Again. At no stage thus there woud be disturbancs in the supply of water. Suta Muni states: Na naasha Udaka -syaasti tadeva parivartatey, Sandhaaranaartham LokaanalmMaayaisha Vishwa nirmitaa/ Anayaa Maayaya Vyaptam Trailokyam cha Charaacharam, Vishvesho Lokakruddevah Sahasraakshah Prajaapatih/ (There cannot be total destruction of water resource in the Universe as it gets transformed again again to preserve all the Beings. Parmatma created Maya to protect the Three Worlds always).

Indeed it was the Almighty who ensured that Surya provided radiance to one and all and likewise supply coolness from Chandra; these are the two major sources of virility or the power of procreation to humanity and other beings. Aside from the mutual coordination of Surya and Chandra, there are other

sourcers of water like Ganges, other great Rivers and a number of Water-Bodies including Oceans. The heat generated by the sharp rays of Surya on the water on Earth gets converted as water fumes and travels up to the skies which eventually generate Clouds. The water content of the clouds turns into rains by the interaction of Winds for the welfare of all the 'Charachara Jagat' or the mobile and immobile Beings on Earth, Invariably, rains occur in scheduled Rithus or Seasons. The sounds of thunders occur due to the animations of wind likewise lightenings occur due to Agni. There are three kinds of Clouds: 'Agneyaas' or the fiery ones, 'Brahmajas' or those born of Brahma and 'Pakshajas' or those born of wings. Agneyas originate from heat producing vapour and occur on cold days creating images of elephants, boars and buffalos wandering on skies; they are known as 'Jeemutaas' devoid of lightnings with showers ranging from one to two Kilometres. Brahmajas are stated due to Brahma's breathing and are coupled with lightnings and rumblings of thunders causing freshness in air and facilitating sproutings on Earth; these clouds are carried by Vayu 'Pravaha' or fierce winds capable of continous and heavy rains of long ranges upto ten to twelve km of distance. These clouds are called 'Pushkaravardhanas' causing heavy down pours with reverberating thunders. The third variety of clouds is 'Antyakalpas' which are the most violent and of unbearable magnitude of sound as though the Cosmic Egg was breaking, 'Parjanya' / 'Diggaja'the other variety of Meghas are conducive to the growth of vegetation and crops and shower mist in winter. 'Parivaha' is yet another type of cloud arising out of the winds from the Sacred 'Akasha Ganga' on the firmanent materialised as snow drops on Himalayas benefiting herbs and crops of grains.

Surya Ratha: Surya Deva travels by a Golden Chariot with a single wheel, five spokes, three nabhis or naves, single rim with six phases, two pole shafts called two Ayanas or transits called Uttarayana and Dakshinayana, with a girth and extent of ten thousand yojanas driven by seven green horses called 'Sapta Chandas' or Vedic Meters viz. Gayatri, Trishtubh, Anushtubh, Jagati, Pankti, Brihati, and Ushnik. Each day of the week is considered as the nave of a single wheel; the 'Artavaas' are the five spokes and the Rithus or the rim. The wheel of the chariot is fixed to its axis and is anchored to Dhruva who propels the chariot to move in the Orbit. The Chariot is occupied by designated sets of Devas, Adityas, Maharshis, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Gramanas and Serpents during each Ritu or Season. During Madhu and Madhava Maasas or Chaitra and Vaishakha months for instance, the representative Devas situated on the Chariot are Dhata and Aryama; the Munis are Pulastya and Pulaha; Prajapati; the Serpents are Vasuki and Iravata; Rakshasas Kharsha and Bhima; Yakshas Rathakrut and Rathoujasa; Gandhavas Tumbura and Narada; Apsaras Susthala and Punjakasthala and Gramanas Heti and Praheti. Like wise, in each set of two months, the designated representatives reside on the Chariot and enhance the significance of Surya Deva by ascribing their positive traits to him; Devas provide their own characteristics to Surya; Munis render Stotras to him; Gandharvas and Apsaras sing and dance for him; Gramanas, Yakshas and Rakshasaas worship the Sun rays and the Valakhilya Sages lead him proceeding ahead of him. Thus Devas accord their own strengths to Surya, Maharshis provide their Tapobala or the power of their meditation to him, and like wise all others on and around the chariot pass on their virtues, capabilities and positive characteristics to him; they would enhance rains, provide coolness, provide fertility, lessen the influence of the Evil to the Living Beings and augment auspicious to the 'Praja' (Public) all around during their respective time slots of two months of their stay on the Chariot.

Chandra Ratha: The chariot of Moon has three wheels driven by ten horses with the colour of white jasmine flowers and the horses are called Yajur, Chandamanasa, Vrisha, Vaaji, Nara, Haka, Gavishna, Hamsa, Vyoma and Mriga. The Chandra Ratha passes through the Star-Way towards Dhruva's grip. Chandra is accompanied by Devas and Pitra Devatas; white serpents are circled on the wheels of his chariot. Though lean and thin, his chariot's horses have unending stamina and have the speed of a person's thoughts. At the end of Krishna Paksha and at the beginning of Shukla Paksha, Surya would be in the opposite situation of Chandra and would gradually fill up Chandra with his virility. As Devataas absorb Chandra's brightness, the latter would be left with only Kala out of sixteen Kalaas / features by the fifteenth day of the fortnight. One of Surya's bright ray called Sushumna fills up with Chandra and the latter improves his splendour. Thus during the Krishna Paksha, Chandra's illumination gets reduced and in Sukla Paksha, his Kalaas get enhanced by Surya's virility. In the Krishna Paksha from Vidiya or the

second day upto Chaturdasi or the Fourteenth day, Devataas absorb the water form of Chandra's Rasa (Juice) which is Amrita or Nectar-like as that is the food of Devatas. Along with Devas, **Pitru Devas** also consume the Sudha Rasa on the Purnima day. It is stated that as many as three thirty crore Devas plus absorb the Soma Rasa daily upto Amavasya and Pitru Devas surround Chandra and consume the left over Soma Rasa by the mid-day of Amavasya to their full satisfaction. The Pitru Devas are of three types viz. Sowmyas, Barhishadas, and Agnishwaads. Kavyaas are also known as Piratas but they are 'Samvatsarakaas' or 'Panchabdaas' or those who return by the Year ends. Sowmyas are of the Form of Ritus and Barhidas are of the Form of Maasaas or months; Agnishvaads are also called Artavaas who are engaged in Pitru Deva Srishti.

Chariots of other Grahas: Budha is the illustrious son of Chandra who is known for his 'Sowmyata' or placidity and his chariot is like of the characteristics of water and its transparency and of wisdom. Bhargava (Shukra) is an Emblem of Prosperity, Brilliant like Surya, possessive of the Voice of Clouds, a 'Pataaka' or Flag and a 'Dhwaja'. His chariot has ten horses generated from Bhumi and has variegated colours of brightness; the horses are smart and of the speed of winds. The Chariot of Kuja (Bhauma) has eight horses generated from Agni possessive of 'Vidyut Kanti' or of Electric Light; his horses have knack of running forward and backward or clock-wise and anti clock-wise as also straight. Angirasa Vamsodbhava Brihaspati the Guru of Devas and Rishis has a Golden chatiot set with eight Divine horses that could run as fast as wind. Shani Deva has a chariot made of iron drawn by mighty horses born of firmament moving at a slow speed. Rahu is carried by a dark chariot drawn by eight black horses tied together only once ever. Having left Surya, Rahu reaches Chandra on Amavasyas and Purnimas; Chandra travels to Surya on Amavasyas and that is called Suryendu Sangama or the union of Surya and Chandra. Ketu has a chariot of eight horses that could as fast as Vayu and these have Dhumra Varna or of the colour of burnt smoke of grass; these horses have the colour of donkeys with red tinge.

Now, all the Planets are fastened to Dhruva, including Sun and Moon. It is believed that any kind of sins that human and other Beings tend to commit consciously or inadvertently are vanished once Dhruva's vision is viewed on the Sky.

Reverting back to **Simsumara** or the Dolphin-like Formation on the Sky, its limb-wise description is as under: Aouttaanpadastasyaatha vijneyo hyutturo hanuh, Yajnaha parastu vigjneyo Dharmo Murthaanamaashritah/ Hridi Narayanah Saadhyohyaswinow purvapaadayoh, Varunaschaaryama chaiva Paschimey tasya Sakthini/ Shishnam Samvatsarastasya Mitropaanam samaashritah, Puccheegnischa Mahendrascha Maarichah Kashyapo Dhurvah/ Taarakaah Sishumaarasya naastam yaanti chatushtayam, Nakshatra Chandra Suryascha Grahaastaaraaganaih sah/ Unmukhaa Vimukhaah Sarvey Vakribhutaah Shritaadivi, Dhruvenaadhishthaaschaiva Dhuvameva pradakshinam/ Pariyaanteeshwara sreshtham medibhutam Dhruvam divi, Agnindrakashyapaanaam tu Charamosou Dhrhuvah smritah/ Eka yeva bhranmatyesha Meruparvata murdhani, Jyotishaam Chakrametaddhi gadaa karshannavaan mukhah/ Merumaalokayatyesha paryantey hi pradakshinam/

(Aouttanapaada as his upper jay, Yagna Deva as the lower jay and Dharma Deva as the head; Narayana as his heart; Ashwini Kumars as his forelegs; Varuna and Aryama were his inner thighs; Samvatsara is his private part and Mitra his anus; Mahendra, Maricha and **Dhruva** arein his tail. The Four Stars in the Milky Way never set; Nakshatras, Chandra, Surya, Grahas, Taraa-ganas or constellations of Stars are faced up or down or curved; they are all presided by Dhruva and go around him. Dhruva is the principal hinge in the heavens next only to Indra, Agni and Kashyapa. On top of the Meru, Dhruva pulls one and all towards him and circumambulates the Great Meru Mountain).

### Rudimentary concepts for the study of Jyotisha

**Agni the Base:** Maha Muni Suta explained to Sages some basic concepts before delving deep into the Science of Astrology. Solar Movement which is stated to be responsible for the origin of all the Planets is strongly believed to be based on Agni by the Vedic Age. Rig Veda precscribed various Agni Karyas and Puranas also endorsed the belief. It is not only to determine the Solar Movement but also to the

preservation of Tri Lokas that Agni is rudimentary. The rays of Surva which are able to captivate water from various sources are indeed due to the absorbtive capacity of Agni of the Sun Rays and hence the cycle of rains, the Ritus or Seasons, Ayanas, Samvatsaras, Kalamaana, Planetery positions, and the eventual impact brought about on the human and other beings. There are three types of Agni viz. Devata related, Bhoutikaagni and Water generated Earth-related Agni called Vidyut Sambhava or Born out of Lightning or Abyoni; as the night is over the Unknown Brahma desired to visualise water and Earth in the darkness and asuumed the form of a tiny 'Khadyota' (glow-worm) and viewed Agni for illumination and named it as 'Parthivaagni' or Terrestrial Fire and divided into three forms viz. 'Vaidutaagni', 'Jatharaagni' and 'Souraagni'. Vaidyutaagni is not assuaged due to rains nor human bellies but only due to friction ofwood. Jatharaagni has no illumination and is not visible. Souraagni gets terminated by the Sun Set and enters Agni and gets revived at Sun Rise. Illumination and Heat promote and increase each other. Alike in the Northern and Souhern hemispheres, when Sun rises the night enters water and water gradually gains heat and radiation; at the time of Sun Set the day enters waters and thus the latter gains transparency next morning. Thus in this order the Earth's hemispheres the Sun Rise and Sun Set or the day and night respectively enter water. Surva Deva absorbs water through his rays and hence called 'Shuchi' or pure. This is related to Earth-related Agni and hence called Shuchi; the latter means Agni with thousand rays which absorb water from various sources like oceans, rivers, wells and all water-bodies. The rays of Agni create both cold water and hot water as also four hundred peculiar forms; those rays which could produce heavy rains are called chandana, Sadhya, Kutana, Akutana and Amrita. Besides these rays, there are three hundred other rays which produce snow. The Snow-fall creating rays are known as Drisyaas, Meghaas, Yaamyaas, Hradinyaas (resounding ones) and they have limited illumination and such rays are called Chandras. Those rays which create heat are white in colour numbering three hundred are called Shuklas, Kuhakaas, and Vishvabhruts. Surya Deva distributes these rays to human beings as well as Pitru Devas equitably and satisfy them. Surya helps utilise these rays to Human beings by way of herbs and vegetation, to Pitras by way of Swadhaa-Homas and to Devatas by way of Amrita. In the Vasanta or Spring and Greeshma or Summer seasons, Surya blazes three hundred rays of Agni to heat up the World while he showers in Sharat Kaala or rainy season by four hundred Agni-Kiranas; in Hemanta or early winter and Sishira or late winter Seasons three hundred rays are utilised.

The **Dwadasha Rudraas** are Indra, Dhata, Bhriga, Pusha, Mitra, Varuna, Aryama, Amsha, Vivashwanta, Twashta, Savita and Vishnu. In the month of Maagha, Surya assumes the name of Varuna, in Phalguna as Pusha, Chaitra as Amsha, Vaishakha as Dhata, Jyeshtha as Indra, Ashaadha as Savitah, Shravana as Viviswata, Bhadrapada as Bhriga, Ashwiyuja as Aryama or Parjanya, in Kartika as Twashta, Margasisa as Mitra and in Pushya as Vishnu. In Vasanta Ritu, Surya has Kapila Varna or of ochre (yellowish-brown) colour; in Greeshma golden colour; in Varsha or rainy Season Surya has white colour; in Sisira Rutu, Sun has red colour; an in Hemata Ritu, he has copper colour. Surya provides strength to herbs and medicines, facilitates enhancement of power to the offerings of Swadha to Pitras and potency to Amrita to Devas. Thus Sun bestows Shakti to Human beings, Pitras and Devas for the benefit of every Being in the Surya Mandala.

Surya the Sourcer: Surya Deva is the originator of Moon, Stars and Planets. Chandra is the Chief of Nakshatras and Surya is the King of Grahas. Angaraka Graha or the Planet of Mars is stated to be Skanda the Commander-in-Chief of Devas. Budha is stated to be of Narayana's Amsha. Yama is of Rudra's Form and is also the son of Vivaswanta or Surya Deva himself. Shani Deva is a significant Planet of slow pace but very dominant. The other two prominent Planets of Shukra and Brihaspati are the Mentors of Asuras and Devatas respectively. ----Adityamula makhilam Trailokyam naatra samshayaha/ Bhavatyasmaa Jagatkrustram Sadevaasura maanusham, Rudropendreyndrachandraanaam Viprendraastri-divoukasam/ Dyutrir -dyutimataam krutsnam yattejah Sarva loukikam/ Sarvaatmaa Sarva Lokesho Maha Devah Prajaapatih/ Surya yeva triloukasya mulam Parama Daivatam, Tatah Sanjaayatey Sarvam tatra chaiva Praliyatey/ Bhaavaabhaavouhi Lokaanaamaadityaa trihsrutou puraa, Jagajjeyo Graho Vipraa Deeptimaanaasuprabho Ravih/ (It is doubtless indeed that Aditya is the source of the entirety of Three Lokas. The whole Universe of Devas, Asuras and Manushyaas is originated from Surya; the grandeur and

glory of Rudra, Vishnu, Mahendra and Chandra, Devatas and Luminaries is all due to Surya. He is the Soul, the Lord, Prajapati and the highest of all who is the Creator and Destroyer of Everything. The very existence or otherwise of the Totality is due to him).

The **Sapta Rashmis** or the Seven Rays of Surya are Sushumna, Harikesha, Vishwakarma, Vishwashrava, Sampadvasu, Arvaavasu and Swaraat. Sushumna resuscitates the waning Moon and spreads up and sideways; Hariksha which is in the front of Surya is the originator of Nakshatras; to the South of Surya is Vishwakarma which sustains Budha or Jupiter; Vishwashrama from the western side of Sun is the originator of Shukra or Venus and promotes the cause of Panditas or or the Learned Human beings; Sampadsawa Rashmi of Surya is the originator of Kuja; the sixth Rashmi Arvavasu is the birth place of Brihaspati and the seventh Rashmi Swaraat is the originator of Saturn. All the Planets and Stars exist due to the magnificence of Surya Deva. Nakshatra literally means that it has no decadence and it is called Taraka as it redeems the Punya of those persons who performed extraordinary deeds.

Abodes of Planets: Through out various Manvantaras, the Abodes of various Planets are fixed and permanent. They are named after each one of them like Soura Sthaana or the Abode of Surya, Sowmya Sthana (Abode of Chandra), Shukra Sthana, Brihaspati (Jaiva) Sthana, Lohita Sthana (Kuja), Shanaischara Sthana, Budha Sthana, Swarbhanu (Rahu) Sthana, and Jyotirgana or Nakshatra Sthanaas. In the current Vaivaswata Manyantara, the Planets are called 'Vaitanikas'. Aditi's son Vivaswanta is Surva; Dharma's son Twishi the Vasu is called Chandra; belonging to Shukra Vamsha, the Rakshasa Guru Shukra is famed as Yajna Yaajaka for the Daanavaas; Angiras's son Brihatteaja or Brihaspati is popular as Deva Guru; Twishi's son Budha is also reckoned as a virtuous Graha; Sanjna and Surya's son Shanaischara is in his abode too; Lohita or Kuja was born to Vikesi Devi and Agni Deva; The Stars called Rikshas are known as the daughters; and Rahu the son of Devi Simhika also called Swarbhanu is the originator of troubles. The Abode of Surya is full of Agni and white where as Twishi or Chandra is full of water and white; Budha or Mercury who is Pancha Kirana or of Five Rays too is full of water and of dark colour; Shukra Sthaana is a Lotus again with water and has sixteen Rays; Kuja also is full of water but of blood red colour; Brihaspati has a big Place and watery in green colour with twelve rays; Saturn has eight rays of black colour and Jalamaya or full of water; and Rahu Sthaana is of dark colour and is the tormentor of Praanis or Beings. All the Nakshatras are 'jalamayas' or full of water and of white colour glitterting with illumination thanks to Surya Deva and these Stars were as old as Kalpa and are shiny due to the interaction of Surya.'

Sizes of Planets: Surya's diameter is stated to be nine thousand yojanas and its circumference is three times more. Chandra's circumference three double that of Surya's. Rahu's circumferenc is equal to that of Sun and Moon. Rahu rotates underneath both Surya and Chandra. Taking after the spherical nature of Earth's shadow, Rahu's form too is spherical full of darkness. From his abode full of darkness Rahu comes out of Sun during fesdtive days like the New Moon and Full Moon and proceeds to Moon. During Solar Festive days, Rahu goes back to Sun from Moon. Shukra Mandala is one-sixteenth of Chandra Mandala and Brihaspati is one-fourth of that of Shuka. Kuja and Saturn occupy three fourths of Brihaspati while Budha is three fourths of Kuja or Saturn. Stars are of thesize of Budha. Stars are normally associated with Chandra and the former are some five hundred yojanas or lesser distance from each other although the minimum disatance from each other one and half yojana; in other words, there is no Nakshatra of lesse than one and half yojana. There are as many Stars on the sky as there are constellations.

**Positions of Planets in 'Ayanas':** Surya's travel depends on the Ayana; in Uttarayana Chandra's movement looks faster than that of Surya because the former happens to be on a higher position compared to that of Surya. While in Dakshinayana Sun takes to the lower elevation compared to Bhumi; It is aligned with the line of Earth or horizon during the New Moon and Full moon days though not normally visible regularly. On a New Moon day, Moon stationed in the Northern path becomes visible on the Southern path. Only on the Vishu days or Equinotical days, Sun Set and Moon Rise are at the same time but not otherwise. In the Dakshinayana, Surya is positioned under all the Planets: Moon orbits above Sun

and so does the entire Galaxy of Stars; Budha orbits above the Chandra; Shukra orbits above Budha; Kuja orbits above Shukra; and Guru orbits above Kuja and Shani orbits above Guru. The Sapta Rishi Mandala or the Great Bear is above Shani and Dhruva or the Pole Star is situated above the Sapta Rishis. It is stated that the distance from the Nakshatras and the Planets is two lakh yojanas.

Planets and Nakshatras: The various Nakshatra Mandalis or Star Constellations responsible for the beginnings of the various Planets were narrated by Suta Maha Muni quoting Veda Vyasa as follows: Vivaswan the son of Aditi was Sun the first Planet was born in the Constallation of Vishakha. Chandra or Tvisimam the son of Dharma originated in Krittika. Shukra the son of Bhrigu Maharshi was born in Tishya or Pushya. Brihaspati, the Deva Guru and the son of Angirasa Maharshi was born in ther constellation of Purva Phalguni. Kuja Deva the son of Prajapati is lit up with nine 'Agni Jwaalas' was born from the Star Constellation of Purvashadha. Shani Deva the son of Surya is full of seven Flames of Fire was born in Revati 'Nakshatra Mandali'. Budha Deva the son of Chandra too has five fires of illumination and was born of Dhanishta. Rahu the enemy Surya and Chandra of Tamasic trait was born in Bharani while Ketu the son of Mrityu who was full of darkness at his abode was born to Aslesha Constellation; his characteristic is known for destruction and death. As Rahu and Ketu were born in these Stars, those humans born in these Stars do have evil effects during the specified Nakshatras and would to well to worship the respective Stars and Almighty as well to ward off the impact.

In sum, Aditya is the Prime Planet; Shukra is the Prime of Taraagrahas; Ketu is the Prime of meteors; Dhruva is the Prime fulcrum of all Luminaries scattered in all directions; Shravishta (Dhanishtha) is the best of Nakshatras; Uttaraayana is the Prime Ayana; Sisira is the Prime of Rithus; Magha is the best of 'Maasaas' or Months; Shukla is the Prime of the Pakshas or Fortnights; Pratipat is the Prime Tithi; between Day and Night, the Day is better of the two; and the best of Muhurtas is that which is governed by Rudra Deva. Among 'Kala Pramanaas' or the Measurements of Time, the best indeed is 'Nimesha'. The best Pancha Varsha or the Period of FiveYears called a 'Yuga' is what starts from Dhanishta to Shravana. Indeed, Divakara is identified as 'Kaala' or the 'Chaturvidha Bhuta Pravartaka' or the Top Controller of Time. Indeed, this Universe is made and managed by Paramatma; and the Science of Jyotisha is unfathomable by those who could very well see and think: *Aagamaadanumaanaas –cha* pratyakshaadupa pattitah, Pareekshya Nipunam Buddhayaa Shraddhaatavyam vipaascitaa/ Chakshush Shastram Jalam Lekhyam Ganitam Buddhivittamaah, Panchaitey hetao Vipraa Jyotirganana vivechaney/ (No human being could grasp or even guess the Form, Substance, Feature, Position and Movement of the Extra-Terrestrial Entities by mere vision. One has to perceive, guess, imagine and believe by various media like Scriptures, Interpretation, discernment and logic. The possible means are vision, water, picturisation and computation.)

### Halahala and Nilakantha, Shiva as a Fire Column and Shiva Linga as Worship Symbol

As Devi Parvati enquired of the origin of Maha Shiva's epithet as Nilakantha, the latter narrated that once when Devas and Danavas decided to churn Ksheera Samudra or the Ocean of Milk with the objective of producing Amrita (Nectar), there burst out a huge column of Poisonous Fire called Halahala that enveloped the whole World threatening to destroy Creation in totality. The agitated Deva-Daanavas approached Brahma Deva and conveyed to him: *Pradurbhavam Visham Ghoram Samvartaagni samaprabham, Kaalamrityuravod- bhutam yugaantaadityavarchasam/ Trilokyotsamaad Suryaabham Visphurattat samamtatah, Visheynottishthamaanena Kalaanala samatvishaa/ Nirdagdho Rakta gouraango krutah Krishno Janardanah, Tam drushtwaa raktagouraangam krutam krishnam Janardanam/ Tatah sarvey vayam bheetaaswaameva sharanam garaah, Suraanaamasuraanaam cha shrutwaa vaakyam bhayaavaham/ (Pitamaha Brahma! When the ocean was being churned, terrible fire of poisonous fumes emerged which was like 'Kaalaagni' that might destroy the Universe at the terminal time of the Yuga. It has even turned the red physique of Janardana into black colour and on seeing this we got frightened and have come to you for refuge!) Brahma replied that the Kalaagni thus created is not possible of elimination by neither himself nor Vishnu but could only be extinguished by Shankara alone; so saying Brahma recalled Omkara Mantra and prayed to Parama Shiva as follows: <i>Namastubhyam* 

Virupaaksha Namastey Divya chakshusey, Namah Pinaaka hastaaya Vajrahastaaya vainamah/ Namahstrailokya naathaaya Bhutaanaam pataey namah, Namah Suraari hantrecha Soma Suryaagni chakshusey/ Brahmaney chaiva Rudraaya Vishnavey chaiva tey namah, Sankhyaaya chaiva Yogaaya Bhutagnaamaaya vai namah/ Manmathaanga vinaashaaya Kaala prushtaaya vainamah, Suretasetha Rudraaya Devadeyaaya ramhasey/ Kapardiney Karaalaaya Shankaraaya Haraaya cha. Kapaaliney Virupaaya Shivaaya Varadaayacha/ Tripuraghna Makhagnaaya Maatrunaam pataye namah, Vriddhaaya chaiva Shuddhaaya Muktaayaiva Balaayacha/ Lokatrayaikaveeraaya Chandraaya Varunaayacha, Agraaya chaiya chograaya Vipraayaaneka chakshusey/ Rajasey chaiya Satyaaya Namasteyyyatayonaye, Nityaaya chaivaanityaaya nityaanityaayavainamah/ Jagataamaarti –naashaaya Priyai Naaraayanaayacha, Umaapriyaaya Sharvaaya Nandivaktraankitaayacha/ Pakshamaasarthamaasaaya Ritusamvatraraayacha, Bahu rupaaya Mundaaya dandinecha Varuthiney/ Namah Kapaala hastaaya Digvaasaaya Shikhandiney, Dhanviney Rathiney chaiva Yaminey Brahmachaariney/ Rugyajuhssaamavedaaya Purushaayeshwaraayacha, ityevamaadicharitai stotraih stutya namostutey, evam stutwaa tato Brahmaa pranipatya varaananey/ (Our prayers to you Virupaksha or of Uneven and of Divine Eyes; Our greetings to you Pinaaka Hasta, Vajra Hasta, Trailokyanaadha, Bhutapati, Suraari; You have Soma-Surya and Agni as your eyes; You are Brahma, Rudra and Vishnu; Samkhya, Yoga and congregation of all Spirits; You are the Destroyer of Manmatha; Kala Prushta or the Backing of Kala Deva or the God of Time; the Sacred Virility; Rudra; Deva Deva; Kapardini, Karaala; Shankara; Hara; Kapalini, Virupa; Shiva; Varada or the Benefactor; the Killer of Tripurasura; the Destroyer of Daksha Yajna; the Chief of Deva Matrikas; Sanatana, Shuddha; Mukta; Bala; Unique Hero of Three Lokas; Chandra, Varuna, Agra or the Elder; Ugra or the Irate; Vipra, Multi-Visioned; Personification of Rajasa and Satwa Gunas; of Unknown Origin; Nitya or Everlasting; Anitya or Temporary; Both Permanent and Unstable; Perceivable and Imperceivable; Chintya or Possible of Meditation and Achintya or beyond Contemplation; Shiva! You are the Form of various Time Units like Fortnight, Months, Seasons, and Years; You are Multi-Figured; of Shaven head; wearer of a 'Danda' or Staff; Leader or Army called Varudhini; Kapala hasta or the holder of a Skull; Digvastra; Sikhandi or of a tufted head, Dhwani or Sound; Rathi or the Charioteer; Yami or Self-Controlled; the Embodiment of Ruk-Yajur-Sama Vedas; Purusha; Ishwara and Bhagavan who is praised on several ways by devotees!) As Brahma eulogised Shiva as above, the latter enquired of the reason of Brahma and Devas approaching him and Brahma explained the urgency of the situation as Devas and Danavas undertook the deed ofchurning the Ocean of Milk and in the process emerged 'Kaalaagni' or the unprecedented and ever-increasing out-break of huge poisonous conflagration enveloping the Skies and there was no other might in the Worlds except himself capable of devouring the 'Halahal'. Maha Deva readily agreed to consume the poison and as soon as commenced to do so, his throat turned blue and there was a sensation in the throat as though Takshaka the King of Cobras was licking his tongue and the 'Kaalakuta' or the worst kind of poisonous stream was discharging which Maha Deva controlled instantly lest the flow would travel down and possibly damage the body parts presumably hurting the Lokas in his stomach; then he retianed the enflamed blue-coloured poison in his throat and thus secured the epithet of Nilakantha; Suraasuraas, Yaksha, Gandharva, Bhuta, Pischacha, Uraga and Raakshasas were bewildered to witness the Scene of Maha Deva's gulping the Halahala and broke into spontaneous and exclamatory commendation: and exclamatory commendation: Aho Blam Viryaparaakkramastey twaho Vapuryoga balam tavesha/ Aho Prabhutwam tava Deva Deva Mahaadbhutam Manmadhadeha naashana, Twameve Vishnuschaturaananatwam twameva Mrityurvaradastameva/ Twameva Suryo Rajanikarascha Vyaktiswameyvaasya charaacharasya/ Twameva Vahnih Pavanastwameva Twameva Bhumih Salilam twameva, Twamevy Suryasya charaacharasya Dhaataa Vidhhaata Pralayastwameva!

(Ishwara! What an unimaginable and most surprising capacity that you possess! Your valour and intrepidity are unique and awe-inspiring! Manmadha naashaka! Deva Deva! How extraordinary is your Governance! You are Vishnu! You are the Chaturmukha or Four Faced Brahma! You are Mrityu, You are Varada, You are Surya, You are Chandra, You are indeed the Form of 'Charaachara Jagat'; You are Agni; Vaayu Deva too; You are Prithvi; You are Jala; indeed you are the Supremr Creator, the Preserver and

also the Extinguisher!). Bhagavan Shiva asserted: Any of my Bhaktaas would read or hear this incident of Nilakantha would secure benefits galore: Brahmanas would enrich their knowledge of Vedas; Khsatriyas secure plentyof Land; Vaishya would reap immence profits and riches and all others would secure happiness. Those who suffer from ill-health and chronic diseases would gain excellent health; if under any kind of duress including even imprisonnment would become free; the expectant mothers would be assured of easy and comfortable deliveries; unmarried would secure admirable life-partners; those who lost wealth would recover it in double measure. Such devotees would also receive the fruits of charity of hundreds of cows; those who read evan a Stanza would be rid of bad dreams, obstacles, evil spirits and fears of any kind!

Shiva as a Column of Fire: When King Bali conquered Swarga by defeating Indra and Devas, Vishnu assumed the Incarnation of Vama Deva and subdued Bali and freed TriLokas from the rule of Daitya-Danavas. The ever grateful Devas were re-instated and approached Bhagawan Vishnu lying the Milk of Ocean; they accompanied Siddha-Brahmarshi- Yaksha- Gandharva-Apsara- Naga-and others to convey their gratitude to Narayana as Dharma was revived and injustice was abolished. Vishnu then replied that he was redeemed by a higher Deity who created the Universe in totality and that he was made to conceive from his belly a lotus on which was materialised another magnificent Being with Four Heads seated on a deer skin and carrying Kamandalu or the Vessel of Sacred Water called Brahma. Even as Vishnu mentioned this, Brahma arrived and asked Vishnu as to who was he! Brahma stated that he was a Swayambhu or Self-Born and Vishnu claimed that he was not only the Creator but the preserver too. While this diologue was going on, there appeared a huge 'Agni Stambha' or a Column of Fire. Both Brahma and Vishnu visioned the Column which was unusually resplendent and hot and as they went nearer it looked like a Linga an image of cosmic manhood and a Phallic symbol. It was made neither of Gold nor Silver nor even of a metal nor stone. It was seen or disappeared in flashes and looked as high as Sky and far underneath the Ground. The vision of this fiery column was frightening even to Vishnu and Brahma, let alone Devas and others who approached Vishnu for thanks-giving. Both Brahma and Vishnu realised that their own egoistic seniority inter-se was meaningless as there indeed was another far Superior Entity was visible before them. Brahma suggested that he would like to see the height of the Fiery Linga and requested Vishnu to assess its depth and gave themselves an outer limit of thousand years to accomplish the discovery failing which they could return to the same Place. As both of them failed in their missions they returned and prayed to the Linga as follows:

Namostu tey Lokasuresha Deva Namostutey Bhutapatey Mahaatman, Namostutey Shasvata Siddha Yoginey Namostutey Sarva Jagat pratishthita/ Parameshti Param Brahma twaksharam Paramam padam, Jyesthastwam Vamadevascha Rudrah Skandah Shivah Prabhuh/ Twam Yagnastwam Vashatkaarastwamomkaarah Paratapah, Swaahaakaaro Namaskaarah Samskaarah Sarvakarmanaam/ Swadhaakaarascha Yagnascha vrataani niyamaastathaa, Vedaa lokaascha Devaascha Bhagavaaneva Sarvashah/ Aakaashasya cha Shabdastwam bhutaanaam Prabhavaapyayah, Bhumou Gandho Rasaschaapsu tejorupam Maheshwarah/ Vaayoh sparshascha Devesha Vapushchandra -masastathaa/ Buddhou Jnaanam cha Devesha Prakruterbeejamevacha/ Samhartaa Sarvalokaanaam Kaalo Mrityumayomtakah, Twam dhaarayasi lokaamstreemstwameva srujasi Prabho/ Purvena Vadanena twamindratwam prakaroshi vai, Dakshinena tu vaktrena lokaansamkshipasye punah/ Paschimena vaktrena Varunastho na samshayah, Uttaarena tu vaktrena Somastwam Devasattamah/ Ekadhaa Bahudhaa Deva Lokaanaam Prabhavaa- pyayah, Adityaa Vasavo Rudraa Marutascha Sahaashvinah/ Saadhyaa Vidyaadharaa Naagaaschaaranascha Tapodhanaah/ Vaalakhilyaa Mahaatmaanastapah Siddhaascha Suvrataah/ Tatwatah Prasutaa Devesha yechaanye niyatavrataah, Umaa Sitaa Sinivaali Kuhurgayatrya evacha/ Lakshmih Kirtirdhrutirmedhaa Lajja Kantirvapuh Swadhaa, Tushti Pushtih Kriyaachaiva Vaachaam Devi Saraswati, Twattah Prasutaa Devesha Sandhyaa Raatristathaiva cha/ Survaayutaanaamayutaprabhaaya Namostutey Chandra Sahasragoura, Namostutey Vajra Pinaakidhaariney Namostutey Saayaka chaapa paanaye/ Namostutey Bhasma vibhushitaanga Namostutey Kaama Sharira naashana, Namostutey Deva Hiranya garbha Namostutey Deva Hiranyavaasasey/ Namostutey Deva Hiranya yoney Namostutey Hiranyanaabha / Namostutey Deva

Hiranya retasey Namostusey Netrasahasrachitra/Namostutey Deva Hiranyayarna Namostutey Deva Hiranyakesha, Namostutey Deva Hiranya Vira Namostutey Deva Hiranya daayiney/ Namostutey Deva Hiranya Naatha Namostutey Deva Hiranya Naada, Namostutey Deva Pinaakapaaney Namostutey Shankara Nilakantha/ (Salutations to You the Lord of Lokas, Devas and Sarva Bhutas, Mahatma! You are the One with everlasting yogic powers and the One who established in all over the Lokas; You are the Parameshthi or the Supreme Deity, Param Brahma or the Ultimate Brahma, the Final Destination; You are the Jyeshtha or Senior Most, Vamadeva, Rudra, Skanda, Shiva and Prabhu; You are the Yagna Swarupa; Vashatkara or the All-Pervasive Supreme Controller and the Personification of Sacrifices; Omkara Swarupa; Swahakara or the Embodiment of all Yagna karmas; Samskaara or the Great Reformer; Sarva Karmanaam or He who directs all the Sacred Deeds; Swadhaakara or the Emblem of all the deeds in connection with worship to Pitru Devatas; the decider of the Regulations in the performance of Yagnas and Vratas; You are the Highest Authority on Vedas, to the Lokas, of Devas and for everything. You are the Akaasha (Sky) and its Shabda (Sound); You are the Origin and Termination of all the Beings; You are the Bhumi and its Gandha or smell; you are the Physique of Chandra; the Feelings of the Heart and the Knowledge of the Mind; You are the Basic Seed to Prakriti or Nature; You are the Samharta or Mrityu or Kaala; you are the Preserver and Sustainer of all the Lokas; the Supreme Creator; you keep Indra on your Eastern side; retain all the Lokas on your Southern side; keep Varuna on your west; keep Soma on your Northern side; Devadi Deva you are the creator and destroyer of the Lokas not once but again and again repeatedly. Maha Deva! You are the manifestation of Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, Maruts, Aswinis, Sadhyas, Vidyadharas, Naagas, Charanas, Valakhilyas the Tapaswis; Siddhaas; and all the Mahatmas.Parama Shiva! you are the Srashta of Uma, Sita, Sinivali, Kuhu, Gayatri, Lakshmi, Kirti, Dhriti, Medha, Lajja, Kanti, Vasus, Swadha, Tushti, Pushti, Kriya, Sarasvati, Sandhya, and Raatri. You have the brilliance of Ten Thousand Suryas and thousand Chandras; Vajra Pinaka Dhari or the Wearer of Pinaka or Bow and Arrows of Diamond-like radiance, rigor and resistance! Both Brahma and Vishnu continued to extol Parameshwara further: Bhasma Vibhushita, Mammadha marana kaaraka; Hiranya Garbha, Hiranya Vaktra, Hiranya Yoni, Hiranya Naabha, Hiranya Retasa, Sahasra netra yukta; Hiranya Varna, Hiranya Kesha, Hiranya Veera, Hiranyaprada, Hiranya Natha, Hiranya dhwani kaaraka; Shankara; and Nilakantha!)

As Nilakantha was glorified by Brahma and Vishnu as above, he replied with the thunderous voice of clouds and a reverberating voice that filled up the Universe stating that he was indeed pleased with their commendation and asked them to visualise his Maha Yoga Shakti as they could not ascertain his beginning or end of his Linga Swarupa. He confirmed that both of them were born to him and were of his own 'Amsha' or his Alternate Shakti. Brahma was born of Maha Deva's right hand and Vishnu from his left hand and was invincible in any Loka! He blessed both of them and directed them to discharge their duties viz. Brahma to create and Vishnu to Preserve Dharma (Virtue) and Nyaaya (Justice).

Shiva Lingodbhava: Maha Muni then narrated the origin of Shiva Linga and its Universe

Worship to the Rishis at the Naimisha Forest: In the days of yore on Himalayas, there was Daruvana famed for rigorous Tapasya by Maharshis along with their wives; the Maharshis were performing several Sacred deeds like Yagnas, Vratas, Agni Karyas, Swadyaayana of Vedas and Scriptures and fastings: their life's motto was Nitya Karma, penance and strict adherence of whatever Scriptures prescribed. The women folk of the Munis too followed the prescribed discipline, food restrictions and living regimen of austerity and devotion. Into this Society of Self Restraint, unfailing virtue and orderliness arrived a semilunatic, nude and weird stranger who had compelling and magnetic personality of strong and attractive physical limbs. His body was full of Bhasma (Ash); his hair was dishevelled; his teeth were crooked and his eyes were blood red. Some times, he laughs boisterously; some time he shouts; some times he cries loudly; suddenly he brays like a donkey; and some other times he breaks into dances amourously. He makes sheepish advances to women irrespective of their age. The Maharshis in Daruvana suffered the Stranger for enough of time and finally confronted him in a group. Among the Rishis, somebody said that after all Rishis would not get angry normally but when they did, no force on Earth could be withstood!

Bhrigu Maharshi cursed Vishnu himself and the latter had to take human births ten times! Gautama Rishi cursed Indra for his sin of cheating the Rishi's wife into bed by Indra and the latter had to drop his male organ on Earth as a result. Agastya Muni cursed King Nahusha who became a temporary Indra and desired to visit Sachi Devi's abode by the palanquin borne by Maharshis and as he got impatient kicked the short statured Agastya Muni saying 'Sapra Sarpa' or 'Quick Quick' but the angry Agastya purposively mis-understood and cursed Nhusha to become a serpent! Thus arguing among themseslves the Rishis told the Stranger that it was highly improper for householders to behave irresponsibly as him and that he should atleast wear a piece of cloth when he could be respected; otherwise the alternative would be to drop his Linga (Male Organ). Maha Deva then replied that even Brahma would not be able to drop his Linga by force, let alone Maharshis; yet, he himself would drop it on his own; having said so Maheshwara disappeared and assumed the Linga Swarupa. As this incident took place, there was all round havoc in the Universe: Trailokye Sarvabhutaanaam praadurbhaavo na jaayatey, Vyaakulam cha tadaa Sarvam na prakaashet kinshana/ Tapatey chaiva Naadityo nishprabhavah Paavakastathaa, Nakshatraani Grahaschaiva Vipareetaa vijanjirey/ (In all the Tri Lokas, the process of Srishti got badly affected; there was Universal agitation and nothing was shining; Sun became pale, Agni lost its heat and the Stars ceased to twinkle; and the Planets lost their moorings). The Maharshis immediately realised that the dropping of the Linga brought in terrible consequences and ran up to Brahma and conveyed the entire incident but Brahma too was agitated as to what happened and confirmed that the so called Stranger was none else but Maha Deva himself; that it would take ages to realise him; that he was the Supreme Lord of Devas, Rishis and Pitru Devas; that after thousand Yugas he would assume the Form of Kaala Deva at the time of Pralaya; that he was the unique creator with his own radiance; that he was Vishnu with Lakshmi as his consort and Srivatsa as his invaluable ornament; that he was called as Maha Yogi during Krita Yuga; that he was the 'Kratu Rupa' or Yagna Swarupa in Treta Yuga; that in Dwapara Yuga, he was 'Kaalaagni' and in Kali Yuga he is Dharma ketu or the Insigna of Virtue; that Panditas ought to realise all these Forms; that he was the combined Shakti of Agni's amoguna, Brahma's Rajo Rupa and Vishnu's Satvika Rupa; that he was 'Digvasana' and was named Shiva; and that hence the Maharshis should worship Shiva with singular ernestness as he was Ishana, Avyaya and that Maha Linga who would surely dispel the fund of ignorance which they never had as he desired to counsel you but you made in the incorrigible mistake of your life time!

As Brahma chided the Maharshis thus, the latter bent to him on their knees and commence worship to Maha Deva in his Linga Swarupa and after a year's puja, the latter re-entered Daru Vana once again and all the Munis made a collective Prayer to him as follows: *Karmanaa Manasaa Vaachaa tatsarvam Kshanthumarhasi, Charitaani Vichitraani Guhyaani Gahanaanicha/ Brahmaadeenaam cha Devaanaa, Durvijnaani Shankara Swaagatam tey na jaaneemo gatim nava cha naiva cha/ Vishweshwara Mahadeva yosi sosi Namostutey, Stuvanti twaam Mahatmaano Deva Devam Maheshwaram/ Namo Bhavaaya Bhavyaaya Bhaavanodbhavaayacha, Ananta Bala Viryaya Bhutaanaam Pataye Namah/ Samhatraye Kapishaangaaya Avyayaaya Vyayaaya cha, Gangaasalila dhaaraaya chaadhaaraaya Gunaatmaney/ Tryaimba –kaya Trinetraaya Trishula vara dhaariney, Kandarpaaya Namastubhyam Namostu Paramatmaney/ Shankaraaya Vrishankaaya Ganaanaam Pataye Namah, Danda- hastaaya Kaalaaya Pashahastaaya vai Namah/ Vedamantra pradhaanaaya Shata jihvaaya tey Namah, Bhutam Bhavyam Bhavishyascha Sthaavaram Jangamam cha yat/ Tawa Dehaatsamutpannam Deva sarva midam Jagat, Shambho paahi cha bhadram tey praseeda Bhagavamstatah/ Ajnaanaadyaadi vaa Jnaanadyantikachit kurutey Narah, Tatsarvam Bhagavaaneva kurutey Yoga maayayaa/* 

Maha Deva! As we were completely ignorant of our mistakes that were committed by our speech, thought and deed, do kindly pardon us. Shankara! Your actions are indeed strange, secretive and incomprehensible not only to us but to Devas and to Brahma too. We welcome you back to Daruvana as we are unable to find our ways and means as to how and what to do in the context of our unpardonable

acts. Vishweshwara! We do not know as to who are you! Mahatma, Maheswara, Bhava, Bhavya (the marvellous one), Bhavana (The Purifier), Udbhava (The Originator), Ananta Bala Virya or the Symbol of Eternal Strength and Virility; Our salutations to you the Creator and the Destroyer; Bhuta Naatha; Samhaara; Kapishanga Rupa or of the ochre complexioned body; Avyaya; Gangaadhara; Savaadhaara; Gunaatma; Traiyambika; Trinetra; Trishula dhaara; Sundara Vigraha; Vrishankana or Bull-bannered; Pramthagana Pati; Paasha Hasta or the Carrier of Paasha in hands; Kaala Swarupa; Veda Mantra Pradhana; Sahasra Jihva or Thousand Tongued; the Knower of the Past, Present and Future; Sthavara Jangama Deva or the Lord of Immobile and Moving Beings; your body creates the Universe in totality! Do save us Shambhu, Bhadra, Bhagavan! Kindly be pleased to human indiscretions like what we did under the cover of Yoga Maya of Parameshwara; may you be restored in the Linga as earlier!).

As the famed Munis including Gautami, Atri, Angirasa, Bhrigu, Vasishtha, Vishwamitra, Sukesha, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Marichi, Kashyapa and Samvarta sought Maha Deva's un-qualified pardon and prostrated before him, Bhagavan was extremely pleased. Then the Munis requested Parama Shiva himself to provide clarifications on certain issues that remained unaswered to them so far: *Bhasma snaanam cha nagnatwam Vaamatwam pratilomataa, Sevyaa sevyatvam tu Vibho etadicchaama veditum*/ (The clarifications required are Bhasma Snaana or the bath of ash, nakedness, left-handed rituals, contrary actions, and the distinction of worthiness of Service to Deities or its unworthiness).

Bhagavan gave the clarifications: Etaddaha sampravakshyami kathaa Sarvaswamadya vai, Agniham Somayutah Somaschaagna- mupaashritah/ Krutaakrutam Vandatyaagnim bhuyo lokaah samaashritaah, Asakru - cchaagninaadagdham Jagasthaavara jangamam/ Bhasmasaadhyam hi tatsarvam pavitramidamutthamam, Bhasmanaa veeryamaasthaaya Bhutaani parishinchati/Agni kaaryam cha yatkrutwaa karishyati cha trayaausham, Bhasmanaa mama viryena muchyatey Sarva kilbishaih/ Bhaasayatyeva yadbhasma shubham vaasayatey cha yat, Takshanaatsarva paapaanaam bhasmeti parikeertatey/ Ushmapaah Pitaro Jneyaa Devaavai Somasambhavaah, Agnishomaatmakam sarvam Jagatsthaavara jangamam/ Ahamagnirmahaatejaah Somaschayaishaa mamaambikaa, Ahamagnischa Somascha Prakrutyaa Purushahswayam/ Tasmaadbhasma Mahaa Bhaagaa mad-viryamiti chochyatey,Swaviryam Vapushaachaiva dhaarayaameeti vai sthitah/ Tadaa Prabhruti Lokesh Rakshaarthamashubheshu cha, Bhasmana kriyatey rakshaa sutikaanaam griheshucha/ Bhasmasnaana vishuddhaatmaa Jita krodho Jitendriyah/ Massmeepa mupaagamyana bhuyovinivartatey/ VratamPaashupatam

yogampaayoganirmitam,PurvamPashupatamhyetirnnirmitamtadanuttamam/Sheshaaschaashra-minah Sarvey Panchaatsurashtaah Swayambhuya, Srishtirshaa mayaa Srashtaa Lajja moha bhayaatmikaa/Nagnaa eva hi jaayantey Devataa Munanyastathaa, Ye chaanye Maanavaa Lokaey Sarvey jaayantyavaasasah/ Indriyairajiair nagnaa dukulenaapi samvrutaah, Taireva samvruto gupto na vastram kaaranam smrutam/ Kshamaadhruti rahimsaacha vairaagyam chaiva Sarvashah, Tulyomaanaapamaanow cha tat praa –varanamuttamam/ Bhasma paanduradigdhaango dhayatey manasaa bhayam, Yadya kaarya sahasraani krutwaa snaayanti bhasmanaa/ Tadsaryam dahatey bhasmayathy- agnistejasaavanam/Tasmaadyatnaparobhutwaa Trikaalamapi yah sadaa/ Bhasmanaa kurutey snaanam Ganapatyam sagacchati/ Samhyatya cha Kratun sarvaan gruhitwa -mamrutamuttamam/ Dhyaaanti ye Maha Devam leenaasttad bhaava bhaavitaah, Uttareynaatha pradhaanam teymrutatwamayaapnyuh/ Dakshiney Naathapanthaanam ye smashaanani bhejirey/ Animaa Mahimaa chaiya Laghimaa praaptireyacha, Garima Panchami chaiya shashtham praakaamyameyacha/ Ishitwam cha Vashitwam cha hyamaratvam cha tey gataah/ Indraadayastathaa Devaah kaamikam vratamaas-thitaah, Aishvaryam Paramam praapya sarvy prathita tejasah/ Vyapagata mada mohamukta raagaastamairajadosha vivarjitaswabhaavaah/Paribhavimidamuttamam viditwaa Pashupatidayitamidam vratey charadhwam/ Yah pathedvai shuchirbhutwaa shraddhaadhaano jitendriyah, Sarva paapa vishuddhaatmaa Rudralokasa gacchati/

(Maha Deva agreed to give a detailed reply to the Maharshis on the specific queries: 'I am Agni; Soma depends on me for every thing. All the Lokas and their Beings are dependent on Agni. The Universe

consisting of 'Sthavara Jangamas' or the Moving and Immobile Beings was burnt by Agni on countless occasions. The resultant Bhasma was sacred and acts like a perfect Purifier; for one thing Bhasma is the bye-Product of anything burnt in Prakriti and thus the cleanser and the steriliser but far more significantly since it was mixed with my own potency. All the hallowed deeds related to Agni thus enjoy the double benefit of Agni's purification and my own virility. In fact Bhasma empowers as a 'Trausha' too or the trebler of the span of life of whosoever applies it on his body. Bhasma's accurate meaning is that it destroys sins. It provides radiance and fragrance of body and is a symbol of Auspiciousness. Pitras call it 'Ushmava' or the provider of coolneess. Devas enjoy longevity due their constant drinking of Soma Rasa; indeed Soma and Agni are myself. If I am Agni, my Ambika is Soma; I am the Purusha and she is Prakriti. And that indeed is the reason why Bhasma is my virility. That is why, Bhasma is used on occasions of inauspiciousness also, or to ward off Evil Spirits and at the Places of baby-births. Once a person has a 'Bhasma-Snaana' or ash-bath he gets his soul purified and overcomes anger and thus named Jitendriya or the One who controls his limbs. Bhasma is a constituent of Pashupata Yoga and Vrata and the impact of the Vrata is far-reaching as a sincere practitioner of the Vrata ceases to have a rebirth!

Again about the aspect of 'Nagnatwa'; indeed none entered into the world with clothes; Devas and Maha Yogis are without clothes. Those who conquer their Physique have least significance or relevance for 'Vastra' and those who could not do so are as bad as having the show of Vastras. Vastra is indeed not a protection for character or a sense of shame; on the other hand, it is more shameful to perform disapproved deeds even while covering the body with expensive clothes! Thus Vastra's significance should be replaced by Kshama or Patience, Dhriti or Courage and determination, Ahimsa or Non-Violence, Equanimity, Non-Interference, Resistence to Material Attraction and Vairagya or an Outlook of Other-Worldi –ness. A person who applies bhasma constantly would gradually develop noble traits till purification of his conscience is attained. Invariably such an ash-prone person seldom does wrong; if by mischance he does indisretions then his latent virtue burns off the impact of such wrong-doings. Thus one must make it a point to apply the auspicious Bhasma regularly. Those who practise Yoga could attain Siddhis like Anima (Infinitesimal), Laghima (weightlessness), Mahima (Enormity), Prapti (Attainment), Garima (Heaviness), Prakyama (Independence of Thought), Isatwa (Superiority), Vasitwa (Capacity to control), and Amaratwa (Immortality). Indra and Devas had attained Siddhis through the means of Kamaya Vratas; like wise Humans too could have access to the Mysique World.

## An Outline on Yagnas, Rishis and Vedas

During the intermission of Krita and Treta Yugas, the activity of agriculture was in full swing, 'Varnashrama' Dharma was established well and Swayambhuva Manvantara was well commenced; Indra Deva established the Institution of Yagnas on firm footing. Maharshis launched the 'Yagna Karmaas' extensively. Ritwiks or the Brahmanas came to be fully engaged in the discipline of Yagnas; 'Saamagaas' or the practitioners of Sama Veda improved their finesse in singing the Stanzas and Atharvas perfected Yajna Kriyas. As Devas were invoked through the medium of Agni Homas by Brahmanas, the respective 'Indriya –atmika' Devas ( Adhi Devatas who are of the Form of Rasa- Rupa- Gandha) were in receipt of the 'Havi Pradaanaas'. But, the Yagnas so performed involved Sacrifices of Animals. There were violent arguments for and against the Sacrifices; the Maharshis were too divided and approched Indra to clarify; those who did not support violence to animals emphasised that such sacrifices were blatant Adhrama and quoted Brahma: Adharmo Dharma ghaataaya prarabdhah Pashu himsayaa, Naayam Dharmo hyadharmeyam na himsaa Dharma ucchatey/ Aagamena bhavaanyagnam karotu yadihecchati, Vidhi drushtena Yagnena dharmenaavyapa setunaa/ Yajna beejaih Surasreshtha yeshu himsaa na vidyatey, Trivarsham paramam kaala-mupaiteyraprarohibhih/ Esha Dharmo Mahaapraajna Virinchivihitah puraa, Evam Vishva- bhungidrastu Rishibhisttatwa darshibhih/ (Dharma is being badly affected by the practice of animal sacrifices. Indeed, violence to animals is Adharma. If Yagnas are to be performed in according to Scriptures, they should not affect the established tentets of Non-violence. Sacrifices should be executed with seeds not kept beyond three years maximum so that they should nor give out sprouts to grow. Therefore, usage of such seeds do not involve any violence and that was what Lord Brahma laid

down). As such contradictory arguments were given, Indra asked King Vasu to clarify and the King without applying much of his own mind followed Manu Smriti and gave the ruling that Sacrifice was an essential part of Yagnas. He also stated that after all, the Mantras in Darshana Grandhas were in accordance of the procedure of Sacrifice and to change the practice of Animal Sacrifice would tantamount to falsifying the Mantras concerned! Having stated thus, King Vasu the illustrious son of Uttanapada left for Rasatala and it so transpired that his return did not material subsequently inferring there by that his judgment was erroneous and invalid. Eventually, Swayambhu Manu too was in bad spot by the Maharshis in this context of his defence of animal sacrifice. It was also noticed that thousands of Munis and Brahmanas reached Swarga in executing Yagnas without resorting to animal sacrifice. In fact, several Munis were stated to have Salvation even without resorting to Yagnaas or or that matter even by the practice of Charity! Innumerable Munis took to the alternative of 'Tapas' or meditation by observing fasts or limited food of fruits and vegetables and accomplished Swarga; they observed Alobha or nongreediness, Bhuta Daya or compassion for co-Beings, Dama or Physical Control, Brahmacharya or Celibacy, Satya or Truthfulness, Dhriti or Moral courage. Countless such practitioners of Dharma among Brahmanas and Kshatriyas reached Salvation like Uttanapada, Priyavrata, Dhruva, Sudhama, Viraja, Shankhu, Pandyaja, Prachina Barhi and so on proved that Tapas and Virtue were effective means of Salvation and Yagnas were not as effective! With Yajna one might meet Devas but Tapas yields Vairaja or Kaivalya!

**Rishis:** The Truth of the Lokas is called 'Ruta' and those who know about it are called Rishis. There are five kinds of 'Risha Jaataas'viz. Ayaktaatmas, Mahan Atmaas, Antaratma, Bhutatma Riksa Jaataas and Indriyatmas. 'Brahma Maanasa Putras' were ten viz. Bhrigu, Marichi, Atri, Angirasa, Pulaha, Kratu, Manu, Daksha, Vasishta and Pulastya who were 'Paramarshaas' or Maharshis. Ishwara's progeny were Kaavya or Shukra, Brihaspati, Kashyapa, Chyavana, Upadhya, Vamadeva, Apasya, Ushija, Kardama, Vishravasu, Shakti and Valakhilyas; all these were called 'Aartavaas' and they all attained Rishitwa due to their Tapas. Then there are Rishis called 'Rishikaas' viz. Vatsara, Nagriha, Bharadwaja, Deergha -tama, Brihaduktha, Sharadvat, Vaajasrava, Shruti, Vashvaashya, Paraashara, Dadhichi, Shamshapa, and Vaishravana- the King turned Rishi- due to their Satyatva or Truthfulness. These are all Rishis who were Mantra Kartaas. Then there were nineteen Rishis called Mantra Vaadis viz. Bhriga, Kaavya, Prachetasa, Ruchika, Atmavanta, Ourva, Jamadagni, Vidudu, Saaraswata, Aarshishena, Yadhaajit, Veetahavya, Suvarchasa, Vaishya, Pruthuva, Divodaasa, Baadhyashva, Grutsna and Shounaka. Angirasa, Vaidyaga, Bhardwaja, Bhashkali, Rituvaaka, Garga, Shini, Samkruti, Purukatsa, Mandhata, Ambarisha, Yavana ashwa, Pourakutsa, Trisadasya, Dasyumanta, Aaharya, Ajameedha, Tukshya, Kapi, Vrishaadarbha, Virupaashwa, Kanva, Mudgala, Utathya, Sanadwaaja, Vaajashravasa, Ayasya, Chakravarti, Vaama Deva and Asija. Three Rishis of Angirasa Vamsha were also famed viz. Brihaduktha, Dirghatama, and Kakshivanta. From Kashyapa Varga were Kashyapa, Vatsaara, Naudhruva, Raibhya, Asita, and Devala and the six were all Brahmavaadis. From the clan of Atri were Atri himself, Avyasana, Shaavaashwa, Gavishthara, Avihotra, Dheemanta and Purvaatithi; all these were Maharshis and Mantrakaaraas. Of the Vasishta vamsha were Vasishtha, Shakti, Paraashara, Indrapramati, Bharadwaja, Maitravaruni and Kundina; all of them were Brahmavaadis. From Kushika Vamsha were Vishwamitra the son of Gadhi, Devratha, Udgala, Madhucchanda, Agha-marshana, Ashtaka, Lohita, Katha, Kola, Devashravasu, Renu, Purana and Dhanamjaya. Maharshis Agastya, Aayu and Drudhaayu and Idhmayaha were called Brahishthaas as they were appointed for Tapasya to Brahma. Manu the son of Vaivaswata and Pururava King called Aila were basically Khatriyaas but were also considered as Rishis. Similarly three Vaishyas viz. Balandana, Vatsa and Samkeela were also qualified as Rishis.

**Vedas:** In Treta Yuga, there was only one Veda divided by four parts. As there was no unanimity of opinion among Maharshis in terms of Mantras, their classification, seriatim and intonations / voice modulations, there was confusion at different Places among varied groups of Rishis. Neither the broad classification was uniform and approved nor the innumerable patterns of editing; the process of reconciliation was too tardy; Rishis, Rishikas, and Rishi-Putras entered into unending and complex intrepretaions. In Dwapara Yuga, there was a division of Vedas into Ruk-Yajur-Saama Veda Samhitas by

Maharshis with varied compositions, Mantra bhedas or variations, Swara bhedas or intonations etc. For eg. Yajur Veda which was rather unwieldy was presented in two parts. With passage of time the Vedas were evolved and so did Shastras; there were innumerable variations witnessed in Ayurveda and its branches, Jyotisha Shastra, Artha Shastra, Hethu Shastra or Tarka and so on. In Dwapara Yuga itself Veda Vyasa divided Vedas into Four Vedas of Ruk-Yajur-Saama and Atharva Swarupas. 'Shrutarshas'or those conversant with the Knowledge of Vedas, in the subsequent generation of Veda Vyasa made several editions of each of the Vedas. The most prominent of the Shutarshas were Bahrucha, Bhargava, Pyla, Samskrutya, Jaabaali, Sandhyaasti, Maathara, Yagjnyavalkya, Parashara, Upamanyu, Indrapramati, Maamduki, Shaakali, Bhaskali, Shokapani, Naila, Alaka, Pannaga, Pakshiganta and so on totalling eighty six of them. In fact there are eighty six 'shaakhaas' or branches of Yajur Veda. Among the illustrious Dwijarshas with Veda Jnaana were Vaishampayana, Louhithya, Kantha kaala, Avashaavadhuh, Shaamapati, Palandu, Alambi, and Kamalapati and their Sishyas. Now, the Sages called Adharvyus of the Charaka branch of Krishna Yajur Veda were different and they were Jaimini, Bharadwaja, Kaavya, Poushyanji, Hiranyanabha, Koushilya, Lougakshi, Kusumi, Laangali, Shalohotra, Shaktiraja, and Bhargava. King Pururava and forty six other Rishis and their Sishyas too were 'Shrutarthas' and they were specialist Vidyarthis in 'Homaas' called Kaushiti, Kankamudya, Kundaka, Parashara, Lobhalobha, Brahmabala, Kranthala, Madagala and Markandeya.

The Term Sapta Vindhya is associated with Sama Veda and the constituents are Hrinkara, Pranava, Geeta, Prastaava, Pratihotra, Upadrava, and Nidhana. Minus the first and the second of these is called Pancha Vidya. In fact, the Mantras of Ruk-Yajur-Saama Vedas contain nine characteristics which are common and these are: Murti (Form), Ninda (Blame), Prashamsha (Praise), Anugjna (Approval or Endorsement), Aakrosha (Admonition), Tosha (Gladness), Prashna (Questioning), Aakhyaana (Narration), and Aaasashti (Blessing). The Mantra bhedaas or different Mantras related to the above nine characteristics are twenty-four types: viz. Prashamsha, Stuti, Aakrosha, Ninda, Parivedana, Abhishapa, Vishapa, Yagna, Aakshepa, Prashna, Prativachana, Ashirvaada, Arthaakyana, Samkatha, Viyoga, Abhiyoga (Fight) Katha, Samtha or Sthiti, Vara or boon, Pratishedha (Tiraskara or disapproval), Upadesha (Instruct), Namaskara, Spruha (Desire), and Vilapa.

Veda Vyasa appointed five disciples viz. Jaimini, Sumanta, Vaishampayana, Paila and Lomaharsha. He commisioned Paila to study Rig Veda, Yajur Veda to Vaishampayana, Saama Veda to Jaimini, and Atharva Veda to Sumanta. Suta Muni was asked by Vyasa to study Itihasaas, Puranas and Kalpa Vakyas. As regards, Yajur Veda, he made four parts and Chaturhotras or four Yajna vidhaanaas or procedures of conducting the Sacrifices. There are four Ritviks called Hota, Adhvaryu, Udgata, and Brahma. Vyasa appointed Adhvarya to recite Yajur Veda, Hota to recite Rig Veda, Udgata to recite Saama Veda and Brahma or the Chief of Rutviks to recite Atharva Veda. The Yajur Veda Mantras are quite long and complicated for pronounciation and that is why hundred Ritviks are required to participate in an Ashwa Medha Yagjna. Paila divided Rig Veda into two Samhitas and entrusted these to two disciples viz. Indrapramati and Bashkala. Bashkala made four Samhitas viz. Bodhya, Agnimatara, Paaraashari and Yagnyavalka Shakha. Indrapramati taught one Shakha to his own son Satyahita; the latter taught it to his son Satyashri. Shakalya, Rathitara and Bharadwaja the son of Bashkala were the students of Satyashri.

Interestingly, Vaishampayana asked his disciple Yagnyavalkya to omit out whatever was learnt from him since the Guru was annoyed as the latter bragged that his Guru's Brahma hatya sin could be redeemed all by himself out of his Tapasya; the cause of the Brahma Hatya was that the Guru could not reach a specific place at an appointed time as per a Group understanding that failure to so reach would tantamount to Brahma hatya. Having left his Guru, Yagnyavalkya meditated to Surya Deva and the latter taught a fresh version of Yajur Veda which was not known to Vaishampayana too. Since Surya Deva assumed the Form of a horse to teach Yagnyavalkya, the Yajuveda Samhita was called 'Vaajina'Yajur Veda or that which was taught to the latter.

Besides the Four Vedas, there were twelve more Vidyas, including the six Vedangas of Shiksha, Kalpa, Vyakarana, Nirukti, Chhandas and Jyotisha; besides Meemaamsa, Nyaaya Vistarana, Dharma Shastra and Puranas, as also Ayur Veda, Dhanur Veda, Gandharva Veda and Artha Shastra.

# Highlights of Kashyapa Vamsha: display of Virtue and Evil as signified by his Wives

One of the the most illustrious examples of Bhagavan's Creation was Kashyapa Muni the worthy son of Maharshi Marichi the Brahma Manasa Putra or the brain-born child of Brahma. As Daksha Prajapati and Prasuti gave birth to sixty daughters, ten were married to **Dharma** viz. Arundhati, Vasu, Lamba, Bhanu, Marutvati, Sankalpa, Muhurta, Sadhya and Vishwa. Sadhya begot Twelve Sadhyas called Jaya Devas who were considered as good as Devas. They were actually reckoned in the context of Yagnas called Darsha, Pournamasa, Brigati, Rathanta, Maah, Vithi, Vivithi, Akuti, Kuti, Vigjnatra and Vigjntata. To Dharma were also born to Vasu the 'Ashtavasus' viz. Dhara, Dhruva, Soma, Ayu, Anala, Anila, Pratyusha and Prabhasa; Marutvati gavs birth to Maruts; Muhurta was born to Muhurta; Sankalpa was born to Sankalpa, Vishwey Devaas to Vishwa and so on. Besides Dharma, Daksha Prajapati also married off twenty seven to Chandra, one to Shiva and thirteen to **Kashyapa**.

Kashyapa was wedded to the famed mothers of Lokas viz. Aditi, Diti, Danu, Kaashtha, Arishta, Anayuvu, Khasa, Surabhi, Vinata, Taamra, Muni, Krodhavasa, and Kadru. His sons were the Dwadashadityaas viz. Dhata, Aryama, Mitra, Varuna, Amsha, Bhaga, Indra, Vivaswanta, Pusha, Parjanya, Twashta, and Vishnu. From Surabhi, Kashyapa was blessed with Ekadasha Rudraas viz. Angaraka, Sarpa, Niruti, Sadasaspati, Ajaikapaada, Ahirbhudnya, Jwara, Buvana, Ishwara, Mrityu and Kapali. From Surabhi, there were two daughters, viz. Rohini and Gandharvi; Rohini begot four daughters named Surupa, Hamsakali, Bhadra and Kamadu: Kamadu gave birth to Cows, Hamsakali begot Mahishaas; and Gandharvi begot Ashvas or horses; Surabhi also begot a Vrishabha/ Bull which was secured as 'Shiva Vahana'.

From Aditi, Kashyapa Muni begot Indra and Devatas. Diti gave birth to Hiranya kashipu as Kashyapa concluded the 'Ati Raatra' of the just finished Ashvamewdha Yagna; the new born was the younger brother of Hiranyaaksha. Their younger sister was Simhika the wife of Viprachit and their son was Rahu. Hiranya Kashipu performed unusual Tapasya for hundred years and secured a significant boon from Brahma that the entire Universe should be subservient to him, that he would be the highest authortity to administer one and all, Deva-Danava-Asuras must be under his control, that all the Beings in the Worlds should eat only after him, that he should not be killed by a wet or dried up weapon neither in day time nor the night. Brahma was taken aback by these demands yet granted the boon. Eversince he secured the boons, the Daitya occupied the body, thought and Soul of everything in the Creation just as Narayana would and controlled all the Lokas; he threw out Indra and Devatas from Swarga, controlled the movements of Planets, Dikpalakas and Daitya-Danavadi Beings alike to this extent that whichever direction would be viewed by him should be prostrated by every one and all including Maharshis and all the Human Beings should consider him as Bhagavan! As the dominance of the evil deeds became climactic, Bhagavan Vishnu assumed a Form of neither a man nor a lion called Narasimha and tore off the body of the Daitya with his sharp nails which were neither wet nor dry, and the time of the killing the Evil was neither day time nor night but the perfect 'Sandhya'. Hiranyakashipu's sons were Prahlada, Anuhrada, Samhrada and Hrada. Hiranayaksha was also terminated earlier as he sought to sink Bhumi Devi down to Rasatala by Vishnu assuming the incarnation of Varaha Deva and the progeny of Hiranyaaksha were five mighty sons especially Surasantapana who was invincible against Devas and fought along with Tarakasura who was decimated by Skanda Deva at a later date. Daitya called Mooka of Hlada's lineage and son of Sunda was killed in Maha Deva's fight with Arjuna as the latter assumed the Swarupa of a Hunter of Animals. Sunda's son as Maricha the son of Taataka who took the form of a Golden Deer to entice Devi Sita and was killed by Shri Rama of the Great Epic of Ramayana. The Grand son of Prahlada viz. Bali who too became invincible was subdued by Vamana Deva and suppressed into Rasatala as Baleyas.

Marud Ganas: Since there were such continuous deaths of her family lineage, Diti was terribly upset as all the gallant heros of Daityas were destroyed successively despite the valiant acts of their intrepidity and resoluteness; she entreated Kashyapa Muni to bestow a boon to her that she must give birth to a son who could kill Indra. Kashyapa Muni too felt that the progeny of Aditi were getting too powerful enjoying Swarga while the progeny of Diti were continuously rotting in the Sub-terrain Lokas despite the fact that they were courageous and highly enterprising. Thus the Muni directed Diti to follow celibacy and fasting with concentrated Tapasya for thousand years and and worship the Supreme whereafter she should observe a 'Vrata'. Diti sought Shukraachaarya's direction to observe the Vrata. As Diti conceived eventually, Indra some how got the awareness of what was happening and approached Diti with feigned feelings of affection to his mother's own sister and made her agree to supply flowers and other materials for the Vrata and stayed with her day and night to protect her from Evil Spirits. As Diti fell asleep almost unconciously when Sun was at peak on the Sky, Indra then entered her Garbha with his 'Vajraayudha', saw the fully grown up boy inside and even as the child cried, Indra cajoled him saying Maaroda maaroda (don't cry, don't cry) and sliced the child into seven parts and further cut the seven parts to total up to forty nine sub-parts; the fully awaken Diti Devi pleaded mercy and cried louldly saying: na hantavyah, na hantavyah! ( not to be killed, not to be killed!). Meanwhile Indra jumped out and sought her pardon for the imprudence that he committed! The terribly distressed Diti was taken aback and got bewildered for a while and having recovered her senses said that Indra need not be afraid of her anger as she would reconcile to what had happened since after all his action was not unjustified as his position would have been at stake of the child was really born.

Having said that most magnanimously she blessed each part of the killed boy as follows: *Bhavantu mama Putraanaam Sapta Sthaanaani vai Divi, Vaataskandhaanimaansapta charantu mama Putrakaah*/ (May my sons be borne by Vayu into seven eternal places of glory and be blessed as Marut Devas with unprecedented splendour and reputation at seven parts of the Universe!)

Diti declared further: Let the first sphere be on Earth, the second in Surya Mandala, the third in Chandra Mandala, the fourth on the Sky at the Jyotisha Mandala, the fifth among the Graha Mandala or the Planetary System, the sixth in the Saptarishi Mandala and the seventh in Dhruya Loka, May my sons move about freely in all the Seven Places with magnificence and pride. Diti further blessed and ordained that the first batch of Marud Ganaas or the first 'Vaata Skantha' or Air Pocket be called 'Avaha'in the vicinity of Bhumi; the second batch of the Vayu Skandha would be reputed as 'Prahava' beyond the clouds upto the Solar Region; the third and fourth batch of Marud Ganaas moving in the Lunar Mandala and underneath the Star Constellations, the Vayu Skandha would be fabled as 'Samyaha'; the fifth bunch of Marud ganaas reaching upto Planets would be distinguished as 'Vivahava'; let the sixth in the series climbing upto Saptarshi Mandala be popularised as 'Anuvaha' and the final hike nearby Dhruva Mandala be glorigied as 'Parivaha'. Oh Shakra! Let it be known all over the Universe that the names of my children on the basis of the deeds entrusted to each of the Ganas are: Shukra jyoti, Satya, Satya Jyoti, Chitra Jyoti, Jyotishmaan, Sutaya, Chaitya; the second Gana would comprise Rutajit, Satyajit, Sushena, Sevajit, Sutamitra, Amitra, and Suramitra; the names of the third Ganaas would be Dhatu, Dhanada, Ugra, Bhima, Varuna, Abhiyuktaaksha, and Saahvya. The fifth Gana would have the names of Druk, Anadruk, Sirat, Druma, Vrikshaka, Mita, and Samita. The Shasthagana would have the names of Iruk, Purusha, Naanaadruk, Samachetana, Sammita, Samavrit and Prati harta. (Incidentally, Brahmanda Purana did not mention the other names). Indra assured that whatever Diti had stated would indeed be firmed up and that all the Forty Marud Ganaas would be share holders of Yagna bhaagas or the Authorised Consumers of the Sacrficial Offerings. They would also be his own brothers and the Co-Devataas!

**Danavas:** The children of Danu were of unimaginable strength and grit with huge tolerance power for determination. Viprachit was the leader. Their capacity to preform Tapasya was colossal and their record for securing boons was enormous. They were cruel, self-centered, evil-minded, quick to act and mastered the art of deception and trickery. At the same time, they read Sciptures to learn about Maya and were

engaged in Agni homas apparently for wrong reasons. Shambara, Dundhubhi, Maya, Indrajit, Taraka, Jambha, Sarabha, Naraka, Pralamba and so on were some of the most revenguful and evil minded Danavas. Another wife of Viprachit viz. Simhika gave birth to Saimhikeyaas who were worse than Danavas and the most cruel and confirmed killers of Brahmanas and Sages. Rahu was the eldest son of Simhika. The most notorious among them included Vatapi, Kalanabha, Ilvala, Bhouma, Namuchi and so on. It was stated that Parashurama buchered as many as ten thousand Saimhikeya Ganas. The famed King Yayati wedded Sharmishtha who was the daughter of Vrishaparva Danava and Sharmishta gave birth to the glorious King Puru. The Danavas named Poulema and Kaleya subdued Devas but eventually Arjuna of Pandavas killled them. Mayasura and Apsara Rambha gave birth to five sons and a daughter Mandodari the wife of Ravanasura. Several Danavas were by birth the instinct of being the destroyers of Yajnas, Sraddhas, Brahmanas, children and cows.

Gandharvas and Apsaras: Both Gandharvas and Apsaras were the progeny of Sages. Gandharvas were Bhimasena, Ugrasena, Suparna, Varuna, Dhritarastra, Gomanta, Suryavarchasa, Patravanta, Arkaparna, Prayuta, Bhima, Chaitraratha, Vikhyata, Sarvajit, Trayodasha, Shaalishira, Parjanya, Kali and Narada. Their younger sisters were Aruna, Anapaya, Vimanushya, Varambara, Mishrakeshi, Asiparnini, Alumbusha, Maarichi, Shuchila, Vidyutparna, Tilottama, Adrika, Lakshmana, Kshema, Divya, Rambha, Manobhava, Asita, Subahu, Supriya, Subhyuja, Pundarika, Ajagantha, Sudati, and Sutapa. Their brothers also include Haha, Huhu, Subahu and Tumbura. Additionally, there are 'Bhulokaapraras' too like Hamsa, Jyotishtama, Aachaara, Daaruna, Varudha, Varenya, Suruchi and Vishyavasu. Other Aprasaras were Menaka, Sahajanya, Parnini, Punjikasthala, Kritasthala, Ghritachi, Vishwachi, Purvachitti and Pramlocha. Urvashi was the daughter of Narayana.

Nagaas: Devi Kadru another wife of Kashyapa Muni was the mother of Serpents, the most well known of them being Sesha, Vaasuki and Takshaka. Other serpents of significance included Akarna, Hastikarna, Pinjara, Aryaka, Iravata, Mahapadma, Kambala, Ashwatara, Elapatra, Shankha, Karkotaka, Dhananjaya, Mahakarna, Maha Nila, Dhitarashtra, Balahaki, Pushpadamshtra, Sumukha, Durmukha, Sunaamukha, Dadhimukha, Kaliya, Ambarisha, Akrura, Nahusha and so on. They were all capable of flying. Some of these had obnoxious features with long tongues, crooked damshtras, huge noses, elongated mouths, multihooded, blood eyed, twisted, very lengthy, broad faced, of various colours and body designs, vengeful and highly poisonous.

Rakshasas: Khasa was another wife of Kashyapa and they had two sons, one born at dusk time and another at the dawn time. The elder had four hands and four legs. His body was full of high hair growth all over his body and his limbs were disproportionate. His younger was born with three heads, three hands and three legs. Both were ferocious and grotesque with eight teethed damshtras. The younger child shouted out of hunger and said that he desired to eat up his mother. The elder son prevented his mother being eaten her up and Kasyapa Muni scenting the risk appeared at once on the spot. He named them as 'Rakshasaas' and blessed them with the boon that their touch of any thing would turn fleshy and full of blood, that in the day time they might be weak and inactive but as the dusk time they would become gradually mighty and change their bodies to those of any species at their wish; that they could disappear as they please too; and that their food would mainly comprise the flesh of Devas, Brahmanas, human beings, animals, birds and so on. Thus fortified with the boons, Rakshasas ruled across the Worlds in the nights.

The progeny of Kashyapa thus represented the high-points of Virtue and Evil as though the Worlds were on balance. Kashyapa's wives truly characterised the facets of the Positive and Negative Forces as reflected in their offspring and their descendants:

Aditirdharmashila tu Balasheelaa Ditistathaa, Tapahsheelaa tu Surabhirmaayaasheela Danustathaa/ Gandha –sheelaa Munischaiva Krodhaadhyayana shaalini/ Geetasheelahyarishtaa tu Krura sheelaa Khashaa smrutaa, Krodhasheelaa tathaa Kadruh Krodhaacha Shuchi shaalini/ Vaahasheelaa tu Vinataa Taamraa vai ghatashalini, Iraanagraha sheela tu hyanaayur –bhakshaney rataa/ Matrustulyaabhijaatascha Kashyapaatmajaa Prabho!

(Devi Aditi is a natural epitome of Virtue; Diti is a sign of Might and Valour; Surabhi is a Tapaswini and the mother of cows and buffalos; Danu is a Mayavati and the mother of Daanavas; Muni is a Gandha Shila; Krodha is Adhyana Sheela; Arishta is a Geeta sheela or has an aptitude for music; Khasa is a symbol of cruelty and wickedness; Kadru is the representation of anger and revenge; Krodha is a natural icon of Purity; Vinata is prone to Vahanas and thus the mother of the illustrious Garuda Deva the Vehicle of Vishnu Bhagavan and Aruna Deva the Charioteer of Surya Deva; Tamra Devi is a byword of Evil and immorality and the mother of Raakshasas; Ira is the emblem of kindness and morality; and Anayu stands for pleasure and enjoyment. These are the natural characteristics of the wives of Kashyapa Muni as truly reflected in their offspring too.)

Indeed, Kashyapa Vamsha stood for Dharma, Kshama, Buddhi, Satpravartana and Competence on one side and Adharma, Jealousy, Ignorance, Misbehavior, Viciousness, Cruelty, and utter depravity on the other! It produced Devas, Danavas, Rakshsaas, Yakshas, Piscachaas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Sarpas, Pashu-Mriga-Pakshi-Vriksa-Lataas. Indeed all these features are amply manifested among Manavas and are deeply immersed in the whirlpool of Samsara- at times displaying virtue and at other times demonstrating viciousness as they are always targetted with the grand mix of the Satvika-Raajasica and Tamasika Gunas; they are ostensibly motivated by the Chaturvidha Purusharthaas of Dharma-Artha-Kaama-Moksha!

# Outlines of Skanda's birth, Pitru Vamsha and Shraddhas ('Nakshatra Shraddha Phala' included)

Of the 'Sapta Pitruganas', four have a Form and three are Formless. The 'Amurtamaan' (Formless) Pitras reside on a Mountain called 'Santaanaka'named after the Term of Progeny. They were the sons of Prajapati Viraja who were great practitionres of Yog and enhance the magnificance of Soma Deva. Their mind-born daughter was Devi Mena who was the wife of Himavan and her son was called Mainaaka. The son of that Mountain Mainaaka was Krouncha. Mena had three daughters viz. Aparna, Ekaparna and Ekapaatala. Both Ekaparna and Ekapatala took to 'Saynaasa' and Aparna practised Tapasya. Mena the mother Aparna asked the latter not to engage herself in Tapasya and said: U -A or 'Child-Do not' and thus was reputed in the Tri Lokas as UMA! All the daughters were remarkable Yoginis but Uma was outstanding. She became the wife of Parama Shiva but for long they were issueless. The Asura named Taraka secured a boon from Lord Brahma that none excepting the son of Shiva could destroy him; the clever Asura was aware of the past tense well since Mahadeva would never marry again as his earlier wife Sati Devi opted for Self-immolation at the notorious Daksha Prajapati's yagna since she as the daughter of Daksha felt slighted that she was uninvited to the function due to his animosity against her husband Mahadeva. To stage-manage to provoke Mahadeva with a longing for Uma who was serving him with the supply of flowers etc.at that time for his puja, Indra commissioned Manmadha and his wife Rati Devi to shoot Shiva with passionate flowers by his flowery arrows; but the plan was foiled and Maha Deva opened his third eye and Manmatha was burnt to ashes. But to the disappoin- ment of Tarakasura Shiva and Uma got wedded in due course and Indra was anxious that a son should be born quickly to the couple. Indra asked Agnideva to take the shape of a sparrow to witness the bed chamber details of Shiva and Parvati as to whether and why not soon enough that Shiva and Uma were not seeking marital union. As Agni's entry as a sparrow into the bedroom just at the time of Shiva-Parvati physical union, Shiva by a suspicion and haste just at that time of the union spilt his virility on the floor. Devi Parvati was dreadfully furious and cursed Agni for his terrible indiscretion and forced to consume and carry Shiva's virility. For years together Agni carried the Garbha but could not tolerate the heaviness and approached Devi Ganga who accepted Shiva's virility. But Ganga too could not bear the severe flames any further and relieved herself when a child with unprecedeted spledour was materialised on her river-banks. As soon as the child was born, celestial drums were sounded, Siddha Chaaranas rained fragrant flowers, Gandharvas sang and Apsaras danced with joy; Daitya-Danava-Rakshasas were burnt off in thousands by the sheer radiance of

the boy; Krittika Devis were anxious in competion to feed the child with their milk and Indra having realised their disquiet materialised Six Faces to allow all the six Krittikas to feed the child simultaneously gaining thus the epithets of **Shanmukha** and **Kartikeya**. Even as child was born, his full range of armoury and weaponry including the most potent 'Shakti Shula' were in position. Bhagavan Vishnu despatched toys viz. a peacock and a cock to play by his Garuda; Vayudeva despatched a 'Kukkuta Dhwaja' or a Rooster Flag; Devi Saraswati gifted a Veena- a plucked musical instrument; Swayambhu Brahma gifted a goat; Shambhu presented a sheep'; and Indra appointed Skanda as the Deva Senapati or the Commader in Chief of Devas. As soon as the announcement was made by Indra, Pramathana Ganas, Deva Ganaas, Vinayaka ganaas, Matrika ganas and Bhutaganaas surrounded Skanda.

Skanda Deva then shifted over to Soma Pada, where the sons of Maharshi Marichi resided; Pitaras like Barhishaadas were Soma Padas. The Manasika Kanya or the mind born daughter of Barhishaadas was Acchoda in the form of a 'Sarovara' but she did not recognise her Pitaras and instead selected one Sage called 'Amavasu'as her father. Amasasu was actaully a Nabhaschara or Sky-wanderer who fell in passion and slept with an Apsara named Adrika. Since she adopted Amavasu as the father, Acchoda started to slide down to Earth and as she was crying away, the real Pitras recognised her and told her that keeping in view the mistake of selecting a person as a father who indulged in sin, she had to suffer but after her death she would get a rebirth as the daughter of a King and in a further birth she would become called Mastyagandhi and would beget an illustrious Maharshi called Veda Vyasa; in fact, Satyavati or Matsyagandhi was born to the then Apsara Adrika and Amavasu! Then Satyavati in her subsequent birth would rejoin Pitruloka as the Manasika Putri of Pitras as Peevari. She would be blessed with five great sons called Krishna, Goura, Prabhu, Shambhu and Bhurishrava, besides a daughter.

Another branch of Pitaras originated from Agni Deva and Swadha Devi. The **Agni Sutas** who had 'Yogotpatti' as their Manasika Kanya. She was married off by Santkumara as the better half to Daitya Guru Shukracharaya; she became well known as Eka Shringa and enhanced the prestige of Bhriga Vamsha. Then there were Sadhyaganas the progeny of Angirasa Maharshi. They were the Pitaras called '**Upahutaas'** and they were worshipped by Kshatriyas and their Manasika Kanya was Yashoda. The Vaishya ganaas worship **Ajyapa** Pitras originated from Maharshi Pulaha; Viraja was their Manasika Putri who was the wife of Nahusha and the mother of Yayati. **Sukaala** Pitaras originated from Vasishtha Vamsha whom Shudras worship. Those Pitaras who were in the Maanasika Lokas in Swarga and their Manasika Kanya was Narmada, the wife of King Purukutsa and the mother of 'Trasaddasya'.

Thus each Varna or Caste would be required to perform Shraddhaas to the concerned Pitru Devas. Those who perfom Apyaayana Kriyas would be pleasing Soma, Agni and Vaivaswata (Yama); as indeed most certainly the Pitraas. The Shraddha Kartas are bestowed with thousands of blessings by Pitras like Yoga Shakti, Ishwarya, Arogya, Rajya Phala, Satsaantana and Sarvakarya Samruddhi!

**Shraaddhaas:** A Shraadda Karta should recite the following Mantra thrice at the beginning and end of the Shraddha: *Daivatebhyah Pitrubhyascha Maha yogibhyashra eva cha, Namah Swadhaayai Swaahaayai Nityameva bhavatyatya,Adyevasaaney Shraadhaasya Tiraavrittham Japetsadaa/* On reciting this Mantra Pitaras are duly invoked and Evil Forces are blown off. If the appointed Brahmanas of the Shraddha Karma are prevailed on to recite this Mantra, Pitraas of three generations are certainly redeemed and the Karta would gain Veerya, Shourya, Artha, Satwa, Aashis, Ayu, and Buddhi.

The next Mantra viz. Saptarshicha is highly propitious: Amurteenaam Samurteenaam Pitrunaam Deepta Tejasaam, Namasyaami sadaa teshaam dhyaaninaam yoga chakshushaam/ Indraadeenaam cha netaaro Dashamaarichayostathaa, Saptaarsheenaam Pitrunaam cha taannamasyaami kaamadaan/ Manvaadinaam cha netaarah Suryachandramasostathaa, Taannamaskruya Sarvaanvai Pitru—mastu vidhishyapi/ Nakshatraanaam Grahaanaamcha Vayavyaagneyoscha Pitrunatha/ Daavyaa prithivyoscha sadaa namasyaami kritaanjalih/ Devasshinaam cha netaarah Sarva loka namaskritaah, Traataarah Sarva bhutaanaam Namasyaami Pitaamahan/ Prajaapater-gavaam Vahneyh Somaayacha Yamaaya cha, Yogeshwreybhyascha sadaa namasyaami kritaanjalih/ Pitruganebhyah Saptabhyo Namo lokeshu satasu,

Swayambhuvey Namaschaiva Brahmaney Yogachakshushey/ Etaduktam cha Saptaarchir Brahmarshigana sevitam, Pavitram Paramamhyetatcchreemadroga vinaashanam, Etena vidhinaayuktastreenvaraan labhatey narah/ (Saptaarshi Mantra: My salutations to those Pitru Devas who are possessive of Form or Formless but are replete with radiance, Dhyaana and Yoga; my obeisances to Pitru Devas who are Manvaadi Nayakaas or Surya Chandraadi Nayakaas; I fold my hands to Pitru Devas who are of Nakshatras, Grahas, Vayu-Agni-Varuna-Prithvi-Akaakaashas; Pitru Devas are Devarshis and are worshipped by one and all! They are the Samraksha Kartas of Sarvabhutaas; May I reverentially greet Pajapatis, Dhenu Maatas, Agni, Soma, Yama, Yogeshwaras and Pitamahaas; May I prostrate before the Pitruganaas in the Sapta Lokas and that the Omniscient Swayambhu who view the Pitruganaas! This is known as the Saptarchisha Mantra which is Sacred, Supreme, highly propitious, prosperous and bestower of excellent well-being). In other words, this Mantra assures Finest Food, Long Life and best progeny!

The significant inputs of Shraddas include the leaf-made vessels made of Sacred Trees like Palaasha, Plaksha, Nyagrodha, Kashmira and Madhuka in which to offer Pitru Yagna Phala; flower garlands; Gandha; Dhupa; Madhu (honey); ghee in the Agnishtomas; Deepa; Japa-homa- Phala mula Namaskaaraas; Vastra-Ratna-Go-Vastu- Dhana Danas; darbhas and tilas; and Bhaksya-Bhojya-Choshya-Lehya-Bhojanas. The climax however would be the Pinda Pradaana with tilas and ghee while invoking three generations of Pitrus by Apasavya Yagnopaveeta, sprinkling of holy water called Pitru Tirtha, by seating in the posture of bent knees; by pouring water drops keeping right palm under the left palm and by reciting the Mantras viz. Namovah Pitarah Soshaaya and Namovaha Pitatah Sounyuh and lift up the first in Apasavya position and after prokshana position it back and follow the same procedure for the second and third pindaas to represent Pitamaha and Prapitaamah. Then would follow Nava Kshouma Sutra Samarpana. The Karta would be seated Dakshinmamukha for peforming formal puja to the pindas laced on the darbha(Kusha gras). Later on the Bhoktaas should face North. The Shraadha Mantra states: Nihanmi Sarvam yadamedhyavadbhavet taascha sarvey Suradaanavaamaya, Rakshaamsi Yakshaah sapiscacha sanghaa hataa mayaa yaatu-dhaanaascha sarvey/ (Let the impurity be destroyed; Asuras and Danavas be destroyed and so let Rakshasaas-Yakshas-Piscacha Sanghas and Dhatus be destroyed) When this Mantra is recited the Evil Spirits should run away and not even look back!

Further, Karta should perform Homas for Karma Siddhi by using Dakshinaagni while other wise Loukika -agni could be utilised. As 'samidhas' or material offered are placed in the Homa Kunda, three types of Mantras are to be recited: *Agnaye swakavyavaahanaaya Swadhaa Angirasey namah-Somaaya vai Pitrumatey Swadhaa Angirasey Namah-Yamaaya Vaivaswataye Swadhaa nama iti dhruvam*/ While performing the homaas or offerings to Agni, these be performed to Agni to Southern side, to Soma to Northern side and to Yama in between. It is essential that the various homas are performed with liberal helpings of ghee, and samidhas so that Agni is flamed up brightly with the least possible 'Dhuma' or smoke. It is well known that in Pitru Karyas including Tarpanas, the word 'Swadha' must be used while in Deva Karyas only the Swaha Mantras are required to be utilised. Tarpanas to Pitaras are an integral part of the Shraddha Karma. As regards Pinda Visarjana, the Karta might offer the first Pinda to Agni to gain happiness; the middle Pinda might be offered to Agni to secure good progeny and the last Pinda be given away to a cow; those desirous of fame and name might offer the Pindas to a running water body and to obtain longevity might offer to crows; in all these cases, the Pinda Visarjana would have the desired effect if suitable Mantras are recited for obtaining the above benefits.

Nakshatra Shraddha Phala: Deva Guru Brihaspati detailed the results of performing Shraddhaas as per Nakshatras on specified days instead of the basis of Tithis; Yama Deva stated that such Nakshatra Shraddhaas are classified as Shashabindu Shraddaas; the fruits of performing them on the basis of Agni Homas are as follows: Those who perform these in Krittika Nakshatra are assured of Swarga if the Karta does the Shraddha with full faith and sincerity. Rohini Nakshatra Shraaddha would bestow ideal son. Mrigasirsha Shraddha Karta would enhance his physical radiance and intellectual faculties as this Nakshatra is Sowmya- featured. Shraddha in Ardra Nakshatra might lead the Karta to perform cruel

deeds! Punarvasu Shraddha helps partnership in Vyavasaaya or activities connected to agriculture as also also attainment of an excellent son. Pushyami Sharaddha too would result in Putra Prapti. Alsesha Shradda too would yield Veera Putra Prapti. Magha Nakshatra blesses Sarva Varna Shreshtthata or dominance of all Varnas. Purvaphalguni Shraaddha results in Material Prosperity. Natural nobility and Character would be the Phalaas of Shraddhas in Uttara Phalguni. Hasta Nakshatra Shraddha secures Sabha Pramukhyata or Dominance in the Public. Chitra yields progeny with social smartness and achievements. Swati assures business successs. Securing excellent progeny in Vishakha. Anuradha gives fame and authority. Jyeshta Nakshatra Shraddhas bestows High Positions in Public Life. Mula Nakshatra Shraddha relieves of physical ailments. Purvashadha Shraddha leads to high popularity and Uttaraashaadha Shraaddha liberates the Karta from distress and troubles. Shravana Shraddha bestows Parama Gati and that of Dhanishtha results in Vedaadhyana and excellent physical well being. Bhadrapada Shraddha provides the fruit of charity of thousand cows. Revati Shradda offers considerable fortune by gaining gold and silver. Ashwini provides Ashwa Prapti and Bharani Shraddha leads to the company and nearness of Uttama Sadhus. Thus Yama Dharma assured Shraddha Phalas on the basis of Nakshatras as above.

( More details are provided on Shraddhas vide the Chapters on 'Shraaddha Kalpa Varnana' in the Essence of Brahma Purana as also on 'Shraadda Prakarana' in the Essence of Kurma Purana as compiled by the same Author in the Series of the Essence of Puranas).

#### PARASHURAMA CHARITRA

## Parashu Rama Tapasya

The illustrious Incarnation of Bhagavan Vishnu as Bhargava Rama was the son of Jamadagni Muni and the grandson of the famed Bhrigu Maharshi and Devi Khyati. As instructed by hisfather and grandfather, Bhargava Rama performed stringent Tapasya in an Ashram in a deep jungle and visiting Maharshis like Bhrigu, Atri, Kratu, Jaabali, Mrikunda were impressed with the high concentration of Bhargava Rama who was seeking to target Shiva in his penance. In course of time, Maha Deva was pleased with Bhargava Rama's devotion and appeared in disguise as a hunter who presented a repulsive person with dark complexion and red eyes with bow and arrows and crude sword and knives of varied sizes and sharpness. He introduced himself as Tosha Pravarsha the Master of The Forest and that no knew person should step in the Forest, much less raise a Hermitage. Even Indra would not be able to reside in this forest without my permission, he said. The hunter then asked Rama as to was he and for what purpose that he was staying in the Forest for such a long time. The former replied that he was performing Tapasya to Maha Deva Shambhu and that he would like please that Sarveshwara, Sarva Sharanya, Abhaya prada, Trinetra, Sarvajna, Tripuraantaka and Shankara. The Hunter heckled at Parashu Rama and said that he was wasting his time. In the course of conversation, Parashu Rama realised that the Hunter was not an ordinary human being; he knew a lot of Shiva as the so called hunter mumbled that Shiva did Brahmahatya and that he snipped Brahma's fifth head. The Hunter further told Parashu Rama that after all he was trying to absolve himself of the sin of his mother's killing! (Once Jamadagni left for Tapsaya and his wife Renuka Devi went to a river to fetch water and witnessed Prince of Mrittikavati Chitraratha was enjoying swims in the river with his women and momentarily Renuka felt envious of the women; Jamadagni noticed that his wife committed a sin and on returning back to his Ashram he asked his sons to kill her for the sin; none of his elder sons were prepared but Prarashshu Rama sliced her neck and killed her at once; apparently, Jamadagni was able to revive Devi Renuka by his Mantra Shakti!). Bhargava Rama then realised that the hunter must be a Siddha! The Hunter further heckled Rama that his Tapasya was futile as he left his old father and killed his mother! Bhargava Rama then asked the hunter to identify himself: Was he Indra or Agni or Surya or Chandra or Vayu or Yama! You have come here to test my sincerity of Tapasya. Mahatma! Do reveal your self, thus prostrated Bhargava Rama and as soon as he stood up, Maha Deva revealed himself and a confused Rama in an ecstatic trance praised him as follows:

Namastey Nilakanthaaya Nilalohita murtaye, Namastey Bhuta nathaya Bhuta yaasaaya tey namah/ Vkyataavyakta Swarupaaya Maha Devaaya Meedhushey, Shivaaya Bahurupaaya Trinetraaya Namo nanah/ Sharanam Bhava Sharva dbhaktasya Jagatpatey, Bhuyonanyaashrayaanaam tu twameva hi paraayanam/ Yanmaya-aprakrutam Deva duruktam vaapi Shankara, Ajaanataa twaam Bhagayanmama tatkhshantu- marhasi/ Ananyayedya Swarupasya Sadbhaayamiha kaha pumaan. Twaamrutey tawa Sarvesha Samyak Shakreti Veditum/ Tasmaatwam Sarvabhavena praseeda mama Shankara, Naanyaasti mey gatistubhyam Namo bhuyo namo namah/ (Nilakantha, Nilalohita, Bhutanaadha, Bhuta vaasa! You are Perceivable yet impossible to Perceive, Maha Deva, Shiva, Bahurupa, Trinetra, Sharva! Indeed I am your faithful devotee and you are my final refuge; I might have talked lightly about you thinking that you were a normal hunter! Do pardon my ignorance and indiscretion; who else is capable of recognising your own magnanimity excepting yourself! I have no recourse else than surrendering myself to you totally!) Shiva replied to Rama: My Child! I am pleased with your Tapasya. I really wish I could bestow every Shakti to you although You deserve it. Yet, you are still not yet ripe enough to withstand the Rudra Shakti and the ralated 'Astraas'; hence you have to perform further Tapasya, resort to Sarva Tirtha Darshanaas and approach me when you consider fit. Subsequently, Bhargava Rama was engaged in Tirtha Darshanaas, fastings, Tapas, Homas, Japas, Snaanaas and other sacred deeds and moved about a lot in Bhumandala. Later, as per the instructions of Maha Deva returned to his Ashram and settled for his Shiva Puja. Meantime, there was a terrible battle between Devas and Asuras and the latter approached Maha Deva for help. Shankara then asked Mahodara to reach Parashurama to bring from his Ashram in Himalayas and the latter was instruced by Shiva to destroy the Asuras. Bhargava was bestowed with a variety of powerful Astra- Shastras and devastated Asuras in large contingents even while the remnants ran away to Rasatala. The victorious Bhargava returned to his Ashram and installed an Idol of the 'Kiraata' who confronted him in the Forest and worhipped him with flowers, Chandana, Dhupa, Dipa and Naivedyas. As Shankara made an appearance along with Marudganas and Devas, Rama fell on his feet and extolled him as follows:

Namastey Deva Devesha Namastey Parameshwara, Namastey Jagatonaatha Namastey Tripurantaka/Namastey Sakalaadhyaksha Namastey Bhakta Vatsala, Namastey Sarva Bhutesha Namastey Vrishabhadhwaja/ Namstey Sakalaadhisha Namastey Karunaakara, Namastey Sakavaabvaasa Namastey Nilalohita/ Namah Sarva devaa ri gana naashaaya Shuliney, Kapaaliney Namastubhyam Sarvalokaikapaaliney/ Smashanavisiney nityam Namah Kailasa vaashiney, Namostu Paashiney tubhyam Kaala kutavishaashaney/ Vibhavemara vandyaaya Prabhavey tey Swayambhuvey, Namokhilajagatkarma saakshibhutaataaya Shambhavey/ Namastripathagaaphena bhaasigaadrendumouliney, Maha bhogindra haaraaya Shiyaaya Paramatmaneyt/Bhasmasancchaanna deheaaya namorkaaginindu chakshushey, Kapardiney namastubhyamandhakaasura mardiney/Tripura dhwamsiney Daksha Yagna vidhwamsiney namah, Girijaakuchakaashmeeraviranjita mahorasey/ Maha Devaaya mahatey Namastey Krittivaasasey, Yogidhyeya swarupaaya Shivaayaachintya tejasey/ Swabhakta hridayaambhoja karnikaa madhyavartiney, Sakalaagama siddhanta saararupaaya tey namah/Namo nikhila yogendra bodhaanaayaamritaatmaney, Shankaraakhila yyapta mahimney Paramatmaney/Namah Shartvaaya Shaantaaya Brahmaney Vishwa rupiney, Adimadhyaata heenaaya Nityaayaavyakta murtayey/ Vyaktaavyakta swarupaaya sthula sukshmaa- tmaney namah, Namo Vedaanta Vedyaaya Vishwa Vigjnaana rupiney/ Namahsuraasura shreni mouli pushpaarchita anghnaye, Shri Kanthaaya Jagaddhaatrey Loka Kartrye namo namah/ Rajogunaataney tubhyam Vishwa srishti yidhaayiney, Huranyagarbha rupaaya Haraaya Jagadaadiye/ Namo Vishwaatmaney Lokasthitivyaapaara kaariney, Satwa vijnaana rupaaya Paraaya Pratyagaatmaney/ Tamoguna Vikaaraatya Jagatsamhaara kaariney, Kalpaantey Rudrarupaaya Paraapaa videy namah Avikaaraaya Nityaaya namah Sadasadaatmaney, Tawa yattatrajaananti Yoginopi Sadaamalaah/ Twaamavigjnaaa durjeyam Samyad Brahmaadayopi hi, Samsaranti Bhavey nyunam na tatkarmaatmikaaschiram/ Yaavannapaiti charanou tavaa- jnaana vighaatinah, Taavadbhhramati Samsaarey Panditochetanopivaa/ Sa yeva Dakshah sa krutisa Munih sa cha Painditaha, Bhavatascharanaambhojey yena Buddhih

sthirikrita/Su Sukshmatvena Gahanah Sadbhaavastetrayimayah, Vidushaamapi mudhena sa mayaa Jnaaya-tey kattham/ Ashabdagocha ratwena Mahimnastwa saampratam, Stotumupyanalamsamyaktwaamaham jadadhiryatah/ Tasmaanagnaanato vaapi mayaa Bhakyaiva Samstutah, Preetascha Bhava Devecha naunutwam Bhaktavatsalah/

(Devadeva! Jagannaadha, Tripuraantaka, Sakala adhyaksha, Bhaktavatsala, Sarva Bhutesha, Vrishabhadhwaja, Sakalaadhisha, Kanukaakara, Skaklaavaasa, Sakala Devaarigana Naashaka, Shuli, Kapaali, Sarva Lokaika paala, Nitya Smashna Vaashi, Kailasavaasi, Pashayukta, Kalakuta- vishaara, Sarva Vibhu, Amarvandya, Swayambhu, Shaktivaan, Sagatkarma Sakshi, Shambhu, Chandramouli, Sarpakantha haara, Shiva, Paramatma, Vibhuti sanchhanna deha, Suryachandraagninetra, Kapardi, Andhakaasura mardana, Tripura dhwamsi, Daksha Yagna Vinaashaka, Yogijana Dhyeya, Achintya Rupa, Bhakta hridayaambhoja karna madhya varti, Sakalaagama Siddhaanta Saara Rupa, Sakala Yogendra Prabhu, Shankara, Sakala Vyaapta Maha mahimna, Paramatma, Sharva, Shaanta, Jagadbrahma, Vishwarupa, Adimadhya rahita, Nitya, Avyakta, Vyaktaavyakta Swarupa, Sthula Sukshmaatma, Vedanta Vedya, Samasta Vishwa Viginaana Swarupa, Suraasurasangha Shreshtha puja paada, Shrikantha, Srishti karta, Lokakarta, Rajo gunaatma, Hiranyagarbha, Paratpara, Pratyagatma, Tamoguna Vikaara, Jagatsamhaara, Kalpanta Rudra Rupa, Parapara-Vida, Avikara, Nitya, Sadas adaatma, Buddhi Prabodha, and Buddhin-driya Vikara! My salutations to you as you are manifested in various Forms as Vasu-Rudra- Marud-Aditya- Saadhaya and Ashwini Kumaaras! You are Avikara, Aja, Nitya, Sukshma Rupa! You are not controllable and unimaginable even by Brahma! Those who continue in ignorance about you and your three major features of Srishti-Sthiti-Samhara are engaged births and deaths; as even great Scholars are unaware about you, what in the cycle of could I realise about you! Indeed your magnificence is far beyond description and voice; thus I am unable to commend you as my Stuti properly yat I know that you are affectionate to your Bhaktas!)

Maha Deva was indeed gratified with this kind of touching prayers and bestowed to him all kinds of Astra-Shastra Vidyas, their usages and withdrawing capacities; a outstanding horse; a distinctive chariot, a peerless bow and bunch of arrows, a distinctive Kavacha or body shield, Beeja Mantras whose recitation could either annihilate the worlds or shower blessings to his followers and in short provided unique Siddhis to Bhargava Rama equipping him with invincible powers enabling him to punish the Evil wherever it existed and at the same time to protect the virtuous and the noble.

### King Kaartaveeryarjuna and his invincibility

The most valiant and invincible King of the times Kaartaviryarjuna of Haihava Vamsha was contemporary to Bhargava Rama halted at the Ashsram of Jamadagna once along with his huge army which was tired and famished on an afternoon when Sun was hot and severe; the army did not have the strength to move forward and decided to rest. The King knew that the Ashram would not have the resource to feed the contingent but the Muni did provide excellent food to them. The King wondered as to how the Muni was able to do so and discovered that the Celestial Cow Kama dhenu was in the Ashram and fulfilled all the requirements of the inmates of the Ashram. The King desired to take away the Kamadhenu to his kingdom but Jamadagni declined politely initially and refused flatly later. The King returned to his Kingdom but sent his Minister to manage to bring the Celestial Cow, if necessary by force. Finally force was used and both the Muni and the Kamadhenu resisted till the last but were tortured; Jamadagni Maharshi was almost killed and Kamadhenu flew to Heaven! The soldiers returned only with the calf which was a wasted exercise since without the mother the calf was no avail anyway. On return to the Ashram, Devi Renuka found her husband lying dead in a pool of blood and fainted and after recovering from the shock with some passage of time, she cried incessantly enquiring about Bhargava Rama. Rama returned from the forest to fetch wood and flowers for homa and puja and was non- plussed about what all had happened. He witnessed his mother beating her chest again and again numbering twenty one times and took a vow that not only King Kartaveeryarjuna would be butchered but would also attack Kshatriyas as a race would be slaughtered twenty one times and wipe out traces of them all; for quite some time now Kshatriyas were harassing Brahmanas and Sages on many

counts, mostly out of fear that Brahmanas were gaining upper hand due to their knowledge and out of fear of an inferiority complex. Renuka decided to jump into fire along with her dead husband in the execution of the old practice of 'Sati Sahagamana' but a Celestial Voice stopped her attempt as Jamadagni's life would by revived once again. Bhrigu Maharshi came to learn of his son's death and on seeing his body stated that if he the Maharshi spent all his life as per Vedas and performed all virtuous deeds including Yagnas and Tapas, then Jamadagni his son should rise up from his death bed and sprinkled sacred weater on the dying body and up came Jamadagni fully resuscitated due to the glory of Bhrigu after full recovery came to realise Bhargava Rama's vow to kill Kartaveeryarjuna and felt sad, not only because that revenge was never the principle of a Brahmana but killing a King by one of his own Subjects would tantamount to 'Rajavadha' which was as atrocious as killing one's own father! Moreso King Kartaveeryarjuna was not only an illustrious King of extraordinary but also an outstanding devotee of Bhagavan Dattaratreya. This created a predicament to Bhargava Rama as there was a vow to kill the King and the Kshatriya Vamsha in twenty one attacks and on the other hand there was the considered advice tantamounting to an instruction of his father not to do so. Jamadagni then advised to pray to Brahma Deva and act according to his considered advice. Brahma too was not acceptable to either of the vows taken by Bhargav and affirmed that it would not be in order that if simply one King perpetrated a sin, there would be little justification to eradicate the entire Kshatriya Vamsha in twenty one battles! Yet, he blessed Rama to recite a Krishna Kavacha tittled 'Trailokya Vijaya' and visit Shiva Loka to seek his blessings in the matter. As Bhargava Rama with great difficulty managed an audience with Shiva, the latter too felt that it was not an easy task to terminate King Kartaviryarjuna who by his mere frown a great warrior like was disarmed and had to flee! However, the ever merciful Mahadeva suggested that he like Skanda Kumara should practise not only the Trailokya Vijaya Mantra but several other powerful Mantras like Nagasatra, Paashupata, Brahmastra, Narayanastra, Agney astra, Varanyastra, Gandharvatra, Garudastra, Jrumbhanaastra and many other Astraas; Rama then bowed with the greatest possible happiness and fulfillment to Shiva, Devi Parvati, Ganesha, Skanda and Nandi Deva and returned to his father Jamadagni, fully overjoyed.!

## Trailokya Vijaya Mantra Kavacha

Vasishtha Maharshi quoted the highly Sacred Trailokya Vijaya Maha Mantra Kavacha: Shrunu Vatsa Pravakshyami Kavacham paramaadbhutam, Mantram cha Shiddhidam Shasvat- saadhakaanaam Sukhaayaham/ Gopijanapadasyaatey Vallabhaaya samucchyaret, Swaaha- amtoyam Mahaa Mantro Dashaaaam Bhukti Muktidah/ Sadaashiyastwasya Rishih Pankti Chhandah Udaahyutam, Devataa Krishna UditoViniyogokhilaaptaye/Trailokavijayashayaatha Kavachasya Prajapatih, Rishiscchandascha Jagati Devo Raajeshwarah Swayam/ Trailokya Vijaya Praaptou viniyogah Prakeertitah Pranavo mey shirah paatu Shri Krishnaaya namah sadaa/ Paayaat kapaalam Krishnaaya Swaahayeti satatam mama, Krishneti paatu netrey mey Krishnaswaaheti taarakaam/ Haraye naama ityesha bhrulataam paatumey sadaa, Om Govinda- aya Swaaheti naasikaampaatu santatam/ Gopaalaaya namo gandam Paatutey satatam Manuh, Kleem Krishnaaya Namah karnou paatu Kalpatarurmama/ Om Krishnaaya namah paatu nityam meydharayugmakam, Om Gopishaaya swaaheti dantapankti mamaavatu/ Shri Krishneti radacchidram paatumey Tryaksharomanuh, Shri Krishnaaya Swaaheti jihvakaam paatu mey sadaa/ Rameshwaraya swaheti taalukam paatumey sadaa, Raadhikeshaaya swaaheti kantham mey paatu Sarvadaa/ Namo Gopiganeshaaya greevaam paatu sarvadaa, Om Gopeshaaya swaaheti skandhou paathu sadaa mama/ Namah Kishoraveyshaaya Swaahaa pushtam mamaavatu, Udaram paatumey nityam Mukundaaya namo manuh/ Hreem Shreem Kleem Krishnaaya swaaha karou paatu sadaa mama, Om Vishnavey namah swaaha baahuyugmam mamaavatu/ Om Hreem Bhaghavatey swaah Nakha panktim mamaavatu, Namo Naaraayaneti nana randhram mamaayatu/ Om Hreem Shreem Padmanaabhaaya naabhim paatu sadaa mama, Om Sarveshaaya swaaheti keshaanmama sadaavatu/ Namah Krishnaaya swaaheti Brahma randhram sadaavatu, Om Maadhavaaya swaaheti bhaalam mey sadaavatu/ Om Hreem Shreem Rasikeshaaya katim mama sadaavatu, Namo Gopijaneshaaya uru paatu sadaa mama/ Om namo Daitya naashaaya

swaahetyavatu jaanuni, Yashodaanandanaayeti namonto janghakey vatu/ Raasaarambha priyaayeti swaahaanto hreem mama vatu, Vrindaa priyaaya swaaheti sakalaangaani mevatu/ Paripurna manaah Krishnah Praachyaam maam sarvadaavatu, Swayam Golokanaathom mamaagneyaam dishi rakshatu/ Purna Brahmaswarupaascha Dakshiney maam sadaavatu, Nairruyutyaam paatu maam Krishnah Paschimey maampaatu Harih/ Govindah paatu Vaayavyaamittarey Rashikeshwarah, Ishaanyaam mey sadaa paatu Brindaavani vihaara krut/ Vrindaa praaneshwarah shaswat paatumurdhwa deshatah, Sadaiva maamaghah paatu Balidhwamsi Mahaabalah/ Jaley sthaley chaantarikshey Nrisimhaah paatu maam sadaa, Swapney Jaagaraney chaiya paatumaam Maadhayah swayam/ Saryaantaraatmaa nirliptah paatu maam Sarvato Vibhuh, Iti tey kathitam Bhupa Sarvaaghougha vinaashanam/ Trailokya Vijayam naama Kavacham Parameshituh, Mayaa shrutam Shiva mukhaat pravaktyam na kashyachit/ Gurumabhyarchya vidhivaktavacham dhaara- yetktu yah, Kanthevaa Dakshinaey baaho sopi Vishnurnasamshayah/ Sa saadhakovasadyatra tatra vaaniramey sthitey, yadisyaat siddha kavacho Jeevanmukto na samshayah/ (My Child! This Sacred Mantra Kavacha is indeed unique and its impact is everlasting; the Ten worded Mantra viz. Gopijana Valaabhaaya Swaaha is the bestower of Bhakti and Mukti. The Rishi of this Mantra is Parama Shiva himself; its chhanda or prosody is 'Pankti'; its Devata is Krishna; its Viniyoga or applicability is Universal; the Trailokya Vijaya Mantra Kavacha's Rishi is Prajapati; Chhandas is Jagati; the letters are twelve; the Devata is Rajeswara: this is the Introductory 'Nyaasa'. Now the text of the Mantra is as follows: Om Krishnaaya namah: may Shiva protect me; Krishnaaya swaaha Mama Taarakaam Harye namah; Hey Krishna paatumey Netrey Krishnaaya swaahaa/ Mama taarakam paatu; Haraye namah Bhrulaatam paatu; Govindaya swaha Mama Naasikaam satatam paatu; Gopaalaaya namah mama gandam (Chin) paatu; Kleem Krishnaaya namah mama karney Kalpataruh paatu; Om Krishnaaya namah Adhara yugmam paatu (Lips); Om Gopeeshaaya! Do protect my teeth; Krishnaaya swaahaa-Jihvam (tongue) paatu; Radhikesshaaya! Do safeguard my throat; Gopi ganeshaaya save my neck; Kishora Veshaaya, guard my shoulders; Mukunda watch my back; Hreem, Shreem, Kleem Krishnaaya safeguard my Udara (belly); and Vishnavey namah please my hands! Bhagavatey! Save my nail-lines; Namo Narayana, do protect my nail-holes; Padmanabha please secure my naabhi (navel); Sarvesa, my hairs and Krishna help my 'Brahmarandhra' to be safe; Madhaya do take care of my forehead; Rasika! Save my kati (waist); Gopijanesha, protect my thighs; Daityanaasha my knees! Yashoda Nanda, my jangha (calf)! Rasaarambha my *Avatu* (sense of shame); Vrinda! My *Sakalaangaas*! The Kavacha then requests Krishna to protect my *Praachya* or East; Golokanaatha my *Agneya* (South East); Brahma Swarupa the Dakshina (South), Krishna my Nairutyaam (South West); Hari! My Paschima (West); Govinda! My Vayavya (North West); Rasikeshwara! My Uttara (North); Brindavana Vihara! Do protect my Urthwa Deshas; Bali Dhwamsi! Safeguard my from Adholokaas (Nether Lokas); Nrisimha save me from Jala, Kindly save me while I am in Jaagriti (awake) or in Swapna Sthala and Antariksha: and Madhava! (dreams). Vasishta Muni assured that sincere recitation of the Kavacha would definitely bestow Puja Phala, Yagna Phala, Daana Phala, Bhu Pradakshina Phala, Sarva Tirtha Phala, Karya Sadhana Phala, Vijaya Phala, Siddhatva and Amaratwa!

### The Unique and Popular Shri Krishnaamrita Ashtottara Stotra

Endowed with the Maha Trailokya Vijaya Mantra Kavacha, Bhargava Rama moved on to Pushkara Tirtha and coninued his Tapasya and Worship as a preparatory effort to destroy the King Kartaveeryarjuna. As he took bath in Pushkara and was returning to his Ashram through a Forest, he overheard the conversation of a deer couple saying that they would not have any fea of an attack of a tiger or lion as they were fotunate to have the Ashram of Bhargava Rama in their vicinity; the he-deer told about the uniqueness of Rama who had taken a vow to kill the King Kartaveeryarjuna as he killed his father Jamadagni who refused to gift Kamadhenu and also took another vow that he would attack Kshatriya Kings twenty four times and eradicate the Kshatriya Vamsha; as advised, Rama made severe Tapasya and secured all possible Astra-Shastras as also the Trailokya Vijaya Kavacha as a preparation for the great battle with the King who after all was not an ordinary warrior but had unique boons of invincibility by Bhagavan Dattatreya whose

he-deer then continued to say that Bhragava would do well to visit Agastya Muni's Ashram and secure Krishnaamrita Stotra too and that Strotra would reinforce his blessings from Maha Deva earlier; after that, no force on Earth and the other Elements could ever subdue the Bhargava Rama, let alone Kartaviryarjuna! All this convesation of the deer-couple was heard by Rama and straight proceded to the Agastva Maha Muni and narrated what all was heard in the forest. The Muni Ashrama of explained that in the past birth a Brahmana Kumara called Suri was the youngest son of Veda Vidwan Shiva-Dutta who trained all the sons in Vedas; once all the brothers went to a forest to collect flowers and fruits and suddenly they heard the frantic sounds of a deer attached by a tiger and killed the deer; Suri felt so intensely moved and he too died soon enough by the shock; the deer killed by the tiger became the present she-deer and Suri was reborn as the he-deer. Having heard the incident of the deer and their conversation, Agastya Muni taught the 'Krishna Ashtottara Naamavali' to Bhargava Rama as Maha Sesha taught it to Bhu Devi: He stated that this Ashtottara was a highly Sacred Mantra which could bestow 'Animaadi Ashta Siddhis' as it was very potent. Samasta Japa Yagjnaanaam Phaladam Paapanaashanam, Shrunu Devi Pravakshya ami Naamaaashtottaram Shatam/ Sahasrannaamnaam Punyaanaam Triraavrityaa tu yatphalam, Ekaavrityaa tu Krishnasya naamaikam tatprayacchati/ Tasmaatpunyataram chaitat-stotram Paatakanaashanam, Naamnaamastottara shatasyaahmeva Rishih Priye/ Chhandonushtthubdevataa tu Yogah Krishnariyaavahah, Shri Krishnah Kamalaanaatho Vaasudevah Sanatana/ Vasudevaatmajah Punyo Leelaa Maanusha Vigrahah, Sri Vatsa Koustubha dharo Yashodaa Vatsalo Harih/ Chaturbhujaachakraasi gadaa shankhaayudhaa- yudhah, Devakinandanah Shreesho Nandagopa priyaatmajah/ Yamunaa Vega Samhaari Balabharda Priyaanujah, Putanaa jeevita harah Shakataasura bhanjanah/ Nandavraja janaanandi Sacchidaananda Vigrahah, Navaneeta viluptango Navaneetanatonaghah/ Navaneeta lavaa haari Muchukunda prasaada krut, Shodasha Streesaharshestribhangi Madhuraakrutih/ Shukavaagamrutaabdheendurgovindo Govidaam patih, Vatsapaalana samchaari Dhenukaasura mardanah/Truneekruta trunaavarto Yamalaarjuna bhanjanah, Uttaalaa taala bhettaa cha tamaala shyaamalaakritih/ Gopagepeeshwaro Yogi Surya Koti Samaprabhah, Ilaapatih Paranjyotiryaadavendro Yadudwahah/ Vanamaali Peetavaasaah Paarijaataapahaarakah, Govardhanaachalodhartaa Gopaalah Sarva paalakah/ Ajo Niranjanah Kaamajanakah Kanjalochakah, Madhuhaa Mathuraanaatho Dwaarakanaatha ko Bali/ Vrindaavanaanta sanchaari Tulasidaama bhushanah, Shyamantaka maney hartaa Naranaaraayanaatmakah/ Kubjaakrishtaambara dharo Mayee Parama Puurushah, Mushti kaasura Chaanura malla yuddha vishaaradah/ Samsaara Vairi Kamsaarirmuraarirnarakantakah, Anaadi Brahmachari cha Krishnaavyasana Karshakah/ Shishupaala shiracchettaa Duryodhanakulanta krit, Viduraakruura varado Vishwa rupa pradarshakah/ Satyavaaksatya Sankalpah Satyabhaamaarato Jayee, Subhadraa purvajo Vishnurbheeshma mukti pradaa- yakah/ Jagadguru Jagannatho Venu Vaadya Vishaaradah, Vrishabhaasura Vidhvamsee Bakaarir Baana baahu krit/ Yudhishtara pratishthaataa Barhibarhaavatamsakah, Parthasaaratiravyakto geetaamrita mahodadhih/ Kaaliyaphanimaanikya ranjita shri padaambjah, Daamodaro gnabhoktaa Daanavendravinaashanah/ Naraayanah param Brahma panna- gaayashana yaahananah/ Jalakreedaa samaasakta Gopiyastraapahaarakah/ Punya Shlokas- Teertha paado Vedavedyo Dayaanidhih, Sarva tirthaatmakah Sarvagraharupi Paraatparah/ Devasya naamnaamashtottaram shatam, Krishnena Krishna Bhaktena Shrutwaa Geetaamrutam Puraa/ Stotram Krishna priyakaram krutam tasmaanmayaa Shrutam, Krishnapremaamrutam naama paramaananda daayakam/ Atyutbhaya duhkaghnam Paramaayushya yarthanam, Daanam Vratam Tapasteertham yatkrutam twiha janmani/ Pathataam Shrunavataam chaiva kotikotigunam bhavet, Putrapradamaputraanaamagatinaam Gatipradam/ Dhanavaaham daridraanaam Jayecchunaam Jayaavaham, Shishunaam Gokulaanaam cha pushtidam Punyavarthanam/ Baalaroganahaadeenam shamanam Shanti Kaarakam, Antey Krishna smaranadam Bhavataapatrayaahakam/Asiddha saadhakam Bhadrey Japaadikaramaatmanaam Krishnaaya Yadavendraaya Jnaana samudraaya yoginey/ Naathaaya Rukminishaaya Namo Vedaanta Vediney,Imam Mantram Mahadevi Japanneva Divaashinam/ Sarvagrahaanugrahbhaaksarvapriyatamo bhavet, Putra poutrehi parivritah Sarva Siddhi samruddhimaan/

('This highly popular 'Krishnaashtottara' is extremely popular, auspicious, Provider of Siddhis, Destroyer of severe sins, Giver of the fruits of several Tirtha Yatras, Granter of Japa Yagna Phalaas; Even if one Pavitra naama of Govinda would suffice to secure Punya and if the Ashtottara is read out or heard for three weeks then the dividends are enormous indeed! Bhu Devi! Sesha was the Rishi of this Ashtottara; the Chhandas or the Prosody was known as Anushttup and Yoga was titled as Krishna and the Ashtottara is as follows: Shri Krishna, Kamala natha, Vaasudeva, Sanatana, Vesudevaatmaja, Punya Swarupa, Leela Manusha Vigraha or the Embodiment of Illusions; the wearer of Sri Vatsa Kaustubha Mani; the beloved of mother Yashoda; Hari or he whose mere utterance of this name smashes all kinds of sins; he who was adored with Shankha-Chakra-Gada-Kripana weapons; the son of Devaki; Nandagopa's beloved son; he who controlled the swift currents of the waters of River Yamuna; the cherished brother of Balabhadra; the killer of Rakshasi Putana; the destoyer of the Shakatasura; the darling of the Nanda-Vraja Villagers; Sacchidananda or the Ever Happy Being; He whose body parts were smeared with butter; He who enjoys dance to secure butter; Anagha or the Sinless; He as a child playfully steals butter for fun; the Lord who granted Mukti to Rishi Muchukunda; He who was the Unique husband of sixteen thousand women; the embodiment of sweetness; he who was created by the sacred words of Suka Muni; Govinda! Govidaampati or the Head of all matters related to Cows; He was in the habit of nurturing cows and calves; the slayer of Dhenukasura; the slaughterer of Trinaavartaasura in grass bits and pieces; Vanamali; Peetavaasa or dressed in yellow attire; the securer of the Parijata flower from Swarga; the lifter of Govardhana Mountain as if it were a toy!; Gopala; Sarvapaala; Aja or who was never born; Nirtanjanma; Kamajanaka or the father of Manmatha; Kanjalochana; the Lotus-Eyed; Madhuha or the Killer of Demon Mathura; Dwarakanatha; Balavaan; Brindaavana Sanchari; he sports Tulasi Garlands; he who took away the glittering and Gold-yielding Shyamantaka Jewel; the Form of Nara and Narayana; he who was attracted by the dress of Kubja and straightened her up; Maya Swabhava; expert in killing Mushtika asura and the wrestler Chanura; Samsara Vairi or the Antagonist of Samsara; Kamsaari; Muraari Narakantaka; Sanatana Brahmachari; the Reliever of Droupadi's predicaments; the smasher of Sishupala's haughty head; the eradicator of Duryodha's Vamsha; the bestower of boons to the virtuous Vidura and Akrura; the manifestor of Vishwa Rupa or the Mammoth Form of Universe; The Embodiment of Truth and Truthful Thoughts; the favourite of Devi Satyabhama; Jayee or of the characreristic of Victory; the elder brother of Subhadra; Vishnu! The imparter of Mukti to Bheeshma; Jagadguru; Jagannaatha; Expert in Venu Vadya; the killer of Vrishabhaasura; the Enemy of Bakaasura whom Bhima killed; slicer of Banasura's hands; the Appointer of Yudhishtara as the King; Barhi barhaavatamsa or he who adorned Peacock feathers on his headgear; Parthasarathi or the Charioteer of Arjuna; Avyaka or the Undiscernible; the Ocean of Gitaamrita; He who displayed his soft feet with the illumination of the diamonds on the hoods of Kaliya Serpent!; Damodara or he who tied up his tummy and waist with a silken thread; who revelled in swimming and water sports; the Stealer of the dresses of Gopikas as they were swimming; Punya Shloka or praised by the Virtuous; Tirtha Paada or where His Feet touch would be Holy Places; Veda Vedya or who is comprehended only by Vedas; Dayanidhi the Icon of Mercy; Sarva Tirthaatmika or His Soul represented all the Hallowed Places of Pilgrimage; Paratpara or the Supreme Most!)

The above Ashtottara of Bhavan Krishna was scripted by Veda Vyasa which Agastya Muni said that was instructed to Bhargava Rama. This potent Ashtottara was documented after hearing the 'Geetaasaara' or the Essence of Gita. Those who read or hear the Ashtottara would overcome all kinds of tribulations and miseries; enhances Arogya (Health), Aishwarya (Opulence), Jaya (Victory), Graha Shanti, Good Progeny, reputation and bestows the fruits of Dana, Vrata, Tapa, and Tirtha Yatras manifold. Agastya Muni further assured that reciting the Stanza viz. *Krishnaaya Yadavendraaya naana mudraaya Yoginey, Naathaaya Rukmini -shaaya Namo Vedanta vediney/* would yield endless benefits!

As soon as the Krishnaamrita Stotra concluded, several Rishis in the Ashram of Agastya confirmed that they were in the habit of reciting the Stotra daily and they experienced visible transformation in their

own lives. They prostrated before the Form of Ananta Deva who basically outlined the Stotra and inspired Veda Vyasa to follow the thoughts. Strangely enough the Deer Couple which also heard the 'Krishnaamrita' nearby and alighted a Vimana from Vaikuntha even while al those present in the Ashram of Agastya and the visibly moved Rishis had a ready proof for themselves. Bhargava went into Yoga Samadhi for long time and Krishna himself appeared before him and assured that owing to the earlier Trailokya Vijaya Mantra and the instant Krishaamrita, Rama was fully fortified to face the arrogant King and destroy him, besides extinguish the entire Kshatriya Vamsha as it came to represent vice, conceit and devastation of Virtue and Justice. Krishna reminded Bhragava of Vishnu's own 'Amsha'and that his mission was to re-establish Dharma and Nyaaya! He further directed that after eradicating Kshatriyas, Bhargava should await Raghu Rama's arrival till Treta Yuga in Tapasya so that the latter would take over the deeds of 'Dharma Samsthaapana' later on.

# The battle of Bhargava Rama and Kaartaveeryarjuna

On reaching Mahishmati pura the Capital of Kartaveeryarjuna, Parashu Rama sent Maharshi Atreya to the King recalling the latter's atrocities in bringing chaos in the peaceful Ashram, shamelessly demanding Kamadhenu, forcibly trying to seize it and the worst of all killing the Maharshi. The overconfident King replied that he was the Star of Haihaya Vamsha, that his thousand hands were endowed with such enormous might that none could dare to look straight in his eyes and that he had the blessings of Dattatreya and so on. He sent away the emissary to Rama to come prepared for the battle. He jumped into action at once, grouped his enormous army with gusto and led it against Parashu Rama, imagining that the Muni Kumara with little backing except his revenge to be pitted against the sea-like and fully trained army with courage, commitment and collossal Mantra Siddhi. There were twelve Akshouhinis of warriors trying to face a single Bhragava Rama! Even while the King and the army were advancing, there were unwelcome omens like the scenes of some with mutilated body parts, some with dishevelled hair hysterically crying loud, some carrying baskets full of bones with oozing blood, some with loud and continuous sneezes, some carrying bags full oil and salt and also the continuous wails of dogs and jackals but the mighty and haughty King ignored them. As soon as the first contingent of army arrived with racing chariots, horses, elephants and experts in archery under the command of Matsya Raja, the first offensive came from the latter in the form of 'Parvata' astra' and Bhargava used Vayavyaastra and the former bounced back killing thousands of the Raja's own men in a death trap. By resorting to the offensive, Bharga invoked Narayanaastra as the first contingment of the army with elephants, horses and chariots was wiped out while the Matsya Raja was singled out with four arrows to systematilically destroy the Dhwaja (Flag), the Charioteer, the horses and the Matsya King who was hurt in the stomach and got killed by omitting blood. King Kartaveeryaarjuna then called upon Brihadbala, Somdutta, Vidarbha Raja, Mithilesweara, Nishadaaati, Magada Chief and others; as they all called up the same destinations of death. Then the tactics of war were changed and instead of the various Allies of Kartaveeryarjuna one by one, the Allied Kings surrounded Bharagava some from the rear, some sideways and some others in the front! It was a combined / group 'Pralayakalaagni' slaughtered the Kings and their supporters in attack; the enraged Rama like 'Dasa Dishas' and fought with them all for three days and nights with his axe and slaughtered the stronghold of the Kings that appeared invincible for a while but they caved in finally. King **Suchandra** who was an outstanding expert in 'Mayavi Yuddha' and an exceptional practitioner of Mantraas entered the battle. Bhargava released 'Narayanaastra' and to his great astonishment and disbelief the Astra proved ineffective. Rama threw up Shiva Shula and that had adorned Suchandra as flower garland. Then Rama invoked **Bhadra Kali** as he knew that She was the most reputed devotee of King Chandra and as she appeared with Trinetras and Trishula: He said: Namostutey Shankara vallabhaayai Jagatsavitryai Samangalaakrutaayai Naanaa Vibhushanaabhiribhaarigayai Prapannarakshavihitodyamaayai, Daksha prasutai Himayadbhayaayai Maheshaardhaanga samaasthitaayai/--(Shankara Patni!, my salutations to you; you are the Creator of Samsara; You have the reputation of saving those in difficultees; You are the daughter of Daksha, the Arthaangi of Maheswara as also the daughter of Himavanta!). As Bhadra Kali was commended, she gave her appearance and asked Bhargava to despatch Suchandra to her as she was her ditinguished devotee; she suggested that Bhargava should use Agneyaashtra to send him to her and that he (Suchitra) would become her servant. Then Bhargava Rama did 'Praanayama' and taking the name of Bhadra Kali, shot his arrow with Agneyastra and Suchandra reached Kailasha. Then came **Pushkaraaksha** who was by no means an insignificant warrior; even as he entered he attacked Rama by raining arrows all around and an angry Rama transmitted Vaaruna- Astra but it was sharply retaliated by Vayavyastra. Rama directed Brahmastra but that too was surprisingly retaliated too. A furious Rama took up his axe and ran up to Pushkaraasha who saved himself by sending 'Panchavishikaastra' a Five pronged fiery arrow with venomous and hissing cobras and these arrows hit Bhargava on his head, shoulders, and tuft; for a second Rama was taken aback and following his reflexes flew literally upto the opponent and axed his head even as all the Devas watching the battle proceedings bit by pit clapped from the skies at the unbelievable and spontaneous alacrity displayed by Rama.

Finally, Kartaveeryarjuna himself arrived by his four hunded feet long golden and bejewelled chariot drawn by hundred chosen horses, with surprisingly huge stock of arms and armaments; he has thousand hands of unique Shakti . It was stated that when Ravana desired to display his prowess to Kartaveeryarjuna, the latter was busy taking morning baths in many Tirthas and dragged Ravana by clutching his ten heads with one of his thousand hands till the Pradakshinas of Tirtha Yatras were over in Sapta Samudras! The chariot accommodated his hundred-strong warrior sons too, each one of them being a warrior in his own right. The classic battle of the heroes was like that of the clash of two Planets! Both were unique in their own right; both were gifted with unparalleled expertise in Astra-Shastra Vidyas and both were blessed by incarnations of the same Bhagavan; one by Dattatreya and another by Maha Deva and Krishna! As soon as Kaartaveerya commenced the fight releasing Brahmastra, Rama had no choice of releasing another Brahmastra too. Keeping in view the universal havoc that created by the Brahmastras, Bhargava Rama-the Incarnation of Vishnu himself- was aware of the impact and absorbed it by his eyes thus secretly exercising his latent capabilty even as pretending himself as a mere human being! Indeed his main objective was Loka Kalyana! Having eased the Universe of the devastation thus averted, Bhargava picked up two arrows and directed them at both the ears of Kartaveerya whose face got defaced due to the loss of both the ears!

The King immediately remembered Bhagavan Dattaatreya who in the past, on such extreme situations, appeared before him at once and provided a shield with the help of which he was defying even Loka Paalakas! But now, there was no trace of Bhagavan Dattatreya as the reason was clear: he was no longer a specimen of Virtue and devotion and he ceased to uphold Justice when he became arrogant, selfish, avaricious and cruel to the extent of stealing the Celsetial Cow and killing Maharshi Jamadagni without scruples! On the other hand Bhargava Rama had shone by comparison; having taken the vow to avenge his father's death and mother's untold grief, he equipped himself with Tapasya, Japa-Homa-Tirtha Yatras as directed by Maha Deva and Krishna Paramatma, both being the same as well as himself since he assumed a Human Form! As there was no response from Datta Deva, Kartaveerya was thus left to his own fate but since his arrogance was still on display, he put up the show and never gave up. He continued releasing Astraas; he released Agneyastra which was sudued by Rama's Varunastra; he released Gandharvastra which was controlled by Rama's Vayavyastra; the King released Nagastra and Garudastra resisted it. Finally, Kartaveerya threw the 'Shula'that Datta Deva gifted to him for an acute emergency and Bhargava Rama became a victim of it and fell down unconscious; as Devas and other Celestial Beings who were closely witnessing the proceedings of this historic battle of Dharma versus Adharma got panicky and Shankara himself administerd 'Sanjivini' to Bhargava Rama.

The latter purified himself with Sacred water and recited Krishna Kavacha and released Pashupata while Dutta Bhakta released Sudarshana. As an ample proof of Dharma Vs Adharma Sudarshana got absorbed in Pashupaastra and the greatest hero turned a despicable villian finally got burnt as ash, once again vindicating Truth and Justice in the Srishti of that Omni Potent and All- Pervading Supreme!

Encounter of Bhargava and Ganesha, Face-Off by Parvati and Shiva-Krishna's identity

After exterminating Kartaveerya, Parashu Rama continued the killings of his hundred sons besides quite a few of the Kings who came to assist Kartaveerya; some five of the late King's sons ran for their lives. There after a highly elated Bhargava reached Narmada to take bath and proceeded to Kailass where Maha Deva and Devi Parvati stayed for thanks giving. He saw Nandeswara, Maha Kaala, Raktahsha, Virupaksha, Bhairava, Baana, Ruru, Veerabhadra, Chanda, Bhrigi, Ekaadasha Rudras, Vidyadharas, Bhuta-Preta-Piscachas, Yaksha, Brahma Raakshasa, Kimpurushas and Kartikeya on the left entrance and Ganesha on the right. Ganesha asked Rama to wait as Shiva and Parvati were alone and that he wanted to find their convenience to enter. Rama was restless and felt uncomfortable to have been stopped by a Boy like Ganesha. There was an argument and Parashu Rama raised his axe which Ganesha disliked and lifted up Bhargava with his trunk and swirled him around when Rama saw Bhur- Bhuvar-Swar-Tapo-Urthwa-Mahar- Jana- Satya-Vaikuntha- Golokas and from there dropped Rama into Sapta Pataalaas and back to Kailasa again. This happened before all who assembled there and a highly fuming Bhargava shot his Parashu which partially broke Ganesha's tusk. As nearly half of his tusk fell down, Earth was shaken with spills of blood, Sapta Samudras witnessed reverberating sounds of upheaval, Earth got quaked and there was univeral commotion. Devi Parvati who heard the uproar and insinuated Maha Deva that he treated Bhragava like his son and Bhargava gave a gift to Ganesha with a broken trunk! Shiva understood the taunt in the words of Parvati and her face off in the context and heartily remembered Krishna. As Krishna and Radha made their appearance, the entire family of Shiva, Parvati, Genesha and Skanda greeted them; Bhargava too having greeted the former fell on the feet of Devi Parvati sheepishly and she did not respond. Shri Krishna sought to pacify saying: 'Bhavabhayahaarini! Bhargava Rama fell on your feet seeking your pardon for his indiscretion and rashness. He stated: Shrunu Devi Mahaabhaago Vedoktam Vachanam mama, Yac chhutvaa harshitaan nunam havishyasi na samshayah, Vinaayakasto tanayo Mahatmaa Mahataam Mahaan/ Yah Kaamah Krodha Udvego Bhayam naavishatey kadaa, Veda Smriti Puraneshu Samhitaasu cha Bhamini/ Naamaanyasyopadishthaani Supunyaani Mahatmabhih, Yaani taani pravakshyaami nikhilaaghaharaanicha/ Pramathaanaam Ganaayecha naanaa rupaa mahabalaah, Teshaameeshastwayam Yashmaatganeshastena keerttah/ Bhutaani cha Bhavishyaani Vartamaanaani yaanicha, Brahmaandaanyaakhilaan- yeva Yasmimllambodarah sa tu/ Yah sthiro devayogena cchinnam samyojitah punah, Gajasya shirasaa Devi tena porokto Gajaananah/ Chaturthihmuditaschandro darbhinaa shapta Aturah, Anena vidhruto bhaaley Bhaalachandrasthatah smrutah/ Shaptah puraa Shaptabhistu Munibhih Samkshayah gatah, Jaatavedaa deeptobhudynaasou Shurpa -karnakah/ Puraa Devaasurey yuddhey Pujito Divipadganaih, Vighnam nivaarayaamaasa Vighnanaashath smrutah/ Adyaayam Devi Raamena kuthaarena nipaatyacha, Dashanam Daivato Bhadreyhyekadantah krutomunaa/ Bhavishyatyatha paryaaye Braahmano Haravallabhey Vakreebhavishyattundatwaadvakra tundah smruto Budhaaih/ Evam tavaasya putrasya santi naamaani Parvati, Smaranaatpaapa haarini Trikaalaanu- gataanyapi/ (Devi! Bhavabhaya haarini! Do condone Bhrargava who fell on your feet for his momentary fault. Indeed Ganesha your son is one who conquered Kaama (Desire) -Krodha (Anger)-Udvega (Neurosis) and Bhaya (Fear) and his names are highlighted in Vedas and Puranas as they were sin-destroyers; he is Pramatha Gana Natha, Ganesha, Lambodara as he keeps the past-present-future happenings of the Brahmanda in his Udara or belly; he is Gajaavana since due to destiny his head was replaced by that of an Elephant; in the past the Chaturashi Chandra was cursed by Ganesha and Krishna got affected by the blame and thus Vinayaka secured the encomium of Bala Chandra; therefore Chandra's radiance was subject to growth and decadence. Similarly Sapta Rishis cursed Agni but Vinayaka re- kindled Agni again and thus got the name of Jaataveda . Ganesha got the name of Shurpa Karna as his flappy ears could winnow the grains from dirt and pebbles signifying the capacity to sift truth and falsehood. Vinayaka secured the name of Vighna Naayaka as he destroyed obstacles and difficuties at the time of Devaasura battles. Thus for each name of Ganesha there was an occurrence or backround and from now on he would be called 'Vakratunda' or Crooked Trunk in future. Devi! Let me bestow to Ganesha the boons that in course of time, human beings should worship Ganesha first before Jataka and other Samskaaraas or Birth and Name Giving Ceremonies, Yatras, launch of Commercial Activities, or Vratas or before any Puja performance). Devi Radha further stated: Prakritih Purushaschobhavanyonyaashraya vigrahow, Dwidhaa bhinnow prakaashetey Prapanchesmin yathaa

tathaa/ Twam Chaahamaavayordevi bhedo naivaasti kaschana, Vishnstwamahamevaasmi Shivo dwiguna- taam gatah/ Shivasya Hridaye Vishnurbhavatyaa rupamaasthitah, Mama Rupam Samaasthaaya Vishnoscha hridaye Shivah/ Isha Ramo Maha Bhaage Vaishnavah Shaivataam gatah, Ganeshoyam Shivah Saakshaat Vaishnavastam Samaasthitah/ Eaitayoraavayoh prabhavoschaapibhedo na drushyatey, Evamuktwaa saa Radhaa krodey krutwaa Gajaananam/ (Prakriti and Purusha are never disconnected and are mutually dependent. It might look that we are two distinct Entities but You and I are the same and we have no difference at all. The concept that I am Vishnu and You are Shiva is indeed absurd and both the Forms are just the same. Ganesha is the Vaishnava Entity called Shiva and Bhargava Rama is the Shaiva Entity named Vishnu. So saying Radha placed Ganesha on her lap and affectionately touched his chins and as soon as that the cuts on his cheeks dried up and Devi Parvati too lifted Bhargava and caressed his tresses. Rama Ganeshas were together again and Krishna kept Skanda on his lap and there was thus a happy union of Shiva and Krishna!

As the task of thanks-giving to Maha Deva and Shri Krishna were accomplished splendidly, Parashu Rama returned home and narrated the entire story of his Tapasya and attaining the Bhakti of Maha Deva, his Tirtha Yatras and accoplishing the Maha Krishnaamrita Stotra, battle with Kaartaveerya and his killing, his encounter with Ganesha, Devi Parvati's subdued anger as Ganesha's trunk was hurt by his 'Kuthaara' and Radha-Krishna Darshana. Jamadagni Muni stated that the vicissitudes experienced by Rama must have been due to the sin of killing Kshatriyas and that Bhargava should atone it through Tapasya again for twelve years. But unfortunately, history repeated again and the five sons of Kartaveerya attacked Jamadagni once again and having killed him took away his head as a souvenir! Bhargava Rama's elder brothers performed 'Uttara Kriyas' (obsequies) to the deceased father. On his return from his twelve-year long penance for atonement as instructed by his father, Bhargava Rama faced a similar situation! This time his reaction was that of a filial duty rather than revenge and launched twenty one systematic attacks of Kartaveerya's sons and indeed of as many as twelve thousand Kshatria Kings and their male progeny searched from the nooks and corners of Earth and wiped out the traces of that Vamsha. Then he and his brothers got dug up Pancha Sarovaras at Kurukshetra and filled them up with the blood oozing heads and mutilated bodies of the Kshatriya Vamsha and performed Pitru Tarpanas and Shraddhas as per Shastras and pleased the Pitras with Snaana-Daana-Mantra-Bhojana- Dakshinas to seek lasting redemption to Pitras to attain higher lokas. The famed Syaantaka Tirtha at Kurukshetra continued to be the Sacred Place for Pitru Karyas. Bhargava further proceeded to Gaya Kshetra to continue the Pitru Karyas at the illustrious Chandra Paada where again the Pitru Devatas receive and bless the 'Karthas' of their offerings till date at the above Tirthas irrespective of any caste or creed. Pinda Pradanas and Tarpanas performed at these Sacred Tirthas with faith and devotion are stated to bestow the best of one's on going life and in the unending series of lives ahead.

#### LALITHOPAAKHYAANA

Chaturbhujey Chandrakalaavatamsey Kuchonnatey Kumkuma raaga shoney, Pundrekshu Paashaankusha Pushpabaana hastey Namastey Jagadeka Maatah/ (Devi Lalithaamba! Jagadaika Maata! You are four armed, high-chested, ornamented with red coloured sugar-cane, 'Paasha', Ankusha and flowery-arrows, my sincere salutations to you!)

Why Maha Purusha could not overcome Paraa Shakti (Prakriti)?: Agastya Maharshi had been on a Tirtha Yatra in Bharata and reached Kanchi Nagara and worshipped Devi Kamakshi and felt concerned about the low standards of morality among human beings. As he was immersed in the worship, Vishnu appeared in the form of Hayagriva with Shankha-Chakra-Japa maala and a Sacred Book. When the Maharshi expressed his concern as above, Hayagriva said that Shiva too raised the same doubt as the Maharshi did and his reply was that he of Vishnu Amsha was indeed the Pradhana Purusha responsible for Srishti-Sthiti- Samhara far beyond the Tri-Gunas of Satwa-Raajasa-Taamasa nature; but there was another Paraa Shakti who was at play in moulding the psyche or consciousness of every being either in the frame work of Virtue or Vice and those who could worship that Paraa Shakti would decide the fate of the worshipper. Asked about the characteristics of that Para Shakti, Hayagriva explained: Maha Devi had

no beginning nor end and all possible Swarupas were her own. But one could only realise her by Dhyana or meditation since her Swarupa was Dhyana itself. Brahma was the foremost to have realised through Dhyana; She was called Prakriti. She was visualised at the time of Samudra Mathana or Churning of the Ocean of Milk by Devas and Daityas as Devi Mohini. Again she appeared in the Form of Parvati whom Mahadeva wedded and gave birth to 'Saasta'or Skanda. Agastya Muni wondered as to why the Sarvajna Mahadeva who brought Manmatha into a heap of ash was enamoured of Parvati! Indeed why Maha Prurusha was unable to overcome Prakriti!

# Indra's dethronment, Lakshm's exit from Swarga, Prayaschityas and Atonement

Hayagriva narrated that Maha Deva decided to teach a lesson to the arrogant Indra and briefed Durvasa Muni to follow a plan as provided by him; accordingly Durvasa intercepted a Vidyadhari who after long Tapasya secured a flower garland from Paraambika and demanded that garland for himself. Then he gifted the garland to Indra rather casually and Indra placed it on the head of Iravata elephant which trampled the garland. The furious Duravasa cursed Indra to get unseated from Swarga and Lakshmi Devi left from there to Vishnu's Vakshasthala (Chest).

Indra had to leave his Chair and enquired Deva Guru Brihaspati as to what was the Prayaschitta or atonement of sins; Killings, Stealing, Violence, Intoxication and Unauthorised Sex were the prominent sins. The Zone-range of killing was defined: Human beings, four legged animals, Egg-born beings, waterborn beings; Tiryak-beings (moving breadth-wise) and bone-less beings; if the intensity of atonement is of ten thousand units as in the case of human beings, it should be thousand-hundred-ten-five-three or one in the subsequent categories afore-mentioned. In regard to the killings of human beings of different Varnas of Brahmana-Kshatriya-Vaishya-and others, the top category of 'Himsa' or Violence is the killing of Father, Mother, Guru, Husband / wife, progeny etc. In the case of the rarest of rare offences like the killings of Brahmanas, Gurus and Parents, and those who take refuge, there would not be Prayaschittaas possible. But in other cases, there might be atonements of extreme intensity but Jeeva Himsa 'per se' was considered as the worst crime attracting maximum atonement. Referring to Stealing, the would not be any Prayaschittas possible in regard to the belongings of Brahma Jnanis, Daridras, Bahu Putra Samsaris and of those who totally depend and believe in; there might however be possibilities of Prayaschitta to other sins subject however to the range and intensity of the offences. In the cases of 'Asteya' or stealing, where ever one's own inner conscience would prick, the atonement might be Tirtha Snaana, Niraahara except one meal of of Kanda Mulas a day and Ambika Shiva worship besides daily recitation of Shata Rudram for one thousand and eight times. As regards, 'Madya Sevana' or consuming intoxicants, the lesser degree intoxicants made of sugar cane, Tada Phala or Palm fruits or Madhuka flower or jaggery might be least sinful; harder drinks are totally avoidable and sinful; a Brahmana who drinks intoxicants would have to atone by performing 'Kruccha Chandraaya Vrata', reciting ten thousand Gayatri Mantra, Jataveda Mantra, and Ambikaa Hridaya Mantra to get purified. Those Brahmanas who practise the worship of Bhairava, Bhadra Kali and such Uccha Saktis might have to consume intoxicants but their range would be restricted as mentioned above. In any case, they should not consume without worship and other wise they are destined to Rourava Naraka. But drinking either other intoxicants or those which would be of exceptions as mentioned above especially be better damned either by jumping into fire or jump from mountains and there would not be any possible atonements. The next and the worst sin relates to 'Para Sree Sangama'; there is no prayaschitta in the case of mother, sister, aunt, niece and 'Guru Bharya'. As regards Deva Dasi, Brahma Dasi, Swatantra and Low-Class women, unions are certain to experience in Narakas depending on considerations of mutual consent or persuasion of force were all classified in great detail along with the resultant retributions either in one's own on-going life and as carry forward to next births or in Narakas.

Deva Guru also suggested to Indra that besides observing the specified Prayasticchhas there could be relief obtained from reciting various Mantra Rajaas that might blunt the sharpness of sins concerned. To start with the sinner who realise the indiscretions or even wanton sins should at the foremost feel wholly responsible for the shortcomings. A Brahmana who confesses and regrets his misdoings should get into

the frame of atonement, perform hundred paranayaamaas, and keep reciting *Idam Vishnurvichakramey*; *Traimbakam Yajaa mahey, Paavamaanika Mantra*; *Anna Sukta*; *Om Bhrugurvai vaarini and Brahmarpana Mantra* and observe fasting overnight and treat Brahmanas to Bhojana, recite again *Idam Vishnur vichakramey and Traimabakam Yajamahey and Pancha Dashaakshari* before taking food. In fact, if anybody observes the above routine, there would never be any scope for doing wrongs, but overcome the Pancha Paapaas which might not affect even marginally the eqaunimity of life in Peace and provide shield against distress, desire and disease.

Indra having heard about the generic narration of sins and atonements desired to know from Deva Guru about the instant happening of Indra being unseated from Swarga and Lakshmi disappearing from Swarga! Brihaspati reminded Indra that Kashyapa Muni gave a curse to Indra that soon enough the latter would lose Swarga and Devi Lakshmi since Indra killed Vishwarupa the former Purohita of Amaravati as he suspected that he was protecting the cause of Danavas; Vishwarupa an ardent devotee of Narayana was the grand son of Kashyapa Muni and Diti.

Ksheera Samudra Mathana and Mohini Avatara: Even while Brihaspati was explaining this to Indra, a huge number of Rakshasas attacked Swarga, harassed Devatas and occupied Swarga. Devas and Indra approached Brahma and the latter reached Kshira Samudra to call on Narayana. Vishnu advised that Devatas should prevail upon Asuras and together churn Ksheera Samudra with Mountain Mandhara as the churning stick, Vasuki as the rope to churn and he by assuming the Incarnation of Kurma would balance the Mountain to enable the churning so that Amrita would be produced; Vishnu further planned that he would ensure that Amrita the life lasting drink so produced would be distributed to Devatas and not the Asuras. The Grand Plan worked as several Asuras perished out of their ego to opt for the serpent's mouth that emitted poisonous flames. In the process of churning emerged Surabhi-Kamadhenu- the Sacred Cow, Varuni Devi carrying Sura the intoxicating drink, Parijata Tree which spread fragrance far and with its flowers and Apsara Ganas all rejected by Asuras as they should Amrita and nothing else! The churning continued and Chandra Deva was materialised whom Maha Deva accepted; Kaustubha Ratna was accepted by Vishnu; a huge mass of poisonous creepers were given away to Naaga Devatas; Aoushadhis the herbal medicines were materialised and Maha Bhairava opted for it. Then emerged Dhavantari in his Kamandalu or the Sacred Vessel the much-awaited Amrita but for a while there was a veil of Maya around the vessel as it looked too innocuous.

Devi Lakshmi appeared and Muni Ganas and Devas hailed her praising her: Lakshmim Ksheera Samudra Raja Tanayaam Shri Ranga Dhaameshwareem, Daasibhuta samasta Deva vanitaam Lokaika deepaankuraam/ Shriman manda kataaksha labdhavibhava Brahmendru Gangaadharaam, Twaam Trailokya kutumbeneem Sarasijaam Vandey Mukunda Priyaam! They also recited Shri Suktam by saying: Hiranyavarnaam Harineem Suvarna Rajatasrajaam Chandraam Hiranyayeem Lakshmeem jatavedomamaahava, Taam avaha Jaatavedo Lakshmeemanapagaamineem, Yasyaam Hiranyam vindeyamgaamashwam Purushaanaham/ etc. The highly excited Gandharvas jumped into symphonic singing and Apsaras danced with ecstacy; Ganga and other Sacred Rivers fetched cool and fragrant waters while 'Ashta Diggajas' or the Celestial Elephants got her bathed. Vishwakarma gifted invaluable Dresses and Ornaments and Maha Lakshmi reached her rightful Place of Vishnu's heart!

With the excitement of Shri Lakshmi's arrival, there was a temporary diversion but soon enough both Devas and Asuras suddenly realised that Dhanvantari's Golden Kamandalu was replete with Amrita! Then suddenly flared up a scramble of swiftly changing hands and a pandemonium was created; a reverberating female voice halted the mayhem and there was an extraordinarily graceful embodiment of Beauty named Mohini Devi who said: 'Gentlemen! What for is this fight! I am a neutral person and I shall to justice to all; hand over the Golden Vessel to me and I will surely distribute Amrita in an orderly manner'; by so saying she made formations of Devas and Asuras and served Amrita to Devas first; being under a heavy cloud of Maya, the Asuras continued to await their turn. Rahu however sat in the queue of Devas and as soon as Surya and Chandra recognised him the latter objected even while Rahu consumed drops of Amrita already; Devi Mohini lifted her serving spoon and sliced Rahu's body into two and his

head flew up to the skies discarding the body trunk behind. As the service of Amrita was over, Mohini Devi disappeared and the spell of Maya was lifted. An uproar broke out and Devaasura battle began but since Devas had already consumed Amrita their prowess was multiplied while the Asuras lost their shine and had to retire to Paataala Lokas.

Sage Narada visited Kailasa and conveyed the happenings at Samudra Mathana and the revelation of Devi Mohini as the arbiter to distribute Amrita to Shiva and Parvati; he also narrated as to how Vishnu Maya was at full display and but for the incident of Rahu, Asuras became powerless and fled back to Pataalas. Both Parvati and Shiva were amused and visited Vishnu and Devi Lakshmi and requested Vishnu to display the Unparalleled Beauty of Mohini. As Vishnu assumed that Form of Mohini, Shiva was unable to resist and chased her even while Devi Uma was protesting; he finally embraced her and the outcome was the birth of Maha Sasta who had the capability of destroying crores of Daityas.

Origin of Bhandaasura: Brahma Deva made an appeal to Bhagavan Vishnu and Lakshmi to make a significant creation of a Jaganmohana Swarupa who could initiate a highly propitious beginning of a Memorable Chapter in the History of the Universe. Vishnu looked sideways amorously at Devi Lakshmi and there got materialised Manmatha with arrows of flowers and a sugar cane bow! Brahma blessed Manmatha to become the Embodiment of Love! Just then Tarakasura was making havoc in the Worlds and Devas knew that only a Son of Shiva and Parvati could exterminate him. They made an appeal to Manmatha to somehow create Shiva's desire for Parvati as she was already in the task of assisting him by supplying flowers, fruits and such other Puja material in his worship. Manmatha agreed and released a flower-arrow or two on Shiva. Maha Deva opened his eyes and looked at Devi Parvti affectionately but quickly recovered from that momentary feeling and wondered how he being a firm controller of senses was disturbed in mind; he discovered that Manmatha was responsible for this sensation in hiding. A furious Maha Deva opened his Third Eye and Manmatha was turned into a heap of ash.

Ganesha materialised a Purusha from that heap. Ganesha was delighted at his Creation and embraced the Purusha. He advised him to worship Maha Deva and he could grant Siddhis to him; Ganesha gave the instruction of 'Shata Rudreeya' and recited him hundred times and sought Shiva's boons; the boon was that half of his enemy's Shakti should be halved while he faced them and that the Astra-Shastras of the enemy should become futile; the boon further assured that he should enjoy his privileges for sixty thousand years! As Brahma learnt of the purport of the boon he stated out of desperation: Bhand! Bhand! and eversince he came to becalled as Bhandasura. Bhanda became a terror to the Universe and Asura Guru Shukra gradually honed his battle skills. He called up Mayasura and made him construct another Amaravati and declared himself as Indra. He acquired a Kireeta which was gifted to Hiranyakashipu by Brahma. Shukra gave him an Umbrella given to him by Brahma and he was never bothered him by disease or fatigue. Thus Bhanda became an Apara Indra with all the fanfare of Indraloka. Bhanda had eight warrior sons and four daughters. Eventually, Indra and Devatas became subservient to Bhanda. Being a staunch devotee of Maha Deva, his progeny too adopted the father's qualities; his sons were Indra Shatru, Amitraghna, Vidyunmaali, Vibhishana, Ugrakarma, Ugradhanvu, Vijaya and Shritiparaga. There were regular Yagna Karyas and the Havya bhoktas were Bhanda and his followers! Vedaadhyayana was common in the houses of common Asuras of Bhandasura's households.

Bhanda's grandeur was ever growing for sixty thousand years but gradually, the spendour slackened and his virtuosity too commenced to wane. That was the time that Vishnu was waiting for as Indra was almost on a breaking point; a **Loka Mohini Maya** was created with the mission of enticing Bhandasura and also despatched a few Apsaras led by Vishvachi to attract Bhanda's key persons in the Court and the Sacred deeds like Yagnas were affected; Vedas were forgottten and Shiva's worship took a backseat.Guru Shukracharya's cautions were ignored and thrown to winds. Sage Narada then took up the mission of reviving the self-confidence of Devas who were dormant in their spirits and self-assurance so far; he prompted Devas to virtually wake up and worship Parashakti. Infused by Narada's sermons, Devas were activated and got refreshed with enthusiasm and reinforcement of devotion to Devi Parvati. While Bhanda's advisers, army and Praja were gradually sinking in moral turpitude, Devas came to enjoy

confidence and morale boost-up. Guru Shukracharya warned Bhanda and his men that Vishnu did lasting and irrevocable damage by spreading Maya and inciting them into fast slippages of their erstwhile demeanor of excellence. On realising their mistakes, Bhanda made last-dig amends by reviving Shiva Puja, Homas and Vedadhyanas, but alas his efforts lost the punch and determintaion.

## Lalitodbhavana, Stuti by Devas and Wedding with Shiva

Devas were engaged in collective and continuous efforts of Yagnas and homas. On one glorious day, Indra and Devas witnessed a huge illumination from the 'Mahaagni Kunda' within a circular shaped radiance a profile of a Devi fully ornamened and bright silk dressed with four hands with a Paasha, Ankusha, a Sugarcane bow and five arrows with a smile beaming on her face appeared. Devas were in bliss to witness that Supreme Vision and commended her as follows:

Jaya Devi Jaganmaatarjaya Devi Paraatparey, Jaya Kalyaana nilaye Jaya Kaamakalaatmikey/ Jayakaari cha Vaamaakshi Sundari, Jayaakhila Suraa- raadhey Jaya Kaameshi maanadey/ Jaya Brahmamaye Devi Brahmaatmaka rasaatmikey, Jaya Naaraayana parey Nanditaaseshavishtapey/ Jaya Shrikanthadayitey Jaja Shri Lalitambikey, Jaya Shri Vijayey Devi Vijayashri samrudbhidey/ Jaatasya Jaatamaanasya Ishtaapurtsya hetavey, Namastasai Trijagataam Paalayitrai Poaratparey/ Kalaamuhurta kaashtha -aharmaasaastu sharadaatmaney, Namah Sahasra seershaayaai Sahasra mukha lochaney/ Namah Sahasrastaabja paada pankaja shobhitey, Anoranutarey Devi Mahatopi Maheeyasi/ Paraatparatarey Maatastejustejiyasaamapi, Atalam tu bhavedpaadou vitalam jaanuni tava/Rasaatalam Katideshah Kukshistey Dharanih bhavet, Hridayam tu Bhuvar lokah swastey Mukhamudahyutam/ Dryshachandraarkadahanaa Dishastey Baahavombikey, Marusta Tavocchwaasaa Vaachastey Shhrutayokhilaah/ Kreedaatey Lokarachanaa Sakhaa tey chinmayah Shivah, Aahaarastey Sadaanando Vastey hridaye sataam/ Drushyaadrushya Swarupaani Bhuvanaanitey, Shiroruhaa ghanaasteytu Taarakaah Kusumaanitey/ Dharmaadyaa Baahavastey syuradharmaadyayudaanitey, Yamaascha Niyamaaschiva Karapaada ruhaastathaa/ Stanou Swaahaaswadhaakarou Lokojjevana kaarakou, Praanaayaamastu teynaasaa rasanaa tey Saraswati/Pratyaahaarastwadindraani dhaanam tey dheestu Sattamaa, Manastey dhaaranaashaktirhridayam tey samaadhikah/ Maheemruhaasteymgaruhaah prbhatamvasanam tawa, Bhutam Bhavyam Bhavishyascha nityam cha tava vigraha/Yagna Rupaa Jagaddatri Vishwa rupaacha Paavani, Aadou ya tu Dayaabhuta Sasarja Nihkhilaah Prajaa/ Hridayasdthaapi Lokaanaamadrushya Mohaanaat –mikaa/ Naama rupayibhaanga cha yaa karoti swaleelayaa, Taanyaadhishthaaya tishthanti teshweasaktaartha kaamadaa, Namastasyai Mahaa Devyai Sarvashatyai Namo namah/ Yadaajnayaa Pravartantey Vahni Suryendumaarutaah, Prithivyaadini Bhutaani Tasyai Devyai namonamah/ Yaa sasarjaadidhaataaram Sargaadaavaadibhuridam, Dadhaara Swayamevaikaa tasyai Devyai Namo namah/Yathaa ghrutaatu dharini yayaakaasha mameyaya, yasyaamudeti Savitaa tasyai Devayai namo namah/ Yatrodeti Jagarkrustram yatra tishthati nirbharam, Yatrantameti kaaletu Tasyai Devyai namonamah/ Namonamastey Rajasye Bhavaayai namonamah Satvika samsthitaayai, Namo namastey tamasey Haraayai namo namo Nirguanatah Shivaayai/ Namo namastey Jagadeka maatrey namo namastey Jagadeka pitrey namonamastekhila Rupatantrey namonamastykhila yantra rupey/ Namo namo Loka Guru pradhaaney Namo Namasteykhila Vaak vibhutyai, Namostu Lakshmyai Jagadeka tushtayai Namomamah Shaabhavi Sarva Shaktyai/ Anadimadhyanta Paancha bhouktikam hyavaangmanogamya matarkavaibhavam, Arupamadwandwamadrushta gocharam Prabhaavamagryam kathamamba varnaye/ Praseeda Vishveshwari Visdhwa vanditey Praseeda Vidyeshwari Vedarupini, Praseeda Mayaamayi Mantra vigrahey Praseeda Sarveshwari Sarva rupini/ Iti stutwaa Mahaadeveem Devaah Sarvey Savasavaah, Bhuyo bhuyo Namaskrutya sharanam Jagmuranjasaa/

(Victory to you Jaganmata Devi! May you be magnificent as you are the best of the Highest and the Paraapara! Victory to you as you are the Embodiment of Auspiciousness and Propitiousness. Victory to you Kamakala -atmika, Vaamaakshi, Kamaakshi, Sundari! You are worshipped by all the Devas! Kameswari! Manada! Brahma mayi, Narayana paraa, Moksha Nilaya, Haryaasakta, Samastha Bhuvanaananda kara! Visha Kantha Shiva Priya! Shri Lata, Dhana Shobha Lata, Ambika, Shri Vijaya,

Samruddhi prada, Victory to you! Indeed you are the cause of those already born or about to be born; you are the cause of Yagnas, and the virtuous deeds being performed like digging water ways and so on. Victory to you, Triloka Palaka, Ananta mukha netra, Savibhaga Kaala Swarupi! The Kaala Pramaana or Time Units of Kashtha- Kala- Kshana-Muhurta- Dina-Maasa-Rithu-Vatsaras are your creation; Our salutaions to You Devi! You are the Anata Hastaabja and Ananta Paadaabja! You are the Infinitesimal compared to an atom as also the largest of the Largest! Sarva Vyapi Devi! Atala are your feet, Vitala are your knees, Rasatala is your waist, Bhumi is your Kukshi (Belly), Bhuvarloka is your heart, Swarloka is your face, your looks are Trilochanas of Agni-Surya-Chandras; the Directions are your hands; your breathing is Vayu; your voice is all the Vedas; your play is Creation of Lokas; your companion is Maha deva; your food is happiness; your place of residence is the heart of the Virtuous Beings; Lokaas are the Seen and Unseen Forms of yourself; your hairs are the clouds; Stars are the flowers decorating your hairs; Dharmas are your hands; Adharmas are your weapons; 'Yama Niyamaas' representing Indrya-Nigraha or Physical Control and Upavaasa Vrataas are your nails; Swaha and Swadha are your child-feeding breasts; Pranayama is your nose; Saraswati is your tongue; actions and reactions are your limbs; Dhyaana is your intellect; Dharana is your mind; Samadhi Sthiti or the Climax of Yoga is your heart; trees and creepers are your body hairs; Prabhata or Early Morning is your vastra; Bhuta-Vartamaana-Bhavishyaas are your varied Forms!

Devi! You are Yagna Swarupa, Vishva Swarupa, Paavani, Ever Merciful Creator of the 'Charaachara Jagat'; Being present in every body's hearts you spread Maya all around; prviding nomenclatures of various materials, you bestow Artha-Kaamaas or Prosperity and Fulfillment; Maha Devi! Our sincere salutations to you! It is with your consent that Pancha Bhutas or Five Elements of Earth-Water-Air-Fire and Sky are regulated; You materialised Adi Deva and take up the tasks of Srishthi-Sthiti-Laya under your instructions; Dharani or Earth which was facilitated by you to bear the burden of of all the Beings; it is you who helped the Sky to hold Surya and other planets! Devi! At the time of Srishti you assume Rajo Swarupa, during the preservation Timer of the Samsara you display Satwa Guna and at the time of Laya you exhibit Taama Guna; You are indeed the father and mother of Samsara; You are Tantra Swarupa; Yantra Swarupini; the Epitome of Aaishwarya, Ananda and Shakti; Adi-Madhya-Anta Rahita; You are Vishveswari, Vidyeshwari, Mantreshwari, Sarveshwari; be kind to us and do provide us your shelter! Jagajjanani!) Lalita Devi was pleased with the Stotra by Indra and Devas and she asked them to seek boons and the desperate Devas described their plight for the last sixty thousand years when Bhandasura dominated the World Scene and threw them out of the erstwhile Swarga even as the Asura created a Swarga of his own. They supplicated that it was high time that Devas were restored to their lost positions by terminating the Bhanda Rajya for ever. Lalita Devi assured that the days of the Asura were over as he had by now come to Adharma and Anyaaya from his earlier years of Virtue and Shiva Puja. She also assured that who so ever would read or hear the Lalitha Stotra would be fearless and disease less; they would overcome difficulties and dissolve ignorance and be happy with prosperity, fame and good progeny.

As Lalita Devi gave her appearance, Brahma arrived along with Maharshis and so did Vishnu by his Garuda Vahana. Shiva also arrived by his Vrisha Vahana. Narada and Devarshis, Gandharvas, Apsaraas too reached there and Vishwakarma was asked to build a suitable Nagari to accommodate several visiting dignitaries including the Mantraadhi Devata Devi Durga, Vidyadhi Devata Shyama and Ambika. **Sapta Matru Devatas** viz. Braahmi, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Vaaraahi, Indraani, and Chamunda came as also **Ashta Siddhi** Devatas viz. Anima, Mahima, Garima, Laghima, Praapti, Praakaamya, Ishitwa and Vasitwa. Crores of Yoginis made a bee-line too. Bhairavas, Kshetra palakas, Maha Saasta, Ganeswara, Skanda, Veerabhadra were there to readily serve Devi. Brahma then proposed to Hari that this was the opportune time to perform the Sacred Wedding of Devi Lalita and Maha Deva. With mutual consent, the wedding was celebrated under the auspices of Vishnu the brother of Lalita Devi. The latter gifted to her an arrow of never fading fragrant flowers; Varuna Deva gave a Naaga Paasha, Vishwakarma gave an 'Ankusha'; Agni gave a 'Kireeta'; Chandra Suryas gave her sparkling ear-studs; Ratnaakara Samudra gifted a variety of Ornaments; Devendra gave an 'Akshya Madhu Patra' or a Vessel containing

eversasting 'Madhu'; Kubera rewarded a Priceless Chintamani necklace; Ganga and Yamunas gave Vinjaamaras or hand fans; Indra and Devatas, Dikpalakas, Marud Ganas, Sadhyas, Gandharvas, Pramathaganas were delighted to hand over therir respective weapons to Lalitha Devi. Then Maheswara and Maheswaris were given a 'Vedokta Mantraabhisheka'. As both of them were seated on a Golden Throne, Brahma named Lalita Devi as Kameshwari or Kamakshi. As the whole Universe was thus replete with joy, excitement and anticipation the Bhandasura would soon be eliminated, Sage Narada prostrated and made a formal request to launch the Vijaya Sena Yatra or the Victory March to kill Bhandasura.

# Lalita Deví's Vijaya Yatra and Bhandasura Vadha:

The Victory March commenced with sky-reaching reverberations of 'Vaadyas' or sound instruments of Mridangas, Murajas, Patahas, Jhallaris, Hundukas, Gomukhas, Barbaras, Hunkaaras and so on. From Lalita's Ankusha emerged **Sampatkari Devi** who alighted an Elephant called 'Rana Kolahala' who in turn materialised countless elephants. From Lalita Devis's Pashaayudha were materialised innumerable horses of varied descriptions like Vanayjas, Kambhojaas, Sindhujas, Tankanas, Parvateeyas, Paaraseekas, Kaala vandijas, Yavanobhutas and Gandharvas. Armed by her various hands, Lalita sat on a horse back even when Dandanatha or Senapati named Shrinatha led her army while the former in turn created several Chandi Shaktis seated on Mahishas / buffaloes or Lions; in fact, the Stree Shaktis created for the occasion were twelve in number viz. Panchami, Dandanaatha, Sanketa, Samayeswari, Samaya Sanketa, Vaaraahi, Potrini, Vaartaali, Maha Sena, Agjna, Chakrewsari, and Arighna. Besides, there were sixteen Mantra Navikas named Sangeeta Yogini, Shyama, Shyamala, Mantranayika, Mantrini, Sachiveshi, Pradhaanesi, Shukapriya, Veenavati, Vainiki, Mudrini, Priyakapriya, Neepapriya, Kadambesi, Kadambayanayaasini and Sadaamada. Meanwhile, a Figure representing Dhanur Veda with four hands, three heads and three eyes gifted a Dhanush (Bow) and two containers full of Arrows to Jagadamba saying these would be useful to fight Bhandasura. Hahagriva then described Parameswari with the following Pancha Vimshati Naamaas viz. Shri Lalitha, Maha Raagni, Paraamkusha, Chaapini, Tripura, Maha Tripura Sundari, Sundari, Chakranatha, Saamraajni, Chakrini, Chakreswari, Maha Devi; Kameshi, Parameshwari, Kamaraga Priya, Kaama koti, Chakravarti, Maha Vidya, Shiva, Ananga Vallabha, Sarva Paaatala; Kulanatha, Amnaaya naaatha, Sarvaamnaya Natha, Sarvamnayna Nivasini and Shringrara Nayika; reciting these names of Lalita Parameshwari would bestow name and prosperity. Tri Ratha Varnana: Ahead of Laliteswari's chariot called Kiri Chakra Ratha, were the Geya Chakra Ratha and Geeti Chakra Ratha. The Nine-Storyed front-running Chariot that moved towards Bhandaasura had huge contingents of Shaktis and these were Ashta Siddhis and Matrikas afore-detailed and Prakata Shaktis viz. Sarva Sankshobhini, Sarva Vidraavini, Sarvaakarshanakrunmudra, Sarva Vashankari, Sarovanmadana Mudra, Yashti, Sarva Mahaankusha, Sarva khastra charikaa Mudra, Sarva Beejaa, Sarva Yoni, and Sarvatrikhandika. Also there were sixteen Chandra Kalaa Shaktis named Kaamaakarshi Kalaa, Budhyaakarshini Kalaa, Ahankaara -akarshini Kalaa, Sabdaakarshini Kalaa; Gandhaakarshini Kalaa, Chittaakarshini Kalaa, Dhairyaakarshini Kalaa, Smrityaarshanika Kalaa, Naamaakashinikaa Kalaa, Beejaakarshinikaa Kalaa, Atmaakarshinikaa Kalaa, Amritaakarshinikaa Kalaa and Shareeraakarshinika Kalaa. On the eighth Storey of the Chariot, are four armed and three eyed of the radiance of Surya Chandra and are charged with high emotions to kill Bhandasura. On the seventh Storey were Stree Shaktis like Ananga Madana, Ananga Madanaaturaa, Anangalebhaa, Ananga Vegaa, Anangaankusa, and Anangaalingapara all of whom were anxiously waiting to terminate Bhandaasura. On the sixth storey of the Chakra raja Ratha are like Kaalaagni and they possessed Agni Baana, Agni Dhanu, Agni Khadga who were all materialised from the Kaamaagni Shaktis and their names were Sarva Sankshobhini, Sava Vidraarini, Sarva -akarshana, Sarvaahlaadani, Sarva sammohihi, Sarvastambhana, Sarvjrumbhana, Sarvonmaadana and Sarva Dwandwaksha -yankari. On the fifth Storey were 'Kulotteernas' who had crooked eve-brows and carriers of Parashu, Paasha, Gada, Ghanta, and Manis. These Stree Shaktis were Sarva Siddhiprada, Sarva Sampadprada, Sarva Priyankara, Sarvanga Sundari, and Sarva Soubhyagyadayani; these were basically the boon-bestowing and merciful Devatas. The fourth Storey Devatas were ten in number viz. Sarvajna, Sarva Shakti, Sarvaish -warya prada, Sarva Sarva Jnaanamayi,

Sarva Vyadhi Nivaasini, Sarvaadhaara Swarupa, Sarvaahapara, Sarvanandamayi, Sarva Rakshaa Swarupini and Sarvepsita phala pradayaini. The third Storey Shaktis Vaagadheeswaris, and Veenaa-Pustaka Dharinis called Vashini, Kaameshini, Bhogini, Vimala, Aruna, Javini, Sarveshi, and Kaalini; these were all Rakshasa Samhara kaarinis. The Shaktis in the second Storey of the Chariot are as powerful as Lalitaa herself and were very close to her and were equally armed like Lalita herself and they were always ready to help, protect and be of forgiving nature! These magnanimous Shaktis were called Kameshi, Bhaga, Nityaklinna, Bherunda, Vahnivaasini, Maha Vajreswari, Dati Twarita, Kula Sundari, Nityaa, Nilapaakaa, Vijaya, Sarva Mangala, Jwaalaamaalini and Chitra. Such was the magnificent presence of Maha Shaktis accommodated in the Chariot . Similarly Shaktis in the Geya Chakra Ratha Prathama Madhya or the central portion of the first Storey was Sangeeta Yogini who was very intimate to Sri Devi and was the Residence of Mantrinis. Other storeys of the Ratha too were similarly brilliant with other Shaktis. The front chariot was of ten yojana's height; the accompanying Geeti Chakra Ratha had a height of seven yojanas and that of Kiri Chakra Ratha was of six yojanas in which Laliteswari was sitting brilliantly.

**Preamble to Devi's battle with Bhandasura:** As the Three Chariots were on the move, Rakshasas were mortally frightened and there were deadly omens to them while Devi's entourages were in top spirits anticipating emphatic Victory. The fool hardy Bhandasura was bragging away as in a dream world that a woman called Lalitha was coming to fight who nodoubt was stated to be beautiful and graceful and that instead of encountering in a battle he would like to invite her to a private encounter!! Ha ha! Bhanda's younger brothers Vishukra and Vishanga were the World's most dreaded and terrifying warriors and the erstwhile devotees of Maha Deva who only knew how to subdue and conquer and were unaware of fear or surrender. As Bhanda was in the fancyand romantic world, the brothers tightened the screws and bolts of the chatiots and charioteers. The Great Rakshasa warriors who frightented Devas and kept on them leash as they woud to slaves were so strong that each of them were able to make a multitude of Devas demoralised for a very very long sixty thousand years of Bhandasura's unchallenged sovereignty aided by thousands of Akshouhinis of unique strengh and of Mastery of Crookedness and Maya! Such powerful Rakshasas uprooted Indra, created a fresh Swarga with modern facilities, controlled Lokapalakas, PanchaBhutas, Tri Murtis, and finally approached a Woman to lead! The Rakshasa warriors included Kutilaaksha, Durmnada kuranda, Karanka, Kaalavaasita, Vajradanta, Vajramukha, Vajraloma, Vikata, Vikataasana, Karaalaaksha, Karkataka, Dirgha Jihva, Humbaka, Karkasha, Pulkasa, Pundraketu, Jrumbhakaaksha, Tikshna shringa, Yamantaka, Atimaya, Ulukajitat, Kujvilaashwya, Attahasa, Mushaka, and Kumbhotkacha.

Bhandaasura's Associates exterminated: Lalitha Devi sounded her 'Pataha Dhwani' as a mark of attack and Bhandasura responded with his 'dundhibhis' or war drums which deafened the Three Worlds. As a trail exercise, Kutilaksha commenced the Operation with ten lakh Akshouhinis and Sampadkari Devi attacked Durmada and in the first round there were casualities with an edge to Durmada. Sampakari showed her red eyes and in no time the Stree Shaktis extinguished the well trained oppposition and even before the re-fill arrived **Durmada** was killed. Kutilaksha shouted on Sapatkari and said that there was no great reason to celebrate the initial sacrifice which normally assessed the depth of the opposition; so saying, Kutilaksha attacked by a horseback appearing once in the Raksasha camp and suddenly opposite the Devi's camp; while on one side, Kutilaksha and Samvasraswati were grappled with each other, **Kuranda** faced Samatkari. The latter put up such an encounter that the rapidity of each other's arrows covered up Surya and the clash of their Astras provided illumination to periodically dispel darkness! Finally, Kuranda fell and Bhandasura realised the Shaktis meant business! Karanka and five Daitya Senapatis were then despatched who created a 'Rana Maya' called Sarpini which created poisonous flames and showered serpents but Nakuleshwari Shakti utilised Garudaastra and also showered Mongooses. As Karanka and five other Senapatis were destroyed, Bhandasura and Kutilaksha instructed Seven more Senapatis to face the attack from the side of Devi; these Senapatis were all born to Rakshasi Keekasa (born of Bones) and were named Baalaka, Soochi Mukha, Phaalamukha, Vikarna, Vikataanana, Karaalaayu and Karataka. The Sapta Senapatis were asked to proceed with three hundred Akshouhinis of

army to attack Lalita Devi directly. But the invincible Shaktis displayed their penchant for blood-drinking and apart from the Sapta Senapatis the massive army was destroyed. Vishanga the brother of Bhandaasura entered the battle and surreptitiously went under Lalitha Devi's chariot and managed to hit his arrow on her hand fan. Kameswari and Tithi Nityaa Shaktis were highly infuriated and Kameswari told in a rather apologetic tone to Devi that since her chariot was fully secured by Maha Mantra Shaktis, the Rakshasaas were trying to use their Maya in the night to make an entry from the rear side under the chariot's wheel and now the Shaktis viz. Vanivaasini, Jwaalaamaalini would then display their power. Then the Nitya Shaktis aimed their arrows and killed countless Daityas; Kameswari killed Damana, Bhagamala shot straight into the Senanayaka Dirghajihva, Nityaklinna annihilated Humbeka, Bherunda Shakti thrashed Hulumallaka, Vahni vaasaa Shakti crushed Kaklusa, Maha Vajreswari Shakti destroyed Kesivahana, Shivaduti Shakti sent Plukasa to Yamapuri, Twarita cut Pundraketa into pieces; Kulasundari smashed Chandabahu, and so on. The villian who started the Adharma Yuddha viz. Vishanga tried to escape but Kameswari Devi caught him by his neck and tore off his Kavacha with her sharp nails and in the process he escaped narrowly but Kameswari let him off as a retreating timid was not fair to run after and what was more the night was just entering the early morning hours. There were floods of blood and unbearable smell of putrid dead bodies all over. Devi Lalita instructed Jwaalamaalini to encircle the entire area with flames to make the army of Bhandasura and also clean up the mess of dead bodies of his army. Her chariots were lifted up the Mahendra Mountain while Dandini Shakti remained on the left of Kiri Chakra Ratha, Shyamala Devi was in the southern side, in the North was Sampadeswari and in the front Hayasana was present. As Bhandasura's sons were asked to attack and display their prowess, Bala Shakti of nine years of age requested Devi to please let her play with the sons of Bhanda along with a fresh battalion of two hundred akshouhinis and Lalita smiled and consented. Bala Shakti uprooted the progeny of Bhandasura and wiped out the army despatched afresh. At this juncture Bhandasura was not only agitated but demoralised. Vishukra then set up a Maha Yantra and made a desperate bid when Ganesha saluted Lalita and took her permission to face the Maha Jaya Yantra as conceived by Vishukra. Gajasura arrived to operate the Most Potent Yantra. MahaVighna Nayaka took the forms of Six Vighna Nayakaas viz. Aamoda, Pramoda, Sumukha, Durmukha, Arighna and Vighna karta and each of these were the Chiefs of crores of 'Herambas'; these six forms of Ganesha and the crores of Herambas moved ahead of him and their mere 'Hunkaaraas' wiped out akshouhinis of Daityas, while the power of their trunks destroyed the remnants. Ganesha himself attacked Gajasura and killed him even as Vishukra who invented the so called Jaya Yantra was destroyed into smitheerens. An undaunted Bhandaasura was nodoubt frustrated and humiliated but the show had to go on and hence sent his brothers Vishukra Vishangas. Vishukra was so notorius that Trilokas were shivering at one stage and he was the Yuvaraja / successor of Bhandaasura. Both the brothers planned to attack Devi together instead of dividing themselves in two directions. Lalita Devi consented that Mantrini Dandini might take the onslaught of the brothers. Mantrini was for all practical purposes the Maha Raajni Lalita herself! All the associated Shaktis of Mantrini were in such inspired disposition as their morale was sky-high; some alighted horses, some were in chariots and others mounted elephants. Shyama Shakti provoked Vishukra; Nakuli Devi fought with Vishu, Maha Maya Kunti with Peshu, Bhauravi with Madada, Laghu Shyama with Kushura, Swapnesi with Mangala, and so on. Vishukra released Trishaastra which made all the Shaktis highly thirsty and the army of Lalita had tough time to cope up the situatation. Dandini prayed to Sura Samudra and the intoxicated Shaktis were joyfully killing the Daityas with redoubled excitement. The Trishastra instead of creating thirst of water thus ended up in the thirst of Madhu and the Devi Sena had a glorious time in killing the Daityas with redoubled vigour and adventurism! Danda Nayika encountered both the brothers together and hit Vishanga with a 'hala' (plough) and Vishukra with 'Musala' (mace).

**Bhandasura exterminated:** With the death of his dear brothers, sons and Senapatis and army of several akshouhinis, Bhandasura was crestfallen and depressed; yet, he proceeded with Kutilaaksha and thirty five Senanayakas and two hundred and eighty five Akshouhinis of army; excepting one woman in Shunyaka Nagari, his Head Quarters, the entire population went fight in the final battle. He alighted his huge chariot drawn by lions; countless of his army members had little space to travel by Bhumi and had

to fly on the sky. Soon on spotting Devi Lalita, he despatched the Astra of 'Andhataamishra' and she retalliated it with 'Vishwaavasaastra' / 'Suryaastra' and blunted his arrogance. He threw 'Antakaastra' and Devi replied it with the Astra of Maha Mrityunjaya. He used 'Sarvastra Smriti' and she destoyed it with Dharana / Medhaastra. Bhanda utilised Bhayastra to frighten Shaktis but Amba used 'Aindraastava' to relieve fears. The Asura used Maha Rogastra and she sent back 'Naama Trayaastra' which released the resounding voices of 'Achyuta-Ananda-Govinda' along with 'humkaara' sounds. Bhanadasura threw at her the 'Ayushnaasha' or Life Destroying Arrow, and Devi replied that Astra with 'Kala Sankarshini' or Life Extending Astra. The desperate Bhandasura then forwarded Mahaasuraastra which was the supercombination of the energies of several notorious Asuras like Madhu-Kaitabha, Mahishaasura, Dhumralochana, Chanda-Mundeswara, Chikshibhu, Chamara, Rakta beeja, Shumbha-Nishumbha, Kalakeya, Dhumra and so on. There were 'Hahaakaaras' from the Devi Sena and the combined strength of various Asuras was too overwhelming. Devi then laughed boisterously and materialised Durga who was the Composite Form of all Devaas; Maha Deva provided to her a mighty 'Shula', Vishnu his Sudarshana Chakra, Varuna his conchshell, Agni his heat and radiance, Vayu a bow and arrows, Indra his Vajraayudha, Kubera his chashaka or drinking vessel, Yama his Kala Danda, Maha Danda, and Paasha; Brahma his Kamandalu or vessel, Iravata his bell, Mritya Devata her Khadga and metal resistor, Samudra his 'haara' or necklace, and Vishwakarma gifted ornaments.

Then Devi Lalita assumed various forms: as **Durga** she was in full form of unusual splendour; as **Narayani** she alighted a Simha Vahana and fought; and she destroyed Mahashasura as **Chandika** as described in 'Durga Saptashati'. Bhandasura released 'Mookaastra' and Devi in turn created the Astra of 'Vakvaadini'. He used Vedaapaharana Astra and she met it with her right hand thumb! Bhanda's 'Arnavaastra' created huge flows of gushing water which was arrested by an **Adi Kurma** of yojana's height and width as created by Devi's right hand's pointing finger.

Bhanda sent an Astra called Hairanyaaksha which created thousands of 'Hiranyakshas 'and Devi created Maha Varaaha from her right hand middle finger who destroyed them all. An infuriated Bhanda produced crores of Hiranyakashipus but an unperturbed Devi frowned from where emerged Prahladaas and **Nrisimha Rupas** from her right ring finger who were like Pralaya Rudras laying the Hiranya kashipus on the Deva's lap and pulled out his intestines and blood. Similarly Devi Lalita created Vamana Devas from her right hand little finger to control Balendras; Parashu Ramas to kill Kartaveeraryaarjunas from her left hand thumb; Shri Rama to destroy the ten headed Ravana and Kumbhakarna and **Lakshmana** to kill Indrajit and from Devi's left pointing finger; **Balarama** from materialised from Devi's left middle finger to kill Asuras; Vaasudeva was created by the left hand ring finger of Lalita Devi and he terminated countless Rajaasuras and other Rakashasaas like Kamsa, Sishupaala, Dantavaktra, Poundraka, Shambara, Pralamba, Narakasura, Banaasura and so on and thereby reduced the weight of Evil on Bhumi and from her left hand little finger created Kali Deva who ended up Huna-Yavana-Kirataka and others. As all the Evil Forces were uptooted by Durga Devi thus, Devi Lalitamba liquidated Bhandasura's Senapatis with Narayanaastra and finally only Bhandasura was left out. She then released 'Maha Kameshwaraastra' which had the extraordinary radiance and energy of thousand Suryas and ultimately the greatest menace in Tri Lokaas was demolished; the Sunyaka Nagari was burnt off with the flames of the Kameswarastra and thus the Dwiteeya Swarga which Bhandaasura created sixty thousand years ago was turned into heaps of ashes; and so did Bhandasura whom Ganesha materialised from the ashes of Manmatha as a play! With the termination of Maha Bhanda, Devas celebrated with resonant sounds of Celestial Drums and showers of flowers from Swarga and they were re-installed in their original positions. Whosoever reads or hears the Legend of Lalita Devi's victory over Bhandaasura would become fearless; they would attain Siddhis, Bhakti, Shakti, Arogya, Keerti, Aishwarya and Mukti! At the huge relief that Tri Lokas came to experience, Brahma-Vishnu-Rudras-Indra and Devas-Adityaas-Vasus- Maruds- Sadhya Devatas-Siddha-Kimpurusha-Yaksha-Nishaachara-Daityas felt so gladdened in their hearts and Maha Devi Lalita sat on a Golden Throne looking relaxed and satisfied; there was a fresh wave of hope, virtue, courage, confidence and happiness began again to all the Beings with relief and

fulfillment. Brahma and others made a spontaneous Commendation at the Victory of Maha Raajni Lalita Devi as follows:

# **Victory Commendation and revival of Mammatha:**

Namo namastey Jagadeka naathey Namonamah Shri Tripuraabhi-dhaaney, Namo namo Bhandamahaasuraghney Namostu Kameshwari Vaamakeshi/ Chintaa- maney chintidaanadaksheychintye, Chitraambarey Chitrajagatprasutey Chitraakhya Nityey Sukhadey Namastey/ Mokshapradey Mugdha Shashaanka chudey Mugdhasmitey Mohana bheda Dakshey, Mudreshwareechirchitaraaja tantrey Mudraapriye Devi Namo namastey/ Kruraantaka dhwamsini Komalaangey Kopeshu Kaaleem Tanumaadadhaaney/ Krodaananey Paalita Sainika Chakrey Krodeekruta- aseshabhaye Namastey/ Shadanga Devi Parivaara Krishney Shadanga Yukta Shruti Vaakya mrugye, Shadchakra samsthey cha Shadbhaava rupey Lalitey Namastey/

(Our salutations to you 'Jagadeka Naatha' and 'Tripuraabhidaana' who has the unique distincion of destroying Bhandasura. Kameshwari, Vaamakeshi, Chantaamani Swarupa, Achnitya, Chiraambari, the Creator of Chitra Jagat, Nitya Shakti called Chitra! Sukha Pradayani, Moksha Pradayani, Chandra Kalaa dhari, Mugdhasmita or Ever Smiling, Fully capable of smashing Illusions, the Sovereign of 'Mudras' or hand gestures and finger postures signifying various feelings; Mudraa Praya, Kruraantaka Dhwamsa, Komalaangi, Kaali Swarupa, Vaaraahi Rupa, Shakti Sainya Palaka, Absorber of all kinds of Fears, Shadanga Rupa or the Essence of Vedangas or Six Corollaries of Vedas viz. Siksha-Vyakarana-Chhanda-Nirukta-Jyotisha and Kalpa; Mulaadhaara and such other Six Chakras of Physique; and 'Shad bhaavaas' or Six Impulses viz. Kshut (Hunger), Trishna (Thirst), Shoka (Distress), Moha (Infatuation), Jara (Old age) and Marana (death). Brahma further extolled Devi as follows: 'Devi Lalita! You are Shiva Swarupini, Kaama Swarupini, Nitya Swarupini, Manohara Swarupini, Varapradayani, Shambhu Kaamini, Moksha dayani, Kalaadhipa, Divyoushadha Prathama, Nagara Samuha Swarupini, Surya Sahasra Kantimati, Daya Swarupini, Devaadi Deva Santosha Swarupini, Animaadi Ashtaiswarya Sevita; Sadaa Shivaatma Prakasha, Sabhaa Maryaada Yukta, Sapta Matruka Sevita, Brahmeswari, Nitya Swarupini, Shodasa Kalaa Samyuta Lalita (magnificent with Sixteen Kalaas), Pramatha Gana Sevita, Samkshodhinyadi chaturdasha jwaalaavaranaa (Devi, you are surrounded by Fourteen Flames like those named as Sankshobhini), Sharva Sidhaadi Shakti namaskruta ( worshipped by Shaktis called Sarva Siddhas); Chakra Swarupini; Vashinyaadi Vaagaishwarya Shakti Sevita Devi (Devi, you are worshipped by Vashinya and other Shaktis who are the Epitomes of Speech Prosperity / fluency); Vaksamudra, Varadeaayani, Samastaayudha Saarvabhouma, Vajreswari, Bhageswari, Kaala Swarupa, Kameswari, Baala, Bindu Swarupa, Bindukalaayaika rupini, Kalpa Pralaya Yama Swarupa, Kama Kalpa Vriksha, Vidyeswari, and Shambhunaatha dwitiya Sthaanaashraya (the alternate Form of Sthaana Rupa!)'

Brahma then introduced Rati Devi the widow of **Manmatha** and requested her to terminate her widow-hood and Lalita Devi readily agreed to do so and asked her to be bathed and dressed up as a 'Sumangali' with chandana-kumkuma, flowers and ornaments. Manmatha got revived. Devi bestowed boons to him saying that from the hair roots of his body he would materialise crores of Manmathas for ever and that he would ensure all the married couple to get marital satisfaction for ever; those who blame him would fail in their marriage unions and males turn out to be impotent and females turn out as frigid and barren. The Nava Manmatha was further blessed by Devi that Maha Deva would renounce Vairagya and would be so fond of Parvati that he did not leave her thus acquiring the epithet of 'Arthanaareswara' Manmatha's Senaani was Chandra, and Peetha mardakas were 'Raaga' or sweet musical notes, Mandanalaya or provocative winds and the sweet cooing of Kokila or Koel.

Construction of Shri Pura: Tri Murtis Brahma-Vishnu-Maheshwaras commisioned the famed Vishwakarma and Mayaasura to construct Shri Pura on Meru Mountain which had four 'Shikharas' or Mountains representing Fourteen Bhuvanas including the Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva Lokas where Lalita Devi would reside and oversee. Shripura is to control the Universe in totality and had seven 'Praakaaraas' or Enclosures, made of steel, kaamsya, taamra (copper), brass, Panchaloha, silver and gold. In each enclosure are countless and highly expansive buildings, halls, massive 'dwaaras' or entry gates, private

rooms, gardens, water bodies, flora and fauna. Each praakaraa had a spread of thousands of yojanas and similarly the area in between each Praakara had thousand yojanas too. Hayagriva exclaimed to Agastya Muni: Could even the two thousand tongued Adi Sesha describe the magnificence of Shri Pura where besides others, **Matanga Kanya** was in constant exaltation for Maha Devi's entertainment! Matanga Kanya was the daughter of Maatanga Muni who having pleased Lalita Devi secured the greatest boon of giving birth to the daughter who would have the greatest privilege of residing and serving Maha Devi in her presence for good! Matanga Kanya was also called Shyama who manifested herself in crores of Laghu Shyama Rupas. There are **Sapta Kakshyaas** or seven huge Bhavanas of Shri Pura in which Siddhas, Charanas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Kinnaras, Kimpurushas, Sadhakas, Nagas, Rakshasas, Dikpalakas, Rudras-all being Devi worshippers.

Among the other Kakshyas are named Shiva Lokantara, Maha Padmaatavi Kakshya, Naukeshwari **Devi Kurukulla** was the most reputed. Ten **Agni Kalaas** were there too and these wer called Dhumraarchi, Ushna, Jwalini, Jwaalini, Visphulingini, Sushri, Surupa, Kapila, Vaavyavaha and Kavyavaha. Twelve **Suryatmaka Kalaas** were housed here and these were Tapini, Taapini, Dhumra, Marichi, Jwalini, Ruchi, Sushumna, Bhogada, Vishwaa, Bodhini, Dhaarini and Kshama. **Chandra Kalaas** were Amrita, maanada, Pushni, Tushni, Pushti, Rati, Dhriti, Shashini, Chandrika, Kaanti, Jyotsna, Shri, Preeti, Angada, Purna and Purnaamrita. **Brahma Kalaas** were Pushti, Buddhi, Sthiti, Medha, Kanti, Lakshmi, Dyuti, Dhriti, Jaraa, Siddhi. **Vishnu kalas** were Sthiti, Paalini, Shanti, Ishwari, Tati, Kaamika, Varada, Hlaadini, and Dirgha. **Roudri Kalas** were Tikshna, Roudri, Bhaya, Nidra, Tandra Kshut, Krodhini, Trapa, Utkari and Mrityu. In addition, sixteen other Kalaas are stated in action in the Sapta Kakshyaas all over and these were materialised Brahma for 'Hastodaka Samsodhana' or to clean up the hands and they were Nivrutti, Pratishtha, Vidya, Shanti, Indira, Deepika, Rechika, Mochika, Para, Sukshma, Sukshmaamrita, Kala, Jnaamaamrita, Vyaadhini, Vyaapini and Vmorupika. These Kalaas were in Maha Padmatavi and Maha Chakra.

Chintamani Griha was the Yagna Sthala where Maha Raajni and Parama Kameshwara perform Yagnas by kindling 'Jnaanaagni'with hundreds of 'Sudhaa Dhaaraas' or pourings of Amrita. To the Nirruti side of Chintamani Griha was the Shri Chakra Raaja Ratha, in Vayavya was the Geya Chakra Ratha, in Ishanya was Kiri Chakra Ratha and in Agneya Gayatri was in Omkaara Mandira with opened and benign eyes providing 'Abhaya' or Safety. In the North side of Chantamani Griha were Ganapati, Shiva, Mrityunjaya and Sarasvati. In diferent sides of North itself were the following Shaktis viz. Shri Paramba, Vishada Jyotsna, Normala and Vigrah; Bala, Annapurna, Hayarudha and Shri Paduka; Unmatta Bhairavi, Swapna Vaaraahika, Tiraskarinikaamba and Panchami. In the Eastern side of Chintamani Griha were Shri Purti and Shri Maha Paduka, besides Anima-Mahima-Garima-Ishhitwa-Prakaamya-Mukti-Iccha-Prapti-Sarvakama, besides Rasa Siddhi-Moksha Siddhi-Bala Siddhi, Khadga Siddhi-Paduka Siddhi-Angana Siddhi-Vaak Siddhi-Loka Siddhi and Deha Siddhi. Braahmi-Mahweswari-Kaumari-Vaishnavi-Vaaraahi-Maahendri, Chamunda and Lakshmi were scattered providing over all Security.

#### Kanchi Kamakshi Charitra

It may be recalled that Agastya Maharshi visited Kanchinagara to worship Devi Kamakshi and Vishnu made his 'darshan'in the Swarupa of Hayagriva to delineate Lalitopakhyana. Now, Hayagriva confirmed that Lalita Devi whom Sarasvati-Lakshmi-and Gauri worshipped had reappeared as Kamakshi: Adyayaanutara saa syaacchitparaa twaadikaaranam, Antaakhyeti tathaa proktaa Swarupaatthatwachintakaih/ Dwiteeyaabhuuktatah Shuddha – paraa Dwibhujasamyutaa, Dakshina hastey yoga mudraam Vaama hastey tu Pustakam/ Bibhrtati Himakundendusuktaasama vapurdyutih, Paraa Paraa triteeyaasyaadwaa Lokaar-yukta sammitaa/ Sarvaabharana samyuktaa Dasha hasta dhrutaambuja, Vaamorunyasta –hastaa vaa Kireetaardhendu bhushanaa/ Paschaatturbhuja jaataa saa Paraa Tripuraarunaa, Paashaankushekshu kodanda Pancha Baana lasatkaraa/ Lalitaa saiva Kaamaakshi Kanchyaam Vyaktimupaagataa, Sarasvati Ramaa Gouryastaamevaadyamupaasatey/ Netra dwayam Maheshasya Kaashi Kaanchipuradwayam, Vikhyaatam Vaishnavam Kshetram Shiva Saannidhya kaarakam/ (Kamakshi is Adi Devata, smaller than an atom; Chit swarupini, Adi Kaarana or

the Primary Cause and is called 'Anta' or the Last. Her Second Swarupa has two hands, one with a Book and another with Yoga Mudra or of the Symbol of Yoga. Her third Form was pure while like snow, a jasmine flower, Chandra and a pearl; her fourth Form was that of thousand Rising Suns with a chandra rekha on her head; she is Para Tripura with four hands carrying Paasha, Ankusha, Ikshu or Sugarcane and 'Kodanda' of Lalita as reappeared as **Kamaksh**i as meditated by Sarasvati-Lakshmi and Gauri; she was Maha Deva's two eyes, one as Shiva Kanchi and another as Vishnu Kanchi.)

Brahma hailed Kamakshi as follows: Jaya Devi Jaganmaatarjaya Tripurasundari, Jaya Shrinaatha Sahajey Jaya Shri Sarva Mangaley/ Jaya Shri Karunaa raashey Jaya Shringaara naayikey, Jaya jayedhika Siddheshi Jaya Yogendra vanditey/ Jayajaya Jagadamba Nitya rupey Jaya Jaya Sannuta lokasoukhya dhaatri, Jaja Jaya Himashaila kirtaneey Jaya Jaya Shankara Kaama Vaamanetri/ Jagajjanamastithi dhwamsamapidhanaanugrahaanmuhuh, yaa karoti swasankalpaattasyyai Devyai namonamah/ Varnaashramaanaam saankarya kaarinah Paapino janaan, Nihantyaa-dyaati teekshanaastraitasyai Devyai/ Naagamaischa na Vedaischa na Shaastrairnayogibhih, Vedyaacha Swasamvedyaa Tasyai Devyai namonamah/ Rashasyaamnaaya Vedaantaistatwa vidbhir Muneeshwaraih, Param Brahmeti yaa khyaataa tasyai/ Hridayasthaapi Sarveshaam yaa na kenaapi drushyatey, Sukshma Vignaana Rupaayai/ Brahmaa Vishnuscha Rudrascha Ishwarascha Sadaa Shivah, Yaddadhyaanaikaparaa nityam tasyai/ Yacharana bhaktaa Indraadyaa Yadaaginaameya bibhrati, Saamraajya sampadeeshaayai tasyai/ Vedaa nishvasitam yasyaa veekshitam Bhuta panchakam, Smitam Charaacharam Vishwam tasyai/ Sahasra sirshaa Bhogindro Dharitreem tu yadaagnaya, Dhattey Sarvajanaadhaaram tasyai/ Jwaladyagnistapatyarko Vaato vaati yadaajnayaa, Jnaana Shakti Swarupaayai tasyai/ Panca Vimshati Tatwaani Maayaa Kanchuka Panchakam, Yanmayam Munayah praahurtasyai/ Shiva Shakti Swarupaaschaiva Shuddha bodhah Sadaa Shivah, Yadyunmeshavibhedaah syustasyai/ Gururmantro Devataacha tathaapraanaascha panchadhaa, ya viraajati chidrupaa tasyai/ Sarvaatmanaamantaraatmaa Paramaananda rupiney, Shri Vidyeyti smrutaavaa tu tasyai/ Darshanaanicha sarvaani yadangaani vidurbudhaah, Tatthaanniyama yupaayai tasyai Devyai namonamah/ Ya bhati Sarva lokeshu manimantraishadhaatmanaa, Tatwopadesha rupaayai tasyai/ Deshakaala padaarthaatmaa yayadvastu yathaa tathaa, Tat rupena yaa bhaati tasyai/ Hey Pratibhataakaaraa Kalyaana guna shaalini vishvottheerneti chaakhaataa tasyai/ Iti stutwaa Mahaa Devim Dhaata Lokapitaamahh, Bhuyobhuyo Namaskrutya sahasaa sharanam gatah/ (Jaganmaata! Tripurasundari! Sister of Lakshmi Pati! Sarva Mangala Rupini! You are an Embodiment of Mercy, Shrigara Nayaki, Siddheswari, saluted by Top Yogis, Jagadamba, Unfailing donor of boons to Devotees; Praised by Himashaila; Always visioning Shankara with desire from your left Eye, apparently as she was Ardha Naareeswari. My salutations to you, as you bless the deeds of Srishti-Sthiti-Layas; you use weapons to smash those who are responsible for violating Varnaashrama vidhis. Devi Kamakshi! You are Swatma Rupini or of Form that is self- generated and neither Agamas, Vedas, Shastras, Tatwa Vettaas, nor Maha Munis. My greetings to you Devi, whom Brahma-Vishnu-Rudra-Ishwara-Sadashivas meditate and Indra and Devas prostrate. Vedas are your 'nishvaasaas' or exhalings; Pancha Bhutas are your looks; the Charaachara Jagat is your smile; It is with your instruction that Adi Sesha holds the weight of Earth, Agni produces flames, Sun gives out heat and radiance; Vayu is at work to to blow winds; all the Tatwas numbering twenty five (as described in earlier pages of this Purana) are all of Devi Swarupa; Shiva-Shakti-Ishwara-Sadashiva are all 'Unmesha Bhedas' or eye strokes; You are Guru, Mantra, Devata and 'Pancha Praanaas', Sarvaatma, Antaratma, Paramaananda, and Shri Vidya! Sarva Darshana Shastras constitute your body parts as opined by Panditas. You are Aayaa -niyama Swarupini; Desa-Kaala-Padartha-Vastu Rupini; Hema mayaakaara or of Golden Form! Kalyana Guna or of Qualities of Propitiousness! You are indeed beyond the Universe! Thus Brahma commended Maha Devi with great devotion and saluted her and requested her to reside at Kanchi for good as the inhabitants of this Karma Bhumi tended to suffer from ignorance and deserved her kindness. He further suggested that Shiva too be present with her. She consented to reside at Kanchi, asked Vishnu too stay there and let Shiva occupy her right body part. Brahma too resided at Kancha along with Sdarasdwati. Lalita Deva made her original appearance as **Bala** and subsequently Brahma and Vishnu celebrated the auspicious wedding of Tripura

Sundari and Shiva in the presence of Devas, Maharshis, Yaksha, Gandharva, Siddha, Vidyaadhara, and others as also Samasta Shaktis. They all hailed Lalita Devi as Kamakshi, the mere three worded Devi like Lalita, who was a Symbol of boon-provision. Hayagriva informed Agastya Muni: Tripura and other Shaktis were of her own creation. She improvised three Eggs and created Tri Murtis entrusting the three duties of Srishti-Sthiti-Samhara to Brahma-Vishnu- Shiva respectively from Satyaloka-Vaikuntha -Kailasha; Vishnu felt that he was the Supreme and as Brahma sat atop the Lotus stem sprouted from the navel of Vishnu resting on Ksheema Samudra, Brahma claimed superiority and the ensuing fight ended up as a third entity emerged as a huge Shiva Linga without a beginning and end. As Maheswara made his appearance, Brahma still claimed his seniority and out of anger of Maha Deva emerged Bhairava who tried to snip Brahma's fifth head but Brahma's kapala was not lreaving Shiva; he had to undergo the ' Brahma hatya' sin and during his Tirtha Yatras landed at Kanchipura. As he was on 'Bhikshaatana' or door-to-door begging with Brahma Kapala as hi begging bowl, he witnessed a Devi on way and she gave him a Jyotirmaya Bhiksha (alms) when Shiva got rid of the Brahma Kapala which fell on ground. The Devi whom Shiva thanked profusely was none else than Kamakshi. Another incident which was highlighted by Vasishtha Maharshi to Suta Muni and the huge group of Sages about the significance of Kanchi was about King Dasaratha of Ikshwaku Kula. For a number of years, the King could not secure children; he had considerable faith in Maha Tripura Sundari and was engaged in her worship for a very long number of years. One night Tripura Sundari appeared in Dasaratha's dream and stated that due to several of his sins committed earlier he was unable to secure children so far and now it was time as he and his wives should be blessed with excellent progeny; Tripura Sundari in the Form of Kamakshi further directed Dasaratha to visit Kanchi along with his Prime Consort Kaushalya to bathe in Kampa Nadi and worshipped Kamakshi and prostrated before the Shri Chakra Swarupini and spent there seven days continously and on the eightth day, they heard aa Celestial Voice that Vishnu himself would be born with his 'Amshas' as model sons of their 'Vamsha'!

#### Shri Lalita Sahasra Naama Stotra

Preface: Anga Nyaasa and Karanyasa: Asyashri Lalitaa Sahasranaama Stotra maalaa Mantrasya, Vasinyaadi Vaagdevataa Rishayah Anushthup Chhandaha Shri Lalitaa Mahaa Tripura Sundari Devataa, Aim-Shaktih, Sau Keelakam, Mama Chaturvidha Purushartha Siddhardhey Japey Viniyogah; Aim – Angushthaabhyaam Namah; Kleem – Tarjaneebhyaam Namah; Souh-Madhyamaabhyam Namah; Kleem-Kanishthikaabhyaam Namah; Aim-Karatala Kara Prushthaabhyam Namah; Aim – Hridayaayanamah; Kleem-Sirasey Swaahaa; Sou-Shikhaaya vashat; Souh-Kavachaaya hum; kleem-Netra Trayaaya Voushath; Aim-Astraaya phat; Bhurbhuvassuvaro dikbandhah/

#### **Dhyanam:**

Arunaam Karunaatarangitaaksheem dhrita paashaankusha pushpa baana chaapaam,
Animaadibhiraavritaam Mayukhai rahamityeva Vibhaavaye Mahesheem/ Dhyayet Padmaasananthaam
Vikasita Vadanaam Padma Patraayataaksheem, Hemaabhaam Peeta Vastraam Karakalitalasaddhema
Padmaam Varaangeem/ Sarvaalankaara yuktaam Sakala mabhayadaam Bhakta namraam Bhavaaneem,
Shri Vidyaam Shaantamurtim Sakala Suranutaam Sarva Sampatpradaatmeem/ Sakumkuma
vilepanaamalika chumbi kasturikaam, Samandahasitekshanaam Sashara Paashaankushaam/ Asesha
Jana Mohini marunamaalya bhushojjwalaam, Japaakusuma bhaasuraam Japavidhouh
smaredambikaam/ (May I meditate that Maha Raajni whose natural complexion is red; whose eyes are
full of kindness; whose hands are ornamented by a noose, a goad, a bow and flowery arrows and who is
surrounded by Ashta Siddhis like Anima, Garima, Laghima and Vasitwa; indeed she is right within in
me! May I meditate Bhavani, that Shri Vidya or the Symbol of Knowledge, Shantamurti or the Epitome
of Peace and Sarva Sampadpradaatreem or the benelolent provider of prosperity, as she dispels fears and
provides protection to all; She is seated comfortalbly on a lotus with majestic face, sparkling eyes akin to
lotus petals, donning a golden dress with a benign smile! May I meditate the smiling Mother who sports

arrows and bow, besides a noose and goad; she is decorated with red japa kusuma flower garlands and ornaments, and with a forehead painted with vermilloin and musk that intoxicated.)

Om Aim Hreem Shreem Shri Matrey Namah/Shri Maataa Shri Mahaaraahni Shrimat Sihaasaneshwari, Chidagni Kunda sambhhutaa Deva Kaarya Samudyataa/ Udyadbhaanu Sahasraabhaa Chaturbaahu Samanvitaa, Raaga Swarupa pashaadhyaa Krodha Kaaraankushojjwalaa/ Manorupekshu Kodanda Pancha Tanmatra Saayakaa, Nijaaruna Prabhaapura majjadbrahmaanda mandalaa/ Champakaashoka sougandhika lasatkacha, Kuruvindamanishreni Kanatkotira mandita/

(Sacred Mother!You are the Extraordinary Queen seated on the Throne mounted by lions; You are generated from the fire-pit of self-realisation; You sparkle with the lustre of thousand Suryas with four arms with a goad in the right hand as though you spur your devotees to follow the right path and at the same time displaying your displeasure with a noose up your upper left hand to correct them where-ever necessary; Devi! You carry a sugar-cane bow with the determination of materialising the Universe with your left lower hand, while actually taking up the deed of Creation with the aid of Five Tanmatras or Elements by another hand of yourself. Indeed the magnificence of your creation is spread all over as Omnipresent. Your Hairdo is endowed with the natural perfume of Champaka-Ashoka-Punnaaga flowers; You are embellished with a Crown bejewelled with special precious stones of Kurukulla as though they signify various emotions and feelings).

Ashtami Chandra Vibhraaja dalikasthala shobhitaa, Mukha Chandra kalankaabha Mriganaabhi viseshakaa/ Vadanasmara maangalya Griha torana jjillikaa, Vaktra Lakshmi pareevaaha chalan meenaabha lochanaa/ Nava Champaka pushpaabha naasadanda viraajitaa, Taaraa kanti tiraskaari naasaabharana bhaasuraa/ Kadamba manjari klupta Karna pura Manoharaa, Taatanka yugali bhuta tapanodupa Mandalaa/ (Lalita Devi! Your broad forehead is dazzling with an adornment of an eighth night's half Moon while the Tilaka or the streak of Musk on the forehead is likened to a smudge on Chandra! Your eye brows represent Victory Arches on the gorgeous face comparable to a 'Manmatha Bhavana'! Your charismatic eyes are like the sparkle of fishes in the Ocean of charm; Your nose is comparable to a freshly blossomed Champaka flower; the gleam of the diamonds worn on the ornament of your nose puts to shame the combined shine of Stars on the Sky; the decoration of a bouquet of Champaka flowers above your ears is cute and appealing; indeed You roam around a lot in the Kadamba Gardens. Your ear-rings are represented by Sun and Moon and have a cosmic relevance.) Padma raaga shilaadarsha paribhavi kapolabhuh, Navavidruma bimbhashrinyakkari radanacchada/ Suddha Vidyaankuraakaara Dwijapankti dwayojjwalaa, Karpura veetika –amoda Samaakarshaddigantaraa/ Nija sallaapa Maadhurya yinirbhita kacchapi, Mandasmita prabhaapura majjad Kaamesha Maanasaa/ Anaakalita saadrusya chubuka Shree Viraajitaa, Kaameshabaddha Mangalya sutra shobhita kantharaa/ (Devi! Your rosy and smooth cheeks defy rubies and blood red lips flout corals and bimba fruit; the two perfect sets of your scintillating teeth represent Dwija-Pankti or the rows of Learned Brahmanas thus signifying pure Knowledge; the whiff of aroma from your face as emanated from the camphor and betel leaves that you take in your mouth fills in the whole Universe signifying that the 'Omkaara Naada' from your mouth resonates every where; Your banter / Chit-chat is far sweeter than the trained tunes of the stringed instrument of Veena and is suggestive of the resonance of Vedas; Your pretty smile to Kameswara overpowers his thoughts and mind; Your chin is uniquely shaped and is above depiction; the Mangala Sutra tied by Kameshwara around Lalita Devi symbolises the very close affinity and inseperability of Prakriti and Maha Purusha or Shiva and Parvati.) Kanakaangada keyura kamaneeya bhujaanvitaa, Ratnagraiveya Chintaakalola Muktaa phalaanvita/ Kameswara premaratna mani pratipanastani, Naabhyaalawaala romaali lataa phalakuchadwayi/ Lakshya romalataa dhaarataa samunneya Madhyamaa, Stanabhaara dalan madhya pattabandha valitrayee/ Arunaaruna Kousumbha vastra bhaasvatkati tati, Ratna kinkinika Ramya rashanaa daama bhushitaa/ Kaamesajnaata soubhagya maadrayoru dwayaanyitaa, Maanikya makutaakaara Jaanudwaya viraajitaa/ Indragopa parikshipta smara tunaabhajanghikaa, Gudha gulphaa Kurma Prushtha Jayishnu Prapadaanvita/ (Devi! You are ornamented on your excellent hands with golden 'Angadas' or armlets and 'Kevura' or wringlets as alluded to the Mantras of these descriptions; You are adorned with diamond and pearl necklaces alluded to the 'Mantraaksharaas'; Lalitaamba! the intimacy of Your love with Shiva is evident by the closeness of your body parts including your thin waist, folds of skin, soft thighs and buttocks covered by bright red saree, your knees ornated with crowns speckled with nine gems and the legs are decorated by gold-studded Indra Gopa Manis; Your golden waist-belt has diamond-studded bells called 'kinkinis' making mild vibrations as signified by small recitations of Mantras and Your feet are vaulted like the back of tortoises indicating 'Prapada').

Nakha deedhiti sanchhanna namajjana Tamogunaa, Padadwaya prabhaajaala paraakruta saroruhaa/ Sinjaana mani manjeera mandita Shri Padaambujaa, Maraali manda gamanaa Mahaalaavanya sevadhih/ Sarvaarunaa navadyaangi Sarvaabharana bhushitaa, Shiva Kaameshwaraankasthaa Shivaa swaadheena vallabhaa/ Sumeru shringa madhyathaa Shri mannagara naayika, Chintaamani grihaantasthaa Pancha Brahmaasana sthitaa/

(Devi! The radiance of your toe-nails rescinds darkness and ignorance and your devotees are enabled to retract from Tamoguna; your sacred feet which are white and spotless do oversmart lotus flowers and they too disperse mental dullness just as a Guru enhances knowledge and sharpness; Your feet are indeed the final goal of worship as they have jingling anklets like Mantraaksharas which facilitate unreserved devotion. The pace and grace of your steps are slow yet steady like that of a Swan as they seek to inculcate gradual transformation and purification of the Soul and there by realise the Final Truth which is deep, complex, hard to cross through and wade like an Ocean. Thus You are bright, red, clean and blemishless from top to bottom; You are adorned with all kinds of ornaments and is the Emblem of Perfection! You are also the Synthesis of Shiva and Shakti and have an ideal partner under your control; Devi! You are ideally situated on the middle top of Meru Mountain or the Center of Shri Chakra and as the Empress of Shri Nagara in the Palace of Chitamani Ratnas as the Prime Deity with Five Brahmas around viz. Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Ishana and Sada Shiva; the reference is that Lalitaambika is situated as the Supreme above all the Brahmas). [Beyond the two Chakras viz. Mulaadhaara and Swadhishtaana in every body, there are Grandhis or layers called Brahma Grandhi; beyond Manipura and Anahata is Vishnu grandhi; beyond Vishudda and Agnaa chakra is Rudra granthi; from Ajnaadhaara to the Skull-Center is stated to be Ishwara Sthaana, above which is stated to be Dwadashanta where Sada Shiva is situated; finally Devi Lalita is seated as Chit Kalaa above the Pancha Brahmaas] Maha Padmaatavi sasmtha Kadamba Vana Vaasini, Sudhaa saagara madhyastaa Kaamaak -shi Kaama daayani/ Devarshigana sanghaata stuyamaamaanaatma Vaibhavaa, Bhanda –asura Vadhodyukta Shakti senaa samanyitaa/ Sampatkari Samaarudha Sindhura Vraja sevitaa, Ashwarudhaadhishtitaashwa koti koti bhiraavrutaa/ Chakraraaja Rathaarudha, Sarvaayudha Parishkruta, Geyachakra Rathaarudha Mantrini parisevitaa/ Kirichakra Ratha -arudha Dandanaathaa puraskritaa, Jwalaamaalinikaakshipta Vahni Praakaara madhyagaa/ (Maha Devi! You reside in the Maha Padmavati Forest of Lotuses being the contact place of a person and the Supreme; more specifically in the interior of the Kadamba Vana where Yantras predominate; also you are in the midst of Sudha Sagara or Bliss or the Center of Shri Chakra's Bindushtaana as Kamakshi the Goddess of Kanchipura the bestower of desires; Devi! You responded to the Prayers of Devaas and Maharshis from 'Chidagni Kunda' to perform the most significant 'Deva Karya'; You are indeed the best equipped with an army and armoury of qualities of selflessness, determination and skill to kill Bhandasura the Grand Fund of Ignorance, Ego, and extreme self-image coupled no doubt with courage, capability and invincibility; Devi! You have the advantage of having Sampatkari as the Head of Elephants who is blessed with extraordinary abilities of intelligence to drive the elephants with features like self-lessness and perfection comparable to sense aptitudes or Tatwaas. Also there were crores of Shaktis riding horses each of whom specialised in mental abilities to win over as alluded- the Evil with Virtue. She rode over the Shri Chakra chariot with her full armoury; She was accompanied by Mantrini on the Geya Chakra Ratha, Mantrini being Devi's mind; Vaaraahi the Commander alighted the Kiri Chakra and was ahead of Devi; You were in the center of Jwaala maalaas or rings of flames) Bhandasainyavadhodyukta Shakti Vikrama harshitaa, Nitya paraakramaatopa nireekshana samutsukaa/Bhanda putra vadhodyuka Baaalaa vikrama nanditaa, Mantrnyambaa virachatha vishanga vadha toshitaa/ Vishukra praana harana Vaaraahi Veerya nanditaa, Kameswara

mukhaa loka kalpita Shri Ganeshwara/ Maha GaneshanirbhinnmaVighnayantra praharshitaa, Bhandaasurendra Nirmukta shastra pratyastra varshini/ Karaanguli nakhotpanna Narayana dashaakritih, Mahaa Paashupataasraagni nirdagdhaasura sainikaa/ (Devi! You were delighted to view the large army about to destroy Bhanda; you were also happy to witness the gallantry of Nitya Shaktis; you were glad that Shri Bala your daughter killed the sons of Bhandasura; you enjoyed that Mantrinyamba terminated Vishnga and Devi Vaaraahi killed Vishukra; then Ganeswara was materialised from your face and the latter destroyed all the Yantras such as various hindrances; You rained Astra Shastras to demoralise Bhandasura; as Bhandasura created Hiraynaaksha, Hiranya kashipu, Ravana and other Arch-Enemies of Devas, you mildly rubbed your finger nails and created the counterparts of Narayana who exterminated the respective Asuras!; by using Pashupataastra, you let an ocean of warriors get converted as heaps of ash). Kameswaraastra nirdagdha sa Bhandasura sunyaka, Brahmopendra Mahendraadi Deva samsthuta vaibhavaa/ Haranetraagni sandhagdha Kaama Sanjeevanoushadhih, Shrimadvaagbhava kutaika Swarupa mukha Pankajaa/ Kanthaathahkati paryanta Madhyakuta Swarupini, Shakti kutaika taapanna Katyatdho -bhaaga dhaarini/ Mula yantraatmikaa Mula kuta traya kalebara, Kulaamritaika rasikaa Kula sanketa paalini/ Kulaanganaa Kulaantasthaa Kaulini Kulayogini, Akulaa Saayaantasthaa Samayaachaara tatparaa/ (Devi! You had burnt Shunyaka Nagara along with Bhandasura and his warriors and finally completed the Deva Karya; Brahma-Upendra-Mahendras were totally gratified and extolled you. You had then revived Manmatha who was burnt off by Maha Deva's third eye. Your resplendent lotus face then revealed the source of speech and the Panchadashi Mantra, which was the Source Mantra that described Your Neck-to-Waist besides the body- part underneath as well as the Mula-Mantra; the Tri Kutaas of your physique akin to the Panchadashi are called Shri-Kama-Kala Kutaas. You are Kulaamrita Rasika or the enjoyer of the nectar of chastity and purity; 'Kula' is stated to be a combined expression of 'Maataa' the one who measures or approves; 'Maanam' is the measure or the quantity to be approved and the 'Meyam' or the one to be approved; Kula sanketa palini is the Enforcer of of the Kula or basically the Tradition of Spiritualism and thus Kulaangana is the Force of the Tradition; Kulantastha or the insider of the Kula conversant with 'Aachaara-Vyvahaaras'; You are the Kaulini or the household-diety and Kula Yogini or Lalita Devi herself; You are Akula who is far above a specific Kula as she represents all the Kulas or Traditions; Samayantastha or the one who is of Shiva-Lalitha's Identity but as construed by varied contexts; Devi! You therefore assume various Forms as per exigencies.) Mulaadhaaraika nilayaa Brahma grandhi Vibhedini, Manipuraantaruditaa Vishnu grandhi Vibhedini/ Agnaachakraantasthaa Rudra granthi Vibhedini, Sahasraaraambujaarudhaa Sudhaa saaraabhi varshini/ Tatillataa samaruchisshatchakopari samsthitaa, Maha Shatktih kundalini bisatantu taneeyasi/ Bhavani Bhavanaagamya Bhavaaranya kuthaarikaa, Bhadra Priya Bhadra Murtirbhakta Soubhagyadaayani/ Bhaktapriyaa Bhaktigamyaa Bhakti Vashyaa Bhayaapaha, Shaambhavi Sharadaaraadhyaa Sharvaani Sharma daayani/ Shaankari Shrikari Saadhvi Sharacchandra nibhaanaa, Shaatodari Shantimati Niraadhaaraa Niranjanaa/ (Devi! You reside inside the Mulaadhaara Chakra that is as Kundalini; You penetrate through the Brahma Grandhi or the barrier of Brahma and enable your devotees practising Yoga to be conscious while awake; then a devotee is facilitated to vision Devi in Manipura while in a condition of stupor; further a devotee has to pierce through the Vishnu Grandhi or the Vishnu knot when the Yogi becomes unconscious and his body and thoughts are felt irrelevant; in the Ajnaachaktaanta state the yogi loses his identity; while breaking Rudra Grandhi the Yogi attains cosmic reality and in Sahasraara Chakra the yogi is stated to seek Salvation. That stage provides Sudhaa sagara or bliss; indeed Devi! You are above these stages and chakras as 'Shatchakopari Samstitha'. You are called as Maha Shakti in union with Maha Deva and is stated to be in the form of a coiled serpent in the state of 'Kundalini' like a thin lotus stem. Devi Bhavani, Bhavanaaamya or Beyond Comprehension as then a Bhavaaranya Kutharika or She would axe the cycle of births and deaths! You would in that Form be a Bhadra Priya, Bhadra Murthi, Bhakta Soubhagyadayani, Bhakti Priya, Bhakti Gamya or realisable by Bhakti alone; Bhakti Vasya or Controllabe by Bhakti only; Bhayaapaha or you drive out fear of the devotees; Shaambhavi, Sharadaaraadhya, Sharvaani or the consort of Sharva, Sharma dayani or the provides of Eternal Happiness; Shankari, Shrikari, Saadhvi or of Purity; Sharacchanda nibhaanana or Luminous like a Full Moon; Shatodari or slim waisted; Shantimati, and Niradhara or supportless and

#### Niranjana or blemishless).

Nirlepa Nirmala Nitya Niraakara Niraakula, Nirgunaa Nishkalaa Shantaa Nishkaamaa Nirupaplava/ Nityamuktaa Nirvikaaraa Nishprapancha Niraashraya, Nitya Shuddha Nitya Buddhaa Niravadyaa Nirantaraa/ Nishkaaranaa Nishkalankaa Nirupaadhirnirishwara, Neeraagaa Raaga mathani Nirmada Madashalini/ Nischinta Nirahankaaraa Nirmohaa Mohanaashani Nirmama Mamataa hantri Nishpaapaa Paapanaashani/ Nishkrodhaa Krodhashamani Nirlobhaa Lobhanaashani, Nissamshayaa Samshayaghni Nirbhavaa Bhava naashani/ Nirvikalpaa Niraabaadhaa Nirbhedaa Bheda naashani, Nirnaashaa Mrityu mathani Nishkrya Nishparigrahaa/ (Nirlepa or Transparent; Nitya or Everlasting; Niraakaara or Formless; Nirakula or composed; Nirguna or Featureless; Nishkala or Undividable; Shanta; Nishkaama or desireless; Nirupaplava or Imperishable; Nitya Mukta or Ever Unrestricted; Nirvikara or Immutable; Nishprapancha or Beyond the Universe; Niraashraya or Unfounded; Nitya Shudda, Nitya Buddha, Niravadya or Irrefutable; Nirantara; Nishkarana or the Causeless since You are the Cause of Causes; Nishkalanka or Spotless; Nirupaadhi or Unaccompanied; Nirishwara or the Ultimate; Niraaga or Uncommitted; Raga Mathani or Devoid of Attachments; Nirmada or Modest; Madanaashani or the destoyer of arrogance; Nischinta or Worryless; Nirahankaara or Egoless; Nirmoha or Illusionless; Mohanashani or Destroyer of Obsessions; Nirmama or Selfless; Mamataahantri or terminator of attachments; Nishpaapa or Sinless; Papanaashani; Nishkrodha; Krodha Shamani; Nirlobha greedless; Lobha naashani; Nissamsaya or devoid of doubts; Samsayaghni or smasher of doubts; Nirbhaya or Unborn; Bhavanaashyani or Destroyer of the Cycle of births and deaths; Nirvikalpa or devoid of actions; Nirbaadha; Nirbheda or Consistent; Bhedanaashani or destroys distinctions; Nirnaasha or Indestructible; Mrutyumathani or demolisher of death; Nishkriya or Actionless; and Nishparigraha or Accepts nothing) Nistula Neela Chikura Nirapaaya Nirathyaya, Durlabha Durgama Durgaa Duhkhahantri Sukhapradaa/ Dushta doora Duraachaarashamani Doshavarjita, Sarvajnaa Saandra Karunaa Samaanaadhika varjitaa/ Sarva Shaktimayi Sarva Mangalaa Sadgatipradaa, Sarveshwari Sarvamayi Sarva mantra swarupini/ Sarva Yantraatmikaa Sarva Tantra Rupaa Manonmani, Maaheshwari Maha Devi Maha Lakshmi Mrudapriyaa/ Mahaa Rupaa Mahaa Pujyaa Mahaa Paataka Naashini, Mahaa Maayaa Mahaa Satwaa Mahaa Shaktirahaaratih/ Mahaa Bhogaa Mahaishwarya Mahaa Veeryaa Mahaa Balaa, Maha Buddhir Mahaasiddhir Mahaa Yogeshwareshvari/ (Nistula or Unparalleled; Nilachikura or dark haired; Nirapaaya or far above any danger; Durlabha or difficult to achieve; Durgama or Difficult to reach; Durga or the famed Swarupa of Shakti who killed Mahishaasura; Duhkhahantri or the destroyer of distresses; Sukhaprada or the Provider of Happiness; Dushta dooraa or away from Evil; Duraachaara shamini or the reliever of evil deeds; Doshavarjita or deviod of imperfections; Sarvajna or All Knowing; Saandra Karuna or Provider of Great Benevolence; Samaanaadhika Varjita or Matchless; Sarva Shaktimayi or Omni Potent; Sarva Mangala or the Symbol of Auspiciousness; Sadgatiprada or the Provider of Righteousness; Sarveshwari; Sarvamayi or Omni Present; Sarva Mantra Swarupini or the Personification of all Mantras; Sarva Yantraatmika or The Epitome of All Yantras; Sarva Tantra Rupa or the Unique Form of all Tantras; Manonmayi or of Heightened Form of Consciousness; Maheshwari; Maha Devi; Maha Lakshmi; Mridapriya or the beloved of Shiva; Maha Rupa; Maha Pujya; Maha Paataka Naashani; Maha Maya; Maha Satwa or of Unique Energy; Maha Shakti; Maha Rati or beyond Sensual Pleasures as she is Bliss herself; Maha Bhoga; Mahaishwarya; Maha Veeryaa; Mahaa Balaa; Mahaa Buddhi; Maha Siddhi and Maha Yogeshwareshwari).

Maha Tantraa Maha Mantraa Mahaa Yantraa Mahaasanaa, Mahaayaagakramaadaadhyaa Mahaa Bhairava Pujitaa/ Maheshwara Mahaa Kalpa Mahaa Taandava Saakshini, Mahaa Kaamesha Mahishi Mahaa Tripura Sundari/ Chatussastyupachaaraadhyaa Chatussashti Kalaamayi, Mahaachatusshashti koti Yoginigana sevitaa/ Manu Vidyaa Chandra Vidyaa Chandra mandala madhyagaa, Chaarurupaa Chaaruhaasaa Charu Chandra Kalaadharaa/ Charaachara Janannathaa Chakra raaja niketana, Parvati Padmanayanaa, Padmaraaga samaprabhaa/ Pancha Pretaasanaaseena Pancha Brahma Swarupini, Chinmayi Parama anandaa Vijnaana Ghana rupiney/ Dhyaana dhyaatru dhyeya Rupaa Dharma — adharma Vivarjitaa, Vishwa rupa Jaagarani Swapanti Taijasaatmikaa/ Suptaa Pragjnaat -mika Turyaa Sarvaavastha Vivarjitaa, Srishti Kartri Brahma Rupaa Gopti Govinda Rupiney/ Samhaarini Rudrarupa

Tirodhaanakareswari, Sadaa Shiyaanugrahadaa Pancha krutya Paraayana! (Devi Lalita! You are the Maha Tantra, Maha Mantra, Maha Yantra, Mahaasana or Seated on Elevation; Mahaa Yaga Kramaaraadhya or worshipped at various Maha Yagnas like Amba Yagna; You are worshipped by Maha Bhairava or Maha Deva himself; You witnessed the Cosmic Dance of Maheshwara at the end of Maha Kalpa; You are the Maha Kamesha's Queen; Maha Tripura Sundari! You are worshipped sixty four types of services; Amba! You are the Origin of sixty four Kalaas or Arts as contained in Vedas and various other Scriptures; also served by sixty four crores of Maha Yoginis; You are the Manu Vidya and Chandra Vidya and are situated on the middle of the Moon's orbit; You are Charu Rupa or of the Magnificent Form; of Charu Haasa or with enchanting smile; with the adornment of Ashtama Chandra; the Maha Raajni of Charaacharas in the Universe; the Dweller of the Chakra Raajaas like Shri Chakra; Parvati! Padma Nayana; Glittering with Padma Raagaas or Rubies; Seated on the Five Pretaas of Brahma-Vishnu- Rudra-Ishwara-Sadaashivaas if they are not provided by life by You! You are of the Form of Five Brahmas; Chinmayi or of Supreme Consciousness; the Paramananda or of Unique Bliss; Vijnaana Ghana Rupini or of the Inimitable Swarupini of Vigjnaana; the Dhyana-Dhyaatru- Dheya Rupa or of the Form of the Meditation-the Meditator and the Meditated! You are beyond Dharma or Adharma! The Vishwa Swarupa; You are Jaagarani or the Ever Wakeful; the Swapanti or in Dreams; the Taijasatmika or in a State of Stupor; or in Supta or Trance; Pragjnaatmika or in a Casual Body without full Consciousness; Turiya or the Fourth Stage when the Senses are inactive on the verge of senselessness; Devi! You are however beyond all these previous stages as you are Sarvaavastha Vivarjita.! Lalita Devi! You are the Srishti Kartri being Brahma Rupini; the Goptri or the Protector as Govinda Rupini; Samhaarini or the Annihilator as of Rudra Rupa; the Tirodhaanakari or as the withdrawing Swarupini as Ishwara and finally the Sadaa Shiva who provides Anugraha or impetus to Re-Create again; such are the Five Swarupas of Yourself Devi viz. Brahma- Vishnu- Rudra-Ishwara and Sada Shiva; You Lalita Devi! Are thus the Pancha Krutya Paraayana or the Practitioner of Five Sacred Deeds!) Bhanu mandala madhyastaa Bhiravi Bhaga maalini, Padmaasana Bhagavati Padmanaabha Sahodari/ Unmesha Nimishotpanna Vipanna Bhuvanaavalih, Sahasra Seersha Vadanaa Sahasraakshi Sahasra paat/ Aabrahmakeeta janani Varnaashrama vidhaayani, Nijaajnaa Rupa nigamaa Punyaapunya Phalapradaa/ Shruti seemanta Sindoori kruta paadaabja dhulikaa, Sakalaagama Sandoha Shukti Samputa Mouktikaa/ Purushaardha pradaa Purnaa Bhogini Bhuvaneshwari, Ambikaanaadi nidhanaa Hari Brahmendra Sevitaa, Hreenkaari Hreemati Hridyaa Heyopaadeya varjitaa/ Raja Raajaarchita Raajni Ramyaa Raageva Lochana, Ranjani Ramani Rasyaa Ranatkinkini mekhala/Ramaa Rakenduvadanaa ati Rupaa Rati Priya, Rakshaakari Raakshasaghni Ramaa Ramana lampataa/ Kaamyaa Kamakaloaarupa Kadamba kusumapriyaa, Kalyaani Jagati kandaa Karunaaras Saagaraa/ (You are in the center of Surya Mandala; Bhairavi! with a garland of Suryas seated in Padmasana posture as Bhagavati the sister of Padmanabha; Devi! As you open your eyes Bhuvanaas are sprouted and destroyed as you close the eyes; You have thousand heads, faces, eyes and feet; the Unique Mother of all Beings from Brahma down to worms; the Prime Regulator of Varashrama Vidhana; Vedas are at your behest; you provide the results of every deed of the Beings as per the content of virtue or otherwise; the particles of your Lotus feet tuns red as 'Sinduri' which adorns the foreheads of virtuous women; the collection of pearl oyster shells comparable to 'Agamaas' is your ornament; You bestow the fulfilment of the Purusharthas viz. Dharma-Artha-Kaama-Mokshas; You are Purna or the Totality; Bhogini or the Everenjoying; Bhuvaneshwari; Ambika; Ananda nidhaana or the Fund of Joy; worshipped by Hari-Brahma-Indra; Narayani; Nada Rupa or of sounds ranging from subtle to gross forms; Devoid of a name or a form; Lalita! You are Hrimkari since the sound 'Hreem' covers Srishti-Sthiti-Samhara; Hrimati or Symbol of Modesty; Hridya or Happiness replete within heart; Heyopadeyavarjita or with nothing to accept or reject; Rajaraajaarchita or worshipped by the Lord of Riches viz. Kubera; Raajni or the Supreme Queen; Ramya; Rajeevalochana or Lotus Eyed; Ranjani the one who delights; Ramani; Rasyaa or the sense perception; Ranat kinkini mekhala or adorned with waist belt with small bells; Rama or the Consort of Vishnu; of Ratipriya as Devi liked Rati since she revived Manmatha the husband of Rati; Rakshakari or the One who provides security; Raakshasaghni the destroyer of Rakshasas; Rama the highest representative of feminity; Ramana Lampata or deeply involved with husband; Kadamba kusuma priya or highly fascinated

by Kadamba flowers; Kalyani or the Symbol of Auspiciousness; Jajatikanda or the root-cause of the Universe; Karunaarasa Saagara or the Ocean of Kindness). Kaalavati Kalaalaapaa Kantaa kaadambari Priyaa, Varadaa Vaamanayanaa Vaaruni Mada Vihvalaa/ Vishwaadhikaa Veda Vedyaa Vindyaachala nivaasini, Vidhaatri Veda Janani Vishnu Maayaa vilaasini/ Kshetra Swarupa Kshetreshi Kshetra Kshetraina paalini, Kshaya yridhi yinirmuktaa Kshetrapaalasamarchita/ Vijayaa Vimalaa yandyaa Vandaaru jana Vatsala, Vaavaadivi Vaamakeshi Vahnimandala vaasini/ Bhaktimat kalpalathikaa Pashu paasha vimochani, Samhrutaasesha paashanda Sadaachaara pravartikaa/Tapartayaagni samtapta Samaahlaadana chandrikaa, Taruni Taapasaaraadhyaa Tanumadhyaa Tamopahaa/ (You are the Kalavati or of sixty four Arts and all they were your own expressions; you are the Paramount Form of Feminine Beauty fond of honey or bliss; the bestower of Boons; the beautiful-eyed; intoxicated with 'Varuni'-the wine of dates alternatively called the Varuni 'Nadi'- or a body tendon; the Vishwaadhika or the Sublime; Vindhyaa chala nivasini; Vidhatri or Sarasvati the Consort of Brahma; Veda Janani or the Mother of Vedas; the Vishnu Maya; Vilasini; Kshetra Swarupa or of Supreme Consciousness; Kshetreshi; Kshetra Kshetrajna Paalini or the Supreme Administrator of the Kshetra or inner self of Jeeva and the his/her domain; Kshaya Vriddhi Vinirmukta or You have neither growth nor decadence; you are worshipped by Maha Deva the Kshetrapalaka; Devi! You are always victorious; Vimala or Clean; Vandya or worshipped by all; Vandaaru jana Vatsala or you have attachment to devoted children; Vaagvaadini or Proficient in speech; Vamakeshi or the consort of Vamakeshwara popular in the Tantrik Science; Vahni Mandala Vaasini or the Resider in the Region of Agni; Bhaktimatkalpa latika or Vriksha that fulfills the desires of devotees; Pashu Paasha Vimochani or the Reliever of Bonds like Ignorance, Jealousy, Attachment and Anger; Samhritaasesha Paashanda or Demolition of Non-Believers; Sadaachaara Prayartika or the Enforcer of 'Sadaachaara' or Good Behaviour; You provide Moonshine like cool relief from 'Tapatrayaagnis' or the Agnis of the Three Difficulties viz. Adhyatmika or of Internal or Psychological nature, Adhibhoutika or External or Physiological nature and Adhi Daivika nature like earthquakes, droughts and such natural calamities; Taruni or Ever Youthful Female; Taapasaaraadhya or worshipped by 'Taapasis' engaged in constant meditation; Tanu Madhya or slender waisted; Tamopaha or destroyer of Ignorance. Chitistatpada Lakshyaardhaa Chideka Rasarupini, Swaatmaananda lavibhuta Brahmaadya -ananda santatih/ Paraa pratyakchiti Rupa Pashyanti Para Devataa, Madhyamaa Vaikhari Rupaa Bhakta Maanasa Hamsikaa/ Kaameswara Praana Naadi Kritajnaa Kaama Pujitaa, Shrigaara Rasa Sampurnaa Jayaa Jaalandhara Sthitaa/ Odyaana peetha nilayaa Bindumandala vaasini, Rahoyaaga kramaadaadhyaa Rahastarpana Tarpitaa/ Sadyah Prasaadini Vishwa Saakshini Saakshi Varjitaa, Shadanga Devataa yuktaa Shaadgunya pari puritaa/ Nityaklinna Nirupamaa Nirvaana Sukhadaayani/ Nityaa Shodasikaa Rupaa Shri Kanthaartha Sharirini/ Prabhavati Prabhaarupaa Prasiddhaa Parameshari, Moola Prakriti ravyaktaa Vyaaktaavyakta Swarupini/ (You are the Sacchidaananda Swarupini who is the most sought after and targetted at; Chideka Rasa Rupini or the Unique Form of Bliss; The Bliss experienced by Brahma downward to every Being was but a drop of the the Ocean of that Bliss; You are the Ultimate Super Consciousness present in each Being that could hardly be realised nor suitably expressed by Vagdevi, as is present in a subtle and intermediate stage between you the Para Deva and an individual; You are the Swan that moves about in the 'Bhakta Maanasa Sarovara'; You are the life-force of Kameshwara; the Kritajnaa or the Evaluator of the actions of Ten Entities viz. Pancha Bhutas, Sun-Moon-Stars-Birth-Death and the Kaala or the Time; Kama Pujita; Shringara Rasa Sampurna; Jaya; Jaalandhara Sthitaa or Positioned in the Jaalandhara Peetha or Anaahata Chakra; Odyana Pitha Nilaya or located in Ajnaa Chakraa or between your Bhrukuti or between your eye-brows; Bindu Mandaka Vaassini or situated in the Central Point of Shri Chakra; Raho yaga Kramaaraadhyaa or worshipped by 'Rahasya Yaga' (Antar Yaga ) rituals; Rahastarpina Tarpita or Devi! You are contented by Secret Tarpanas or Sacrificial Offerings; Sadya Prasaadini or pleased with prescribed rituals; Vishwa Saakshini or the Witness of Universal Actions! Saakshi Varjitaa or none could ever realise your own deeds; Shadanga Devataa Yuktaa or You are the Chief of Six 'Angaas' or Six 'Konaas' stated to be Heart-Head-Tuft-Eyes-Shield or Kavacha and 'Astra' or Weapon; also Shadgunya Pari Purita or the Six Angles of the Shri Chakra stated to be Qualities like Virtue, Jnaana, Yasha, Aishwarya, Sampada and Vairagya or detachment; Nitya klinna or Ever Merciful; Nirupama or Uaparalleled; Nirvaana Sukha

Daayani or the Bestower of Nirvaana or Moksha; Nitya Shodasikaa Rupa or the Kalaas of Chandra or the brightening features of Moon day by day; Shri Kanthaartha Sharirini or Artha Naareeshwari; Prabhavati or Provider of Illumination all the directions; Prabha Rupa or of Epitome of Radiance; Prasiddha the most well known in the Form of the First Person 'I'! Parameshwari; Mula Prakriti; Avyakta or Imperceptible; yet Vyaktaavyakta or Evident but Unmanifested). Vyaapini vividhaakaara Vidyaavidyaa Swarupini, Maha Kamesha nayana kmdaahlaada Koamudi/Bhakta haarda Tamobheda Bhaanumadbhaanu santatih, Shiva dooti Shivaa –raadhyaa Shiva Murtih Shivankari/ Shivapriyaa Shivaparaa Shishteshtaa Shistapujitaa, Aprameyaa Swaprakaashaa Manovaachaamagocharaa/ Chicchhaktischetanaa rupaa Jada Shaktirjadaatmikaa, Gayatree vyahrutih Sandhyaa Dwijabrinda nishevitaa/ Tatwaasanaa Tatwamayi Pancha koshaantara sthitaa, Nisseema mahimaa Nitya Youvanaa Madashaalini/ Madaghurnita Raktaakshi Mada paatala gandabhuh, Chandanadrava digdhaangi Chaampeya kusuma priyaa/ Kushalaa Komalaakaaraa Kurukullaa Kuleswari, Kula kundaa-layaa Koula maarga tatpara sevitaa/ Kumaara Gana naathaambaa tushtih pushtirmatir-dhrutih, Shaantsswastimati Kaantirnandini Vighna naashani/ (Devi! You are omnipresent in myriad forms either as Knowledge or Ignorance; You are pleasing to Mahesha like a moonshine does to a Lili flower; Your splendour disperses the darkness of ignorance to your Bhaktaas like the bright Sun does to the Worlds; You are Shiva's Sevika adoring Sada Shiva as Shiva Murti, Shivankari and Shiva Para. Persons with good demeanour worship you and you too are pleased with their Pujas; Aprameya or immesurable; Swa Prakasha or Brilliant on your own; Mano vaachaama gochara or Beyond the comprehension of one's mind or speech; You are Chit Shakti or the Power of your own Perception; the Chetana Rupa or Awareness and Responsiveness; at the same time you are also Jada Shakti or non-responsive; in any case, none has the capacity to know you! Gayatri! Vyahriti or the Syllables of Gayatri Mantra; the Sandhya; Dwija brinda nishevita or pleased by Brahmanas; You are seated in Tatwa or Truth; Tatwamayi; Pancha Koshaantara Sthita or the Dweller of Five Sheaths viz. Kaamamaya, Manomaya, Atimanasa, Vigyaana and Hiranmaya Koshaas; you are of boundless command; ever youthful; blissful; with blood red eyes of superiority; red cheeks full of bliss; with body smeared with sandal wood paste; desirous of champaka flowers; proficient in all deeds; subtle and gentle; Goddess named Kukukulla dominating the Shri Chakra who is also known as critical and objective; Kuleshwari; Kulakundalaya or Paramatma inside Muladhara Chakra; Kulamarga tatpara sevita or worshipped by those conversant with Kaulamarga practices; Mother of Skanda and Ganesha representing prowess and overcoming obstacles; Tusti or embodiment of happiness; Pushti or of sound health; Dhriti or courage and endurance; Shanti or tranquility; Kanti or glow and warmth; Nandini or the Ever Vivacious and Vighna nashini or remover of all hurdles). Tejovati Trinayana Lolaakshi Kamarupini, Malini Hamsini Mataa MalayachalaVaasini/ Sumukhi Nalini Subhruh Shobhana Sura Nayika, Kaala kanthi Kantimati Kshobhini Sukshma Rupini/ Vajreshwari Vamadevi Vayovastha vivarjita, Siddheshwari Siddha Vidyaa Siddha Maataa Yashaswini/ Vishudda chakra nilaya Rakta Varna Trilochana, Khatwaangaadi praharana vadanaika samanvita/ Paayasaanna Priyaa Pashuloka Bhayankari, Amritaadi Maha Shakti samvritaa Daakineshwari/ Anaahataabja nilayaa Shyaamaabhaa Vadana dwayaa, Damshtrojjwalaaksha maalaadidharaa Rudhira samsthitaa/ Kaala raatryaadi Shaktoughavritaasnighnoudana Priya, Mahaa Veerendra varadaa Raakinyaambaa Swarupini/ Mani puraabja nilayaa vadanatraya samyutaa, Vajraayudhaapetaa Daamaryadi bhiraavritaa/ (Tejovati or full of Illumination; Tri Nayana or the Three Eyed of Surya-Chandra-Agnis; Lokaakshi Kamarupini or of alluring eyes being the Symbol of Feminine Longing for the Universe; Malini or the wearer of garlands; Hamsini or a Swan representative of Pavitrata and Vairagya; Mataa or Shri Maata; Malayachala Vasini or the Resident of Malaya Mountain; Sumukhi or Bright-Faced; Nalini or like a Lotus; Subhru or of Eye brows that bring in auspiciousness; Sobhana; Sura nayika; Kalaakanti or the spouse of Shiva who by that epithet killed Darukasura; Kantimati; Kshobini or Excited to Create the Universe; Sukshma Rupini or of Subtle Form; Vajreshwari one of the Goddesses of Shri Chakra; Vamadevi or Shiva's left Body-Part viz. Artha Naareeshwari; Vayovasthaa vivarjita or devoid of age; Shiddeshwari; Siddha Vidya or Shri Vidya; Siddha Mata or the Mother Siddha ready to protect devotees; Yashaswini; Visuddha Chakra Nilaya or the Resider of Vishuddha Lotus with sixteen petals; Arakta Varna or of Blood-red colour; Trilochana; Khatyangaadi- Praharana or a mace with a skull at its end used as a weapon; Vadanaika samanvita or with a Unique Face; Payasaanna Priya or fond of rice cooked in milk; Twakstha or absorbed in the Skin tissues; Pashu Loka Bhayankari or Dreadful to the Boorish and the Ignorant; Amritaadi Maha Shakti Samvarta or Encircled by Great Shaktis like Amritaakarshini; Daakineshwari residing in Vishudda Chakra; Anaahataabja Nilaya or inhabitant of Anaahataabja Chakra with the name of Raakini; Shyaamaabhaa or in the Form of a maiden of Shyama colour of black and blue; Vadana dwaya or Bi-Faced; Damshtrojjvala or bright with tusks; Aksha -maalaadhara or the carrier of a Rosary bead garland; Rudhira Samsthita or the occupant of blood-tissues; Kaalaraatraadi Shakougha Vrita or enclosed by Shaktis like Kaalaraatri; Snigdhoudana Priya or contented by consuming fried rice; Mahaa Veerendra Varadaa or the Provider of boons to Maha Veeraas / Tri Murtis and Indra; Raakinyaamba Swarupini or of the Swarupa of Raakinyamba; Manipuraabja nilaya or the inhabitant of Manipura Padma with ten petals; Vadana Traya Samyutaa or with Three Faces; Vajraadikaayudhopeta or fortified with Vajraayudhaa and other weaponries like thunderclaps; Daamaryaadibhiraavruta or encircled by Yoginis like Damari, Mangala, Pingala, Dhanya, Bhadrika, Ulka, Siddha etc.

Rakta varnaa maamsa nishthaa gudaanna preeta maanasaa, Samasta Bhakta Sukhadaa Laakinyaambaa Swarupini/ Swaadhishtaanaambujagataa Chatutvaktra Manoharaa, Shulaadyaayudha sampannaa Peeta varnaati garvitaa/ Medo nishthaa Madhu preetaa bandinyaadi samanvitaa, Dadhyaannaasakta hridayaa Daakini rupa dhaarini/ Mulaa dhaaraambujaarudhaa Panchavaktraasthi samsthitaa, Ankushaadi prahananaaVaradaadi nishevitaa/ Mudgoudanaasakta chitthaa Saakinyaambaa Swarupini, Ajnaa chakraabja nilayaa Shiklavarnaa Shadaanana/ Majjaa samsthaa Hamsavati Mukhya Shakti samanvitaa, Haridraannaika rasikaa Haakini rupa dhaarini/ Sahasra dala Padmastaa Sarva Varnobhi sevitaa, Sarvaayuda dharaa Shukla samsthitaa Sarvato mukhi/ Sarvoudana preeta chittaa Yaakinyaambaa Swarupini, Swaahaa Swadhaa matirmedhaa Shrutih Smritiranuttamaa/ (Rakta Varna; Maamsa Nishta or inhabitant in the tissues of flesh; Gudaanna Preeta Manasa or likes to eat rice mixed with jaggery; Samasta Bhakta Sukhada or Provides with contentment to one and all; the Mother Form of Lakini; Swadhishtaanaambuja Gata or the Insider of the Padma Chakra named that name; Chaturyaktra Manohara or Enchanting with Four Attractive Faces; Shulaadyayudha Sampanna or is fortified with armaments like Shula; Pita Varna or of Yellow colour; Ati-Garvita or higly distinguished; Medo nishtha or absorbed in the tissue of fat; Madhu Preeta or having a penchant for honey; Bandinyaadi samanvita or in the Company of Bandini and other Shaktis; Dadhyannasakta hridaya or with a longing for curd rice; Kaakini Rupa dhaarini or taking over the Form of Kaakini; Mulaadhaaraambujaa rudha or mounted on Mulaadhara at the base point; Panchavaktra or Five Faced; Asthi Samsthita or present in the bone tissues; Ankushaadi Praharana or equppied with Ankusha or goad and shovel and other weaponry; Varadaadi nisevita or worshipped by Varada and such other Yoginis; Mudgoudana sakta chitta or delighted in the taste of green gram cooked rice; Saakinyaambaa Swarupini or taking over the Form of Saakini Shakti; Ajnaachakaabja nilaya or resides in the two petalled Agnaachakra in beteeen the eyebrows; Shuka varana or of Pure White Colour; Shadaanana or of Six Faces; Majja Samstha or of the tissue of brain; Hamsavati; Mukhya Shakti Samanvita or of Powers of respiration; Haridraannaika Rashika or fond of Turmeric; Haakini rupa dhaarini or assumes the Form of Hakini in the Shri Chakra; Sahasra dala padmasthaa or the inhabitant inside in the thousand leafed Lotus; Sava Varnobhi sevitaa or magnifecent all the Alphabet Letters; from A to Ksha; Sarvaayudha dhara or is well equipped with all Astra-Shastraas; Shukla samsthitaa or the abode of 'Ojas' or tissue of Virility; Sarvatomukhi or has the power visioning from all the directions; Sarvoudana preeta chitta or fond of all kinds of food; Yaakinyaambaa Swarupini or of the Form of Yakinyaamba; Devi! You are Swaahaa or the oblataion to Agni and Swadha or oblation to Pitaras; Mati or Buddhi / Intellect; Shruti or Veda; Smriti or Manu Shastra about morality and Anuttama or the Supreme Most). Punya keertih Punya labhyaa Punya Shrayana Keertanaa, Pulomajaarchitaa Bandha mochani Bandhuraalakaa/ Vimarsha rupini Vidyaa viyadaadi Jagatprasuh, Sarva Vyaadhi prashamani Sarva Mrityu nivaarini/ Agraganyaachinthya rupaa Kalikalmasha naashani, Katyaayani Kalahantri Kamalaaksha nishevitaa/ Taambula purita mukhi daadimi Kusuma prabhaa, Mrigaakshi Mohini Mukhyaa Mridaani Mitra Rupini/ Nitya truptaa Bhaktanidhir niyantri Nikhileswari, Maitryaadi Vaasanaalabhyaa Mahaa Pralaya Saakshini/ Paraa Shaktih Paraa Nishthaa Prajnaana ghana rupini,

Maadhyi paanaalasaa matthaa Maatrikaa Varna rupini/ Mahaa Kailaasa nilayaa Mrinaala Mridu dorlataa, Mahaniyaa dayaa murtir Mahaa saamraajya shaalini/ Atma Vidyaa Mahaa Vidyaa Shri Vidyaa Kaama Sevitaa, Shri Shodashaakshari Vidyaa Trikutaa Kaamakotikaa/ Devi! The auspicious episodes of your glory provide worth and value to your Devotees; such merits are derived due to the attainment of good results of previous births; merely hearing and extolling your magnificence would be commendable; Pulomajarchita or the wife of Indra worshipped You to avoid the torments faced by Nahusha the short time Indra, you saved her with your grace; Bandha Mochani or the liberator of Samsara's bindings; Barbaraalakaa or with beautiful and wavy hair style enhancing charm; Vimarsha Rupini or high capacity to distinguish realities of life or otherwise; Vidya the Epitome of Knowledge; Viyadaadi Jagat Prasuh or You provide relief from the Elements of Nature; Sarva Vyaadhi Prashamani or the Curer of all kinds Physical and mental deficiencies; Sarva Mrityu Nivarini or the diffuser of all types of death; Agraganya or the Superlative; Achintya rupa or Unapproachable by thought and imagination; Kali Kalmasha Naashini or the demolisher of sins prone to Kali Yuga; Katyaayani Devi; Kalahantri or the destroyer of the Concept of Time; Kamalaaksha Nivesita or worshipped by Vishnu; Tambula Poorita Mukhi or satisfied with mouthful of betel-leaf juice; Daadimi Kusuma Prabha or likened with the redness of pomogranate flower; Mrigaakshi or of the fascinating eyes of a deer; Mohini; Mukhya the Chief; Mridani or the Queen of Maha Deva; Mitra Rupini or of the Form of Surya; Nitya Tripta or always contented; Bhakta Nidhi or the Ever Available Fund of Fulfillment of Devotees; Niyantri or the Designer and Enforcer of Rules and Regulations; Maitraadi Vaasanaalabhya or the attainer of excellent propensities like Maitri or amity and rapport; Maha Pralaya Saakshini or the Sole Witness of the Great Dissolution; Paraa Shakti; Paraa Nishtha or the Ultimate Spiritual Effort; Prajnaana Ghana Rupini or the Embodiment of the Highest Consciousness; Maadhvi Paanaalasaa or Intoxicated by Spiritual Excellence; Mattaa or fully oblivious of the worldly affairs due to that kind of intoxication; Maatrikaa Varna rupini or of the various Forms of Matrikas; Maha Kailasa Nilaya; Mrinala Mridu Dorlata or with the soft hands like those of Lotus Stalks; Maaniya; Daya Murti; Mahaa Saamraajya Shaalini; Atma Vidya or the Knowledge of the Supreme Self; Maha Vidya; Shri Vidya or of Mantras like Bala, Pancha Dashi, Sodashi and soon; Kama Sevita or worshipped by Manmatha; Shri Shodasaakshari Vidya viz. the Mantra ofShri Raja Rajeshwari Mantra; Trikuta or of Mantra Panchaadashi comprising Three Kutaas viz. Kaamaraaja, Vaagbhava and Shakti Kutaas and Kaama Kotika or Devi has the eminence of Shiva). Kataaksha kinkari bhuta Kamalaakoti Sevitaa, Shirasthitaa Chandranibhaa Phaalasthendra Dhanuh Prabha/ Hridayasthaa Ravi prakhyaa Trikonaantara deepikaa, Daakshaayani Daitya hantri Daksha Yagna Vinaashini/ Daraandolita Deergaakshi Darahaasojjwalanmukhi, Guru Murtirguna nidhirgomaataa guha janma bhuh/ Devesi danda nitisthaa daharaakaasha rupini, Pratipanmukyharaakaanta Tithi Mandala Pujitaa/ Kalaatmikaa Kalaanaathaa Kavyaalaapa vinodini, Sachaamara Ramaa Vaani Savya dakshina sevitaa/ Adi Shaktirameyaatmaa Paramaa Paavanaakritih, Aneka koti Brahmaanda Janani Divya Vigrahaa/ Kleenkaari Kevalaa Guhyaa Kaivalya pada daayini, Tripuraa Trijagadvandyaa Trimurtirstridasheshwari/Tryakshari Divya gandaadhyaa Sindura Tilakaanchitaa,Umaa Shailendra Ganayaa Gouri Gandharya Sevitaa/ (Devi! Your gracious looks could create crores of Lakshmi Devis who in turn create innumerable forms of prosperity to your devotees; You are situated at the 'Brahma Randhra' of one's head; Chandranibha! or of Chandra Devas's sheen; Phaalkastaa or the resident of forehead shining with the varied colours of rainbows; You are Hridayasthaa or situated in the hearts; Ravi Prakhya or of Surya's brilliance; Trikonaantara Deepikaa or the luminosity of the traingle inside the Shri Chakra; Dakshayni; Daitya hantri the killer of Daityas; Daksha Yagna Vidnaashani; Daraandolita deergaakshi or with long eyes moving slightly; Darahaaso-jjvalan mukhi or with a smile indicative of your internal gladness; Guru Murti or the Untimate Teacher; Guna nidhi or the Fund of Satwa-Raajasika-Taamasika Gunaas! Deveshi! Danda Nitistha or the Enforcer of Punishments; Daharaakaasha Rupini or of the Form of Space above all the Lokaas or figuratively the space inside the heart of Lotus! Pratipanmukhyaraakaantaa or the Forms of the fifteen phases of Moon as Devi is worshipped; Kalaatmika or of Chandra's Sixteen, Surya's twenty four and Agni's ten 'Kalaas' or units of splendour; Kalaa naathaa or the Chief of Kalaas; Kaavyaalaapa Vinodini or possessive of interest in Literary Activities; Sachaamara Ramaa Vaani Savya Dakshina Sevita or served with 'Chamara' hand-fan by Lakshmi and Saraswati on

Your right and left sides; Adi Shakti; Ameya or quantifiable; Atma; Parama or the Final; Paavanaakruti or the Form of Sanctity; Aneka Koti Brahmaanda Janani or the Mother of countless Universes; Divya Vigraha; Kleem -kaari or the representation of the Beeja by that name; Kevala or the Unique; Guhya or Enigmatic; Kaivalya pada daayani or the bestower of Moksha; Tri Pura or of Three Characteristics; Tri Jagad Vandya or worshipped by the Three Lokas; Tri Murti; Tri Dasheswari or the Ultimate of Three Dashaas or of Jeevatma-Jaagriti-Paramatma or otherwise: a Person-Awakening and Ishwari; Tryakshari or Three Bija Mantras; Divya Gandhaadhyaa or the Form of Celestial Fragrance; Sindura Tilakanchita or Devi with Sindura on her forehead; Uma; Shailendra Tanaya or the daughter of a Mountain King; Gauri; Gandharva Sevita or worshipped by Gandharvas).

Vishwa Garbha Swarna Garbha Varadaa Vaagadhiswari, Dhyanagamya paricchedyaa Jnaanada Jnaana Vigrahaa/ Sarva Vedaanta Samvedyaa Satyaananda Swarupini, Lopaa- mudraarchitaa leelaa klipta Brahmaandalaa/ Adrusyaa Drusya Rahitaa Vigjnaatri Vedya –varjitaa, Yogini Yogadaa Yogyaa Yogaanandaa Yugandharaa/ Icchaa Shakti Jnaana Shakti Kriyaa Shakti Swarupini, Sarvaadhaaraa Supratishthaa Sadasadrupa dhaarini/ Ashta Murtirajajaitri Loka Yatraa vidhaayani, Ekaakini Bhumarupaa Nirdwaitaa Dwaita Varjitaa/ Annadaa Vasudaa Vriddhha Brahmaatmyaikya Swarupini, Brihati Brahmani Brahmanandaa Balipriyaa/ Bhaashaa rupaa Brihatsenaa Bhaavaabhaava vivarjitaa, Sukhaaraadhyaa Shubhakari Shobhanaa Sulabhaagatih/ Rajarajeswari Raajya daayini Raja vallabhaa, Rajatkripaa Raaja Peetha nijaashritaah/ Vishwa garbha or the Universe is in her; Swarna garbha or the Mother of Vedas and Bijaaksharaas; Avarada or opposite of Varada / Bestower; Vaagadhishwari or Saraswati; Dhyana gamya ot the Target of Meditation; Aparicchedyaa or Undividable; Jnaanada or the Giver of Knowledge; Jnaana Vigraha or the Epitome of Jnana; Sarva Vedanta Samvedya or All the means of Knowledge like Vedas and Vedaangas are meant only to realise Devi; Satyaananda Swarupini or the Form of Truth and Happiness; Lopaamudraachita or worshipped by Devi Lopamudraa the wife of Agastya; Leelaa Klipta Brahmaanda mandalaa or You create the several Brahhmandaas only for your happiness; Adrushya or Unseen; Drusya rahita or Unvisionable; Vigjnaatri or the Power of Knowledge; Vedya Varjitaa or You have nothing to see; Yogini; Yogadaa or the Giver of Yoga; Yogaananda; Yugandhara or the Protector of Yugas or Time; Icchaa Shakti, Jnaana Shakti, Kriya Shakti Swarupini or the Shakti of Will, Knowledge and Deed and their Forms; Sarvaadhaara; Supratishta or Well-Established; Sat-Asat Rupa Dharini; Ashta Murti or Lakshmi-Medha-Dhara-Pushti-Gauri-Tushti-Prabha-Dhriti; Ajaa Jaitri or the Conquerer of the Unborn or Ignorance; Loka Yatraa Vidhayani or the Decider of Life-Circle; Ekaakini the Most Lonely; Bhuma Rupa or of the State beyond Consciousness; Nirdwaita or Unique or The Singular; Beyond Duality; Ananda; Vasuda or Provider of Prosperity; Vriddha or the Oldest; Brihati or Huge; Brahmani or the Wife of Brahma or Sarswati; Brahmaananda; Bali Priya or Fond of Sacrifices; Bhasha Rupa or The Form of Language; Brihatsena or the Possessor of Massive Army; Sukhaaradhya or worshippable with ease; Shubhakari or the Provider of Auspiciousness; Shobhana Sulabhaa Gatih or the easiest way of securing Salvation; Raja Rajeswari or the Maha Raajni; Rajya Dayani or the bestower of Kingdoms; Rajya Vallabha; Rajat Kripa or the Merciful with grace; and Raja peetha Nivesita Nijaashraya or your devotees are seated around you on thrones of Rajyas). Rajya Lakshmih Kosha nathaa Koshanaathaa Chaturanga Baleshwari, Saamraajya daayani Satya sandhaa Saagara mekhalaa/ Dikshitaa Daitya shamani Sarva loka vashankari, Sarvaardha Dhaartri Savitri Sacchidaananda Rupini/ Desakaalaa paricchinna sarvagaa Sarva Mohini, Saraswati Shastra mayi Guhaambaa Guhya Rupini/ Sarvopaadhi vinirmuktaa Sadaa Shiva Pativrataa, Sampradaayeshwari Saadhvi Gurumandala Rupini/ Kulotteernaa Bhagaaraadhyaa Mayaa Madhumati Mahi, Ganaambaa Guhyakaaraadhyaa Komalaangi Gurupriyaa/ Swatantraa Sarva Tantresi Dakshinaamurti Rupini, Sanakaadi Samaaraadhyaa Shiva Jnaana Pradaayani/ Chitkalaananda kalikaa Premarupaa Priyankari, Naamapaaraa -yana preetaa Nandi Vidyaa Nateswari/ Midhyaa Jagadadhishtaanaa Muktidaa Muktirupini, Laasyapriyaa Layakari Lajjaa Rambhaadi Vanditaa/ (Rajya Lakshmi! You are the Koshanathaa or the Treasurer or the Chief of Koshas or Sheaths / domains viz.Manomaya, Praanamaya, Annamaya, Anaandamaya and Vigyanamaya; Chaturanga Baleswari or the Head of four types of Army viz. Cavalry, Elephantry, Chariotry and Infantry; Samrajya dayani; Satya sandha the Upkeeper of Words and Abider of Truth; Saagara mehala or

Oceans are your girdles; Dikshita or the Initiator of Mantras; Daitya Shamani or the Destroyer of Daityas; Sarva loka vashankari or the Administrator of all Lokas; Sarvaartha daatri or the Bestower of Purusharthaas of Dharma-Artha-Kaama-Moksha; Savitri; Sacchidaanada Rupini; Desa Kaala Paricchinna or Unconditioned by Space and Time; Sarvaga or Present always and every where; Sarva Mohini or the Supreme Enchantress; Sarasvati; Shastramayi or the Essence of Shastras; Guhamba or the Mother of Skanda; Guhya Rupini or the Form of Secrecy; Sarvopaadhi Vinirmuktaa or beyond all limitations and bindings; Sadasiva Paivrata; Sampradaayeswari or the Queen of Traditions; Saadhvi or the female Sadhu; Guru mandala rupini or the Tradition of Gurus; Kulottirna or beyond Kula or tradition; Bhagaaraadhya or worshipped by Sun; Maya or Illusion; Madhumati or Blissful; Mahi or Bhumi; Ganaamba or Mother of Ganaas and Ganesha; Komalangi or of delicate Body Parts; Guru Priya or the Beloved of Shiva the Adi Guru; Swarantra or Independent; Sarva Tantreshi or the Ruler of Tantras; Dakshinamurti Rupini or manifested as Shiva's Form as Adi Guru; Sanakadi Samaaraadhya or worshipped by Maha Munis like Sanaka; Shiva jnaana pradaayani or the provider of Shiva Tatwa or Awareness; Chitkala or Pure Consciousness; Ananda Kalika or the inhabitant of joy; Prema Rupa; Naama paaraayana preeta or is fond of recitation of her names; Nandi Vidya or the Mantra by which Nandeswara pleased her; Nateswari or the Queen of NatyaShastra; Midhyaa Jagadadhistaana or the Presider of the Illusory Universe; Muktidaa or the Provider of Salvation; Mukti Rupini or the Form of Salvation; Lasya Priya or fond of Cosmic Dance; Layakari or the Pralayakaarini; Lajja or Modesty; and Rambhaadi vandita or worshipped by Apsaras like Rambha). Bhavadaava Sudhaa Vrishtih Paapaaranya Davaanalaa, Dourbhaagya toolavaatulaa Jaraa-dhvaantarayi prabhaa/ Bhyagyaabhi chandrikaa Bhakta chittha keki Ghanaa Ghana, Roga Parvatadambholirmrityudaaru kuthaarikaa/ Maheshwari Maha Kaali Mahaa Graasaa Mahaashana, Aparnaa Chandikaa Chandamundaasura nishudini/ Ksharaksharaatmika Sarva Lokeshi Vishwa dhaarini, Trivarga dhaatri Subhagaa Traimbikaa Trigunaatmikaa/ Swargaapa vargadaa Shuddhaa Japaapapushpa nibhaakrutih, Ojovati Dyutidharaa Yagjna rupaa Priyavrataa/ Duraaraadhyaa Duraadharshaa Paatali Kusumapriyaa, Mahati Meru nilayaa Mandaara kusuma priyaa/ Veeraaraadhyaa Viraadrupaa Virajaa Vishwato mukhi, Pratyakgrupaa Paraakaashaa Praanadaa Praana rupini/ Maartaanda Bhairavaaraadhyaa Mantrininyasta raajyadhuh, Tripureshi Jaatsenaa nistraigunyaa Paraaparaa/ (Bhayadaaya Sudhaa Vrishtih or the rain of Amrita drowns the forest of Samsaara; Paapaaranya dawaanala or the Fire broken in the Forest would destroy the woods of sins; Jaraadhwaanta Ravi prabhaa or old age is dispersed by the emerging Surya's rays; Bhakta Chitta keki gahanaa ghana or as a Peacok dances at the sight of clouds on the Sky, Lalita Devi prompts devotees to dance with their devotion; Roga Parvata Dambholi or Devi smashes diseases of the mind and body of devotees; Mrityu daaru kuthaarika Devi! You are the axe that brings down the tree of death; Maheshwari! Maha Kaali! Mahaa Graasaa or the gigantic heap of Food; Mahaashana or the huge serve of food to the devotees; Aparna or She who paid penance to Shiva even without eating leaves; Chandika or furious with the Evil; Chanda Mundaasura Nishudini or the Terminator of the Asuras called Chanda and Munda; Kshara ksharaatmika or of the Swarupa of both destructible and indestructible forms; Sarva Lokeshi; Vishwa dhaarini or who covers all the Lokaas with her shield; Trivarga Dhaatri or the Upholder of Dharma-Artha-and Kaama; Subhaga or the Form of Surya; Traimbika or the Three Eyed of Surya-Chandra and Agni; Trigunaatmika or of the Swarupa of Satwa-Raajasa- Tamo gunaas; Swargaapavarga daa or the provider of Swarga of Happiness for a limited period till the Punya Phala is drained but Apavarga is everlasting Salvation; Suddha; Ojovati or the giver of vitality; Dyuti- dhara or the provider of illumination of knowledge; Yajna Swarupa; Priya Vrata or Devi likes all kinds of Vratas; Duraaraadhyaa or She does not encourage worship by those who are unable to control their own misgivings; Duraadharsha or does not assist those who out of evil influences refuse to reform themselves; Paatali Kusuma Priya or Devi likes Paatali flowers; Meru nilaya or Meru Mountain is her Place of stay; Mandara Kusuma Priya; Veeraa- raadhyaa or worshipped by the courageous; Vitat Rupa or of Macro Form; Viraja or without Rajasika Guna; Vishwato mukhi or directly facing the Universe; Pratyagrupa or introvert; Paraakaasha or the Ultimate Cosmos; Pranada or the Life-giver; Prana Rupini or the very life; Martanda Bhavravaaraadhya or the one worshipped by Bhairava named Martanda [ Of the other Bhayairavas are stated to be Kaala Bhairava, Kshetrapala Bhairava, Ruru Bhairava, Chanda Bhairava, Asitanga Bhairava,

Krodha Bhairava and Unmatta Bhairava]; Mantran –vasta Rajyadhuh or she entrusts the duties of administration to her Minister Raja Shyamala; Tripuresi; Jayatsena or she has her ever-victorious divine army; Nistraigunya or unscathed by the Three Gunas and Paraapara or the Ultimate Reality). Satyajnaananda Rupaa Saamararya Paraayanaa, Kapardini Kalaamaalaa Kaamadhuk Kaama rupini/ Kalaanidhih Kaavya Kalaa Rasajnaa Rasa sevadhih, Pushtaa Puraatanaa Pujyaa Pushkaraa Pushkarekshanaa/ Param Jyotih Paramdhaama Paramaanuh Paraatparaa, Paasha hastaa Paasha hantri Paramantra Vibhedini/ Murtaamurtaa Nitya tripaa Muni Maanasa hamsikaa, Satya vrataa Satya rupaa Sarvaantaryaamini Sati/ Brahmaani Brahma janani Bahu rupaa Budhaarchitaa, Prasavitri Prachandaajnaa Pratishthaa Prakataakritih/ Praaneswari Praana daatri Panchaasatpeetha rupini, Vishunkhalaa Viviktasthaa Veeramaataa viyatprashuh/ Mukundaa Mukti nilayaa Mula Vigraha rupini, Bhaavajnaa Bhava rogaghnee Bhava Chakra pravartini/ Chhandassaaraa Saastra saaraa mantra saaraa Taloari, Udaara keerti ruddhaama Vaibhavaa Varna rupini/ (Devi! Your characteristics are Truth-Knowledge-Bliss; desirous of maintaining the equal eminence of Shiva; Kapardni! Kalaa maalaa! Kamadhuk or Kamadhenu; Kama Rupini! Kalaa Nidhi! Kavya kalaa! Rasajna or proficient in tastes; Rasa Sevadhi or Sea of bliss; Pushta or well-nurtured; Puratana; Pujya; Pushkara or the Sacred Tirtha by that name; Pushhkarekshana or with charming eyes like lotus-petals; Parama Jyoti or the Supreme Luminosity that provides radiance to Surya-Chandra-Agni; Parama dhaama or the zenith point where Devi resides; Paramaanu or the infinitesimal atom: Paraatpara or Out of reach to the Peak; Pasha Hasta or Pasha in her hand; Paasha hantri or the smasher of bonds; Paramamtra vibhedini or the demolisher of Evil Mantras; Murtaamurtaa or Perceptible and Imperceptible Forms; Nitya Triptaa or always satisfied with services tendered with devotion; Muni Maanasa Hamsikaa or is like a female Swan swimming in the pious minds of Sages; SatyaVrata; Satya Rupa; Sarvaantaryamini; Bhaahmani; Brahma Janani; Bahu Rupa; Budhaarchita or worshipped by Jananis or the Enlightened; Prasavitri or the one who delivers; Prachanda Ever Irated; Pratishtha or of well-established prestige; Prakataakriti or well experienced Form; Praaneswari; Praana daatri or Provider of Life Force; Panchaashat Peetha Rupini or the Seat of fifty six alphabet letters from 'A' to 'Ksha'; Vishrunkhala or free from shackles; Viviktastha or readily realisable in Sacred Places; Vira Mata! Viyatprashuh or who created Akasha; Mukunda; Mukti Niyaya or of Five Kinds of Mukti viz. Salokya, Saamipya; Saarupa, Saayujya and Brahma; Mula Vigraha Rupini or the Very Original Sourcer of all kinds of Energies; Bhaavajna o r who knows the Bhaavas or thoughts and the Reality; Bhava Rogaghni or the destroyer of all types of dieases; Bhava chakra Pravartini or the Animator of the Cycle of births and deaths; Talodari! you have the Nether Lokas in your belly! You are the Essence of Chhandaas or Prosody-the Essence of Shastras; the Essence of Mantras and you enjoy Keerti and unending magnificence as also the Embodiment of Varnaas and Vedas). Janmamrityu jaraatapa Jana vishraanti daayini, Sarvopanishadudghushtaa Santyateeta kalaatmika/ Gambheera Gaganaantastha Garvitaa Gaanalolupaa, Kalpanaatahitaa Kaashtaakaantaa Kantaardha Vigrahaa/ Karya kaarana nirmuktaa Kaamakeli tarangitaa, Kanatkanaka taatankaa Leelaa vigraha dhaarini/ Ajaa Kshaya vinirmuktaa Mugdhaa Kshipra prasaadini, Antarmukha Samaaraadhyaa Bahirmukha sudurlabhaa/ Trayee Tri -varga nilayaa Tristhaa Tripuramaalini, Niraamayaa Niuraalambaa Swaatmaaraamaa Sudhaa srutih/ Samsaara panka nirmagna samuddharana Panditaa, Yagnapriyaa Yagna kartri Yajamaana Swarupini / Dharmaadhaaraa Dhanaadhyakhsaa Dhana Dhaanya vivardhini, Vipra Priyaa Vipra rupaa Vishwa bhramana kaarini/ Vishwa graasaa Vidrumaabhaa Vaishnavi Vishnu rupini, Ayoniryoni nilayaa kutasthaa Kularupini/ (Devi! You have been the Saviour of all those devotees who were smitten in the Birth-Death-Old Age syndrome by providing them knowledge and solace; all the Upanishads had declared that there was no duality of existence and that there was only one viz. You who were Santyatita Kalaatmika or the Singular Force, Gambhira or Complex to Know, Gaganaantasta or present in Sky and Space beyond; Garvita or rightfully proud as the Cause and Creation; You were lost in the resonance of Sama Vedaa; Kalpanaa Rahita or of Pure Consciousness; Kaashtha or the Target to reach; Aakaanta or Anantha; Kaantaardha Vigraha or Artha Naareeswara; Karya Kaarana Nirmukta or Devoid of Cause and Effect; Kamakeli tarangita or engaged in constant play with Shiva; Kanatkanaka Tatanka or of sparkling golden ear-rings; Leelaa Vigraha Dhaarini or You change many Forms for your own fun; Aja or birthless; Kshaya vinirmuktaa or devoid of degeneration; Mugdhaa or

Unassuming; Kshipra Prasaadini or the Provider of her kindness to her devotees; Antarmukha Samaaraadhyaa or who could be worshipped through introspection; but you are difficult to be realised only by external services without that firm faith; Trayi or of the personification of Three Vedas of Ruk-Yajur-Saamaa; Trivarga nilaya or of Three Gunas; Tripura Malini, Niraamaya or of no ill health; Niraalamba or Niraadhaara / supportless; Swatmaaraama or Self-delighted; Sudhaa Shruti or the Stream of Bliss experienced from one's own devotion; Samsara panka nirmagna Samuddharana Pandita or Devi! You are an expert to lift up sincere devotees from the quagmire of Samsara just as Bhagavan Varaha rescued Bhu Devi from Rasaatala! You are Yagna Priya, Yagna Kartri and Yajamaana Swarupini; You are Dharmaadhaara; Dhaana -adhyaksha; Dhana Dhaanya Vivarthini or the Developer of wealth and food; You are Vipa Priya; Vipra Rupa; Vishwa Bhramama Kaarini or rotates the wheel of travel round the World involving Jeevas; You are also Vishwa graasa or the Rotator of the various lokas till Pralaya halts the wheel; Vidrumaabhaa or the radiance of coral from the Vidruma Tree of Knowledge; Vaishnavi; Vishnu Rupini; Ayoniryoni nilaya or the Root Cause being the first triangle of Shri Chakra and the Source of the Causes; Kutastha or the Peak of Ignorance; Devi! You are Kula Rupini in the normal sense of Varnaashrama but also referring to Kula being Mulaadhaara Chakra). Veera goshthipriya Veera Naishkarmyaa naada Rupini, Vigjnaana Kakalaa Kalyaa Vidagdhaa Baindavaasanaa/Tatwaadhikaa Tatwaayi Tatwamadtha Swarupini, Saamagaana priya Soumya Sadaa Shiya Kutumbini/ Savyaapasavya maargasthaa Saryaapadviniyaarini, Swasthaa Swabhaava madhuraa Dhira Dhira samarchitaa/ Chaitanyaarghya sanaara –adhyaa Chaitanya Kusumapriya, Sadoditaa Sadaa Tushtaa Tarunaaditya Paatalaa/ Dakshinaa Dakshinaaraaghyaa Darasmera mukhaambujaa, Koulini Kevalaanarghya Kaivalya ada daayani/ Stortapriyaa Stutimati Shruti samstuta vaibhavaa, Manasvinimaanavati Maheshi Mangalaakritih/ Vishwa Maataa Jagaddhaatri Visaalaakshi Viraagini, Pragalbhaa Paramodaaraa Paraamodaa Manomayi/ Vyomakeshi Vimaanasthaa Vajrini Vaamakeswari, Pancha Yagna priyaa Pancha preta manchaadhi shayani/ (Viragoshthi priya or Devi is interested in the Advanced 'Upaasakaas' or concentrated Meditators and their goshti or discourses; Veera! as you had killed Bhandasura; Naishkarmya or without any action since no action is to be done by her seriously; Nadarupini or Shabda Brahma; Viginaana kalana kalya or perceiving Knowledge by way of 'Atmaanubhava'; Vidagdha or proficient; Bainavaasana or seated in 'Bindu' or the central point of Shri Chakra the precise place of Shiva; Tatwaadhika or surpassing the zones of Tatwa like Shabda, Sprarsha and so on; Tatwamayi or however She is the Sarva Tatwa Swarupa; Tatwamartha Swarupini or the symbol of what Tatwa is all about; Saama gaana priya; Soumya; Sada Shiva Kutumbini or the entirety of 'Charaachara Srishti'! Savyaapasaya Maargasthaa or the Savya Marga or Dakshina Marga followed by Sages, Brahmanas and Maharshis but Apasavya Marga is followed by Bhairavas and so on called Vaama marga; Sarvaapad vinivaarini or eliminator of disasters; Swastha or Self-Established; Swabhava Madhura or of Natural Pleasantness; Dhira or courageous; Dhira Samarchita or worshipped by the dauntless but not by timid or foolish; Chaitanyaarghya Samaaraadhyaa or worshipped by those who are enlightened with Sacred Water; Chaitanya Kusuma Priya or Devi enjoys being offered 'Atma Jnaana' as a flower of worship; Sadoditaa: Devi is always in the fresh memory of her devotees; Sadaa Tusthaa or always gratified due to reverences paid by the devotees; Tarunaaditya Patala or she is like a rising Sun of crimson hue; Dakshinaadakshinaaraadhya or or Devi is worshipped by Savyaapasavya marga; Darasmera Mukhaambujaa or she is ever pleasant and smiling to devotees; Kaulini or worshipped by the followers of the specified Tantra; Kevala or Solitary; Anarghya Kaivalya Pada daayani or Devi bestows the matchless Kaivalya to the devotees; Stotra Priya; Stutimati or she is possessive of such inimitable characteristics that are adorable; Shruti Samstuta Vaibhava or the glories of Devi are commended by Vedas and Shastras; She is Manaswini or Controller of Mind; Manavati; Maheshi; Mangalaakriti; Viswa maataa; Jagaddaatri; Vishalaakshi; Vairaagini or detached; Pragalbha or dominant; Paramodaara or highly liberal; Paraamoda or of Ultimate Gladness; Manomayi or of Pure Mind; Vyomakeshi or Aakaasha as her hair; Vimanastha; Vajrini; Vaamakeshwari or worshipped by Vaamakeshwara Tantra; Panchagni priya or of worship to Deva, Pitara, Brahma, Bhuta and Manushya; Panchapreta Manchaadhi shayani or of Five Pretas viz. Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Sada Shiva and Maheswara). Panchami Pancha Bhutesi Pancha

samkhyopachaarini, Shaswati Shashwataishravyaa Sharmadaa Shambumohini/ Dharaa Dharasutaa

Dhanyaa Dharmini Dharma vardhini, Lokaatita Gunaatitaa Sarvaatita Shamatmika/ Bandhuka Kusuma prakhyaa Baalaa Lilaa Vinodini, Sumangali Sukhakari Suveshaadhyaa Suvaasini/ Suvaasinyarchana preetaa Shobhanaa Shuddha Maanasaa, Bindu Tarpana Santushtaa Purvajaa Tripuraambikaa/ Dasha Mudraa Samaaraadhyaa Tripuraa Shri Vashankari, Jnaana Mudraa Jnaana Gamya Jnaana Jneya Swaripini/ Yoni Mudraa Trikhandeshi Trigunaambaa Trikonagaa, Anaghaadhbhuta Chaaritraa Vaanchitaartha Pradaayani/ Abhyaasaatishayajnaataa Shadadhwaateeta rupini, Avyaaja Karunaa Murtiajnaana dhwaanta Deepikaa/ Aabaala Gopa Viditaa Sarvaanullanghya Shasanaa/ Shri Chakra Raaja Nilayaa Shrimat Tripura Sundari/ Shri Shivaa Shiva Shaktyaika rupini Lalitaambikaa, Evam Shri Lalitaa Devyaa Naamnaam Saaharakam Jaguh/ Iti Shri Brahmaanda Puraaney Uttara Khandey Shri Haya- greevaagasthya Samvaadey Shri Lalitaa Rahasya naama Saahasra Stotra Kathanam Naama Dwiteeyodhyaayah/ Panchami or the Spouse of the fifth Lord mentioned afore; You are Pancha Bhuteshi or the Sovereign of Prithvi-Aapas-Tejas-Vayu-Aakasha; Pancha Samkhyopa - Charini viz. Lam ( Gandham), Ham (Pushpam), Yam (Incense), Vam (Naivedyam) and Sam (Naanaa Vidhopachaaraan); Shaswati (Ever Lasting); Shasvathaishwarya or Eternal Wealth; Sharmadaa (Provider of Happiness); Shambhu Mohini; Dhara or the Massive Support; Dhara Suta or the daughter of Himavaan; Dhanyaa or the Blessed One as Shambhu Patni; Dharmini or the Embodiment of Virtue and Truth; Dhama Vardhini or the Organiser of Dharma; Lokaateeta or surpasser of Lokaas; Gunaatita or far beyond the Tri Gunas; Sarvaatita or transcends Universes; Shamaatmika or the Personification of Tranquility; Bandhuka Kusuma Prakhyaa or like the Red Bandhuka Flower; Bala or Bala Tripura Sundari; Leelaa Vinodini or Enjoying the Playful Sport of Universal Creation and so on; Sumangali or the Most Auspicious wedded spouse of Shiva; Sukhakari; Suveshaadhya or dressed up perfectly with Vastra, precious jewellery, sandal paste; perfumery, betel juice in mouth and so on; Suvasini; Suvaasinyarchana preetaa or appy to be worshipped by Suvaasinis; Asobhana or eternallly youthful and charming; Suddha Maanasa or of Pure Heart and Thought; Bindu Tarpana Samtushta or she is very contented by performing Bindu Tarpana in the Shri Chakra's inner most Chakra called Sarvaananda maya; Purvaja or the First Movement of Supreme Consciousness of Herself; Tripuraambika; Dasa Mudra Samaaraadhya orworshipped by Ten Mudras or hand-finger gestures [viz.Sankshobhini (Jolting), Baana (Arrow), Aakarshana (Attraction), Vashya (Power), Unmaada (Ecstasy), Mahaankusha (the Great Goad), Khechary (Flying), Vijayini (Victory), Trikhanda (Three Sections) and Dhanu (Bow)]; Tripuraa Shri Vashamkari or the Fifth Chakra of Shri Chakra; Jnaana Mudra or the Gesture of Upadesha or Initiation forming a circle with the thumb and index fingers stretching the other fingers to signify the Final Reality is complete; Jnaana Gamya or Jnaana is the Goal; Jnaana-Jneya Swarupini or Lalita Devi is the Knowledge as also the Jneya or the one to Know; Yoni Mudra one of the Mudras; Tri Khandeshi or another Mudra indicating the Unity of Tri Khandas; Triguna; Ambaa; Tri Konagaa; Anagha or free from Sins; Adbhuta Chaaritra; Vaanchitarta prayayani or Fulfiller of desires; Abyaasaatisaya Jnaataa or Devi could be realised by constant practice of meditation and puja; Shadadhwatita Rupini or Six methods of Realisation of Lalita Devi include three related to Shakti called Mantraawaas viz. Varnas, Padaas or words and Mantras as also three Tatwaardhaas of Shiva including Kalaas, Tatwaas and Bhuvanaas; AvyaajaKarunaa Murti referring to Maternal Affection; Ajnaana dhwaanta deepikaa or the Great Illumination that destroys darkness / ignorance; Aabaala Gopaala Viditaa or known to Children and even Cowherds; Sarnaanullangha Shasana or none could ever disobey this Shasana or Ruling; This command is by Shri Chakra Raja Nilaya, Shrimat Tripura Sundari, Shri Shiva, Shiva Shaktaika Swarupini and Shri Lalitambika!!)

#### Lalita Sahasra Naama Phala Shruti

Iteyna Naama Sahasramcha kathitam tey Ghatodbhavah, Rahasyaanaam rahasyamcha Lalitaa preeti daayakam/ Anena sadrusham Stotram na Bhutam na Bhavishyati, Sarva roga prashanam Sarva sampadprabandhakam/Sarvaapamrityu shamanakaala Mrityu nivaarinam, Sarvajjwaraarti shamanam Deerghayushya pradaayakam/ Putrapradamaputraanaam Purushaarthapradaayakam, Idam Viseshaacchridevyaah Stotram Preetividhaayakam/ Japennityam Prayatnena Lalitopaasti tatparah, Praatah Snaatwaa Vidhaanena Sandhyaa Karma samaapyacha/ Puja griham tato gatwaa Chakra Raajam samarchyayet, Japey sahasram vaa Trishatam shatameyyacha/

(Agastya Muni! Recitation of this highly Sacred and Secret Lalita Sahasra-naama Stotra is unparalleled either in the Past or in Future. This Stotra prevents diseases, untimely and nagging deaths, extends life, bestows progeny and fulfills the Purushardhaas of Dharma-Artha-Kaama-Moksha.Hayagrivadeva strongly advised that one should make a sincere effort to recite the Stotra after purifying the body and mind, enter the Puja Griha, perform the Sandhyaa Vandana and Gayatri Japa, worship the Shri Chakra formally and then recite the Devi Lalita Sahasra Naamaavali. The Punya that is accrued by bathing in Sacred Rivers like Ganga innumerable times or the Fruit secured by performing Prathishta of countless Shiva Lingas in Varanasi or the Phala secured by giving away Daanaas during Surya Grahana or Solar Eclipse at Kurukshetra would indeed exceed the Recitation of the Sahasra Naama. Digging wells and water bodies in deserts, performing Ashwamedha Yagnas on the banks of Ganga, organising 'Anna Daanaas'to several Brahmanas, would all far exceed the Punya gained by the Recitation. Reciting even one Sranza of the Stotra would suffice to demolish serious sins, especially neglecting daily duties and continuously and conciously resorting to confirmed deeds of vice. It is like going to Himalayas to get rid of biting cold would be as infructuous as demolishig sins by means other than of reciting the Sahasra Naama! The Phala Shruti futher stated that the Recitation of the Stotras would be specially fruiful on Sacred days of Sankraanti, Vishu, birthdays of Self and near-dears, Navamis, Chaturdashis, Purnimas and on all Fridays. On Purnami evenings one could vision Devi Lalita in the Chandra Bimba and recitation at that time would provide far-reaching fruits of worship of which Devi Sahasranama is a significant input.

Sarva vyaadhi nivruttvartham Sprushtwaa Bhasma Japedidam Tadbhasma dhaaranaadeva nashyanti Vyaadhayah Kshanaat!

(To overcome all kinds of ailments, one should apply bhasma or ash on the body of the patient concerned by reciting the Stotra and indeed the latter would recover as soon as the Recitation is over. Persons affected by 'Graha Peedaas' or obstacles posed by Nava Grahas are bathed in the waters collected by vessels would soon be freed from the Planetary Aberrations. Even poison in the body would melt away by consuming water infused with the Mantras. A 'kanya' of one's desire for a man, or a childless woman intensely craving for a child, a bhakta desirous of overcoming 'dushta prayogaas' of Low Class and Abhicharika Shaktis, a devoted person who is a victim of theives and robbers or any such devotees of need, or redressal or justice are all well advised to most earnestly worship Lalita Devi who would fulfil all human aspirations with certainty.

#### Shri Lalita Trishati Naama Stotra

Sakumkuma vilepanaa malikachumbi Kasturikaam,

Samanda hasitekshanaam Sashara Chaapa pashaamkushaam/

Asesha jana Mohinimaruna maalya bhushaambaraam,

Japaakusuma bhaasuraam Japavidhou smaredambikaam/

Nyasah: Asya Sri Lalita Trishathi Stotra Maha Mantrasya, Bhagavan Hayagreeva Rishih; Anushtup Chandah; Sri Lalita Maha Tripura Sundhari Devata, Ayim Bija- Klim Shaktih-Sou keelakam-Mama Chaturvidha Purushartha Siddhyardhey Japey Viniyogah Lamityaadabhiramganyaasa Karanyaasaah Kaaryaah Dhyaanam:

Ati Madhura Chaapa Hastaamaparimitaa moda baana Sowbhagyaam,

Arunaamatishaya Karunaamabhinava Kula Sundarim Vandey/

(My salutations to you Devi! You carry a Sacred Bow with Sugar Cane with countless arrows that bestow prosperity; indeed you are the embodiment of kindness and happiness with youthful beauty)

Kakaara Roopa Kalyani Kalyana Guna Shalini

Kalyana Shaila Nilaya Kamaniya Kalavathi

Kamalakshi Kalmashagni Karunamritha Sagara

Kadambha Kananavaasa Kadamba Kusuma Priya

Kandarpa Vidya Kandarpa Janakaapaanga Veekshanaa

Karpoora veetee Sourabhya Kallolitha Kakuptataa

Kali Dosha Haraa Kanja Lochanaa Kamra Vigrahaa

Karmadi Saakshini Karayatree Kamra Phala Pradha/

(Devi! You are the representation of the Alphabet '**Ka**' that stands for **Radiance** which incidentally is the First Letter of the Pancha Dashi Maha Mantra viz. *Ka Ye Ee La Hreem, Ha Sa Ka Ha La Hreem, Sakala Hreem*; You are Kalyani or the Essence of Auspiciousness; with all characteristics of Goodness; mounted on the peak of virtue; you are the tasteful refinement and an abode of aesthetics; with alluring lotus-eyes; a proven destroyer of filthy sins; Karunaamrita Saagaraa or a nectar-like ocean of compassion; freely moving about celestial gardens of Kadamba trees as you would love to be adorned with the fragrant Kadamba flowers like clean thoughts and deeds; You are the adorable Personification of Love and its total knowledge; as the Mother of Love, materialised Manmadha by your mere sight; Devi! You enjoy the juice of betel leaves with the taste of scented material and spread the whole Universe with joy; you destroy the evil effects of Kali Yuga; you protect the worlds with your lotus-eyed looks; you are possessed of a demeanor that binds every mind; you are the sole witness of every thought and deed prompting every one to perform actions and also decide on the outcome of all such actions.)

Ekaara Roopachaikaaksharainyekaakshraakrithih

Ethathaditya Nirdesyaa chaikaananda Chidaakrithih

Evamithyaagama bodhya chaika Bhakthi madarchidaa

Ekagra Chitta nirdhyathachaishanaa rahitadruta

Ela Sugandhi Chikura chainahkuta Vinasini

Eka Bhogaachaika Rasachaikaikaishwarya Pradayini

Ekaatha Pathra Samrajyapradha chaikaanta Poojitha

Edhamaana Prabhaachaijadanejajjagadeeswari

Eka Veeraadi Samsevyaachaika Prabhaava Shalini

( Devi! You are of the alphabet Form 'Ea' standing for Para Brahma or the Absolute Truth and that is the Second Letter of the 'Pancha Dashaakshari'; this is also the Unique and Sacred Letter OM; indeed you are the image of each and every Letter and can not be decided as this or that Letter since you are the Epitome of Knowledge and Enlightenment; You are beyond the description that Scriptures could impart and could be possibly be realised only by single-minded devotion; you could be meditated with focussed determination and pure thought by total surrender and detachment; Devi! Your hairs are of sweet flavours; you are the personification of pleasures and love rescinding all traces of sins and vices; you can bestow the greatest gift of 'Ekaishwarya'; you can even grant the wish of becoming an Emperor of the

Universe effortlessly; you can be overcome by worship in concentrated solitude; Jagadeshwari! You are the Outstanding Sourcer of Splendour and Energy worshipped by the most Valiant and the Resolute as you are the Eka Prabhaava Shalinya or the Unique Symbol of Magnificence!)

Eekaara Roopini Eesithri chepsitaarthaa pradayini

Eedrigithya Vinirdishya cheshvaratya Vidhayini

Eeshaanaadi Brahmamayi cheshatwaadyashta Siddhidha

Eekshithri Eekshana Srushtyanda Kotireeshwara Vallabha

Eeditha cheshwaraardhaanga Shareereshaadhi Devatha

Eeshwara Prerana Kari chesha Thandava Saakshini

Eeshwarothsanga Nilaya chetibaadhaa Vinasini

Eeha Virahitha chesha Shakthireeshat Smithaanana/

(You are the Third Letter **Ee** of the Alphabet symbolising **Supreme Energy** that mobilises the Universe; the motivation and drive of actions; the benevolent provider of the 'Eepsitarthaas' or desires irrespective of limitations or restrictions; in fact you make the devotees feel that they are of 'Ishvaratwa' by themselves! Devi! You are the Union of Pancha Devas viz. Brahma-Vishnu-Rudra-Ishwara-Sadaa Shiva; You are the Benefactor of Ashta Siddhis viz. Anima, Mahima, Garima, Laghima, Prapti, Prakamya, Ishatwa and Vashitya; You are Eekshtri or the Cause and Observer; by your mere looks are created crores of Beings; the Sacred Scriptures are not tired of your grandeur; Eshwara Vallabha! Eswaraartha Sharirini! Eshwaraadhi Devata! Eshwara Prerana kari! Eshwara Tandava Saakshini or the Distinctive Spectator of Shiva's Cosmic Dance; the Excusive Seater on Shiva's lap; Devi! You are the Singular Power that could terminate all kinds of catastrophes; you are desireless as no aspiration is beyond you; the Supreme Shakti within Eshwara; and of the Supreme Countenance of magnetic smiles!

Lakaara Roopa Lalitha Lakshmi Vani Nishevitha

Laakhini Lalana Roopa Lasadh Dharadima Paatala

Lalanthika Lasadhphaalaa Lalata Nayanaarchita

Lakshanojjwala Divyangi Laksha Kodyanda Nayika

Lakshyartha Lakshanaagamya Labdhakama Lathathanuh

Lalaamarajadalika Lamba Muktha Lathanchitha

Lambodara Prasurlabhyaa Lajjaadhyaa Laya Varjitha

(Lalita Devi! You are of the Form of the Letter La connoting upsurge of Mental Calibre or sagacity being the fourth Letter of the Pancha Dashaakshari Mantra; Lalita or the Emblem of Softness and Simplicity of a Mother to a Child; served by Lakshmi the Symbol of Prosperity and Vani the Insignia of Learning; You are Laakhini or of easy access; Laalana Rupa or of the feminine quality of nurturing; of the delicious tenderness of an opened pomegranate and of a lustrous forehead embellished with a red dot of Tilaka; Devi! You are venerated by Parameshwara who has a third eye on his Lalaata; you are splendid with excellence as the Utmost Sovereign of Lakhs and Crores of Universes; the Lakshyaartha or the Inner Connotation and Lakshyagamya or the Ultimate Destination to reach; Labhda Kaama or the Fulfillment of Desires; Lataatanu or of a supple physique over which creepers tend to crawl; Devi! You are adorned with red Tilaka on the forehead and with long chains of pearls; indeed you are attainable with pure

commitment though! Ganeshwara Mataa! You shy away from the unworthy; and as the Everlasting One you are immune from Pralayas or the Great Annihilations).

Hreemkaara Roopa Hreemkaara Nilaya Hreem Pada Priya

Hreemkaara Beejaa Hreemkaara Mantra Hreemkaara Lakshana

Hreemkara Japa Supreetha Hreemathih Hreemvibhushana

Hreem Shila Hreem Padaaraadhya Hreem Garbha Hreem Padaabhidha

Hreemkara Vaachya Hreemkara Poojya Hreemkara Peethigaa

Hreemkara Vedya Hreemkara Chinthya Hreem Hreem Shareerini

( Devi! You are the **Hreemkaara** Shakti symbolising **Power and Authority** being the Fifth Letter of the Alphabets and the Heem Mantra of Pancha Dashaakshari; You reside in the Hreem Shabda as you are highly fascinated with it; you are the latent implication of the Mantra which is typically of your own; you readily get invoked by the 'brand' and be responsive to its recitation; indeed your are Hreemati or heartmind-Soul; Hreem Vibhushana ot its Ornament; Hreem Sheela or possessive of the features of Brahma-Vishnu-Maheshwara; You are easily accessible by the worship of the word Hreem; You are the Vachya or the Meaning; the Pujya or the worshippable; the Peethika or the basis; the Vedya or the realisable; the Chintya or the conduit of meditation; Hreem or the Provider of Fulfillment; Hreem Sharirini or of Hreem as your Physique; Devi! You indeed are the bywod of Hreem!

Hakara Roopa Haladhrith Poojitha Harinekshana

Harapriya Haraaraadhya Hari Brahmendravanditha

Haya Rudhaa Sevithanghrir Hayamedha Samarchita

Haryaksha Vahanaa Hamsa Vahanaa Hatha Danava

Hathyadi Papa Samani Haridashwaadi Sewitha

Hasthi Kumbhothunga Kucha Hasthi Kritthi Priyaangana

Haridra Kumkumaa Digdhaa Haryaswadya Amaraaarchidha

Harikesha Sakhi Hadhi Vidya Halaa Madaalasa

( Devi! You are of **Ha** kaara Rupa or of the sixth Letter of Alphabet signifying **Courage and Intrepidity** for the demolition of Shatru Sena or of the Armies of Antagonists; recitation of the Hakaara of Panchadasakshari Mantra is stated to overcome enemies from within and without; You are worshipped by Balarama who had the reputation of carrying a Plough to assert his prowess in battles; Harinekshana or of the attractiveness of deer's looks; Harapriya or the darling of Maha Deva; you are worshipped by Shiva and saluted reverentially by Vishnu-Brahma-and Indras; the entire cavalry mounted on horses perform sincere pujas to secure victories; the Performers of Ashmamedha Yagnas seek your benevolence to obtain their desires; Durga Devi who mounts on Lions too beseeches your grace; Saraswati who rides a Swan implores your assistance; Devas who kill Danavas beg of your kindness; Being merciful you mitigate the severity of even sins like murders; Indra who rides green horses is ever reverential to you; those feminine Shaktis whose breasts are as elevated as elephant heads crave your indulgence and venerate you; You are the beloved of Lord Shiva who likes to be clad with Gaja Charma or Elephant Skin as he granted the dying wish of Gajasura whom he sent to Kailasha; Lalita! Your brilliant body is smeared with haridra-kumkuma powder pastes (turmeric and saffron); Indra and Amaras are never tired of worship as you are their constant Saviour; Hariksha Sakhi or the Companion of Shiva with green tresses; Devi! You are the

Symbol of Haadi Vidya viz. Ha-Sa-Ka-La-Hrim--Ha-Sa-Ka-Ha-La-Hrim--Sa-Ka-La-Hrim; You are intoxicated with the grape juice of the Ocean of wine!)

Sakaara Roopa Sarvagjna Sarveshi Sarva Mangala

Sarva Karthri Sarva Dharthri Sarva Hanthri Sanathani

Sarvaanavadya Sarvanga Sundari Sarva Saakshini

Sarvaatmika Sarva Sowkhya Daatri Sarva Vimohini

Sarvaadhara Sarvagatha Sarvaavaguna Varjitha

Sarvaaruna Sarva Maatha Sarva Bhushana Bhushitha/

(The Sixth Letter of Alphabet 'Sa' as also the Sixth Letter of Panchadashaakshari embodies Affluence and Contentment; Devi! You are the Omniscient; Omni-Potent; the Form of Auspiciousness; Sarva Kartri or the Performer of all the Deeds; Sarva Dhatri or the One who is the fulcrum of all the Beings and again Sarva Hantri or the Destroyer of Every Thing; the Sanaatani or the Ageless, Originless and the Everlasting; the Spotless; the Sarvaanga Sundari; the Singular Witness of the Happenings; the all Pervasive Super-Soul; the Provider of Happiness to one and all; the Spell-Binder; the Foundation of Every Entity; the Omni-Present; Devoid of all Shortcomings; the ever fresh beginning like the emerging Sun's crimson on the horizon; the Mother of all and every thing; and the finality of Ornamentation as you are the Supreme Embellishment yourself!)

Kakaararthaa Kaala Hanthri Kameshi Kamithartha Daa

Kama Sanjivani Kalya Kathina Sthana Mandala

Kara Bhoruh Kalaa Nadha Mukhi Kacha Jitambudaa

Kataakshasyandi Karuna Kapaali Pranan Nayika

Karunya Vigrahaa Kantha Kanthi Dhootha Japavalih

Kalalaapaa Kambhu Kanthi Kara Nirjitha Pallavaa

Kalpavalli Sama Bhuja Kasthuree Thilakojjwalaa/

(The Eighth Letter of Alphabet 'Ka' stands for Illumination and Perception being the eighth Shabda of the Pancha Dashaakshari Mantra of Lalita Devi; You are Kaala Hantri or the Terminator of the Terminator or the Concluder of the Time-Cycle at the time of the Great Annihilation; Kameshi! You govern hopes and aspirations; you also fulfil the wishes; indeed you revived Kaama the Deity of Love from his end from a heap of ash burnt from Shiva's Third Eye; you are the Originator, Adroiter and Bestower of all the Fine Arts; the Possessor of firm and hard breasts and of robust thighs like those of an elephant trunk; of a charming countenance like the full moon; with hair like dark and thick clouds; of compassionate looks ready to ignore the blemishes of Beings; Devi! You are the consort of Kapaali; the Embodiment of Benevolence; Kantaa or the Flagship of Femininity; far more shimmering than the best of flowers; with punctuated style of conversation; with a conch-like neck and hands of gentleness like soft flower-buds; your arms are charming and thin like Kalpa Valli creepers; Lalita! Your forehead is embellished with Kasturi Tilaka or the thin spot of musk.)

Hakaaraarthaa Hamsa Gatirhaatakaabharanojjwalaa

Haarahaari kuchaabhoga Haakini Halya Varjitha

Harithpathi Samaaraadhyaa Hathaathkaara Hathaasura

Harsha Pradaa Havirbhoktri Haarda Santhama Saapahaa

Halleehaalasya Santhushta Hamsa Mantrartha Rupini

Hanopaadaana Nirmuktha Harshini Hari Sodari

Haahaa Hoohoo Mukha Sthutya Hani Vriddhi Vivarjitha

Hayyangavina Hridaya Harikopaarunamshukaa/

(The Letter 'Hakaara' signifies Wealth and Gallantry being the ninth Letter of Pancha Dashaakshari; Devi! You are a Hamsa Gamana or of a Swan's Pace; adorned with golden ornaments; your jewellery on the chest does indeed allure Shiva; you are Hakini or the One who snaps servitudes to usher freedom literally as also of the chains of Samsara; you refrain from the evil thoughts and deeds; you are adored by the Ashta Dikpalakas viz. Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirruti, Vaayu, Varuna, Kubera and Ishaana; you killed Asuras instantly and suddenly by your bravery; acclaimed as the Source of Bliss; you relish the dance of maidens; you have unparalleled expertise in Hamsa Mantra and the regulation of Pranayaama; you are devoid of desires but distributes happiness and contentment; the sister of Hari; Gandharvas praise you on your face as Haahaa Hoohu; you are far above the features of growth, decay or death; on witnessing the tribulations of various Beings, your heart melts like butter but on getting angry your visage turns red.

Lakaararthaa Latha Poojya Laya Sthithudbhaveswari

Lasya Darshana Santhushta Labhaalaabha Vivarjitha

Langhyetharaaginaa Lavanya Shalini Laghu Siddhida

LaakshaarasaSavarnaabha Lakshmanagraja Poojitha

Labhyetara Labdha Bhakthi Sulabha Langalaayudhaa

Lagna Chaamara Hastha Shri Sharada Parivijitha

Lajjaapada Samaraadhya Lampata Lakuleshwari

Labdha Maanaa Labdha Rasaa Labdha Sampath Samunnatih/

(Devi! The Tenth Letter 'La' of the Alphabet is also the Tenth of the Pancha Dasaakshari is indicative of 'Karma' or the result of the deeds of one's past. You are esteemed and worshipped by the womanhood of chastity; the Supreme of the Universe in all the stages of Birth, Growth and Destruction alike; witnessing the joyous dance of women gives you immense pleasure; You are far above the considerations of profits and losses; Mother, your instructions are always carried out and never questioned and indeed none whosoever dared to ask you questions! You are matchless in elegance and poise; you give away Siddhis with least devotion and reverence; you shower kindness with minimal efforts like melting gold is sealed in wax; Lord Shri Rama the incarnation of Vishnu performed regular pujaas to you to bestow the capacity to uproot Adharma; you save persons regardless of their deeds and fruits; you are very easily won over with selfless devotion; some times you carry plough as a weapon like Adi Sesha to punish the vicious; Lakshmi and Sharada serve you with 'Chaamara' as a hand fan; you make exceptions to Principles of your own making some times to save situations; Devi! Several Groups of persons from varied backgrounds are unanimous in their unity in devotion to you albeit in the methodologies of their worship; you are venerated by one and all as you are the Finality of Happiness and Prosperity.)

Hrinkaarini Hrinkaraadi Hrim Madhya Hrim Shikhamanih

Hrimkaara Kundaagni Shikha Hrimkaara Shashi Chandrika

Hrimkaara Bhaskara Ruchir hrimkaraamboda Chanchalaa

Hrimkara Kandam Kuritaa Hrimkaaraika Paraayanaa

Hrimkara Deerghika Hamsi Hrimkarodyana Kekini

Hrimkaraaranya Harini Hrimkaaraavaala Vallari

Hrimkara Panjara Suki Hrimkarangana Deepika

Hrimkara Kandaraa Simhi Hrimkaraambhuja Bhringika

Hrimkara Sumano Maadhvi Hrimkaara Tharu Manjari

(Devi! You are the Emblem of the Eleventh Letter of the Pancha Dashaakshari Mantra **Hreemkara** denoting **All-Pervasiveness** of the Supreme Shakti; Hrimkaaraadi signifies Hrim and Om Mantraas; Hrim Madhya means the Cause of Universal Existence and yourself; Hrim Shikhamani or you wear Hrim on your head; you are the Agni Kunda and Agni Shikha named Hrimkaara; You are the life-providing rays of Mooshine which too is called Hrim; you are the heat and dazzle generated by Surya Deva which is named Hrim; it is the lightning of black clouds and yourself which is called Hrim; it is yourself and the germination of tuber from a seed which is Hrim; you are the Reciter of Hrim as you trust and depend on it; it is the Hamsa / Swan moving freely in a Sarovara is called Hrim; the Peacock dancing with gay abandon in a garden is called Hrim; the deer enjoying its playful jumps in a forest is known as Hrim; you as the climber from a flower bed is Hrim; the green parrot in a cage is Hrim; the deepika or the light kept in a court yard is Hrim; a lion resting in a mountain cave is Hrim; Devi! Even an insect which is yourself hovering around a lotus in water is Hrim; the honey in a flower which too is of your own Form is Hrim; a cluster of flowers that appears on a tree is also called Hrim!

Sakaraakhya Samarasaa Sakalaagama Samstutaa

Sarva Vedantha Tatparya Bhoomi Sad Asada Asraya

Sakhala Satchidananda Saadhya Sadgathi Dayini

Sanakadi Muni Dhyeya Sada Shiva Kutumbini

Sakaladhishtaana Roopa Sathya Roopa Samaa Krithih

Sarva Prapancha Nirmathri Samanadhika Varjitha

Sarvothunga Sangahina Saguna Sakaleshtadaa/

(Devi! You are the Twelfth Form of the Alphabet 'Sa'which is also the twelfth Letter of the Pancha Dasaakshari Mantra indicating Gunaateeta Shakti or the Power of Featurelessness. You are the underlying energy that is all-pervasive all over in the Universe; commended by all the Scriptures in a single tone; you are the Singular Abode where the Essence of Vedantas is manifested; that indeed is the Place where Thuth and Illusion are clearly distinguished; you are the Finality where you are in your Full Form of Sacchidanada or the Union of Truth-Awakening-Bliss; yet, you are not in imagination but possible of Realisation; you bestow the blessing of Sadgati or the Path for Realisation; Maha Munis like Sanaka had meditated and achived you; as the counterpart of Maha Deva you belong to the Totality; the Merger Point of all kinds of Faiths and Institutions of worships; You are the Substance of Truth and Impartial in the true sense; you have materialised the Prapancha; you are the matchless; you are the Supreme; you have no features; you have no attachments; and indeed you are the Greatest Provider of what one wishes and deserves!)

Kakaarini Kavya Lola Kameshwara Manohara

Kameswara Prananaadi Kamesotsanga Vasini

Kameshawara Alingatangi Kameshwara Sukha Pradha

Kameshwara Pranayini Kameshwara Vilasini

Kameshwara Tapasiddhi Kameshwara Manah Priya

Kameshwara Prananadhaa Kameshwara Vimohini

Kameshwara Brahma Vidya Kameshwara Griheswari

Kameshwaraahladhakari Kameshwara Maheswari

Kameshwari Kama Koti Nilaya Kaankshithartadaa/

(Kakaarini or the Thirteenth Letter of Alphabet 'Ka' denoting Fullfillment and also the Thirteenth Letter of the Pancha Dasaakshari Mantra; Devi! You derive immense pleasure as you are acclaimed in 'Kavyaas' or Spiritual Texts; you are the enticer of Maha Deva's thoughts; the true reflector of Kameshwara's thoughts and dispositions; you are always present in his blissful company; in fact you are in the physical union of Kameshwara; providing happiness to Kameshwara as his heart's throb and pulsewatcher; indeed you are the fruit of Kameshwara's 'Tapasshakti'; you are his dearest; Life's Master; and Mesmeriser; you are the Brahma Vidya that enables you to reach the destination of Kameswara; you reside in the Abode of Kameshwara which is truly the Universe in totality! You gladden Kameshwara as Maheshwari of Kameshwara; as Kameshwari, you are the alternative Form of Kameshwara; you are Kamakoti Nilaya fulfilling all kinds of 'Kaamaas' or desires.)

Lakarini Labdha Roopa Labhdhadhir Labhdha Vanchitha

Labhdha Paapa Manodoora Labhdha Ahankara Durgama

Labhdha Shakthi Labhdha Deha Labdha Iswarya Samunnathi

Labhdha Vriddhi Labhdha Leela Labhdha Youvana Shalini

Labhdaatishyaya Sarvaangaa Soundarya Labhdha Vibhrama

Labhdha Ragaa Labhdha Gati Labhdha Nanaagama Sthithih

Labhdha Bhoga Labhdha Sukhaa Labhdha Harshaabhi Pujita/

Lakaarini Devi! You are the Alphabet Letter 'La', the Fourteenth word of the Pancha Dasaakshari Mantra signifying 'Prapti' or the Deservedness or Merit; you are the Swarupa of Fulfillment; achievable by Jnaana; the Provider of desires; distanced from Sinners; impossible of achievement by egomaniacs; the giver of powers to those whom you will; and the bestower of Affluence whom you select; Devi! You are infinite and there is nothing more that you could accomplish; you are spirited and bouncy at your own volition; you are youthful forever; you are the Epitome of Beauty as you prefer; you get the Universe surprised as per your discretion; you have fulfilled all that you decided; you have secured an illustrious husband as per your option; you direct the Scriptures at your command; you enjoy for the sake of yourself and experience the highest mark of fulfillment)

Hrimkara Moorthirhrimkaara Soudha Shringa Kaphotika

Hrimkara Dughabdhi Sudha Hrimkara Kamalendira

Hrimkara Mani Deeparchi Hrimkara Tharusharika

Hrimkara Petikaa Manirhrimkaradarsha Bimbikha

Hrinkara Koshaasilatha Hrimkara Sthana Narthaki

Hrimkara Shuktikaa Mukthaamanirhrimkara Bodhitha

Hrimkaramaya Souvarna Stambha Vidruma Puthrika

Hrimkara Vedhoupanishad Hrimkaraadhwara Dakshina Hrimkara Nandaanarama Nava Kalpaka Vallari Hrimkara Himavath Ganga Hrimkaraarnava Kousthubha Hrimkara Mantra Sarwaswaa Hrimkarapara Sowkhyada/

(Hrimkaara Murti! You are the characterisation of **Hrim** the final and fifteenth Letter of Devi Panchadashaakshari Mantra indicative of **Paripurnata** or Fullness; You are comparable to a Dove representing Peace and Tranquility atop the Palace called Hrim; the 'Amrit'churned from the Ocean of Milk named as Hrim; the Lakshmi Swarupa seated comfortably on the surface of a Lotus flower as designated by the Mantra of Hrim; the lustrous 'Mani Deepa' despelling darkness around is called Hrim; the singing bird sitting pretty on a lofty tree is called Hrim; the charming 'Mani' kept secure in a box is called Hrim; the reflection of an Image in a mirror is called Hrim; the sharp sword encased in a sheath is called Hrim; a vibrant dansuese in action on a broad stage to a mellifluous musical note is called Hrim; a pearl in an oyster shell is called Hrim; Devi! The process of Instruction to devotees about the meaning of the Scriptures is called Hrim; the precious Murti decorated on golden pillars is Hrim; the Upanishads arranged on top of Vedas is called Hrim; the Dakshina tipped to a Dwarapalaka is also known as Hrim; the ever climbing creeper from a plant bed in a garden is called Hrim; the River of Ganges on the Himalayan Mountain Range is designated as Hrim; the invaluable Koustubha thrown up from by the waves from the depths of an Ocean is called Hrim; the Totality of Mantras materialised in the Universe is summarised as Hrim; and the maximum Fund of Happiness collected from all over in the Universe too is called Hrim!)

[Pancha Dasi Maha Mantra: Ka- Ea- Ee-La-Hreem, Ha Sa Ka Ha La Hreem, Sa-Ka-La-Hreem]

#### Shri Lalitaa Trishati Stotra Phala Shruti

Chanting Lalita Trishati even once sets the mind-set straight and clean. The more one chants or even hears, the more one takes steps forward. Bhagavan Hayagriva assured Agasthya Muni that by chanting Lalita Trishati even once would help to attain peace of mind. Its practice without desires transforms the heart, mind and Soul. Fulfillment follows as a consequence, for the Decider is Lalita Herself. As one sows, so one reaps *OM PURNAMNADA PURNAMIDAM PURNAAT PURNAMUDUCHYUTEY PURNASYA PURNAMADASAYA PURNAMEVE VASISHYATEY* 

#### ESSENCE OF BRAHMA VAIVARTHA PURANA

[Invocation - Krishna Creates Tri Murtis and Devis & grants equal status to Shiva - Brahma's secondary Creation, his progeny and their offspring - Mutual curses of Brahma and Narada and Brahma's ineligibility to Worship- Narada reborn as Gandharva, his Yogic death and rebirths - Krishna stuuti'- 'Kavacha' & Shiva 'Stuti' and 'Kavacha'-Narada's darshan of Narayana Maharshi - Maharshi Narayana defines Pancha Prakritis, their Kalas and manifestations --Yagjnyavalkya stuti to Devi Saraswati's 'Puja Vidhana' and 'Kavacha' -to Saraswati and restoration of lost memory of Yaju Veda - Mutual curses of Lakshmi, Saraswati and Ganga land them in Bharata Varsha - Origin of Prithvi, worship to her and results of disrespect to her-Ganga and Bhagirath's efforts, her Puja and final restoration as Vishnu's wife- Vedavati-Maya Sita-Draupadi and as Devi Tulasi - Devi Savitri's 'puja vidhaana' - Maha Lakshmi's exit from Swarga and restoration & Puja Vidhana - Shodashopachaaraas' and Indra Stuti included) -Woeship to Swaha, Swadha, Dakshina, Shashthi, Mangla Chandi & Manasa-Devi Durga's 'Shodasha naamas' and 'Vyakhya', Stuti and Kavacha-'Ganeshopaakhyaana' -'Utpatti', Kashyapa's curse to Shiva, Ganesha about to fight with Parashurama, Ganesha Kavacha & Mahatnmya

Shri Krishna 'Leelas' (Miracles) and Mahatmya -Bhu Devi complains of 'Bhu Bhaara' and Krishna's human incarnation- Krisha's instructions about births in Krishnaavatara-Concept of Radha-Krishna 'Tadaatmya' (Unification) - Shrikrishna 'Janma', Shri Krishna Leelaas- -Dwaraka Nirmana, Krishna kills Sishupaala & Dandaavarka- Devi Rukmini's wedding with Shri Krishna Sacred Union of Radha and Krishna - Brahma Vaivarta Purana Phala Shruti - Naaraayana Maharshi explains Shri Krishna Purusha and Prakriti Devi ]

Ganesha Brahmesha Suresha Seshaah Suraascha Sarvey Manavey Muneendraah, Saraswati Shri Girijaadikaascha Namanti Devyah Pranamaami tham Vibhum/

I salute that Unique Paramatma whom Ganesha, Brahma, Maha Deva, Devendra, Sesha Naaga and other Devas, Manus, Sages as also Sarasvati, Lakshmi, Girija and other Devis stoop their heads down).

Sthulaasthanurnurvidathatam Trigunam Viraajam, Vishwaani Lomavivareshu Mahaantamaadhyam/ Srushtyunmukhah Swakalayaapi Samarja Suksham, Nithyam Samethya idiyastamajam bhajaami/

I worship in my heart and soul that Inimitable Virat Purusha who materialised separate Forms of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva to perform the three acts of Creation, Preservation and Demolition with the aid of Three Features of Satvika, Rajasika and Tamasika respectively and absorb the whole Universe in his hairy pores of skin by his Sukshma Rupa or 'Antaryaami Atma' (Inner Conscience).

Vandey Krishnam Gunaateetam Param Brahmaachutam yatah/

Aavirbhu Bhuvah Praktruthi Brahma Vishni Shivaadayah/

(I greet Para Brahma Vaasudeva who is all pervading and everlasting from who had emerged Prakriti Maya, as also Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and other Devas).

At the huge gathering of Sages at Naimisharanya, Shounaka Muni requested Suta Maharshi to narrate such a Purana in which the 'Karana Tatwa' or 'raison d'tre'/ motivation of the Supreme Being taking 'Form and Substance'; whether this 'Form'or of 'Prakriti' was definable by 'Gunas' (Features), 'Tatwas' (Characteristics) and 'Kalas' (attributes); the manifestations of that Paramount Power representing Creation, Preservation and Demolition; the various methods of 'Dhyana' (meditation), the Targets of meditation in Goloka, Vaikuntha, Shivaloka, as also of the 'Amsas' or alternate Forms of Devas.

# Krishna creates Tri Murtis and Devis & grants equal status to Shiva

Narrating the Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Suta Maharshi divided it five broad Chapters viz. Brahma Khanda, Prakriti Khanda, Ganapati Khanda, Shi Krishna Janma Khanda and Uttara Khanda. In the Brahma Khanda, the Genesis of the Universe was traced when there was only a Massive Fund of 'Jyotishpunja'or of Immense Illumination comparable to crores of Surya Devas out of which Maha Yogis and Maharshis were stated to have visioned **Goloka Dham**, beneath which were situated Three Lokas. In Goloka, stated to be of three crore Yojanas of width and length, there were no 'Adhi- Vyadhis' (Stresses of Physical, Mental, Intellectual, and cosmic imbalances), 'Jara-Mritus' (old age and death) and 'Shoka-Bhayaas' (Agonies and Fears) among the Goloka Residents where **Shri Krishna was** the Over Lord. During Pralaya time, only Bhagavan Shri Krishna was the unique resident, but as Srishti (Creation) resumed after Pralaya, it was full of Gopas and Gopikas. Some fifty crore yojanas underneath Golaka, was **Vaikuntha** to the right side and **Shivaloka** to the left. Vaikuntha loka was of the spread of a crore yojanas in which Bhagavan Narayana and Lakshmi resided and Shivaloka of an equal spread where Bhagavan Shankara stayed. Goloka was full of magnificent radiance and joy while Shri Krishna dressed in silks, adorned with Koustubha, Murali (flute) in his hands, a golden 'Kirita' (headgear) on his head; body fragrance of sandalwood powder and kumkum and a 'Vanamala' round his neck sat with poise, as

an Embodiment of Sachhidananda (Truthful, hearty and blissful) Nirvikara (Unaffected and changeless), Shanta (Ever Peaceful), Mangala (Propitious) Avinaashi (Indestructible) Satpurusha (The Noblest) Sampurnachitta (Totally Conscientious) and Samasta Vidita (The Omni-scient).

As Bhagavan Krishna found that after 'Pralaya', the entire Universe was empty, dark, devoid of Sky, Air, Water, Earth and Fire and as he had none to assist, he created from his right side three 'Gunas'viz.Satvika, Rajasika and Tamasika and through these created 'Maha Tatwa', 'Ahamkara', 'Pancha Tanmatras' of 'Rupa'(Form), 'Rasa'(Taste), 'Gandha'(smell), 'Sparsha'(Touch) and 'Shabda'(sound) and 'Pancha Vishayas'/ Indriyas. Then Bhagavan Krishna materialised 'Narayana' whose body colour was 'Shyama' (black), ever-young, 'Peetambaradhari' (red silk robed) and 'Vanamaali'just like himself. Vishnu has four arms carrying Shankha (Conch-shell), Chakra (Wheel), Gada (Mace) and Padma (Lotus). Like himself, Bhagavan Krishna created Narayana with an alluring smile, a countenance like 'Sharatkaala Purnima Chandra' (the full moon night of Autumn season bringing out special joy), Koustubha Mani, 'Shri Vatsa'/ birth spot on his 'Vakshasthala' (chest) where Devi Lakshmi resided as a near-replica of Bhagavan Krishna himself. As Krishna created Narayana, the latter eulogised Krishna as follows:

Varam Varenyam Varadam Varaaham Varakaaranam,

Kaaranam Kaaranaanaam cha Karma tatkarma -kaaranam/

Tapastastphaladam shashwat tapaswinaam cha taapasam,

Vandey Nava Ghana Shyaamam Swaatmaaraamam manoharam/

Naiskaamam kaama rupamcha kaamaghnam kaamakaaranam,

Sarava Sarveswaram Sarva bijarupamanutthamam/

Vedarupam Vedabeejam Vedoktaphaladam phalam,

Vedagjnam tadvidhaanam cha Sarva Veda varaam varam/

(My salutations to you Shri Krishna! You are the Supreme; the adored by the adorers, the bestower of boons, the cause of the confirment of boons, the cause of the causes; the result of the deeds and the deed of the results; the form of meditation; the fruit of meditation; the donor of the fruit; the Exemplary Tapaswi; the one with the body colour of fresh cloud uniqueness; the most charming and the soulful of distinction! My obeisances to you Shri Krishna, as you are the Kamarupa (The Form of Desire), the Nishkama (The One without Desires), the Kamaghna (the demolisher of desires); the 'Kamakarana' or root cause of Kama or desire; Sarva Rupa, Sarva beeja swarupa or the Seed of all manifestations; the Sarvottama or the Noblest; the Sarveswara; the Profile of Vedas; the Provider of Fruits of Vedas; the Creator, the Embodiment as also the Greatest Exponent of Vedas!) Having commended as above, Narayana was manifested as the greatest Preserver of the Universe once the process of Creation would progress and got ready to assume his extraordinary powers and also the responsibilities.

Any person who reads or hears the above few lines would obtain their wishes like good progeny or an ideal life-partner fulfilled; a person who is facing problems like unemployment, dethronement, poverty or insufficient resources, long standing illnesses or even imprisonment would quickly recover and overcome all difficulties and secure positive benefits.

From Paramatma Shri Krishna's left side of his physique emerged **Bhagavan Shiva** whose body-glow was crystal-clear with 'Pancha Mukhas' (Five heads), whose his four directions were like his Vastras (clothes)-in other words 'Digvastra, head adorned with golden and knotted thick hairs, three eyes on each of his heads, ornamented with half-moon like headgear and carrying Trishula, Spear and 'Japamala' (rosary of beads). He is the Yogeswara of Yogis, 'Mrityu' of 'Mrityus' (Terminator of Terminators), 'Mrityumjaya' or the Conqueror of Mrityu, Maha Gyani, Gyana Swarupa, and Bestower of Gyana. Bhagavan Shiva went into raptures as he made the following commendation to Shri Krishna:

Jayaswarupam Jayadam Jayesham Jayakaaranam,

Pravaram Jayadaanaam cha Vamdey tama paraajitam/

Vishwam Vishveyshvaresham cha Vishwastam Vishwakaarana kaaranam/

Viswharakshaa kaaranam cha Vishvaghnam Vishwajam param,

Phalabeejam phalaadhaaram phalamcha tatphalapradam/

Tejah swarupam teyjodam Sarvatejasvinaam varam/

(I greet Bhagavan Shri Krishna who is Victory personified, the Provider of Victory, Capable of granting Victory, the reason for bestowing Victory, and the best among those who gift Victory away and as the invincible *par excellence*. I hail Paramatma Krishna who represents the Totality of Universal Manifestation; he is the Maheswara of Ishwars of the Universe; the inspiration behind the existence of the Universe; the fulcrum of the Universe; the great conviction to generate the Universe; and the cause of the causes to create the Universe. I pray to Krishna who crafts the Srishti, preserves and upholds it and demolishes it finally. I salute Shri Krishna who is kick-start of Srishti as a seedling, the strong hold of it as a growing plant and eventually as a tree; the outcome fruits of the Tree and the final terminator of the Tree. Indeed I acknowledge the Supremacy of Shri Krishna who is a symbol of Illumination, his unparalelled Form, and inimitability). Those persons who read or hear the 'Stotra'given above shall achieve all kinds of 'Siddhis' (Powers) and witness Victory at every step in life. They secure good friends; properties, prosperity and immense intelligence as also sizeably diminish enemies, griefs and sins.

Thereafter, the Greatest Tapasvi **Brahma Deva** emerged from the Lotus sprouted from the navel of Shri Krishna along with four heads, a 'Kamandalu' (water carrying vessel) with his Vastras /clothes, teeth and hair all in lustrous white. Lord Brahma is the Ishwara of Yogis, the Chief of Sculptors and Architects, and the Apex Creator of the 'Charaachara Jagat' or the Moving and Immobile Beings; the Embodiment of Chatur Vedas and the husband of Sarasvati-the Goddess of Vidya / Learning, Knowledge and Vedangas viz. Siksha, Kalpa, Jyotisha, Vyakaran, Nirukta and Chhandas; he is also the Epitome of Satvika Guna. Brahma extolled Shri Krishna as follows:

Krishnam vandey Gunaateetam Govindamekamaksharam,

Avyakta- mavyayam Vyaktam Gopavesha vidhaayinam/

Kishora vayasvam Shanta Gopikantam Manoharam,

Naveena neerada shyaamam koti kandarpa sundaram/

Vrindaavana –vanaarbhyarney Raasamandala samsthitam,

Raasehwaram Raasavaasam Raasollasa Samutsukam/

(My greetings to Govinda Krishna! You are far beyond the three Gunas of Satva-Rajo-Tamasas and the unique and indestructible Parameswara; You have no prejudices nor prides; the 'Vyakyaavyakta' or the Perceivable yet Inconceivable, with the attire of a Gopa boy, eternally as a teen-ager, ever peaceful and charming, with a body of cloudy colour, busy with Raasa mandali affairs at Vrindavan, performing Rasa leelas (dance dramas) with abundant enthusiasm as a 'Raaseswara'. Sincere reading of the Stotra helps provide excellent progeny, health and fame.

**Dharma Purusha** was materialised from Bhagavan Krishna from his 'Vakshasthala' (Chest) with white robes, of white body-colour and as an Embodiment of Purity, Virtue, Justice and Peace. Being fully devoid of the 'Shad Vargas' of Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsara (Desire, Anger, Greed, Infatuation, Arrogance and Jealousy), Dharma is also of Dharma Swarupa, Dharmishtha (Dharma

Practitioner) and Dharm Pradata (The bestower of Dharma). The major purpose of materialisation of Dharma was to teach, practise, train, enforce, promote punish and reward all those who falter or follow Dharma. All those who recite the twenty four names of Shri Krishna as addressed by Dharma would have all the sins and difficulties disappeared just as serpents vanish at the sight of Garuda, the Carrier of Vishnu; these Sacred Names are: *Krishna, Vishnu, Vaasudeva, Paramatma, Ishwar, Govinda, Paramaananda, Eka, Akshara, Achyuta, Gopeswara, Gopishwara, Gopa, Gorakshaka, Vibhu, Gopa Swami, Goshtha Nivaasi, Govatsa pucchadhari, Gopa Gopi Madhya Viraajamana, Pradhana, Purushottama, Navaghana Shyaama, Raasavaasa, and Manohara.* 

**Devi Sarswati** appeared from Bhagavan Krishna's mouth along with a veena and a book, and she was radiant like crores of Moons; her eyes were as graceful as a lotus of Sharat season and were wearing as pure a Vastra as Agni with a charming smile. She was the mother of Shrutis, Shastras, and Vidwaans. Shri Krishna created later Maha Lakshmi from his mind as an ever youthful Devi who was the 'Adhishthatri' of Ishwarya (Opulence) and the bestower of Prosperity to one and all; she is called Adi Lakshmi, Rajya Lakshmi, Dhairya Lakshmi, Dhana /Dhanya Lakshmi, Santaana Lakshmi, Veera Lakshmi, Gaja Lakshmi, Vijaya Lakshmi. She praised Krishna saying that he was the Satya Swarupa or the Embodiment of Truth, Satya Bija or the Seed of Truth from which the plant sprouts, 'Satyaadhaara'or the Hold of Truth, and 'Satyamula' or origin of Truth, From his 'Buddhi' (intellect), Bhagavan created Mula Prakriti **Devi Eshwari** with the complexion of molten gold compable to innumerable Suryas wearing a blood-red Saree with hundred hands holding Trishul, Shakti, Sharanga Dhanush, Khadga, Bana, Shankha, Chakra, Gada, Padma, Akshamala, Kamandalu, Vajra, Ankusha, Paasha, Bhushundi, Danda, Tomar, Narayanaashtra, Brahmaastra, Roudraastra, Paashupataashtra, Parjanyaashtra, Vaarunaashtra, Agneyaastra and Gaandharvaastra. She is the 'Adhishtana' Devata of several Shaktis including Nidra (Sleep), Trishna (Undue desire), Kshudha (Hunger), Pipasa (Thirst), Daya (Mercy), Shraddha (Fortitude) and Kshama (Endurance). She exalted Shri Krishna saying that she was looked up as Praakriti, Maheswari and Sarva Shakti Swarupi but without his backing, she would indeed be ineffective and that he was the Pati (Master), Gati (Destiny), Paalak (Administrator), Srashta (Creator), Samharak (Destroyer) and Punah Srishti Kaarak (Re-Creator); if he so decides he could create crores of Vishnus by his mere brow-beats; the Tri Murtis would not be able to adequately praise him, much less comprehend him and so on. Devi Savitri was the next Creation from the tip of Shri Krishna's 'jihva' (tongue) with crystal-like spotless white coloured attire and a 'Japamala' (rosary of beads). As the mother of Vedas, she was the target of daily japa by humanity, especially the Brahmanas with the Pranava Mantra viz. the Gayatri Mantra, providing them the power of radiance and intellect. From his mind, Shri Krishna created Kamadeva and Kamini, popularly called Manmadha and Rati Devi. Kamadeva had 'Pancha Baanaas' (Five Arrows) viz. Maaran, Stambhan, Jrumbhan, Soshan and Unmaadan, which were used by this Deity of Love. From Shri Krishna's eye-twinkle emerged Agni and Swaha; in continuity he materialised Jala and Varuna / Vaaruni; from his breathing emerged Vaayu (Pavana) and Vayavi.

As a drop of Shri Krishna's virility fell in water, there was a huge egg that came into being and a Maha Virat Purusha called 'Maha Vishnu' got materialised as the sixteenth 'Amsa' of Shri Krishna. As Maha Vishnu was floating on water, there were two Daityas-Madhu and Kaitabha-created from the dirt of his ears and as they tried to attack Brahma, the latter approached Maha Vishnu who expanded his thighs since they sought a boon from Maha Vishnu that they could be killed at any dry place. After killing the demons, the 'medhas' or the marrow (fat) filled in the entire water and hence the name of 'Medini' to Prithvi or Vasundhara.

After the Srishti as above, Shri Krishna was delighted to spend time at the Raasamandali in the Goloka in the company of Gopas and Gopis and from his left side created a matchless 'Kanya' named **Devi Radha.** She had a unique and highly attractive countenance with outstanding nose, perfect set of white teeth, mirror-like cheeks; face decorated with chandan, Agaru, Kasturi, Kumkum and Sinduri; an excellent hair style full of jasmine flowers; feet defying the tenderness of lotuses; gait of a swan and tastefully

embellished with valuable and fabulously designed golden jewellery and precious stones around her

waist, hands, neck and ankles. Thereafter, Shri Krishna created youthful cows, bulls, buffalos and swans from his hair-roots, one of the bulls having been gifted to Parama Shiva and an exquisite 'Raja hamsa' to Brahma Deva; white and coloured horses from his left ear of which one unique horse having been presented to Dharma Deva; and from his right ear were generated fierceful lions among whom the best one was given away to Devi Durga with repect. Bhagavan Krishna also materialised five exceptional Chariots whose speed was comparable to that of wind, with the circumference of a hundred yojanas each drawn by thousands of strong horses and was highly decorated; one of such 'Rathas' was gifted to Dharma Deva, one was reserved for his personal use and one for Devi Radha and the rest as reserve. In due course, Bhagavan Krishna generated 'Dhanaadhyaksha' **Kubera** -and his wife Manorama- as the King of Guhyas / Yakshas; Bhutas, Pretas, Piscachas, Kushmandas, Brahma Rakshasas, Betals and such other cruel and horrifying species presented to Shiva Deva; along with four-armed and two armed soldiers. Then were produced Krishna Parayana Vaishnavas; Bhairavas like Ruru Bhairava, Samhara Bhairava, Kala Bhauirava, Asita Bhairava, Krogha Bhairava, Bhishana Bhairava, Maha Bhairava and Khatvaanga Bhairava; Bhayankar Three-Eyed 'Digambara Ganas' all to assist Shiva with Trishulas and Parighas; Ishana and countless prototypes being one of the Dikapalakas; and from his nose Chhidra Daakinis, Yoginis and Kshetrapaalas, Further on Krishna fashioned three crores of Divya Devatas from his rear portion. Pursuant to the above Creations, Krishna Deva handed over Lakshmi as the better-half of Narayana; Savitri to Brahma; Murti to Dharma Deva; Rati Devi to Kama Deva, Manorama to Kubera and so on. He had specially invited Maha Deva and Simhavahini and sought him to accept her. Parama Shiva requested Shri Krishna as follows: I may not be greatly interested in a life-partner. But, my ambition is to worship you always from all of my five faces by 'Smarana' (Memories about you), 'Kirtana' (singing your hymns), 'Shravana' (hearing about you), 'Japa' (repeating your Sacred Names incessantly), and Dhyana (concentrate about you), 'Charana Seva' (Service to your feet), my 'Vandana' (salutations), 'Atma saparpana' (my total dedication to you) and eating my 'naivedya' (offerings); Krishna! Please grant me the above requests only. Also bestow to me the following six boons: 'Saarshti' (as much of affluence of you have), 'Saalokya' (as much of 'loka prapti'/ worldly possessions as you have), 'Saameepya' (the fortune of being near to you), 'Saamya' (attainment of equality with you) and 'Saayujya' (absorption into you). Do grant me the Eighteen Siddhis viz. Anima (reducing the size upto an atom), Mahima (increasing the size upto infinity); Laghima (reducing the weight to almost nothing), Garima (increasing the weight upto infinity), Praapti (attaining unrestricted access to any place), Praakaamya (achieving any thing desired), Ishitwa (possessing supremacy over anything / anybody), Vashitwa (controlling any thing

/ anybody) Sarva kaama -vasaasita (fulfilling all desires), Sarvajnata (ability to know anything), Doora shravana (capacity of hearing from distances), Parakaya pravesha (ability to enter any body), Vaakshuddhi (ability to realise whatever is stated), Kalpavrikshatva (fulfillment of bestowing any desire), Srishti Shakti (Capacity to create), Samhaara Shakti (capability to destroy), Amaratwa (death -lessness), and Sarvaagranyata (Achievement of the highest possible status). Shiva further requested Shri Krishna to grant him Yoga, Tapas, all kinds of Daana, Vratas, Yashas / celebrity, Kirti (reputation), Upavasas (fastings), Vaani (distinct voice / speech), Satya (Truth -fulness), Tirtha Bhramana (The fruits of visiting all Tirthas), Snaana (the fruit of bathing in all Oceans, Rivers, Sarovars and all waterbodies; worship to all Deities, darshan of all Deva Pratimas; attaining of Brahmapada, Rudrapada and Vishnupada (or the Status of all the Tri Murtis) and all other definable or undefinable statuses. When the long wish-list was requested for, Shri Krishna smiled and said: Twatparey naasti mey preyaamstwa madeeyaathanah parah, ye twaam nindanti paapishthaa jnaana heenaa vicheytanaah, Pachyantey kaala sutreyna yaavachhaandra diwaakaroy/ (Shiva! There is nothing more beloved to me than anybody else; you are in fact far superior to my own soul; if any sinner, or ignoramus or imprudent person happens to criticise he/she would get roasted in 'Kalasutra naraka' till Chandra and Surya happen to be in power). Krishna further said that Shiva would undoudtedly be an entirely independent and equal force to be reckoned with just as his. As regards the offer of a wife that he made, Krishna renewed his request to accept Devi Durga

Simhavaahini and Parama Shiva accepted her. Shri Krishna then revealed the excellent value of 'Shiva Linga Sthapana' or establishing a Shiva Linga; he said: *Maha Deva Maha Deva Maha Deveti vaadinah*, *Paschaadyaami Mahaastrasto naama shravana lobhatah, Shiveti mantramucchharya praanamstyajati yo narah/ Koti janmaarjitaat Paapaanmukto muktim prayaati sah, Shivam kalyaana vachanam kalyaanam kalyaanam Muktivaachikam/ Yaatsattha Prabhavettena sa Shivah parikeertitah/ (If some body recites Maha Deva, Maha Deva and Maha Deva, I am tempted to be behind him and follow him; if somebody takes Shiva's name at the time of his death, that person would be freed from the sins committed by his/her previous crores of lives and most certainly secure 'Moksha'. The word 'Shiva' stands for 'Kalyana' or Propitiousness and the word Kalyana denotes 'Mukti'. Also the letter 'Shi' stood for 'Paapa naashana' and 'Va' for Moksha. Eventually, Krishna taught Kalpavriksha Mantra and Mrityunjaya Tatwa Gyana to Shiva and the 'Ekaadashara' Mantra viz. Kaama bija Kleem-Shri bija Shreem-Maya bija Hreem- and Kaama bija again Kleem to Devi Durga. Krishna also taught Shrishti Shakti, Manovaanccha Shakti, and Agni-Vayu-Kubera Shaktis to Brahma.* 

# Brahma's Secondary creation, his own progeny and that of their offspring

Authorised by Bhagavan Krishna, Brahma Deva took up the further Srishti of Eight principal Mountains viz. Sumeru, Kailasa, Malaya, Himalayas, Udayachal, Agasthya -chal, Suvela and Gandhamadana; Seven Seas viz. Lavana, Ikshurasa, Sura, Ghrita, Dahi, Kseera, and Suswaadu; Seven Dwipas viz. Jambu Dwipa, Shaka Dwipa, Kusha Dwipa, Pluksha Dwipa, Kouncha Dwipa, Nyagrodha or Shalmali, and Pushkara Dwipa.; Eight Loka paalakas viz. Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirutthi, Varuna, Vayu, and Ishana atop Eight 'Shikharas' of Meru and Eight 'Puras'; Ananta Sesha Naga at the root of the Meru; Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, Swarloka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka; on the highest peak of Meru Brahmaloka is situated and there above the Dhruva loka. Underneath the Meru are Atala, Vitaala, Sutala, Talaatala, Mahatala, Pataala and Rasaatala. Thus the Sapta Dwipas, Sapta Swargas and Sapta Pataalas together constitute the *Brahmanda*. While Vaikuntha, Shivaloka and Goloka are stated to be constant, the rest is 'Kritrima'/ 'Anitya' (temporary).

Meanwhile, Devi **Savitri generated** the immortal Vedas of Ruk-Yajur-Sama and Atharava as also 'Nyaya' (Justice) and 'Vyakarana' (Grammar), the various Shastras and the Thirty Divine 'Raagaas' (Musical compositions) including Kanakambari, Bhanumati, Manoranjani, Sindhu Bhairavi, Mayamalawa Goula, Malahari, Chakravaram, Haatakambati, Hindolam, Keeravaani, Karahaproya, Kapi, Madhyamavati, Shivaranjani, Kamboji, Mohanam, Bilahari, Hamsadhwaini, Suddha Saveri, Naga Bharanam, Keeravani, Bhava Priya, Mohana Kalyani, Amrita Varshini, Rasika Priya Kusumakaram etc. Savitri also created the Four Yugas of Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kalaha Priya Kaliyuga; days, nights, weeks, Sandhyas (Evenings), Ushas (early mornings), months, Seasons, Tithis, Dandas, Kshanas; Pushti (health), medha (brain power), victory, six Krittikas, Yoga, Karana, Devasena the Chief of Matrikas. Savitri also produced from her breast-milk three Kalpas viz.Brahma, Padma and Vaaraaha; four Pralayas viz. Nitya, Naimitthika, Dwiparaartha and Prakrita, Kaala, Mrityu Kanya and Vyadhiganas.

Later on **Brahma** continued his Srishti from his 'Prishta' (rear side) the tow entities 'Adharma' and 'Alakshmi'; from his 'nabhi' (navel) Vishwakarma the Shilpa Guru, from his 'Balaparaakrama' or prowess the Eight Vaus; Manasa Putras (mind-born sons) Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana, Sanatkumaras; Swayambhu Manu and his wife Shatarupa the Administrator of the Universe; Eleven Rudras viz. Mahan, Mahatma, Matimaan, Bhishan, Bhayankar, Ritudwaja, Urthvakesha, Pingalaaksha, Ruchi, Shuchi and Kaalaagni Rudra. From Brahma's right ear came out Pulastya, left ear Pulaha, right eye Atri, left eye kratu, nosetip Arani, face Angira and Ruchi, from left side Bhrigu, right side Daksha, from Brahma's shadow came out kardama, Panchashikha from his navel, from chest came out Odhu, from Brahma's

throat came Narada, shoulder Marichi, from neck Apaantaratama, from tongue Vasishtha, from lips Pracheta, from left belly came out Hamsa (Swan) and Yati from the right belly.

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

# Brahma and Narada curse each other and Brahma's ineligibility of worship

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

Jaatismaro Harey bhaktiyuktah shukarayenishu,

Janirlabheth sa prasavee Golokam yaati karmanaa/

Govinda charanaambhoja bhakti maadhveeka-meepsitam,

Pibataam Vaishnavaadinaam sprashapootaa Vasundharaa/

Teerthaani sparshamicchanti Vaishnavaanaam Pitaamaha,

Paapaanaam Paapadatthaanam Kshaalanaayaat -manaamapi/

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

# Narada reborn as Gandharva, his Yogic death and further births

Pursuant to Brahma's curse to Narada, the latter was born as a Gandharva named Upabarhana. The King of Gandharvas had no son and meditated Shiva for many years by Stotra, Kavacha and Dwadashaakshara Mantra taught to him by Sage Vasishta. Shiva appeared before the Gandharva King who desired to have a son who would be a steadfast devotee and 'sewaka' (servant) of Shri Krishna; Shiva gave him the choice to the Gandharva of securing Indratwa, Amaratwa or even Brahmatma instead of the boon to obtain a son who would be a mere servant of Shri Krishna. The Gandharva said that not only he did not prefer Indratwa, Brahmatwa etc. but wished for the boon of becoming a servant of Shri Krishna and not even Sayujya (absorption) with Shri Krishna! He insisted: Saalokyasaashti Saameepya Sayujyam Shriharerapi, tatra nirvana mokshamcha Na hi vaancchhanti Vaishnavaah/ (TrueVaishnavas do not even aspire for

Shri Krishna's Salokya, Saashti, Saameepya, Saayuiya and Nirvana Moksha), but prefer to secure the 'daasya'/servantship of the Lord, while sleeping, being conscious, and at all the times; thus he requested for such a son who would be a close servant of Srihari; however the boy to be born should be long-lived, well-behaved, ever youthful, a Gyani, extremely handsome, Guru Bhakta and Jitendriya or with of the gift of mastery of Physical aspirations. As the King of Gandharvas was blessed with a son of such qualifications, Sage Vasishtha named the child as 'Upa' or added and 'Barhan'or devotion. As he grew up, Upabarhana commenced Tapasya. Another Gandharva King Chitraratha had fifty daughters and Upabarhana married them all and was happy. But, meanwhile he visited Brahma once and Upabarhana got infatuated with Apsara Rambha and noticing this indiscretion, Brahma asked him to end his life in the Yoga way and told that he would be reborn as a Shudra and eventually regain his original position by virtue of his devotion as his (Brahma's) son. Then immediately Upabarhan practised Yoga by breaking the six chakras of Muladhara, Swaadhisthaana, Manipura, Anahata, Vishuddha and Agina; then commenced breaking the sixteen nadis viz. Ida, Sushmna, Medha, Pingala, Praanahaarini, Sarva gyana prada, Manah Samyamani, Vishuddha, Niruddha, Vayusanchaarini, Gyana jhrumbhana kaarini, Sarva praanahara, and Punarjeevana kaarini and further brought up Jeevaatma into Brahma Randhra and for two ghadis, aligned Atma into Paramatma. As Upabarhan got absorbed into Shri Krishna, the eldest of his fifty wives Devi Malavati, a 'Maha Pativrata' and the most beloved and highly dedicated person was uncontrollable with anguish, astonishment and anger too at the curse given by Brahma Deva at the flimsiest cause of a momentary and remote desire for an Apsara which did not call for a death sentence and a rebirth! Malavati as a Maha Pativrata was indeed aware of the happenings and got prepared to curse not only Brahma, but the Trimurtis! She shouted with rightful indignation at Krishna Paramatma and complained to him at the untimely death of her husband; she conveyed her wounded feelings to Vishnu, Brahma, Maha Deva, Dharma and all the Powers that be! Meanwhile all Devas heard a Celestial Voice (Akaashavaani) that indeed the self-esteem of a hurt Pativrata ought to be pacified as soon as possible and as a response to that Voice perhaps, Vishnu as a Brahmana boy appeared before her and sought to moderate her feelings; the Pativrata said that if her husband did not return to life, she as a true Pativrata would immolate herself and the entire 'Deva Samuha' would be responsible for the unwarranted death of a woman, that too a Pativrata! The Brahmana boy had to perform the delicate task of avoiding a curse to Tri Murtis by a Sadhwi and of vindicating the position of Brahma due to whose curse the Gandharva youth lost his life. The boy enquired of Malavati about the possible reasons for her husband's death: whether he had any illness; if so he knew how to treat all kinds of diseases by Ayurveda; whether she would like to call any Devata with possible responsiblity of Death; if so, he could line up the relevant Devatas before her! Whether her husband died on account of Yoga practice; if so, he knew what Yoga was all about! 'Believe me Devi: I will definitely do my best to bring your husband back to life'! The confident manner in which the Brahmana boy talked to her gave conviction to her that this boy might perhaps revive her husband! The boy then called up a Meeting of 'Vedavettas' with the knowledge of Vedas and first invited Mrityu Kanya of black complexion wearing red attire with six hands and looking frightful; then came Kaala Deva who was of black colour with ferocious nature with six feet, six faces, sixteen hands and twenty four eyes; then arrived Yama Dharma Raja. Malavika questioned Yama as to how he took her husband away even when his death was perhaps not due! Yama repied that he had not taken her husband away since his life was not over. Mrityu Kanya and Kaal Deva too gave similar replies and denied their involvement in the death of Upabarhana. Then the Brahmana boy referred to Vaidya Samhita and said that besides the Four Vedas of Ruk-Yajur-Sama and Athrarvana, the Panchama Veda viz. Ayur Veda was handed over by Prajapati to Surya Deva who made an independent Samhita and passed it down to his disciples, who in turn made their own Samhitas or interpretations. Such Ayur Veda Vidwaans were sixteen in number: Dhanvantari, Kashi raj, Divodas, two Ashvini Kumars, Nakula, Sahadeva, Yama, Chyavana, Janaka, Budha, Jaabaala, Jaajali, Pila, Karatha and Agastya. Dhanvantari scripted Chikitsa Tatwa Vigyana; Deodas wrote Chikitsa Darpan; Kashi Raja made Chikitsa Kaumudi; Ashvini Kumars presented Chikitsa Saara Tantra; Nakul made Vaidyaa Sarvaswa; Sahadeva made Vyadhi Sindhu Vimardhan; Yama Raja scripted 'Jnaanarnava' and so on. Severe fever was the root cause of various illnesses; Bhasmas were their 'Astras' to control these diseases and Rudra was their Devata. Madagni was

their father-figure in three forms viz. 'Vaata', 'Pitta' and 'Kapha'. Ground coriander seed powder and sugar with water reduces Pitta (bile); also, all kinds of 'Daals /Pulses, 'Pancha Gavya material' or cow milk, ghee, curd, dung and urine; ripe 'bel' fruit, 'taal' fruit, ginger and moong daal (green gram) juice and sugar-sesame seed churna / mix are the prescribed material for reduction of 'Pittha'. Kapha increases by taking bath soon after food; drinking water without thirst; smearing til oil all over the body; consumption of Snightha (palm- grove oil) and Amla oil, eating spoilt meal, curd, drinking rain water, Sugar-sherbats, coconut water; eating ripe tarbuja, 'Kakdi rasa, eating kakdi and bathing in open waterbodies in rains. But eating dried and fried food items, walking a lot, sweating out, eating unripe plantains, ground jeera, red chillis, cloves, fasting, drinking less water, ghee and dried sugar mix, black pepper, dried ginger and honey would kill kapha. 'Vaata prakopa' deeds (Vayu-based) are walking after meals, running, too much of movement and mating, worrying a lot, quarrelling, fasting, experencing fear etc. tend to increase gas. Remedies against producing gas are eating ripe plantains, lemon juice with sugar, coconut water, freshly fried food items, cold water, til oil, coconut, Khajur, and dried fruits. As Upabarhana was a normal and healthy youth as confirmed by Devi Malavati, the cause of illness or diseases was also ruled out and hence it became clear that the untimely death of Upabarhana was not due to an act of Mrityu Kanya, or Kaala or Yama Raja as per their own confessions. The only possibility was due to Upabarhana's own making, apparently by the Yoga way on his own volition. Having thus been convinced by the Brahamana boy who disproved the allegations of Devi Malavati that Devatas and Trimurtis were responsible for the death of Upabarhana, she became immediately defensive. The Brahmana boy emphasised that Malavati was indeed a Great Pativrata and gained considerable 'Punya' on that score; also Upabarhana was a known devotee of Shi Krishna including in his previous births, but seeds of great deeds by her as a Pativrata, besides her husband as as an undisputed record of Bhakti would have to grow into a fruit-yielding tree and that it would take time to assess the totality of the accounts of pluses and minuses on account of 'Praarabdha', 'Sanchita'and the ongoing 'karmas.' The Brahmana boy who finally vindicated the Truth appeared in his real position as Vishnu. Brahma approached the dead body of Upabarhana and sprinkled water from his 'Kamandalu'/vessel; Shiva then bestowed 'Jnaana Swarupa' to the Gandharva, Dharma Deva provided Dharma Gyan and the Brahmana / Vishnu revived him fnally. Agni kindled jatharaagni or the digestive fire within; Kama Deva gave back all his desires and aspirations; Vayu gave back his breathing; Surya Deva restored eyesight; Vani Devi gave back the power of speech and Shri Devi accorded glow of his countenance. Brahma asked Malavati to bathe her husband quickly and wear new clothes. The highly blissful Malavati knew no bounds of joy as her dearest husband came back to life. Gandharvaloka was a happening Place in the Universe where the Tri Murtis and all the Devas descended down there. The Gandharva Nagari which was heretofore plunged into darkness and tragedy sprang back to relief and vigour with the revival of the life of Gandharva Prince. There were grand celebrations with music and dance, song and gaiety and thanks-giving and total dedication to Shri Krishna.

#### Shri Krishna 'Stuti' and 'Kavacha' & Shiva 'Stuti' and 'Kavacha'

An ever-grateful Malavati broke into tears with suppressed emotions and commended Shri Krishna as follows:

Vandey tam Paramaataanam Sarva Kaarana Kaaranam,

Vinaa yena shavaah sarveyh praanino jagateetaley/

Nirliptam Saakshi rupam cha Sarveshaam sarva karmasu,

Vidyaamaanam na drushtam cha Sarveh Sarvatra sarvadaa/

Yena Srashtaacha Prakritih Sarvaadhara Paraatparaa,

Brahma Vishnu Shivaa deenaam Prasuryaa Trigunaatmikaa/

Jagatsrashtaaswayam Brahmaa niyato yasya sevayaa,

Paataa Vishnushcha Jagataam Samhartaam Shankarah swayam/

Dhyaayantey yam Suraah Sarvey Munayo Manavastathaa,

Sidhhaascha yoginah Santah Prakriyeh param/

Saakaaramcha Niraakaaram Param Swecchhaamayam Vibhum,

Varam Varenyam Varadam Varaaham Vara kaaranam/

Tapah phalam Tapo-beejam tapasaamcha phalapradam,

Swayam Tapah Swarupam cha Sarva rupamcha sarvatah/

Sarvaadhaaram Sarva beejam karma tatkarmanaa phalam,

Teshaamcha Phaladaataaram tadbeeja kshaya kaaranam/

Swayam tejah swarupam cha Bhakta –anugraha vigraham,

Sevaadhyaanam na ghatatey Bhaktaanaam Vigraham binaa/

Tat tejo mandalaakaaram Suryakoti samaprabham,

Ateeva Karmayeeyam cha Rupam tatra manoharam/

Naveena neerada Shyaamam Sharatpankaja lochanam,

Sharad paavarna Chandraasyameeshad bhaaswadaasya samanvitam/

Koti kandarpa laavanyam leelaadhaama manoharam,

chandanokshita saavargam Ratna bhushitabhushitam/

Dwibhujam Muraleehastam Peetakousheya vaasasam,

Kishora vayasam Shaantam Raadhaakantamanantakam/

Gopaanganaa parivrutam kutrachinnirjaney vaney,

Kutrachitraasamadhyastham Raadhayaa parisevitam/

Kutrachid Gopavesham cha veshtitam Gopabaalakaih,

Shatashringaachalotkrushtey Ramye viridaavaney vaney/

Nikaram Kaamadhenuunaam rakshatam shishurupinam,

Golokey Virajaateerey Paarijaata vaney Vaney/

Venum kvanaantam madhuram gopi-sammoha kaaranam,

Niraamaey cha Vaikunthey kutrichiccha chaturbhujam/

Lakshmi kaantam paarshadaischa sevitam cha Chaturbhujaiih,

Kutrachit Swaamsha rupena Jagataam paalanaayacha/

Swetadweepey Vishnu rupam padmayaa parisevitam,

Kutrachit swaamsha kalayaa Brahmaandey Brahma rupinam/

Shiva swarupam Shivadam Saamshena shivarupinam,

Swaatmanah Shodashaamshena Sarva -adhaaram Paraatparam/

Swayam Maha Viraadrupam Vishvogham yasya lomasu,
Leelaayaa Swaamshakalayaa jagataam paalanaaya cha/
Naanaavataaram Vibhrantam beejam teshaam sanaatanam,
Vaantam Krutrachit santam yoginaam hridaye sataam/
Praana rupam Praaninaam cha Paramaatmaana meeswaram,
tam cha stutomashaktaamabalaa Nirgunam Vibhum/
Nirlakshyam cha nireehamcha saaram Vangmanasoparam,
yam stotumakshayonantah Sahasravadanena cha/
Panchavaktraschaturvaktro Gajavaktrah Shadaananah,
yam stotrum na kshamaa Maayaa Mohitaa yaya Maayaa/
Yam stotum na kshamaa Shrischa Jadibhutaa Saraswati,
Vedaa na Shaktaa yam stotum ko vaa Vidwamscha Vedavit/
Kim stoumi tamaneeham cha shokaartaa stree Paraatparum/

( I salute Paramaatma who is the Cause of Causes, without whom the whole World and its inhabitants are non-existent as he is the under-current and the Evidence of each and every activity of all Beings; he is the fulcrum of the Universe and the Creation of Tri-Gunaatmika Prakriti who in turn is the Creator of every thing including Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva entrusted with their own activities of Srishti, Palana and Samharana; She is also the Creator of all Devatas, Manus, Siddhaas, Yogis and Saints who are eternally engaged in the devotion of that Paramatma who is far above the Prakriti; that Paramatma who has Visible and at the same time Invisible, who is 'Aaakara' or possessive of Form, yet 'Naraakaara' or without Form; who is the boon, the boon-giver, the reason of giving a boon; the seed, the plant, the tree, the fruit and the enjoyer of the fruit, the taste of the fruit as also the destroyer of the fruit. He is a huge fund of Tejas (radiance) but to enable devotees take various Forms, Names, Typical Appearances, and Features. Specified Boons are expected from the Bhaktas like good progeny, knowledge, powers, wealth, good health, fame, or Salvation and indeed he is the instant Provider. He is an Epithet of Radiance with unimaginable shine of crores of Suryas; his Rupa is readily attractive like crores of Kandarpas with the complexion of blue sky with Sharad season's lotus-like eyes; he has a physique smeared with Sandalwood paste all over and ornamented with jewellery and fresh flower garlands full of intoxicating fragrance; with high shoulders wearing scented and sift silks with a Murali in hands full of youthful vigour in the company of Radhaakanta and countless of Gopikas and Gopabalas; visualised sometimes in the Form of a Bala Gopala who did the miracle of lifting the Govardhana mountain with his litle finger; some times in the most charming Brindavana forests pressing his tender fingers to produce the celestial music of flute leaning on a tree with crossed legs; some other times in yoga nidra while Devi Lakshmi was pressing his tender feet on the Sesha Nag's bed of coiled softness; yet other times in the Form of Vishnu with four arms adorned with shankha, chakra, gada and Padma while Devas and Sages were singing praiseful hymns and rhythemic utterances of Veda Mantras; while assuming the Swarupaof Parana Shiya at the Shiya dhaama; like a Brahma as the Creator of the 'Charaachara Jagat' and as the Veda Swarupa outlining virtues and their practices and recognising the sublimity of the Unique Paramatma; and as the Virat Swarupa with the Universe within him as the make-believe kaleidoscope with endless variations who is at once a reality but a fantasy full of Maya that is visible yet invisble; legible yet illegible; distinct yet amorphous! Devi Malavati finally said that it would never be possible to gauge what Paramatma was all about, even as Tri Murtis failed in defining him/her/it / and this or that or other! Pancha mukha Maha Deva, Chaturmukha Brahma, Gajaanana Ganesha, Shadaanana Kartikeya, Maya herself lost her way in seeking to define Krishna Deva; Lakshmi and Saraswati made determined

efforts but in vain; when such was the reality, a grief-striken helpless woman like Malavati could only betray her pettiness to define that Maha Shakti called Paramatma!).

In course of time, Devi Malavati gave birth to a boy and as the curse of Brahma was over, Upabarhana died; she left to Pushkara Tirtha and immolated herself in an Agni kunda but was reborn as the daughter of King Srinjay; as she was a great Pativrata she decided to marry Upabarhana again in his next birth. Meanwhile, there was a pious woman, named Kalavati the wife of a Goparaja Dwimali; Kalavati and Muni Kashyapa had a chance union and thus was born a boy of great radiance; he was named Narada as there was a severe drought at that time since 'Naara'meant water and 'da' denoted a provider. Dwimali came to know of the Kalavati-Kashyapa Muni affair and left for Badarikashram and died in a Yogic way. Kalavati was in the protection of a kind Brahmana till Narada was born. As a 'Jatismara' with the knowledge of previous births, Narada became an intense devotee of Shri Krishna; Maharshi Sanat Kumara taught the Maha Mantra: Om Shri Namo Bhagavatey Raasa mandaleswaraya Shri Krishnaaya swaahaa/ The boy Narada eventually became a Maha Tapaswi and left the Gopa Sharira. After a few Kalpas, Brahma materialised Narada again from his throat along with Marichi and other Maharshis. Brahma mooted the idea of Narada's wedding, but Narada refused as he was keen on Tapasya to Shri Krishna. Brahma advised that already Narada's earlier wife Malavati was engaged in severe Tapsya with a determination of wedding Upabarhana. More over, Brahma said that he taught Vedas and Narada would have to furnish Guru Dakshina to him. In principle, Narada agreed to marry but requseted Brahma to provide the Upadesha of Krishna Kavacha and Shiva Kavachas before the wedding.

#### Brahmanda naamaka Krishna Kavacha:

Brahma Deva requested Shri Krishna to impart the most sacred 'Kavacha' (Shield) to Parama Shiva, Dharma and himself. Shri Krishna told all the three:

Shrunu vakshyaami Brahmesha Dharmedam Kavacham param,

Aham daasyaami ushmabhyam gopaneeyam sudurlabham/

Yasmai Kasmai na daatavyam praanatulyam mamaivahi,

Yattejo mama dehesti tattejah kavachopija/

(Shri Krishna told Brahma, Maheswara and Dharma that he was imparting the highly unattainable and confidential Krishna Kavacha to them, but beware, this Mantra should not be given away in a casual and careless manner since this was a protector to me and whatever power is in me is absorbed in the Kavacha too!)

Kuru sristimimam dhrutwaa Dhaataa Trijagataam bhava/

Hey Dharmatwa mimam dhrutwaa bhava saakshii cha karmanaam,

Tapasaam phalaaataa chayuyam bhavata madwaraat/

(Brahma! you should hold this Kavacha and perform Srishti of Three Lokas with the status of Vidhata; Shambho! you too grasp the Kavacha and execute the deed of Destruction and enjoy the same Shakti as my own; Dharma! You too cling to this powerful Kavacha and perform the deed of a 'Karma Saakshi'or an Evidence of all that would happen in the Universe. All three of you do enjoy my confidence and be the beneficiaries of my blessings).

OM ASYA SHRI BRAHMANDA PAAVANA KAVACHASYA SAAKSHAAT SHRIHARIH RISHIH, GAYATRI CHHANDAH, SA EVA JAGADEESHWARAH SHRIKRIHNO DEVATAA DHARMAARTHA KAAMA MOKSHESHU VINIYOGAH/ (To this Brahmanda paavana Kavacha, Swayam Shrihari himself is Rishi, Gayatriis Chhanda, I, Shri Krishna, am the Devata and am authorising the following Kavacha to secure Dharma, Artha, Kaama and Moksha; this should be recited three lakh times to enable 'Siddhi' (to fructify).

YA BHAVET SIDDHA KAVACHO MAMA TULYO BHAVETTHU SAHA,

TEJASAA SIDDHIYOGENA JNAANENA VIKRIMENACHA/

PRANAVO MEY SHIRAH PAATU NAMO RAASESWARAAYACHA,

BHAALAM PAAYAANNETRA YUGMAM NAMO RAADHESWARAAYACHA/

KRISHNAM PAAYAACCHHENNA YUGMAM HEY HAREY GHRAANAMEVACHA,

JIHVAAKAAM VAHNIJAAYAA THU KRISHNAAYETHI CHA SARVATAH/

SHRI KRISHNAAYA SWAAHETI CHA KANTHAM PAATU SHADAKSHARAH,

HREEM KRISHNAAYA NAMO VAKRTAM KLEEM PURVASCHA BHUJADWAYAM

NAMO GOPAANGANESHAYA SKANDHAAVASHTAAKSHAROVATU,

DANTA PANKTIMOSHTA YUGMAM NAMO GOPEESHVARAAYACHA/

OM NAMO BHAGAVATEY RAASAMANDALESHAAYA SWAHAA,

SWAYAM VAKSHASTHALAM PAATU MANTROYAM SHODASHAAKSHARAM/

YEM KRISHNAAYA SWAAHETI CHAKARNA YUGMAM SADAAVATU,

OM VISHNAVEY SWAAHETI CHA KANKAALAM SARVATOVATU.

OM HARAYE NAMA ITI PRUSHTHAM PAADAM SADAAVATU,

OM GOVARDHANA DHAARINEY SWAAHAA SARVASHAREERIKAM/

PRAACHYAA MAAM PAATU SHRI KRISHNA AGNEYAAM PAATU MAADHAVAH/

DAKSHINEY PAATU GOPEESHO NAIRRUTYAAM NANDANANDANAH/

VAARUNYAAM PAATU GOVINDO VAAYAVYAAM RAADHIKESWARAH.

UTTAREY PAATU RAAMESHA AISHAANYAAM -ACHYUTAH SWAYAM/

SANTATAH SARVATAH PAATU PARO NAARAAYANAH SWAYAM,

ITI TEY KANTHITAM BRAHMAN KAVACHAM PARAMAADBHUTAM/

MAMA JEEVANA TULYAM CHA YUSHMABHYAM DATTHAMEYVACHA/

(Those who fulfil this Kavacha-by reciting it three lakh times and attain Siddhi-would obtain 'Tejas', 'Yoga', 'Jnaana'and 'Bala-paraakrama' as well as in my own case; May 'Omkara' save my head and my greetings saying *Namo Rameswaraaya* secure my fore-head; may my reverence saying *Namo Radheswaraya* protect both of my eyes. Let the shabda *Krishna* govern my ears; let *HeyHarey* shelter my nose; let the *Swaha* mantra save any problem to my tongue; let *Krishnaaya swaaha* accord my well being; let the 'Shodashaakshra' Mantra not create any hardship to my throat; *hreem Krishnaaya namah* should provide safety to my face; the Mantra *Kleem Krishnaaya namah* should guard my both hands; let the Ashtaakshari Mantra *Namo Gopaanganeshaya* guard my teeth and mouth; let this mantra: *Om Namo Bhagavatey Raasa mandale -shaa Swaahaa*: Let the Raasa Mandala safeguard my chest by Shri Krishna; *Yem Krishnaaya Swaahaa*: Let this Mantra save any problem to my ears; *Om Vishnavey Swaaha*: Let this Mantra protect my 'Asthipanjara'; *Om Haraye namah*: Let the Mantra shield my bodyback and feet; *Om Govardhanoddhaaraya Swaaha*: May Shri Krishna provide shelter to my entire body. Let me be safeguarded by Shri Krishna from the East, by Madhava in the Agneya side, Gopeswara in the

Southern side; Nandanandana in the Nirutyakona, Govinda on the western front; Raadhike -swara in the Vayavyakona, Rameswara on the Northern side, Bhagavan Achyuta in the Ishaana kona and let Narayana look after my welfare from all the sides). Shri Krishna said: 'Brahma! This Parama Kavacha for your total protection and is as good as my own Existence. This Kavacha bestows the Punya of performing Ashwamedha and Vajapeya Yagnas and should be worn with external and internal purity.

After the Upadesha of Krishna Kavacha, Maha Muni Suta awarded **Shiva Dwadasha -akshara and Shiva Kavacha** to the august gathering at Naimishaaranya. In the past, Sage Vasistha gave the 'Shodasaakshara' to Suta Muni and was originally granted it by Shiva to Muni Durwaasa and also to Banaasura; the Maha Mantra bestows the Shakti to secure victory over the Tri Lokas:

SANSAARA PAAVANASYAYA KAVACHAYA PRAJAPATHIH,

RISHISCHHANDASCHA GAYATRI DEVOHAH CHA MAHESWARA.

DHARMAARTHA KAAMAMOKSHESHU VINIYOGAH PRAKIRTITA/

PANCHALAKSHA JAPEYNAIVA SHIDDHIDAM KAVACHAM BHAVET/

YO BHAVET SIDDHAKAVACHO MAMA TULYO BHAVED BHUVI,

TEJASA SIDDHI YOGENA TAPASAA VIKRAMENACHA/

SHAMBHURMEY MASTAKAM PAATU MUKHAM PAATU MAHESHWARAH,

DANTAPANKTIM CHA NEELAKANTHOPYADHARESHTHUM HARAH SWAYAM/

KANTHAM PAATU CHANDRACHOODAH SKANDHOU VRISHVAAHANAH,

VAKSHASTHALAM NEELAKANTHAH PAATU PRUSHTHAM DIGAMBARAH/

SARVAANGAM PAATU VISHVESHAH SARVADIKSHU CHA SARVADAA.

SWAPNEY JAAGARANEY CHAIVA STHANURMEY PAATU SANTATAM/

ITI TEY KATHITAM BAANA KAVACHAM PARAMAADBHUTAM,

YASMAI KASMAI NA DAATAVYAM GOPANEEYAM PRAYATNATAH/

YAT PHALAM SARVA TEERTHAANAAM SNAANENA LABHATEY NARAH.

TAT PHALAM LABHATEY NUNAM KAVACHASWAIVA DHAARANAAT/

IDAM KAVACHAMAJNAATWA BHJENMAAM YAH SUMANDADHIH.

SHATA LAKSHA PRAJASTOPI NA MANTRAH SIDDHIDAAYIKAH/

(To this Samsaara paavana Shiva Kavacha has Prajapati as Rishi, Gayatri Chhanda and Maheswara as Devataa. Its Viniyoga or usage is to secure Dharma, Artha, Kaama and Moksha: *Om asyashri Samsaara paavana naamadheyasya Shiva Kavachasya Prajaapatirrishi Gayatri cchando Maheswaro Devataa Dharaartha Kaama moksha siddhow Viniyogah*. The effectiveness of the Kavacha is subject to its recitation by five lakhs and its Siddhi bestows great body-glow, Siddhi yoga and 'Bala Parakrama' or Strength and Gallantry equalling none on Earth. The meaning of the Kavacha states: May Shambhu protect my head and Maheswara my face. May Nilakantha shield my teeth and Hara Deva my lips; Chandrachuda my throat and Vrishabha vaahana my shoulders; Nilakantha my chest and Digambara my rear portion; may Vishvesha shield all my limbs from all directions; may Shtaanu Deva defend me always while I sleep or am woken up. Maha Deva told Baanaasura that this Invaluable Kavacha ought not to be taught to every body without discretion and in fact try to keep it confidential. Those who wear this Kavacha yield the fruits of Titha Yatras instantly. Even a dull person would become agile and avtive.

In the past, the following Kalpa Vriksha 'Mantra Raj'handed over to posterity as follows:

OM NAMO MAHAA DEVAAYA NAMAH, OM NAMASSIVAAYA! VANDEY SURAANAAM SAARAMCHA SURESHAM NEELALOHITAM. YOGEESWARAM YOGABEEJAM YOGINAAM CHA SUROORGURUM/ JANAANANDAM JNAANARUPAM JNAANABEEJAM SANAATANAM. TAPASAAM PHALADAATAARAM DAATAARAM SARVASAMPADAAM/ TAPORUPAM TAPOBEEJAM TAPODHANADHANAM VARAM, VARAM VARENYAM VARADAMEEDYAM SIDDHAGANAIRVAREYH/ KAARANAM BHUKTI MUKTEENAM NARAKAARNAVA TAARANAM, ASHUTOSHAM PRASANNAASYAM KARUNAAGARA SAAGARAM/ HIMACHANDANA KUNDENDU KUMUDAAMBHOJA SAMNIBHAM. BRAHMAJYOTIH SWARUPAMCHA BHAKTAANUGRAHA VIGRAHAM/ VISHAYAANAM VIBHEDENA VIBHRAANTAM BAHURUPAKAM. JALARUPAM AGNIRUPAMAAKAASHA RUPAMEESWARAM/ VAAYURUPAM CHANDRARUPAM SUTYARUPAM MAHATPRABHUM, AATMANAH SWAPADAM DAANTUM SAMARTHAMAVA LEELAYAA/ BHAKTA JEEVANAMEESHAM CHA BHAKTAANUGRAHAKAATARAM, VEDAA NA SHAKTAA YAM STOTUM KIMAHAM STOUMI TAM PRABHUM/ APARICCHHINNA MEESHAANAMAHO VAANGMANASOH PARAM, VYAAGHRA CHARMAAMBARADHARAM VRISHAMASTHAM DIGAMBARAM/ TRISHULA PATTISHAADHARAM SASMITAM CHANDRASEKHARAM/ ITYUKTWAA STAVARAAJENA NITYAM BAANAH SAMYUTAH, PRAANAMACCHAMKARAM BHAVATYAA DURVAASHAASCHA MUNEESWARAH/

(I salute Bhagavan Shiva, Mahadeva, Suresha and Neela lohita! who is the quintessence of all 'Tatwaas'; the Chief of all Devatas; the embodiment of Yoga as its germinator and its Master; the personification of 'Jnaana'as Jnaana Swarupa, Jnaana beeja, and Jnaana Pradaata; the Supreme Being of Tapasya, its root, ramifications and phala / the end result; the Fund of Prosperity, Boons and Benefits to Siddhaganas; the Desire, Sadhana / Facility and Destination of Moksha; the highest Form of Brahma Jyoti; the manifestations of Primary Elements like Prithvi, Water, Radiance, Air, and Sky as also the Sun and the Moon; the highest image of Bhakti and its applications; the Magnificent Form unaffected by Desha, Kaala and Vastu ie. Place, Time and Material; that Parameswara beyond recognition of thought, speech and action; and the Digambara Rupa, the Bull-rider, Trishula Dhaari and Chandra Shekhara. That's how Baanasura saluted Bhagavan Shiva by reciting the above 'Stavaraja' or the Hymn of Eulogy and bending his head down the reverential feet of Shankara with humility and dedication. And so did Maha Muni Durwasa too.) Those who recite the above 'Stotra Raja' even for a month with devotion and sincerity every morning would be cured of long standing diseases, imprisonments, childlessness, poverty, and any kind of difficulty in life by the mere lifting of Bhagavan's Trishula!

# Narada's Darshan of Maha Deva and Nara Narayana

As Brahma was pleased that finally his 'Maanasa Putra' Narada agreed to marry as per his wish, he gave the Upadesha of Krishna Kavacha and Shiva Kavacha as above and recommended that Narada visited Maha Deva and Narayana to sensitise him about the Principles of 'Ashrama Dharmas' with special reference of 'Garhastya', virtues of life, Bhakti, significance of Devas and Devis, the ways of worship and the ways and means of attaining 'Mukti'/ realisation of Shri Krishna. Brahma suggested to Narada to first visit Shivaloka situated one lakh yojanas above Dhruva loka for Shiva Darshan. Spread over an area of a lakh yojanas, Shiva loka was such that Vishwakarma the Architect and Builder of Devas could ever have dreamt of where crores of Siddhas and Shiva-Parshadas resided, where lakhs of Bhairavas stayed, where lakhs of Kshetras and palaces existed, and where there was no fear, death, disease, old age, and any kind of difficulty. Narada witnessed a breath-taking platform lit up with Five Moons in the midst of which Bhagavan was visioned with a Profile of dazzing illumination of pure white complexion and Five faces with 'Jataajut' adorned by half moons, Ganga on the head, blue throat, with moving and hissing snakes around his neck and shoulders, sporting a Trishula, a Damaru, and a 'Rudrakshamaala' rotated by his soft fingers with the name of Shri Krishna on the tips of his red lips with a highly pleasant visage and a capturing smile. He was surrounded by Yogendras, Siddhendras and Munindras. As Narada came near Mahadeva, he recited the Shiva Stuti and Kavacha and prostrated before him.

Maha Deva knew the purpose of Narada's visit to seek replies on several questions such as Brahmana's 'Ahnika Aachaara' / Nitya Karmas (daily deeds) and Paramatma Swarupa Nirnaya. Maha Deva described the daily routine by waking up at the Brahma Muhurta and introspect the 'Brahma Randhra'or the tiny, pure, and undisturbed mental-lotus without any features or inhibitions and concentrate on the Parabrahma Swarupa as prompted by one's own Guru (Mentor) and meditate that Guru who was indeed Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara, Adya Prakriti Durga Devi, Chandra-Surya-Agni-Varuna-Vayu and so on. After the morning ablutions, the Brahmana would take his 'Snaan'while doing 'Mrittika Lopana'for Shuddhi of one's own body by reciting the Stanza: Ashwa kraantey Rathakraantey Vishnu kraantey Vasundharey, Mritthi key hara may paapam yanmayaa dushkrutam krutam/ (Bhu Devi! On your sacred physique many horses speed up, several chariots passby and Vishnu rolls off his feet during his playful 'Avataraas'; let all the sins that are committed over you be absorbed by you Devi!) Then while taking bath, one should recite: Gangecha Yamunaachaiva Godaavari Saraswati, Narmadaa Sindhu Kaaveri jalosmin sannithim kuru/ (Hey Gangey, Yamuney, Godaavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu, Kaveri! You are all requested to be kindly xist in these waters with which I take my bath with devotion!). Then all the other Deities are remembered such as Nandini, Sita, Malini, Mahapathaa, as well as the Rivers which originated from Vishnu Deva's feet such as Ganga, Padmavati, Bhogavati, Swararekha, Kaushiki, besides Prithivi, Shubhaga, Viswakaya, Shivaamrita, Viswakaaya, Shivaamriti, Vidyadhari, Suprasanna, Lokaprasaadhini, Kshema, Vaishnavi, Shantida, Gomati, Sati, Savitri, Tulasi, Durga, Mahalakshmi, Saraswati, Radhika, Lopamudra, Diti, Rati, Ahalya, Aditi, Sangina, Swadha, Swaha, Arundhati, Shatarupa and Devahuti. Then 'tilak' should be applied on the corners of hands, forehead, neck and chest, otherwise all the other deeds like Snaana, Daana, Tapa, Homa, Deva Yagna and Pitru Yagna are all stated to be useless! After being seated on an 'Asaana', a devotee is to worship Shalagrama shila, Mani or Pratima with water and Mantra. The nomal sixteen services offered in the worship are Aasana, Vastra, Arghya, Paadya, Achamaneeya, Pushpa, Chandana, Dhupa, Deepa, Naivedya, Gandha, Maalya, Shayya, Jala, Anna and Tambula along with Mula Mantras. Vaishnavaites practise the procedure of first performing Bhuta shuddhi, followed by Anganyasa, Pratyanganyasa, Mantra nyasa and Varanyasa. A Kurma Deva should be set in a pre-made Trikona Mandala and purify the Mandala with the sacred water invited from various rivers; then the above prescribed seervices are dedicated in seriatim. Visarjana, Deva puja with Agni homa and 'Bali' / sacrifice to Dikpalakas constitute a parcel of the 'Ahnika Karma' or the daily procedure of an ideal Brahmana.

The second query of Narada to Maha Deva related to *Bhakshya bhojya kartavyas* (Food material approved or otherwise). Any kind of food items offered as 'Naivedya' to a Deity or 'Havishya' offered as 'Agni homa' are the most appropriate. Conversely, food consumed without offering to Bhagavan is as impure as poison or excreta. Further, Brahmana should observe fast on every Ekadashi day and must not

take food. On Krishna Janmaashtami, Shri Rama Navami and Shiya Rathri particularly, non-observance of fast entails double offense. Only exceptions who cannot observe the fast on the prescribed days might be those who are extremely diseased, badly ill and women in advanced stage of confinement or during the periods of menses. Even in respect of such exceptions, fruits and roots and milk/water might be consumed. In any case, those who can certainly not take food have to clear their own respective conscience and scruples. Even as a daily routine, only that food which is offered to Bhagavan and thus becomes 'Prashad' must be eaten the best. As regards the food items which are prohibited the following regulations would apply: consumption of milk in a copper vessel, eating food / water that is already parteaten or drunk by another person, drinking salted milk, or eating brinjal in Kartika month and pumpkin in Chaitra month must be avoided since it would lead to monetary loss; eating small specie of brinjal on dwiteeya day must be avoded; eating 'Parwal' (little gourd) vegetable helps opposition forces. Consuming 'Muli' (radish) on chaturthi day is prohibited as it might adversely affect availability of ready cash. On Panchami, eating of 'bel' items should be avoided. Consuming neem leaves on Shashthi day is taking like poison; on Saptami, consumption of 'tada' fruit is like inviting illness; eating any product of coconut is eroding one's thinking capacity; 'loki' (bottle gourd) and kalambi vegetable must be avoided on Ashtami and Navami days respectively; on Dashami, Dwadashi and Trayodashi 'Shimbi' / 'Sem' (cluster beans)), Putika /Poi and Brinjal must be avoided respectively. Eating meat ought to be avoided any time. Usage of oil and 'Stree Sahavas' should be avoided on Amavasya, Purnima, Sankranti, Chaturdhashi, and Ashtami as also on Sundays, Vrata days, and Shraddha days. Eating curds in nights, sleeeping during day time and Sunrise-Sun set times and eating food of a woman in menses ought to be avoided. Shaving / haircut in Krittika star time and on Amavasya days should be avoided.

Having described 'Ahnika Aachaara' and 'Bhakshabhaksha Vidhi', Maha Deva briefly defined Parabrahma Swarupa to Brahmarshi Narada. Parabrahma is present in all Beings with 'Pancha Pranaas' (Vital Aairs) viz. Prana-Apana-Vyana-Udana-Samana illuminated in the Supreme Form of Paramatma. He said that in the form of complete Gyan, he was present and Prakriti was as Shakti or Iswarini. Just as Surva or Chandrama get reflected in the water kept on pots, any Being is the reflection of the Supreme Force and the moment the pot is broken, the reflection disappears too; this is how Jeevatma is the reflection of Paramatma getting dissolved into the latter. At the very end, there is only one Paramatma that remains on the Form of 'Mandalaakara Jyoti'- a circular globe of extraordinary radiance akin to crores of Suryas and exists like the never-ending Sky ans as an 'Avinaashi' (Ever Existent). Yogis refer that *Unknown* as Sarwa Swarupa Paramatma who is *Nireeha*, *Niraakaara and Nirguna*. That Supreme is like the Shakti of Thirst in Agni, radiance and heat in Surya, whiteness in milk, colness in water, sound from the Sky and Sugandha from Prithvi. It is that Highest Energy with the interaction of 'Chhaayaarupini Maya', like the proverbial 'Kumhara' (potter) moulds the 'Mitti' /earth and creates myriad forms of 'Chaarachara'/animate and inanimate beings. It is that Shri Krishna whom Vaishnavites worship as 'Saakara' assuming a unique and resplendent Form in a typical circular fund of illumination called 'Goloka Dhaam' which neither has an axis nor a support, which is as wide as a lakh crore yojanasunimaginable that is-full of Gopanganas, Gopaas and Gomataas, where there are countless Kalpavrikshaas, Kamadhenus, and invaluable golden buildings studded with diamonds, gems and precious stones among which there was a mammoth and an unmistakably distinct Palace where a teen aged boy of cloud-coloured Physique, with the dazzle of crores of Suryas of brilliance and an equal number of Chandras with amazing coolness is present, with a golden headgear of outstanding shine with a peacock feather, golden hand wrists bangles, ear rings, arms and shoulders all studded with Nine Gems in molten like gold, the most renowned 'Kaustubh Mani'on his chest, the ever enchanting flute in his hands, an alluring smile on his red lips hiding pearl like teeth comparable to thousands of Manmathas. On his lap is Devi Radha who is surrounded by Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara, Dharma and Ananta; Sanaka brothers and illustrious Maharshis, and Gopa-Gopis. This Adi- Purusha Paramatma Shri Krishna literally denotes: Krish meaning Totality and Na denotes 'Atma' or Soul. As Bhagavan Shiva delineated Shri Krishna thus, Narada repeated the Stotra by which Gandharva Raja Upaharna extolled Shi Krishna as also

Bhagavan Shiva and took leave of the latter to approach Nara Narayana and proceeded to 'Narayanaashrama' at Badari Tirtha.

# Maharshi Narayana defines Pancha Prakritis, their Kalaas and manifestations

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

In the Second Chapter of Brahma Vivarta Purana titled **Prakriti Khanda**, Narayana stated that Pancha Prakriti Devis viz. Ganesha's mother Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Savitri, and Radha organised the process of 'Sristhi'. Then Narada enquired of Bhagavan Narayana as to what were the origins and the Swarupas of these Prakritis, their characteristics and as why were they called by Five Pritis? Maharshi Narayana replied that the word 'Pra' denotes 'Prakrushta' or expert and 'Kruti' denotes 'Srishti', thus the total word is **Prakriti**. In the 'Trigunatmaka' Form, Satva Guna is significant in the context of Srishti (Creation); the word 'Pra' stands for 'Pradhana' and 'Kriti' denotes Srishti; in other words, that Devi who is primarily responsible for Creation is called Prakriti. Maharshi Narayana illustrated Purusha and Prakriti are two Forms, the right and the left respectively and thus Prakriti also is Nitya / Eternal as much as of Purusha. That is the **Mula Prakriti Parameswari**. On the insruction of Paramatma, five Rupas were authorised to perform Srishti.

Bhagavati Durga is Shiva Swarupa, also called Narayani, Vishnumaya and Purna Brahma Swarupini, whose natural characteristics are to besow Yasha (Fame), Mangala (Propitiousness), Dharma (Virtue), Shri (Wealth), Sukha (pleasure), Moksha (Salvation) and Harsha (happiness). Sidheswari, Siddhirupa, Siddhida, Siddhidaata, Eswari, Buddhi, Nidra, Kshudha, Pipaasaa, Chhaya, Tandra, Daya, Smriti, Jaati, Kshaanti, Bhraanti, Shaanti, Kaanti, Chetana, Tushti, Pushti, Lakshmi, Vruti, and Mataa are all the names of Durga. Bhagavati Lakshmi is the Shuddha Satva Swarupa who is Shrihari's Shakti, the Embodiment of Prosperity, Charm, Restraint, and Superior Nature and by nature is the anti-thesis of Lobha, Moha, Kaama, Krodha, Mada and Ahamkara. Noted as 'Maha Lakshmi', she is 'Swarga Lakshmi', 'Rajya Lakshmi', 'Griha Lakshmi', 'Dravya Lakshmi', 'Kirti Lakshmi', 'Vanijya Lakshmi' and 'Ashta Lakshmi'. Bhagavati Saraswati is the Adhishtaana Devi of 'Buddhi', 'Vaani', 'Vidya', 'Kavitha', 'Medha', Samsmarana Shakti, Kalpana Shakti, Bodha Swarupa, Nissandeha, Vichaara kaarini, Grandha kaarini, Sangeeta Sandhi, Taala Kaarini, Vishaya-Gyana-Vaani Rupa, Vyakhya-Upadesha-Vaani-Pustaka-Tapomayi and Siddhi Vidyaa Swarupa. Bhagavati Savitri / Gayatri is the 'Veda Maata' or the Mother of Four Vedas, the 'Utpanna Shakti' or the Creator of Chhanada/ Vyakarana and other Vedangas, the 'Sandhya Vandana' and also the mother of Tantras. She is also the Dwija Rupa, Jagadrupa, Tapaswini, and Parama Shuddha Rupa. Tirthas look forward to secure her touch for attaining their 'Shuddhi' or purity and 'Pavitrata' or sanctity. Her Swarupa is of Shuddha Sphatika Mani and is the personification of 'Satwa Guna'. Her natural trait is to bestow Moksha. The Fifth Prakriti Bhagavati Radha Devi is the 'Adhishthaana Devata' of 'Prema and 'Praana' or Love and Life. She is the most exalted of all the Devis. She is noted for her 'Sundarata' (Beauty and Charm), 'Sadgunata' (Good characteristics), and 'Sowbhagyata' (auspiciousness). She is called by several names like Paraavara, Saarabhuta, Paramaadya,

Sanaatani, Paramaananda Rupa, Dhanya, Maanya and Pujya. She is Nityanikunjeswari and the Raasakreedaa's Adhishtaatri, originated from 'Rasamandali'. As the most significant and popular Devi of Goloka, she is well-known as Raaseswari and Surasika, Ahlaada-swarupini, Nirguna (devoid of the Three 'Gunaas'), Nirlipta (devoid of worldly joys and attractions), Naraakaara (She has no physical Existence made of Pancha Bhutas) and Atma Swarupini of Shri Krishnaatma. Only Vidwan Purushas through Veda Vidhana could perceive her undisclosed Existence or Reality. Munindras and Surendra would never be able to realise what Radha is all about! She is stated to wear only Neela Vastras (Blue clothing) emerging from Agni Shuddhi or Purity of Fire. She is the daughter of Vrishabhanu Gopa. Prithvi is stated to have been purified with the touch of Radha's feet! Yet Brahma and other Devas could not vision her! Prakriti Devi has several 'Amshas' (Alternative Forms), 'Kalaas' (Features), and 'Kalaamshas' (Alternative Features). For instance, **Devi Ganga** who purifies 'Bhumandala' has a water Form, originating from Bhagavan Shri Hari's feet and is like the blistering Agni which turns the wood-like sins into ash. Mere touch, or better still take a bath or much better of consumption of 'Ganga Jal' would qualify human and other Beings for securing 'Kaivalya'/ Salvation. Ascending the ladder to 'Golokaa' would be possible by worship to Devi Ganga, which is considered as the most superior of all 'Tirthas' and Rivers. Ganga flows in the 'Jatas' (curled and twisted hair) of Shankara Maha Deva. From there it flows in various lines down to Bharata Varsha enabling 'Tapaswis'/meditators and each and everybody to ennoble and purify their hearts and the Holy waters of the River are pure and clean. Bhagavan Narayana is especially fond of Devi Ganga. Shri Tulasi is another principal 'Amsha' of Prakriti Devi with the natural tendency to adorn Vishnu's feet. Any 'Sankalpa' (proposal), 'Puja' (worship) or 'Tapasya' (meditation) of Bhagavan assumes quicker response and is considered as the best, sacred and most propitious embellishment to Shri Hari. The sins of a worshipper are burnt off like wood by fire and the contact of Tulasi gladdens Narayana. In fact, worship of Govinda is stated to be incomplete without 'Tulasi dalas' with double leaves. In Bharata Varsha, Devi Tulasi in Vriksha Form is reputed as Kalpa Vriksha or the one granting and fulfilling the desires of devotees. Also, to the residents of Bharata Varsha, Tulasi is a readily available boon and a 'Traana' or Raksha / protection. Another significant 'Amsha' of Prakriti Devi is Jaratkaaru or the mind-born daughter of Kasyapa Muni named Mansa Devi, who has the privilege of being the disciple of Bhagavan Shankara and is a highly learnt 'Vidushi' of knowledge. Nageshwari is the sister of Nagaraja Sesha and is revered as 'Naga Maata' always worshipped by Nagaloka residents and is a Siddha Yogini whom Sri Hari is fond of and is a Vishnu Swarupini. She is the Adhishthaana Devata of all Mantras related to Sapras, Also, Nageswari is the Pativrata of Jaratkaaru Muni who was of the 'Amsha' of Shri Krishna. One another of the prime 'Amshas' of Prakriti Devi is **Devasena**, one of the Matrikas, and is also named Bhagavati Shashthi whose principal responsibility is to protect and safeguard 'Shishus' (children); She is also a Tapaswini, Vishnu Bhakta and the wife of Kartikeya. In fact, she is the sixth 'Amsha' of Prakriti Devi and is thus appropriately called Shashthi Devi. All devotees worship for excellent progeny and facile delivery of children; in fact on the sixth day of delivery, the mothers who had just delivered a child perform puja on the day and again on the twenty first day after delivey for the welfare of the newly born, since Devi Shashthi happened to be the twenty first among the Matrikas. Shashthi Devi is a personification of kindness with the duty of protecting children from any difficulty on account of water, earth, sky and household. Mangala Chandi was materialised from the face of Prakriti Devi and is responsible for granting all boons involving propitiousness. She assumes benign nature at the time of Srishti but at the time of 'Samhaara' or destruction, she assumes anger and annoyance and hence her name as Mangala Chandi. She is worshipped on Mangal days or Tuesdays each week. She bestows male progeny, grand children, prosperity, fame, and all-round contentment. Once pleased by devotion, there is nothing that she would not award, yet once annoyed she would destroy the world in a second! Maha Kaali emerged from Devi Prakriti's eyes and at the time when two Raakshasas called Shumbha and Nishumbha were on the rampage damaging Virtue and the Virtuous, Devi Durga created Kaali from the former's forehead, being half of Durga's Shakti and courage. Devi Kaali's radiance is comparable to crores of Suryas. Basically, she is a Yogeshwari and is an apex devotee of Bhagavan Shri Krishna; she has the might and courage of Shri Krishna and also has the complexion of Krishna too. If provoked, she could breathe out the entire 'Brahmanda' or the Universe.

But, a kind Kaali Devi is more likely to grant boons of Dharma, Artha, Kaama and Moksha to the virtuous and the Upright. She is the target of 'Upasana' to Brahma downward to all the Devatas as also Munis and Yogis. Bhagavati Vasumdhara is of a prime 'Amsha' of Prakriti Devi on whose benevolence the whole World stands on, with the well deserved descriptions like 'Sarva Sasya Prasutika' (the Creator of all Agricultural Activities), 'Ratnaakara', 'Ratna garbha', 'Sarva Jeevana Pradaayani', 'Sarva Sampatti kaarini', and 'Sarvaadhaara'. **Devi Swaha** is the wife of Agni Deva without whose generosity no 'havi' could be dedicated to any Devata; Dakshina Devi is the wife of Yagna Deva without whose kindness all kinds of Karma Kandas become futile. Swadha Devi is the wife of Pitaras and the worship by Munis, Manus or Manavas becomes a waste if her name is not uttered while making any offerings. Devi Swasti is the wife of Vayu Deva and without her consent any exchange of blessings, give-and-takes etc. turn out to be a waste without her name being specially mentioned; in fact the whole World would eagerly await her utterances as many as possible. **Devi Pushti** is the wife of Bhagavan Ganesha and each and every human being has to invoke her since without her support and mercy, the whole humanity-be it a male or female-would become weak, feeble and pathetic. **Devi Tushti** is the wife of Ananta Deva without whose blessings, there would be no sense of 'Samtushti' or contentment and welfare. **Devi** Sampatti is the wife of Ishana Deva, and without grace, the whole World would have been a Place of Poverty and Misery. Kapila Maha Muni's wife **Devi Dhriti** is welcomed by all the Lokas, since all the Beings in Bhagavan's Srishti would have been bereft of Courage and intrepidity. Dharma Raja Yama's wife **Devi Kshama** is an embodiment of clemency and forgiveness, lest the world would have been a hell to live in without mercy and the 'milk of human kindness'; indeed, 'to err is indeed human, but to forgive is divine'! **Devi Rati** is the 'Adhishtaatri' or the Presiding Deity of Love and Play and the wife of the illustrious Kama Deva and is welcomed by one and all for the reason that life would have been dry and without much reason to live, human beings would be considered as dry and dead! Devi Mukti is the wife of Satya who is the be-all and end-all of sensible human beings for their goal is Salvation or relief from the unending cycle of deaths and births. Saadhvi Devi Dava is the better half of Moha or extreme obsession, the anti-thesis of leniency and dis-possession. The 'Sahadharmini' of Punya is **Devi Pratishtha** without whom one's very existence in life is a waste and purposeless. Sukarma's wife is Kirti Devi noted for recognition and if a human being has no place in Society then again an aimless and sub-standard survival is dissipated. Devi Kriya is the wife of Udyog or Industry; indeed, nobody in life could afford to be completely inactive without performing any deeds! Adharma's wife is Midhya whose physique was almost non-existent in Satya Yuga, somewhat recognisable in Treta Yuga, lean and thin in Dwapara Yuga but well built and solid in Kali Yuga; her trait is 'Pragalbhata' or boasting and her brother is 'Kapata' or falsity who keeps on moving from house to house; this Devi is an antonym of **Devi Dharma**. The wives of Susheela are Devis Shanti and Lajja and these two traits of Virtue are the ingredients of disciplined life; a human being devoid or short of these qualities is sub-human, shameless and disruptive in attitude. The famed wives of 'Jnaana' (embodiments of knowledge) are Devis Buddhi, Medha and Smriti, without whom existence tends to be a meaningless exercise.

The above 'Amshaas' of Prakriti Devi are indeed notable; but there are innumerable manifestations like Dharma's wife Murti; Kaalagni or Yoga Nidra is Rudra's wife; Kaal's wives are 'Sandhya', 'Raatri' and 'Din' (Early morning, Night and Day respectively); 'Ksuhdha' and 'Pipaasa' are the wives of 'Lobha'; Prabha and Dahika are the wives of Teja; ara and Mrithu are the wives of Jwara; Vairaaga's wives are Shraddha and Bhakti; Rohini is Chandra's wife; Sangjna is the wife of Surya; Shatarupa is the wife of Manu; Shachi is the wife of Indra; Tara is the wife of Brihaspati; simiarly Ahalya and Vasishtha; Ahalya and Gautami; Anasuya and Atri; Devahuti and Kardama; Prasuti and Daksha; Pitara's 'manasi kanya' or mind born daughter Menaka was the mother of Parvati. Lopamudra, Aahuti, Vindyavati who was the wife of Bali, the wives of Kubera, Varuna, Yama, Kunti, Damayanti, Yashoda, Draupadi, Shaivya, Devaki, Gandhaari, Satyavan's wife Savitri, Radha Devi's mother Kalavati', Mandodsari, Kausalya, Subhadra, Kaikeyi, Revati, Satyabhama, Kaalindi, Lakshmana, Jambavati, Nagnajiti, Mitravinda, Rukmini, and Sita are all maifestations of Lakshmi Devi. Vyasa's mother Yojana gandhi, Kaali, Baana putri Usha and her associate Chitralekha, Prabhavati, Bhanumati, Sati Mayavati, Renuka-the mother of Parashurama,

Balarama's wife Rohini, are all Devi Prakriti's 'Kalaas'. In fact, all the Grama Devatas too are all Kalas of Prakriti.

### Devi Saraswati's 'Puja Vidhana'and 'Kavacha'

Having described that Durga, Radha, Lakshmi, Saraswati and Savitri were the Pancha Prakritis, Narayana Maharshi told Narada Muni that Shri Krishna performed worship to Prakriti's 'Amshabhuta Kala Swarupa Devis'viz. Vaani, Vasundhara, Ganga, Shashthi, Mangala Chandika, Tulasi, Manasa, Nidra, Swadha, Swaahaa and Dakshina. Shri Krishna said that in terms of 'Teja' (Radiance), 'Rupa' (Form) and 'Gunas' (Features), these Eleven Devis were as significant as his own. As the details of worship of Durga, Radha and Lakshmi would be taken up later, Narayana Rishi desired to describe the Puja Vidhana of Devi Saraswati first.

Devi Saraswati's worship is the most auspicious on Megha Shukla Panchami as ordained by Shri Krishna when all over the Universe the Puja as also 'Vidyaarambha (initiation of Studies) is performed by human beings, Manuganas, Devatas, Muniganas, Vasus, Yogis, Siddhas, Nagas, Gandharvas and Rakshasas with the traditional 'Shodashopacharas' by invoking Saraswati into a Kalasha or a Book. Then puja should be done to six Devatas viz. Ganesha, Surya, Agni, Vishnu, Shiya, and Devi Paryati before performing Puja to Devi Saraswati. For 'Naivedya'/ Offering, the mix of butter, curd, milk, white sesame, sugarcane juice, jaggery, white rice, ghee, etc. should be the 'Havishaanna'. White flowers, white Chandana, white Vastra, and white decoratives would all be the inputs for the Puja. Then would be followed Dhyana (Meditation), Kavacha, Mula Mantra and regular puja. The Dhyana would describe the Deity as having Shukla Varna (white complexion) of great beauty and smile, well dressed with white robes, with one hand carrying a Book, both the hands a 'Veena'instrument, adorned with jewellery and white flower garlands, with Brahma-Vishnu and Shiva nearby and surrounded by Devatas, Munis, Manus and Manavas executing prostrations. The Ashtaakshara Vaidika Mula Mantra is: Shreem Hreem Saraswatyai Swaahaa/ Bhagavan Narayana gave 'Upadesha' (administering) of this Mantra to Valmika Muni on the banks of River Ganga; Bhrigu Muni gave Upadesha to Shukra during a 'Surya grahana' (Solar Eclipse); Marichi's son Kashyapa Muni gave the Upadesha to Deva Guru Brihaspati during Chandra Grahana (Lunar Eclipse); Brahma gave the Upadesha to Bhrigu Muni at Badarika Ashram and so on. Without Upadesha, the Mula Mantra is ineffective, but once Upadesha is performed, the Mantra becomes a powerful tool in enhancing thinking capability and widening mental horizons. Sarasvati Kavacha titled Vishwa Vijaya (as provided by Brahma to Bhrigu) is as follows:

Shrunu Vatsa pravakshaami Kavacham Sarva Kaamadam,

Shruti saaram Shruti Sukham Shrutyuktam Shruti pujitam/

*Uktam Krishnena Golokey Mahyam Brindaa -vaney Vaney*,

Raaseshvarena Vibhunaa Raaseyvai Raasa mandaley/

Ateeva gopaneeyam chaKalpavriksha samam param,

Ashrutaadbhuta manraanaam Samuhai -scha samanvitam/

Yad dhrutwaa Bhagavaacchhrukrah Sarava daityeshu pujitah,

Yad dhrutwaa pathanaad Brahman Buddhimaamscha Brihaspatih/

Pathaanaddhaaranaad gaami Kaveendro Vaalmiko Munih,

Swaayambhuvo Manuschaiva yaddhrutwaa Sarva pujitah/

Kanaado Gautamah Kanvah Paaninih Shakataayanah,

Grandhah chakaara yad dhrutwaa Dakshah Kaatyaayanah Swayam/

Shaataatapascha Samvartho Vashishthascha Paraasharah,

Yad dhutwaa pathanaad grandham Yagjnyavalkyas -chakaara sah/

Sushyashringo Bharadwajas -chaasteeko Devalastathaa,

Jaigeesha vyotha Jaabaalir yad dhrutvaa Sarva pujitaah/

(Brahma told Bhrigu that he was giving a Kavacha of Saraswati which was the essence of Shrutis, which was sonorous to the ears, proposed in Vedas and fully approved. Raaseshwara Bhagavan Shri Krishna in Goloka where Raasamandalis were in progress preached this Kavacha which was confidential and unheard by anybody earlier. Shukraachaarya became worthy of worship by all Daityas due to this Kavacha. Brihaspati's mental sharpness came about due to the power of this. Valmiki came to be known as a 'Kaveeswara' only due to the might of this Kavacha. Swayambhu Manu came to be revered due to its constant Recitation. The famous writers viz. Kanaad, Gautam, Kanva, Panini, Shaakataayan, Daksha and Kaatyaayana gained reputation due to this Kavacha. So did Veda Vyasa, Shatatapa, Samvarta, Vasishtha, Paraashara, Yaagnyavakya, Rishyashringa, Bharadwaja, Aasteeka, Devala, Jaigeeshya, and Jaabaali script their masterpieces by power of the recitation of this 'Kavacha').

Kavachasyaascha Viprendra Rishireva Prajapatih,

Swayam chhandascha Brihati Devataa Shaaradaambika/

Sarva tatwa parignaaney Sarvaardha saadhaneshucha,

Kavitaasu cha Sarvaasu viniyogah prakeertitah/

Shreem Hreem Sarasvatyai Swaha Shiromey paatu Sarvatah/

Shree Vaagdevataayai swaahaa bhaalam mey sarvadaavatu/

Om Saraswatyai swaaheti shrotrey paatu nirantaram,

Om Shreem Hreem Bhaaratyai swaahaa netra yugmam sadaavatu/

Aim hreem Vaagvaadinyai swaahaa naasaam mey sarvatovatu,

Om Hreem Vidyaadhishthaatu Devyai Swaahaa oshtham sadaavatu/

Om Shrim Hreem baahvyai swaaheti danta panktim sadaavatu,

Emityekaaksharo Mantro mama kantham sadaavatu/

Om Shreem Hreem paatu mey greevaam skandhoumey Shreem sadaavatu,

Om Shreem Vidyaadhishtaatru Devayai swaahaa vakshah sadaayatu/

Om Hreem Vidyaaswarupaayai swaahaamey paatu naabhikaam,

Om Hreem kleem Vaanyai swaaheti mama hastow sadaavatu/

Om Sarva varnaatmikaayai paada yugmam sadaavatu,

Om Vaagaadhishthaatu Devyai swaaha Sarvam sadaavatu/

Om Sarva kantha vaasinyai swaahaa praachyaam sadaavatu,

Om Hreem Jihvaagra vaasinyai swaahaagnidishi rakshatu/

Om Aaim Hreem Shreem Kleem Saraswatyai Budha jananyai Swaahaa,

Satatam Mantra raajeyam dakshiney -maam sadaavatu/

Aim Hreem Shreem Trayksharo Mantro Naairyuttyaam mey sadaavatu,

Kavi jihvaagra vaasinyai swaaha maam vaarunovatu/

Om Sarvaambi -kaayai swaahaa vaayavye maam sadaavatu,

Om Aim Shreem Gadya padya vaasinyai swaahaa maamuttharevatu/

Aim Sarva shastra vaasinyai swahaishaanyam sadaavatu,

Om Hreem Sarva pujitaayai swaahachhodhruvam sadaavatu/

Aim Hreem Pustaka vaasinyai swaahaadho maam sadaavatu,

Om Grandha rupaayai swaahaa maam sarvatovatu/

Iti tey kathitam Vipra Brahma mantraugha vigraham,

Idam Viswa jayam naama Kavacham Brahma rupakam/

Puraashrutam Dharma vaktraat Parvatey Gandhamaadaney,

Tawa sneyhaanmaya khyaatam pravarttavyam na kasyachit/

Gurumabhyarchya vidhivadsnaanaalamkaara chanadanaih,

Pranamya dandavavad -bhumou kavacham dhaarayet sudheeh/

Pancha laksha japeynaiva siddham tu Kavacham bhavet,

Yadi syaat siddha kavacho Brihaspati samo bhavet/

Mahaavaagmi Kaveendrascha Trailokya vijayee bhavet,

Shakroti sarvam jeytum cha Kavachasya prasaadatah/

(Viprendra! Prajapati is the Rishi to this Kayacha; Brihati is the Chhanda; Mother Sharada is the Adhishthaatri Devi; the 'Prayoga' (application) of this Kayacha is an attempt to realise the meaning of 'Tatwa parigyana' or the knowledge of Tatwas and a synthesis of Kavitas (Poetry) and their absorptive capacity. Shraddha is given as my sacrifice to Shreem-Hreem-Swarupini Saraswati and I request that she must please guard my head from all the directions. I offer my Shraddha to Om Shreem 'Vaag Devata' and I implore her to secure my forehead; I offer my devotion to Om Hreem Bhagavati Saraswati and I beseech her to keep my ears intact; my surrender to Om Shreem Hreem Bhagavati Bharati and my sincere request to her is to protect my eyes; my prostration to Aim-Hreem Swarupini Vagdevi with the supplication to shield my nose; my submission to Om Shreem Hreem Vidya Adhishthaatri and appeal to her to safeguard my 'danta-pankti' or row of teeth; 'Aim' is the letter with which I offer my reverences to Devi Sarasvati and I seek her kindness to keep my throat in tact; with humility I approach Om Shreem Hreem Vidya Swarupi to save my navel; may Om Hreem Kleem Swarupi Devi Vaani strengthen my hands with power as I bow my head to her with respects; I approach Om Swarupini Bhagavati 'Sarva Varnaatmika' my unreserved humbleness with the folded hands to secure my feet; Let my very existence which is owed to Omkaara Devi be fortified by my earnest prayer to provide me all-round safety. Mother Saraswati Veda Swarupa! do provide my safety from the Eastern side; I offer my Shraddha to Om Hreem Swarupini to kindly protect me from the 'Agneya' side; You are the Mantra Swarupa of Om Aim Hreem Kleem Saraswatyai Budha Jananyai Swaaha; please safeguard me from the Southern direction. May the Tryakshara Mantra of Aim Hreem Shreem keep me safe from the Nirruti Kona'. As the tip of my tongue is dedicated to Om Swarupini, kindly protect my western disha. May Bhagavati Sarvaambika keep safe of my 'Vaayavya kona'; may Gadya-Padya Nivaasini in the Form of 'Om Aim' keep safe my northern direction; the Sampurna Shastra 'Aim Swarupini' who is worshipped by one and all is an emblem of Mercy and should strengthen my 'Ishana' direction; from above the top of my being, may 'Om Shreem Swarupi' help me to protect always; the mother of Vidya who resides in Sacred books is revered by

sincere prostration and may her secure me down under; and finally, my obeisances to you Om Swarupini and Grandha beeja rupa! Preserve me safe from all directions). Recitation of this Kavacha yields memory power, mental sharpness and immense knowledge. Its recitation by five lakh times would definitely yield 'Parama Siddhis' to excel Deva Guru Brihaspati!

# Yagnavalkya's Stuti to Saraswati and restoration of his lost memory of Vedas

The illustrious Yagnavalkya was the disciple of Sage Vaishampayana who taught Yajur Veda and as there were arguments between them about certain interpretations of the Veda, the Guru got furious and demanded that what all was taught should be vomitted in the form of digested food. As the vomit came out, some of the co-pupils of Yagnavalkya took the forms of 'Tittiris' (partridges) and picked up the 'Ucchishtha' and the remains turned out to be the Taittireya Samhita and the Yajur Veda came to be known as Krishna Yajurveda. The disillusioned pupil Yagnavalkya decided not to take up a human Guru and prayed to Surya Deva to accept him as his Guru. Pleased by Yagnavalkya's penance, Surya descended in the form of a horse and disclosed a new form of Veda immortalised as Shukla Yajurveda or Vayajasaneya ('Vaji' being a horse) from his manes, as distinguished from Krishna Yajur Veda, not known to Vaishampayana too; the Shukla Yajur has the rhythm of a horse gallop! Surya directed Yagnavalkya to worship Saraswati to improve memory and the 'Stuti'was as follows:

Yaagnyavalkya vu vaacha:

Krupaam kuru Jaganmaatarmevam hatatejasam,

Gurushaapaat smritibhrashtam Vidyaa heenamcha duhkhitam/

Jaanam dehi smritam dehi Vidyaam Vidyaabhidevatey,

Pratibhaam Kavitaam dehi Shaktim sishya prabhodhineem/

Grandhakartutwa shaktim cha susishya supratishthitam,

Pratibhaam Satsabhaayaam cha Vichaara kshamataam Shubham/

Luptam sarvam Daivavashaatraveebhutam punah kuru,

Yathaankuram bhasmani chakaroti Devataa punah/

Brahma swarupaa paramaa Jyoteerupaa Sanaatani/

Sarva Vidyaadhi Devi yaa tasmai Vaanyai namo namah/

Yayaa vinaa Jagat sarvam shaswajjeevanmritam sadaa,

Jnanaadhi Devi yaa tasyai Saraswatyai Namo namah/

Yayaa vinaa Jagat Sarvam Mookamunmukttavat sadaa,

Vaagadhish –tthatru Devi yaa tasyai Vaanyai namo namah/

Himachandana kundendu kumudaam bhoja sannibhaa,

Varnaadhi Devi yaa tasyai chaakshuraayai Namo namah/

Visarga bindu maatraanaam yadadhish -thaana meva cha,

Ityam twam geeyasey sadbhir bhaaratyai tey Namo namah/

Ya yaa vinaacha Samkhyaataa Samkhyaam kartum na shakyatey,

Kaala samkhyaa swarupaa yaa Devi Vyaakhyaadhishthaatru Devataa,

Bhrama Siddhaanta rupaa yaa tasyai Devyai Namo namah/ Smriti Shakti Jnaana Shakti Buddhi Shakti Swarupini/ Pratibha kalpanaa shaktiryaacha tasmai namo namah, Santkumaro Brahmaanam jnaanam prapacchha yatra vai/ Babhuva jadavat sopi siddhaantam katrumakshamah, Tadaajagaama Bhagavaanaatmaa Shri Krishna Ishwarah/ Uvaacha sa cha taam stohi Vaaneemishtaam Prajaapatey, Sa cha tushtaava twaam Brahmaachaajnayaa Paramaatmanah/ Chakaara twadprasaadena tadaa siddhaanta muktamam, Yadaapyantam prapacchha Jnaanamekam Vasundharaa/ Babhuva mukavat sopi Siddhaantam katrumakshamah, Tadaa twaam sa cha tushtaava samtrastah Kashyapaajnayaa/ Tatschakaara Siddhaantam nirmalam bhrama bhanjanam, Vyaasam Puraana sutram cha prapaccha Vaalmeekam yadaa/ Mounibhutah sa sasmaara twaameva Jagadambikaam, Tadaa chakaara Siddhaantam twadvarena Muneeswarah/ Sampraapya nirmalam Jnaanam Pramaada dhwamsa kaaranam, Puraana sutram strutwaacha Vyaasah Krishnakalodbhavah/ Twaam sishevey cha dadhyow cha shatavarsham cha Puskarey, Tadaa Tatvo varam praapya Satkaveendro babhuva ha/ Tadaa Vedavibhaagam cha Puraanamcha chakaara sah, Yadaa Mahendrah prapacchha Tatwajnaanam Sadaa Shivam/ Kshanam tatwaameva samchintya tasmai jnaanam dadow vibhuh, Prapacchha Shabda Shaastram cha Mahendrascha Brihaspatim/ Diyam Varsha Sahasramcha sa twaam dadhyouscha Pushkarey, Tadaa Twavatto varam praapya Divya varsha sahasrakam/ Vuvaacha Shabda shaastram cha tadardhyam cha Sureshwaram, Adhyaapitaascha ye sishyaa airadheetam Muneeshwareyh/ Tey cha twaam Parisamchitya pravartantey Sureswareem, Twam samstutaa pujitaa cha Muneerindrai Manu Maanavaih/ Daityendraischa Suraischaapi Brahmavishnushivaadibhih, Jadeebhutah Sahasraasyah Panchavaktraschaturmukhah/ Yaam stotum kimaham stoumi taamakaasyena Maanavah, Iktyuktwaa Yaagnavalkascha bhaktinamraatma kandharah/ Pranamaam niraahaaro ruroda cha muhurmuhuh.

Tadaa Jyotihswarupaa saa tena drushtaapyuvaacha tam/
Sukaveendro bhavetyuktwaa Vaikuntham cha jagaamah,
Yaagnyavalka kritam Vaaneestotrameytatu yah pathet/
Sa Kaveendro Mahaavaagmi Brihaspatisamo bhavet,
Mahaa murkhascha durmedhaa varshamekam yadaa pathet/
Sa panditascha medhaavi Sukavischa bhaved dhruvam/

( Jaganmaata! May you show me mercy as my glow was lost due to my Guru's curse and eventually my memory power was lost too! I am extremely disheartened as I was misled in my 'Vidya'. I beseech you Devi to grant me Jnaana, smriti (memory), Vidya (knowledge), Pratishtha (Distinction), Kavitwa Shakti (Power of Poetry), capacity to convince pupils and capability to produce excellent writings of Grandhas. Side by side, provide me competent 'sishyas'. Mother! Kindly bestow on me the ability to shine in the congregations of learned personalities with my thoughts and expression. Unfortunately, the fund of my knowledge evaporated and I request you to revive and reinforce it in a new and exceptional form. Let my Gyan be refurbished just as a seed hidden in a heap of ash is germinated fast and strong. My sincere obeisances to you Brahma Swarupa, Parama Devi, Jyoti Rupa, Sanatani and the Adhishthaari of all Vidyaas. Vaani! This world is as futile and lifeless as a dumb and mad entity without your benign blessings. Without you as the 'Akshara Rupa' or the Personification of 'Aksharas' or the Alphabets that build up the Great Palace of Literature and Expressions, who is worshipped with Chandana, Hima, Kunda, Chandrama, Kumuda and white lotus, this life is dissipated existence. You are the 'Adhishthaana Devata' or the Reigning Deity of 'Visarga', 'Bindu' and 'Maatra' indicative of a half-word, a nil-word and a measure of a word which constitute the rudiments of a Great Piece of Writing or Speech! You are the basis of 'Sankhya' and 'Ganita' or the numbers and measuring units without which there could be no counting or accounting and the quantification and evaluation. Devi! You are the embodiment of Smriti Shakti (Power of Memory), Jnaana Shakti (Power of Knowledge), Buddhi Shakti (Power of Mind) and 'Kalpana Shakti' (Power of Imagination or Thoughts). You are the Ruler of Tongue, Mind, Thought, Speech and any thing to do with brains. When Sanaka Kumaras desired to establish 'Bhrama' (Improbables) and 'Siddhantas' (Theories and hypotheses), Brahma himself faltered and approached Shri Krishna when the latter asked Prajapati to implore and with your active involvement 'Siddhantas' came into existence! When once Prithvi asked Ananta Deva to reveal the secret of Jnaana, Sesha Deva failed to define the Siddhanta and prompted Sage Kashyapa to commend Saraswati and that was how in response to the Sage the wrong principles about Jnaana were demolished and the Siddhantaas were enunciated. When Veda Vyaasa asked Maharshi Valmiki about 'Purana Sutras', the latter cut a sorry figure and urged Vaani to establish the Sutras for a year at Pushkara Kshetra and by her grace Valmiki explained the same in poetic form and thus Vyasa became a Poet of unparalelled excellence not only to script Puranas but also divisioned Vedas! When Indra asked Brihaspati about the Principles of 'Shabda Shastra', the latter meditated for long time and was finally blessed by Devi Saraswati and in turn produced several experts in the Discipline of Shabda, besides Indra. Many Manus, Munis and Manavas were able to worship and secure proficiency in several skills. Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Devatas and Danavas were of no exception to extol your Virtues. Mata Saraswati! When thousand faced Sesha Deva, the Pancha mukha Shankara, the Trimukha Brahma were all engaged in deep meditations to Devi, of which siginificance would be a human being in doing so? Thus Muni Yagnavalkya was exhausted in pleading Devi Saraswati when his shoulders were dropped and eyes were profusely streaming with water. Then a huge fund of Illumination appeared and Devi Saraswati blessed the Muni that he would be a highly renowned Poet whose fame and name would be immortalised. Those who read or recite the above Saraswati Stutis with sincerity would reap the powers of Jnaana, Smriti and Buddhi. Even if a 'murkha' (stupid) or a 'durbuddhi' (evil-minded) reads or recites the Stotra for a year, the person concerned would certainly acquire qualities of an intelligent and erudite scholar and Poet of standing.

### Mutual curses of Lakshmi, Saraswati and Ganga land them in Bharata Varsha

Originally Lakshmi, Saraswati and Ganga were the wives of Shri Hari in Vaikuntha. Saraswati felt that Shri Hari was getting fonder of Ganga and complained to Lakshmi but Lakshmi was neutral. Saraswati was irritated and cursed Lakshmi to become a tree as she was insenstive. Ganga felt bad that Saraswati was unnecessarily interfering and cursed Saraswati; this led Saraswati to curse Ganga. Reacting to these curses, Shri Hari gave dispensations as follows: Lakshmi would be born as a tree in the house of King Dharmadhwaja and become the wife of Asura Shankhachuda, a Vishnu devotee and later on turn out to be Shri Hari's dear wife and live for ever as Tulasi and also as a River named Padmavati in BharataVarsha; Devi Ganga due to Saraswati's curse would become a Holy River to demolish the sins of those who take baths on her waters and eventually flow down in Bharata Varsha due to the persistent efforts of Bhagirath and be called as Bhagirathi and be the wife of Samudra who was also of Shri Hari's 'Amsha' and at the same time be at the 'Shiva Sthaan'; and Saraswati as a result of Ganga's curse would become the wife of Brahma; and finally Lakshmi who was of Satwa Tatwa without any anger or jealousy and would be Shri Hari's own wife eventually. As Shri Hari gave the dispensations as follows, all the three Devis viz. Lakshmi, Saraswati and Ganga embraced each other and felt ashamed of their indiscretions which resulted in the repercussions and prayed to Bhagavan Shrihari as to when the arrangements would terminate and the latter pacified the Devis that he would not only ratify the curses that they made to each other but also retain their positions in Vaikuntha with equal attentions and affections to all the three Devis. Saraswati would keep half 'Amsha' in Bharata Varsha and half with Brahma and the total Amsha with himself (Shri Hari); similarly in respect of Ganga, half of Vishnu's Amsha would be Bhagirathi in Bharata Varsha sanctifying the Beings and by slashing their sins there and the rest of Amsha remaining intact with himself as also have the unique privilege of remaining on Shankara's holy head; as regards Lakshmi, one Amsha would be Tulasi as also as River Padmavati for Kali Yuga's five thousand years and all the Devis would return to Vaikuntha thereafter. The occurrence of the curses among the Devis and the arrangements that were made about them by Shri Hari had some hidden meaning: even while there were several Tirthas in Bharat Varsha, there was a great need for some outstanding Rivers and Punya Kshetras where not only devotees of Shri Hari, but even hopeless sinners and 'Nastiks' (athiests) should have possibilities for self-improvement. That was the reason for the emergence of these Sacred and sinwashing Rivers for quick-if not instant- relief to them. Bhagavan Vishnu indicated that there were several persons, who thrived on cheating, making false promises, social parasites, promise breakers, 'Vishwaas ghaatis', givers of wrong and misleading evidences, occupiers of others' properties and belongings; those who discard parents and blood-relatives; swindle or forcibly bamboozle others etc. The purpose of the Sacred Tirthas like Ganga, Padma and Saraswati was thus to exonerate and correct such misled persons to reform them and lessen the budren on Earth.

### Origin of Prithvi, worship and consequences of disrespect to her

At Shri Krishna's twinkle of an eye, Lord Brahma's age of hundred Brahma years are over and there would be a 'Prakritik Pralaya' when Prithvi (Earth) sinks in water and merges into Parabrahma Paramatma Shri Krishna. Maharshi Narayana narrated to Narada that there had been a belief when Daityas Madhu and Kaitabha were killed on the expanded dry place of Narayana's thighs (since the Daityas agreed to be mutually killed only on a dry place without wetness) and the 'Meda' or fat of the demons' dead bodies got dried up by Sun's heat and that was how Medini was formed. Another version about the origin of Prithvi which Narayana Rishi narrated was what Mahatma Dharma told the Rishi: The 'roma kupas' or the hair-roots of Maha Purusha's body emitted dirt which created Prithvi and as many hair

roots mixed with the sweat (water) emitted dirt so many times the formation of Prithvi takes place! Each time Prithvi is created, it emerges from the Seven Seas, along with Seven Dwipas, with Himalaya, Meru anf other Mountains; with Surya, Chandra and other Planets; with Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara abiding the Maha Puurusha's instructions; along with Devas and other Pranis would get materialised too; Punya Tirthas are also created; Seven Heavens and Seven Under Worlds are created too; Brahma loka, Dhruva loka and so on woud also get materialised. Such is the repetitive activity which takes place in each Kalpa.[Brahma's age is hundred Brahma years of which he has completed fifty years and the first day of his fifty first year is in progress and a day/night of Brahma is two kalpas; thus each Kalpa has a thousand Mahayugas equivalent to 4.32 billion human years] The current Sweta Varaha Kalpa too, Brahma requested Shri Hari to save Prithvi from the onslaught of Demon Haranayaksha who tried to be dump her in Rasatala and Shri Hari assumed the incarnation of Varaha Murti and rescued Prithvi by his 'dumshtras' (tusks). A grateful Prithvi prayed to Narayana and the latter bestowed the boon to her that hence forth, she would be worshipped by Munis, Manus, Devatas, Siddhhas, Danavas and Manavas as and when there would be activities of construction like Griha Prayseh, Griharambha, irrigation projects etc.and those 'Murkhas' (Idoits) who would not do so would go to hell! Meanwhile, Devi Prithvi and Varaha Devagave birth to Mangala Deva who became a Planet eventually. Maharshi Narayana then advised Narada about the procedure of **Bhumi Puja** by first invoking her with the Mula Mantra viz. Om Hreem Shreem Vasudhaayai swaahaa/ Bhagavan Vishnu himself prayed to her as follows:

Yagna sukarajaayaa twam Jayam dehi Jayaavahey,

Jayey Jayey Jayaadhaarey Jaya sheeley Jaya pradey/

Saraadhaaraey Sarva beejey Sarva Shakti samanvitey,

Sarva kaamapradey Devi Sarveshtam dehi mey bhavey/

Sarva shasaalaey sarvashasyaadhaye

Sarva shasyaharey Kaaley Sarva shsyaatmakey bhavey/

Mangaley angalaadhaarey Mangalye Mangala pradey,

Mangalaarthey Mangaleshey Mangalam dehi mey bhavey/

Bhumey Bhumipa sarwasvye Bhumipaala paraayaney,

Bhumipaahankaara rupey Bhumim dehi cha Bhumidey/

(You are Yagna Varaaha's wife, the provider of Victory and the mainspring of Victory with the basic feature of victory! You are the principal sustainer and supporter of the entire world, the Bija Swarupa and the Emblem of all Powers and the bestower of all desires; kindly grant me each and everything of significance to me. You are the personification of harvests; the provider and also the destroyer of crops! You are also the symbol of auspiciousness, its major hinge and the pride of 'Bhumipalakaas' or (Kings) and large farmers. Do grant me unending property, Devi!)

Maharshi Narayana apprised Narada that whosoever recited the above 'Stuti' to Bhu devi would for several successive births become Kings, renowned Landlords and property owners of great substance. Further, any person who gives 'Bhu daan' (charity) becomes eligible to reach Vishnudhaam; if a piece of Earth with standing crops is donated, the person concerned stays in Vishnudhaam for a long period of time. Those who donate to Brahmanas sizeable villages and huge chunks of agricultural lands would be residents of Vaikuntha. Even those who encourage the deeds of donation would be the beneficiaries of Punya. Contrarily, those who steal land especially from virtuous Brahmanas, or abet in such shady transactions would be destined to Kaalasutra, Kumbhipaka or Asipatra and Rourava Narakas depending on the intensity of cheating in the transactions, besides sufferings in the on-going lives too, great losses of physical well being, family disasters, loss of property and ignominy in the Society finally ending up with fateful and tragic end of life. Having described the pluses and minuses of donations or misuses of Land,

Maharshi Narayana had not only described the Procedure of worship by way of Bhumi Puja by performing 'Shodasopacharas' or the Sixteen Services with Pushpa, Gandha, Deepa, Dhupa and Naivedyas, he also cautioned not to keep on bare earth certain items viz. Deepas, Shivalingas, Bhagavan/Bhagavati Murtis, Shankha, Yantra, Shalagrama, pushpa, japamala, pushpamala, Karpura, Chandana wood, Rudraksha mala, pustaka and Yagnopaveeta. At the time of Earthquakes or Grahanas (Eclipses), there should never be any breaking of Bhumi which might eventually cause sufferances of the limbs of persons responsible. Bhu Devi is complemented by several epithets such as 'Kaashyapi' as she was the daughter of Kashyapa Muni; 'Sthira' as she is stable; 'Vishvambhara' as she carries the burden of the world; 'Ananta' or of Endless nature; 'Prithvi' as the provider of desires in the form of a Kamadhenu at the behest of King Pruthu and 'Bhumi' as the base for building 'Bhuvanas' or Residences of Comfort to one and all as per their own luck and deservedness!

# 'Ganga': Bhagirath's efforts, Puja to her and final restoration as Vishnu's wife

Of the two wives of King Sagara viz. Vaidarbhi and Shaibya, Asamanjasa was born to Shaibya while Vaidarbhi delivered a 'Maamsa pinda' (piece of meat); Vaidarbhi meditated to Bhagavan Shankara sincerely and the latter arrived in the form of a Brahmana and cut the piece of meat into thousand pieces which turned out to be as many sons. As they grew of age, the thousand sons accompanied a horse meant for Rajasuya Yagna of King Sagara and behaved flippantly with Kapila Muni while in Tapasya and the furious Muni burnt off the thousand sons into ash. As the King approached the Muni for clemency, the latter assured that if Sacred Ganga were brought from heavens to the ashes of the sons cursed by him, their souls would attain salvation. Asamanjasa and his son Amshuman resorted to Tapasya to Devi Ganga for long time and died but the son of Amshuman named the legendary **Bhagirath** was fortunate to vision Shri Krishna who in turn instructed Devi Ganga who in any case was to descend to Bhuloka owing to Sarasvati's curse and the pursuant dispensation of Bhagavan Vishnu. Shri Krishna blessed Ganga not only to provide Mukti to Sagara's sons but purify the sins of the troubled human beings through out Kali Yuga who would bathe in Ganga and worship her; even by saying 'Gangey Gangey' from a distance the devotees would be relieved of their sins and if per chance any Prani died while touching Ganga, that Prani would surely attain Vaikuntha!

Narada Muni enquired of Narayana Maharshi about the formal procedure of worship to Ganga desirous of reaping maximum advantages. In fact, King Bhagirath was stated to have followed the following procedure as described by the Maharshi. He performed worship to six Deities before qualifying the puja to Ganga Devi, viz. Shri Ganesha, Bhagavan Surya, Agni Deva, Vishnu, Shiva and Bhagavati Parvati. Subsequently, Bhagiratha prayed to Devi Ganga as follows: 'You are pure like the white champaka flower ready to demolish the sins of those worshipping you as you have been materialised by the Vigraha of Paramatma Shri Krishna who had given you the status of thousands of 'Sharatkaala Chandras'as you are the most propitious Narayana Priya, always peaceful and smiling with adornnents of Malati Pushpa garlands, 'chandana bindus' on your broad forehead shining prominently with 'Sinduri bindu'; with pearl like teeth and profusely kind eyes; with such soft feet that put the most delicate white lotus petals to shame; surrounded by Devatas, Siddhas, Muni Ganas and Tapasvis. I greet that Maha Ganga who only knows to bestow boons, purify sinners and enhance the levels of devotees to finally reach peaks of Self-Realisation on par to Mukti. After performing Dhyana on the above lines, the devotee would carry out 'Shodshopa -chaaraas' of Asana, Paadya, Arghya, Snaana, Anulepana, Dhupa, Deepa, Naivedya, Tambula, Sheetala Jala, Vastra, Aabhushana, Maalaa, Chandana, Aachamana and Shayya. Thus dedicating his total self Bharirath requested Ganga to follow that route which passed through where the ashes of Sagara Putras were rested as a result of Muni Kapila's curse, thus relieving their souls and receiving the epithet of 'Bhagirathi'.

Maharshi Narayana conveyed an interesting episode to Narada about a Radha Mahotsava which was being celebrated on a Kartika Purnima at a Rasamanadali. Devi Saraswati took up her Veena and created mellifluous tunes in perfect 'Tala Swaras' and Brahma was delighted to gift a rare 'Ratna' as a gift. Shiva gifted an invaluable 'Mani', Krishna gifted Koustubha, Devi Radha prsented a wonderful Navaratna Maala and various Devatas gifted their own gifts too. Meanwhile Bhagavan Shankara rendered a fantastic Poem which was scripted with highly envigorating usage of select words that shook up the moods of the Raasleela congregation. On hearing the extraordinary piece of rendition, the entire audience was spell bound in unbelievable rapture and ecstacy and took time to gain normalcy. But the Rasamandala was in deep distress as Radha and Krishna were not traceable. There was an 'Akaasha Vani' or a Celestial Voice which directed Bhagavan Maha Deva to materialise Tantra Shastra and create Mantras and Kavachas that would be appropriate to the Tantras to be thus created. In reply, Shankara made a vow by swearing over 'Gangaajal' which was present in Shiva's 'kamandalu'(vessel) which indeed was the Sangam of Radha and Krishna who were untraceable so far in the Raasa Sabha that was spell bound hitherto pursuant to Shiva's rendition!

After the effect of curses by Sarasvati to Ganga and Lakshmi to assume their own Rupas on Martya Loka, lasting for Kali Yuga's five thousand years, the respective Devis reached back to Vaikuntha and including the Rupa of Devi Tulasi got materialised as Four Wives of Shri Hari; these four wives reached their positions, representing also like Four Vedas. Indeed these formations of Sarasvati, Ganga, Tulasi and Lakshmi were of Bhagavan Shri Hari's ramifications. Paramatma Shri Krishna in Goloka who created the Trinity along with his alter-ego Devi Radha or the Devi Prakriti is the Unique Paramatma Swarupa.

# Vedavati-Maya Sita- Draupadi and finally as Devi Tulasi

In the lineage of Manu Daksha Savarni were born Brahma Savarni-Dharma Savarni-Rudra Savarni-Deva Savarni and Indra Savarni who were all Parama Bhaktas of Bhagavan Vishnu. The son of Indra Savarni viz. King Vrishabhadhwaja was a great devotee of Parama Shiva and the latter considered the King even more important than his own sons Ganesha and Kumara. Somehow the King never followed the Vaishnava Dharma and even discouraged Vishnu Puja and Lakshmi Puja. An infuriated Surya Deva cursed the King that his Rajya Lakshmi would abandon him. Shiva in turn lifted his Trishul and ran behind Surya Deva and the latter sought refuge from his father Kashyapa Muni and Brahma. The three some of Surya, Kasyapa and Brahma sought protection from Vishnu Deva. Shiva too reached there and told Vishnu that Vrishabhadhwaja was his personal Bhakta and Surya cursed the King. Vishnu replied that by the time Shiva reached Vaikuntha, lot of time elapsed and not only Vrishabhadhwaja lost his Empire and died but also his son Rathadwaja passed away and the latter's sons Dharmadwaja and Kushadwaja became intense Bhaktas of Vishnu and were performing Tapasya to Lakshmi Devi; Vishnu further said that an 'Amsha' of Maha Lakshmi would be soon born to Malayati, the blessed wife of Kushadwaja. As soon as the baby was born, she recited Vedas and was thus named Vedavati. In course of time, Vedavati took to severe Tapasya. There was an Akaasha Vani (Celestial Voice) which pronouned that Vedavati in her next birth would be Vishnu's wife. On hearing this, Vedavati left for Gandhamadana Mountain and intensified her Tapasya further. The demon Ravanasura spotted Vedavati in Tapasya and made advances to her; she cursed Rayana at his misbehaviour, declared that she would sacrifice her life by jumping into Agni Kunda and in her next birth would become responsible for his death as Devi Sita, the wife of a human Avatara of Vishnu to be called Shri Rama. Devi Sita was wedded to Shri Rama in the next birth. To keep up the word of his father Dasharatha, Rama along with Sita and Lakshmana moved on to the forests and Agni Deva approached Rama as a Brahmana and conveyed that since the time for Sita's abduction by Ravana was imminent, he (Agni) should replace Devi Sita with Maya Sita and after the episode of Ravana's killing was over, he would replace real Sita with the shadow Sita after the 'Agni Pariksha' time. Vedavati alias Chhaya Sita proceeded to perform Tapasya at Pushkara Kshetra and in

Dwapara Yuga became *Draupadi* as the daughter of Drupada Raja and further as the wife of Pandavas. Thus Vedavati was blessed as a *Trihaayani* born in Satya, Treta and Dwapara yogas.

The daughter of King Dharmadhwaja and Malati was named *Tulasi* as both men and women could not weigh the beauty and charm of the Child-Tulanaasmartha- she was named as Tulasi. Being a 'Jatismara' with the memory of her previous births, Tulasi performed very strict Tapasya to Brahma Deva who appeared and asked Tulasi to seek a boon. Tulasi recalled that she was in her earlier birth she was a Gopi by the same name as Tulasi, that she was in Goloka as a close companion of Devi Radha and was fond of a boy called Govinda who was too a Gopa boy in the 'Raasa Samaaja', that their freindship blossomed into lust, that Devi Radha cursed the lovers to be born into 'Martyaloka'/ Bhuloka and assured that on performing Tapasya to Brahma Deva the latter would give the boon of marrying Shri Krishna. Brahma smiled and told Tulasi that the same Gopa was already born with the 'Amsha' of Shri Krishna as a Danava King called Shankhachooda residing in Samudra, who was invincible to even Parama Shiva and that he would be her husband initially and subsequently wed Vishnu Deva as his very dear wife when Tulasi would become a Tree /Shrub when the whole Universe would worship as Vrindaavani. Devi Tulasi was thrilled at what Brahma revealed about the future course of events, but had a lurking fear of Radha Devi as to whether she would make this dream-like future possible as predicted by Brahma. Brahma again smiled and taught the procedure of pleasing Devi Radha by a Shodashopachara Mantra, Radha Stotra, Kavacha and Puja Vidhana. Tulasi was determined to please Radha and performed incessant 'Raadhopaasana'. In course of time, Tulasi had dreamt of a handsome youth and on the next day a Yogi called Shankhachooda landed at 'Badarivana' who practised Shri Krishna Mantra and Kavacha, thanks to Jaigeeshva Muni. As Tulasi got his darshan at a common place she was readily got attracted to him and vice versa. They exchanged pleasantries as also serious matters of Vedanta content, especially in the background of both of them being Jatismaras, when Brahma appeared and encouraged their Gandharva Vivaha.

Even as Shankhachooda was enjoying his new marital life, he was simultaneously warring with Devatas, as he was essentially a Danava and tortured Devas and forcibly dislodged them from Indraloka. He acquired three crore 'Dhanurdhaaras' ace bowmen, three lakh race horses, five lakh top rate elephants. Trishula dhaaris, countless chariots, and highly trained Maharathis and virtually became an unconquerable force in the entire Universe. On top of it he was a staunch Krishna devotee and the latter himself bestowed a talisman which fortified his prowess further. Shri Krishna was no doubt aware that the Danava King was performing all acts of Viciousness, brutality and violence; yet the demon's staunch devotion to him far outweighed his vices and cruelties to Devas, Maharhis, Sages and Brahmanas. This situation prompted Bhagavan Shiva to advise the Danava King and mediated peace with Devas. He used all his skills and powers of bringing about rapproachment; he said: 'Raja! You release the kingdom of Devas and make me and every body happy; you enjoy your own Kingdom and desist from fraternal enemities as Daityas, Danavaas and Devatas are all from the Kashyapa Muni and the own sisters of Diti, Danu and Aditi respectively. 'Brahma hatva' and 'Jaati droha' would be equally despicable etc. He also threatened that besides Indra, Surya, Yama, Varuna, Vayu, Shaneswara, Kubera etc. the illustrious Kumara, Nandi, Bhadra Kaali and he himself too would fight against him and the opponents. But the good advice given by Maha Deva himself fell flat on Shankhachooda's deaf ears and the great battle of Devas and Daanavas which could have been avoided did take place due to the persistence of one Daitya King Shankhachooda! The King descended to the battle field adorned with the Dhanush and arrows that Bhagavan Vishnu gifted to him once. Skanda intiated the battle by destroying Shankhachooda's chariot, Kavacha, the charioteer and his headgear and made the Daitya faint. But the latter recovered quickly and took up a Vishnu Shakti and attacked Skanda, by the powerful strike of which Skanda fell down. Devi Kaali took over and assaulted the Daitya who was an expert in Maya Shakti and dodged the Devi. Bhagavan Shiva revived Skanda by his Jnaana Shakti in a moment. Maha Deva then declared a fulfledged war in which Indra was pitted against Vrishaparva, Surya Deva against Viprachittha, Chandra against Dambha, Kaala Deva against Kaleswara, Agni against Gokarna, Kubera versus Kalakeya, Vishwakarma against Mayasura, Mrityu Devata against Bhayankara, Yama Raja against Samhara Danava, Varuna

against Kalivinka, Vayu versus Chanchalasura, Budha against Ghritaprishtha and Shanaischara versus Raktaksha, Jayanta versus Ratnasaara, Vasugana versus Varchogana, Nalakubara versus Dhumra, Dharma vs.Dhanurdhara, and Mangala vs. Mandukasha. The Adityaganas, Ekadasha Rudras, Rudraganas headed by Nandeswara, Gandharvas, Yakshas and Kinnaras were all a the battle where the Danava Sena was annihilated mercilessly and there were streams of blood and floating dead bodies of soldiers and animals on the battle front. As there was a climatic moment at the combat, Maha Kali released Brahmastra at the Danava King who retalliated with another Brahmastra with the result was a nought. Then Devi Kaali intiated the Mantra to release 'Brahmastra' when a Celesial Voice was heard to say: King Shankhachooda is a 'Maha Purusha' (Illustrious Noble Being) and Pashupataastra should not be released against him, since he would not be killed by it. In fact, as long as a 'Kavacha' (Shield) given by Shri Hari was carried on his body and as along as his wife's 'Pativratya' (High devotion to her husband) would last, the Danava would continue to be indestructible as these were the boons to him by Brahma. Bhadrakali then refrained from attacking the King but concentrated on destroying the rest of the Danavas and their Chiefs and so did the other Devas. Meanwhile, Bhagavan Vishnu took the form of an old Brahmana and approached for a boon. When Danava King replied that he could grant him anything, the Brahmana asked for the 'Krishna Kavacha'; the Danava King who abided by his word parted with the Kavacha. Bhagavan Vishnu then assumed the Form of Shankhachooda and entered Devi Tulasi's interior room in a delightful mood saying that he won the battle and wished to rest. Devi Tulasi was full of joy and in a celebrating mood of relaxation; the Maya Shankhachooda and Devi Tulasi were happy in their union and thus Tulasi's 'pativratya' got affected. As both the hurdles of 'Krishna Kavacha' being donated by the Danava King to a Brahmana and the ruin of Tulasi's Pativratya by Vishnu impersonating as Shankhacooda were removed, it was easy for Mahadeva to terminate the Danava King who returned to Devi Radha's Rasa-leela party at Goloka as Sudama and Bhagavan Krishna and Devi Radha welcomed him back into their fold. From the bodybone - remains of Shankhachooda emerged several kinds of 'Shankhaas' (conchshells) which were not only adorned on Shri Krishna's hands but had since then found a permanent place in every Puja of Govinda. Meanwhile Devi Tulasi suspected the Maya Shankhachooda and as Vishnu revealed himself she was upset that original Danava King was no more, cursed Vishnu to become a 'Paashaana' (rock piece) since he was unscrupulous and heartless and played the drama and removed her husband from the scene; eversince formal Vishnu Puja had been through the Sacred Form of a Shaaligraama. Vishnu then gave a reverse curse that Tulasi would become a holy River Gandaki as also as a Sacred Tree / shrub worshipped throught the Universe including Bhuloka, Swargaloka and Pataalalokas; Vishnu further said that 'Abhisheka' with Tulasi leaves to Narayana would provide the same effect as 'Sampurna Snaanas' or baths in all hallowed places including Sarva Kshetras; performing several Yagnas; satisfying Shri Hari with thousands of Abhishekas of holy waters along with 'Tulasi Dalaas'; thousnad 'godaanas' to equate a Tulasi patra daan; serving tulasi water at the time of a death; any puja with Tulasi to any Deity as good as lakhs of Ashwanmedha Yagnas or death with a tulasi on hand resulting in access to Vaikuntha. If a person swears with a Tulasi on hand, his pledge is considered to be an unquestioned belief and breaking the vow with a Tulasi would attract Kalasutra and Kubhipaaka Narakas. Bhagavan Shri Hari futher said that in order to make her curse to him true, he would become black 'Paashaanas' (Saligramas) on the banks of River Gandaki and several 'krimi keedas' would bite the imprints of Shri Chakra thus becoming eligible for worship. Those Saligrams which have the colour of Cloud / Shyama Varna would be callled Lakshmi Narayana; those stones which have one door and four chakras are called 'Vanamaali'; stones of light blue colour are called 'Lakshmi Janaardana'; those with two doors, four chakras and a cow's horn are called 'Raghavendra'; small stones with two chakras of black colour are known as 'Dadhi Vaamanaas'; very small stones with two chakras and vanamaali are called 'Shridhara'; round stones with clear chakra and Vanamali sign are 'Damodaras'; and so on. Narayana Rishi described the Puja to Devi Tulasi with the 'Dasaakshara' (Ten worded) Mula Mantra / Beeja Mantra viz. (OM) SHREEM HREEM KLEEM AIM BRINDAAVINYAI SWAAHAA comprising Lakshmi Beeja (Shreem), Maya beeja (Hreem), Kaama bija (Kleem) and Vaani beeja (Aim). After reciting the Mantra, formal Puja must be performed, followed by offering ghee soaked Deepa, Dhupa, Sindura, Chandana, Naivedya and flowers followed by the 'Stuti' that Vishnu himself recited:

Vrindaa rupascha vrikshaascha yadaiktra bhavanti cha,

Vidhurbhudaastena Vrindam matpriyaam taam bhajaamyaham/

Puraa babhuva yaa Devi twaadow vrindaavaney vaney,

Tena Vrindaavani khyaataa soybhaagyam taam bhajaamyaham/

Asamkhyeshu cha viseshu pujitaa yaa nirantaram,

Tena Vishwapujitaakhyaam Jagat-pujyaam bhajaamyaham/

Asamkhyaani cha Vishwaani pavitraani yayaa sadaa,

Taam Vishwapaavaneem Deveem virahena smraanyaham/

Devaa na tushtaah pushpaanaam samuhena yaya vinaa,

Taam Pushpa saaraam Shraddhaam cha drashtumicchhaami shokatah/

Vishwey yatpraaptimaatrena bhaktaanando bhaveda dhruvam,

Nandini tena vikhyaataa saa preetaa bhavataabhi mey/

Yasya Devyaastulaa naast Visweshu nikhileshu cha,

Tulasee tena vikhyaataa taam yaami sharanam priyaam/

Krishna jeevana rupaa yaa shaswatpriyatamaa Sati,

Tena Krishna jeevaneeti mama rakkshantu jeevanam/

(When Vrinda tree and another kind of tree look alike, then intelligent persons call the group of trees as *Vrinda* only! It is that Vrinda who is popular that I pray; my greetings to that auspicious Devi who emerged in ancient times in Brindavana and was called as *Brindaavani*; I implore that unique tree which is worshipped among innumerable other trees and is called as *Vishwa pujita*; I greet that universally revered tree in veneration; it is the *Pushpasaaraa* which is held in high esteem among several other flowers and is meditated by all Devas that I yearn to vision with emotion and anxiety; may Tulasi be kind to me as she is known for spreading happiness around and fulfil one's desires and that is why her epithet is *Nandini*. I seek shelter from that Devi whose inherent values are impossible to weigh (tulana) and therefore called *Tulasi*. It is that Vrinda Swarupa who is considered as *Krishna jeevani* that protects the life of Shri Krishna!). In short, Tulasi Stotra is: *Vrindaa Vrindaavani Vishwapijita Vishwapaavani*, *Pushpa -saaraa Nandini cha Tulasi Krishna jeevani/ Etannaamaashtakam chaiva Stotram Naamaartha samyutam, yah pathet taam cha sapujya soshwamedha phalam labhet/ After the Stotra as above, the formal Puja comprising the 'Shodashopachaaraas' are required to be performed by men and women for prosperity, long and healthy life.* 

### Devi Savitri's 'Puja Vidhana'

Devi Savitri is the mother of Vedas whom Brahma Deva worshipped first followed by all the Devas. A reputed King of Madradesha called Ashwapati and his queen Malati whose qualities of virtue, charity and devotion brought them fame in the contemporary times but had unfortunately no children. Maharshi Vasishta gave 'Upadesha' (Instruction) of Gayatri Mantra and the royal couple performed sincere 'japa' (repetitive muttering of Mantra) and worship but to no avail; they shifted to Pushkara Kshetra and intensified their devotion. Meanwhile, there was a celestial voice which directed the King to perform Gaytri Mantra japa ten lakh times. At the same time Maharshi Parashara arrived and advised the King as follows: One Gayatri japa a day would demolish sins of that day; ten Gayatris would remove the sins of a

day and night; hundred times a day would destroy a month's sins and thousand a day would blow up a month's. The Japa of a lakh of Gayatri Mantra would relieve a life time's sins and that of ten lakhs would bestow Siddhis. Gayatri Japa of a crore times would give highly positive impact and of ten crores would secure Mukti! Maharshi Parashara thus advised the King to perform 'Trikaala Sandhyas'in the morning, mid day and the evening; he said that whatever virtuous deeds are done on a day would have no value to any Brahmana unless the Trikaala Sandhyas are achieved. If a person sincerely executes the Japas would become radiant like a Surya and the dust under his feet would become worship-worthy! Parashara Maharshi also taught the way the Gayatri Japa had to be done:

Karam sarpa phanaakaaram krutwaa tam turdharva mudritam/ Aanamnamurthwamachalam prajepet praangmukho dwijah,

Anaamikaa madhdya deshaadadho vaamakramaneyna cha/ mula paryantam japasyesha krama karey/ *Tarjanee* 

(A Brahmana should sit towards the East, keep the right hand lifted up and perform 'Mudras' (hand postures or gestures) while the body is slightly bent down; the count of Gayatri should commence from the middle part of the Anamika finger and to its lower part; then to the little finger's lower, middle and top portions; back to the top of Anamika finger; then the top of the middle finger; again top of the fore finger, its middle and lower parts; and further to the lower parts of middle and Anamika fingers, thus totalling twelve).

Maharshi Narayana explained to Narada that Savitri Vrata should be observed starting from the evening of Jyeshtha Krishna Trayodashi and on the following Charurdashi day perform the Savitri Puja with fourteen kinds of fruits and fourteen types of Naivedyas, pushpa, dhupa, Vastra, Yagnopaveeta etc. The Vrata Karta has to set up a Kalasha (vessel) and invoke Ganesha, Surya, Agni, Vishnu, Shiva and Parvati, and then execute Savitri dhyana, stotra and the formal puja. The 'dhyana' (meditation) to Devi Savitri would be on the following lines: 'Devi Savitri! You have the complexion of molten gold with the radiance of Brahma Teja like the severe summer's thousand mid-day Suryas wearing two Agni Shudha vastras. You are known as 'Sukhada', 'Muktida', 'Shanta', 'Sarasampad Swarupa' and 'Sarva sampad pradaatri'(Provider of bliss, Salvation, Peace, and Wealth since you are the Symbol of Prosperity). May I invoke the 'Adhishthaatri'or the Over-all in charge of Vedas and Shastras and meditate that Veda bee Swarupa Savitri!' After the invocation thus, the devotee would have to offer the 'Shodashopachaaraas' of Aasana, Paadya, Arghya, Snaana, Anulepana, Dhupa, Deepa, Naivedya, Taambula, Sheetala Jala, Vastra, Bhushana, Maalaa, Chandana, Aachamana and Shayya. [Details of Pativrata Savitri-Yama Raja dialogues are given in the Essence of Matsya Purana by the same author.]

# Mahalakshmi: her exit from Swarga and restoration, and Puja Vidhana ('Shodashopacharas' and 'Stuti' by Indra included)

Parabrahma Paramatma divided himself into two Bhagavans viz. Shri Krishna and Vishnu at the beginning of 'Srishti'. Paramatma also divided into two Devis; from his right side was manifested Devi Radha and from the left Maha Lakshmi. Krishna and Radha resided in 'Goloka' while Vishnu and Lakshmi resided in Vaikuntha. Both Krishna and Vishnu as well as their Consorts were equal in their 'Amshas' traits in terms of Form, Profile, complextion, radiance, fame, dresses, adornments, Gunas, comprehension, voice, gait, morale and psychology, excepting Krishna was with two hands and Narayana with two hands. 'Maha Lahshmi' is called like wise as she is the supreme leader of womanhood representing idealism, virtue, grace, kindness, and all that is propitious and auspicious. She is called 'Swarga Lakshmi' as she is the Archetype of Wealth, Prosperity, and Magnificence. She is 'Rajya Lakshmi' standing for the Excellence of Royalty and Opulence; 'Griha Lakshmi' worshipped in each and every household and the symbol of patience, service, generosity, fertility, devotion and practical wisdom

of all 'Grihinis'. In fact, she is not confined to only Ashta Lakshmis viz. Adi Lakshmi, Dhanya Lakshmi, Dhairya Lakshmi, Gaja Lakshmi, Santana Lakshmi, Vijaya Lakshmi, Vidya Lakshmi and Dhana Lakshmi, but characterizes several good aspects like Arogya Lakshmi, Shri Lakshmi, Shobha Lakshmi, Shubha Lakshmi, Rama, Indira, Chakrika, Kamalika, Kalyani, Vaishnavi, Narayani, Shri Devi, Jalaja, Madhavi, Aishwearya, Padma Priya, Padmakshi, Ulka Vahini and so on. She is present in all materials of significance like Bhushanas, Precious metals and Nava Ratnas, flowers, fruits, water, Kings and Queens, Homes, Palaces, Dhanyas, Vastras, Sacred Places, Deva Pratimas, Mangala Kalashas, Manikyas, Chandana and other fragrances, Dhanya, Vidya-Arogya and Puja related items etc. At the very first, Bhagavan Vishnu performed worship to Maha Lakshmi at Vaikuntha, followed by Brahma, Parama Shiva, Swayambhu Manu, Indra and Devas, Gandharvas, Nagas and Rishis and Munis. Brahma worshipped on Bhadrapada Shuka Ashtami. Vishnu initiated Pujas on Chaitra, Pousha, and Bhadrapada Tuesdays and Fridays.

Durvasa Muni was on way to Kailasha from Vaikuntha *en route* Swarga; on way he met Indra, blessed him and did the rare honour of gifting a Parijata flower garland which Vishnu presented to the Muni. Out of arrogance, Indra placed the garland around the neck of 'Iraavata'-the Elephant Carrier of Indra! The infuriated Muni felt that this sacrilegious and irrevernt act of Indra was not only indicative of disrespect for himself but also an act of unpardonable profanity to Bhagavan Vishnu! He therefore cursed Indra saying that an invaluable gift rewarded to Durvasa by Narayana was parted with and out of consideration to Indra who ignored its inherent worth. Hence, the root cause of Lakshmi, who was the Form of Prosperity, should abandon Swarga forth with. He further said that as a Bhakta of Narayana, he had the least fear for Brahma or Shiva; in fact the head of the elephant which wore the Parajata garland should by sliced off and eventualy replace Ganesha's head! With this furious curse of Durvasa, Indra came to senses and realised his unpardonable folly and said: *Aishwaryam vipadaam beejam jnaana pracchanya kaaranam, Muktimargargalam daadhyam Hari bhakti vyavasaayikam/ Janma mrityu jaraa roga shoka bheetaamkuram Param, Sampatthi timiraandham cha Mukti maarga na pashyati/* 

(Aishwaryam or Great Prosperity is the seed from which difficulties arise, suppressing Gyan or Wisdom and the barrier of Mukti Marga creating obstacles all through the way of Hari-Bhakti. Opulence happens to be the seedling to Janma /Birth, Mrityu/ Death, Jara / Old Age, Shoka / grief and Anurag / Desire. It is due to wealth that obstacles and blindness to 'Mukti Marga' are caused). By so saying, Indra fell on Sage Durvasa's feet with subdued ego and repentance. Muni Durvasa pardoned Indra and advised Deva Guru to be inolved to perform worship to Shri Krishna. Brihaspati gave him encouragement and said that virtuous and brave persons should not get disheartened on occasions like this; 'Sampatti' or fortune and 'Vipatti' or complex trouble would occur due to the Karma phala of previous births. Deva Guru further said: Maha vipattow samsaarey yah smaren Madhusudanam, Vipattow tasya Sampattir bhaveydvidityaaha Shankarah/ (A person who remembers the name of Madhusudana at the time of hardship would definitely find a way out from Vipatti to Sampatti according to Shankara). Later on Deva Guru and Indra approached Brahma Deva who in turn took Indra and Devas to Vaikuntha. Bhagavan Vishnu stated that just as the whole Universe was undre his control, he himself was bound by what his Bhaktaas dictated to him! Indeed, those who ignored Vishnu, my devotee Lakshmi too would leave that Place at once! After all, Maha Muni Durvasa of Shankara Deva's Amsha was Vishnu's parama Bhakta and his anger was indeed justified! As his shraddhaa in Govinda was unbreakable, the Muni cursed Indra for his unpardonable blunder. Indeed Lakshmi would instantly leave-and so would Vishnu- that house where there was no sound of 'Shankha' (Conchshell), nor where a Tulasi shrub was worshipped; nor where Shankara Puja was executed, and where Brahmanas were not invited to take food. Bhagavan Vishnu further said that Devi Lakshmi would not stay in such residences where Vishnu Bhaktas were critisised, where food was served on Ekadashis and Janmashtamis; where unmarried girls of Devi's names were sold or purchased; where guests were not entertained for food or stay; where persons eat food before Sunrise; where persons sleep during the days or those who sleep naked; those Brahmanas who never performed Vratas, fastings, Sandhya vandanas and Vishnu pujas; and where there was 'Jeeva himsa' or Cruelty of human or other beings of any description. Contrarily, Lakshmi would stay

permanently in those houses where there are discussions, Bhagavat Kirtanas, singings of hymns, Shankha dhwanis, pujas of Shalagramas and Tulasi, Pujas of Devas and Devis, Devatarchanas and Naivedyas, renderings of Mantras and veneration of Deva Bhaktas, Godmen, Brahmanas and Sumangalis. Having explained on these lines, Vishnu advised Devi Lakshmi to stay in Ksheera Samudra till Devas and Danavas did 'Amrita Manthana' or churning of the Ocean. Soon thereafter, the Sagara Manthana commenced with Mandara Mountain as 'kaashtha' or the Churning rod; Kurmavatara / the incarnation of Bhagavan Vishnu as Tortoise to balance the Mountain, Sesha Naaga as the rope with which to rotate the 'kaashtha', and Devas and Danavas as the Churning Parties. As result of the 'Manthana', first emerged 'Halahala' (the massive poisonous flames) which was devoured by Maha Deva and kept in his throat and then surfaced elephant Iravata, Ucchhaishvara horse, Sudarshana Chakra, Koustubha Mani, Chandra and Devi Lakshmi whereafter emerged Dhanvantari and Amrit. Devi Lakshmi adorned Vishnu with Vanamali when Vishnu worshipped her, followed by Maha Deva, Brahma, Indra and Devatas when Durvasa's curse to Indra was cleared and Lakshmi's 'Amsha' reappeared as Swarga Lakshmi.

### Lakshmi Puja by Indra -'shodashopachaaraas' (Sixteen Services) and 'Stuti'

An ever grateful Indra to Devi Lashmi then performed formal worship to the restored *Swarga Lakshmi* as follows commenced with *Dhyana*: 'Parama Pujya Bhagavati Maha Lakshmi seated on a thousand petalled Lotus illuminated with the lustre of countless Chandras! We are mesmerised to vision your stunning and gorgeous Rupa like that of molten gold wearing silks of extraordinary grace and charismatic smile as the Embodiment of Affluence and Propitiousness. May we deserve the extraordinary fortune of worshipping you in person?'

Asanam: Amulya Ratna saaram cha nirmitam Vishwakarmanaa, Pashyaani prakrush -taani varaani durlabhaani cha, Aasaanamcha vichitram cha Maha Lakshmi pragruhnataam/ (Bhagavati Maha Lakshmi! May I offer in your service an invaluable and distinguished seat made of Choicest Jewels specially designed and crafted by Vishwakarma, the Celestial Designer!) Paadyam: Shuddham Gangodakamidam Sarva Vanditameepsitam, Paapedhma vahni rupam cha gruhyataam Kamalaalay/

(Kamalaalaye! This pure and hallowed Ganga water is borne by the heads of one and all as the same is endeared and revered by them; this is considered as Agni Swarupa which burns off all kinds of sins; do kindly accept it to wash your sacred feet); Arghyam: Pushpa chandana durvaadi samyuktam Jaahnaveejalam, Shankha garbhastitam shuddham gruhnataam Padma vaasini/( Padmavaasini! This Ganga water in a Shankha along with flowers, Chandana, Durva and such other consecrated material is offered to you as a welcome drink) Sugandhi Pushpa thailam: Sugandhi pushpa thailam cha Sugandhaamalaki phalam, Deha Soundrya beejam cha gruhnataam Shri Harey Priye! (Shri Hari Priye! This fragrant oil extracted from Amala fruit is a pleasing application to enrich physical beauty and skin smoothening; do please allow it to be used as a bathing device); *Dhoop :Vriksha niryaa swarupam cha* Gandhadravyaadi samyutam, Shri Krishna kaantey dhupam cha pavitram prati-guhyataam/(Shri Krishna Kantey! I proffer 'dhoop' or the aromatic smoke of incense material mixed with a vegetable gum; do kindly accept this smoke offered with sanctity); Chandan: Malayaachala sambhutam vriksha saaram manoharam, Sugandha yuktam sukhadam Chandanam Devi gruhnataam/ (Devi! this chandana 'gandha' which originated from the chandana tree on Malaya mountain is not only sweet-smelling but also provider of coolness; I request you to apply on your body to give soothening effect); Deepam: Jagacchasthuh swarupam cha dhwaanta pradhwansa kaaranam, Pradeepam shuddha rupam cha gruhyataam Parameswari/ (Parameswari! Kindly allow this Sacred Light which is the vision of eyes, remover of darkness and a symbol of Purity to please you and light the surroundings); Naivedya: Naanopahaara rupam cha nanaa rasa samanvitam, Naanaa swaadukaram chaiva Naivedyam Pratigruhnnataam/ (Devi! I am tendering this 'Naivedya' or the offering of various eats and juices which have been prepared with taste and flavor; I should be obliged of these snacks are consumed to please me). Anna: Annam Brahma

swarupam cha Pranarakshana kaaranam, Tushtidam Pushtidam chaiya Devyaannam pratigruhyataam/ (Devi! Annam/ food is considered to be of Brahma Swarupa; food is also a life saving material which ensures eating-satisfaction and enhances strength in the natural way; I request you to taste this food); Kheer: Shaalyakshata supakwam cha sharkaraagavya samyutam suswaadu samanoharam, Swaadu yuktam Maha -Lakshmi Paramaannam Pratiguhyataam/( Maha Lakshmi! This Kheer or cooked rice with sugar and ghee is specially prepared for your taste; please taste this preparation); Swaastika Mishtaanna: Shakaraa gavya pakwam cha suswaadu sumanoharam, Mayaa niveditam LakshmiSwaastikam pratiguhnataam/ (Lakshmi! This is 'Mrishta- anna'/Sweet rice called Swastika which is a mix of sugar and ghee in cooked rice which is being offered as a Naivedya to you for your kind acceptance). Phala: Naanaa vidhani ramyaani pakkvaani cha phalaanicha, Swaaduyuktaani Kamaley gruhyataam phaladaani cha/ (Devi Kamaley! These are various fruits ripe for eating, which are not only sweet luscious but also desire-fulfilling; may I present these juicy fruits for approval). Dughdha: Surabhistana sambhutam swaadu sumanoharam, Martra -amrutam sugavyam cha gruhnnataamachyuta priye/ (Achyuta Priye! This pure milk which is fresh from Surabhi cow's udder is meant for Martyaloka residents and is tasty like ambrosia; I beseech you to taste it and gratify me!) Gud / Jaggery: Suswaada rasa samyuktamikshu vriksha samudbhavam, Agnipakkamati swaadu gudam cha prati- guhyataam/ (Devi! this jaggery has been made of sugarcane juice heated up and solidified; indeed this is very sweet and fresh; please savour this). Mrishtaanna: Yava godhuma sashyaanaam churna renu samudbhavam, Supakvam guda gavyaaktam Mrishtaannam Devi gruhyataam/ (Devi! This is a sweet preparation made of wheat and 'Yava' grains-mix, nicely cooked with jaggery and ghee which too is very appetizing for favour of your taste); Pishtak: Shasyachurnodbhavam pakkvam Swastikaadi sumanvitam, Mayaa niveditam DeviPishtakam pratigruhyataam/ (Devi! This pishtak made of rice powder with Swastika and other signs is a fried and crisp savoury for your taste); Eik/ Sugar cane: Paarthivo vriksha bhedascha vividha dravya kaaranam, Suswaadurasa samyutam Eikshuscha pratigruhyatam/ (Devi! This sugar cane is an extraordinary tree on Earth and is a source of several bye products like jaggery, sugar and simple juice from raw cane; this juice is indeed very sweet and succulent; it is my prayer that you may drink up this juice!); Vyanjan: Sheeta vaayu pradam chaiva daahey cha sukhadam param, Kamaley! Gruhyataam chedam vyajanam shweta chaamaram/ (Kamaley! In this stuffy climate, a white 'chamara'/ hand fan would certainly bring relief and happiness; may I serve you with 'Vyanjana' for your comfort); Taamboola: Taambulamcha varam ramyam karpuraadi suvaasitam, Jihwaa jaadyacchedakaram Taamboolam Devi gruhyataam/ (Devi! This 'Taamboola' made of tender betel leaves and fragrant materials like 'karpura'/ camphor and other scented edible digestibles would provide freshness and good feeling to your tongue and mouth; may I tender this to you); Jala: Suvaasitam sheetalamcha pipaasaa naashakaaranam, Jagajjevaa rupamcha jeevanam Devi gruhyataam/ (Devi! To quench thirst, there is nothing like very cold, nicely scented and life-reviving water; do please accept this as well); Maalya: Deha soundarya bijam cha sadaa Shobha vivardhanam, Kaarpaasaja cha krumijam vasanam Devi gruhyataam/ (Devi! The bouquets and garlands made of a wide variety of fresh and perfumed seasonal flowers provide invaluable joy to the wearers of these as also enhance beauty and grace to them; it is my privilege and unique opportunity to proffer these flowers to you); Achamaneeya: Punya tirthakam chaiva Vishuddham Suddhidam sadaa, Grhnateem Krishna Kaantey twam ramyamaachaneeyakam/ (Krishna Kaantey! This 'Tirtha jala' which is sanctified on its own as also purify others is highly worthy of 'Achamaneeya'; do accept the same); Shayya: Ratnasaaraadi nirmaanam pushpachandana samyutm, Ratnabhusha bhushaadhyam sutalpam Devi gruhnnataam/

(This invaluable and highly comfortable bed with soft cotton and silk clothing, which is bejewelled and treated with fresh and intoxicating flowers and fragrances, is tendered to you Devi! please do accept this for your relaxation); *Apurva Dravya: Yadyad dravyamapurvam cha Prithivyaapi durlabham, Deva bhushaarbhogyam cha taddrayam Devi gruhnataam*/ (Devi! Not only these but whatever invaluable and even impossible maretials are available on Earth or elsewhere that are worthy of adorning your body would be available at your nod of head!) After performing the 'Shodashopa -charaas' thus, Indra pleased Devi Lakshmi with the recital of the Moola Mantras which were taught to him by Brahma Deva: These

Mantras include: 'Shri Beeja' (Shreem), 'Maya Beeja' (Hreem), 'Kama Beeja' (Kleem), and 'Vani Beeja' (Aim), followed by the word 'Kamalavaasinyai' and further adding the word 'Swaahaa'; the Mantrarajaa would be: SHREEM HREEM KLEEM AIM KAMALAVAASINYAI SWAAHAA/ Kubera recited this Mantra for long time to Devi Lakshmi and attained unprecedented 'Aishwarya' (Wealth); also Daksha Savarni Manu secured unique Sovereignty of 'Sapta Dwipas'. As Bhagavati Maha Lakshmi gave 'darshan' (vision) to Indra Deva, he was overtaken by extreme emotion and praised her as follows:

### Indra 'Stuti' to Devi Lakshmi

Om Namo Maha Lakshmyai/

Om Namah Kamala vaasinyai Naraayanyai Namo Namah,

Krishnapriyayai Suraaryai Padmaayai cha Namo Namah/

Padmapakshetranaayai cha Padmaasyaayai Namo Namah,

Padmaasanaayai Padmasanaayai Padminyai Vaishnavyai cha Namo Namah/

Sarasampatsarwarupaayai Sarva daatryai Namo Namah,

Sukhadaayai Moksadaayai Siddhidaayai Namo Namah/

Haribhakti pradaatryai cha Harshadaatryai Namo Namah,

Krishna vakshahsthaalaayai cha Krishneyshaayai Namo Namah/

Krishna shobha swarupayai ratna padmey cha shobhaney,

Samapattadhishthaatru Devyai Maha Devyai Namo Namah/

Shasyaadhishthaatru Devyai Shasyaayai cha Namo Namah,

Namo Buddhiswarupayai Buddhidaayai Namo Namah/

Vaikunthey yaa Mahaalakshmeeryaa Lakshmeeh ksheerasaagarey,

Swarga Lakshmeerindra gehey Rajyalakshmeernupaalaye/

Grihalakshmischa grihaanaam gehey cha Griha Devataa,

Surabhih saa gavaam Maataa Dakshinaa Yajnakaaminee/

Aditirdeva mataa twam Kamalaa Kamalaalaye,

Swaahaa twam cha Havirdaaney Kaavya daavey Swadhaa smrutaa/

Twam hi Vishnuswarupaa cha Sarvadhaaraa Vasundharaa,

Shuddha Satwa Swarupaa Twam Naraayanaparaayanaa/

Krodha himsaa varjitaa cha Varadaa cha Shubhaananaa,

Paramaarthapradaa twam cha Haridaasyapradaa Paraa/

Yayaa vinaa Jagatsarwam Bhasmee bhutamasaarakam,

Jeevanmritam cha Vishvam cha Shavastulyam yayaa vinaa/

Sarveshaam cha Paraa twam hi Sarva bandhavarupini,

Yayaa vinaa na Sambhaashyo Baandharvair baandhavah sadaa/

Twayaa heeno Bandhu heeno twayaa yuktah sabaandhavah,

Dharmaartha kaama mokshaanaam twam cha Kaarana rupinee/

Yathaa Maataa stanandhaanaam shishuunaam Shaishavey sadaa,

Tathaa twam sarvadaa Maataa Sarveshaam Sarvarupatah/

Maatru heenah stanaandhascha sa chejjeevati Daivatah,

Twayaa heeno janah kopina Jeevatyeva nischitam/

Suprasanna Swarupaa twam maam prasanna Bhavaambikey,

Vairigrastam cha ishyam dehi mahyaam Sanaatani/

Vayam yaavat twayaa heenaa bandhu heenascha Bhikshukaah,

Sarava sampad viheenaascha taava Deva Haripriye/

Raajyam dehi Shriyam dehi Balam dehi Sureswari,

Keertim dehi Dhanam dehi Yasho Mahyaamcha dehi vai/

Kaamamdehi Matim dehi Bhogaan dehi Haripriye,

Jnaanam dehi Dharmam cha Sarva Soubhaagyameepsitam/

abhaavamcha Prataapamcha Sarvaadhikaaraevacha,

Jayam Paraakramam Yuddhey Paramaishwarya meyvacha/

I Bhagavati Kamalavaasini, Devi Narayani, my repeated greetings to you. Samsaara saara bhutaa Krishna Priya Bhagavati Padma! My innumerable greetings to you. You possess lotus eyes and lotus face, Bhagavati Maha Lahshmi! My repeated salutations to you Maha Lakshmi; you are called Padmaasana, Padmini and Devi Vaishnavi; you are also Sukha daayani, Sarva Sampadswarupini, Moksha daayani, and Siddhi daayani. You lead to the Sacred Path of dedication to Shrihari and the Provider of Happiness to those who excel in devotion to Him. My sincere salutation to you as you exist in full bloom on Krishna's chest and is therefore called as Krishna's Hridayeshwari. You are the major possessor of Krishna's Shobha or Splendour and the 'Adhisthatri' (Sovereign) of 'Sampurna Sampatti' (the Totality of Wealth) as also the Adhishthatri of 'Dhanya' (Harvest) and Dhanya Swarupa. You are the Maha Lakshmi of Vaikuntha, Lakshmi of Ksheera Sagara, Rajya Lakshmi of Kingdoms, Swarga Lakshmi in Indra's Swarga, Griha Lakshmi in households, Griha Devata, Go Lakshmi called Surabhi, Dakshina Lakshmi in Yagnaas, Aditi Maataa Lakshmi to Devas, Swaha Lakshmi at Havyapradaana at Yagnaas,and Swadha Lakshmi at the Kavya Pradaana. You are the Bhu Lakshmi, Sudha Satwa Swarupa, 'Akrodhi Swarupa', 'Ahimsa Swarupa', Varada, Sharada, Shubhaa, Paramaarthadaa and Haridaasapradaa. Without you, the entire Universe is dissipated and dead. You are the 'Bandhu Swarupa' and the Gateway to Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. The World is your milk-providing toddler and you are the ever kind Mother whose natural trait is to help with patience! Hari Priye! Till I could not vision you, I am a 'Bandhu heen', a beggar, and a pauper. Mother, grant me Rajya, Opulence, Power, Fame, Prosperity, any possession of my choice, Buddhi, Bhoga, Jnaana, Dharma, Sowbhagya, Prabhava, Pratapa, Adhikaara / Authority, Victory in battles, Parakrama and Paramaishwarya.] Those who recite the above Stuti thrice a day could retain Lakshmi for ever.

Worship of Swaha, Swadha, Dakshina, Shashthi, Mangala Chandi and Manasa

At the time of Srishti, Devas approached Brahma to formalise an arrangement of their food. As Brahma requested Vishnu, the latter materialised an 'Amsha' in the form of 'Yagna' and which ever 'havishyas' (oblations) were made to Agni by Brahma were transferred to Devas. But the offerings made by Brahmanas, Kshatriyas etc. never reached to Devas. As Brahma requested Shri Krishna to sort out the problem, the latter desired Mula Prakriti to release one of her 'Kalas' or features and Prakriti materialised the Dahika Shakti of Agni in the form of **Swaha Devi.** Brahma suggested Swaha Devi to marry Agni Deva, but she was reluctant to do so as her intense desire was to wed Shri Krishna and none else; she performed severe Tapasya and Shri Krishna advised her to marry Agni Deva for the time being and wait till the end of Varaha Kalpa when she would be be reborn as Devi Nagnajiti, the daughter of King Nagnajit. As advised, Swaha Devi married Agni and gave birth to three famous sons named 'Dakshinaagni', 'Garhapatyagni' and 'Ahavaneeyaagni.' Meanwhile, Rishis, Munis, Brahmanas, Kshatriyas etc. came to practise the pronounciation of Swaha Mantra and lasting arrangement of food for Devas had been made eversince. In fact, those 'havishyas' / 'Ahutis' made to Agni without the Swaha Mantra is like a snake without poison, a Brahmana without the knowledge of Veda, a woman who has to devotion to her husband, a person without 'Vidya' (education) and a tree which does not bear fruits. Worship of Swaha Devi thus continued with the Mula Mantra: Om Hreem Shreem Vahnijaayai Devyai Swaha and formal puja with Shodashopachaaraas or the Sixteen Services The Sixteen Sacred names of Swaha Devi are as follows: Swaha, Aadyaa, Prakrutyamsha, Mantratantranga Rupini, Mantraphaladaatri, Jagaddhaatri, Sati, Siddhiswarupa, Siddha, Sadaa Nrunaam Siddhidaa, Hutaashaadaahikaa Shakti, Hutaashaa Praanaa-dhika Rupini, Samsaara saararupa, Ghora samsaara taarini, Deva jeevana rupa and Devaposhana kaarini. Recital of these names would bestow Siddhis; the persons concerned are also shielded against Anga heenata, Bharyaa heenata and Putra heenata (physical disablity, dearth of wife or deficiency of progeny respectively).

Swadha Devi is an enricher of 'Pitru Trupti' and 'Shraddhaas'. At the time of Srishti, Brahma created seven Pitaras (Kardama, Pulaha, Kulah, Bhrigu, Bharadwaja, Marichi and Angira) and their descendants of whom four were 'Murtimaans' (with Form) and three in the form of 'Tejas'. The daily duties of Brahmanas include Trikaala Sandhya, Shraaddha, Tarpana, Balivaishwa Deva, and Veda Pathana. Also 'Tarpanaanta Snaana, Shraddha paryanta Pujana and Trikaala Sandhyaanta Ahnika Karma are the duties as prescribed by 'Shrutis'. Brahma stipulated 'Shraddha Vidhana'/ procedure including the material to be used etc. but the food oblations to Pitrus by Brahmanas never reached them properly and the Pitras complained to Brahma and as in the case of Swaha Devi, Mula Prakriti manifested from one of her Amshas another Devi Swadha like white Champaka with the features of Vidya, Guna, Buddhi and Shuddhi or Knowledge, Characteristics, Temperament and Purity respectively similar to Lakshmi Devi. Brahma declared Swadha Devi as the wife of Pitras, just as Swaha Devi in the case of Agni. In respect of 'Vastu daana'and offerings to Devatas at Yagnas / Homas through Agni Deva, the Mantra suffix Swaha is to be recited, offerings to Pitras are to be suffixed with the Mantra viz. Swadhaana. Here again, offerings to Pitras by way of Tarpanas and Shraddhaas are invalid without the suffix Mantra viz. Swadhaana. Swadhaa Swadhaa Swadheytyevam Trisandhyam yah pathennarah, Priyaam vineetaam sa labhet Saddhvi putrah gunaanvitam, Pitruunaam Pranatulyaa twam Dwija jeevana rupini, Shradhhadhishthaatru Devi cha Shraddhaadeenaam phalapradaa/ (Those who recite the Sacred name of 'Swadha, Swadha, Swadha' at the time of Trikaala Sandhya would be bestowed with a loving and loyal wife as also well behaved children. Devi! You are the 'Prana Tulya' to Pitaras and the 'Jeevana Swarupa' of Brahmanas, being the 'Adhishthaatri'of 'Shraaddhas'; it is through your kindness that Shraddhas and Tarpanas become successful. You provide 'Tushti' (satisfaction) to Pitras, Preeti (fulfilment) to Dwijas and 'Abhivruddhi' to 'Grihastis' or house-holders). Maharshi Narayana further advised Sage Narada about the Mula Mantra of Swadha Devi viz. Om Hreem Shreem Kleem Swadhaa Devyai Swahaa. After invoking the Devi with the Mantra, Brahmanas perform Puja, Stuti and prostration to seek the blessings of Pitru Devas.

Maharshi Narayana narrated to Narada about the background of Gopika Susheela of Rasamandali of Goloka. She was deeply desirous of Shri Krishna and Devi Radha was annoyed and asked Susheela to leave Goloka. Almost instantly Shri Krishna disappeared and Devi Radha was confused and prayed to

him saying that despite her being with him for long, she could not overcome the temperament of a woman. As though he pardoned Devi Radha, Shri Krishna re-appeared at Goloka. Meanwhile, Devi Susheela assumed the name of **Dakshina Devi** and performed harsh Tapasya to Shri Hari and the latter blessed her and handed her over to Brahma who in turn declared her as the wife of Yagna Deva. 'Phala' was the son of Dakshina and Yagna. Besides Yagnas, any Sacred Karya-be it a Vrata, a Mangala charya, a devotional task of any description needs to be rewarded as Dakshina to Brahmanas concerned immediately; other wise the Punya Karma is stated to be a futile exercise and gets registered as an enrty into the stomach of 'Bali'! Dakshina Devi is stated to have materialised from the right shoulder of Devi Lakshmi as an important 'Kala' (feature) and is a formaliser and the fulfilling agent of any Punya Karya! Worship to Dakshina Devi by way of Dhyana by the Mula Mantra - *Om Shreem Kleem Hreem Dakshinayai Swaha*-followed by Padya, Arghya, Naivedya etc. would grant Vidya to Vidyaheen, Dhan to Dhanaheen, Bhumi to Bhumiheen, Bharya to Bharyaheen, Putra to Putraheen etc. Those who face difficulties, dangers and complexities would be freed by reciting the Mula Mantra for a month and the beneficial results would be sure to folllow.

Shashthi Devi is a Matrika Devi called Devasena, the consort of Kartika and is also known as 'Balada' and 'Vishnu Maya'. Her natural characteristic is to provide shield to children by way of security, development, intelligence, good health, happiness and long-life. King Privavrata, the illustrious son of Swayambhu Manu by deftly divided the World into Sapta Dwipas performed a tough Yagna to secure a son. When his wife got pregnant, the King was delighted and anxiously awaited the birth of a son, but alas his wife delivered a still child. The King took the dead child to the cremation ground, cremated him and desired to take away his life too. All of a sudden, there was a flood of light and a Devi appeared who said that she was Shashthi, the wife of Kartikeya also called Devasena, the Manasa Kanya of Brahma Deva and a Matrika born out of the sixth Amsha of Prakriti Devi. She revived the dead boy to life and commanded him that he should perform worship to her as also popularise her puja among his subjects, that his revived son would be named Suvrata who would perform hundred Ashwamedha Yagnas, and that he would become a Supreme Monarch. King Priyavrata declared Shashthi Puja on the sixth day of every new child, besides observing Shukla Shasthi of every month for her worship. Besides, the twenty first day after each child's birth would be the day of Nama Karan and again on the day of 'Annaprashan'too, there would be celebrations in the name of the Devi who indeed was the provider of security and good health to the new-borns throught out their childhood. Devi Shashthi's worshipped was popularised in each household with the Mula Mantra japa viz. Om Hreem Shashthi Devavyai swaha and formal Puja with Stotra, dhupa, deepa, Naivedya etc. Devi Shashti's constant puja provides excellent health and Vidya to all the growing children. Also those who have no children would be blessed with good offspring who again are granted growth, health and happiness.

Mangala Chandi literally denotes competent and capable Provider of Auspiciousness. In the Manu Vamsha (Lineage), there was a famous Emperor named Mangala who ruled Sapta Dwipas (Seven Islands). He always prayed to Mangala Chandi of Mula Prakriti's manifestation of Durga, who was an 'Ishta Devata' of women-folk. Mangala Chandi too was of the Amsha of Bhumi who was the mother of Mangala Graha. When Shankara encountered a problem with Tripurasura who felled the aeroplane by which the former was travelling, Bhagavati Durga assured Shankara that Vishnu would take the form of 'Vrishabha' (bull) and with her grace would kill Tripurasura. Then Shankara out of gratitude worshipped Durga Devi in the form of Mangala Chandi with the Mula Mantra Om Hreem Shreem Kleem Sarva pujyai Devi Mangala Chandikey Aim Kruum Phat Swaha and worshipped her with Dhyana, Padya, Arghya, Achamana, Vastra, Pushpa, Chandana, Naivedya, Bali, Alamkara, Maala, Pishtaka, Madhu, Sudha and a variety of fruits. Parama Shiva also complemented Mangala Chandi with the Stotra saying: 'Bhagavati Mangala Chandi! You are destroyer of evils and difficulties providing a full shield and protection to all the Bhaktas. You are the Mangala Daksha, Shubha Mangala Chandika, Mangala, Mangalaarha and Sarva Mangala Mangalya! You are the Mangala Devi of Mangalas and the Epitome of Mangala or Proptiousness. Do grant us of everything that is positive and auspicious! May my prayers in Tuesdays be fruitful and rewarding!'

Mansa Devi is famed Deity who has been the constant fulfiller of genuine wishes of her devotees was the mind-born daughter of Kashyapa Muni. She is addressed by several epithets as 'Vaishnavi Devi'as the Meditator for Three Yugas and when Parameshwara appeared before her he called her 'Jaratkaaru' seeing her torn vastra and emaciated body; he also blessed her that she would be woshipped as a Deity in Swarga, Brahmaloka, Bhumandala and Paataala; as she was of extreme 'Goura Varna' with extraordinary beauty and grace, she came to be called 'Gagadgouri'; as she was trained in the discipline of devotion by Parama Shiva, she is 'Shaivi'; since she was the unique devotee of Bhagavan Vishnu, she has been called 'Vaishnavi'; as she rescued innumerable snakes in the Sarpa Yagna performed by King Janamejaya of Padanvas of Maha Bharata as a retribution against a snake called Daksha killed his father Parikshit, she came to be called 'Nageswari' and 'Nagabhagini'; as she was a destroyer of 'Visha' (Poison), she came to be named as 'Vishahaari'; as she secured Yoga Siddhi from Shiva Deva, she is called'Siddha Yogini'; as Shiva bestowed 'Mrita Sanjeevani Vidya' or the Mantra Vidhana of reviving the Dead, she got the description of 'Maha Jnaana Yukta'; she is also called 'Jaratkaaru Priya' or the beloved wife of Jaratkaaru Muni and also as 'Astika Maata' or mother of Sage Astika. (Jaratkaarur Jagadgouri Manasaa Siddha Yogini, Vaishnavi Naagabhagini Shaivi Nageswari tathaa/ Jaratkaarupriya Astika Maataa Vishaharoticha, MahaaJnaana yuktaa chaiva saa Devi Vishwa -pujitaa/ Dwaadashaitaani nammani pujakaaley tu yah pathet, Tasya Nagabhayam naasti tasya Vamshodbhavasya cha/) If a person is afraid of snakes, or resides in a place where serpents move about or are infested with snakes, recital of the above Stanza would instantly run away from that Place; those who recite the Stotra ten lakh times would attain Naga Siddhi and would become immune from snake bites and his / hers body would be poison-proof. That person could even play with snakes and hang them around their necks! They would also attain Siddhis like Nagasana and Naga Talpa. Mansa Devi's Mula Mantra is *Om Hreem Shreem Kleem Aim* Manasa Devyai Swaha/ A devotee who performs worship to her with this Mantra followed by the sixteen services of Dhyana, Pushpa, Gandha, Naivedya etc. especially on Ashadha Sankranti Panchami day -Naga Pachami day- would certainly become Dhanavaan, Putravaan and Kirtimaan.

An incident related to Sadhvi Manasa was that her husband Sage Jaratkaru was resting on her lap one evening and she had to disturb him since it was time to perform Sandhyo -pasana; the Muni cursed her to give birth in a Chandala family but when she gave the reason of disturbing him was known, he tried to curse Surya who said that he had to do his daily duty. When Manasa cried, he lightened the curse that she could meet him any time and blessed that an excellent son of Brahma Gyan, Tapaswi and Vishnu Bhakta would be born; by the grace of Shri Krishna, the Manasa- Jaratkaru were able to meet as and when desired and they gave birth toAstika. Eventually, Deity Surabhi, the Divine Mother of the Vamsa of Cows appeared and bestowed her milk to Manasa and by her grace she attained Swarga Loka!

### Devi Radha-Her origin at Goloka, birth on Earth & return and Puja Vidhan

Maharshi Narayana narrated to Narada Muni that Maha Deva explained to Devi Parvati about the 'Praadurbhaava' and 'Mahatwa' (Origin and Magnificence) of Devi Radha. Maha Deva said: *Radhaa bhajeti Shri Krishnam sa cha taam cha parasparam, Ubhayoh Sarvasaamyam cha sadaa Santho vadanti cha/* (Devi Radha worships Shri Krishna and Shri Krishna worships Radha; they both are the 'Araadhya' and 'Araadhaka' (worship and the worshipped) respectively. The Great Learned Experts are convinced and strongly believed that both Radha and Krishna are unified as also the counterpart concepts. Radha emerged from the words of 'Ra' denoting 'Raasa' and 'Dhaavan' denoting attraction or magnetism for the beloved (Shri Krishna). Another interpretation would be: Mere pronouncement of the 'Shabda' (word) 'Raa' would readily attract the unobtainable 'Mukti' and pronounciation of the word 'Dhaa' would instantly chase Shri Krishna's sacred feet! A simpler interpretation of the word 'Raa' denotes accomplishment and the word 'Dha'means 'Nirvana' or 'Moksha'. Maha Deva further explained that from the hair roots of Radha emerged innumerable 'Gopis' and from Shri Krishna's 'romakupas' emerged

as many 'Gopas'. From the left side of Radha was materialised Devi Lakshmi who was the 'Adhishtatri'or Sovereign of 'Sashya' or Crops; Griha Lakshmi of house-holds; the Four armed Maha Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu of Vaikuntha and the Rajyalakshmi of Kingships. Radha herself resides in Krishna's own chest and is the 'Adhistatri' of Krishna's very existence, but for the curse of Sudama, due to which she had to descend from Goloka to Bhuloka as the daughter of Vrishabhunu Gopa and his wife Kalaavati. When once Radha was angry with Krishna during their love-hate dialogue objecting to Krishna's tolerance of Viraja Gopi's open declaration of love for Krishna, Sudama Gopa intervened and Radha therefore cursed him to become an 'Asura' viz. Shankhachuda the wife of Tulasi, and Radha received Sudama's return curse to become Radha on Earth. Vrishabhanu's wife Kalaavati gave birth to Yoga Maya Vayu alias Radha. As Radha grew up, her parents decided to marry her off to Rayana, but at the time of wedding, Maya Radha was materialised and the real Radha diappeared. In the name of security, the newly-born Krishna was transferred across the River Yamuna for the fear of King Kamsa from Mathura; Rayana was the brother of Devi Yashoda who was married to Maya Radha. Real Radha appeared at Pushkar Tirtha since Brahma performed long time Tapasya for her and blessed him; after a little stint at Brindavan at Rasa leelas with the human Krishna, the Real Radha who made hazy appearances at Brindavana;s 'rasaleelas' with Krishna left forTirtha Yatras for hundred years left for Goloka, while meanwhile the human form of Shri Krishna lightened of the burden on Earth by killing several Danavas inhuman forms like Kamsa, Shishupala etc. Prajapati Drona was reborn as Nanda and Yashoda who had the good fortune of parenthood of Shri Krishna; Maharshi Kashyapa was born as Vasudeva and Aditi as Devaki, while Kalavati became Radha Devi's mother and Vrishabhanu was Vasudama Gopa.

The famed Dhruva of Manu Vamsha had a noted son called King Utkal who performed several Yagnas and Brahma himself gave him the title of Suyagna. At one of the Yagnas, there was an excellent congregation of Maharshis like Santkumaras, Pulaha, Pulastya, Pracheta, Bhrigu, Marichi, Kashyapa and so on. Into this great 'Sabha' walked in an ill-dressed Brahmana called Sutapa and the King was not quite enthusiastic and did not attend to him in reverence. The Brahmana Muni was hurt and annoyed as also gave him a curse that his wealth and Kingship would be lost due to the King's indifferent attitude. One by one the Maharhis in the Court supported the Brahmana Muni and passed their adverse comments too. The King begged of the unqualified pardon of Sutapa and advised the highly remorseful Suyagna to worship Maha Devi Radha with Dhyana, Stuti, Kavacha, Mantra and the formal Puja comprising 'Shodaposhacharas' who could only reverse Brahmana 'Shaapa' (curse).He taught the Mula mantra viz. *OM SHRI RADHAYAI SWAHA* and perfomed formal Puja after Dhyana as follows: *Shweta champaka varnaabhaam Koti chandra Sama prabhaam*,

Sharatpaavarna chandraasyaam Sharat Pankaja lochanaam/

Sushreyneem sunatimbaam cha pakka bimbaadharaam varaam/

Muktaapankti vinidyaikadantapankti manoharaam,

Ishadbhaasya prasannasyaam Bhaktaanugraha kaataraam/

Vahni shuddhaamshukaadaanaam ratnamaalaavibhushitaam/

Ratna keyuara valayaam ratna manjeeraranjitaam,

Ratna kundala yugmeyna vichitrena viraajataam/

Suryaprabhaa pratikruti gandasthala viraajitaam/

Amulya ratna nirmaana graiveya vibhushitaam,

Sadratnanirmaana kireeta makutojjvalaam/

Rataagaleeya samyuktaam ratna paashaka shobhitaam/

Vibhrateem kabareebharam Maalati maala bhushitaam/

Rupaadhistaatru Deveem cha Gajendramanda gaamineem/

Gopobhih Suprima abischa sevitaam Shweta chaamaryaih,

Kasturi vindubhih Saadbhramadhas chandana bindunaa/

Sindura bindunaa chaaruseemantaathahojjvalaam,

Raasey Raasewara yutaam Radhaam Raseswareem bhajey!

After the Dhyana, the 'Puja Krama' to Radha Devi includes the Sixteen Services viz. Asana, Vastra, Padya, Arghya, Gandha, Chandana, Dhupa, Deepa, Pushpa, Snaana, Bhushana, Naivedya, Tambula, Jala, Madhuparka and Shayya. Pujas to eight 'Nayikas' also need to be performed and these are Malavati in East, Madhavi in Agneya, Ratnamala in South, Susheela in Nairuti, Shashikala in west, Parijata in Vayavyakona, Padmavati in North and Sundari in Ishana kona. These pujas concluded, there should a Parihara Mantra by way of Stuti in Saama Veda manner:

Twam Devi jagataam Mataa Vishnu Mayaa Sanaatani,

Krishna praanaadhi Dvi cha Krishna Praanaadhika Shubhaa/

Krishna prema mayi Shaktih Krishna Sowbhagya rupini,

Krishna bhakti pradey Raadhey Namatey Mangalapradey/

Adyame saphalam janma jeevanam saarthakam mama,

Pujitaasi mayaa saa yaa Shri Krishnena pujitaa/

Krisha Vakshasi yaa Radhaa Sarva Sowbhagya samyutaa,

Raasey Raaseswari rupaa Vrindey Vrindaavaney Vaney/

Krishna piiyaacha Golokey Tulasi kaananey tu yaa,

Champaavati Krishnasangey kreedaa champaka kaananey/

Chandraavali Chandra – vaney Shatashringey Sateeticha,

Viraaja darpahantri cha virajaa tata kaananey/

Padmavati Padmavaney Krishnaa Krishna sarovarey,

Bhadraa kunja kuteerey cha Kaamyaa vai Kaamyakey vaney/

Vaikunthecha MahaLakshmi varni Naraayanorasi,

Ksheeradey Sindhu kanyaa cha Martyai Lakshmirharipriya/

Sarva Swargey Swarga Lakshmirdevaduhkha vinaashani,

Sanaatani Vishnu maayaa Durgaa Shankara vakshasi/

Savitri Veda maataacha kalayaa Brahmavakshasi,

Kalayaa Dharma patni twam Naranaraayana prasuh/

Kalayaa Tulasi twam cha Gangaa Bhuvana Paavani,

Lomakupodbhavaa gopyah Kalaamshaa Rohini ratih/

Kalaa kalaamcharupaacha Shatarupaa Shachee Ditih,

ditirdeva maataa cha twatkalaamsha Hari Priyaa/

Devyasha Muni patnischa twatkalaa kalayaa shubhey,

Krishna bhaktim Krishna daasyam dehimey Krishna pujitey/

Yevam krutwaa pareehaaram Stutwaa cha Kavacham patheth,

Puraakrutam Stotrametadbhakti daasya pradam Shubham/

Those who recite the above Radha Stuti for a year would bestow many-sided boons of attaining wealth, progeny, health, and complete contentment in life and Goloka Prapti subsequently. Indeed, constant 'Radhopaasana' provides Sampurna Tirtha Snaan, all kinds of Daanaas, performance of several Vratas, Prithvi Parikramana Phala, many Yagna diksha grahana, protection of Satya and Dharma, Nitya Krishna Seva, Chaturveda pathanaa phala.

### 'Durga's 'Shodasanaama Vyaakhya', Puja, Stotra and Kavacha

Devi Durga's sixteen names viz. Durga, Narayani, Ishaana, Vishnu Maya, Shiva, Sati, Nitya, Satya, Bhagavati, Saavarni, Sarva Mangala, Ambika, Vaishnavi, Gauri, Parvati and Sanatani. Bhagavan Vishnu annotated the above names: In the word Durga + 'aa', the shabda 'aa' stands for 'hanta' or demolisher; in other words Durga demolishes Daityas, Maha Vighna, Bhava bandhana, Karma, Shoka, Duhkha, Naraka, Janma / birth, Yamadanda, Maha Bhaya and Atyanta Roga or extreme illnesses. Narayani denotes kirti (fame), teja (radiance), rupa (excellent Form) and guna (characteristics). The break-up of the word Ishaana is Ishaan + 'aa'; Ishaan indicates 'Siddhis'and 'aa' stands for 'Provider'. Vishnu Maya refers to the Thick Cover of Maya or illusion created by Bhagavan Vishnu at the time of Creation of the Universe. Shiv+ aa refers to Durga who is bestower of Shiv / 'Kalyana' or propitiousness. Sati denotes the Better Half of Shiva, Pativrata and the epitome of Sadbuddhi / excellent outlook. Durga is Nitya or Everlasting as is 'Paramatma'. Satya is the Everlasting Truth like Paramatma is. Bhagavati denotes the one who is the emblem Bhaga (blessing). Saavarni provides uniform qualities to all Beings in Srishti from Brahma downward. Sarva Mangala is the Embodient of Priopitiousness. Durga is Ambika or the Universal Mother. Vaishnavi is the Shakti of Durga Devi. Durga is Gauri as she has Goura Varna; also she possesses Parama Shakti; Shiva is her Guru as well as Shri Krishna. She is *Parvati* or Parvata Raja Putri and the Adhishtaana Devata of 'Parva'/Festivities. Sanatani denotes 'Sanaa' or Sarvada and 'tani' or Vidyamaan.

Paramatma Shri Krishna worshipped Devi Durga at the time of Srishti at Goloka in the Raasa mandali of Brindavana for the first time. At the second time, Brahma worshipped as the whole Universe was in the grip of fear due to the Daityas Madhu and Kaitabha. Shiva worshipped Durga at the third time when he had to encounter Tripurari. Indra performed 'Aradhana' to Devi Bhagavati as he was dethroned due to Durvasa Muni's curse and Rajya Lakshmi deserted Swargaloka. Eversince then, Munindras, Siddhendras, Devatas and others had been worshipping Devi Durga to accomplish their own ends. At the beginning of Dwiteeya Parardha, there was a King called *Surata* in the lineage of Dhruva who lost his Kingdom to another King called Nanidi and took shelter from the Ashram of Muni Medhasa. Meanwhle a Vaishya called Samadhi also sought shelter form the Muni since, Samadhi's wife and sons were unscrupulous and turned Samadhi out from his house. The Muni taught the Durga Puja Vidhana, Stotra, Kavacha and Mula Mantra to both the fugitives, one from his Kingdom and another from his own house. Prakriti Devi was pleased and bestowed Suratha his Kingdom, Manutva after his life. Vaishya was asked as to what could be bestowed to him; did he desire Siddhis, or Manutwa, Indratwa, Amaratwa aor even Brahmatwa! Samadhi replied that he did not know what the best was for him but she might please bestow the best of boons. She said that the best she could offer was what even Devarshis would not be able to achieve viz. Golokadham and Shri Krishna and there could be nothing beyond it! Devi said:

Smaranam Vandanam Dhyaana -marchanam Guna kirtanam,

Shravanam Bhaavanam Sevaa Krishney Sarva -nivedanam/

Etayeva Vaishnavaanaam Navadhaa Bhakti lakshanam,

Janma mrityu jaraa vyaadhi yama taadana khandanam/

[The nine features of Vaishnava Bhakti are Bhagavan Shri Krishna's Smarana (memorising), Vandana (greeting), Dhyaana (meditation), Pujana (worship), Guna Kirtana (extolling His qualities), Shravana (hearing), Bhavana (introspection), and Seva (service)] Having said this, Bhagavati Prakriti Devi disappeared and Samadhi Vaishya left for Pushkara Tirtha and turned out to be a Krishna daasa. King Suratha practised Para Prakriti's Aradhana.

Maharshi Narayana then narrated Krishna's Stotra to Devi Durga to Narada Muni:

Twameva Sarva janani Mula Prakritireeswari/

Twamevaadyaa Srishti vidhow Swecchayaa Trigunaatmika/

Karyaartha Sagunaa twam cha Vastuto Nirgunaa swayam,

Parabrahma Swarupaa twam Satyaa Nithyaa Sanaatani/

Tejah swarupaa Paramaa Bhaktaanugraha vigrahaa,

Sarwa Swarupaa Sarveshaa Sarvaadhaaraa Paratparaa/

Sarva beeja swarupaacha Sarva pujyaa Niraashrayaa,

Sarvajnaa Sarvatobhadraa Sarva mangala Mangalaa/

Sarwa Buddhi Swarupaacha Sarva Shakti Swarupini,

Sarva jnaana pradaa Devi Sarvajnaa SarvaBhavini/

Twam Swaahaa Devadaaney cha Pitrudaaney Swadhaa Swayam,

Dakshinaa sarva daaney cha Sarva Shakti Swarupini/

Nidraa twamcha Dayaa twam cha Trishnaa twamcha Manah Priyaa,

Kshukshaantih Shaantireeshaa cha Kantih Srishtischa Shasvati/

Shraddhaa Pushtischa tandraa cha Lazza Shobhaa Dayaa tathaa,

Sataam Sampadsarwa rupaa cha vipattirasaytaamiha/

Preeti Rupaa Punyavantaa Paapinaam Kalahaankuraa,

Shaswatkarmamayi Shaktih Sarvadaa Sarva jeevinaam/

Devebhyah Swapadodaatri Dhaaturdhaatri kripaamayi,

Hitaaya Sarva Devaanaam Sarvaasura vinaashini/

Yoga nidraa Yoga rupaa Yogadaatri cha Yoginaam,

Siddhi Swarupaa Siddhaanaam Siddhi daa Siddha yogini/

Brahmaani Maheswaricha Vishnu maayaa cha Vaishnavi,

Bhadradaa Bhadra Kaalicha Sarva loka bhayankari/

Graamey Graamey Graama Devi Gruhey Devi Grihey Grihey, Sataam kirtih Pratishthaa cha ninda twamasataam sadaa/ Maha Yuddhey Mahaa Maari Dushta samhaara rupini, R akshaa Swarupa Sishtaanaam Maateva Hitakaarini/ Vandya Pujya Stutaa twamcha Brahmaadeenaam cha Sarvadaa, Brahmanya rupaa Vipraanaam Tapasyaacha Tapaswanaam/ Vidyaa Vidyavataam twam cha Buddhibuddimataam sataam, Meghaasmriti Swarupaacha Pratibhaa Prati bhaavataam/ Raajnaam Prataaparupaa cha vishaam Vaanijya rupineem/ Srashtow Srushiswarupaa twam Rakshaa rupaa cha paalaney/ Tathaantey twam Mahamaari Vishwasya Vishva Pujitey, Kaaala raatrir mahaaraatrir moharaatri scha Mohini/ Duratyaya mey Maayaa twam yayaa Sammohitam jagat, Yayaa mugdho hi Vidwaamscha Moksha maargam na pashyati/ Ityaatmanaa krutam Stotram Durgaa Durgayaa Durga naashanam, Pujaa kaaley pathedyo hi siddhirbhayati yaanchhitaa/

(Devi! Sarvajanani, Mula Prakriti Ishwari, Adya Shakti in Srishti; You are Triguna -mayi but assume Sagunas as per needs but basically 'Nirguna'; You are the Truth, the Everlasting, the most Ancient Parabrahma Swarupa and the Most Radiant; but you assume varied Forms as per the imagination and descriptions of Bhaktas! You are Sarwa Swarupa, Sarveswari, Sarwaadhaara, Paraatpara, Sarwa beeja swarupa, Sarwa Pujya, Niraashrayaa, Sarvajnaa, Sarvatobhadra, Sarva Mangala Mangalaa, Sarwa Buddhi Swarupa, Sarwa Shakti Rupini, and Sarwa jnaanapradaa. You are of the Swarupa of Swaaha to enable 'havishya daana' to Devaas; the Swarupa of Swadhaa to pass on Shraaddha and Tarpanas to Pitaras and of Dakshina Swarupa at all kinds of Sacred 'Karyas' including 'Daana Yajnaas'! You are the Nidra Devi, Daya Devi, Trishna /thirst, Kshudha /hunger, Kshama /Patience, Shanti /Peace, Ishwari, Kanti / Illumination, Shashwati / the Permanent, Shraddhaa /fortitude, Pushti/ physical strength, Tandra /fatigue, Lajja / disgrace, Shobha /brilliance, and Daya / mercy.Devi! You are the 'Sampatti' or prosperity to 'Satpurushas'/ virtuous persons and 'Vipatti'for 'Dushtas'. Even to Brahma, you are the 'Dharana-Poshana'/ Preserver and Promoter. You ensure that the balance of 'Samsara' is maintained by destroying the Asuras / the Evil and encourage Devas/ the Virtue; You are the Yoga Nidra, the awarder of Yoga phal to Yogis, Siddhi to Siddhaas, and thus the Embodiment of Siddhi and Yoga. You are the Brahmaani, Maaheswari, Vishnu Maya, Vaishnavi, Bhadraayani and Bhadra Kaali. You are the 'Graama Devi'/ Deity of Villages, 'Griha Devi'/ the Resident Deity of Households. In Maha Yuddhaas / Great Battles, you are the 'Dushta samhaarini'/ the annihilator of the wicked and to Sishta Purushas / the Protector and Unique Mother-Figure of the Righteous. You provide Brahmanatwa to Brahmanas, Tapasya to Tapaswis, Vidya to Vidwaans, Buddhi to Buddhimaans, Medha / intellect and memory power to the Intellectuals, Pratibha / mental agility to Buddhishaalis, Valour to Kings, Business Skills to Vaishyaas, and physical strength and well being to Shudras. At the time of Destruction, You shatter the Universe as 'Mahamaari', 'Kaalaraatri', and Maha Maya or the Great Deluge!) Sincere recital of the above 'Durgama Sankata Naasha Stotra' extolled by Shri Krishna to Durga Devi would most certainly fulfil any desire of the Reciter. If a woman without a child, or delivers a dead or deformed child recites or hears the Stotra for a year, she would definitely give birth to an excellent boy. If a person in imprisonment languishing in

custody recites the 'Sankata naasha Stotra' even for a month, he or she would be freed with grace. Similarly, persons suffering from incurable diseases; differences of opinions or unending quarrels; house-fires; robberies or natural disasters or difficulties of any description would smoothly overcome such situations as hard as even death!Bhagavan Narayana then imparted the following 'Maha Durlabha Kavacha of Durga' (very difficult to secure Shield) to Narada Muni; by wearing this Shield, Bhadra Kaali killed Raktabija; Indra regained Rajya Lakshmi and his lost Indratwa; Mahaakaal became a Chirajeevi and Dharma Purusha, Nandi became a Maha Jnaani; Parashu Rama attained invinciblity and rooted out the then Kshatriyas who were most hated at one time; and Durvasa Muni was blessed as an equivalent in his powers as Maha Deva himself! The following Kavacha Shlokas protect and empower each body part of its Reciter and provide strength, mental power and 'Jeevan Mukti' or Salvation in one's own life!

### **Durga Kavacham:**

Om Durgeti chaturyantam swaahaanto mey shirovatu,

Mantraha Shadaksharoyam cha Bhaktaanaam Kalpapaadapah,

Vichaaro naasti Vedeshu grahanecha Manomuney/

Mantragrahana maatrena Vishnu tulyo Bhavennnarah,

Mama Vaktram sadaa paatu Om Durgaayai namontatah/

Om Durgaa raksha iti cha kantham paatu sadaa mama,

Om Hreem Shreem iti Mantroyam Skandhah paatu narantaram/

Om Hreem Shreem Kleem iti pushtam cha paatu mey sarvatah sadaa,

Hreem mey Vakshahthalam paatu hastam Shimati santatam/

Om Shreem Hreem Kleem paatu sarvaangam swapney jaagaraney tathaa,

Praachyaam maam paatu Prakritih paatu Vahnai cha Chandikaa/

Dakshiney Bhadra Kaalicha Nairrutey cha Maheswari,

Vaaruney paatu Vaaraahi Vaayavyaam Sarva Mangalaa/

Uttarey Vaishnavi paatu tathaishaanaam Shiva priyaa,

Jaley sthaley chaantarikshey paatu maam Jagadambikaa/

Iti tey katitham Vatsa! Kavacham cha sudurlabham,

Yasmai kasmai na daatavyam praktavyam na kasyachit/

Gurumbhyarchya Vidhivadstraa – lankaara chandanaih,

Kavacham dhaarayedyastu sopi Vishnurna samshayah/

Bhramaney sarva Tirthaanaam Prithivyaascha pradakshiney,

Yat phalam labhatey lokasta detadbhaaraney Muney/

Pancha laksha japyenaiva siddhamedbhaved dhruvam,

Lokamcha Siddha kavacham naasrtam vidhyati samkatey/

Na tasya Mrityurbhavati jaley Vahney Vished dhruvam,

Jeevanmukto bhavet sopi Sarva siddheshvarah swayam/ Yadi syat Siddha kavacho Vishnutulyo bhaved dhruvam/

(May this Mantra of Six Aksharas / Letters which are like a 'Kalpa Vriksha' viz. 'Om Durgayai swaha' protect my head. There was no mention in Vedas about this and as soon as the Mantra is instructed, the person concerned to whom it is taught is as good as Vishnu himself! Let the Mantra 'Om Durgayai Namah' guard my face. Let the Mantra 'Om Durgey Raksha' safeguard my throat. May the Mantra 'Om Hreem Shreem' protect my shoulders always. May the Mantra 'Om Hreem Shreem Kleem' save the rear part of my body! Let the Mantras 'Hreem' protect my chest and 'Shreem' my hands. May the Mantra 'Om Shreem Hreem Kleem' keep my entire body safe while I am awake or asleep. Prakriti Devi! Please save me from my Eastern side. Chandika Devi! Keep me secure from the Agneya side. May Bhadrakaali save me from the Southern direction, Maheswari from Nirruti kona, Vaaraahi from the Western direction, Sarva Mangala from Vayavya kona, Vaishnavi from North, Shiva Priya from Ishanakona, and Jagadambika from water, Bhumi and Sky. Vatsa! I have given you this Kavacha which is hard to secure and this should not be given away to each and everybody nor should be recited before any body. One should formally worship Guru with Vastra / clothing, Aabhushana/ ornament and Chandana and then only wear the Kavacha as this is as good as Vishnu Himself. This gives the 'Phala' of performing Sampurna/ complete Tirtha Yatras and full circling of Prithvi. This Sacred Kavacha has to be recited five lakh times to attain its fruition or Siddhi. Once a person secures Siddhi, no Astra could demolish him; he could enter water and Agni with ease; and he would the status of 'Jeevan Mukta'). After the recitals of the Durga Stotra and Kavacha, formal Durga Puja is performed with Asana, Vasana, etc. as also to Ashta Nayakas viz. Ugrachanda, Prachanda, Chandogra, Chandanayika, Atichanda, Chanda, and Chandavati as also to Ashta Shaktis viz. Brahmani, Vaishnavi, Roudri, Maheswari, Narasimhi, Vaaraahi, Indraani and Kaumari.

# 'Ganeshaakhyaana'-'Utpatthi', Shani Vikshana, Kashyapa's Curse to Shiva, 'Eka Danta' due to fight with Parashurama, Ganesha Kavacha & Mahatmya

Maharshi Narayana recounted to Narada Muni the account of Ganesha commencing from his birth, the significant events that followed with impact on Universal welfare and his 'Mahatmya'. Maha Deva advised that Devi Parvati should perform a Sacred Vrata Punyaka in favour of Shri Hari which was like a 'Kalpa Vriksha' that fulfilled all kinds of desires including 'Uttama Putra Prapti'; this Vrata was the best like Ganga among Rivers, Shi Hari among Devatas, Shiva among the Vaishnavites, Brahmana among Charur Varnas, Pushkara among Tirthas, Tulasi dala among leaves, Parijata aong flowers, Ekadashi among Punya Tithis, Ravi Vara among the aweek days, Margasirsha among the Maasas, Vasanta among Ritus, Mother among the Gurus, wife among the closest relative, Mango among the fruits, Pati among Priyajanas, son among the Bandhujanas, Priya bhashan among sweets, Puranas among Kavyaas, and so on. Bhagavan Shiva appointed Sanat Kumara as the Purohit of the Vrata along several persons to acquire Puja materials and intiated the proceedings of the year-long vrata on Magha Shukla Trayodashi with the objective of securing an extraordinary male child with Vishnu's 'Amsha'. Brahma and many important Devas arrived to attend the Vrata, besides innumerable Maharshis and Rishis like Kapila, Kratu, Vasishtha, Pulaha, Atri, Gauthma, Bhrigu and arkandeya. Dharma Putra Nara-Narayanas, Dikpalakas, Devatas, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Vidyadharas and so on.Bhagavan Vishnu and Devi Lakshmi too arrived, to initiate the Maha Vrata. Vishnu Deva addressed the illustrious gathering and blessed Devi Parvati for performing this unique Vrata which woul grant her the benefit of thousand Rajasuya Yagnas and Golokanath Shri Krishna himself would be born as partial 'Amsha' to the Shiva-Parvati pair. He further declared the boy to be born would have over thousands of epithets like Ganesha the house hold word in Trilokas and as the Lord of Ganas; Vighna nighna as he would bless that no obstacles would be faced by the Performers of any deed the Worlds over; Lambodara since his Bhaktas would pamper and

offer him food specialities that he liked and his stomach would be thus elongated; Gajaanana since an elephant face would be fixed on his shoulders soon; Ekadanta as he lost one of his tusks in an encounter with Parashurama. Lord Vishnu ordained that if Ganesha were not worshipped no puja would be ever successful anywhere in the Trilokas. As the Vrata was executed perfectly as per the prescribed 'Vidhana', the illustrious guests were treated in high esteem, appropriately gifted and respectfully provided unique 'Bhojanas'. Then the question of Dakshina was raised by the Purohit Sanat Kumara for sucessfully conducting the Vrata; he said that either she parted with the Tapsya that she had been putting in all through her life or given away her husband Parama Shiva. Devi Parvati argued that if her Vrata were to be fruiltful by givng away either her Tapasya or her husband, then the vrata was not worth it, except that she would beget a son and secure Dharma! It was like performing puja to a tree by ignoring the interest of the Bhumi! A husband would be more worthy to a Pativrata than obtaining hundred sons! As Parvati was arguing like this, Vishnu offered the solution of giving away Shiva as Dakshina and got him back in exchange of cows which were of Vishnu Swarupa. Evenwhile Parvati was not satisfied the solution, Sanat Kumara performed 'Purnaahuti' of the Vrata and Maharshis recited the Swasti Mantras and the Sacred Vrata was concluded. But Parvati was none too happy about the deal suggested by Vishnu. However she offered one lakh cows in exchange of her husband, especially since Vedas underlined that the price of a cow was that of a husband. The problem was still not settled as Sanat Kumara said as to what would do with one lakh cows in place of an invaluable Shiva! Devi Parvati was non-plussed since neither she was able to secure the Vrata Phala by getting a son of Krishna Amsha as assured by Vishnu, nor could even get the 'darshan' of Shri Krishna. Just as her mind was disturbed on these lines, there descended a big blaze from the high skies like thousand Suryas and all the dignitary Deities present looked up in awe and dread; Vishnu, Brahma, Mahadeva, Dharma, Saraswati, Savitri, Lakshmi, Himalaya and various Devatas. Devi Parvati was overcome at the vision of an all compassing radiance and broke into grateful tears that after all the Vrata that she performed was indeed triumphant and that the Mula Purusha had acknowledged its success! She was literally dazed and prayed to that huge illumination and Paramatma obliged her with his physical vision for a while eventually the vision disappeared. Sanat Kumara released Shiva, gifts were given away liberally to all the invitees, excellent food was served, music and dance were displayed and Shiva and Parvati knew no bounds of joy. Meanwhile a hungry Brahmana appeared on the scene and after taking food counselled the couple about the Parama Tatwa of the Unparalelled, Ever lasting Truth and about the Most Compassionate Supreme Power and he too disappeared suddenly. Even as Parvati was utterly bewildered in that stage of heightened astonishment and shock with incidents happening so swiftly that she was in unbelievable dreams, an 'Akash Vani'was heard loudly and clearly that Shiva and Parvati should immediately reach their Mandir: The Celestial Voice said: 'Jaganmaataa! Please be composed and see for your self your own son in your Chamber; he is indeed the Goloka Pati Paratpara Shri Krishna Him self! The boy is the sweet fruit of the Magnificent Tree of the Punyaka Vrata that you had so successfully accomplished! It is that Parama Teja which the highest yogis dream of visioning; it is that Adi Purusha whom Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are constantly absorbed in with Dhyana; and it is that Punya Rasi Swarupa whose very thought dispels all Vighnas of all Beings in Trilokas who is lying playfully in your bed chamber indeed!!'

As soon as the Akashavani Devi Saraswati made the celestial announcement, the Shiva-Parvati couple made a swift dash into their Mandir, embraced the child by quick turns and gave 'Mangala Snaana'; even before the Snaana, all the Devatas, Dikpalakas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Maharshis got collected and instantly Vishnu, Brahma, Dharma and their spouses were anxiously waiting for the Darshan of the Sacred Child. Vishnu blessed the child with 'Deerghaayu'/ long life, Vignaan like that of Shiva, and 'Sarva Pujyata'/ Worship worthiness soon! Brahma said that the child's fame and Shakti be known all over at once. Maha Deva blessed his son that like himself he should become a Daata (Philanthropist), Hari Bhakta, Buddhimaan, Vidyaavaan, Punyavaan, a Jitendriya and Shanta Murti. Dharma Deva blessed to be a Dharmika / the Form of Virtue, Sarvagjna/ the All- Knowing, Dayaalu / Kind hearted, and 'Shri Hari Samaana'/ equivalent to Shri Hari. Devi blessed him to be a resident of each and every home and be

an ever charming and Powerful source of Strength to every body. Saraswati blessed him Dharana and Smarana Shakti / Memory Power, Vivechana Shakti / Thinking Power and Kavita Shakti (Power of Imagination). Veda Maata Savitri blessed that he should become a Veda Gnaani. Vasundhara (Bhu Devi) blessed Ganesha to be an emblem of Kshama (Forbearance), Sharana daata (Provider of Refuge), Ratna Sampanna (The Fund of Opulence), Vighna Rahita and Vighna naashaka (The destroyer of Obstacles). Parvati blessed Vinayaka to excel inhis father's traits as Maha Yogi, Siddha, Siddha pradaata, Shubha karaka / Giver of Auspiciousness, Mritunjaya / the Conqueror of Death and 'Atyanta Nipuna' or the Embodiment of Skills. Those who read or hear about the 'Ganesha Janma Vrittanta' are blessed in several ways: the childless would get chidren, the poor gets rich, the wifeless gets wife, the diseased gets healthy, an unfortunate woman gets fortunate, a spoilt child gets discipined, money lost gets recovered and an unhappy person finds himself extremely joyful.

Shani Vikshana: Once Devi Parvati happened to meet Lord Shaneswara the Planet and the son of Surya Deva during the Festive days of Ganesha's birth celebrations and asked him to bless the child. Shani Deva declined politely as his looks falling on a newly-born (or for that matter on any person) would not be auspicious to the child, since he was cursed by the daughter of Gandharva King called Chitraratha, to whom she was engaged as decided by his father. Unfortunately, he encountered the woman when she was about to have her bathing after menses; she cursed Shaneswara that whom soever he would see a person even by mistake would have his head cut! Parvati did not take what Shani Deva said seriously and prevailed onlim to bless Ganesha. Although Shani Deva glanced the child through the corners of his eyes, Ganesha's head droppped abruptly and Devi Parvati fainted at this sudden tragedy. The dropped head of the boy reached Goloka and Vishnu realised as to what had happened. He jumped on Garuda and flew towards North to locate any 'Praani' sleeping northward and found a bull elephant; its head was sliced with his Sudarshana Chakra and fixed the elephant head in place of the head of Ganesha and blessed the child foremost after the fxation of the elephant head and returned to Kailasa. After getting better from her faint, she found Vishnu who had completed the task of fixation of the elephant head. Meanwhile Maha Deva realised what all happened and so did Brahma, Dharma and Devatas. Vishnu blessed Ganesha and gifted his Kaustubha Mani; Brahma gifted a precious kireeta /headgear, Dharma a Ratnaabharana and all other Devatas followed suit. As Devi Parvati became exremely upset with Shaneswara, she cursed him to become 'Angaheen' but Devas requested Devi Parvati to reconsider her lightening the curse especially she took Shaneswara's warning lightly, she reduced the severity of her curse by revising it that Shaneswara might turn lame for ever.

The first puja, after Ganesha's new Rupa emerged, was executed by Vishnu and he blessed Ganesha that at each Puja, Vrata, or any Sacred Deed, the Prathama Puja must be performed to Ganesha only and garlanded him with a Vanamaala. Vishnu performed the 'nama karana' (name giving) in the presence of Devas, Maharshis and Munis; he gave eight names: *Vighnesha, Ganesha, Heramba, Gajaanana, Lambodara, Ekadanta, Shurpa-karna and Vinayaka*. Devi Parvati made Ganesha sit on a golden chair, gave 'Padya' with the holy waters of Ganga, Godavari etc.; offered Akshatas, flowers, chandana, Kasturi, Agaru Dhupa, Deepa, and Naivedya with a variety of Bhakshya, Bhojya, Lehya, Choshya and Paniyas, besides a wide range of fruits. Tri Murtis and their spouses, Devas and Devis, Menaka and Himalaya had all chanted the Mantra: *OM Shreem Hreem Kleem Ganeswaraaya Brahma ruupaaya chaaravey, Sarvasiddhi pradeshaaya Vighneshaaya Namo namah*/ Bhagavan Vishnu then recited the Sacred **Ganesha Kayacha** to Shanaischara as follows:

Samsaara mohanasyasya Kavachasya Prajapatih,

Rishirscchhandascha Brihati Devo Lambodarah Swyam/

Dharmaartha kaama moksheshu viniyogah Prakirtitah/

Sarve -shaam kavachaanaam cha saarabhutamidam Muney,

Om Gam Hum Shri Ganeshaya swaahaa mey paatu mastakam,

Dwatrimshadaksharo Mantro mey sadaavatu/

Om Hreem Kleem Shreem Gamiti cha Satatam paatu lochanam,

Taalukam paatu Vighneshah Satatam Dharani taley/

Om Hreem Shreem Kleemiti cha satatam paatu naasikaam/

Om Gaim Gam Shoorpakarnaaya Swaaha paatwadharam mama,

Dantaani taalukaam jihwaam paatu mey shodashaaksharah/

Om Lam Shreem Lambodaraayeti swaahaa gandam sadaavatu,

Om Kleem Hreem Vighnanaashaaya swaah karnam sadaavatu/

Om Shreem Gam Gajaananaayeti swaahaa skandham sadaavatu,

Om Hreem Vinaayaketi swaaha pushtam sadaavatu/

Om Kleem Hreemiti Kankaalam paatu Vakshahsthalamscha gam,

Karow Paadow sadaa paatu Sarvaangam Vighna nighnakrit/

Praachyam Lambodaram paatu Aagneyyaam Vighna naayakah,

Dakshiney paatu Vighnesho naairrutyaam paatu Gajaananah/

Paschimey Parvati putro Vaayavyaam Shankaraatmajah,

Krishnashyaamshaschottarey cha Pari purnatamasya cha/

Eshaanmekadantascha Herambah paatu chordhvatah,

Adho Ganaadhipaha paatu Sarva pujacha Sarvatah/

Swapney Jaagaaney chaiva paatu maam Yoginaam Guruh/

Iti tey kathitam Vatsa Sarvamantrougha Vigraham,

Samsaara mohanam naama Kavacham Paramaadhbhutam,

Shri Krishnena puraa dattham Golokey Raasamandaley,

Vrindaavaney vinitaaya Mahyam Dinakaratmja/

Mayaadattam cha tubhyam cha yasmai kasmai na daasyasi,

Param Varam Sarva Pujyam Sarva sankata taaranam/

Gurumabhyarchya vidhivat Kavacham Dhaarayetu yah,

Kanthevaa dakshiney baahow sopi Vishnurnasamshayah/

Ashwamedha sahasraani Vaajapeya shataanicha,

Shatalaksha Prajastopi na Mantrah Siddhi daayakah/

(This 'Samsaara Mohana Kavacha's Prajapati is Rishi, Brihati is the Chhanda, Swayam Lambodara Ganesha is Devata; Dharma, Artha, Kaama and Moksha is the 'Viniyoga'; this entire Kavacha is of great essence: Let the Mantra *Om gam hum Shri Ganeshaaya swaaha* safeguard my head; the Dwadashokshara Manta save my forehead; let *Om Hreem Kleem Shreem Gam* protect my netras / eyes; may Vighnesha protect my ear lobes; let the Mantra *Om Hreem Shreem Kleem* protect my nose; let the Mantra *Goum Gam Shurpaanyaya Swaha* guard my lips and tongue; let the Mantra *Om Lam Shreem Lambodaraaya Swaaha* secure my cheeks; may the Mantra *Om Kleem Hreem Vighna naashaaya swaaha* keep my ears safe; let *Om Shreem Gam Gajaananaaya swaahaa* secure my shoulders; may the Mantra *Om Hreem* 

Vinaayakaaya swaaha guard my rear part of my body; let *Om Kleem Hreem* protect my 'kamkaal'/ skeleton and the Mantra *Gam* save my chest. Let Vighna-nihanta provide safety to my hands, feet and the entire body! May Lambodara save my Eastern side, Vighnanayaka the Agneya side, Vighnesha the Southern side, Gajaanana the Nirruti side, Parvati putra the West, Shankaraatmaja the Vaayavya side, Shri Krishna the North, Ekadanta the Ishaana kona, Heramba the Urthwa bhaga / skyward, and Ganaadhipa the 'Adhobhaga' the underground. May the 'Yogi Guru' procect my while asleep or awake. This is how I explained the whole 'Samsara Mohana naama Kavacha'to you Suryanandana Shaneswara. This Kavacha was bestowed to me when I attended the 'raasa leela' convention at Goloka and this should be divulged to one and all. If a person wears the Kavacha after Guru Puja, it shall indeed safeguard him or her and bestows the boons of performing thousand Ashwamedha Yagnas and thousand Vaajapeya Yagnaas. The Siddhi of this Kavacha is attainable after hundred lakh japas of it.)

Kashyapa Muni's curse to Shiva: Besides the Shani Vikshana, there was another reason for Ganesha's Elephant head. Once Surya Deva attacked two demon brothers Mali and Sumali and the ever-kind Maha Deva saved the brothers by throwing his Trishul on Surya and the latter became motionless with a serious injury on his chest and his chariot fell down too. The whole Universe came to stand still, the highly frightened Devas were stunned at the happening and the World was drowned in complete darkness. The highly griefed father of Surya Deva, the powerful Kashyapa Muni, was shattered and gave a curse to Maha Deva that just as his son's chest was broken open by the Trishul, Shiva's future son too would drop off as suddenly. The momentary anger of Shiva got cooled down and from his Yogic powers recovered Surya's normalcy. The demon brothers received their retribution at once as they became victims of dreaded diseases as their limbs were dried up and they lost their strength and shine. Brahma advised that since they annoyed Surya and contracted the incurable diseases, they had to worship Surya himself and please him. He taught the remorseful demons the method of worship to Surya, his Stuti and Kavacha and regained their might and sheen. But Kashyapa Muni's curse as irretrievable and Ganesha's head had to be replaced.

Parashurama's encounter with Ganesha and loss of the latter's tusk: The famed Emperor Kartaveeryarjuna visited the Ashram of Maharshi Jamadagni as he and his huge army was tired by the dusk; the kind Maharshi treated the Emperor and army with excellent food and 'Atithya' (hospitality) becoming of their stature. The Emperor wondered as to how a Sage could afford such royal meals and generosity. The Muni explained that this was all due to the grace of Surabhi Kamadhenu. A jealous Kartaveerya desired that Surabhi was worthy of the custody of an Emperor but not a poor Muni and that Jamadagni would better give charity to him so that the huge army could be properly taken care of their food needs by Surabhi, whose security also would be provided from enemy Kings since the safety of all the Subjects of the Empire was after all his responsibilty! Jamadagni replied that Maharshis would only accept charity but not give to Emperors, that Subabhi was awarded by Indra and that neither he nor Surabhi could be given away in charity without Indra's permission, and as regards Surabhi's safety, she had adequate might and mind to conquer any enemy. As mutual arguments got heated up, Kartaveerya decided to take away the Cow by force and Surabhi was prepared for the fight when Sage Kapila at the instance of Brahma Deva prevented the altercation. But, the hurt ego of Kartaveerya propelled him to revisit the Ashram of Jamadagni and killed him with the Shakti sword gifted to him by Dattatreya. Jamadagni's wife Renuka Devi became uncontrollable and prepared herself as a Pativrata to immolate herself. Parashu Rama, the son of Jamadagni and Renuka arrived at the Ashram and took a vow not only to kill Kartaveerya but the entire race of Kshatriyas and offer Tarpan of blood to the departed soul of his father. Brahma Deva advised Parashurama to visit Shivaloka and please him with his darshan. Shiva was indeed pleased when Parashurama gave detials of his 'Pratigna' to avenge the death of his father and also root out the Kshatriya Vamsha as a whole. On hearing this Bhadra Kaali got furious but Parashu Rama broke into tears by narrating the extremities that Kartaveerya in particular and all the contemporary

Kshatriya Kings in general were assuming alarming proportions against the Brahmanas, Sages, Maharshis and the very concept of Virtue and justice. Shiva was convinced and awarded a magnificent Trailokya Vijaya Maha Kavacha, besides innumerable 'Astras'to Parashurama like Nagapasha, Pasuhpatastra, Brahmastra, Agneyastra, Narayanastra, Vayavyastra etc. After practising the Trailokya Vijaya Kavacha at Pushkara Tirtha and pleased Parama Shiva, Parashurama then started his battles with Kshatriya Kings like Matsya Raja, Suchandra, Kaalistavana, Sahasraaksha, and finally the invincible Kartaveeraarjuna who was a Symbol of Kshatriyas who were all fortified with Kavachas and blessings from several Devas and Devis, including Maha Deva himself.

It was at that moment of Glory when Parashurama avenged his father's killing and when the atrocities that thousands of Kshatriya Kings perpetrated on humanity and virtue were ended -recalling Shri Krishna's human incarnation that Narayana would take birth as and when Dharma was in jeopardy-that Parashurama desired to meet Maha Deva and Ganesha objected to the meeting! As he entered Kailasha, Parashurama witnessed Nandeswara, Mahaa Kaal, Pingalaksha, Vishalaksha, Bana, Virupaaksha, Vikataasha, Bhaskaraksha, Kaala Bharava, Ruru Bhairava, Rudraganas, Vidyadharas, Bhuta Preta Piscachas, Yogendras, Yakshas, Kimpurushas and Kinnaras. As Parashurama passed through several layers of security, finally he landed at the Place where Mahtma Ganesha stopped him. The great veneration, he greeted Ganesha and requested him to allow into the Interior of Shiva. Parashuram utilised all his tactics of justification and persuasion but Ganesha became stiffer than ever. When all kinds of requests, entreaties and prayers to Ganesha failed, Parashurama lifted his 'Parashu' and Skanda Deva intervened and tried to keep him cool. But still when Parashurama tried to force entry; Ganesha lifted his trunk, looped the latter with his trunk and encircled the hapless Parashurama round and round to show him Sapta Dwipas, Sapta Parvataas, Sapta Sagaras, Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, Swarloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka, Dhruvaloka, Gauriloka, and through him into one of the Oceans, lifted him again and showed him Vaikuntha and Goloka where he had the vision of Shri Krishna too. As this playful activity of Ganesha was in progress, the mighty Parashurama hit one of Ganesha's tusks with the 'Parashu' (axe) that Maha Deva himself gifted and the tusk fell off as blood gushed out. As this accident took place, Kartikeya ran towards his parents with fear. The resting parents were shocked and Devi Parvati's instant reaction was to kill Parashurama but being the Loka Mata restrained herself and addressed Parashurama as follows: You are born in Brahma Vamsha to one of the illustrious sons viz. Maharshi Jamadagni and also the son of Renuka of Lakshmi Amsha. You are one of the greatest devotees of Maha Deva. How did you do this to my son! Shiva Deva is your Guru since he taught the Trailokya Vijaya Kavacha and countless Astras from him. Is this the Guru Dakshina that you thought fit to give your Guru! You could have perhaps given a better Dakshina of cutting Ganesha's head instead of breaking his tusk only! My son Ganesha no doubt has the Shakti of destroying crores of cunning animals like you but was only playful with you; yet you have wantonly hurt him by breaking his tusk not as an accident but with vengeance! You may know that he is of Paramatma Shri Krishna's 'Amsha' and the Deity who receives the foremost puja all over the Universe!' As she addressed Parashurama with great restriant and reasoning, he felt ashamed of himself, greeted his Guru Shiva in his own heart and prayed to his 'Ishta Deva' Shri Krishna. Devi Parvati visioned a Brahmana boy who met her earlier at thet time of Ganesha's birth; Maha Deva too had the vision of the boy like a quick flash and disappeared. Meanhile, Vishnu appeared and analyzed the critical situation that had arisen out of the serious sin done by Parashurama since what he had was tantamount to Guru Ninda and downright betrayal of the faith that Shankara gave to his sishya! Vishnu further said that Parashurama was momentarily taken by folly as otherwise he too was like Ganesha or Kartikeya; as the Universal Deities with responsibilities like Shiva and Parvati might not impose personal angles into such happenings. Vishnu extolled Devi Parvati as follows:

 $Gane shame kadantam\ cha\ Herambam\ Vighna\ nayakam,$ 

Lambodaram Shurpakarnam Gaja Vaktram Guhaagrajam/

Naamaashtartham cha Putrasya Shrunu Maata Haripriye,

Stotraanaam saarabhutam cha Sarva Vighna haram param/ Jnaanaartha vaachako gascha nascha nirvaana vaachakah, Tayoreesham param Brahma Ganesham pranamaamyaham/ Ekashabdah pradhaanaartho dantascha Balavaachakah, Balam pradhaanam sarvasmaadeka dantam namaamyaham/ Deenaartha vaachako hescha rambah palaka vaachakah, paripaalakam deenaanaam Herambah pranamaamyaham/ Vipattha vaachako vighno Nayakah khandanaartha- kakah, Vipat khandana kaarakah namaami Vighnanaayakam/ Vishnudatthaaischa naivedyairyasya Lambodaram puraa, Pitraa datthaaischa vividhairvandey Lambodaram cha tam/ Surpakaarou cha yatkarnaam Vighnavaarana kaaranow, Sampadyow Jnaana rupow cha Surpakarnam namaamyaham/ Vishnu prasaada pushpam cha yanmurdhni Munidattakam, yad Gajendra vaktra yuktam Gaja vaktram namaamyaham/ Guhasyaagrey cha jaatoyamaavirbhuto Haraalaye, Vande Guhaagrajam Devam Sarvadevaagra pujitam/ Yetanmaashtakam Durgey Namaabhih samyuktam param, Putrasya pasya Vedey cha tadaa kopam thathaa kuru/ Yetanmaashtakam Stotram naanaartha samyutam shubham, Trisandhyam yah pathennithyam sa sukhee sarvato jayee/ Tato Vighnaam palaayantey vaina teyaad yathoragah, Ganeswaraprasaadena mahajnaani bhaved dhruvam/ Putraarthi labhatey putram Bhaaryaarthi vipulam striam, Maha jadam Kaveendrascha vidyaa vaancham bhaved dhruvam/

(Mother Parvati! your son has eight names viz. Ganesha, Ekadanta, Heramba, Vighnanayaka, Lambodara, Shurpakarna, Gajavaktra, and Guhaagraja. Please listen to the meanings of these names; this Great Stotra is the essence of several Stotras and is the demolisher of all kinds of obstacles. In the word Ganesha, the letter 'Ga' is 'Jnaanaartha vaachaka' and 'na' is 'nirvaana vaachaka'; the letters 'Ga', 'na' and 'Isha' together denote the 'Isha' or the Supreme of 'Ganas'; thus one should say: I greet Ganesha. In the word Eka dantha, Eka is pradhaanaarthak and Danta is Bala vaachaka; thus it is said: I salute Eka danta. In the word Heramba, 'Hey' is Deenaartha vaachaka and 'ramba' is paalana vaachaka and the total meaning would be the Administrator of Deenaas or the Needy who seek asylum. In the word 'Vighna naayaka', Vighna is vipatti vachaka and naayaka is khandanaarthak vachaka, meaning thereby Ganesha is the demolisher of hindrances. Lamba + Udara or Ganesha has an Extended Tummy as he is fond of consuming large quantities of Savouries and sweets; I adore 'Lambodara'! My salutations to you, 'Surpakarna'! with surpaakara/Vikrita/ strained + Karna or ears. 'Gajavaktra' or Elephant faced Deva, my prostrations to you! 'Guhaagraja' or the elder brother of Guha Deva / Skanda; I pay my reverences to you! Devi Parvati! Kindly listen to the Sacred Eight Names of Ganesha and bear with me before getting

angry, if need be. Those who recite these names during the three Sandhya timings with sincerity and devotion would always be happy and victorious, from whom any kind of obstacles run away like snakes approaching Garuda. By the great grace of Ganeswara, those who have no children would be blessed with children, those who have no wives would have them too and those who have the least intelligence would flourish as Vidwans and Poets.

Parashurama prostrated before Devi Parvati and begged her of pardon that he as her own child should, since she was the 'Jagat Janani'/ the Mother of the Universe and said that the he had perpetrated a sin to his Guru and Gurupatni of which he was ashamed. He also performed Puja to Ganesha who too excused Parashurama for his indescretion, for which Ganesha too claimed partial-responsibility.

Ganesha's encounter with Devi Tulasi: As Devi Tulasi was seeking to perform Tapasya on the banks of Ganga, she saw Ganesha a young and handsome youth moving about enjoying the refreshing coolness of the River. Tulasi was readily attracted to him, drew him into conversation by amply indicating her fascination to him and finally proposed to him for marriage with him. Ganesha was taken aback and spurted that she was like his own mother and what was more that he hated to be drawn into any marriage in life as the very concept of family was abhoring to him; he said that the institution of marriage was the terminator of Hari-Bhakti, the destroyer of Tapasya, the indestructible knot of 'Bhava Bandhana' or the inescapable rope of family ties, the demolisher of Tatwa Gyana, the closure of the Moksha dwara and the end of personal freedom. Ganesha therefore advised the Kanya to seek somebody else as her life partner and leave him free. Devi Tulasi got terribly annoyed with Ganesha's weird arguments and the way that he discarded her summarily. She cursed Ganesha that he would be married definitely despite his wishes and Ganesha gave a reverse curse that since she was insensitive of other's feelings, she would become a the wife of a demon (Shankhachooda) and subsequently bocome a Tree. On realising the backround of each other, they complemented each other as Tulasi was destined to the wife of Narayana and Ganesha was the famed son of Maha Deva and Parvati Devi. But Tulasi leaves should never be offered in Ganesha Puja!

# Shri Krishna 'Leelas' and 'Mahatmya'

Highlighting the basic traits of a true Bhakta of Bhagavan Shri Krishna, Maharshi Narayana initiated his discourse to Narada Muni of 'Shri Krishna Janma Khanda' of Brahma Vaivarta Purana. He said: Archanam Vandanam Mantra japam Sevanameva cha, Smaranam keertanam shashvad Guna shravana meepsitam/ Nivedanam tasya Daasyam Navadhaa Bhakti lakshanam/ (Bhagavan's puja / worship, Vandana / salutations, Mantra japa / repetitive incantation of Mantras, Seva /Service, Smarana / memorising, keertana / lyric singing, Nirantara Guna shravana / constant hearing of Bhagavan's features, and Dasya bhava / sense of servitude are the traits of Bhaktas). Stating this as the consecrated prologue of the Shri Krishna Khanda, the Maharshi explained the basis of the Unique Shakti of Shri Krishna's taking a human form as an incarnation descending on Earth with the popular human name as Shri Krishna! It was at the specific prayer of Bhu Devi that 'Adharma' and 'Anyaaya' were at a peak, that the Supreme Shri Krishna assumed the human form!

[Yadaa yadaahi Dharmasya glaanir bhavati Bharata!

Abhyuddhaana -madharmasya sadaatmaanam srijaamyaham/

Paritraanaaya Saadhuunaam Vinaashaaya cha dushkrutaam

Dharma Samsthaapanaaya sambhavaami Yugey yugey/

(Bhaarata! As and when Dharma is affected, I recreate myself in the form of a human being to save the Virtuous and punish the Evil and reestablish Dharma, Yuga after Yuga!) In Goloka on a day, Gopi Viraja Devi happened to be rather friendly with Shri Krishna and she was making amorous advances to the Lord. Devi Radha felt jealous and moved away from there, while Gopa Shridam sought to stop Radha to explain that Viraja was simple and innocent. Radha out of fury cursed Shridam for siding Viraja that he should become a demon on Earth. Shridam too cursed back Radha that she should be born on Earth. After cursing each other, both of them regretted. Shri Krishna gave a dispensation to Shridam that he would become an invincible Asura by name Shankha chooda and finally get killed by Shankara's Trishula to return to Goloka; Radha would be born into Vraja Bhumi in Gokula in the house of Gopa Vrishabhanu and move about freely in forests and get engaged in Raasa Lilaas along with Krishna and Viraja Devi would be born as a River anf from Krishna would beget seven sons named Lavana, Ikshu, Sura, Ghrita, Dadhi, Dugdha and Jala that would be Seven Samudras eventually!

Bhudevi complains of 'Bhubhaara' (extreme sins) and Krishna's human incarnation:

As Bhu Devi was extremely distressed with the excesses being experienced by Asuras, she approached Brahma Deva and bitterly wept that it was not possible bear the violences and overloads of Evil any longer. Brahma Deva collected all Devas and reached Kailasa where Parama Shiva, Dharma along with Shri Hari travelled to Virajaatata, Shatashringa Parvat, Raasa Mandal, Brindavan and finally landed at Goloka. As Devas were thrilled to reach the Radha Mandir which defied even the imagination of Devas and stood aside; Brahma, Shiva, Dharma and Narayana could not control their emotions to vision the Unique Nirguna Swarupa Shri Krishna and greeted him as follows:

Varam Varenyam Varadam Varadaanaam cha Kaaranam,

Kaaranam Sarva bhutaanaam tejorupam Namaamyaham/

Mangalyam Mangalaayeem cha Mangalam Mangala pradam,

Samasta Mangalaadhaaram Tejorupam Namaamyaham/

Sthitam sarvatra Nirlipamaatma rupam Paraatparam,

Nireehamavi-tarkyam cha Tejorupam Namaamyaham/

Sagunam Nirgunam Brahma Jyoti rupam Sanaatanam,

Saakaaram cha Niraakaaram Tejorupam Namaamyaham/

Twam -anirvachaneeyam cha Vyaktamayaktamekakam,

Swecchaamayam Sarva rupam Tejorupam Namaamyaham/

Gunatraya vibhaagaaya Rupatrayadharam param,

Kalayaa tey Suraah Sarvey kim Jaananti Shruteyh Param/

Saraadhaaram Sarva RupamSarva beejamabeejakam,

Sarvaantakamanantam cha Tejorupam Namaa -myaham/

Lakshyam yad Gunarupam cha varnaneeyam vichakshanaih,

kim varnayaa-myalakshyam tey Tejorupam Namaamyaham/

Ashareeram Vigrahavadeendriya vada-teendriyam,

Yada saakshi Sarva saakshi Tejorupam Namaamyaham/

Gamanaarhama -mapaadam Yada chakshuh Sarva darshanam,

Hastaasya heenam yad bhoktum Tejo Rupam Namaamyaham/

Vedey nirupitam vastu santah Shataascha varnitum,

Vedo nirupitam yatthatejorupam namaamyaham/

Sarvesham yadaneesham yad Sarvaadi yadanaadi yat,

Sarvaatmakamanaatmam yattrjorupam namaamyaham/

Aham Vidhaata Jagataa Vedaanaam Janakah Swayam,

Paataa Dharmo HaroHartaa stotum Shakto na kopiyat/

Sevayaa tawa Dharmoyam Rakshitaaram cha rakshati,

Tawaajgnyaa samhartaa twayaakaaley nirupitey/

Nishekalipikartaaham twadpaadambhoja sevikaa,

karminaam phala daataacha twam bhaktaanaam cha nah prabhuh/

Brahmaandey vimba sadrushaa bhutwaa vishaniyo vayam,

Evam katividhaah santi theshvananteshu sevikaah/

Yathaa na sankhyaa renuunaam tathaa teshaamaneeyasaam,

Sarveshaam janakschesho yastotum chakah Kashamah/

(I salute that Tejorupa Paramatma who is Vara, Varenya, Varada, Varadaayaka Kaarana; I commend that Tejorupa who is the Mangala kaari, Mangala Yogya, Mangala Rupa, Mangala

Dayaka and Mangaaadhaara; I greet that Tejaswarupa who is Vidyamaan, Nirlipta, Atma

Swarupa, Paraatpara, Nireeha, and Avitarkya; I pray to that Tejorupa who is Saguna, Nirguna, Sanaatana, Brahma, Jyoti Swarupa, Saakaara and also Niraakaara. I prostrate before that Tejorupa who is Anirvachaneeya, Vyakta yet Avyakta, Adwiteeya, Swechhaamaya and Sarva Rupa. Paramatma! You assume three gunas and three Swarupas but are far beyond all the Gunas and Swarupas! All the Devas are as a result of your materialisation; you are beyond the reach of 'Shrutis'. You are the Sarvaadhara, Sarva Swarupa, Adi Karana, Swayam Kaarana rahita, Sava samhara kaara and Anta rahita. Vidwaans might be able to describe you if they could target a Lakshya, but you are Alakshya! How could I describe you as you are indescribable since you are only a Mass of Illumination! You are Figureless but yet have a Figure; 'Indriyaa Yukta' but yet 'Indriyaateeta'! You are the 'Saakshi' or the Evidence and Substantiation of every thing, but you have no Saakshi as there is no verification possible. You may not have a pair of feet but possess the proof of the swiftness of light! You may not a pair of eyes but could vision the whole Universe in the minutest details; you may not have hands and a mouth but surely you enjoy our Naivedyas. Vidwans who possess proofs of various 'Vastus' mentioned in Vedas including Panchabhutas and so on, but could they provide a proof about youself? I beseech you to reveal yourself, since you are the Saveswara who has no further Eswara; anything or anybody has a definite beginning but you no Beginning as you are the Beginning! Brahma Deva addressed the Tejorupa saying that he himself was the Creator and the Pronouncer of Vedas; Dharma Deva was the unquestioned Ruler of the Universe and Maha Deva was the unparalelled Samhara Karta; but none of us could determine much less guess as to who you are! Prabho! We three are your Bhaktas and indeed you are our Supreme Master. Brahmanda is a reflection and we are mere images. How can we indeed achieve the competence to describe you!)

As the Tri Murtis went into raptures over the vision of the Tejorupa of Shri Krishna, both Krishna and Radha granted their physical appearances. Shri Krishna replied to the sincere tributes that were made and said:

Aham praanaascha Bhaktaanaam Bhaktaah praanaa mamaapi cha,

Dhyaayanti ye cha maam nityam taam smaraami divaanisham/ (I am the life of the Bhaktaas and Bhakti is my life; I am fully engrossed in the thoughts of my devotees day and night!).

Krishna's instructions to others about various births in Krishnavatara:

There after Krishna convened a meeting of Gopas and Gopis and revealed his plans of their descending in the Vraja Bhumi under the leadership of Nandaraya and asked Devi Radha to take birth in the house of Vrishabhanu and Kalavati. In fact, Kalavati was of Lakshmi Amsha and was the Manasi kanya of Pitaras but was cursed to be born in Bhuloka by Muni Durvasa. Then Krishna gave instructions that Lakshmi Devi should be born as Rukmini as the daughter of Vidarbha King and he would reach Kundinapuri and marry her. Parvati would be born as Maha Maya to Yashoda and Nandagopa but would be transferred to the prison where Devaki and Vasudeva would be in Kamsa's custody and after her rescue from the cruel hands of Kamsa when a celestial voice informed Kamsa that Krishna was already born and was safe some where, could join Maha Deva again. He asked various Devas and Devis to take birth in various houses of Gopas and Gopis. Some of the significant births as instructed by Krishna were: Skanda as the son of Jambavati (another wife of Krishna) who was of half Amsha of Parvati; Kamadeva as Rukmikni's son in Chhaya Rupa since Rati Devi would be born in the house of Shambarasura; Bharati would be the daughter of Banasura; Brahma would be the son of Praduymna from Rukmini named as Aniruddha; Ananta Deva would be preserved in Devaki's garbha but would be actually born to Rohini and as he (Balarama) was transferred from one garbha to another would be called 'Samkarshan'; Kalindi would be another 'Patrani'/ Chief Queen of Shri Krishna (Surya' daughter Yamuna as Kalindi); Tulasi would be Lakshmana as another Patrani; Vasudha would be Satyabhama; Sarasvati would be Shayaa; Swaha Devi would be Susheela; Ratnamala would be Sanjna the wife of Surya; from the 'Kalaas' of Lotus, there would be sixteen thousand wives of Krishna. (The eight Patranis were Rukmni, Satyabhama, Jambavati, Kalindi, Lakshmana, Bhadra, Mitravinda and Nagnajita). Krishna further instructed that Dharma Deva would be Yuddhishtara, Bheem from the Amsha of Vayu Deva, Arjuna from Indra's Vamsha, Nakula and Saha Deva from the Amsha of Ashwni Kumaras, Karna from the Amsha of Surya Deva, Vidura from Yamaraja, Duryodhana from Kali, Shantanu from Samudra, Abhimanyu from Chandra, Bhishma from Vasu Devata, Vasudeva from the Amsha of Kashyapa, Devaki from Aditi, Nandagopala from Vasu, Yashoda as Vasu Patni, Draupadi from the Amsha of Lotus and would be born from Yagna Kunda, Dhrushtadyumna from Agni's Amsha, Subhadra from the Amsha of Shatarupa whose birth was from Devaki's garbha). Many other Gopas and Gopis were born from the Amshas of Devis and Devis. After Shri Krishna's instructions to reappear during the Krishna's incarnation, he was seated with Sarasyati on left and Lakshmi on his right and Radha on his chest. But Radha was unhappy for any seperation from Krishna.

Concept of Radha-Krishna 'Tadaatmya' (Unification):

Assuring that the two entities of Radha and Krishna are one and the same, Shri Krishna explained that the entire 'Bhahmanda' was divided into two parts, it would not be possible that either of the parts could exist without the other, like no fruit could emerge without a flower, no flower would exist without a tree / plant and there would have to be a seedling / seed for these, Prithvi was the foundation, Prithvi's base was Seshanaga, the latter bears the weight by Kurma, Kurma's basis was Vayu and Vahu's 'adhara'/ hold was Paramatma (me that is Shri Krishna); indeed Krishna's 'Adhara Swarupa'was Mula Prakriti (that is Radha!). Shri Krishna further stated that Radha was a Sharira Rupini (Physical Entity) as also

'Trigunaadhaara Swarupini'; he declared: "I am Your Soul!" If Radha is a body, Krishna is the Supreme Soul! These two Entities are just not different!

Yathaa ksheerey cha dhaavalyam daahikaacha Hutaashaney,

Bhumow gandho Jaley shailyam tathaa twayi mama sthithih/

Dhaavalya dugdhayoraikyam daahikaanalayoryathaa,

Bhugandha Jalashaitya -anaam naasti bhedastadhaavayoh/

Mayaa Vinaa twam nijeevaa chaadrushyoham twayaa vinaa,

Twayaa vinaa Bhavam kartum naalam Sundari nischitam/

Vinaa mrudaa ghatam karthum yathaa naalam kulaalakah,

Vinaa Swarnam Swarakaarolakaaram katrumakshamah/

Swayamaatmaa yathaa nityastathaa twam Prakritih Swaym,

Sarava shakti samaayuktaa Sarvaadhaara Sanaatani/

(You are my Shakti just as there is whiteness in milk, the power of thirst in Agni, Gandha Shakti in Prithvi, and the power of coolness in `water; there is thus no separation of Krishna and Shri Krishna just as the whiteness of milk, thirst of Agni, smell of Earth and coolness of water. Without Krishna, Radha cannot exist and without Radha Krishna would not! Without Radha, Creation of the Universe would be impossible and vice-versa, just as a potter could not produce pots without earth, and a goldsmith could not make ornaments without gold! Just as Krishna's Soul is permanent, Radha's soul too is never-ending; thus Radha-Krishna's perception as alive as Purusha and Prakriti are!

#### Shri Krishna Janma:

As King Kamsa was happy at the conclusion of the wedding of his sister Devaki with Vasudeva, there was an 'Akasha vani' (celestial voice) that thundered to say that Kamsa would be killed by the eighth child of the new couple. Kamsa reacted instantly and sought to kill his sister but the Dharmajna Vasudeva prevailed on him not to do so and thus a pacified Kamsa kept both his sister and brother-in-law into prison and killed six boys each year in a row. As the delivery of the seventh child was nearing, Devi Yogamaya transferred the embriyo into Rohini's garbha, even as Kamsa took ample precautions. Rohini Devi delivered Samkarshana / Balarama. When the eighth conception was confirmed, Devaki's garbha was filled up with Vayu and just at the entry time of the tenth month, Kamsa tightened the security of the gates as he was aware that the eighth child would be his killer. Even as Kamsa was lying restless in his bed awaiting instant call of the Dwarapalakas to convey the news of Devaki's delivery, little did he realise that Brahma and Devas assembled in the prison ready in position to welcome the Supreme Lord of Srishthi-Sthiti and Palaya was arriving. The Dwarapalakas were lulled into stupor and the Great Grand Vision of a High Luminosity gave the first Darshan to the proud parents who were in a daze and after a quick recovery of their senses, broke down into ecstacy as the Lord spoke to Vasudeva and Devaki and revealed that in their previous birth they were Kashyapa Muni and Aditi and he bestowed them the boon of their possessing the Lord as their proud son! The rest was history that Vasudeva was directed to transfer the resplendent Child from the delivery room to Nanda-Yashoda couple across River Jamuna in Gokula, brought the latter's female child Maha Maya to the prison in Mathura of Kamsa, Kamsa's attempt to kill the child, Vasudeva and Devaki pleaded that the child was a baby but not a boy, there was an Akash Vani saying: 'You fool Kamsa! Why are trying to kill a baby without a reason; you are not aware of the peculiar ways of Vidhata! The boy who is destined to kill you has already been born and would reveal at the appropriate time.' Kamsa then spared the baby although Devaki and Vasudeva

continued to be in shackles; they were indeed aware of the Truth from Shri Krishna himself during his Vision Vasudeva and Devaki prayed to Maha Maya /Parvati Devi and at the time of Rukmini's wedding to Krishna handed over Parvati to Durvasa Muni who had the Amsha of Bhagavan Shankara.

#### Shri Krishna Leelas:

On hearing a Celestial Voice again when he was in his Court, King Kamsa was alerted that Vasudeva transferred his enemy boy Krishna from Mathura to Gokula in the house of Nanda and Yashoda and brought back Maha maya and Krishna was Narayana himself who would exterminate Kamsa for sure. Along with him, his brother Balaram too was growing in the same house! Kamsa despatched his sister **Putana** to Nanda's house on the pretext that she was a Gopa Kanya from Mathura, gained confidence of Yashoda and fed milk with her breast to which she applied poison with the plan of killing Krishna. But Bala Krishna gave such a powerful bite that she died! Yashoda and Nanda were astounded at the incident and not realising that he was Paramatma himself called Brahmanas to ward off evil eyes and took precautions that such accident would not recur. Putana in her earlier birth was the virtuous wife of King Bali called Ratnamala who prayed to Vamana Deva that her desire was to breast-feed Narayana as a child and Krishna fulfilled her desire now!

Another demon called **Trinaavarta** who suddenly arrived on the banks of Yamuna River as a whirl-wind when Yashoda put Krishna to sleep for fresh and cool air. The storm was felled even big trees and created havoc followed by darkness and in that confusion Krishna was lifted up the sky and the helpess Yashoda fainted. Bala Krishna controlled the Rakshasa by the pressure on his head of his left toe and dropped him to death to the ground with a thud and sent him to Goloka. The demon was the King of Pandyadesha named Sahasraaksha who was once enjoying a swim in a river near Gandhamadana Mountain along his wives and even noticing the Muni Durvasa with his thousand desciples did not care to greet him with reverence and ignored him. The Muni cursed the King to become a demon; his queens were surprised at the curse to their husband and having prepared an Agni Kunda jumped into it. The King begged the Muni's clemency and the latter gave his 'Shapa vimochan'/ relief from the curse when Lord Krishna's foot would touch the demon's head; as regards his queens they would be born into royal families as unwed Kanyas and Krishna would marry them.

Garga Muni performed **Nama Karana** of Krishna: in the word Krishna, 'Ka' kaara indicated Brahma Vachak; 'ru' kaara Ananta (Sesha) Vaachaka; 'sha' kara is Shiva and 'Na' kaara was Dharma vaachaka, 'A' kaara was Vishnu vaachaka and Visarga was of Nara-Narayana Artha bodhaka. Krishna would thus mean Sarva Swarupa, Saradhaara and Sarva Beeja.'Krish' shabda is nirvana vaachaka, 'na' is moksha bodhak thus indicating the bestower of Nirvaana and moksha. Also the word 'Krish' indicated 'nischeshta' or stand still, 'na' means Bhakti and A' kata is the bestower.Bhagavan is Nishkarma Daataa or the Giver of Deeds without aiming returns. Nanda Kumara gave the following mames to Krishna, viz.

Krishnah, Peetambarah Kamsadwvansi cha Vishtara swavaah,

Devakinandaah Sheeshu Yashodanandano Harih,

Sanataanochyto Vishnuh Varveshayah Sarvarupadhtuk,

Saradhaarah Sarvagatih Sarava kaaran kaaranah/

Radha bandhu Raadhikatma Raadhikaajeevanah Swayam,

Raadhikaasahachaari, cha Raadhaamanasapurakah/

Radhaadhano Raadhikaago Raadhikaasakta maanasah,

Raadhaapraano Raadhikesho Raadhikaaramanah Swayam/

Raadhikaachitta chorascha Raadhaa praanaadhikah Prabhu,

Paripurnatamah Brahma Govindo Garudadhwajah,

Naamaanyethaani Krishnasya shrutaani Saampraah Vraja,

Janma mrityu haranyeva Raksha Nanda Shubhakshano!

Nanda Kumara also gave the names of Balarama as Haladharah, Sankarshana, Ananta, Baladeva, Hali, Shitivaasa, Neelaambara, Musali, Revatiramana and Rohinaya. The inseperable pair of brothers was a joy to the well-wishers.

As Yashoda had gone for Yamuna Snaana, Bala Krishna consumed milk, curd and butter in the house freely along with his friends and broke lot of utensils and earthen pots. On return home Yashoda found that Krishna was responsible for the disorder and as a punishment tied him to a huge tree. Even as she got busy with her chores in the house, she heard sounds of thud since the massive tree fell on the ground and as Yashoda rushed to the spot in the backyard, Krishna's innocent face looked up and Yashoda was told that one Deva greeted Krishna and alighted a Viman up the skies! That was **Nalakubara** the son of Kubera who became a tree as Muni Devala was disturbed of his Tapasya and received a curse awaiting Krishna's sacred touch. Apsara Rambha who was also responsible for the noise was cursed to be the wife of King and was released by Indra's hand touch at an Ashvamedha Yagna.

As Krishna entered the teens, there were a series of mishaps at Gokula while Krishna and his Gopa friends were moving about in the nearby jungles. A huge Rakshasa in the Form of a Crane called **Bakasura** and attacked Shi Krishna; he was so formidable that even the Vajrayudha of Indra made of Dadheecha Muni's backbone turned futile and Devas made 'Hahaakaar' in their battle against him in the past. Shri Krishna took the form of grass and the Asura picked it up and ate it; just as Agastya Muni digested the Asura Vataapi, Krishna emerged from Bakasura's stomach by bursting it out and thus put an end to that mighty demon. **Vrishabhaasura Pralamba** attacked Krishna as he was playful with Gopa boys who were frightened but Krishna smiled and gave courage to his friends; he held the bull horns with such power of his hands the the horn dropped down with gushing blood and mighty mass of Pralamba came down with a thump and died instantly. **Maha Daitya Keshi** assaulted Krishna approaching him with top speed by digging earth making frightful sounds and trying to bite Krishna with his teeth. But the physique of Krishna was so strong that the Demon's powerful teeth crumbled to dust and the Daitya died instantly. Watching the scene of Keshi's death, Devas sounded drums of victory and rained fragtrant flowers in sheer relief and happiness.

Keeping in view of the frightening and frequent occurences at Gokula, Nanda decided to shift to **Brindavana**, a newly built and well planned Nagar built by Vishwakarma which was five yojanas wide and beautiful. Gopa Vrishabhanu and Kalavati had an excellent Palace in which their daughter Radha lived in. Nandagopa and Yashoda too had a comfortable 'Bhavan' too in which Shri Krishna lived. More than these were the most charming Brindavana, the Madhu vana and the breathtaking Raasa Mandali.

One day, a playful Krishna along with a few friends roamed into the deep green forests of Yamuna banks and reached a lonely 'Sarovar' which seemed to be never frequented. As Krishna and friends discovered heaps of dead cows, Krishna entered the waters all alone. The mighty **Kalia Snake** devoured Krishna but it could not contain it and had to vomit him out. Krishna jumped up the hoods and subdued it. The Great snake fainted and other companion snakes ran helter-skelter. Kaliya's wife Surasa prayed to Krishna and begged him for Salvation. Since Krishna did not reappear for long time, the friends were greatly agitated and reached Nanda, Yashoda and Balarama. After a painfully long interval, there appeared Krishna dancing on the massive heads of the most dreadful Kaliya. The fully subdued and explained that he and his family could not travel to Yamuna River for fear of Garuda; Shri Krishna falilitated Kaliya's smooth passage out of the Kalindi since the Lord's foot prints were easily recognised

by Garuda Deva. Meanwhile, Krishna's parents and in fact most of Brindavana vaasis rushed to the Sarovar, despite Balarama's assurances of Krishna's safety only to witness the joyous spectacle of Krishna dancing away on the hoods of Kalia.

As Nanda Gopa was afraid that if Indra Yagna were not performed at the Govardhana Giri, Indra would take revenge and there would be natural disasters. Shri Krishna discounted this false belief; instead there should be worship of Narayana, of the Govardhana Mountain, of Brahmanas, of cows and of Agni Deva who were all of Narayana Swarupa. Since Krishna persuaded Nanda to perform **Govardhana Puja** instead of Indra Puja. Indra Deva became furious and punished Brindavana with mighty winds and torrential down-pours. There was 'Ati Vrishti', 'Shila Vrishti', 'Vajra Vrishti' and 'Ulkaapat'. As Nanda Gopa sought to regret his action of not worshipping Indra, the confident Krishna lifted the entire Govardhana Mountain with his left hand and asked all the Bridavana Residents including men, women, children, cows and all other beings to take shelter underneath. Indra thus realised his arrogance and folly; he prayed to Shri Krishna, but more significantly Nanda Gopa and all the Residents of Brindavana were over-awed that they were all indeed so fortunate to be in the company of Paramatma himself!

As directed by Shri Krishna, Gopa boys entered Talavana and plucked fruits from the trees, knowing that **Dhenukasura** who had a Form of a donkey stayed there and even Devas failed to enter it. As expected there was a fearful braying of a donkey apparently of Dhenukasura. The Gopa boys thought that their last minutes of life had arrived and started reciting the name of 'Krishna, Krishna'. Krishna assured them that there was no fear at all. He said that this Asura was born of Durvasa Muni's 'shaap' (curse) and that he would deal with him alone and asked Balarama to take the boys away. As soon as Dhenukasura faced Krishna, the latter gave a fiery look and even Krishna's vision was adequate to bring the memory of Asura of his past birth's happenings. King Bali's son Sahasika once was attracted to Apsara Tilotthama in an open garden and Tilottama too liked Sahasika. Not realising that Muni Durvasa was in serious Tapasya, the lovers were playful spoiling the Muni's concentration and thus cursed Sahasika to take the birth of a donkey and be a cruel Daitya and that Tilottama too would be born to Banasura as Devi Usha the wife of Pradyumna. Durvasa however gave a dispensation to the Daitya Dhenkasura that the moment who would seek to attack Sri Krishna in his Human Avatar; Krishna's sacred vision would give the realisation about his Vamana Avatara and of his father King Bali of Rasatala.

King Kamsa the maternal uncle of Shri Krishna, who had been overtaken by fear of death ever since a Celestial Voice cautioned that the eighth child of his sister Devaki and Vasudeva would kill him. He tried his best to have Krishna eliminated even as a child and despatched a number of Evil Powers but each time Krishna was terminating as they attempted. As a result, Kamsa was desperate and restive and one midnight got a bad dream that a frightening black widow with flowing hair, sharp teeth and nails was applying oil on his limbs laughing boisterously accompanied my very tall and grotesque masculine figures performing death-dances! Next morning a shattered Kamsa convened a meeting with his family members, close and trusted Ministers and his Purohit Satyak- a dear disciple of Guru Shukracharya- and conveyed about the horrible dream and its possible effects. Guru Satyak discounted the dream and to ward off the bad omens, and suggested to perform Maheswara Yagna and also puja of the Paashupata Dhanush with Maha Nandi gifted away to Banasura, and the same was in the Royal possession of Kamsa. Kamsa suggested that the proposed Yagna and worship of the Dhanush would be a great opportunity to invite Krishna and Balarama to the festivites and approved Akrura to depute to Brindavana to personally invite Krishna and Balarama brothers to visit Mathura. Akrura, the elder and respected virtuous person of Yadukula headed by Nanda gopa at Brindavana was thrilled at the opportunity of inviting Krishna and Balarama and personally bringing them to Mathura. Kamsa's plan was to somehow get the brothers of Brindavana and make foolproof arrangements to trap them to death. Devi Radha and Gopikas as well as Nanda and Yashoda, besides the entire Brindavan were most unhappy that Krishna would be separated

while on Krishna's tour to Mathura, Krishna assuaged their feelings, especially of Devi Radha, Having reached Muthura, Krishna and Balarama were surrounded with admiring crowds, straightened and transformed the deformed and ugly girl Kubja into a pretty maiden, accepted the flowers being taken to the Royal Court by the Maali (gardener), punished the pro-Kamsa dhobi (washerman) on way and threw the Royal dresses in a gutter saying there was no further need for expensive dresses for Kamsa, visited the houses of Akrura and other senior Vishnu Bhaktas to accept delicacies for food, revisited Kubja Devi's residence to bless her and despatch her to Goloka, broke the Paashupata Dhanush with ease and aplomb even as the entire Mathura was agog and awe, met parents Devaki and Vasudaeva even as their tears with profuse ecstasy were overflowing, killed the rogue elephant at the Entrance of the Kamsa Sabha, devastated the massive-bodied Malla Chanura, mesmerised the crowds with his charm and valour; forcibly dragged the most arrogant, merciless, villianous and dreaded King Kamsa to the center of the stage set for the duels with Malla Chanura and called for his Sudarshana Chakra to have the ignominous head of Kamsa sliced! Later on Krishna released his parents from bondage, reinstated Ugrasena, the father of Kamsa as the King and the suppressed Yadava community breathed fresh air of redemption. Garga Muni performed 'Upanayana' (Initiation to Gatatri Mantra) of Balarama and Krishna, the latter underwent formal 'Gurukula Vaasa' or residential education at the house of Sandeepani and as a Guru dakshina brought the dead son of their Guru and his wife back to life!

#### 'Dwaraka Nirman':

On return from 'Guruvaasa', Krishna and Balarama returned to Mathura and planned the construction of Dwaraka puri. Krishna remembered Garuda Deva, Ksheera Sagara and Deva's Architect Vishwakarma. He secured large area in the Seashore from Samudra Deva. Both the brothers discarded Gopa's attire and wore Raja's dresses. He requested Vishwakarma to build a modern, spacious and luxurious Dwaraka Nagar with fantastic facilities for all the residents of Mathura for accommodation on back-to-back basis including human beings, cows and so on. Vishwakarma planned and materialised an ideal City which was a model as per Vaatsu Shastra; huge amounts of building material including precious stones and gold was procured and support Engineers and workforce arrived. The City was got ready and the complete contents of Mathura were transferred overnight and the population was thrilled at the miracle. Dwaraka was inaugurated and Devas including Brahma, Hara, Ananta, Dharma as also Maharshis and of course the Yadavas with great pomp and show!

#### Krishna kills Shishupala and Dantavaktra:

Shri Krishna was invited to 'Indraprastha', the New Capital of Pandayass, by Yudhishtara and Panadaya brothers to celebrate Rajasuya Yagna and as per the advice of grandfather Bhishma, Krishna was named as the Chief Guest at the celebrations. Sishupala who was Krishna's arch-enemy objected to the proposal [when Sisupala was born to Chedi King Damaghosha and Sutadevi, Krishna called on Suta Devi-cousin sister of Krishna- to see the child but the boy was born ugly with four hands and three eyes; Krishna snipped off the extra hands and eye and a Celestial Voice was heard that the person who snipped off the extra limbs would kill him too. Sishupala's parents begged of Krishna to postpone Sishupala's death, Krishna agreed that he would not harm the child till he committed hundred mistakes against him]. As Sishupala's hundred mistake limit was over at the Rajasuya Yagna, Krishna called for his Sudarshana Chakra which sliced off Shishupala's head. On hearing Shishupala's killing by Krishna, the former's great friend Dantavakra attacked Krishna, and after a duel with maces and killed Dantavakra too. In their earlier births, Sishupala and Dantavaktra were Ravanasura and Kumbhkarna killed by Lord Shri Rama; infact they were the 'Dwarapalakas'/ the Gate Keepers of Vaikuntha who were cursed by Sanaka brothers as they barred entry to Vaikuntha to become two demons in three successive Yugas, but on their entreating the Sanaka Sages secured a dispensation that they would be killed by Narayana himself: Jaya and Vijaya were thus the demon brothers Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakashipu killed by Narayana in the

latter's 'Avatars' as 'Matsya'and 'Nrisimha'in Satya Yuga; by Shri Rama who killed Ravana and Kumbharna in Treta Yuga and by Krishna who killed Shishupala and Dantavaktra in Dwapara Yuga.

## Devi Rukmini's wedding with Krishna:

Vidarbha King Bheeshmaka discussed the proposal of Devi Rukmini's alliance with Krishna in his Court and requested Shatananda, the learned son of Muni Gautama to personally visit Krishna at Dwaraka. But Virarbha Prince Rukmi objected that Krishna was unbecoming of his sister as he was a coward who could not face Jarasandha despite the latter's challenge to Krishna several times, that he got Kalayayan the Mleccha hero and a close friend of Jarasandha killed by foul means by hiding behind King Muchukunda in a cave, that he ran away to a far off place viz. Dwaraka out of fear of Jarasandha and that a better choice as Rukmini's husband could be Shishupala and so on. Despite these objections, the King went ahead and despatched Shatananda to Dwaraka and handed over the Lagna Patrika as a consent from his side. Earlier, King Koutukavash performed the wedding of Balarama with his daughter Devi Ravati and Balarama too was delighted about the offer. The efforts made by Rukmi and his ill- advising companions like Shalva, Shishupala and Dantavakra culminated in a battle with Yadavas and Balarama with his plough and Yadu Sena badly defeated Rukmi. The wedding of Shri Krishna and Devi Rukmini was celebrated in the most befitting manner. (Pursuant to the wedding of Rukmini, Krishna's marriages with Satyabhama, Jambavati, Kalindi, Lakshmana, Bhadra, Mitravinda and Nagnajita; as Shri Krishna killed Narakasura, there were sixteen thousand 'Kanyas'imprisoned by the 'Asura' who were all released free but they begged of Krishna to accept them all as their wives, apart from the 'Patranis' or as the Principal Wives mentioned above.) [References about the Great Maha Bharata Battle and the Grand Role of Shri Krishna as a Diplomat, Philosopher, Guide and Saviour of Pandavas were few and far between in the entire Text of Brahma Vaivarta Purana; equally scarce were the allusions of the Termination of Yadu Vamsha. Following is the Essence of the last chapters of 'Krishnajanma Khanda' when Devi Radha who was hitherto at Bridavana suffering pangs of separation from Krishna's 'physical' presence had finally reappeared at 'Siddhaashrama' (described elsewhere in this Purana that Radha and Krishna were reunited at the renowned 'Prabhasa Kshetra'). It was stated that Krishna's human life was for one hundred and twenty five years; eleven years in Nanda Gopa's house, fourteen years in Bridavana along with Radha, and hundred years in Mathura and Dwaraka; no wonder Devi Radha missed Krishna's company a long time of a century and over a decade on Earth!]

### The Sacred Union of Devi Radha and Shri Krishna:

Vasudeva performed Rajasuya Yagna as advised Shankara Deva at 'Siddhaaashram'. One 'Amsha' of Rumini and there Devis left for Dwaraka and another was left behind. Krishna asked Nandagopa and Yashoda to return to Gokul from where the originated. Meanwhile Krishna spotted the beautiful face of Devi Radha nearing the Ashram with a group of Gopikas surrounding her. Devi Radha too visioned Krishna from a distance. Having come near Krishna, she said: 'My beloved! I am thrilled to see you. To day the purpose of my life is fulfilled! My five 'Praanaas' are revived and my Soul is filled the bliss. An extremely rare and nearly impossible 'Bandhu Darshan' (Mutual Vision of the closest relatives) gladdens the 'Drashta' (The Visioners) as well as the 'Drishya' (The Vision). I have been drowned in the 'Shoka Sagara' or the ocean of tears and the burning pangs of 'Viraha' or separation. Now, your nectar-like revelation is comparable with the 'abhisheka' (Refreshing Bath) of the heat of that severance! In your company, I am as mighty as Shiva, Shivaprada, Shivabeeja and Shiva Swarupa, but my disconnection with you is as unbearable as extreme misfortune and all my actions are lost in wilderness. Even when a wife and husband are disjointed, they do feel the separation; but in our case the 'Viyoga' is as serious as that of 'Prakriti' and 'Purusha'!' As Radha was saving like this, Gopikas prepared a luxurious bed and having kept scented gandha, flowers, fruits, milk and sweets ran away laughing away loud and mischievously. Krishna replied: Devi Radha! By nature I am the Lord of all the Lokas and am the

'Antaraatma' of each and every Being from Brahma downward. In Goloka, I am the fulfledged, unique and everlasting Krishna as the Swami of Radha. At present I am Krishna of Bridavana as 'Radhaapati' with two hands in the attire of a Gopala. In Vaikuntha I am the four armed Swami of Lakshmi and Sarasvati. I am the single and Supreme Being divided into two Forms of Prakriti and Purusha. On Earth in Shweta Dwipa on Ksheera Sagara, I am the husband of 'Maanasi', 'Sindhukanya' and 'Martya Lakshmi'. I am the Kapila Rishi the husband of Bharati; in Mithila the husband of Sita'; in Dwaraka the Swami of Rukmini of Maha Lakshmi Swarupa; it is my Amsha that Pandavas are as the husbands of Draupadi etc.' When Krishna said these words, Devi Radha prostrated before Krishna. Devi Radha then desired that before Krishna would take her and all the 'Goloka Vaasis', she would like to visit the places where 'Krishna Leelas' were performed. Next morning, a golden chariot was arranged to visit Gokul where Yashoda and Nanda Gopa welcomed Radha and Krishna and a memorable 'Mahotsava'/ Festivity was celebrated. To Krishna's left side sat Radha and to the right sat Yashoda, Nanda, Vrishabhanu and Kalavati and various Gopas, Gopis, relatives, and associates. Krishna performed 'Gyanopadesha' to Nanda Gopa. On way the golden chariot passed through 'Vraja Bhumi', Viraja River's view, Shatashringa Mountain, several Raasa mandalis, original Brindavan where crores of Gopa and Gopikas were present; Radha got down the Chariot to converse with them as she felt so happy that she was lost into herself! As Shri Krishna descended from the Chariot, Brahma, Sesha, Surya, Mahendra, Chandra, Agni, Kubera, Varuna, Pavana, Yama, Ishana and other Devas Ashtavasus, Nava Grahas, Ekadasha Rudras, Manus, Munis were all lined up to welcome Paramatma Shri Krishna and praised Him one by one their heart's content.

#### Brahma Vaivarta Purana 'Phala Shruti'

This Purana describes the magnificence of Deities and their progression/ evolution. It is comparable to River Ganga among the Sacred Rivers, Pushkar among Tirthas, Kashi among the Holy Cities, and Bharata Varsha among Desas/ countries. This Purana is the most significant like Meru among Moutains, Parijata among flowers, Tulasi among leaves, Ekadashi Vrata among Vratas, Kalpa Vriksha among trees, Shri Krishna among Devatas, Maha Deva among the Supreme of 'Jnaana Swarupas', Gyaneshwara among Yogendras, Kapila among Shiddheswaras, Surya among the most radiant, Sanat Kumara among the Vaishnava Bhaktas, Shri Rama among the Kings, Lakshmana among the Dhanurdhaaris, Sati Durga among the Punyavati Devis, Radha among the Premikas, Lakshmi among Ishwaris, Sarasvati among the Panditas (Scholars)! It is a distinct generator of sheer joy, which clarifies innumerable doubts and bestows prosperity and propitiousness. It demolishes of Vighnas (obstacles of any kind) and yields fruits of performing Yagnas, Tirtha Darshanas, Vratas and Tapasya. There is no exaggeration in saying that reading this Purana excels 'Veda Pathana'. Any unfortunate woman reading this would result in prosperity to herself and her husband. The Purana Shravana or Pathana blesses the person concerned with good progeny, good wife / husband, and name and fame. It relieves of diseases to the diseased, shackles from imprisonment, dangers from the victims of great risks, and panic to those experiencing fright etc. Reciting a stanza or half or even a quarter of this Sacred Purana would result in change of human values, encouragement for further reading and concentration and mental application. If all the four 'Khandas' are read out or heard or cogitated about, then the past sins of Balya, Kaumara, Youvana and Varthakya stages of life are burnt off and the fruits of 'Go-daana' and 'Yagna phala' obtained.

### Narayana Maharshi explains about the 'Tatwa' of Shri Krishna and Prakriti Devi

Lambodaro Harirumaapatireesha Seshaa Brahmaadayah Suraganaa Manavo Munindrah, Vaani Shivaa Tripathagaa Kamalaadika yaa Sanchitayeda Bhagavatscharanaaravindam/ Samsaarasaagaramateeva

gabhiraghoram Daayaagni sarpa pariyeshtita cheshta taangam, Samlanghyagantumabhi yaanchati yo hi daasyam sanchitayed Bhagavatcchharanaara -vindam/ Govardhanoddharana keertirateena khinnaa Bhurdhaarita cha dashaanaagna karena klinnaa, Vishwaani Lomavivareshu Vibharturaadeh Sanchintayeda Bhagavat –ccharanaaravindam/ Gopaangana vadana pankaja hat padasya Raaseswaraaya pumshaha, Brindaavaney viharato vrajavesha Vishnoh sanchintayed Bhagavatas – cchananaara vindam/ Chakshurnimesha patito Jagataam vidhaataa tatkarma vatsa kathitumBhuvi kah samarthah/Twamchaapi Naradamuney paramaadareyna sachintitah kuru Harerscharanaaravindam/ Yuyam vayam tasya kalaakalaamshaah kalaakalaamshaa Manayo Muneendraah, Kalaayiseshaa Bhavapaara mukhyaa Mahaan Viraad yasya Kalaa viseshah/ Sahasra seershaa Sirasah pradeshey bibharti siddhaarthasamam cha Vishwam/ Kurmamcha Sesho mashako gajey yathaa Kurmascha Krishnaascya Kalaakalaamshah/Goloka naathasya vibhiryashomalam shrutow Puraaney nahi kinchana sphutam/ Na Padmaamukhyaah kathitum samarthaah Sarveshwaram tam bhaja Paadmamukhyam/ Vishveshu Sarveshu cha Vishwa dhaamnah Satyeava Shasvadvidhi Vishnu Rudraah/ Teshaamchaa Samkhyaah Shtutayascha Devaah Param na jaananti tameeshwaram bhaja/ Katoti Shrishtimcha Vidhervidhaataa Vidhaaya nityaamy Prakrutim Jagatprasuum/ Brahmaadayah Prakritikaascha Sarveybhakti pradaam Shreem Prakrutim bhajanti/ Brahma Swarupaa Prakrutir na bhinna yayaacha Srishtim kurutey Sanaatanah/ Shriyascha sarvaah kalayaa Jagatsu Maayaacha Sarvey cha tayaa vimohitaah/ Naaraayani saa Paramaa Sanaatani Shaktisha pumshah Paramaatmanascha, Atmeswaraaschaapi yayaa cha Shaktimaamstayaa vinaa Shrishtamashakta yeva/

( Maharshi Narayana explained to Narada about the interaction of 'Maha Tatwa' of Shri Krishna the Supreme and the Prakriti Devi: The entire Universe is well advised to prostrate before that Everlasting and Endless Bhagavan whom all the Shaktis like Ganesha, Vishnu, Rudra, Seha, Brahma and other Devatas as also Manus, Munis, Saraswati, Parvati, Ganga, Lakshmi and other Devis bend their heads down to. Those who are desirous of swimming across and traversing the 'Samsara Sagar' which encircles every Being by the terrible 'Daavaagni Sarpa'-the fiery and poisonous serpent- would have to necessarily enjoy the enslavement of the self before Bhagavan Shri Krishna. It is that Shri Krishna -who lifted the Govardhana Mountain with his hand and saved Vajra Bhumi and its inhabitants from the fury and anger of Indra; that he who lifted with ease the entire Bhudevi who was on the verge of sinking into deep Ocean lifted up by the might of his tusks and restored her in her original position; and that he whose skin pores carry endless 'Brahmandaas'- to whom we dedicate our very existence. It is that Shri Krishna again who is like the 'bhramara'/ honey-bee hovering around the sweet faces of Gopikas in Brindavana fully engrossed in the 'Raasa-kreeda' that we should always meditate his sacred feet. Narada! Is there any body in this world that is competent to describe the 'Leelas' of Bhagavan Krishna by whose mere eye-twinkle that a great Brahma engaged in 'Srishti'gets terminated? Narada! You and I as well as each and every Being are the 'Kalaas'/ reflections of that Mahat Kala Swarupa! Manus and Munis are of that Maha Kala also! Brahma, Shiva, Adi Sesha with his thousands of hoods holding Earth as though it was a seed of mustard are all of Paramatma's undescribable 'Kala' even as that Paramatma carries Sesha Deva like a fly on an elephant! The Four Vedas failed to describe even an atom of what Shri Krishna in Goloka was all about! Brahma and all the Devatas put together too fell far short of their imagination and far reaching vision to substantiate the Supreme! Shri Krishna was like a Vidhata among unaccountable Vidhatas. Brahma and other Devas are materialised from time to time by Prakriti and Narada! You should worship Prakriti too. Prakriti is not however a separate entity! Prakriti is 'Maya' or an Illusion but is reflection of Shi Krishna! Yet, the Lord created the Mula Prakriti or 'Vishnu Maya' to assist him and that Maya was materialised in Five Forms viz. Radha; the second manifestation was of Lakshmi as the Embodiment of Wealth; the third is Saraswati, the personification of Knowledge, Vidya, Kalas, who is worshipped by all; the Fourth Amsa is Vedamata Gayatri / Savitri and the Fifth Amsha of Prakriti is Durga denoting Shakti, Capacity and Courage. Together, these five manifestations bestow Aspiration, Prosperity, Knowledge, Sacredness of Vedas and Shakti!

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#### ESSENCE OF DEVI BHAGAVATA PURANA

Emphasizing the Holiest Name of Maha Devi Bhagavati, Suta Maha Muni addressed a congregation of Sages headed by Saunaka Muni at 'Naimisaranya', the Forest of Naimisa as the Kali Yuga had no access to that Sacred Place, since the 'Manomaya Chakra' (The Wheel of Mental Illusion) created by Brahma occupied the entire World excepting the Naimisa Forest. The outer rim of the Wheel became thin and would stop rolling further and hence the Forest was chosen as the Sanctified one. The unfolding of the subject matter was that of Devi Bhagavata Purana, originally recited by Krishna Dvaipayana Maharshi Veda Vyasa, who described it as Maha Purana, elevating its status above the Eighteen Main Puranas, viz. Agni Purana, Bhagavata Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Brahma Purana, Brahma Harama, Brahma Vivarta Purana, Garuda Purana, Kurma Purana, Linga Purana, Matysa Purana, Markandeya Purana, Narada Purana, Padma Purana, Skanda Purana, Siva Purana, Vamana Purana, Varaha Purana, and Vishnu Purana. Maharshi Veda Vyas divided the Maha Purana of Devi Maha Bhagavata into Twelve 'Skandas' (Volumes) containing three hundred Chapters totalling eighteen thousand Stanzas. The Maha Purana describes how Devi Bhagavati, the Primeval Energy, empowered 'Maha Purusha'to create the Universe. The five major Characteristics covered in the Purana are 'Sarga' (Creation of the Universe) by 'Maha Purusha'or the Primeval Energy, 'Prati Sarga' (Secondary Creation), Dynasties of Solar and Lunar Kings, 'Manyantaras' beginning from Swayambhu Manu and the subsequent Manus, and Portrayal of Manus and other Kings.

Maha Vishnu remote-controlled by Devi Bhagavati

Devi Bhagavati or Vidya is known as an amalgam of Three Characteristics, viz. Satvika Sakti, reflected in Goddess Sarasvati; Rajasika Sakti as represented by Goddess Maha Lakshmi; and Tamasika Sakti known as Maha Kali. Also, the Maha Sakti is represented by the Trinity viz. Lords Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Siva the Destroyer (Srishti, Stithi and Laya Karakas). In the Introductory Recitation of Devi Bhagavatam, Sage Suta quoted Narada Maharshi as having confirmed by Lord Vishnu Himself to Lord Brahma that His own Premordial Energy of Universal Existence is the result of Her empowerment to Maha Vishnu to execute Her commands! Maha Vishnu reiterated that He is subservient to Devi Bhagavati and is always in Her Tapasya or meditation, but at the same time, enjoys freedom to possess the company of Goddess Lakshmi, to incarnate Himself in various forms and features some times as Dasavataras as Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Loin, Dwarf, Rama, Parasurama, Krishna, Buddha or Kalki; some times as Mohini to distribute 'Amrit' or Nectar and so on. But His actions are always remotecontrolled and are oriented to protect the Virtuous and punish the Wicked. Thus Maha Vishnu is indeed the Highest Representative of Maha Devi with full freedom to act on His own, within the framework of Her Supreme Control.

### Devi Bhagavati blesses Vishnu as Hayagreeva

As Indra and Demi-Gods were performing a Sacrifice in the presence of Brahma and Mahesa, they had all desired Maha Vishnu to preside over the Function and called on Him. But, Lord Vishnu was in 'Yoga Nidra' or the Sleep of Deep Meditation and nobody would dare wake Him. More over, interruptions of somebody's speech, the love of a couple, or waking up a person's deep sleep are sins equivalent to 'Brahma hatya' or killing of a Brahmana. The Lord was seated in a 'Padmasana' posture squatting with His legs folded and resting His chin on the top of His Bow with an Arrow fully drawn. As the Sacrifice was to be concluded, Lord Siva advised Lord Brahma to create a White Ant, 'Vamri' and directed it to bite the arrow gently which should wake up the Lord to consciousness and thus make the request. The Vamri sensed the delicate situation and requested Brahma to grant it a return boon for the great risk being undertaken in disturbing the Yoga Nidra of no less a personality than Maha Vishnu Himself! Lords Brahma and Siva gave a boon to the Vamri that what ever trickles from the Sacrificial Offerings of Ghee in the Homa Kunda (Fire Pit) would spill out could be collected as its share. As commanded by Brahma, the insect bit the fore-end of the arrow and the tight string gave way at once and the entire Universe reverberated with horrifying sound as the earth quaked, mountains were shaken, Oceans rose high, Sun lost way and Devas got traumatised. Maha Vishnu's Head was severed with His Crown and there was no trace as to where it fell! Along with Devas, Brahma and Siva cried like human beings as there was a 'Pralaya'-like situation( Universal Dissolution). Then Deva Guru Brihaspati consoled Indra, Brahma and Siva and emboldened them to countenance the grim situation, as such eventualities did happen in the past.[ Indra had to face several such events when he was dislodged from his throne by Danavas or when his body wore thousand genital marks (since he was infatuated with Ahalya and cheated her into bed, as her husband Sage Gautama was away by assuming the Sage's body form and thus attracted his curse); similarly Brahma was infatuated with his own creation 'Satarupa' an extraordinary woman of beauty and gazed at her as she avoided his attention by moving in all directions when he obtained five heads and in disgust Lord Siva cut one of the heads looking up as a sign of extreme displeasure].

The only recourse that Lords Siva and Brahma, accompanied by Indra and Demi-Gods, had was that in one voice, they made an intense appeal to Maha Devi Bhagavati, the Eternal Cause of Causes, the very Original Energy, the Life Force of entire Creation, the Bindu and Pranava, the Sourcing Fountain of knowledge and above all the Embodiment of Charity and Forgiveness. Pleased by the most sincere

prayers of Brahma and Siva downward, 'Nirguna' Maha Devi hinted that there ought to be a cause for the tragedy. In the company of Maha Lakshmi, once Maha Vishnu laughed by thinking of something. Lakshmi Devi failed to understand the possible reason as to why Vishnu was so much amused about. Was it a spot on Her face or was it due to another woman in His desire? Then as Vishnu did not clarify, Lakshmi assumed 'Tamasic Guna' and gave a curse to Him saying that His head should fall off. Thus happened the resultant tragedy despite Her sincere repentance.

While this tragedy took place, there was a coincidental incident that a tough Davana of extraordinary cruelty, named Hayagriva or the Demon with the neck of a horse, resorted to severe 'Tapas' Meditation) to Maha Bhagavati for thousands of years by following a strict regime of Sacrifice and unflinching devotion. Maha Devi appeared before the Rakshasa and granted him a boon that no Power in the Universe could cause death to him, except by an Extraordinary Energy in the form similar to his own viz. Hayagriva form alone could destroy him. Brahma and Siva hastened with the solution to the present gravest tragedy and instructed Devata's own Architect, Visvakarma to do the needful. The Architect killed a horse at once and fixed its neck to Lord Vishnu's severed head and thus emerged Lord Hayagriva.

### Vishnu destroys Madhu Kaitabha brothers

When Maha Vishnu was in Yoga Nidra in a comfortable posture of lying on the bed of Ananta Naga, two Demon brothers named Madhu and Kaitabha were born from the wax of Maha Vishnu's ears. Their birth was a mystery and unknown as felt by the brothers themselves whose physical forms grew fast and strong day by day, even as they were playing in the ocean surroundings, killing various kinds of aquatic species for food or play. Coming of age in course of time, the Demon brothers with huge bodies and proportionate common sense too, realised that there must have been a Massive Force which alone could have given birth to them. From the air, they heard a sound 'Vagbija' the Seed Mantra (Seed 'Bija' and 'Vak' the Speech of Goddess Sarasvati). To start with fun, but later on with maturity, they kept on practising the sound for years together, little realising the impact of the Mantra's repetition. In fact, they became so obsessed with the Mantra that they neither had food nor sleep, but with full concentration and utmost sincerity. 'The Parasakti's Voice emerged from the Skies that the Danava brothers would be invincible in the entire Universe provided they were united and fight two-some. Blessed by Maha Devi, the two brothers became swollen with pride and eventually attacked Lord Brahma Himself. On realising that they were unconquerable, Brahma who was seated on the lotus- head sprouting from Maha Vishnu's navel, tried the age-old four means. He tried to use 'Sama (Counselling) 'Dana' (Gifting or bribing), 'Bheda' (put one against another) and finally 'Danda' (Punish), but neither of these media appeared feasible; he ran away to Vaikuntha for protection but Maha Vishnu was in Yoga Nidra. Brahma had thus praved to Yoga Nidra Devi to prompt Maha Vishnu to wake up. It was actually Maha Maya's discretion which mattered as Vishnu Himself could not regain consciouness on His own. The concentrate of 'Tamo Guna'- Maha Maya - was earnestly prayed to by Brahma, as this was a prestige issue for him and the entire domain of Gods! Maha Maya left Vishnu free and He was fully woken up to face the challenge of the hour, viz. to either manipulate or massacre the brothers, Madhu and Kaitabha. Lord Vishnu invited the brothers to fight with Himself. The fight continued for five thousand years but without a tangible result. As the Demons were clashing one after another and Lord Vishnu was in duel singly, the latter asked the brothers to give a break as it was against Justice that they took alternate positions while He was alone. During the break, Vishnu prayed to Maha Sakti and complained that the fight was unfair and that they were also given by Her the boon of voluntary death or 'Svacchanda Maranam'. Maha Sakti realised the lacuna in the duel and advised Vishnu to give boons to the brothers so that a way out would automatically open up. Meanwhile, Maha Sakti agreed to be present at the fight in physical form and disturb the concentration of the Demon brothers by casting Her fake amorous looks. This encouraged Vishnu to

convey the Demons that their duel with Him was of great quality and thus He was ready to give boons to them. They got into the trap as they boasted that they were prepared to give boons to Him instead of the other way around. Vishnu grabbed the opportunity and said that He be given the boon of their death by killing each other! The brothers gave an excuse that the boon could be given only provided there was no water or wetness in the Ocean. Vishnu expanded his thighs manifold so that there could be adequate space for the killings. The Demons expanded their bodies too and thus the thighs of Vishnu and the body sizes of the brothers kept on increasing horizontally and vertically proportionately. Finally, the illusion created by Vishnu proved stronger and the brothers had to yield to their own killings. Thus Maha Sakti who assumed human physique and paved the way to the killings of the Danava brothers without breaking the Rules of 'Dharma Yuddha', partly by trickery and partly by Maya or Illusion.

#### Devi Bhagavati - 'Nirguna' and 'Virupa' Shakti

At this juncture, the congregation of Sages at 'Nimisharanya' needed suitable clarification as to whom precisely should one pray to or anchor one's hearty devotion to a specified target. The query appeared to be reasonable and the replies so far looked rather nebulous. Muni Suta however did his best to reply this pointed question with an equally pointed clarification. Indeed the Supreme Force in action is one and only the one! That Force is Eternal, Unborn, All Encompassing and Unknown. Having firmly established this Reality, the clarification required is as to whom one should dedicate and pray to. Vedas, Sastras, Puranas, Upanishads and name which ever Scripture was sourced, they all emphasized one uniform Truth that there were Satvik, Rajasic, and Tamasic 'Gunas' (Aspects) and the Trinity of Gods represented Creation by Brahma, Preservation by Vishnu and Destruction by Siva. Trinity is Unity and Unity is Trinity! They all represented the same and were not detached. It is one's vision that might get blurred but not the Realism. Side by side, one should also recognise the 'Nirguna' Aspect-an amalgam of all the features. Now, where would be the aspect of Maha Shakti emerge here? That Super Force again was the Nirguna Facet. Thus when one prayed, there was no canalisation or distinction of Gods. But for the purpose of Idenification, one might keep the entire target as an Entity, imagine a Physical form and facilitate one's concentration at it. Thus Siva is a part of Kundalini Shakti dominated by Tamo Guna; Brahma is dominated by Rajasik Sakti, and Vishnu is Satvika Sakti; indeed they are all one and the same. However Maha Sakti has no sex, age, form, 'Gunas', Characteristics and Identity; in fact, that precisely is the Unknown Truth. Thus replying to the question raised by the congregation of Sages, Saunaka Muni asserted that pure thoughts or prayers, or whatever 'means' that one might practise ought to be squarely targetted to Brahma Sanatani Sakti, since there could never be any Super Energy without It; this was emphasised by Narada Maharshi as was gathered from (and corraborated from Vyasa Deva) Brahma who in turn was advised by Maha Vishnu Himelf!

# Interplay of Primary 'Gunas' causes Chandra's Romance with Tara

Having explained the interplay of the three primary Gunas, Suanaka Muni described that the memorable Veda Vyasa himself was smitten by the desire of getting a child. In this context, he gave two relevant examples of obsessions experienced by Chandra for Tara and King Pururava for Urvasi to underline the fact that none is above the interplay of the three Gunas.

Brihaspati the Teacher of Demi-Gods had a beautiful wife named Tara. Once, Chandra (Moon) visited the house of Brihaspati the Guru and instantly fell in love with Tara, who too reciprocated her romantic feelings. In course of time, she deserted Brihaspati and moved into Chandra's house. Brihaspati approached Chandra and counselled him that this romance with his own Guru's wife was not only

illegitimate but a blatant infringement of Dharma which would attract a sin tantamount to 'Brahma Hatya' or the murder of a Brahmana and asked Tara to be returned to him. Chandra declined to do so as Tara came away out of her own desire. Brihaspati visited Chandra again but the latter was adamant to return Tara saying that the couple were madly infatuated mutually. Brihaspati warned Chandra with dire consequences and approached Indra for redressal. Indra himself faced a situation similar but his role was as a cheat for masquerading Sage Gautama in Ahalya's bed and received the curse to imprint genital marks all over his body. However his role was that of the Chief of Devas and despatched an intelligent emissary to Chandra Loka. The Representative advised Chandra to be sensible as he already had twenty eight beautiful Stars as his wives and even offered any of the Apsara Damsels to quench his lust. The Messenger returned to Indra empty handed and the latter decided to wage a war against Chandra Loka. Knowing of this incident, the Danava Guru Sukracharya, the arch-rival of Deva Guru Brihaspati, espoused the cause of Chandra and assured of the help of Demons in a possible war. Meanwhile Brahma Himself flew across by His 'Hamsa Vahana' (Chariot of Swan) to Chandra Loka and consequently Chandra let Tara return to Brihaspati, who was happy and excused Tara for her indiscretion. Tara a pregnant woman gave birth to a charming boy but Tara confirmed that he was Chandra's own son and Chandra took away the child and named him 'Budha'.

### **Budha weds Ila (King Sudyumna)**

As Budha fell in love with Ila, a beautiful woman, little did he realize that actually Ila was a King turned into a woman. King Sudyumna a pious Ruler of his subjects went into a forest for hunting but as he and followers entered the area, they were all converted as women. This happened due to a ban imposed by Lord Siva as He was alone with Parvati once, a few Sages entered the forest and disturbed the Lord's privacy. Not aware of this fact, the King and party entered. The King thus converted into a woman was known as Ila, who out of shyness did not return to the Kingdom. Per chance, Budha met Ila and they were married and begot a child, named Pururava. Meanwhile Ila met Sage Vasishtha and revealed the entire happening and the Sage prayed to Lord Siva and begged Him a way out for the pious King Sudyumna to get back his original position. Lord Siva agreed to let Ila attain manhood every alternate month. Thus the appearances of Ila and the King alternated every month and as the wife of Budha, Ila gave birth to Pururava. In course of time, when Pururava was made the King, Sudyumna retired to Vanasprastha and prayed to Devi Bhagavati as Ila and her sincere devotion paid off by absorbing her into the eternal Bhagavati Herself!

### King Pururava's infatuation with Apsara Urvasi

King Pururava proved himself as a model King ruling by Dharma, Varnashrama and other Vedic principles. Meanwhile, Urvasi the Celestial Dansuese received a curse from a Sage to leave to Earth for a fixed time-frame. On learning about the best possible choice as a suitor in King Pururava, it was not difficult for him to be lured and she agreed to marry him on three conditions that she would consume only 'ghee' (classified butter), that he should take good care of two sheep that she brought from Gandharva Loka and that she should not view his bare body except in bed. Fully mesmerised by her presence in his company, Pururava's interest in his duties of governance got diluted gradually. Meanwhile, the time frame of her curse was over and Indra sent his persons to steal the sheep. When he knew about the pilferage, he chased the thieves not even realising that he was unclad but the celestial thieves outsmarted him. Urvasi got terribly infuriated as Pururava broke the contract on both the counts of chasing away the thieves unclad and not being able to safeguard the sheep. She left him for heavens and Pururava's frustration and pangs of separation got him distressed to such an extent that he wandered various places

aimlessly. By chance he saw Urvasi at Kurukshetra, profusely regretted his follies and entreated her to return to him, when she advised that their meeting was purely temporary and that he should overcome his infatuation with her. Thus there indeed were instances of interaction of 'Gunas' of which Veda Vyasa was no exception.

## Maharshi Veda Vyas and Son Suka Maha Muni

Maharshi Krishna Dvipayana Veda Vyas, son of Sage Parasara and Satyavati, got a desire to secure a child. With this wish, he performed severe 'Tapasya' addressed to Maha Devi and to Maha Deva Sankara for hundred years. Indra had suggested to Sankara that His prayers be kindly be approved as the Maharshi's strict observance of futher penance could not be continued any longer. Bhagavan Sankara appeared before Veda Vyasa and granted him the boon of getting a son who would be a rare example of Purity, Great Virtue and Spiritual Enlightenment. Veda Vyasa was carried away by what Sankara blessed and initiated the Agni Homa action by the 'Arani' process of rubbing wooden pieces to light up. Just then, the Celestial Apsara (nymph), Ghritachi made a flashy appearance and cast amorous looks at the Maharshi. Being unsure of the romantic reaction of the Maharshi who no doubt got disturbed in his mind about her presence, she took the form of a tempting Parrot and flew across the Homa Kunda; Maharshi could not resist his lust for the Apsara and discharged his masculinity on the wooden sticks meant for Arani. Thus emerged from the Arani Fire, a boy of extraordinary radiance and chiselled body features resembling Veda Vyasa himself, excepting for his nose; He was named 'Suka' at the Name Giving Ceremony, since the Apsara took the form of a parrot at the moment of relieving his lust. The Maharshi enjoyed supreme happiness in fondling the child and bringing him up. He was in fact born with full comprehension of the Holy Scriptures and added to this, Veda Vyasa's early training and subsequent tutorship under Deva Guru Brihaspati made him an excellent 'Jnani'. He learnt Vedas, Sastras, and the entire gamut of Scriptures beyond which there perhaps was left little that was worthy of imbibing. As the Brahmachari attained marriageable age, Maharshi Vyas desired to perform the wedding of Suka Muni who resisted the idea vehemently. He said that having been trained as an ascetic, he had no desire whatsoever to enter into married life. Veda Vyasa explained that that according to 'Agamas', the stage of 'Garhastya' or married life was an integral part of human life of the four chapters viz. 'Brahmacharya', 'Garhastya', 'Vanaprasthya', and 'Sanyasa' as that was a logical evolution of normal living. Vyasa said that the order of life was disturbed in his own example but that exception was not a rule. Moreover, he realised that he regretted his own action of remaining single and infringed the Laws of Nature as stressed in the Sciptures. Suka Muni counter-explained that human life was a very valuable achievement and as such he would rather abstain from the so-called pleasures, causing the invitable pain, that 'Samsara' was a knife-edge existence of humanity and that he would prefer the skip-up of the Garhasthya phase in his limited existence. He further explained that the entire human existence was constanly engaged in a struggle to get released from the complicated net of 'Maya' (Illusion) and in a virtual warfare against the 'Arisht Vargas' or the Six Enemies of 'Kama' leading to and the logical resultants of 'Krodha' (Anger/ Intolerance), 'Lobha' (Meanness or Possesivenes), 'Moha' (Infatuation), 'Mada' (Arrogance) and 'Matsarya' (Jealousy). Between the two steps of temptation of entering into the net and the desperation to break it out, there would be a wide abyss which would occupy successive cycle of births and deaths owing to the concepts of 'Sanchita'

(latent), 'Prarabdha' (Carry forward), and 'Vartamana' (the Current Account) and to perpetuate the vicious 'Kala Chakra' (the Wheel of Time) further on would be a conscious stupidity, if not an ignorant folly, thus argued Suka Muni. He further stressed to Veda Vyasa that let alone normal human beings, but even Indra, Brahma, Vishnu or Maheswara could never exist in peace as Indra always kept protecting his throne from Asuras as he was their first target; Brahma had this entire creation as His 'Samsara' or His family; Vishnu no doubt had Maha Maya Lakshmi Herself as His partner but was fully engaged with the

wily Demons' atrocities to overcome and protect the balance of the entire Universe; Maheswar was constantly busy with the destruction of evil forces. Humanity without exception thus was persistently subject to want, struggle, helplessness, and pessimism. A householder's plight to subsist along with a family had always led to cunning, meanness, hypocrisy and opportunism. Where was the time for 'Karma Kanda' to perform, let alone remember the name of the Super Force, when the full manifestation of Maya or Illusion was at an explosive point! The Maha Maya Sakti had for instance submerged a Maharshi like the illustrious Veda Vyasa- who had interpreted Vedas, created all the Eighteen Puranas and several Upa Puranas, and innumerable Scriptures of eternal value to mankind- had an intense sense of 'Vyamoha' or extreme possessiveness to his son, Suka and was bent on making him a 'Grihasthi' since that would be his dream of his son to wed a woman, procreate children and be an ideal householder!

# Physical Manifestation of Maha Devi to Vishnu

Veda Vyasa had by now known Suka's confirmed views on marriage and commended Suka's reading the Great Purana of Maha Bhagavata written by himself in which the process of Creation of Universe was described in detail. In the Purana, he gave the illustration of Lord Vishnu providing solace by Maya Maha Sakti when Vishnu found Himself as a small child at the time of Pralaya or Universal Dissolution. The Lord was floating on water on a banyan tree leaf wondering as to how He was brought in that state and who could have done so? A resonant Celestial Voice was heard in a half stanza saying: 'All this being witnessed is my doing and there is nothing else eternal'. Even as Maha Vishnu was wondering what was heard, He found a mass of radiance on the skies gradually taking the form of a vision in full manifestation of Maha Bhagavati in the form of Maha Lakshmi with divine robes and ornaments, four arms with conchshell, disc, lotus and mace. She was floating on the Ocean waters along with Her personified Co-Sakties and Vibhuties on either side viz. Rati, Bhuti, Buddhi, Mati, Kirti, Smriti, Dhriti, Sraddha, Medha, Svadha, Svaha, Kshudha, Nidri, Daya, Gari, Tulsi, Pusti, Kshama, Lajja and so on. Maha Vishnu was astonished as never before and with folded hands kept on reciting the incomplete stanza that She was Eternal and nothing else! Maha Lakshmi addressed Vishnu and said that each time there were Universal Dissolutions herebefore, the same scenario happened and there were unifications of His and Hers but He had not realised as He was under the spell of Maha Maya which was Her's again. She further said that Her physical Manifestaion at present was unreal as She had none, but a Supreme Force as an amorphous, unknown, everlasing, unborn, all pervading and omniscient Energy. She commanded Vishnu to create Brahma and Siva- each one to create and destroy- and represent the two Gunas of Rajas and Tamas and thus re-start the cycle of life and death under the cover of Maya and that Vishnu should promote Satvika Guna and handle the delicate task of safeguarding and preserving the entire Universe as also protecting 'Dharma' (Virtue) and 'Nyaya' (Justice). Further on, the process of creation of Demi- Gods, Sages, and human beings and other species followed and so did the formation of Societies and Principles of Dharmas, Varnashramas, and stages of human life and so on. By inference, Veda Vyasa said that the established practices commended the insitution of marriages, of the duties of Grihasta (Householder) and 'karma kanda', followed by retirement, Sanyasa and finally attainment of Salvation- all in a gradual process step by step. An adamant Suka was still not relenting in his attitude and Veda Vyasa suggested Suka's visit to Mithilapura and meet King Janaka for his advice as he had 'Jeevan Mukti' (Salvation while alive).

### How King Janaka convinced Suka Muni to marry?

Quite reluctantly, Suka Muni travelled all the way from Meru Mountain to Mithila. He was unaware of the nuances of City life and for the first time ever witnessed himself the full demonstration of subdued

virtues and blatant vices, momentary joys and unending frustrations, rare displays of integrity and loud noises of hypocrisy. Even the Gatemen stopped him to ascertain Suka's personal credentials and made him wait for days together. Finally, some Ministers and Officials enquired about him and found that he was the Great son of memorable Veda Vyasa himself. He was ushered into the palace and welcomed with grand luxuries for eight days and offered him the services of coquettish maids but there was little reaction in him. The Muni met King Janaka in his Court with full blast of music, dance and wine all around as there were festivities in his honour. He was offered a full glass of milk and was asked to greet a bevy of beauties singing and dancing around him. There was absolutely no response whatsoever as his senses and elements were just the same while taking rounds without spilling even a drop of milk. The King who, as described by Veda Vyasa had the Status of Jeevan Mukta or Videha (without body but alive), was astounded at the boy's equanimity and declared that he might as well return to Veda Vyasa as his son was a paradigm of virtue par excellence and that was most inflexible! But, the mission for which Vyasa referred Suka Muni to the King was to make Suka agree to marry. Hence a one-to-one dialogue was arranged and the process of serious discussion proceeded. Suka Muni argued,- as he had done with his father earlier- summing up that he would rather choose the 'Vihanga Marg' (sky route) as against the land route or a short-cut to salvation without wasting his precious life with the experimenta -tions of 'Samsara' or the house-hold chores viz. 'Garhastya' and 'karmkanda'. King Janaka allowed the boy to steam off and initiated the process of subtle counselling. He said: 'Even if human passions 'seem' to be under control, the state of 'Sanyasa' is not bound to be as easy as is made to be in practice. The term 'Yoga' is highly deceptive as it presumes overcoming wants ranging from hunger and thirst, sleep and ill health and such bare needs for the meagre existence to medium kinds of wants such as a place to live, a companion to live with, family happiness, medical help, and such other minimum facilities which are not only highly permissible but are infact prescribed in Scriptures. Any fall from the high altitudes of Yoga would be too steep leading again to the low levels of frustration, self-condemnation and helplessness. That was precisely what the Holy Scriptures including Vedas recited by Brahma Himself. He prescribed the step-by-step methodology of Varnasrama. Even Gods and Demi-Gods followed the path of 'Garhastya'. A person following the normal route would be immune from successes and failures and could buffer the consequences with equal ease, provided of course one does not transgress avoidable pitfalls. Moreover, in exceptional cases like in the case of Suka Muni, there is the least possibility of unwanted attractions as he would be unaffected anyway. The example of Janaka himself is worth following as he was 'Videha' (body less) yet he knew the pattern of Jeevan Mukta or Moksha while Living a Contented Life. Why suffer without reasonable and allowable comforts rather than living morally and normally by still achieving the desired objective of Salvation? There is no need to rule out a view that the World is optimistic if we moderate the senses and control the mind, instead of complaining that the World is a hell and full of misery and meanness. Also, how could one enjoy the effect of 'coolness' unless the deadly impact of 'heat' is suffered. A Karma Yogi who practises controls and discipline, like a dew drop on a lotus leaf, would have the Golden Mean of enjoying 'Iham' (the satisfaction of Good Living) and 'Param' (the attainment of the Final Goal)! Having been more or less convinced that Sanyasa yoga for his age and keeping in view the relevant factors might not be unsuitable, Suka sought certain clarifications on a few issues, as though he wished to hear from Videha Janaka for public enlightentment. The issues were related to killing of animals, consumption of wine and attachment to sex. He wondered as to how these habits were permitted in the Scriptures! As regards the aspect of meat eating, Scriptures allowed animal sacrifice for the purpose of Yagnas and specified ceremonies like Asvamedha Yagas, Goat or other Sacrifices of animals and so on but certainly not oriented to indiscriminate killings for the sake of enjoyment of meat eating. Similarly, drinking Soma Rasa is strictly as an integral part of Yagnas invoking Gods through Fire Sacrifices involving elaborate procedures through the chanting of relevant mantras and are of purely religious orientation; for instance, a person performing certain Sacrifices as per established format approved by Scriptures are known as Somayajis and are highly revered. But consumpion of alcohol is never approved for personal enjoyment. So is the case of involvement with women. Indeed no Scripture approved of blanket sex excepting with a lawful

wife that too only for procreation purposes in moderated measure and not with comprehensive license which verges with vice or obssession and certainly not extra-marital, in any case.

# Muni Suka's wedding and Salvation thereafter

Muni Suka returned from Mithilapura a changed person and to the greatest delight of his father, married the daughter of a Muni named Pivari and they had four sons and a daughter all of whom were happy in their weddings too. Maha Muni selected Mount Kailash subsequently to practise higher disciplines of Yoga, achieved Siddhies of Anima, Laghima and so on and finally ascended further from the top of Mount Kailasa to realise self-realisation to join the Supreme Bhagavati. As Veda Vyasa got shaken up from his son's absence and practised heavy penance targetting Maheswara as the embodiment of Tamas Guna, the Lord appeared and gave him the boon that he could always find Suka in his own shadow!

After the departure of his son, Veda Vyasa was a frustrated person and carried on with his disciples Asita, Devala, Vaisampayana, Jaimini, Sumanta and others and after their studies were over, he despatched them with the tasks of propagating Dharma all over. He left Meru Mountain to meet his mother Satyavati from whom he left long ago on the banks of Ganges. He realised that his mother was married to the King of Hastinapur, Santanu on the condition that another son of his, Bhishma born from his first wife Ganga, would neither marry nor beget a child since there shold not be any progeny to claim the throne. Shantanu and Satyavati gave birth to Chitrangada and Vichitra-Virya. After Shantanu died, Chitrangada became the King but in a war with Gandharvas, Chitrangada died and Vichitravirya was made the King. Bhishma desired that Vichitravirya be married as he was eligible and when the King of Kasi announced a 'Swayamvara' (bride's choice among the Invited Kings), Bhishma forcibly took away three brides-Amba, Ambika and Ambalika to Hastinapura. On arrival, Amba requested that since she already selected the King of Salva at the Svayamvara, she might be please allowed to do so and Bhishma agreed. But the King of Salva did not agree and as she returned back insisting that as per Dharma Bhishma must marry her. Since Bhishma did not agree that even earlier, Amba left for the forest and became an ascetic. King Vichitravirya married Ambika and Ambalika but was not able to extend the progeny and died of premature death. Then came up a crisis of Kingship falling vacant without a heir. Satyavati called for Vedavyasa who was settled on the banks of River Sarasvati to help continue the lineage through Ambika and Ambalika. Ambika closed her eyes in bed with Veda Vyasa as she was not happy with the union and thus a blind boy, Dhrita-rashtra was delivered. Ambalika sent a Servant woman into the bed and a wise boy, Vidura was born. But when the mistake was realised and Ambalika had to go into the bed, she was too frightened into paleness afraid of the Maha Muni and thus was born Pandu. No doubt Pandu became the King before his elder brother who was born blind but since he died of early death due to illness, Dhritarashtra the blind had to be the King.

#### Genesis of 'Matsyagandha' alias Satyavati

There was a pious King Uparichara Vasu of Chedi Kingdom who had a beautiful wife Girika. Such was his devotion that Lord Indra was pleased and gifted him an air- borne flying chariot. On the day of the 'Sraddha' (annual ceremony) of his deceased father and ancestors, his wife had a desire to bear a child from him but in view of the Ceremony, he left for a forest to hunt a deer for the Sacrifice as also fetch other material for the Ceremony. But when he was reminded of his wife's request, he was overcome with passion and spilt his virility which he did not wish to waste and thus retained it on a banana leaf and commanded a falcon to carry the packet to his queen with a message to her. Another falcon mistook the leafy packet as a piece of meat and snatched it. In the clash of the falcons, the packet fell in a river. Meanwhile an 'Apsara' (Celestial nymph), named 'Adrika' who was bathing in the river mistakenly dragged the feet of a Brahmana performing his prayers on the banks of the river. He cursed the Apsara to

become a fish as his meditation was interrupted. That fish swallowed the floating leafy packet and thus got pregnant.. The fish was caught by a fisherman after nine months and found from its stomach twin babies - a boy and a girl child. The fisherman presented the babies to the pius King, who by his mystic powers visualised the boy as his own child from the banana leaf and hence retained him to be the future King, and gave away the baby back to the fisherman and gifted him with riches enough to bring up the girl-child. This was the genesis of 'Matsyodari' who grew as an extraordinary beauty. Sage Parasara who wished to cross the river by boat was managed by 'Matsyagandha' and her voluptuous physical features raised instant infatuation for the fisher woman. Before yielding at a lonely island in the river, she demanded that she should spread heavenly fragrance from her body over an area of one yojana- or Yojanagandha- and that she should be blessed with an exraordinary son well versed with Scriptures and unparallelled devotion to Almighty. Parasara renamed the woman as Satyavati and also blessed her to become a Queen. The memorable son of Parasara and Satyavati was Krishna Dvipayana Veda Vyasa, as he had the purity of Lord Vishnu Himself and Dvipayana since he was born in a river island ( Dvipa).

### Chain reaction of Ganga -King Mahabhisha-Ashta Vasus- King Shantanu

There was a virtuous King Mahabhisha of Ikshvaku Dynasty who pleased Indra with a series of 'Asvametha' and 'Vajapeya' Sacrifices and attained Indra Loka after his death. Once he had attended the Court of Lord Brahma and along with him was seated Devi Ganga. He was immensely attracted to her and she too reciprocated with her amorous glances. Brahma got disturbed and cursed both of them to take to human lives as husband and wife. Mahabhisha opted to be the son of King Pratipa of Puru Dynasty. At the same time Ashta-Vasus (Eight Vasus) of the Celestial Region headed by Vasu Prithi and their families visited Sage Vasishtha's 'Ashram' and admired 'Kama Dhenu' the Sacred Cow whose milk bestowed disease-less longevity and sublime happiness. The wife of one of the Vasus, Dyau was impressed with the Cow and quietly stole it and its calf. Sage Vasishtha found in his 'Diya Drishti'

(Celestial Vision) that Nandini the Sacred Cow was in the custody of Vasu Dyau and cursed all the Vasus to be turned as human beings. Being highly repentant, the Vasus beseeched Vasishtha to dilute the effect of the curse and out of compassion the Sage agreed to one year's human life to seven Vasus as their involvement was indirect but Vasu Dyau should have a full life time. The Vasus, who knew about Brahma's curse to Ganga Devi, approached her to give birth to Seven Vasus of one year's human life each and one life time's existence to the last born Vasu. But this was agreed to subject to the condition that her prospective husband should agree to freedom of her action without any reservation and if he did not, she would quit as the husband. Eventually, Ganga waited on the banks of River Ganges and awaited the arrival of King Pradipa of Kuru Dynasty for meditation. The King arrived to perform 'Surya Namaskaras' on the river bed and Ganga appeared as a charming woman and sat straightaway on his right lap, indicating thereby that the place was to seat a son / daughter. The damsel identified herself as Ganga Devi and replied that she would await his son's arrival who was yet to be born. In course of time, King Pradipa got his son, Shantanu, and as he grew as a handsome youth advised him to meet Ganga Devi who would propose but cautioned that he should not ask her questions and agree to whatever she asked. Accordingly, Ganga Devi, the eternal beauty, agreed to wed Shantanu and agreed to her conditions unilaterally. She gave immense happiness to Shantanu, who became the King after his father's abdication of the throne. After a year, they were blessed with a boy, but she took the baby and submerged him in the flow of Ganga! To his great surprise, Shantanu witnessed the horror of the child's cruel drowning in the flow but dared not say one word to his wife. This happening was repeated again and again for seven times and as the eight child was born, Shantanu protested and Ganga as per their contract left, but requested that the boy be named as Gangeya.

### Gangeya, the exemplary 'Bhishma', of Mahabharata

For a long time since Ganga Devi left Shantanu, the latter had no interest in life and Gangeya, who was increasingly aware of his father's disenchantment in the duties of Kingship, virtually carried on the burden lightly. As a dutiful son, he did whatever was possible or even impossible, but for the replacement of the position of a mother. Once when he accompanied his father on a royal hunt on the banks of River Yamuna and found an extraordinarily stunning woman whose body flavour was heavenly and intoxicating. Her captivating physical features sent tremors in Shantanu's mind and asked his son Gangeya to enquire about her. The lady replied that she was a fisherwoman and any enquiry about herself be ascertained by her father only at their abode. The fisherman was not sure whether her daughter's future would be assured since a grown up King-in-Waiting was already in place. Gangeya gave an assurance that he would not put in a claim for Kingship. But this did not satisfy the fisherman as Gangeya's next kin would definitely make the claim to the throne. Then Gangeya declared that in view of the apprehensions expressed by the fisherman and subtly endorsed by his daughter, he would take a Sacred Vow before all witnesses concerned that he would never ever marry! Shantanu as well as the entire Kingdom were taken aback by the decision of Gangeya. Shantanu tried to wriggle out of the deal, but Gangeya did not allow any departure from his vow; he said that the sacrifice being performed was not comparable to that of Parasurama, who for the asking by his father Jamadagni, had cut his own mother's head on the flimsy reasoning of her imagined flicker of mind when she saw a Gandharva bathing; or to Lohitasya who allowed himself to be sold to a Brahmin as a servant boy, for working heinous household duties leading to death, to repay his father Harischandra's debt to Sage Visvamitra; or obeying the implicit instruction of his father Dasaratha conveyed by Queen Kaikayi to abandon the self and wife Sita to fourteen years of forest life as an ascetic couple ending by the kidnapping of his wife and undergoing untold misery and torture! Thus quoting such examples, Gangeya announced to the whole World that not only he would not marry but protect the entire progeny of the 'Vamsa' as long as he lived! Thus was given Gangeya the indelible name of Bhishma in the generations to follow!

# Pandavas and Kauravas- Quick proceedings of 'Maha Bharata'

Since the elder issue of Veda Vyasa from Ambika, Dhritharashtra was born blind, Ambalika's son Pandu was made the King with the approval of Bhishma, the driving force of the Kingdom, with Hastinapura as the Capital. The elder brother had two wives Gandhari and Sauvali, the former being the Prime Wife and the latter was a keep in the household. Gandhari, the daughter of Gandhara Desa and brother of Sakuni, gave birth to one hundred sons, the elder two being the notorious Duryodhana and Dussasana (actual names were Suyodhana and Susasana, standing for Good Warrior and Good Administrator). Gandhari preferred to close her eyes always, out of sentiment as her husband was blind. Sauvali's son was Yuyutsu. Pandu Raja, the earlier King, was married to Kunti, the daughter of King Surasena and the paternal aunt of Lord Krishna. The Raja also married Madri, the daughter of King Madra. When Kunti was a very young girl, her father asked her to assist Sage Durvasa in a four month long Sacrifice / Yagna performed by him and after the end of the Function, he was pleased to teach a Mantra to her which could invoke any of the Demi Gods and Allied Devatas including Indra, Surya, Yamadharma Raja and Vayu, as well as allied Demi-Gods like Aswini Kumars. Out of curiosity, Kunti experimented by invoking Sun God in her private chamber and to her great surprise and dismay she found Surya Himself standing before her and asked her as to whether she desired a son or a daughter. Being of a tender age of preteens, she was flabbergasted at the odd statement of Surya's but since the latter understood the predicament of the girl, Surya gave her the boon that her virginity would not be disturbed, but she should however be conceived. Kunti took her personal maid into confidence and even informing her mother of the incident, she did not step out of her chamber. After nine months, she delivered a boy of exceeding radiance and attraction with inborn armoury and ear-rings. With the help of the maid, she arranged the child in a floating box and

placed it on a nearby waterbody. A charioteer of the Court of the King, Atiradha and his wife found the floating casket and as they did not have an issue, considered the child as a great blessing and brought him up as 'Karna' since he had ear-rings in-born and as Radheya after the name of the step mother. Therafter Kunti considered the incident as forgotten of her innocent childhood. Subsequently Kunti married King Pandu in a 'Swayamvara' (as per the bride's own choice), but soon thereafter, King Pandu received a curse from a Brahmana who was targetted by the King's arrow mistaken for a deer in copulation and the curse was that if he slept with a woman, he would fall dead at once. The King knew that without begetting a son he would not be able to cross the River Vaitarani at the entry point of hell itself and the soul would get stuck there itself! Pandu suggested that Scriptures would allow a virtuous Brahmana to sleep with her and Kunti informed that she knew a Mantra as gifted by Durvasa Muni and by reciting that she could be blessed. Thus, Kunti invoked Yama Dharma Raja, Vayu, and Indra from time to time and was blessed with three sons, viz. Dharmaraja, Bhima and Arjuna respectively. She also passed on the Mantra to Madri who begot Nakula and Sahadeva as twin brothers. Once when Pandu ventured a wrong move to invite Madri in bed, Pandu died because of the Brahmana's curse as expected, and Madri too died in selfimmolation, leaving the two sons to Kunti's care. Hence they came to be popular as Pancha-Pandavas. As Pandu died, Dhritarashtra was sworn in as the King and there were quick changes in Hastinapura, because of a blind King doting on his children especially Duryodhana who was in evil league as 'Dushta Chatushtaya' or the Four Wicked Men along with his younger brother Dussasana, his maternal uncle Sakuni and Karna (who was declared as the Ruler of a Subsidiary Anga Desa, as he was barred otherwise from Royal responsibilities and rights since he did not have Kshatria origin as the son of a charioteer). The Evil Four had constant quarrels with their Pandava cousins, due to jealousy, as the cousins were far more disciplined and stronger as also since Kuru Vamsa elders and others liked them more. The Evil Four pretended sympathy for Pandavas and wanted them to move into a new Palace but their intention was to kill them while sleeping as the Palace was made of lac and susceptible to quick fire. Thanks to Krishna's foresight and precautionary measures, Pandavas exited safe from the burning Palace through a secret passage, as the Evil Four misled the Public that Pandavas and Kunti were burnt. Meanwhile Pandavas masqueraded as Brahmanas and stayed in a poor family house on rent. When the turn of sparing a person from the landlord's house came up for Sacrifice to a Demon, named Bakasura, (as per a contract with the village heads and the Demon that instead of his killing the Villagers indiscriminately), Bhima the strong man opted to reach the Demon's abode away from the Village and brought relief to the Villagers by killing him in a severe duel. From thereon, Pandavas still appearing as Brahmanas, moved on to King Drupada's Court for Druapadi's Swayamvara and succeded in the test of destroying a fish on a quickly moving wheel kept above one's head by an arrow while viewing its reflection down in a water pool underneath. This feat was possible only to an ace archer. Karna and Kauvaras attended the Swayam Vara too. Only Arjuna could perform the feat as Karna who too was a great archer had failed, again causing jealousy on learning that the Brahmanas were fake and actually they were Pandavas. On hearing the good news that after all Pandavas were not dead, the Elders of Kuru Vamsa including Bhishna, Dronacharya, and Kripacharya were overjoyed but the Evil Four were shaken. They agreed that a portion of the Kigdom be given away to Pandavas as a peace making measure and the Elders like Bhishna appreciated the gesture. Pandavas thus moved to a new Capital at Indrprastha where a fantastic 'Maya Sabha' or a Palace of Illusions built by the Divine Architect-Designer by the name Maya. Recovering from their days of misfortune, Pandavas recouped and performed 'Rajasuya Yagna'and invited Kauravas including the Elders like Bhishma, Drona, Vidura and Kripacharya as well as the Evil Four. Lord Krishna who had always been a staunch supporter of Pandavas was honoured as the Chief Guest and when King Sisupala the evil opponent of Krishna objected and insulted the latter, his Sudarsana Chakra (Wheel) snipped his head. The Evil Four, especially Duryodhana felt highly envious of Pandavas, invited them to Hastinapura only to trap Dharmaraja into an unjust chess game with Sakuni who was an expert in it and defeated Pandavas against stiff conditions of losing their Kingdom and even themselves including Draupadi, with whom an attempt was made for disrobing. The conditions were twelve years of forest life and one year of unidentifiable destination where they should not be recognised failing which, the terms could be doubled! During the forest life of twelve years, Kauravas tormented Pandavas and during the year long

'Ajnanavas' or unreconizable place, took refuge in changed status with Dharmaraja as Kanku Bhat or Brahmana Adviser to King Virat in his latter's court, Draupadi as 'Sairandhri' as the Maid in the Queen's Chamber, Bhima as the cook in the Royal kitchen, Arjuna as 'Brihannala'-the transgender dance teacher of the Princess Uttara; Nakula and Sahadeva as the keepers of horses and cows. During the course of their stay in the Virat kingdom, Pandavas underwent unknown torture and humiliation including the attempted molestation of Sairandhri by the King's powerful brother-in-law, named Keechaka who was quietly eliminated by Bhima in a night duel. At the end of their stay in cognito, Kauravas tried to capture the cows of King Virat but by that time Brihannala came into the form of Arjuna as the 'Agyata vasa' year was over and destroyed the Kaurava Army single handedly and having utilised the 'Sammohana Astra' or the 'Mantra' which lulled the War Stalvarts like Bhishma, Drona, Asvatthama and of course the Evil Four into long slumber and released the cows of King Virat back home. There were talks of 'Sandhi' or Reconcilliation held by Krishna on behalf of Pandavas but the puffed up Evil Four refused even to a pin-some space to Pandavas, let alone five villages to the five some and the Great War of Mahabharata was fought for eighteen days dragging even the Elders of Kuru Vamsa like Bhishma, Drona and quite a few pious persons by the Evil Four on one side and Pandavas on the other with Krishna as Charioteer cum unarmed Adviser of Pandavas. A major casuality from the Pandavas side was that of brave and young Abhimanyu, the son of Arjun and Subhadra, in a 'Chakra Vyuha' (a circular closed fight) among many- to-one unjust encounter. There was mass destruction on both sides and the tragedies of stalwarts including the entire generation of Illustrious Elders who took part in the Battle as also the Evil Four, with Duryodhana as the last to fall to Bhima, who killed Dussasana earlier.

# Maha Bhagavati allows vision of the dead at Kurukshetra Battle

Pursuant to the Great Battle, the respected ladies of both Kauravas and Pandavas who lost their husbands, sons, grand sons, grand fathers, fathers, in-laws and nephews collected on the banks of Ganges and prayed toVeda Vyasa to secure a glimpse of the departed, since the ladies could not go to the battle field. Among the ladies were Kunti, Gandhari, Draupadi, Subhadra and Uttara. Dhritarashtra and Pandava Heros were also invited to the expected miracle-spectacle. The Maharshi performed Pranayama and deep yoga- oriented meditation to the Unknown and Omniscient Devi Bhagavati. His intense and continued worship for quite sometime and as an indication of the positive response received from Maha Devi, there were indications on a huge sky-long celestial screen and there were quick glimpses of the one-to-one fights and the resultant deaths and reactive celebrations; the screen views of the Linga and Limbless Bodies of the departed souls which were recognised at once by the concerned eyes, but not the converse.

#### Asvathama punished and Parikshith born

Asvathama could not reconcile to the death of his father Drona Acharya who was otherwise invincible but as per Krishna's advice, Bhima killed an elephant named Asvathama and made Bhima shout that Asvathama was killed and conveyed the news to Drona Acharya. Drona was horrified at the news, asked Dharmaraja for confirmation and the latter confirmed: 'Asvathama died-the elephant! But he said further in a very low tone saying 'Asvthama hata: Kunjarah'. Thus Drona was cheated, hung his bow and arrows and sat still in meditation, when Arjuna showered arrows and killed Drona. Desirous of killing Arjuna in sleep, Asvathama did not find him, but thus killed the full party of Arjuna's sons in sleep. In turn, Arjuna located Asvathama and fought a fierce battle. Drona's son finally used to 'Brahmastra', the most potent Mantric arrow. Arjuna too retaliated by the use of the same Astra and controlled Asvathama. Yudhistara

and Krishna advised not to kill Asvathama but cut the naturally born 'Shringa' Jewel (diamond horn), which itself was an ugly insult to him. The impact of Asvathama's Brahamastra would have normally torn off Arjuna's pregnant daughter-in-law Uttara, bur for Lord Krishna's mystic intervention. The child thus born to Uttara was Parikshith who was then the last remnant of Pandavas. As a King, Parikshith was highly spiritual and benevolent. Once when he concluded a Royal hunt and got thirsty, he visited the Ashram (Hermitage) of Sage Samaika who was in deep meditation and thus did not respond to the King's visit. He was annoyed and picking up a dead snake fallen on the ground nearby picked it up and placed it around the Muni's head as a garland. On return to the hermitage, the Sage's son Sringi saw the ugly sight and gave a curse that whoever did this insult to my father would be killed within a week's time. The King having known of the curse readied himself on the banks of River Ganges and requested Maha Muni Suka to enlighten him the Great Purana of Maha Bhagavata. On the seventh day, with all the security in a seven storeyed building on the river banks, Taksha made efforts to sneak in the building somehow and intercepted a Brahmana by name Kasyapa desirous of making wealth from relieving the King's problem as he knew the Mantra of anti snake bite; Daksha gave away plenty of money to the Brahmana and got rid of him; in fact he tested the Brahmana whether he could really administer the Mantra and revive an entire tree burnt by poisonous flames of serpent's bite; the Brahmana did convert the tree's ashes to its original position. Later in the evening Taksha asked disciples to disguise as Brahmanas to carry fruits to the King on the pretext of reciting Atharvana Veda and the fruit which the King ate contained a small insect which was Taksha himself assuming an enormous body and killed the King.

# Janamejaya's 'Sarpa Yagna'( Snake Sacrifice) stopped by Sage Asita and Veda Vyasa

When King Parikshith met his end, his son Janamejaya was hardly a lad of eleven years and was declared as the next King. Guru Kripacharya trained him in the Science of Archery, Administration and Dharmasastra. He was married to Vapustama the daughter of King of Kasi and carried on with pious activities. Meanwhile a Sage Uttanka approached Janamejaya and provoked him to take revenge on his father's killer Taksha and perform Sarpa Yagna (Sacrifice of Serpents) and command Taksha into the Fire Pit (Homa Kunda) and Sacrifice all the Serpents in the process. Sage Uttanka told the King that his father could not go to heaven because of snake bite. Convinced thus, the King ordered that the Yagna be arranged. Thousands of snakes were burnt off and Taksha was so afraid of his life that he sought refuge from Indra. But, so revengeful were Janamejaya and Sage Uttanka that they were prepared to command not only Taksha but even Indra to Sarpa Yajna and haul them into the Fire Pit! Taksha thus approached Sage Asita to call on the King and to refrain from proceeding further in the Sacrifice as thousands of innocent Snakes were burnt off, for the sake of Taksha. Veda Vyasa explained the Episode of Sage Asita and King Ruru to the King. In the olden days, there was a Sage Jaratkratu who was practising high devotion to Devi Bhagavati in a forest. He had a vision of his dead father and forefathers in a cave who asked him to marry and suggested an eligible woman named Jarat Karu, who was the sister of Vasuki. Meanwhile the co-wives of Sage Kasyapa, viz. Kadru and Vinita had an argument as to what was the colour of the horses of the Sun God's chariot. Vinita guessed the color as white but Kadru had a bet that the colour was black. It was agreed that whoever lost the bet would have to carry the other on her back always while going to places. Kadru asked her sons to colour the horses black to win the bet. While some of her sons obeyed her but others did not. Kadru cursed those who did not comply be burnt off in a Fire pit and Vinita virtually became Kadru's slave. Vinita's son 'Garuda' the Carrier of Maha Vishnu, asked for the cause of her sorrow and she narrated as to what happened. Out of his affection for his mother, Garuda approached Kadru to pardon his mother and Kadru agreed provided that Garuda could bring Amrit (nectar) from the custody of Vaikuntha. Garuda was bent on relieving his mother's curse and fetched a jug of Nector from Vaikuntha. Kadru was delighted and released Vinita. All the family members and friends of Kadru were invited and asked to clean up themselves before taking spoonfuls of

Amrit. But Indra quietly stole away the jug of Amrit. The invitees of Kadru returned from their baths and found that the jug was missing. They were disappointed but tried their best to lick any drops from out of the jar that might have spilt on the grass (Kusa) and as they licked their tongues were cut and hence were known as 'dvi-jihvas' or two tongued ever since. Vasuki and others who were troubled by Kadru approached Lord Brahma and complained against Kadru, the mother of snakes. He blessed them and said that the younger sister of Vasuki, Jarat Karu, should be proposed to wed Sage Jaratkaru. But the Sage was highly short tempered and the bride should be very obedient and trustworthy and the couple would beget a child who would enlighten, control and discipline the whole community of snakes and lighten the burden of their over-haughtiness to the world. That was why, Sage Asita prevailed upon King Janamejaya to stop the unique Sarpa Yagna and Veda Vyasa too approved of Sage Asita's request. Maharshi Vyasa had suggested that instead of the revenge-oriented Sarpa Yagna, he should rarher build a spacious Temple dedicated to Devi Bhagavati and also perform Devi Maha Yagna and such other Spiritual activities to release the soul of late King Parikshith and relieve the curse of the Brahmana boy.

### Vision of Maha Bhagavati by Trimurtis

King Janamejaya asked about the significance of 'Maha Devi Bhagavati Yajna' from Veda Vyas, since he felt confused as to who should be targetted to put one's whole hearted devotion, as multi-dimensional attention to Gods might get diffused even to StarYogis, let alone normal human beings, especially because concentration in human mind is highly erratic and fluid against the powerful pull of material distractions. The normal belief had been that one could anchor on either Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver or Mahadeva the Destroyer, each representing the Rajas, or Satvik, or Tamas Gunas respectively, but to say that an amalgam of all the Gunas as Devi Bhagavati was perhaps an oversimplification! Even Sun God whose visibility was a clear phenomenon, is directly perceptible before one's own vision. Veda Vyasa replied that this question was no doubt revelant but was replied in the past by the Trinity themselves. At the stage when Maha Vishnu killed Madhu Kaitabha by expanding His thigh space, the Trinity had clearly comprehended that Devi Parasakti who had no form nor dimension and was the endless and unique energy. There were heavenly directions to the Trinity at the time of Universal Destruction to perform 'Tapasya' or meditate, to Create, to promote and destroy Illusion. As the Trinity themselves got no leads to create what and how, to promote which, and where, that was the Illusion or Maya! The Trinity wondered that as there was no earth but a huge Ocean, no five elements of Nature (Earth, Light, Air, Sky and water), no five 'Tanmatras' or the causative rudiments, (viz.'Sabda' or Sound, 'Sparsa' or Touch, 'Rupa' or Sight, 'Gandha' or Smell and 'Rasa' or Taste), no sensual organs, and no Gunas or Saguna, Durguna or Nirguna - Goodness, Evil, or Equanimity. How could the process of Creation be initiated! In reply, a 'Vimana' or an Airfloat was sent to carry the Trinity towards the Sky and landed at a place where was no water but ground. The Place looked like a beautiful City with well laid buildings, gardens, water fountains, trees with ripe fruits and splashes of flowers with divine fragrances, conditioned air and lighting-apparently the gate way to Heaven. The aeroplane was lifted up again and flew low to let the Trinity watch the Nandana Garden, Surabhi the Cow, Parijata the Celestial Tree, the Iravata the Divine Elephant, a bevy of Beautiful Apsaras at dance, Gandharvas on singing, and finally the High Throne with glittering gold and jewellery with Indra and Sachi, encircled by Planetary Heads like Varuna, Agni, Surya, Moon and a host of Devatas and their Devis. Further on the Trinity witnessed the Brahma Loka, the Vaikuntha and Kailasa and discovered original Trinity with their wives and accompaniments. Finally, the aeroplane reached 'Sudha Sagar' (The Ocean of Nectar) and in its midst they found the 'Mani Dvipa' or the Island of Gems in which a Cot with the four legs represented by Brahma, Vishnu, Mahaswara and all other Demi-Gods was sighted. The Trinity then had the Super Vision of extraordinary radiance, twinkling flashings of a physical manifestation of MAHA DEVI BHAGAVATI! The top portion of the Cot represented Sada Siva in the form of a colourful rainbow with a red carpet bejewelled and spread over. She sat gracefully smiling wearing a red garment, a garland with

red flowers and red sandal paste on her forehead with black eyes and red lips, four hands wearing a noose, a lotus, a goad and an 'Akshaya Patra' (an eternally filled vessel) as though She was about to give away boons. Even the birds around were chanting mystic incantations of 'Moola Mantras' like 'Hrim'. [Examples of Moola Mantras (Seed Mantras) are: Om Aim Hreem Srim; Om Ka-A- E- La Hrim, Ha-Sa-Ka-Hala-Hreem, Sakala Hreem; Om Aim Kleem Sauh Kleem Aim; Om Aim Hreem Kleem Chamundaya Vicchey; Aam Heem Krom Aim Kleem Sauch; Etc]. Her ear-rings were of the shape of 'Sri Chakra'. She was surrounded by Devis like 'Hrillekha' and others like 'Anga Kusuma'. She was seated in a 'Satkona' (seven angled) Yantra format. Lord Vishnu of the Trinity recognised Her as He saw her in the same physical manifestation when He was a toe-sucking boy on a banana leaf floating on a massive water surface and blessed Him to create Brahma and Maheswara and advised that the process of Creation be taken up as soon as possible. Lord Vishnu said that the Trinity was fortunate with their vision of Maha Devi and the 'Tapasya' (meditation) that was performed by them all through the duration of Yugas had succeeded. As He stated like that, Lords Brahma and Eswara were choked with emotion and endless joy and prostrated before the Unparallelled Vision with humility and gratitude. As soon as the Trinity entered the Entry Point of the Sanctum Sanctorium where Devi Bhagavathi was seated smilingly, the three-some of Brahma, Vishnu and Eswara were converted into stunning feminine forms. Another astonishing miracle was that the entire Universe was witnessed on her toe nails including the Trinity and their Abodes, the Pancha Boothas, Indra, all other Devas, Gandharvas, Apsarasas, the humanity, Oceans, Mountains, Sages like Veda Vyas, the Galaxy, view of Sisumara, Asvinis and so on.

#### Trinity's Prayers to Maha Bhagavati and Sixteen 'Tatvas'

Completely overcome by awe and humility, Lord Vishnu addressed Maha Bhagavati that He was amazed to witness the entire Universe on Her toe nails including Himself and He was but a miniscule reflection of Herself. Nobody knows how many such Vishnus were created and that She was 'Karanguli nakhotpanna Narayana Dasa Kritis' or She created Ten Incarnations of Narayana by touching Her hand nails! She was 'Om, Hreem and Srim', 'Moola Prakruti' and 'Moola Mantratmika'. She was 'Niradhara' (Foundation less), 'Nitya' (Eternal), 'Nirguna' (Without Characteristics), 'Nirvikara'

(Changeless) and 'Dhyana Dhatru Dhyaya Rupa' (The Meditation, The Meditator and The Meditated). She was the material Cause of Prakriti (Nature), Maya (Illusion) and the 'Tatvas'\*. She was the Super Power but yet She bestows Kindness readily and spontaneously (Avyaja Karuna Poora Purita)!

[ Tatvas \*: 1) 'Inanendriayas': Five of sense organs, viz, Eyes, Nose, Tongue, Mouth, and Skin; 2) 'Karmendriayas': or Five Organs for Action viz: mouth, feet, hands, genital and anus; 3) Five 'Tanmatras' or inner basics of elements or light, sound, taste, smell and consciousness; 4) Five 'Antahkaranas': Mind or thought, Buddhi or Understanding, Siddha or Power of mind leading to Jayam or success and Angaram or Excitement; 5) Six 'Adharas' or Foundations: Muladhara, Svadhistana, Manipura, Anantha, Visuddhi and Angana; 6) 'Dhatus' or Seven Body Constituents: Serum, Blood, Semen, Brain marrow, Flesh, Bone and Skin. 7) Ten 'Vayus' or Vital Airs: Prana (Near Heart), Apana (Top to bottom), Samana (Near Throat), Vyana (Total Body), Utthana (near navel), Nahana

(movements and speech), Koormana (causing disgust or dismay), Kiriharana (facial), Devadatta

(exaled by yawning) and Dhanajaya (remaining in the body after death) 8) Five 'Kosas' or body parts: Annamaya (food body), Manomaya(Composed of mind), Pranamaya (the force holding body and mind), Vijnanamaya (body of intellect) and Anantamaya (the body of Bliss); 9) 'Nava Dvaras' or Nine Doors: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth, genital and excretionay channel. 10) Eight 'Vikaras' or Vices: Lust, meanness, anger, carelessness, showiness, ferocity, haughtiness, and jealousy. 11) Three

'Mandalas' or Body Regions: Agni Mandala or the fire place in lower abdomen, Aditya Mandala or the Place of Sun in stomach, and Chandra Mandala or the Region of Moon in head and shoulders. 12) Three Temperaments viz. flatulency or excessive self importance, melancholy or pensive sadness, bilous temperament or irritability, Phlegmatic temperament or indifference. 13) Three 'Gunas' or attributes: Satva (Goodness), Rajas (Passion) and Tamas (Ignorance). 14) Five 'Avasthas' or Inner Soul abodes in body parts viz. 'Sakiram' or Fully Alive and Vigilant connected to forehead, 'Svapnam' or dormant soul in a state of dream connected to neck, 'Sujjuti' or insensibility of soul connected to breast, 'Turiyam' or abstraction of mind while soul is connected to navel and 'Turiyathitam' or a state of death when the soul is sunk into mooladharam. 16) Ten 'Nadis' or nerve connections viz. Idakala or the nerve beginning from big toe of right foot to left nostril, 'Pinkala' nerve connecting the big toe of left foot to right nostril, 'Kantari' or nerves beginning from navel to neck assuming seven folds of seven tones of human voice, 'Suguva' or the optical nerves interconnecting ten branches, 'Purudan' or the auditory nerves linking one hundred twenty lines, Guru beginning from navel to flat stomach, 'Sangini' on flat belly, 'Suzi Muna' the nervous link connecting Adharas like Mooladhara, Svadhishtana etc.and Atti and Alambuda connecting miscellaneous body parts.]

Lords Brahma and Siva also paid their reverent prayers to Maha Devi Bhagavati and She bestowed Her blessings to them to dutifully discharge their respective duties to Her entire satisfaction, as they had raised queries before their departure by airflight; She commanded them to initiate the fulfillment of tasks assigned to them forthwith. She obliged Lord Maheswara by repeating the nine lettered Mantra to be repeated by them as often as possible viz. 'Om Hrium Srim Chandrikayai Namah' along with the Moola (Seed) Mantra. Brahma too was extremely ecstatic with the mind-boggling Darshan (Vision) and most of His doubts appeared to have been cleared excepting one however that still remained with him. He wondered whether what Vedas affirmed again and again that the Maha Purusha was the one and only Super Evergy beyond comprehension and if so, whether that Incomprehensible Power was Herself! In that case, whether Maha Purusha and Maha Devi Bhagavati were just the same? Was Maha Purusha a Feminine Shakti or a Male Supreme Force?

### Devi Bhagavati Explains about Her Vibhutis (Manifestations & Powers)

To the pointed queries expressed by Lord Brahma, Maha Devi gave clarifications in no uncertain terms that Maha Purusha and Herself was just the same as a lamp and reflection in a mirror and that She was neither a female nor a male, but a Unique Genderless Nirguna. Any changes witnessed are due to the interplay of 'Antah Karanas' or natural instincts like Mind, Buddhi, (Mental Power) and 'Ahankara'

(Ego) on the one hand and 'Maya' (Illusion) on the other. At the time of Creation following the Great Dissolution (Pralaya), the dissimilarities occurred as Gender, 'Karma' (Fate) and 'Anthah Karanas' all created by 'Maya'. It was at that time of Creation, that The Supreme Energy assumed various 'Vibhutis' or Manifestations like Sri (Prosperity), Buddhi(Brainpower), Daya (Compassion), Dhriti (Tolerance), Smriti (Memory), Shraddha (Conviction), Medha (Acumen), Lajja (Shame), Shanti (Peace), Nidra

(Sleep), Pipasa (Desire), Vidya (Comprehension), Spriha (Awakenness or Alertness) and Shakti

( Power). Maha Devi continued to state that She was the Para, Madhyama and Pasyanti ( Mystic expressions of the Supreme Power indicating the Stages of Manifestations of the Eternal Force); She was Para Shakti beyond one's Comprehension, Madhyama Shakti who was both Expressed and Unexpressed ( Vyakta –Avyakta) and Pasyanti Shakti who was Fully Manifested and recognisable with Physical Form or Sakara Shakti; She was also present in thirty five million 'Nadis' through out a human body (the tubular organs of the body like arteries, veins, intestines, blood vessels, pulses etc. She was in Vasa (fat),

majja (marrow), Tvak (skin) and Drishti (eye sight) clearly present in each and every part of 'Samsara'. So was the case of non moving objects of Creation either animate or inanimate. Maha Devi further affirmed that She was seen as Brahmi or Sarasvati, Vaishnavi or Lakshmi, Eswari as Gauri, Indrani as Indra, Varuni as Varuna, and so on whose formations were all Hers, making the counterpart Purushas perform their tasks as the Maha Devi's agents or instruments of action. She was the Gunas of Satva, Rajas and Tamas; Ahamkaras-Jnana Sakti (the Power of Knowledge), Kriya Sakti (The Power of Action) and Artha Sakti (The Power of Wealth or Maya the Illusion); The various Tatvas and Maha Tatva; and the interplay of Five Tanmatras or Subtle Elements viz. (Touch, See, Breathe, Hear and Taste) and Five Basic Elements (Earth, Air, Water, Fire and Sky) known as the Process of 'Panchee- Karana' resulting in Five Causes. This was made into a Jeeva (Living Entity) and the Cosmic Totality of That would be Brahma, stated Devi Bhagavati!

## The 'Gunas' (Attributes) and their Characteristics

Further to Lord Brahma's conversation with Maha Devi, the features of the Three 'Gunas' or attributes were explained to Narada. Normally, Faith is known to exist in the form of three Gunas viz. Sattva Guna, Rajas Guna and Tamas Guna. Sattva is described as the fountain of Goodness and happiness in a pure form. Its colour is stated to be white standing for purity, integrity, happiness, contentment, forgiveness and faith. The Rajas Guna is stated to be red in colour and is featured as false pride, deceipt, avarice, hatred and selfishness. The Tamo Guna standing for black colour is stated to feature ignorance, lack of resources, anger, fear and quarrelsomeness. There is no set identity of the Gunas but are intermingled and rapidly changeable. A person who is Good basically might spurt out into anger and pride and change over in the same breath to fear. But surely the resultant impact would be disastrous. As, Lord Krishna stated in Bhagavad Gita: *Dhyayato vishayam pumsaha sanghas theshupa jayate /Sangat sanjayatey kama kamakrodhobhi jaaythey / Krodhaha bhavati sammohaha, sammohat smrithi vibhramaha / Smritir bhramsaha buddhi naso buddhi nashoth prayatyati. 'An unfullfilled desire would lead to anger. Anger leads to obsession. Obsession leads to failure of memory (focussed thinking) and lack of memory leads to mental balance!* 

Narada reacted instantly to the Principles of 'Gunas' saying that normally one felt that Lords Vishnu, Brahma and Siva represented Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic Gunas respectively but the description was not fully represented in their cases. Brahma replied that the predominance of their Gunas was described but there was no water-tight segregation possible in their cases too as in the case of human beings. He gave the illustration of a lamp, but the wick, the oil and the flame together provided light. The three materials denoted the Rajas, Satvik and Tamas Gunas, just as each or any living being could –and normally didsynthesise the Gunas. In this connection Brahma gave the example to Narada of an illiterate Brahmana, Satyavrata who turned out to be a Learned Sage, by the Grace of Maha Devi Sarasvati.

### How Satyavrata an illiterate Brahmin became a Learned Sage?

The description about Maha Devi's appearance to Trinity and the explanation provided to them by Her about Herself was given to Narada by Lord Brahma. This was handed over to Veda Vyasa by Narada and down the line to Suta Muni and in turn to the King Janmejaya as to how Devi Sarasvati interpreted the foolish Brahmana boy's ignorant chatter noise as Her Bija (Seed) Mantra and blessed him. In Kosala Desa of Lord Rama, there lived a Virtuous Brahmana named Deva Dutta desirous of begetting a Son performed 'Puttreshti' Yagna with great devotion. Suhotra acted as the Brahma of the Sacrifice, Sage Yagnavalkya as 'Athurvu', Brihaspati as 'Hota', Paila as 'Prastotha', Govila as 'Udghata' and many

learned Brahmanas as the Key Assistants. There was a Superintendent Brahmana too for the Soma Sacrifice who was to measure the Principal Area for the Yagna, collect the Sacred Vessels, fetch the Sacrifice Animal and manage the Function all through. Rig Veda and Yajur Vedas were rendered and Govila as Udghata being an expert of Sama Veda initiated its recital. But, Deva Dutta became restless since Govila was taking deep breath in the Sama Veda rendering in accented voice, viz. 'Uddhata', 'Anuddhata' and 'Svarita' and finally 'Ratantara Sama' in seven tunes. Govila's rendering was objected by Deva Dutta; he shouted on Govila and said: "you are rendering the Veda in bits and pieces as an ignorant and dumb person!" This insinuation in the open house angered Govila and he cursed as follows: "Your son will be ignorant and dumb too"! Deva Dutta regretted his remarks and begged of Govila's pardon. Govila in turn excused Deva Dutta and lightened the curse to say: "Although your son will be initially stupid and dumb, later in life will be a Learned Sage by the grace of Maha Devi Sarasvati." As Deva Dutta was blessed with a son in due course, he was named Utathya. But, he had indeed turned out to be a stupid and dumb boy attracting his parents' frustration and disgust for him. One day, the boy disappeared as he was harassed too much and went into a dense forest without aim. He was surviving with fruits and sitting under a tree took a resolve that he would never tell a lie, come what might. In course of time, he built a hermitage with the help of villagers nearby and gradually came to be known as Muni Satyavrata as a person who always spoke truth. One day, a hunter passed by and asked the so-called Muni whether a boar passed by; actually the boar which was wounded by the hunter's arrows had indeed taken refuge in his own hermitage and while entering the abode it gave a very pitiable look as though it entreated him not to inform the hunter that the animal was hiding in his own hermitage. Satyavrata being a truth stating person was in a dilemma. Somehow, he did not tell the truth as he felt that the hunter had his selfish reason to catch and kill the boar whereas the boar deserved mercy since it was hurt and gave a frightened and mercy seeking look. So he replied the hunter saying 'aim, aim and aim', without meaning any thing. The hunter knew that the Muni had the name for telling the truth only and left away. Meanwhile, the boar left the place into the forest thus rescued. Eversince then he kept repeating the word 'aim', aim, 'aim' for everything. Indeed the word was the first letter of the Seed Mantra of Devi Maha Sarasvathi viz. Om Aim Dheem Kleem! Maha Devi Sarasvathi was pleased with the continuous repetition of only one word of the 'Moola Mantra' untiringly and gradually he pronounced the word OM also by the grace of Maha Devi Herself! Eventually Satyavrata became a renowned Sage as per the blessing of the Sage Govila and a proud son of Deva Dutta and his virtuous wife. Apparently, there were many factors working in favour of Satyavrata to transform himself from an illiterate to a Sage: the immediate blessing was by Sarsawati Herself as he was persistent in his dedication to speak the truth always and reciting even one word of the Seed Mantra out of sheer ignorance though, the blessing of Sage Govil who diluted the curse into a favour, the forest life and sense of renunciation, the act of mercy shown to the hurt boar vis-à-vis the selfish hunter who might have hurt Satyavrata too but for his weighing the pros and cons in his cool judgment and finally, his own 'Karma' as 'Prarabhda' or 'Sanchita' actions of the past as carry forward were all the beneficient causes.

## **Amba Yajna-Regulations and Precedent Performers**

King Janamejaya sought for the details of Amba Yajna from Maharshi Veda Vyasa. Sages and Brahmanas perform the Sacrifice in Satvik manner, Kshatriyas and Kings perform in the 'Rajas' fashion, while Rakshasas do these in 'Tamasa' style. Satvik Yajnas are executed in ideal manner normally in 'Uttarayana' or when Sun's direction changes from south to north, by highly puritan Brahmanas with their rightly earned resources as per strict adherence of Rules and Regulations prescribed and invariably for the larger benefit of the Society rather than for their own selfish motives. Rajo-oriented Yjanas too are aimed at the welfare of the Subjects of a country or a Rajya but once the Raja decides to organise the Yajna only to satisfy the Royal ego, then errors or motivations creep in the function. For instance, the 'Sarpa Yajna' had a definite purpose of vengeance and such events are initially commenced with bangs,

but end up with whimpers. The Yajnas with motives domineering selfishness or obsession do get successful in the short term but finally the end result would invariably be a negative or boomeranging impact at the end. For instance, the Sacrifices performed by Demons like Hiranya Kasipu or Indrajit or Bhasmasura are purely motivated for selfish reasons. Certainly, the motivations in performing the Yajnas play an important role. King Dasaratha performed 'Putra Kameshti' was a success as it was done perfectly; but the Yajna done by Indra by Visvarupa as a duplicate Brihaspati was a fiasco ending Indra beheading Visvarupa as the latter, who was of the origin of Daitya clan, uttered mantras appeasing a few Daityas instead of Gods. King Drupada did the Putra Yajna out of spite for Dronacharya and thus an angry son Dristhtadyumna was born and Draupadi an example of distressed woman had several problems in her matrimonial life commencing from marrying five Pandavas, her end-less humiliation by Kauravas after the defeat of Dhritarashtra in an open assault on her before her brave husbands in a full Royal Court, travails in twelve years of forest life, her 'Ajnathavas' (Hiding phase of life) for a year as Sairandhri as a servant maid, the harassment by Keechaka and so on. Even the Rajasuya Yajna concluded by Dharmaraja himself in the presence of Lord Krisna was a flop as the sordid drama that happened to Pandavas followed thereafter, apparenltly due to the ego factor that was in play at the time of the Yajna! Many Tamasaoriented Yajnas were held by several Daithyas which had all temporary triumphs but in the long-run were fatal at the end.

Besides the above types of Yajnas, Veda Vyasa described an entirely distinct kind known as 'Manasika Yajna' (Sacrifice by Mind), which is nodoubt difficult but once executed well would be extremely effective. The performer has to be completely devoid of sensual pleasures and attractions, has to preplan all the items of Yajna material, keep ready with purity of mind and body, pre-arrange Brahmana Priests and designate them as the Yajna Brahma, Adharyu, Hota, Prastota, Udgata, Pratihatra and Assistants and pre-worship them, imagine a huge hall for the Sacrifice, plan out the Central portion as the Altar (raised ceremonial structure) and the Homa Kunda or the Fire Pit; imagine the lighting of five 'Agnis' represented by the five Prana Vayus or five Life Forces viz. 'Prana', 'Apana', 'Vyana', 'Samana' and 'Udana' in the Fire Pit with considerable care and caution, accompanied by the concerned 'Mantras' Viz. Prana standing for 'Garhastya', Apana for 'Ahavaniya', Vyana for 'Dakshina', Samana for 'Avasatya' and Udana for 'Sabya Agni'. One should be extremely careful and concentrated while lighting the respective Fires as any defect or shortcoming might have extreme ill-effects. In the Manasic Yajna, mind is the performer, Presiding Deity is 'Nirguna' Brahma and Maha Devi Bhagavati or the 'Nirguna Sakti' is the targetted Receiver of the Fire Oblations. The offering of Prana Vayus are in the form of materials meant for the Homa Kunda or the 'Kundalini'. Then by means of 'Samadhi' (the final stage of Yoga) the Nirvikalpa Mind is surrendered to Devi through the Performer's consciousness or to the Self (Atma) which attains 'Moksha' (Final Liberation). The mortal form of 'Jiva' is stated to continue as long its 'Prarabhda' remains. Indeed, this type of Manasika Yajna is not meant for ordinary persons in any case, as this is the highest effort that a human being could possibly execute. But, Veda Vyasa had certainly recommended to perform a Rajasic Yajna aiming at Maha Devi Bhagavati as per the Rules and Regulations described earlier to King Janamejaya, instead of seeking to 'Sarpa Yajna' which would be only vengeful but could never provide liberation to his father's soul, after the latter's very enduring effort in hearing Maha Bhagavata from Maha Muni Suka during his very last week's life!

#### Lord Vishnu performs Amba Yajna

Being inquisitive, King Janamejaya enquired of Veda Vyasa as to when and who executed Amba Yajna first. When Trimurthis returned after Maha Bhagavati's Vision, they created Satya Loka, Vaikuntha and Kailasa and took charge of their tasks assigned by Maha Devi. From the Ocean was formed Earth, called 'Medini', made out of the marrow of the foremost Demons, Madhu and Kaitabha, and also as 'Mahi

Dhara', the Great Holder, which was supported by the Grand Serpent, Anantha, Brahma initiated the Creation process with the mountains to stabilise the Earth, including the 'Meru', the Principal Mountain. He created Marichi, Narada, Atri, Pulakasthya, Pulaha, Kratu, Daksha and Vasishtha as 'Manasa Puthras' or the Offspring of His Mind. From Marichi was born to Kasyapa; from Kasyapa were born Diti and Aditi and the latter gave birth to Danavas (Demons) and Devatas (Demi-Gods). Kasyapa created human beings, animals, serpents and other animate beings. Brahma created Svambhu Manu from his lower part of the body and Satarupa emerged from Brahma's left hand. Manu and Satarupa gave birth to two sons, Priyavrata and Uttanapada and three daughters. And thus Creation proceeded further. Meanwhile, Indra Loka or Swarga (Heaven) was also created and so were the Planetary Heads and other Celestial Creations including Kubera, Yama, Gandharvas, Apsaras and so on. Thus after the Procedure of Creation was stabilised, Lord Vishnu got an inspiration from Maha Bhagavati and decided to perform Amba Yajna and informed Brahma, Eswar, Indra and the Devatas and the Sages Vasishtha, Kasyapa, Daksha, Vamana Deva and Brihaspathi who were all in position. A gigantic Yajna Hall was built and the Altar too, the twenty seven Priests were appointed, the Yajna material was procured as per 'Shastras', the Agni Kunda was prepared out of brick and wood and Kundalini was kindled by Yoga, along side the rendering of Mantras and Moola Mantras strictly as per concerned Scriptures. At the successful end of Amba Yajna, a sonorous voice of Maha Devi announced that She was indeed pleased with the Proceedings just concluded, that She appointed Lord Vishnu as the Leader and Prime Deity to be prayed to by Brahma, Maheswara, Indra and all the rest; that any problem faced by any one of them should be resolved by Him on their request by assuming His 'Avataras' as appropriate; and that She was deputing 'Shaktis' like 'Varahi' and 'Narasimhi' and popularise them by making appearances as Idols to be worshipped all over to supplement the efforts of Trinity.

### Sura Sena's Illustration of Maha Devi's Glories

As an illustration of Maha Bhagavati's direct intervention to bless an upright devotee, Veda Vyasa narrated a Pauranic instance to King Janamejaya who had already firmed up his decision to perform Amba Yajna instead of the Tamasic 'Sarpa' Sacrifice. A King of Solar Dynasty of yore at Kosala, Dhruvasandhi was an ideal and pious ruler. He had two wives, Manorama and Leelavati, the earlier wife being a legally wedded one and the latter one out of fascination. Within a year's difference, the wives delivered two boys, named Surasena and Shatrujit respectively. The King had a stronger attraction to his second wife and son. In course of time, the King was killed by a lion in a royal game in a forest. The Royal Court's Senior Officials recommended Surasena to be the King, but the younger wife of King Dhruvasandhi, Leelavati claimed the throne as the deceased King was closer to her and Shatrajit too. The fathers of the two wives were called for consultations but there was no solution to the problem as both King Virasena of Kalinga the father of Manorama and the powerful King of Ujjain Yudhajit, the adamant daughter of Leelavi too were at war at each other. King Virasena was defeated and killed and Shatrujit was made the King by the dominating Yuddhajit, despite Sage Vasishtha's protests. Priminister Vidalla of the Court, the loyal person of the erstwhile King, accompanied the hapless Manorama and son Surasena to seek refuge from Sage Bharadvaja at his Hermitage. But, Yuddhajit's secret agents found out the whereabouts of Manorama and Surasena at the Ashram of Sage Bharadvaja. Yuddhajit visited the hermitage and tried to take away the mother and son by force but the Sage cautioned not to do so and gave the example of Sage Visvamitra trying to take away Nandini the Sacred Cow and its calf by force from the hermitage of Sage Vasishtha and regretted later as the wrath of Vasishtha and the powers of the Sacred Cow were grossly underestimated. Then Yuddhajit had to make a retreat and since then the mother and the son lived peacefully.

Meanwhile, Surasena grew as a fine and handsome youth in the pious atmosphere of the hermitage under the turorship of the Sage and his followers. One day, Priminister Vidalla, who had been loyal to the elder queen and the son visited to the hermitage to enquire of the welfare of the mother and the son and the disciples of the Ashram addressed him to say: 'Klib', 'Klib' at the entrance where Surasena too was nearby. Since then, he kept on repeating the words 'kli', 'kli' as a mis- pronounciation of words 'Klib, 'Klib'. Quite unknowingly, the words mis- pronounced were those in the Moola Mantra of 'Kama' or desire with anusvara omitted. Thus initiated with the Mantra which became a habit of reciting it, the boy's attitudes changed miraculously by the coincidence or 'Sukrita' -the carry forward of good deeds of his previous birth. Eventually, the boy's 'Upanayana' (Gayatri Mantra's initiation) was performed by the Sage Bharadwaja who also taught him Archery and Military Science as also the essence of Sastras which a Kshatriaya should know. A princess, Sasikala, sighted Surasena and got intensely desirous of him. The King of Kasi, Subahu announced Swayamvara (Choice of bride for selection of a groom from among invitees) at the instance his daughter, keeping Surasena in view. Surasena too reciprocated and met her frequently with the concurrence of both the parents from both sides. Of the three types of Swayamvara, viz. 'Iccha anusara' or bride's free choice without strings, 'Panya anusara' or choice as per a condition like Lord Rama breaking 'Siva Dhanush' (Lord Shiva's bow), or bride's choice of the most courageous warrior, Sasikala chose the first option. Surasena, as Manorama, Sasikala, her parents were all praying to Maha Devi in their own ways and the blessings of Sage Bharadwaja were aplenty. Meanwhile Yuddhajit too attended and so did his grandson Shatrujit along with a galaxy of Princes as also Surasena. Yudhajit challenged to say that if Surasena were to be the choice, he would surely kill the latter. He also incited other invitees and said that anybody other than Surasena would be acceptable but the latter had neither a Kingdom, nor bravery, nor wealth. Scenting that a fight would be inevitable, King Subahu postponed the function overnight to cool the tempers and offered overnight guest status to all. On the following day, a quiet announcement came that the selection had been made in favour of Surasena. As expected, a battle was fought with Surasena and Subahu on one side and many who protested headed by Yudhajit on the other. Maha Devi Bhagavati assumed many forms of Shakti and massacred the opposing armies in no time and both Yudhajit and Shatrujit were smothered like flies. The devotees of Devi Bhagavati headed by the Surasena couple were astonished to witness glimpses of the Sakar Swarupa of the Great Mother and prayed to their heart's content with tears rolling and senses benumbed. As soon as he assumed Kingship of Kosala, Surasena built temples all over the Kingdom especially at Ayodhya and simultaneously King Subahu built famous temple complex of Lord Visvanath and accompanying Saktis of Devi Annapurni and Devi Visalakshi. In fact, through out Bharatvarsha, 'Nava Ratri' celebrations are performed with immense devotion and dedication to various Forms of Devi Bhagavati, especially as Devi Durga.

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### Navaratri Celebrations-Methodology and Rewards

Navaratri functions are held for nine days twice every year during the first half of 'Asvayuja' and 'Chaitra' months from 'Pratipad' to 'Dasami'. The Navaratra festivals in Asvayuja month are known as Sarat Navaratras and the Chaitra month festivals are populurly known as Vasanta Navaratras. The preparation for Sarat Navaratri in the Autumn season commencing from Asvayuja Pradhama Tithi actually starts from Bhadrapada Amavasya itself with one meal of 'Homa Anna' or 'Sacred Agni Prasada'. At a designated Place in the center of a Hall, a raised platform made of bricks, called 'Vedi' of six feet wide and one and half feet height be arranged. On the Pratipad Tithi of Asvayuja, the Person(s) concerned sponsoring the Navarartras must arrive clean and composed, having already performed their 'Sandhavandanam' or daily pujas and should seek the blessings of Brahmanas appointed (either nine, or five or three or atleast one) after presenting them new clothes and Dakshina. 'Swasti' Mantras followed by Veda Parayana would be recited. An Idol of nicely decorated Durga Devi seated on a Lion, with either four or eighteen hands, with symbolic arms and jewellery be installed as also a Pot of Sacred River Water placed over an 'Yantra' (diagram) representing Grandhis (Chambers) of Trinity and relevant Demi-Gods and Planetary Heads, while rendering the relevant Mantras. With various Worship Materials in place, the

Puja would commence along with the Mantram 'Om Hrim Srim Chandikaya namah'. Proceedings with Sacrificial Animals, [\* not so much in India now, but in vogue in Nepal during Dussera Festival Days] for propitiating of Gods and Almighty Shakti, would follow. 'Arthies' (Camphor cum oil soaked cotton vick lamps shown to Deity) are performed, accompanied by instrumental music, singing and dance in praise of Maha Devi Bhagavati. 'Bala Kanya Bhog' or Prasad

(Food material offered to Deity) to Virgins of the ages of two to ten would follow. The virgins of two years are named Kumaris, three years are Trimurthies, four years are Kalyanis, five years are Rohinis, five years are Kalikas, six years are Chandika, seven years Sambhavi, eight years Durga and Nine years as Subhadra. Blessings of these Virgins provide removal of problems, wealth, longevity, happiness, health and Peace. The procedure for the evenings too is similar in the Sandhya Puja viz. the 'Arti" Worship to Goddess accompanied by instrumental music, 'Shodasa Upacharas' or Sixteen kinds of worship ranging from holding an Umbrella to the Diety, hand fanning, showing a mirror, camphor lighting, Veda Recital, Singing and dancing in praise of Amba, 'Naivedyam' or offering varieties of food, and 'Parikrama' or taking the Deity around the worship place, or a temple or surrounding areas and so on. At the end, Bhajans (Group Singing), Purana Prayachana (Lectures on the Mysteries of Goddess), 'Harikathas' (Musical renderings of Stories of Religious nature) and so on are performed. Special worship is arranged on the 'Saptami', 'Durga Ashtami', and 'Maha Navami' days ie, the seventh, eighth and the ninth days of the Festival. Devotees not quite involved in the previous days too would like to invariably perform Worship as per their choices in their own Puja Places in their own residences, or Temples or Specially built up (improvised) Group 'Mandaps' for community worship. Saptami is described as the day when Maha Bhagavati takes a 'Saakar' or Bodily Incarnation to destroy the Demon 'Mahisha Asura' who had the form of a Buffalo, creating havoc to the World. The following day, popular as 'Durga Ashtami', Maha Bhagavati in the Incarnation as Durga Devi looks fierce and angry with the Demon and prepares for a violent battle with him and fellow Demons and massacres them all. It is also believed that Bhadra Kali was incarnated in a furious and gruesome form to devastate the 'Yaina' that was performed by Daksha Prajapati, the father of 'Maha Sati', the better half of Lord Siva and the Kali Incarnation was surrounded by innumerable 'Yoginis' or the multiple permutations of Sixty Attendants of Bhadra Kali who created mayhem at the Yajna and killed Daksha and his followers. On Maha Navami Day, Maha Bhagavati in the forms of fury and destruction punished the evil forces and brought back Her own Creation to normalcy and established balance of power. Thus the two days of Durga Ashtami and Maha Navami are the days of the Grand Finale of the Navarathras, which are remembered for the relief, climactic joy and devotion experienced by the humans and Gods alike. The day next day falling on Vijaya Dasami is the day of high celebration and gratitude to Maha Bhagavati for Her 'Leelas' or Playful Actions that remain complex forever in human minds, soaked deep in the grip of Maya or Illusion! Whoever observes Navarathri Pujas with devotion are certain to reap benefits- Dharma (Virtue), Artha ( Prosperity), Kama (Worldy fulfillments) and Moksha (Eternal Bliss) with the blessings of Maha Bhagavati. Even those who committed unpardonable misdeeds earlier- 'Pancha Patakas' or heinous acts viz. killing Sages and Brahmanas, stealing gold or valuables, drinking and gambling, adultery or association with perpetrators of sins-would be spared if only the Navaratra Worship is performed with faith.

Veda Vyasa described to King Janamejaya the illustration of how Lord Ramachandra had conquered the indomitable Ravana, when the latter had kidnapped Bhagavati Sita by deception in disguise as a Fake Sage and on securing tip offs that She was in Lanka under Ravana's custody. In fact, the earlier forest life of Lord Rama was a dismal experience consequent on his Step mother Kaikeyi's demand to send away Lord Rama and Lady Sita to forest life for fourteen years. Sri Rama had to invade Ravana's Lanka to recover Sita, with the help of King Sugriva of Kishkindha and his Monkey brigade including Heros like Lord Anjaneya, Jambavanta and Angada. It was at that critical time that Maharshi Narada met Lord Rama and advised Him to perform Navaratra Pujas to fulfill the objective of destroying the unbeatable Ravana

and his entire followers and for recovering Sita Devi. (In fact, Ravana was seeking Maya Sita Devi, as real Sita in her earlier birth was an ascetic daughter of a Sage and Ravana was reproached by her when he made advances to her. He caught her hairs and she felt her body became impure and cursed that she would destroy him and his clan in her next birth and ended her life in Yoga Fire. As Sita Devi as the wife of Sri Rama, she gave away her Maya (Illusion) to Ravana and he actually stole away a poisonous serpent in the form of Maya Sita in the 'Ashoka Vana'!) Narada told Sri Rama that in the past, Navaratras were observed in sincerity by Indra, many other Demi-Gods as also Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara and obtained their Blessings from Maha Devi to fulfill their own wishes and prayers. As advised by Narada Maharshi, Lord Rama performed the Navaratras and secured Bhagavati Devi's blessings. The battle was fought killing Rakshasas and the mighty Indrajit, Kumbhakarna and Ravana by Sri Rama as an instrument of Devi Bhagavati.

# Explanations of 'Karma' on queries about Krishna Avatar

Concerning a number of queries raised by King Janamejaya in the context of Krishna Avatar, Maharshi Veda Vyas explained the role of 'Karma' or Fate playing vital significance. There are invisible links of one's life to the previous births and the actions of present life to future consequences and the cycle of lives goes on, unless there is a possible break in the vicious circle in a highly unlikely situation of a zero account. The concepts of 'Sanchita' (accumulated), 'Prarabdha' (accumulating) and Bhavishya (forthcoming) total up 'Karma'. Viewed from this perspective, the very many questions raised by the King such as why Lord Krishna's father Vasudeva and mother Devaki were kept in prison for no fault of theirs; why Krishna had to have two mothers Devaki and Yasoda; why Devaki had to deliver six infant boys in a succession just to be killed by Kamsa till the seventh and the eighth were spared; why did the righteous Pandavas struggle in life and faced several ugly situations especially when their share of Kingdom was given, moved on to Indraprastha and performed Rajasuya Yajna! Maharshi Veda Vyasa provided replies on several queries of King Janamejaya as linked with 'Sanchita Karma'. As an illustration, he narrated the incident of the birth of seven infants before the eighth issue of Lord Krishna and why Aditi was born as Devaki in the next birth. Two daughters of Prajapati Daksha, Aditi and Diti, were wedded to Sage Kasyapa. Indra the King of Devas was born to Aditi; and Diti too desired to give birth to a son as powerful as Indra. Kasyapa advised Diti to perform a religious ritual with great piety and purity. As Diti too was conceived and the boy was nearing the delivery, Aditi got perturbed with envy. She asked her son Indra to somehow terminate the delivery. Indra pretended affection to Diti and when she fell fast asleep, entered by his mystic power the pregnant area and used his thunderbolt (Vajra Weapon) by splitting her womb into seven parts which were cut into seven further parts totalling forty nine parts. These forty nine parts were delivered and became Aswini Kumars, the powerful and virtuous Devas. The seven parts of the foetus were born as Devaki's infant boys, six of them having been killed by Kamsa as soon as born and the seventh one flew away in the process of killing as 'Yoga Maya'. Of course the eighth child was carried to Gokula as that of Nanda and Yasoda and thus emerged the Krishna Avatar. Diti learnt how the envy of Aditi was responsible for the miscarriage and cursed Aditi that she too be punished as Devaki in her next birth experiencing the pangs of losing seven infants in a row. Another illustration given by Veda Vyasa about the impact of 'Karma' was related to the several miseries faced by Pandavas, particularly after their conduct of Rajasuya Yajna; the explanation was that the Function was performed more out of arrogance and bravado rather than for religious reasons. Similarly, highly virtuous persons like Bhishma, Drona and Dharmaraja had undergone many embarrassing situations again as a clear example of Sanchita Karma.

#### Nara and Narayana, Urvasi and Prahlada

Maha Muni Dharma was born from Lord Brahma's heart and was wedded to Prajapathi Daksha's ten daughters. He had four sons Hari, Krishna, Nara and Narayana. The former two were practitioners of high system of Yoga and Nara and Narayana were always engaged in religious means. When Nara and Narayana were performing rigourous meditation at Gandhamadan Mountain for over one thousand years, Indra got alarmed at the safety of his throne and despatched Celestial Damsels like Rambha, Tilottama, Menaka totalling sixteen thousand and also requested Manmadha and Rati Devi to help divert the attention of the Sages. All the coquetisth approaches made by Heavenly Nymphs fell flat as these Sages were far above the aspects of lust and anger. With a smile, the Sage brothers created one outstandingly beautiful woman from their thighs and hence named Urvasi! The Munis said that since there were so many Nymphs who came from Heavens to visit the place, they thought it fit to create at least one hostess to look after them. The Apsaras were put to shame as their intention was different and fell on the feet of the Sages. They were all grateful that despite the deep provocation that the Munis had faced, they did not curse the Apsaras; instead the Munis asked to take away Urvasi also and leave them in peace to continue their 'Tapasya'. But the Apsaras desired to stay at the most alluring surroundings of the Mountain and begged of Narayana to marry them as they were all got mesmerised and infatuated with him. On their collective insistence, Sage Narayana agreed that in His next Avatar as Lord Krishna, He would marry them all and with that assurance, they returned back to Indra Loka. As the Apsaras left, the Sages Nara and Narayana did not get angry with the disturbance caused by the presence of so many damsels and spoilt their Tapasya, as anger and 'Ahamkara' (Ego) would indeed be worse than lust and thus reverted back to their 'Tapasya'. In fact the Sages felt that a position like that happened earlier when they were overcome by the instinct of 'Ahamkara' and their meditation was badly affected when there was a fight with Prahlada and that they would never like to repeat a situation like that.

Veda Vyasa explained to King Janamyejaya that Illustrious Sages like Nara Narayanas or even the evermemorable devotee of Lord Vishnu like Prahlada, who was responsible for the slaughter of Hiranya Kasipu by Lord Vishnu's Incarnation of 'Narasimha', were not exceptions to 'Ahamkara', let alone ordinary human beings! The son of Bhrigu Maharshi, Chyavana Muni was bathing in Narmada River at a 'Punya Kshetra' ( a Holy Place) named Vyarhitisvara. A frightful snake pulled the Muni and dragged him down to Patala. The Muni felt that his last hours of life were counted as the snake would surely give him a poisonous bite any time and prayed to Lord Vishnu most sincerely wondering how awful was fate that after a highly ascetic life he had to have an end like this! But, the poison proved ineffective as his prayers were responded to. In Patala, the snake felt apologetic for its action and revered the Muni for his powers. Others nearby too respected the Sage and the word went round till the King of Patala, Prahlada called him and realised that Chyavana Muni too was a close devotee of Lord Vishnu. During the conversation with the Sage, Prahlada realised how enlightened the Muni was and enquired which were the best pilgrimage places on earth for visits. The Muni replied that if there were no pollution in one's own mind, every place would be a pilgrimage center and if the mind was full of vice, avarice, and violence, no pilgrimage was worth it. In any case, Chyavana Muni recommended Prahlada's visit to Naimisharanya and the nearby Chakra Tirtha and Pushkara Tirtha and so on. Prahlada was excited and visited Naimisaranya and noted that there were several Sages engaged in their own Tapasyas. But, suddenly he saw a sight of two Munis with knotted hair, keeping before them two sets of bows and arrows, 'Sarangam' and 'Ajavagam' (Pinaka) belonging to Lords Vishnu and Siva. The Sages were indeed Nara and Narayana. Prahlada was furious to see the sight of the Sages keeping bows and arrows before them and at the same time engaged in deep meditation. He felt that both bravery and meditation could never be side by side and neither of these qualities was genuine. He reprimanded and badly criticised the Sages,

who asked the King to mind his business and leave them alone. Then arguments followed by the King and the ascetics and the King gradually became louder and quarrelsome. The spirit of 'Ahankara' overcame both the sides and snow-balled into a fulfledged battle! The entire Universe got reverberated with the exchange of fiery arrows from Nara and Narayana on the one hand and Prahlada and the entire army of Asuras on the other for several years. It became apparent over the time that the two Sages were indeed invincible and Prahlada was almost overcome; he remembered Maha Vishnu who appeared before the devotee. Bhagavan Vishnu declared to Prahlada that the Great Sages Nara and Narayana were of His own 'Amsa' (Expansion). Realising his grave blunder, Prahlada fell on the feet of the Sages and prayed to them that 'Ahamkara' blinded him and 'Maya' overpowered his emotions, for which he was ashamed and guilty!

# Sage Bhrigu curses Maha Vishnu

There were on-going battles between Devas and Demons, but the most potent war fought was that of Bali with Devas in which Danavas had an upper hand .But Lord Vishnu took the incarnation of Vamana and tricked Bali by asking for just three feet of land and occupied the entire Universe and suppressed Bali's head to the Sub-terranian world as the third foot! Similarly Prahlada's father Hiranyakasipu was killed taking the form of half-lion and half - man to escape the effect of Brahma's boon. Thus each time Danavas got boons from Brahma, Lord Vishnu tried to search for the escape clauses of the boons secured after rigorous Tapasya and appeared as the saviour of Devas always. Thus brooding, Sukra Acharya, the son of Sage Bhrigu and Urjasvati, consoled Danavas and assured that some other strategy would have to be followed to achieve victory over Devas. Thus Danava Guru asked for patience and restraint and meanwhile practised a life of austerity and abstinence till he found a solution to the problem from Tapasya. The Acharya then meditated Lord Siva for several years together and finally pleased him for a boon. He explained that the various Tapasyas performed by Danava Kings in the past to Brahma and the boons obtained from him proved futile since they had only temporary impact and each time Lord Vishnu was discovering loopholes in the boons received. That was the reason why Lord Siva was approached for a solution as a boon, the kind of which should not have been granted to his opponent Brihaspati, the Deva Guru. Lord Siva in turn gave a very arduous method to follow namely to perform penance for thousand years lying upside down inhaling smoke from burnt husk. Meanwhile Deva Guru disguised himself as Sukracharya and gradually misguided Danavas and taught them a licentious and wicked life quite contrary to what Sukracharya advised before his departure for Tapasya. The Danavas were provoked by the Fake Danava Guru went on war against Devas who killed several Demons as the latter were disunited, indisciplined and weak. Sukracharya's mother, Kavya, found that Devas were drawing too near to Danavas and protected them by putting Devas to deep sleep by requesting the Goddess of 'Nidra' (Slumber). Indra escaped the sleep as Lord Vishnu absorbed him into His body; He also used the Sudarsana Chakra (Wheel) and cut off Kavya's head even ignoring that she was a woman that too the wife of Sage Bhrigu. The Sage was furious on learning that Vishnu's Chakra cut Kavya's head and gave him a curse that Vishnu would be born again and again as a human being since He never cared for the killing of a woman and hence be punished by learning the misery of staying imprisoned for nine months each time before the births. Also by his mystic powers, the Sage revived his wife to come alive! Indra was afraid that Bhrigu cursed Narayana and soon original Visvamitra would also return after securing the much desired Mantra from Lord Siva. So Indra made a plan and asked his daughter Jayanti to disguise herself as a maid and reach Visvamitra's hermitage and please his mother Kavya to start with and please the Sage in his duties subsequently which she did exceedingly well. Meanwhile Visvamitra secured a great boon from Lord Siva that he would be invincible to any force in the Universe. Lord Siva blessed the Sage with the Mantra. Also he was pleased with the sevices of Jayanti and desired to give boons to her. She revealed her identity as Indra's daughter and requested the Sage to marry her. Visvamitra agreed that she could be with him for ten years, that he would not attend to any outside task during the period and

that she would not be visible to others. Indra's plan thus succeeded well. The fake Sukracharva (Brihaspati) too had a successful time. But after ten year's time Visvamitra left Jayanti and returned to Asuras and sought to expose the fake Sukracharya, but the fake Sage advised that he was real Sukracharya and the one who arrived just then was really fake! The real Sukacharya was not able to convince the foolish Danavas and having cursed them for not recognising him left in anger. Having fulfilled his mission, the fake Sukracharya or Brihaspati returned to Indra Loka. Danavas felt cheated and desired to convey their sincere apologies and thus approached Sukracharya with King Prahlada in the lead. The Sage was furious as he felt insulted, while actually he took the trouble of severe Tapasya only for the welfare of the entire Danava community whereas they let him down badly by believing in Brihaspati in disguise. King Prahlada pleaded with the Sage very earnestly and all the Danavas prostrated before the Guru to excuse them for their lack of gratitude and commonsense. Sukracharya understood from his intuition that the regrets expressed by Prahlada and Danavas were genuine. He then narrated that Lord Brahma assured him of the King of Danava's coming to power soon and for the time being Danavas would have to lie low and await excellent times till Prahlada's grandson would be born as Bali and reign the Three Worlds. What the Danava Guru told Prahlada was so encouraging that he did not wait for more time and attacked the Devas; Devas lost the war.

Indra was surprised at the defeat of Devas. He prayed to Devi Bhagavati at the instance of Deva Guru, Brihaspati. He extolled the unparalleled Glory of Devi as per 'Shakti Darsana' and described Her as the 'Tatvas' rooted to the material manifestation of Pancha Bhootas or Five Elements; the Tatvas include Maha Bindu, Nada Sakti and Misrama Bindu. She dwelt in five sheaths (Kosas) viz. Annamaya, Prana Maya Kosa, Manonmaya, Vignana Maya and Ananda Maya. She was the Vedas, Sastras, Upanishads, Mantras, Tantras and multi-routed final destination and so on. Devi Bhagavati was pleased and made Her extraordinary appearance in full form, packed with armoury and ornaments. Out of sheer panic, Danavas led by King Prahlada fled away to Patala forthwith. Thus ended the unwarranted war declared by Danavas against Devatas who had other important duties to perform; thus the Devi's appearance was a warning to both Devas and Danavas that they should not waste mutual energies in frequent bickerings. Thus there was a Truce ending the War.

#### Links to previous births of personalities during Vishnu 'Avataras'

King Janamejaya enquired of Maharshi Veda Vyasa about the Incarnations of Lord Vishnu and the connected links of persons figuring in the respective Avataras. While in the 'Chakshusa' Manvantara of 'Kritha' Yuga, the Incarnation of Vishnu was of Dharma and the sons were Nara and Narayana, the Vaivasvata Manvantara of the same Yuga witnessed the Incarnation of Dattatreya, the son of Sage Atri and Anasuya; The Trinity were born to Anasuya as Soma from Brahma, Dattatreya from Vishnu, and Durvasa from Eswara. In the last phase of KritaYuga was born 'Narasimha', destroyed Hiranya Kasipu, saved Prahlada and re-established Dharma. As in the case of Hiranyaksha when Lord Vishnu took the Incarnation of a Boar, the links were clear in that the Sanaka Brothers - Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanath Kumara-gave a curse to Jaya and Vijaya-the Gate Keepers of Vaikuntha, the abode of Lord Vishnu- that they be born as cruel as Kings in three successive births as Hiranya Brothers, as Ravana and Kumbhakarna, and as Sisupala and Dantavarka. In Treta Yuga, Lord Vishnu's Incarnations were of 'Vamana' to curb the power of King Bali, as Parasu Rama the destroyer of the erring and arrogant Kshatriyas, and Rama as the 'Maryada Puroshottama' (Ideal and Virtuous Paradigm Human Being). In Dvapara Yuga, the Incarnations were repeats of Narayana and Nara as Krishna and Arjuna. After Sage Bhrigu's curse, Lord Vishnu's Avataras were indeed born and as humans to go through the travails of pregnancy and delivery, where as the earlier Avataras of Matsya, Kurma and Narasimha were

Svayambhus. Besides Lord Vishnu several players enacting the dramas related to the Avataras too had links with their previous births according to their own 'Sanchita' or 'Prarabdha Karma'.

With special reference to Krishna Avatar, King Janamejaya explained that he had already got the answer in the previous pages as to how Lord Krishna had sixteen thousand and eight wives of whom eight were accounted for as Rukmini, Satyabhama, Jambavati, Kalindi, Mitravinda, Satya and Bhadra, apart from the rest who were the Apsaras who were sent to Nara and Narayana Sages by Indra. But he had a barrage of other questions which deluded answers for him: Why were Vasudeva and Devaki chosen as the parents of Krishna and Balarama; why were the six infants killed as soon as given birth to; why were Krishna and Balarama grown at Gokula and how did Balarama get transferred to Yashoda's pregnancy from that of Devaki; why did Krishna shift to Dvaraka overnight from Mathura if it were not out of fear of Jarasandha and how could the residents of Mathura were convinced; why were the good Pandavas subjected by fate to untold miseries, especially by Draupadi; How was it that Draupadi was the wife of five brothers which was considered as incest in any civilised Society; why did a Maharshi Veda Vyasa agree to a procedure of begetting children to two widows and a Dasi, simply because Bhishma took a vow not to marry and become a King again; how come an intelligent King like Dharmaraja yielded to the temptation of playing a 'friendly' game of chess, being fully conscious of the implication of losing it at a ridiculously high stake of Aranyavasa for twelve years and a year long Ajnatavasa, that too by involving his wife and brothers; why did the highly virtuous and brave persons like Bhishma, Drona, Karna, Drupada and so on failed to control the Evil Forces and save the Great Battle; how was it that Asvathama a great Warrior and the son of Drona Acharya himself resorted to the meanest act of killing the five sons of Pandavas while in sleep; and why did the Great Munis curse the entire Yadu Vamsa for a casual prank played by Yadu boys for displaying a boy as a pregnant woman knowing fully well that Lords Krishna and Balarama too belonged to the same Vamsa and so on. The spate of doubts expressed by King Janamejaya as above could be dealt with by convincing explanations in the pages ahead, keeping in view the colossal role played by Maha Maya (The Grand Illusion) or Maha Devi Bhagavati.

# Burden of Evil on Earth and the Role of 'Maha Maya'

Maharshi Veda Vyasa described to King Janamejaya in reply to the above and similar questions about the experience of Mother Earth in bearing the very heavy load of Evil Persons even in the 'Dyapara Yuga' itself and in 'Kali Yuga' it surely would be far worse! Assuming the form of a cow, 'Bhu Mata' (Earth) wailed that ferocious Kings like Jarasandha, Sisupala, Kamsa, Naraka, Salva and Kesi were ruling and there appeared to be no relief forthcoming in the near future. She approached Indra, Brahma and finally to Lord Vishnu who told Brahma that the Trinity were responsible for the 'Srishti, 'Stithi' and 'Laya' ( Creation, Preservation and Destruction ) and were certainly not independent by themselves, as they were carrying on with their own duties. The Decider would have to determine as to how the understandable problem of Bhu Devi (Earth) be tackled, since her difficulties were genuine. 'Let us all pray to Her and we have to follow Her Instructions', said Lord Vishnu. On making a group prayer, the Prime Force Maha Maya appeared on the horizon with all Her splendour and made an order that as a first step, Sage Kasyapa be born as Anaka Dundhubhi Vasudeva (there were the joyous sounds of drums at the time of his birth), along his wife Aditi as Devaki; Vishnu as Krishna; The Supreme Maha Maya Herself to be born as Yashoda; Maha Maya to send Vishnu as Her Avatar to the prison and arrange Dundhubhi Vasudeva to transfer Krishna to Yashoda, the wife of Nanda who would be the foster mother of Krishna; She Herself would transfer Ananta Deva (Balarama) from Devaki to Yashoda; both Krishna and Balarama as they grew would destroy a number of Evil Forces; the Pandavas would be born as part incarnations of Yama Raja as Dharma Raja, Vayu Deva as Bhima, Indra as Arjuna, and Asvini Kumaras as Nakula and Sahadeva; the incarnate of Vasuki would be born as Bhishma; remnant forces of Evil

would all be destroyed at the Battle of 'Maha Bharata' at Kurukshetra by arranging several situations of extraordinary nature at the battle field; and even far before the Great Battle right from the stage of Kuru Vamsa and the contemporary timed-dynasties!

Thus the pointed queries of King Janamejaya raised to Maharshi Veda Vyasa could be squarely answerable by the fascinating explanations of the actions of Maha Maya most of which were 'situational adjustments' [\*] created by the Players in the Large Dimension Dramas themselves as influenced by Her Maya; while the rest of the explanations were reflections of Maha Bhagavati's Supreme Illusion! The following Pages would unravel or disentangle the 'knots' to some of the queries made by the King. [\* The explanation as to why all the Pandava brothers married the same lady was due to Arjuna's breaking the 'Matsya Yantra' and Draupadi was to select only Arjuna but that would not be permissible when the elders were not married yet; the 'Dharma Sandeha' (The riddle of virtue) was solved by Arjuna's mother, Draupadi herself, King Drupada, Arjuna's other brothers, Bhishma and other elders of Kuru Vamsa and the Sages who attended the function. Another query of Janamejaya related to Bhishma's 'Pratigna' (the Great Vow of life) neither to accept Kingship nor marry lest next generation might claim the throne and the need to perpetuate the dynasty was important; as per Sastras such situations be overcome to let the widows of erstwhile Kings be married to any Brahmana and as such Veda Vyasa was instructed by his mother Satyavati and he could not disobey his mother.]

Maha Maya's assurance to lighten the burden of Bhu Devi was thus taking shape. Vasudeva and Devaki were born, linked with their earlier births as Sage Kasyapa and Aditi. Kamsa who was Kalanemi in his previous birth killed 'Sadgarbhas' or the six sons of successively. Sadgarbhas were traced back to the good six sons of Sage Marichi and his wife Urna in the first Manvantara of Swayambhu Prajapati. They laughed at Lord Brahma as He became passionate to His own daughter Sarasvati and Brahma cursed them to be born to Danavas. Thus they were born to Demon Kalanemi. In their subsequent birth, the six of them were born to Hiranyakasipu but were very virtuous and prayed to Brahma, who was happy that they were devotional. Brahma named them 'Sadgarbhas' and gave them boons of longevity. As Hiranyakasipu realised that they were not giving heed to his words, he banished them to Patala to be born again as Devaki's six sons killed by Kamsa who was Kalanemi in his earlier birth. [ In the previous pages it was described that the fetus to be born to Diti from Sage Kasyap was cut by Indra's thunderbolt into seven pieces and were reborn to Devaki in her previous birth's Aditi; Kamsa killed six sons and the seventh flew away and warned Kamsa. Apparently, these were the incidents repeated in two separate 'Yuga' births]. Then the transfers of Krishna and Balarama followed suit. Karna was born to Kunti and Sun God; Drona was part incarnation of Brihaspati and Asvathama of Rudra Deva; Virat was part incarnate of Maruts; Dhritarashtra was Daitya Hamsa in his earlier birth; Kripa and Krita Varma were Maruts; Duryodhana was Kali; Sakuni was Dwapara; Dhrushtadyumna part incarnate of Agni (Fire); Pradyuman of Sanat Kumara; Drupada a part incarnate of Varuna; Druapadi was of Lakshmi; Kunti was Siddhi; Madri was Dhriti; Gandhari was Mati; Sisupala was Hiranyakasipu earlier; Jarasandha was Demon Bipracchati; Salya was Prahlada; Demon Kesi was Hayasira in his previous birth and so on.

# Lord Krishna's 'Leelas' (Miracle Acts)

The transfer of Lord Krishna from Mathura to Gokula by Vasudeva was a mystery. A heavenly voice was heard that Vasudeva should hurry up to Gokula, that the heavy gates were all opened, the strong force of guards were put to slumber, the River Yamuna which was in spate under a spell of cyclone would give way, he should deposit Devaki's Krishna on the bed of Yashoda (while Rohini would have already given birth from Lord Balarama) and pick up the female child back to the prison in Mathura as though nothing

happened as Kamsa would visit the prison to throw away the female child of Yashoda to skies which warned that indeed the eighth child of Devaki was safe elsewhere to kill him eventually. The frightened Kamsa despatched his associates to locate and destroy the child one by one including Putana, Baka, Vatsa, Dhenuka, Pralamba, Sakata, Kesi and so on. It was a sport for Krishna and Balarama to terminate the many Demons thus sent by Kamsa. As time passed, the miracle acts of Lord Krishna included the punishment to the mighty and poisonous serpent Kaliya; the lifting aloft of the Govardhana Mountain by a little finger; the 'Vimochana' (Relief) of a curse by Narada to the two sons of Kubera viz. Nalakubara and Manigreeva who converted as tall trees Yamala and Arjuna in the backyard of Nanda as mother Yashoda tied Him to a grinding stone placed in between the trees since he was highly mischievous; and finally the opening His mouth to Yasoda as He was eating pebbles and sand and demanding His mouth to be opened wide only to witness the Whole Universe in it.

As though his final days drew near to his end, Kamsa sent Akrura to Gokula to invite Krishna and Balarama to Mathura. On their entry into the City there was an enthusiastic welcome to the heros of Gokula by onlookers- men, women and child. They broke the bow 'Indra Dhanush' easily, killed Kuvalayapidana the ferocius elephant, put an end to the powerful wrestlers Chanura, Mushtika, Sala and Tosala and finally shattered Kamsa with ease. The parents were released from prison and installed the maternal grand father Ugrasena back to the throne. Thread Ceremony was performed to the two boys who having taken the vow of celibacy moved into the hermitage of Muni Sandipana to learn Vedic knowledge, martial arts, Artha (Finance) and Administrative skills for twelve years, returned to Mathura. Kamsa's father-in- law Jarasandha tried to kill Krishna and Balarama in seventeen battles and they were able to resist the high and mighty opponent mostly by mental alertness and planning. Jarasandha engaged Kala-Yavana (the Black Yavana) of Mlechyas of foreign origin whose warriors far outnumbering those of Mathura were ruthless and sinful not used to the Regulations of 'Dharma Yuddhas' or Disciplined Battles, terrorising innocent men, women and children alike. Krishna led Kala Yavana into a cave where Sage Muchukunda was in deep slumber for centuries and mistaking him for a false and wily Krishna Himself kicked Muchukunda, who got the boon from Indra that who ever woke him up by force would be burnt off. Thus cleverly getting rid of Kala Yavana, Krishna got rid of the menace of Jarasandha till he was killed in a duel with Bhima of Pandavas as Jarasandha was destined to die in Bhima's hands. But before Jarasandha's end, he kept on tormenting Yadavas as Krishna's killing Kamsa was never forgotten. Thus Krishna and Balarama decided to create another place Dvaraka as a beautiful port City which was constructed afresh by Visvakarma the Divine Architect. Having shifted to Dvaraka from Mathura, Yadavas and allies had a comfortable and peaceful time. Meanwhile, Lord Krishna desired to marry Rukmini and vice versa but her powerful brother Rukmi who hated Krishna since he was in the camp of the deceased Kamsa, Sisupala and Jarasandha, preferred her marrying Sisupala instead. At the time of her marriage with Sisupala, Krishna eloped with Rukmini defeating the armies of the friends of Rukmi. In course of time, Krishna acquired seven other queens viz. Jambavati and Satyabhama in the context of winning Syamantaka Jewel and the rest of them viz. Kalindi, Mitravinda, Lakshmana, Bhadra and Nagnajiti.

Rukmini begot Pradyumana and at his name-giving ceremony just ten days of his birth, Danava Sambara stole the child and threw him away in a sea knowing the boy was Krishna's son. The child was devoured by a big fish and a fisherman gifted the fish to Demon Sambara again, who in turn gave it to Mayavati the cook in charge. As the fish was cut, a crying infant was seen and Narada who appeared there to give the link of her earlier life as Rati Devi, the wife of Manmadha and the infant in the stomach of the fish was Manmadha himself! After opening the third eye which burnt Manmadha, Lord Rudra was upset about the interruption of His meditation since the Demi-God of Love despatched flowery arrows on Lord Rudra to notice Parvati Devi who was at that time worshipping Him being desirous of marrying Him so that the end result should be the birth of Lord Muruga who only could destroy the Demon Taraka! When Rati

Devi wailed that the cause of Universal Benefit took away her husband's life, Lord Rudra appreciated the situation and gave the boon of Manmadha's rebirth as Pradyumna the son of Krishna and Rati Devi herself as Mayavati. Indeed, whether Lord Krishna was aware or not of the past, present and future but surely was covered up by 'Maya' and cried incessantly and addressed Maha Maya through sincere prayers that She should kindly restore his missing son Pradyumna soon. Maha Bhagavati Maya appeared and assured that Danava Sambara stole the child and would be restored when Pradyumna attained the age of youth. King Janamejaya raised a very pertinent question to Veda Vyasa as to how Lord Krishna being the incarnation of Maha Vishnu Himself had to pray to Maha Maya Devi to ascertain the where- abouts of His son! Veda Vyasa explained that once a human life is assumed the qualities of human beings are bound to be acquired automatically even to Incarnations more so because of the cover of Maya. Qualities like hunger, thirst, sleep, fatigue, fear, kindness, anger, pride, pleasure, pain, disease, old age, death are the natural phenomena of each and every human. Lord Rama in a far earlier incarnation too was ignorant of whether He had to go on forest life on the eve of His becoming the heir apparent; whether Lady Sita fancied for the golden deer and Rama left running to fetch it and lost sight of Sita from the hermitage since Rayana abducted her; whether on return to Ayodhya as Emporer Rama had to banish her on the flippant words of a washerman! Such were the situations that even 'Avatara Purushas' had to go through once they were made as human beings. Similarly, Lord Krishna had to face the instant event. Indeed Maha Devi's supremacy is eternal and undisputed!

# Lord Krishna prays to Maha Deva

As the seniormost Queen Rukmini secured illustrious sons like Pradyumna who was the Demi-God of Love Manmadha himself in his earlier birth as evidenced by Narada, other Queens like Jambavati were desirous of ideal sons to be born from Krishna, who too was expressive of the same kind of desire. Krishna thus approached the Great Sage Upamanyu, who was not only an expert of Vedas but a noted devotee of Lord Maha Deva with extraordinary mystic powers to initiate and guide Krishna in ascetic practice. Sage Upamanyu was one of the three disciples of Sage Ayodhaumya named Aruni and Veda, besides himself. The Guru who assigned Upamanyu the duty of taking cows out for grazing asked him as to how was he so healthy and Upamanyu told that what ever was received as alms was consumed by him. The Guru asked him not to receive alms further. But the student was still healthy and the reason was the milk of the cows taken out for grazing. The Guru forbade that too and asked Upamanyu not to eat fruits nor drink water even. Finally, the student ate tree leaves and of the leaves some were poisonous and he became blind and fell in a deep well. The Guru prayed to Aswani Kumars to heal Upamanyu and the Kumars gave a medicine, but the disciple refused it unless approved by his Guru. Aswinis argued that his Guru never took permission from the Guru's Guru and hence the medicine be taken; but Upamanyu said that who would rather continue to be blind but would never take the medicine without the Guru's permission. Aswini Kumars were so pleased that Upamanyu imbibed the full knowledge of Vedas and Sastras at once, besides reviving his eye sight.]

Sri Krishna learnt from the Sage Upamanyu the Holy 'Pasupati Mantra', shaved his head and performed Tapasya to Lord Pasupatinath by subsisting on fruits in the first month, water in the second and third months and on air only standing on one leg later. In the sixth month, Lord Shiva appeared before Him seated on 'Nandi' the bull along with Devi Girija, when Maha Vishnu, Brahma, Indra and many Devas also accompanied. Sri Krishna prostrated before Maha Deva and Maha Devi and secured boons of getting sixteen thousand more wives, each getting ten sons all of whom very virtuous and valiant. Maha Devi too spoke that after living for hundred years, Krishna and Balarama would leave the mortal bodies and return to their own abodes; also, following a curse of Sages, their dynasty of Yadavas, Vishnis and Andhakas would be destroyed. Further, after Krishna's 'Niryana' or demise, His wives would be plundered by

robbers of their valuable jewellery as cursed by Sage Ashtavakra and great misfortune would befall on Yadu Vamsa. Thus prophesied Maha Devi and these future events were precisely as per one's own 'Karma'. Having seen the vision of Holy Appearences, Sri Krishna bowed out of immense adoration, showed reespect to His spiritual Guru Sage Upamanyu and returned to Dvaraka happy with the boons, still awestruck with the memorable experience that He had!

# Supremacy of Maha Deva Over Maha Vishnu

King Janamejaya was still unconvinced as to why Sri Krishna had to pray to Maha Deva Siva, as He Himself was a fulfledged Incarnation of Maha Vishnu. Maharshi Vyasa had already explained the position and further clarified as follows: Sri Krishna was an Incarnation of Maha Vishnu but not Maha Vishnu Himself. Any human 'Avatara' was to be considered in the context of a human being and could not, repeat not, be imagined other-wise as human features, qualities and action-reaction pattern or cause and effect syndrome ought to be similar, although perhaps the impact of Maha Maya might be less pronounced in the context of Incarnations as in the case of ordinary human beings. This fact was described and emphasised in the earlier pages. The subsequent clarification was also explained fairly emphatically that the 'inter-se' superiority of Lord Vishnu over Lord Maha Deva was not of such consequence or relevance, since all prayers reach the Eternal Paramatma; [ Akaasaat patitam Thoyam Yadha Gacchati Sagaram, Sarva Deva Namaskarah Kesavam Pratigachhati or Just as water falling from the sky converges into the Sea, all the prayers to various Gods finally reach Almightyl. Thus one might infer: 'Sivaya Vishnu Rupaya, Siva Rupaya Vishnavey, Sivasya Hridayam Vishnuh Vishnyoscha Hridayagum Sivah' or both Godheads are just the same and their hearts are the same. However if this explanation sounded nebulous the definite reply would be that the seniority position clearly was: Brahma, Vishnu and Siva signifying 'Srishti', 'Sthithi' and 'Laya' in that order or the functions of Creation, Preservation and Destruction. Veda Vyasa further explained that the Word 'A' meant Formation, 'U'meant Protection and 'M' meant Demolition, reflecting the Three Characteristics of Satvika Guna, Rajasika Guna and Tamasika Guna. Most importantly, Veda Vyasa stated that the emphatic stress while pronouncing the last word or the Half Word 'M' of 'OM' stood for Maha Maya Bhagavati Herself. The speciality of the terminating half letter 'M' was that it was not pronounced as a distinct and separate word, signifying thereby that the Half Word was 'Maya' or 'Maheswari' which had no Entity yet the 'Most Distinctive'! 'Vyakta Avyakta Swarupini' or 'Saguna-Nirguna Embodiment]. Sages confirmed that Vishnu was superior to Brahma and Maheswara was superior to Vishnu but in 'Turiya' State or of pure consciousness, beyond the three earlier States of 'Jagrata' (waking concious-ness), 'Svapna' (dreaming) and 'Sushupti' (dreamlessness), the finality has no concept of superiority or otherwise)! 'Moola Prakriti' created the Trinity, the entire Universe with living or non living entities and most interestingly the feature of 'Ahamkara' from Brahma downward to a blade of grass, not realising that Maha Bhagavati was the 'Karanam-Kaaranam- Kartha' (Performance, Purpose and Performer or Action, Act and Actor) all by Herself! The role played by 'Yoga Maya' was thus unique as human beings upwards to various Devas of multi-levels or potencies experienced the Ego problem or Ahamkara rooted deep down in the inner consciousness whereas the actuality was different. Thus Maharshi Veda Vyasa explained that there had been a thick cover of ignorance ruling the entire Universe and the make-believe world was a typical mirage which continued to confuse humanity as a reality, where as the reality was a hallucination or a mere fantasy!

## Origin of Mahishasura and his battle with Devas

There were two mighty Demon brothers Karambha and Rambha, both desirous of begetting brave children and practised severe 'Tapasya'. Karambha did his devotion inside deep waters and Indra having taken the form of a crocodile dragged the Danava's feet and killed him. Rambha sat on the banks of River Indus and performed a rigorous Sacrifice to Lord Agni. Meanwhile, he found his elder brother dead in the depths of River Sindhu and desired to guit life but Fire-God did his appearance and prevented the suicide. The Fire-God also gave him the boon of securing a son who would shake up the entire world. Rambha found that in the vicinity there was a passionate She-Buffalo with whom he mated and at the same time a he-buffalo desired to mate with the she-buffalo and as Rambha sought to prevent, the hebuffalo killed Rambha. The she-buffalo killed herself on the funeral fire and while doing so gave birth to a hefty and ferocius Buffalo-Demon Mahishasura. Rambha too emerged from the Fire as The Fire God recreated him in another form who was eventually noted as 'Rakta Bija' or the Seed of Blood. As Mahishasura grew, he performed tough penance and pleased Lord Brahma who gave him the boons that no force on earth could kill him except by a woman whom the Danava made fun of, little realising that the exception might soon be a reality of his death. Puffed up by the boons secured, the Demon Mahishasura created havoc in the World by trying to dislodge Devas from Heaven, torturing Sages and Munis; slaughtering men, women and children, rejoicing in all kinds of sinful activities and finally attempting to dislodge Indra and Devas from the Heaven. He sent a messenger to Indra asking Him to surrender or get ready for a war. Indra got furious and warned the Demon. The latter convened a War Conference and alerted all the Danavas to get ready and assured them that he secured great boons from Brahma and that he was as good as immortal against any male power or animal power, excepting womanhood which was in any case helpless without male power! Indra too called for an urgent Conference of Devas including all the Planetary Heads like Varuna, Vayu, Agni, Surya, Saturn, Yama, Budha, Guru Brihaspati and so on to position themselves ready with their respective Vehicles and followers. So far, it was a battle between Indra and Mahisasura, during which the former Commander-in-Chief Chiksusa, General Vidala and Danava Tamra took up the offensive which Indra could control. But as Mahishasura himself entered the field and spread out his 'Samavari Maya' or the Illusion for all and thousands of Mahishasuras appeared on the battle field each acting as powerful as the other, Devas including Varuna, Yama, Kubera and Agni fled away. Indra in his fast-track mind prayed to Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra about Mahishasura's Illusionary tactics. Brahma got His conveyance Hamsa or the Swan, Vishnu by Garuda, Kartika His peacock, and Rudra His bull. While Indra controlled Chaksura, Varuna by Asiloma, Yama by Trinetra, Kubera by Maha Hanu, Vishna fought Andhaka and Rudra restricted Mahishasura. But when the battle went on for hundred years and each year Mahishasura became mightier, it became clear that the Demon would not be shattered unless a female 'Shakti' would have to be thought of for the purpose. It was also realised that instead of depending on the female power of one Devi, say Sachi Devi, Vani, Lakshmi or Parvathi individually, it would be ideal to unify the Powers of all and generate one Maha Nirguna Shakti who would destroy the Demons once and for all. The Composite Super Energy converging into a Unique Shakti thus emerged with all the Individual Shaktis of Trinity, Devas and their respective female powers embodying a mountain like Fire and dazzle which was not visualised even by Devas themselves let alone normal species. The Supreme Deity was endowed with the armoury and 'Mantras' of Gods together too.

#### Maha Devi's Physical features

Maharshi Veda Vyasa ventured to describe the splendorous outline of Her Image to King Janamejaya: Her Form was a mass of blistering dazzle, Her Charmingly Extraordinary Face was that of Maha Deva represented by 'Tamoguna'; Her long and black Hair overhanging from Head to knees was like the Power of Yamaraja; Her three Eyes were the intensity and ferocity of 'Agni', the pupils being

black, middle portion being white and the end of the eye balls being red; the two Eye Brows were black like 'Sandhyas' (twilights) curved like the arrows of Cupid; the two Ears created by Vayu or Air, Her Nose chiselled and attractive; teeth like gems of Daksha; lower lip like 'Aruna' the Charioteer of Sun and the upper lip after Lord Kartika; thighs and legs of Earth and Varuna; eighteen hands of Vishnu and red fingers like the glitter of Vasu Devatas.

Soon after The Maha Devi was formed, various presentations were made to Her by the Devatas: the Ocean of Milk gifted a pearl necklace and eternal red robes; Vishvakarma provided ornaments for each part of Her Physique never seen in the Universe earlier; Varuna presented flowers of everlasting fragrance and freshness as well as a Vijayanti garland on her chest; Mountain Himalaya a ferocious lion as Her Conveyance; Maha Vishnu gave a Chakra (Discus); Sankara a 'Trisula' (Trident); Agni (Fire) Deva gifted a 'Sataghni' Weapon; Conch by Varuna; Divine Bow and Arrows by Vayu Deva (Wind God); Yama God of Death a Sceptre; Indra his thundebolt; Brahma a 'Kamandalu'a vessel of Holy Water Ganges; Kubera gifted a Drinking Cup of Gold and an everfresh Lotus; Varuna a 'Pasa' (A Destructive Rope) capable of rounding off hundreds of Demons together and Visvakarma a high voltage Kaumudi Mace and so on.

# Mahishasura's amorous proposals to Maha Devi

With all the armoury and ornaments Maha Devi was comfortably mounted on the Lion and laughed so deafeningly that the entire Universe trembled with fear as though a catastrophy occurred. Mahishasura too was shuddured at the roar and his associates ran helter skelter to ascertain what was it about! One messenger reported to the Demon that he had an illusionary appearance of a huge sheet of light and when seen intently looked like an outlined feminine figure, with a cool and smiling face of rare beauty, fully armoured and ornamented, seated on a lion with several Gods surrounded around Her. Mahishasura, who never ever realised that a female figure was mounted on a Lion with eighteen hands and was fully armoured as though ready to fight, felt that the Messenger must be crazy or the view was an Illusion created by the Devatas to frighten Danavas. Any way he sent his Prime Minister to take a personal Message to 'that Woman' to say that if really She were not an Illusion, She should meet and surrender to him and that he would assure Her to make her a life partner as the Reports received were that she was of marriageable age without a husband. She roared in loud laughter and asked him to convey the message to the stupid Demon to withdraw his fight if he had any sense (which a Mahisha as an animal normally lacked), apologise to Her and quietly to go down to the nether world Patala to save himself! The Prime Minister talked highly arrogantly and even desired to attack Her but for Her being a woman and Maha Devi said that She could have smothered him then and there but for His being a Messenger and Dharma Shastras or the discipline of War prevented Her to kill a Messenger. The Prime Minister left for Mahisha still asking for the Devi's rethinking about the possibility of marrying his King and not to finally close the chapter of his King's amorous offer to Her! The Messenger met the King and conveyed the proceedings that She was ready to fight. Mahisha called for a Conference and many opinions were expressed including a ridiculous explanation that the Devi indirectly meant that She could kill him by the corner looks of Her eyes, that She would lay him down( for sex?) and that She could take out his vitality in no time! The Resolution was that all the Four Methods viz. 'Sama' (Counselling), 'Dana' or material temptation, 'Bheda' (divide and rule) and finally 'Danda' or punishment. Thus Demon **Tamra** was sent to the battle field with the Brief that he should try all the Methods before punishing Her. Tamra did use the methods of good counselling, the temptation of marrying a hero like Mahisha and seeking to divide Her and the 'timid' Devas. Maha Devi laughed at the foolish alternatives proposed by Tamra and when he kept on arguing about the happiness that She could attain by Her union with Mahisha got terribly annoyed and roared thunderously when mountains shook and Tamra fled away back to Mahisha.

#### Carnage of Mahishasura's Army

As Tamra returned without result that the three initial methods of Sama, Dana and Bheda did not yield results, the Danavas got the firm reply that war was imminent. But one elderly Statesman among the Danavas, Vidaliksa expressed the concern that by taking advantage of the loophole in the boon given by Brahma to Mahisha of not getting killed by any species excepting by a female should cause concern; it might well be that by placing Her ahead, Devatas might kill Mahisha! Durmukha said that whatever might happen the situation was of no return and they have to fight out without showing their backs any way. Vaskala bragged that when the entire Deva army including Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra had retreated and collapsed, why should one think and plan strategies at this late stage; this is an hour of action and not of precious- little- do- nothings and thus therefore was high time for action! As an initial step in the battle, the two Demons-Durmukha and Valsala- once again used the catch phrase of Devi's romance with Mahisha. Maha Devi got infuriarated, lost patience that She displayed for long and fired five arrows against Vaskala to strat with. When he took up his club aloft, She hurled her own club and smashed his head to death. Her action was so swift that Durmukha's reflexes did not work for a while as there were shrill shouts of Victory to Maha Devi and after regaining some composure Durmukha reacted with his arrows and bow. Meanwhile Maha Devi rained piercing arrows all around and hundreds of Danava heads rolled all over and Durmukha's chariot was shattered. As he jumped out and hit Devi's lion with his club, She cut his throat with Her axe. There were screams of happiness heard from Devas, Gandharvas and Kannaras as also Great Sages and Siddhas from Earth. As the armies of Vaksala and Durmukha ran for their lives and fled back to convey the killings of their masters, Demon Mahisha got a shock that two great warriors had succumbed to death and that was unbelievable indeed. His General Chiksuraska, a Danava of never-ending cruelty and intense loyalty to Mahisha leapt from his seat and shouted with rage that the Devi would be destroyed for sure. He took Mahisha's permission to shatter that Woman and bring her back to Mahisha dead or alive. Demon Tamra too accompanied the General. The moment he entered the war field, Chiksuraska kept on shouting at Devi that he had arrived to avenge the death of Vaksala and Durmukha and bombared with arrows, spears, maces, sharp swords and a lashing tongue. Tamra went near Bhagavati and hit the lion on its head with an iron 'musala' (club) when Devi was provoked and hurled Her axe with dashing speed as the Demon fell, turned around and tried to throw his musala but took the last breathing. The General Chiksaruska started screeming with rage and flew across to reach Devi who pierced with Her spear through his body. The entire army ran for their lives in the same direction that they arrived. **Asiloma and Vidalaksa** were the two top Demons who not only had valour and might but were well versed in war tactics and diplomacy too. In fact these two were in the inner ring of Mahishasura's court and get rarely provoked but could call a spade a spade always counselling their King Mahisha about the pros and cons of a given situation. Asiloma addressed Devi Bhagavati and asked Her as to why She had been killing Danava soldiers wrecklessly without least provocation, excepting request Her fair hand in wedding to their master. Was it a sin to ask Her for Mahisha's wedding? After all She could simply say 'no', but why this carnage? Maha Devi replied to the calm reasoning put forth by Asiloma: 'I have no desire nor hatred. I stand for 'Dharma' and 'Nyaya'( Virtue and Justice). Your King had perpetrated endless sins of severe nature and interfered with the natural way of human life and destroyed all norms of decency. He had hurt Devas, Indra and Trinity. Having secured boons from Brahma, he had harmed Brahma Himself and thus proved to be an ungrateful demon who should never be excused. I am the Origin of the Universe- The timeless, featureless, sexless, and faultless Super Energy without fear or favour. Mahisha's consience is impure and had been wanting to marry Me; this is clear that he had no sense as he had been possessed by high degree of Maya.' Thus explaining in an impassioned manner, She advised Asiloma and Vidalaksa to retreat to 'Patala' but both of the Demons decided to die while fighting rather than betraying their Master. Knowing fully well that Maha Bhagavati would kill them any way, they wished rather to get killed valiantly on the battle field

than show their backs. Maha Bhagavati had fully acknowledged the maturity of their thinking and felled both of them after their waging a brilliant battle.

### Maha Devi destroys Mahishasura

So far Mahishasura was despatching his warriors to fight Maha Devi but when his most trusted Asiloma and Vidalaksa had also got smashed, he got into his chariot and faced the Devi in a handsome human form to impress Her with his smartness. The all-knowing Devi smiled and said that his human form did not make any impact on Her. The Demon harped again on the same topic of union between them. She said that the only union possible could be of a sincere devotee and Almighty as She was a Parashakti and Prakrithi wedded to Maha Purusha who was also the Maha Purusha Himself! She was requested by all the Devas and the Trinity to protect them and wipe out the demons including him. Still persistent, the foolish Mahishasura gave the example of Mandodari, the daughter of King Chandrasena of Simhala, who took a vow of celibacy but when her younger sister was arranged a 'Svayamvara' (bride's choice of wedding) from a group of select suitors, Mandodari was tempted to select a husband although he proved to be a cheat later as caught red handed enjoying a servant maid; Mahisha assured that he would never be like him. Maha Devi got highly infuriated with such narrations and said that he was not only stupid but also a coward and perverse and that he should decide at once either to fight or withdraw to 'Patala', lest he would not avail of the chance of fight but would unilaterally decide to destroy him. Meanwhile, two other followers of Mahisha viz. Durdhara and Trinetra had duels separately and got exterminated. Mahishasura changed his forms first like a lion and later on as an elephant and finally in his Sarabha form. The entire Universe and the Pancha Bhutas (The Five Elements) were dislocated from their axis as the duel was in progress. The Danava tied up his tail to mountains and whirled them against Maha Devi, who was enjoying cups of Grape juice meanwhile. The Demon kept on transforming his body forms in such quick succession that one could hardly realise what was happening and each time there was a change, he was striking from various angles with different kinds of arms like arrows, swords, Trisulas (Tridents), clubs, and maces. Charged then with red eyes looking like torrential balls of fire, Devi Bhagavati finally lost Her cool and commanded Her Chakra (discus) which broke Mahisha's body split into two, each part jumping one over another and the Greatest menace on Earth had thus been terminated; there were hysteric shriekings and reverberations of earsplitting sounds of high volume drummings spread across the entire Universe to the utmost relief and ecstasy of all Devas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Kimpurushas, Apsaras and world wide congregations of Sages all rejoicing with celebrations.

As normalcy prevailed somewhat, the Devas and Trinity assembled in a Grand Felicitation Function with Maha Devi presiding. The magnificent congregation described the features, miracles and recent happenings. Maha Devi replied that both Danavas and Devas were of the same creation of Hers and that there was nothing like a distinct categorisation of Danavas and Devas, except that the proportion of the Three Gunas-Satvik, Rajas and Tamasic-varied from person to person and even different situations facing each person. The Eight Vices-Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsarya- existed in the same person as the mind and heart at variance with each other; it would thus be a common enemy to both divinity and humanity in varying degrees; interaction of these common enemies needed to be minimised and that was the Tatva Gyan all about. Added to these features were the 'Tapatraya' or the three kinds of problems inherent in human life ('Adibhautika' or external pains like physical infirmities, pains from animals and co-humans; 'Adhyatmika' or internal diseases; and 'Adhidaivika' or natural occurences like cold, heat, rain, thunders, earthquakes etc.) over which fate determined the circumstances over which there could be little control anyway. But where there would be scope for self- control, which was of utmost importance to balance the 'Gunas' properly. She Herself noted the individual accounts of Prarabhdha, Sanchitha, Vartamana and Bhavisya of all the beings - be it Brahma or a piece of grass.

Nobody could escape the good and bad dimension or magnitude of each action. Thus life would be assessed in the strict accordance of the Rules already laid. Having said these words, Maha Bhagavati disappeared.

# Sumbha, Nikumbha and followers slayed by Devi Ambika

As in the case of Mahishasura, the Demon brothers from Patala, named Sumbha and Nikumbha did the same indiscretion of ignoring the Supreme Power of Maha Bhagavati as Mahishasura and after strenuous Tapasya for an 'Ajuta' or ten thousand years to Lord Brahma, secured boons for invincibility from any living species, except women. As soon as they received the boons, they requested Sage Bhrigu to be their Guru and Adviser and the elder Sumbha was enthroned with Nikumbha as the next in command. The news spread out in the nether world and multitudes of Danavas were attracted to the King as he became invincible in the three worlds. The Fierceful Chanda and Munda Danava Warriors joined in with their entire armies. So did the fearful Danava Dhumralochana and his army. The notorious Raktabija who had the boons of creating another Raktabija for each drop of blood from his body also joined in. Together, they all created deadly scare in all the three worlds and humbled Indra, Varuna, Agni, Vayu, and other Demi-Gods like Yama, Kubera as also tormented Sages. Thus the strong group of Demons reigned the Heavens besides the rest of the World for a thousand years and Indra and other Devas were displaced and disillusioned. Indra approached Deva Guru Brihaspati as to what should be done in this situation of wilderness. Deva Guru explained that the phase of frustration was a result of 'Karma' and the only recourse would be to approach Maha Devi Bhagavati and also enlist the support of Brahma, Maha Vishnu and Maha Deva. He recalled that at the time of Bhagavati destroying Mahishasura, Maha Devi told Indra at that time such crises, Indras and Devas could approach Her for help. Accordingly, they prayed to Devi Bhagavati to provide rescue to them. They all recited the Seed Mantras of Devi like 'Om Hreem' incessantly; pleased by their devotion, Maha Bhagavati appeared in the Form of Ambika Devi, known over the Universe as Kausika Devi; an alternate image created from Parvati Devi also emerged as Kalika Devi( Kalaratri) looking angry with a countenance of black colour and blood red lips too frightful to behold by Danavas. Ambika along with Kalika appeared on the back of a lion and they were seated comfortably looking cool and relaxed as the Historic Drama of the twin Demons and their followeres was to be unveiled! Even as Kausika Devi and Kalika were sighted on a lion, Demons Chanda and Munda happened to passby and had a fantastic view of Kausika and Her unparalelled beauty and could not take away their eyes staring and admiring Her. They ran to Sumbha to convey the latest news and the former asked Sugriva, an intelligent spy cum messenger to collect information about the Lady and also sensitise Her about the valour, richness and smartness of the King Nisumbha and that he could be a richly deserving partner of life for Her. The Messenger used all his skills and sought Her to tempt with innumerable valuable gifts! He also conveyed to Her the most significant fact that his King was invincible and immortal, thanks to Brahma Deva's boons. Kausika Devi pretended that She was impressed and said that the matrimonial offer looked highly gorgeous. There was however only a small catch and that could be to overcome Her as the King appeared to be such an illustrious warrior. She said that She took a bet in Her childhood among Her friends that She would marry only such a husband who could defeat Her in a fight! The Messenger coveyed the 'small catch' in the alliance to which the King felt was amusing. He consulted his younger brother Nikumbha who advised that **Dhumralochana** to approach the Devi Kausika but handle Her tenderly, as She said something childishly and was not, after all, aware of our valour! Dhumralochana repeated the same kind of amorous message from his King, when Kalika Devi intervened to say that instead of bragging he might as well display his valour as there was no point in wasting his breath. The Danava became furious, as Kalika the 'ugly' woman attacked him with a shower of arrows. As he dared to leap towards Kali abusing Her, Kausika Devi burnt the demon into ashes from Her fiery looks and his entire army ran back helter-skelter to return to their King. Kausika Devi blew Her conchshell so loudly as though She was inviting the next batch of Demons could be

despatched for their death. Nisumbha volunteered to jump in the fray, but King Sumbha restrained him, as there were other Warriors were getting anxious to dispose of 'that' Maya Devi. He had thus signalled Chanda and Munda go along with their combined armies of huge volume and prowess, as they were all trained in war tactics including black magic, and tantra of meanest type. Once again the catchphrase of wedlock with Sumbha was used by them. Kausika Devi was readily annoyed as She was surfeit of praises and boasts; She created Devi Chandika from Her frown and Her face became red with anger. Chandika Devi was looking extremely dreadful with tiger skin around, wearing strings of skulls, deep eye holes, fat belly, protruding and uneven teeth and eighteen hands wearing variety of sharp weapons. She was biting elephants and horses with Her fingernails and crooked teeth, besides hundreds of Danavas who were creating such screeches of pain and death. The entire war field looked like a stream of blood and stinking flesh with corpses bundled up in mountain-like heaps. Such was the havoc created in the battle with Chanda and Munda who were dazed and terrified. She caught them by their necks and took them to Devi Ambika as Sacrifices, cut their heads into pieces and drank their blood when Devas clapped and chanted Victory Musicals! As the remnants of Davanas ran for their lives to the King, the latter said that they were timid flies who had vulgar lust for life and deserved to depart to Patala as they had no place for them on Earth. Meanwhile Raktabija was already ready waiting for the Master's nod. On arrival at the battle field the three Shakties-Ambika, Kalika and Chandalika-welcomed them tauntingly asking him not to commence the praises of the King's might, smartness and richness but come to the point of a fight without the initial pleasantries. As Raktabija spilled blood, each drop would produce his prototype, the fact indeed known to the Devis already. Lord Rudra gave the boon to the Demon and as such, the Demon was welcoming more and more of gashes so that as many drops of blood would produce as many demons. At this point, Kausiki Devi created more forms of Shakties such as Brahmani, Vaishnavi, Rudrani, Indrani, Varahi, Narasimhi, Kumari, Narayani, Sivani and so on to devastate the thousands of Danavas. Ambika then asked Kalika to extend Her tongue long and wide and struck an axe on the body of Raktabija so that the blood of the body got completely drenched out. This operation continued for some time and the blood of the very many Raktabijas was drenched out sysmatically by one form of the Demon pitted against another form of a Devi and only the flesh left out was relished by the Devis. With the last effective Demon Raktabija having been eliminated, The Devi's high voltage death-call sound was heard clearly in the court of Sumbha and Nikumbla inviting them to death. Nikumbha made his appearance at the battle forthwith as he was aware that his turn to death was certain and door-knocking. He surely knew how difficult it would be to extinguish war experts like Chanda-Munda, Dhumralochana, and Raktabija as each one of them single handedly could keep Indra and Devatas on the run. Now that they had all gone down the drain, death was staring at his face. Indra and Devas were all in their celestial positions to watch the Memorable Sight of Nikumbha's imminent massacre. As soon as he arrived in his chariot, he went off to business without preliminaries, unlike his predesessor warriors who would not initiate the fight hoping against hope that the Devi might relent to marry the King Sumbha as Nikumbha himself brainwashed them to use the four principles of Sama, Dana, Bheda and Danda before resorting to the last alternative. As Nikumbha sent a torrential rain of arrows on Devi Chandika, She kept on breaking the arrows as a sport while intermittently She was redirecting back to the Demon and meanwhile joking to Kalika Devi that these Danavas were so foolish as not to understand even now the impossibility of success in their mission but continue to hope against hope! Her mighty lion was let loose in the meantime which sprang up like a lightning, killing hundreds of Danavas who were massacred with their blood flowing in streams. Nikumbha was infuriated and hit the lion on its head with a massive club, as it was hurt and withdrawn and with the same club approached Kalika Devi. Chandika noticed the offensive of Nikumbha and with Her Trisula hacked his head into pieces, which no doubt fell down smashed but shot up on its own circling around Devi Chandika as though it was paying his last homage! Simultaneously, his headless body with his club in hands was wandering all over, as a frightful spectacle was on display by onlookers above but the fighting hands were severed into pieces by Maha Chandika and his body assumed a mountain-like shape fell on ground with a startling sound of a ear-piercing thud.

The last Chapter of **Sumbha** was scripted by Maharshi Veda Vyasa to King Janamejaya more in remorse than in anger as those were the heartfelt feelings of the Demon. Having lost his dear brother, valued Ministers, Generals and countless Demon soldiers who had ruled the Three Worlds without even a minute question, Sumbha was already destroyed psychologically wondering the playful hand of Fate which turned his 'Ahamkara' (Ego) into ashes. Indeed, he was now prepared to save his skin and return to Patala- from where he hailed originally from-but the future generations would describe him as a selfish coward who succumbed to timidity and certainly that was not a life worth living in disgrace. Thus putting up a face of courage and self respect rather than of humility and ignominy, Sumbha approached Ambika Devi with false feelings of bravado and expected pride and addressed Her that he would not feel like fighting with a fresh flower like Her, as She was meant for sentimental treatment rather than harsh language and that She was worth performing prayers to rather than picking up cudgels. Fully reading the Demon's mind hiding fear of death and of sins of the past, Ambika smilingly replied that even at this stage, he could be excused as guilt and timidity were the predominant features in his heart. More over, She said, since he was not reconciled to fighting against Her due to infatuation and obsession, he could as well attack Chandika Devi who was excusively incarnated for the purpose. As She said so, the full play of his 'Arishvargas' came up in His exterior mental frame and commenced displaying arrogance, anger and desperation of 'do or die' attitude. He picked up his powerful club and tried to jump against Chandika Devi and with Her own club, She broke the demon's head into two parts, thus ending the disgusting Saga of Sumbha's end to the horror of the Sub-terrain and the momentous rejoicing of the Three Worlds which heaved a sigh of relief and liberation. Indra and Devas with the Trinity in the background went in overwhelming swoons of excitement and ecstacy for they were forlorn for thousand years of relegation and sincerely conveyed gratitude to Devi.

#### Glories of Chandika Devi

King Janamejaya requested Maharshi Veda Vyasa to narrate some previous illustrations of devotion to Chandika Devi securing Salvation. There was a King of virtuosity named Suratha who ruled his subjects well and earned popularity. But, some Mlecchyas attacked and defeated his Kingdom and he had to take refuge in a hermitage of a Muni and practised Tapasya till better days could return to revive his Kingship again. Meanwhile a Vysya named Samadhi too sought refuge in the hermitage as his wife and sons became greedy and threw him out of the house. The Muni described to the King and the Vysya about the kindness of Devi Maya whose sincere devotion would never fail. But the power of Maya or illusion was so powerful that even Brahma, Vishnu and Maha Deva were never exempt from its mighty pull. When Brahma and Vishnu had an argument as to who was more important, they found a 'Linga' or a never ending stone formation, whose depth and height were never known. Brahma said that he would ascertain the Linga's height and flew up, while Vishnu went down to find out its depth. Both of them were tired going up and down for several years, but could not get a clue. But Brahma said that he found out the height and a Ketaki flower was a witness. When asked for confirmation the flower said that Brahma did reach the top. A voice was heard saying that both Brahma and the Ketaki flower were lying, because the flower rolled down from a height while Brahma caught hold of it. Since then Maha Deva cursed the flower that it should never be used for worshipping Him. Such was the power of Maha Maya that even Brahma or Vishnu could not comprehend It. The three 'Gunas' of Satvika, Rajas and Tamas had such a mighty pull that even Trinity were victims of these, let alone others! The Sage described that the 'Moola Prakriti' or the Super Force had no beginning nor end. She is Eternal, the Cause of Causes, the Vital Force residing in all beings. She is the all pervading innner consciouness or the 'Brahman' and a reflection of the beings, like Fire present in Fire only, rain present in rain only, sunshine present in sunshine only but not in any other form. She is the doer, the doing and the deed. She is Sarasvati of Brahma, Maha Lakshmi of Maha Vishnu and Parvati of Maha Deva. She is the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. Devi Chandika's Bija (Seed) Mantra is: Om Aim Hreem Kleem Chamundayai Vicchhe.

When King Suratha and Vaisya 'Samadhi' performed meditation as suggested by the Muni, they were relieved of their respective difficulties. The King regained his throne as Mlecchas were overthrown. Vaisya 'Samadhi' too adopted a typical life of hermitage shedding his worldly desires.

### Procedure of worshipping Maha Devi

After ensuring external and internal purity ('Bahya Suddhi' and 'Antar Suddhi') and squatted with concentration, one should initiate 'Achamana' (sipping water thrice) with 'Kesavaya Svaha, Narayanaya Svaha, Madhavaya Svaha etc; be ready with articles of worship; perform 'Pranayama' or controlled breathing; follow by 'Bhuta Suddhi' or purification of the old and installing the new representation of Devi Bhagavati and observe internal 'dhyana' (meditating) to mean: dissolve Earth into Water, Water into Fire, Fire into Air, Air into Ether, Ether into 'Ahamkara', 'Ahamkara' into 'Mahat'

(Great Energy) and 'Mahat' into 'Prakriti' or 'Maya', or in other words imagine transformation of the Five Elements into Moola Prakriti; follow Bhuta Suddhi by 'Jeeva Suddhi' or align the Self with Parama Devi; proceed further by mentally setting Six Chakras (outer- most circle inserted by an inner circle, further inserted by four more inner circles one within another) thus arranging the installation of 'Shat chakropasthitha Samsthitha' simultaneously pronouncing the afore mentioned nine lettered Mantra, viz. 'Om Aim Hrim Kleem Chamundaya Vicche' and align the Mantra to the six chakras as also touching the relevant body parts of the Worshipper concerned. The 'Kartha' or the Worshipper should perform 'Sankalpa' or mentioning the 'Tidhi'(date), 'Vara' (day) 'Nakshatra' or the relevant 'Star' of the day, 'Aayana' or the Course of the Solar Movement, Month, Year, Manvantara, Yuga, Place, Name of the Performer, 'Gotra' etc.; sprinkle water on the self, surroundings, articles and place of worship and recite the Mantra to remove obstacles for worship viz. 'Astraya Phat'; place the Sacred Copper Plate in position; [ readily available from contemporary markets or draw two hexagonal triangles - one straight and another inverted- crossing each other, draw a figure outside that image, an octagonal form of eight petals and outside this a 'Bhupura' or boundary lines. On the eight petals are inscribed the Bija Mantras with the ninth word inscribed at the central Ovum]. The 'Bindu' or 'Adhara Shakti' or the Super Energy at the Central Ovum which one has to worship. The 'Yantra' (diagram) is expected to resemble human body and is a mystical representation of Devi Maha Bhagavati to be worshipped.

**Actual Puja** commences while seated facing east and looking at the tip of the top triangle of the Yantra. The lowest triangle at the bottom right represents Lord Ganesha whose prayer is a traditional must. The bottom left hand side is governed by Sun God, top left Corner by Lord Vishnu, and top right corner by Lord Shiva. The 'Lokapalas' or Direction-wise Guards protect as follows: Indra guards East, Agni

(Fire) guards South East, Lord Yama guards South, Nirruti South West, Varuna the God of Rain and Water guards the West, 'Vayu' the God of Air guards North West, Soma or Moon guards North, and Ishana protects North East. After propitiating the Devas and Lokapalakas, Puja to Devi Bhagavati starts by *Kara Nyasa and Anga Nyasa*. The Karanyasa Mantras are: Aim- angushttabhyam Namah, Hreem-Tarjaneebhyam Namah, Sreem - Madhyamabham Namah, Aim- Anamikabhyam Namah, Kleem Kanishthikam Namah, Souh Karatala prushthabhyam Namah. Anganyasa Mantras are: Aim Hridayaya Namah, Hreem Sirase Svaha, Sreem Sikhayavoushat, Aim Kavachahum, Kleem Netratraya aushath, Sauh Astrayaphut. Salutations to Maha Devi as follows:

Om Aim Sreem Aim Kleem Souh-Kriya Shakti Peethayai-Shri Padukayam Pujaami

Om Aim Sreem Aim Kleem Souh-Jnana Shakti Kundalinyai- -DO-

Om Aim Sreem Aim Kleem Souh- Iccha Shakti Maha Tripura Sundaryai- -DO-

Nithyamba Pujas: The following Mantras to added after each Nityamba:-

Om Aim Hreem Shreem Aim Kleem Souh XXXX Sri Padukayam Pujaya Namah

Example: Do Kameswari Nityamba Do

Bhagamalini Nityamba, Nityaklinna Nityamba, Bherunda Nityamba, Vahnivasini Nityamba, Maha Vajreswari Nityamba, Sivaduti Nityamba, Tvarita Nityama, Kula Sundari Nityamba, Nitya Nityamba, Neelapataka Nithyamba, Vijaya Nithyamba, Sarva Mangala Nithyamba, Jwalamalini Nitymaba, Chitra Nityamba, Maha Nitya Nityamba, Parameswara Nityamba, Parameswari Devi, Mitresamayi Devi, Shashtheesa Mayi Devi, Uddishamayi Devi, Charyanathamayi Devi, Lopamudramayi Devi, Agashyamayi Devi, Kala- tapanamayi Devi, Dharmacharyamayi Devi, Muthakesivaramayi Devi, Deepakalanathamayi Devi, Vishnudevamayi Devi, Prabhakara Devamayi Devi, Vasudevayamayi Devi, Ratnadevimayi Devi and Sri Ramanandamayi Devi.

# Navavarana Puja- Names of Devis in Nine Enclosures

'Pradhama Avarana' (First Enclosure) in Three Outer Lines:

First Line: Anima Sidhamba, Laghima Sidhamba, Mahima Sidhamba, Isitva Sidhamba, Vasitva Sidhamba, Prakamya Sidhamba, Bhuti Sidhamba, Iccha Sidhamba, Prapti Sidhamba and Sarva Kama Sidhamba.

Second Line: Sri Brahmi Matruka, Maheswari Matruka, Kaumari Matruka, Vaishnavi Matruka, Varahi Matruka, Mahendri Matruka, Chamunda Matruka, and Mahalakshmi Matruka.

Third Line: Sarva Sankshobhini Devi, Sarva Vidravini Devi, Sarvakarshini Devi, Sarva vashankari Devi, Sarvamadini Devi, Sarva Mahankusa Devi, Sarva Khechari Devi, Sarva Beeja Devi, Sarva Yoni Devi, Sarva Trikhanda Devi, Trilokya Mohana Chakraswamini Devi and Prakata Yogini Devi.

'Dvitheeya Avarana' (Second Enclosure): Kamakarshini Shakti, Buddhyakarshini Shakti, Ahankarakarshini Shakti, Sabdakarshini Shakti, Sparshakarshini Shakti, Rupakarshini Shakti, Rasakarshini Shakti, Gandhakarshini Shakti, Chittakarshini Shakti, Dhairyakarshini Shakti, Smrutyakarshini Shakti, Namakarshini Shakti, Beejakarshini Shakti, Atmakarshini Shakti, Amrutakarshini Shakti, Sarva Aasha Paripurka Chakraswamini and Gupta Yogini.

'Truteeya Avarana' (Third Enclosure): Anga Kusuma Shakti, Ananga Mekhala Shakti, Ananga Madana Shakti, Ananga Madanatura Shakti, Ananga Rekha Shakti, Ananga Vegini Shakti, Ananga Ankusha Shakti, Ananga Malini Shakti, Sarva Sankshobhana Chakraswamini, and Gupta thara Yogini.

'Chaturdha Avarana' (Fourth Enclosure): Sarvakshobini Devi, Sarva Vidravini Devi, Sarvakarshini Devi, Sarvahladini Devi, Sarva Sammohini Devi, Sarva-Sthambhini Devi, Sarvajhrumbhini Devi, Sarvavashankari Devi, Sarva Ranjani Devi, Sarvandini Devi, Sarvatha Sadhika Devi, Sarva Sampatti Purani Devi, Sarva Mantramayi Devi, Sarva Dvandva Kshayankari Devi, Sarva Soubhagya Dayaka Chakraswamini Devi and Sampradaya Yogini Devi.

'Panchama Avarana' (Fifth Enclosure): Sarva Siddhiprada Devi, Sarva Sampathprada Devi, Sarva Priyankari Devi, Sarva Mangala Karini Devi, Sarva Kamaprada Devi, Sarva Dhuhkha Vimochani Devi, Sarva Mrithyu Prasamani Devi, Sarva Vighna Nivarini Devi, Sarvanga Sundari Devi, Sarva Sowbhagya Dayani Devi, Sarva Ardha Sadhaka Chakraswamini and Kulotheerna Yogini.

'Shashtha Avarana' (Sixth Enclosure): Sarvagya Devi, Sarva Shakti Devi, Sarva Aishvarya Pradayani Devi, Sarva Jnanamayi Devi, Sarva Vyadhi Vinasini Devi, Sarvadhara Swarupa Devi, Sarva Papahari Devi, Sarva Anandamayi Devi, Sarva Raksha Swarupini Devi, Sara Epsitha Phalaprada Devi, Sarva Rakshakara Chakra Swamini and Nigarbha Yogini.

'Saptama Avarana' (Seventh Enclosure): Vasini Vagdevi, Kameswari Vagdevi, Modhini Vagdevi, Vimala Vagdevi, Aruna Vagdevi, Jayani Vagdevi, Sarva Eswari Vagdevi, Kaulini Vagdevi, Sarva Rogahara Chakraswaini, Rahasya yogini, Banini, Chapini, Paasini and Ankusini.

'Ashta' Avarana' (Eighth Enclosure): Maha Kameswari Devi, Maha Vajreswari Devi, Maha Bhagamalini Devi, Sarva Siddhiprada Chakraswamini and Ati Rahasya Yogini.

'Nava Avarana' (Ninth Enclosure): Sri Sri Bhattarika, Sarvanandamaya Chakraswamini and Parapara Rahasya Yogini.

## Conclusion of Navavarana Puja:

Tripura Devi Namah: Dhyayami; Tripuresi Devi Namah: Avahayami; Tripura Sundari Devi Namah: Asanam Samarpayami; Tripurasiddhi Devi Namah: Snanam Samarpayami; Tripuramba Devi Namah: Vastram Samarpayami; Maha Tripura Sundari Devi Namah: Abharamam Samarpayami; Maha Maheswari Devi Namah: Gandham Dharayami; Maha Maharagni Devi Namah: Pushpam Pujayami; Srimad Simhasana Iiswaryai Devi Namah:Padam Pujaami; Lalitha Devi Namah: Gulphou Pujayami; Maha Raagni Namah: Janghou Pujayami; Paramakushi Namah: Januni Pujayami; Chapinyai Namah: Urum Pujayami; Tripurayi Namah:Katim Pujayami; Maha Sundaryai Namah: Nabhim Pujayami; Sundaryai Namah: Vasitrayam Pujayami; Chakranathaya Namah:Udaram Pujayami; Charinyai Namah: Kantham Pujayami; Chakreswaryai Namah:Oshtham Pujayami; Maha Devai Namah: Kapolam Pujayami; Kameswaryai Namah: Dantapanktim Pujayami; Parama Eswaryai Namah:Chbukam Pujayami; Kamaraja Priyayai Namah: Nasika Dwayam Pujaami; Kamakotikayai Namah: Bhru Madhyam Pujaami; Sarv Patalayai Namah: Mukham Pujayami; Kulanthayai Namh: Parswam Pujaami; Amnayanathyayai Namah: Siram Pujamami; Sarva Amnaya Nivasinyai Namah: Padukam Pujayami; Maha Sringara Nayikayai Namah: Sarvangyani Pujayami.

Maha Sakti Devi Namah: Dhoopam Aghrapaami; Maha Guptha Devi Namah: Deepam Darshayami; Maha Gupta Devi Namah: Nivedaym Samarpayami; Maha Ananda Devi Namah: Tamboolam Saparpayami; Maha Skanda Devi Namah: Mantra Pushpam Samarpayami; Maha Maha Sri Chakra Nagara Samragni Namah: Pradakshina Namaskaran Samarpayami. [Note: If the detailed worship on the above lines is not possible to perform, at least the following powerful Panchadasakshari mantra may be recited 108 times each day keeping in view the Sri Yantra with concentration:

Ka E La Hreem-Ha Sa Ka Ha La Hreem-Sa Ka La Hreem ]

# Indra kills Trisira and Vritra and his penance

Prajapati Visvakarma, the famed Architect of Devas, had a son named Trisira or the three headed Brahmana boy who used to practise ascetism with one head, drink wine with another and look around in all directions with the third. Being an ardent student of Vedas, he was always engaged in severe Tapasya, especially 'Panchagni Sadhana' hanging upside down a tree branch exposed to Summer Sun, winter cold and heavy rainy season without food conquering worldly desires. Being highly suspicious of the intentions of Trisira who might pose problem his own throne, Indra despatched Apsarasas to disturb Trisira's rigorous meditation but to no avail. Indra thus killed him even when he was in meditation, even as he knew that killing a pious Brahmana in meditation was the highest possible sin. Furious with Indra's dreadful deed, Visvakarma performed an inexorable Sacrifice by 'Abhichara' process (taking revenge) reciting Atharva Veda Mantras, created a mountain like and ferocious boy with the sole objective of killing Indra. The huge boy was named **Vritra** or who could save his father as Vrinjina. Visvakarma equipped him with all kinds of war tactics and divine armoury including a swift and sturdy Chariot, a 'Sudarshan' like Disc, and a'Trisula' like spear. As Vritra grew, Indra was getting nervous and approached Deva Guru to prevent any risk from the Demon. Brihaspati warned Indra that he should better

be prepared for a Big Battle as the forebodings were not conducive, as after all Indra had committed a heinous crime of killing a Brahmana out of pride and fear. Meanwhile Vritra formulated his plans of attack and grouped a vengeful and desperate army of Danavas as his support. As the dooms day arrived, Indra and Devas were attacked and a furious Danava clan fought for hundred years and Indra leapt for life from Elephant 'Airavata' and ran by foot and Varuna, Vayu, Agni and all other Planetary heads and Devatas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras and so on fled too incognito. At one stage Vritra caught hold of Indra and literally devoured him. All the Deva Chiefs prayed to Deva Guru to some how save Indra and Brihaspati managed Vritra to yawn with his mouth wide open and somehow helped Indra to manage to bale out from his mountain-cave like mouth of Vritra! As Indra and Devas fled and hid themselves from Vritra, the latter ruled Heavens for thousand years and Devas continued sporadic efforts to defeat Vritra and Danavas but to no avail. Indra and Devas approached Maha Deva for help and together along with Maha Vishnu prayed to Maha Devi and got Her blessings. Some senior Sages went in a delegation to Vritra requesting for truce with Indra and Devas. Vritra agreed that the truce be agreed provided that his death should take place neither during day or night, with a dry or liquid substance or by wood, stone, thunderbolt and similar substance. The Sages agreed to the conditions. But Vritra's father Visyakarma cautioned the son that past history was a witness to Indra's vicious acts and that he would certainly strike Vritra at an opportune time; he said that Indra was such a crook that he killed the foetus of his own mother's sister Diti by entering into her womb by Anima and other Siddhis and killing it into pieces; by taking the form of Sage Gautam and cheated the Sage's wife Ahalya into bed, and recently killed Trisira on the suspicion that he might usurp his throne and so on. In course of the function like 'Suthika Sauchak'ie one month after birth till 'Samavartan' or boy returning from 'Gurukula' after studies. Meanwhile Rahul came to realise that Varun had been demanding the Naramedha and ran away. After some time when he came to know that his father was exremely ill with dropsy as a result of Varuna's curse, Rahul wanted to return home but Lord Indra advised him against it. Sage Vasishtha the well wisher Guru of Harischandra suggested that an alternate way of performing Naramedha as approved by Scriptures was neither day nor night but the twilight time. It was wrongly deduced that it was Indra who killed Vritra, but the actual position was that Maha Bhagavati entered and energised the Sea foam and terminated Vritra. That was why Maha Bhagavati was known as 'Vritranihantri'. [ Srimad Maha Bhagavatha Purana stated that Maha Vishnu advised Devas to implore Sage Dadhichi to spare his backbone which was converted into a thunderbolt by Visvakarma the Architect of Devas with which was killed Vritra by Indra.] Badly hurt by the sense of guilt that he killed a Brahmana the result of which would be that of a Great Sin of 'Brahma paataka' as this would be a second sin of killing Trisura, who was also a Bramhana, Indra felt miserable and hid himself in the stalk of a lotus in Manasarovar lake. As Indra was absconding for a long time, another Indra King Nahusha was installed, and puffed up by the new position Nahusha asked for Sachi Devi to serve him, as he was the King then. Sachi asked for some time Indra befriended Vritra and when the latter was roaming on the Sea beach he took advantage of the situation and sent his thunderbolt to dip itself in the froth of the Sea waves and killed Vritra as the time time to make sure that her husband was really hiding or dead. She prayed to Devi Maha Bhagavati and explained her predicament to Her. Maha Devi asked Sachi to accompany a female messenger named Visvakama; they went by an air-borne vehicle to Manasarovar where she met Indra who was frightened with the sense of guilt hiding inside the stalk of a lotus. On narratinig the happenings of the new Indra, his desire to own Sachi as his wife, her asking him for time, praying to Maha Devi and the messenger Visvakama helped locating Indra, the latter advised Sachi to allure Nahusha into a forest by a Vehicle meant for Sages. She returned to Nahusha who borrowed the 'Vimana' (air plane) of Sages who understood the deceipt of Nahusha and allowed both of them to board the vehicle saying: SARPA SARPA, which had the double meaning of 'Get In and go' and also 'Serpent, Serpent'! The Great Muni was whipped by Nahusha to let the Vehicle go fast. The Vehicle dropped Nahusha in the thick of a forest who took the shape of a huge serpent and picked up the real Indra and Sachi Devi back to Heavens safe, when all the Devas were happy that original Indra returned! Nahusha secured his liberation only after the Maha Bharata was over and the Five Pandavas passed through the forest and King Dharmaraja answered the questions correctly from his serpent formation and liberated him too. By the Grace of Devi

Bhagavati, Indra was reinstated and the curse of his 'Brahma Hatya Pathaka' (killing a Brahmana) was already dissolved by way of atonement and sufferance in hiding at 'Manasarovara'. Such was the Supreme Justice that Devi Maya did to every being without favour or prejudice. The powerful 'Karma' or Fate works equitably to Tri Murthis downward to a grass blade, but the norms change with the passage of Yugas from Satya to Treta to Dvapara and Kali Yuga when the percentage of Gunas would witness radical change by way of reduction to Satvik, medium to Rajas and maximum to Tamas and when the peak reaches to Tamas, it then would be time for Universal Dissolution!

# Sages Vasishtha Vs. Visvamitra and their 'Ahankaras' (Egos)

There was a fine interplay of Satvika, Rajasvika and Tamasika Gunas in respect of two illustrious Sages Vasishta and Visvamitra in the context of King Harischandra, son of Trisanku of Solar dynasity. The King had no issues and prayed to Lord Varuna who granted a boon on the condition that his son would be given away by way of Human Sacirifice (Naramedha). The son Rahul grew from stage to stage and at each could be to buy a boy for riches and sacrifice him. The King purchased a boy named Sunasepha from his very poor parents and readied him for the Sacrifice. Sage Visvamitra objected and as the King and Vasishtha did not heed, the 'Varuna' Manthra was given to Sunasepha by Visvamitra and thus the boy was rescued and Vauna's indebteness to the King was dissolved. But the enmity between the two Sages was snowballed. Vasishtha cursed Visvamitra to become a crane and the latter cursed the former to become a Sarasa or an Adi bird. Both the birds quarrelled with each other for long on the same tree on the banks of Manasarovara. As Devas informed of the two birds, Lord Brahma relieved them of their mutual curses of the Sages and sought to bring about a rapproachment of both the Great Sages.

### Personality clashes of Sages and Kshatriyas-

### King Nimi Vs. Vasishtha

King Nimi of Ikshvasu dynasty was highly righteous and sought to perform in the name of Devi Bhagavati; Sage Vasishtha who was the dynasty's Raja Guru agreed to be the Head Priest. At the arrived time when all the preparations were through, the Sage informed that Indra had called him too for a Sacrifice and sent word that King Nimi's Yagna be rescheduled. King Nimi went ahead with his function as per schedule. Vasishtha returned and cursed Nimi that his mortal body would fall off. The King gave a return curse likewise. But since Nimi's Yagna was not complete, he performed it as 'Videha' or without body as Lord Yama was pleased with the Sacrifice and gave him the option of another nice birth or enter the first Jiva body of Brihaspati but the King chose the Videha option. Vasishtha had to pray to his father Brahma who arranged that he be reborn as **MitraVaruna**. In the past, Apsara Urvasi was infatuated by Mitra-Varuna and two issues were born, one was Agasti who beame an ascetic and the other was Ikshvaku who became a King. Mitra Varuna's Jiva -body was still intact even before Brahma created original Vasishtha; the Jiva of the present Vasishtha now dropped as a return curse of King Nimi entered the duplicate body of Mitra Varuna without any loss of original Vasishtha's wisdom and Radiance!

# King Yayati Vs. Sukracharya

In an another incident Sage Sukracharya cursed King Yayati. The Sage's daughter Devayani married the King but objected to live with his another wife Sarmishtha but still the King did not comply. The father of Devayani Sukracharya cursed that Yayati would become old and impotent. As the King entreated for forgiveness, the Sage's curse was diluted that if any of his sons could take the position of Yayati's old form instead, then he could regain his youth. The youngest son of Sarmishtha, **Puru** who bore his father's curse and after Yayati, he became a youthful King, the ancestor of Panadavas and Kauravas. Veda Vyasa affirmed that being an upright King, Yayati was also in a position to reverse the curse of the Danava Guru but restrained from doing so and quietly conceded to assume the old age as after all he did not commit a great sin in asking his another wife Sarmishtha to bed; equally wonderful was the preparedness of Puru to take on the curse of the Sage and sacrificed his own youth for thousand years!

# Haihayas Vs. Bhargava

Conflicts of ego bewteen Kshatriyas and Brahmanas assumed snow-ball effect gradually. The Haihayas and Bhargavas had open disagreements to this extent that even pregnant women of Bhargavas were not spared of violence. Over a period of time, greed, jealousy and power proved to be the factors causing quarrels which finally climaxed into the era of Haihaya King Kartavirya of thousand hands and an ardent devotee of Avadhuti Dattatreya as also of Devi Maha Bhagavati. As the violence by Haihayas on Bhargavas became acute, the latter assembled and prayed to Devi Girija intensely in an 'Amarana Diksha' (Devotion till death). The Devi appeared and assured that a boy would be born from Her thighs and would save them. But the Haihayas sought to blind the Brahmana lady who secured the boy- named Aurva or born of thighs, by the grace of Bhagavati. Ayurva was so radiant that all the Haihayas were all blinded. When the entire Haihaya clan prayed to the Brahmana lady to restore their eyesight, Aurva forgave them and their eyesight was restored. Haihayas got a lesson, as they all knew that Aurva was a gift of Devi Herself and they reverted back to their original position of reverence to Bhargavas in particular and Brahmanas in general. [Parasurama, in Lord Vishnu's incarnation, killed Kshatriyas in twenty one battles and also ended the mighty King Kartaviryarjuna]

The origin of Haihayas was interesting. Once, Lord Surya's son, Revanta rode on the Celestial Horse

'Uucchaiswara' and called on Maha Vishnu; Laxmi recognised the co-born Horse at the time of churning the Ocean and was lost in thoughts, despite Vishnu's noting Her indifference. Vishnu became angry and cursed Her to become a mare as She was much captivated with the horse. Lakshmi Devi prayed to Maha Deva and Girija who sent the latter's emissary to Vishnu with the request that He too be born as a horse. Lakshmi Devi confirmed to Devi Girija that her husband had great reverence for Mahadeva as Vishnu was praying to Maha Deva Himself. Hence Vishnu obliged and took the form of a Horse. The Animal Forms of Vishnu and Lakshmi gave birth to a male human child who was left in the forest but was ordained to be picked up by King Yayati's son Turvasu (Hari Varma) who was meditating for a son for hundred years. But meanwhile a Vidyadhara named Champaka and his spouse Madanashala were flying around and found a child of profound sparkle and desired to own him, but Indra warned them that the child who gave birth to Hari and Laxmi was actually meant for Yayati's son Hari Verma who was performing severe Tapasya for a male child who was subsequently named as 'Eka Vira' (The One Only Warrior). As Ekavira grew into an ideal Youth with considerable learning and valour, King Turvasu and coronated Ekavira and retired to forests. Ekavira was popular as a worthy King. As he was roaming once on the banks of Ganges, he found a pretty girl crying. When cajoled, she (Yasovati) said she was the companion of the Princess Ekavali, the daughter of King Rabhya and Queen Rukmarekha. The couple performed a Sacrifice and were blessed as Ekavali emerged from the Homa Kunda (Firepit). When the Princess and Yasovati were bathing in a Pond in their territory, Demon Kalaketu appeared, killed King

Rabhya's soldiers and made amorous advances to Ekavali. She entreated the Danava King from 'Patala' that her father desired her to be wedded to King Eka Vira of Haihayas and thus requested her to leave her. But the Danava King heeded little and forcibly took Ekavali away to Patala. On hearing about the incident, Eka Vira revealed his identity and wondered how to reach Patala to fight Kalaketu. Yasovati was distressed heavily and prayed to Devi Bhagavati who in her dream informed that by the dint of a 'Bija' (Seed) Mantra which she learnt earlier by Lord Dattatreya be meditated for a month with pure heart and on the banks of Ganges, she would meet King Eka Vira and help her to kill Kalaketu. As she knew the Triloka Thilaka Yogeswari Mantra, King Eka Vira was initiated in it as follows: *Hrim Gauri Rudrayathey yogeswari hum phut swaha*. He was thus able to reach Patala, destroyed Kalaketu, rescued Ekavali back and married her under the care of her parents who prayed to Bhagavati with extreme gratitude. It was in the union of Eka Vira and Ekavali that the famed Kartavirya was born in the Haihayas clan.

# Play of 'Maya' - Narada's wedding and womanhood!

Maharshi Narada visited 'Samyapraksha', the Sacred Hermitage of Maha Muni Veda Vyasa on the banks of River Saraswathi. The two Grand Sages exchanged mutual experiences and the inevitable play of 'Maha Maya' (The Great Illusion) in their own lives. Veda Vyasa narrated the incidents of his past including the role played by Devi Bhagavati Maya as to how his father was enticed with his mother Satyavati-a fisher woman, the insistence of his mother to sleep with his own younger dead brother's wives to beget children to uphold the family royalty, his temptation with Apsara Grithachi and the birth of Suka Muni, his extreme attachment with the son and the intense desire to be a family man even at the cost of sending him to 'Videha' King Janaka to brain wash the son to wed and the most painful feeling of his son's loss when he died and so on. Maharshi Narada recalled too of his own unforgettable memories of wedding who had been a confirmed Brahmachari (Bachelor) and, worse still, becoming a woman and as a wife with children and grandchildren!

Narada ('Nara' is Knowledge and 'Da' means Giver) was a 'Loka Sanchari' or Universal Tourist by virtue of a curse given by Daksha Prajapati as Narada interfered with his sons-Haryasvas; Whereas Daksha asked the sons to learn and meditate well and then become 'Grihasthis' or House holders later but Narada guided them to perform 'Tapasya' and be eligible to salvation instead of getting mixed up with worldly activities. Hence the curse. Such a legendary personality- a Brahma Manasa Putra or born of Lord Brahma's mind-fell flat due to the powerful intentions of Maha Maya. In one incident, the two Devarshis Narada and Parvata fancied to visit Bhuloka and visit various Sacred Places and Rivers. Having gone on the pilgrimage, they had to stop over at the Kingdom of King Sanjaya as their movement for four months had to be halted due to the season of rains. The King made all the arrangements for their comfortable stay and also asked his youthful daughter Damayanti to oversee their needs of daily regular pujas. In course of time, Damayanti got atrracted by Narada by his erudite knowledge of Scriptures, his eternal youth and most importantly by his Sama Veda intonation as well as his musical talents, especially his excellent playing of Veena (lute) instrument. There was a distinct attitudinal change of Damayanti towards Narada vis-a-vis Parvata which was not to the liking of the latter. He asked Narada whether there was any fascination for each other and he confirmed it. Parvata became furious as this was not the purpose of their coming to visit Bhuloka and the result was loathsome. Thus, Parvata left Narada's company and cursed him to have a monkey face. King Sanjaya and wife sought to hurry up with Damayanti's wedding but she was adamant to marry Narada only as she was infatuated with him, despite his face. He was an adept in the Science of Music, a virtual Nada Brahma and an authority of Swara, Grama and Murchchana. Sapta Swaras: Sadja, Rishabha, Gandhara, Madhyama, Panchama, Dhaivata and

Nisada. Gramas are the gradual increase and decrease of Swaras; Mruchchanas: intonations and regulation of sounds by controlling the air and harmony through keys, changing keys for sound modulation and creating melodies] Damayanti also felt that after all Kinnaras the celestial musicians had horse faces and Narada was admired for his innumerable other qualities. Narada and Damayanti were married and were extremely happy. After a lapse of time, Maharshi Parvata visited Narada couple, withdrew his curse and Narada became normal again. Such was the play of Maya and strange were the ways of destiny which was a part of Bhagavati's 'Leelas' never understood by Trimurtis, not to mention of Narada!

Devarshi Narada narrated another example of the pastime of 'Maya' to Veda Vyas which was even more telling. As Lord Vishnu and Narada were conversing once at Vaikuntha, Narada was proud to make a statement that happily he was not a victim of Maya as he was beyond it but human beings often get victimised to it. Lord Vishnu called for His Vehicle Garuda and suggested that both could go out for a drive. He stopped Garuda at the City of Kannouj near a lake, suggested that they might refresh with a swim and asked Narada to do so first. The moment Narada dipped in the water, Narada became a charming woman and lost his memory. Vishnu left quietly along with belongings like Narada's clothes, lute and hand worn musical instruments. Meanwhile, King Taladhvaja of Kannauj arrived there with his followers and was immediately struck by the beautiful lady (Narada) and enquired about her name and details. As the woman did not remember her antecedents, the King took her and married her in the presence of all according to Vedic rites and named her Sowbhagya Sundari. The King declared her as the Principal Queen and their marital life was exceedingly successful as they begot twelve sons who grew and were married too and she became a grand mother. As there was a terrible war with a neighbouring country, the sons and grandsons of the King were killed but the he did not fight. An elderly woman well versed in Vedas and Mantras provided solace to the Queen and suggested that after the obsequies she might take bath in a 'Pumthirdha' for males as the departed were all males. The elderly woman, who was Vishnu Himself conducted the Queen to the lake and even after one dip realised that she was Narada himself! As the King was wailing about the whereabouts of the Oueen, the elderly lady or Vishnu consoled the King and sent him back and had a hearty laugh to Narada who was put to shame as this was a pastime for Devi and Lord Vishnu was but an instrument in the entire drama to prove that none whatsoever was above 'Maya'!Thus both Maharshi Veda Vyasa and Devarshi exchanged mutual experiences in the context of Maha Maya who rejoices, like a magician in making dolls dance as per Her will and pleasure, and plays with all living and non living beings from Lord Brahma to an insignificant pebble. She casts Her spell to the objects according to their 'Karma' and as per the mix of their own 'Gunas' in various proportions. The Basic Laws prescribed by Maya Bhagavati are enforced by Her Three Agents, viz. Trinity and their deputies and the actions are performed by the individuals concerned according to their volitions which are again conditioned by their remote past, immediate past and current accounts of 'Karma'!

#### Genesis of Lord Brahma and His various creations

Lord Brahma, born of Lord Vishnu's navel of lotus, first created seven Manasa Putras or mind-born sons-Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasishtha. Then came Rudra from His anger, Narada from His lap, Daksha from right thumb and Virini (Daksha's wife) from left thumb. Brahma also created the Sanaka Brothers (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanat Kumaras) as 'Manasa Putras'. From Daksha, Virini gave birth to five thousand sons in two lots but on preaching by Narada, the sons left away in different directions and an angry Daksha cursed Narada to take rebirth from Virni. Then Daksha and Virini gave birth to sixty daughters of whom thirteen were married to Sage Kashyap, ten to Dharma, twenty seven to Moon, two each to Bhrigu, Aristanemi, Krisasva and Angira. Among the first lot of

seven Manasa Putras, Marichi begot Sage Kasyapa -who married the thirteen daughters of Daksha and Virini- and the Sage was responsible for wide ranging Kasyapi creation of Danavas, Devas, Yakshas, reptiles, animals, birds and so on. Among Devas, the most significant son was Sun or Vivasvan and his son was Vaivasvanta Manu. Besides Ikshvaku who was the eldest, Vaivasva Manu had other important sons viz .Nabhaga (Ambarisha was his famous son who was a just and religious King), Dhrishta (Dhrashtaka was his son who attained Brahmana Stature though he was a Kshatriya), Saryati (Anarta was his son and Sukanya was the pretty daughter married to Chyavana Rishi, who was old and blind but Awsini brothers gave eye sight and youth owing to her good character and chastity), Narisyanta, Pransu, Nriga, Dishta, Karusa and Risadhra. Ikshvaku had one hundred sons, Vikuski being the eldest.

King Janamejaya requested Maharshi Veda Vyasa to kindly describe why King Saryati's beautiful daughter Sukanya married a blind and old Sage Chyayana. It so happened that the smart princess visited a garden along with her playmate girls. She was attracted to a bush from which there came an interesting illumination of star like twinkling; she pricked a dried piece of a tree branch and pierced into it. Immediately there came out a blood stream and a loud sound of human cry. Sukanya and mates ran away. She narrated the incident to her father who was afraid of the situation as that happened to be the hermitage of Sage Chyavana; as a result the urine and stools of the entire army of the King stopped. King Saryati approached and profusely apologised to Sage Chyavana who was performing severe Tapasya with eyes open for hundreds of years and he was blinded because of his daughter's foolishly inquisitive nature. The King offered that her daughter was prepared to look after the blind Sage and if he agreed she would marry him. Thus the pretty and youthful Sukanya had willingly married the blind and old Sage and served him with great devotion. After a few years, two Aswini Kumars passing by, appreciated her service and dedication and offered to get back her husband's eyesight as also his youth on one condition that when the Sage took bath in a lake nearby she should identify and recognise him as besides him they too would be just similar to pop up from the water. This test was indeed tough and Sukanya sincerely prayed to Devi Bhagavati to help her through the test. Her prayers were well answered and Sukanya did recognise the real Sage as there was a concentrated radiance of Sattva Guna that distinguished him from the other two. The Sage was delighted as he got back his sight and a clear impossibility of youth and sought a return gift from the Aswini brothers who desired to have a cup of Soma Rasa (Elixir) from heavens. Chyavana Muni performed 'Agnistoma' Sacrifice but the Soma Rasa was refused by Indra, since the Divine Physicians were not eligible. A mantrik fight became inevitable as a Deity bestowing magical powers, named Kritya, was invoked by the Sage who created a frightful demon, Mada, created havoc in heavens and all the Devas were unable to control him. Indra had to yield to Aswini brothers' request and the invincible demon Mada had to be disintegrated into four parts, viz.a sexy female, drinking, gambling and hunting.

Reverting back to Saryati, his grand daughter Revati was as well known as Sukanya; Anarta was Sukanya's brother whose son was Revata who in his turn had one hundred sons and a daughter Revati. As Revata approached Lord Brahma through prayers for a suitable match for Revati, the latter suggested that Revati be brought to Brahmaloka. In this context, King Janamejaya raised a pertinent question to Maharshi Veda Vyasa whether it would ever be possible for Revata to imagine that he and his daughter Revati could visit Satyaloka for bridegroom hunting! Veda Vyasa confirmed that it was indeed possible to do so during that age. There were several instances in the past, that Danavas travelled Amaravati of Indra, Satyaloka of Brahma and Kailasa of Maha Deva. Arjuna reached Amaravati and stayed there for years. Thus in the present case, Brahma asked Revata and Revati to meet the former. But by the time they reached there Brahma was busy attending a musical concert and as this was over Brahma told Revata that the possible names suggested by Revata as ideal grooms and their sons and grandsons were long back dead and gone as they were then going through the twenty seventh Vivasvata Manvantara of Dvapara Yuga. Brahma suggested however the name of Balarama who along with Krishna would soon be born and Balarama the incarnation of 'Ananta Deva' would be a suitable bridegroom. As the father and daughter

reached Bhuloka, Revati was happily wedded to Balarama, as ordained by Brahma. Maharshi Veda Vyasas explained that in Satya loka, there were no concepts of time, distance, age, disease and death as were applicable in Bhu loka.

# **Solar Dynasty- Origin and Highlights**

Vivasvata Manu had a sneeze and was born the eldest son **Ikshvaku** who established the Solar dynasty. Devarshi Narada initiated him into the worship of Devi Bhagavati and prayed for the expansion of the Solar (Vaivsvata) dynasty and Ikshvaku was blessed with hundred sons; he ruled Ayodhya, sent ninty sons to the Eastern Provinces, eight to the Southern Provinces to govern and kept two with himself, including the eldest son Vikuksi. At the 'Sraddha' ceremony of his father, Ikshvaku sent Vikuksi to fetch a deer from the forests for Sacrifice but Sage Vasishtha found defect of the cooked meat of the Sacrifice and Ikshvaku became furious and banished the son to forests who never returned and practised Yoga there till Ikshvaku died. Vikuksi or Sasada as known during his forest life became the King and his only son Kakustha (Indravahana or Puranjaya ) became a powerful Monarch. It was this time that Danavas attacked Indra and the Devas badly and the latter approached Maha Vishnu for help. Lord Vishnu asked them to seek King Kakustha's assistance; he agreed to the proposal provided Indra became the carrier during the War. Indra reluctantly had to agree and changed himself into a bull (Kakud) on whose hump sat the King and routed the Danavas and that was how the King was known as Kakustha or Indravahana or Puranjana. He had a lasting alliance with Indra and gave away all the riches of Danavas gained from the War to Devas. Kakustha's son was King **Prithu** who was a part Avatar of Vishnu and an unfailing Devotee of Maha Bhagavati. His lineage was Visvarandhi-Chandra- mighty Yuvanasya- Savanta who built Savanti like Paradise-Brihasva-Kuvalasya who killed the ferocious Demon Dhundhu and was thus known as Dhundhumara-Haryasva-Nikumbha-Varahasva- Krisasva- Parasenajit - Yavanasva and the legendary Mandhata who built one thousand and eight palaces and the immortal City of Benares and innumerable places of Pilgrimage. The story of Yavanasva was indeed interesting as he did not beget from several wives any child and hence performed a Sacrifice for days together. One night when he was sleeping in the Sacrificial Arena, felt terribly thirsty and drank the 'Mantrik jal' or Sacred water actually meant for his Senior Wife to let her conceive; subsequently he got pregnant and his Ministers had to cut his stomach open to deliver a male child. When the child cried for milk, Indra who was pleased with the Sacrifice appeared and fed the child with his forefinger and thus was named as Mandhata. Known for his valour and courage, Mandhata was acclaimed as 'Sarva-bhouma' and Indra gave him the title 'Trasadasyu' as he was a terror to robbers. He and wife Bindumati begot two sons Purukustha and Muchukunda. The son and grandson were religious and noble Kings but in the fourth generation there was a wicked person by name Satyavrata who never had respect either father or Guru Vasishtha. He had performed a crime in kipnapping a Brahmana bride and thus got banished from the Kingdom by his father King Aruna who cursed the son to become a chandala or the lowest class of Society. While wandering in the forests, the Chandala could not get anything to eat and hence killed a cow; Vasishtha cursed Satyavrata to become a 'piscachi' (Goblin) who would carry three marks of 'Shankhu' of leprosy on his forehead to indicate three crimes, one to abduct a Brahmana bride, to defy father and Guru before abandoning the Royal Palace and three to kill and eat a cow! That was why Satyavrata was known as 'Trisanku'!

Trisanku learnt a 'Mula Mantra' of Maha Bhagavati from a Muni Kumara and being deeply hurt by his previous acts of sins lit up a Sacrificial Fire and sought to jump into the flames. Devi Bhagvati realised

the extreme transformation of the highly repenting 'Piscachi' and appeared to bless him to reach his aged father and assume Kingship. Sage Narada conveyed Bhagavati's wish and the King was highly pleased that his son Satyavrata finally secured Maha Devi's kindness to his son, that his Piscachi and Chandala forms were freed and that he would be eligible for Kingship. He left for 'Vanaprastha Ashram' ( Retirement) and crowned his son. But King Satyavrata had ideas to reach Heavens in his present form of a mortal and enjoy the sweet experiences there including with Apsarasas. He asked Maharshi Vasishtha to perform a Sacrifice to achieve that objective. The Maharshi said that the King could never ever fulfill his ambition, especially since his past actions were non – erasable sins giving him the 'Tri Sankhus'. The King suggested that his ambition must be obtained even if he were to change his Guru and Spiritual Teacher! This angered Vasishtha who cursed the King to become a Chandala once again. As he might not carry on as the King in that form anymore, he paved the way for his son Harischandra to become the King. Meanwhile Sage Visvamitra's wife Kausiki conveyed to her husband that Satyavrata was indeed a very kind person as when Visvamitra left on his Tapasya for several years, it was Satyavrata who saved her and her sons as they were srarved of hunger and she was even tried to sell one of the sons to save others. Satyavrata supplied deer meat daily to them but on one day no deer was available and thus killed Kamadhenu to feed them with its meat. Sage Visvamitra was moved with this and agreed to repay Satyavrata in Chandala form to reach heavens in his human form and through his mystic powers and Fire Sacrifices sent Satyavrata in the very human form of Chandala to Heavens. But Devas did not allow his entry there because of Satyavrata's record of sins and kicked him back to Earth. But, Sage Visvamitra utilised substantial stock of 'Punya' and created another Swarga just like the original called 'Trisankhu Swarga' and installed Trisankhu as the King of that duplicate Swarga in between Bhuloka and Devaloka with equally attractive luxuries made possible in that Swarga!

King Harischandra was at the top of the list of enemies for Sage Visvamitra, especially since the King was the disciple of Sage Vasishtha. On the other hand the King's father Trisankhu was so close to Visvamithra that the Sage gave away a sizeable share of Visvamitra's hard earned 'Punya' to forward 'Trisankhu' to Heavens and as his entry was disappoved there, further Punya was spent to create a brand new Trisankhu Svarga midway between Bhuloka and Svarga as a challenge to Devas and indirectly to Sage Vasishtha. There was another instance when Lohitasya the son of Harischandra was saved from Demi God Varuna's debt to Harischandra on account of Lohithasya's Sacrifice that got transfferred to the poor Brahmana boy Sunyasapha who was bought at a heavy price; Visvamithra gave the mantra to appease Varuna to Sunehesapha while Vasishta suggested the way out of the problem to Harischandra and arranged Sunehesapha to be bought over. Keeping in view the above incidents, Visvamitra was waiting for an oppornunity to strike at Harischandra. Meanwhile another incident happened which angered Harischandra.

Once King Harischandra was horse riding on the banks of Ganges and found a woman wailing and the reason was that the lady was highly disturbed at Visvamitra's continuous Sacrifices. Harischandra forbade the Sage to perform the Sacrifices. He got annoyed and created a Demon in the form of a Boar who created havoc in the King's forests; the King ran after the beast and finally killed it but lost his way. Visvamitra as an old Brahmana showed the way back but by a strange illusion created by the Sage extracted a promise to the Brahmana that he would give away his entire possessions in return. Harischandra's Kingdom and power were gone on return back. Visvamitra idenified himself as the Brahmana and told the King Harischandra that he had also pay Dakshina as a cartful of gold for a Rajasuya Yagna that he did in the past. Harischandra moved out of the Kingdom to Kasi which was out of his domain. He sold his wife and son as slaves to repay Dakshina's interest and he himself worked as a bonded labour at Kasi's cremation ground to a Chandala who was his Master. [The Cremation Place is still named as 'Harischandra Ghat' on the banks of Ganges] Untold misery of hundreds of years was experienced by the wife Saivya and son Rohitasya at the masters' abode performing menial jobs and he

himself toiled as Gate keeper as the bonded labour of 'Chandala' with an endless debt by the years till their end. Subsequently, Lohitasya was bitten by a snake in the garden of the Master and died. There was no other help available even to carry the son's dead body. Harischandra and Saivya could not recognise each other initially and Saivya begged of the Gate keeper to burn her son's body. The Gate Keeper Harischandra insisted payment of fees for the task of cremation and she had none to afford. Half of her Sari was sold for the fees but the cremation charges were still due. It was at that final desperation when Saivya and Harischandra sought to jump into the fire along with the son's dead body with their last silent prayers on their lips for Devi Satakshi that Trimurtis, Indra and Devas appeared on the scene. When Indra invited to Devaloka, Harischandra waited for the affirmative nod of his Master, Chandala, who was Yama Dharma Raja Himself! There were flowery rains from Skies as a 'Pushpak Viman'

(Flight of Flowers) took off from the Cremation Ground for the Most Shining Couple of Truthfulness, Sacrifice, Perseverance and exemplary devotion to Devi Satakshi. Son Lohitasya was revived, as he too underwent the rigours of life at every stage since his birth by the threats of death from Varuna Deva with whose blessings that he was born, to the stage of a fugitive in the forests and passed through the hardest life as a slave dying finally by a snake bite!

### Magnificence of Satakshi Maha Devi

King Janamejaya desired to understand from Maharshi Veda Vyasa about the Glory of Maha Devi Satakshi whom the bright star of Solar Dynasty Harischandra was highly devoted to. There was a dreadful Demon Durgama, son of Ruru born in the family of Hirankyaksha. He developed a great theory that Devas had been becoming powerful because of Fire Sacrifices being performed by Sages and Brahmanas according to the Mantras prescribed in the Vedas and hence the root cause of Vedas be desrtroyed. With this objective in view, he performed very severe Tapasya for thousand years and the might of the meditation shook the Three Worlds and Lord Brahma was obliged to arrive by His Swan Chariot. The Demon asked for the specific boon to give him away all the Vedas to himself. As soon as Brahma gave the boon, there was complete chaos among Brahmanas and Sages as none could carry out daily worship starting from 'Sandhya Vandana', to 'Homas', 'Sraddhas', 'Jata Karmas', rites after deaths, 'Vrathas' or 'Pujas', and a whole lot of allied activities including astrology, astronomy, fine arts, Artha Sastras, the Sciences of Wars like Astras, Sastras and so on as indeed the purpose and wherewithal of life is terminated. Indeed the balance of Nature, Planetary movement, lack of rains, water, crops, food and a threat to humanity and the other worlds, the entire creation was all affected! While Siddhas and Yogis could survive even without food, humanity in general including beasts and birds were affected for want of food; thus Maha Devi in an Extension of 'Shakambhari Devi' made possible a dispensation of vegetables and fruits and a general slackening of hunger and thirst! Meanwhile one thousand 'Akshouhinis' of army one Akshouhini comprises 21,870 chariots, so many elephants, 65,610 horses, 109,350 foot soldiers of Danavas were engaged in a fight with Maha Devi. From Her Personality emerged innumerable Main Shaktis like Bagada, Bhairavi, Chhinnamasta, Jambhini, Kalika, Kamakshi, Kamala, Matangi, Mohini, Shodasa, Tarini, Tripura and Tulja Devi. There were other ramifications of Maha Shakti as well who routed and destroyed Danavas headed by Durgama. Maha Devi stated in Her own profound voice in a manner that the totality of Universe would hear: 'I am Durga the killer of the concept of Durgama as there is nothing like 'Durgama' or Surpassable for Me! Vedas constitute parts of My Being. Protect them as a precious gift from Me.' Having said thus Maha Bhagavati disappeared and the Trinity, Indra and Devas praised the Adi Shakti

( Primeval Energy) as the Universe was stabilised and World Order was re-established once again.

#### **Ultimate Supremacy of Bhagavati Unquestionable**

Interaction of Maha Maya and Ahamkara (Illusion Vs. Egoism) takes place so intensely that the false concept of 'first person—I or Mine' often overshadows the Truth of Reality. Normal human beings are the major sufferers of this interaction and understandably so because of their vulnerability to defeats and successes happening at every step in life, resulting in sorrows and joys. Strangely enough however, Devas who are expected to be the repositories of equanimity often tend to be the victims of this conflict. Worse would be in the case of Trinity sometimes! The conflict of Realism versus self-centeredness came to fore when Vishnu and Mahadeva began to claim supremacy over each other. Their inner awareness was overshadowed as they fought and tended to divide loyalties among Devas and the susceptible humans. The clash continued and they used to brag before their respective spouses who were quiet as they knew the Reality. As the collision took a serious turn, both Maha Lakshmi and Girija Devi left their respective abodes. Both Vishnu and Siva lost their controls and Shaktis. As both realised their follies and prayed to Maha Bhagavati, She appeared along with spouses and warned them that indeed they were like the grain and shell and in both the cases they were the shells and the Devi incarnations were the respective grains.

### Daksha Prajapati - Sati Devi, Maha Deva and 'Shakti Pteethas'

Maha Muni Durvasa performed Tapasya of high quality to Devi Bhagavati and She was pleased with him and gifted a flower garland which was worn on his head. From there the Muni met Daksha Prajapati who asked for the gifted garland for worship; however he kept it in his bedchamber where he was intoxicated with the fragrance, got provoked by his animal instinct to sleep with his wife and worse still he abused Maha Deva . The Garland was also an extension of Bhagavati in whom the form of Sati Devi was present too and as a ready witness of Sati Devi's silent protest against Her father whose remarks on Her husband were unjust, she had no alternative but to quit a body which was not worthy of Her father's ancestry and thus sacrificed Her life by installing Yoga Fire. On learning of this, Lord Siva grew furious and created Vira Bhadra with several Bhadra Kalis, being ready to destroy the three Worlds. He picked up Sati's dead body and performed furious Siva Dance to release His pent up emotions and intense feelings of love for Sati Devi and heightened anger for Daksha. Lord Vishnu cut off Sati's body with arrows which were thrown away into hundred and eight places that were later known as Shakti Peethas. If Vishnu did not do likewise, Lord Siva might not cool down soon enough. Lord Siva's followers destroyed the Sacrifice that was in the process already, but being an Ocean of Kindness, He installed the Sacrificed goat-head fixed on Daksha's severed head, appeared at all the places wherever the body parts of Sati fell and blessed humanity to worship the Places as Holy Temples.

Veda Vyasa described the **Siddha Peethas** as mere hearing about these would destroy sins and worshipping the Deities would bestow powers. The face of Gauri is at Kasi with the name of Visalakshi; that in Naimisharanya as Linga Dharini; Lalitha Devi at Prayaga or Allahabad; in Gandha Madan by the name of Kamuki; in Southern Manasa as Kumuda; in Northern Manasa as Viswakama or the Provider of Desires; in Gomanta by the name of Gomati; in the Mountain of Mandara as Kamacharini; in Chaitraratha by name Mandotkata; in Hastinapura as Jayanti; in Kanyakubja as Gauri; in Malaya Mountain as Rambha; in Ekambara Peetha as Kirtimati; in Visve as Viswesvari; in Pushkara as Puruhuta; in Kedara Peetha as Sanmarga dayani; as Manda at the top of Himalayas; as Bhadrakarnika at Gokarna; as Bhavani at Sthanesvara; as Bilvapatrika at Bilvake; at Madhavi at Srisaila; Bhadra in Bhadresvara; Jara on Varaha Saila; as Kamala at Kamalaya; as Rudrani at Rudrakoti; Kali in Kalanjira; Maha Devi in Salagrama;

Jayapriya at Siyalingam; Kapila at Mahalingam; as Muktesyari at Makota; as Kumari in Mayapuri; as Lalitambika at Sanatana; at Mangala at Gaya Kshetra; as Vimala at Puroshottama; as Utpalakshi at Sahasraksha; Mahotpala at Hiranksha; Amoghakshi at Vipasa River; Patala at Pundravardhana; Narayani as Suparsva; Rudra Sundari at Trikuta; Vipula Devi in Vipula; as Kalyani in Malayachala; Ekavira in Shyadri; Chandrika in Harischandra; Ramana in Ramatheertha; as Mrigavati at Yamuna; as Kotini at Kota Theertha; Sugandha at Mandhavadana; Trisandhya at Godavari; Rati Priya at Gandharva; Subhananda in Sivakundam; Nandini at Devika thata; Rukmini in Dvaravati, Radha at Brindavana; Devaki in Mathura; Paramesvari in Patala; Sita in Chitrakuta; Vindhyadhivasini in Vindhya Range; Maha Lakshmi at Karavira; Uma Devi in Vinayaka; Arogya in Vaidyanatha; Mahesvari in Mahakala; as Abhaya in all the Usna Thirthas; Nitamba in Vidhua mountain; Mandavi in Mandavya; Svaha in Mahesvari pura; Prachanda in Chagalanda; Chandika at Amarakantaka; Vararoha in Somesvara; Pushkaravati in Prabhasa; Devamata in Sarasvati; Paravara in Samudra thata; Mahabhaga in Mahalaya; Pingalesvari in Payosni; Simhika in Kritasoucha; Atisankari in Karthika; Lola in Utpalavartaka; Subhadra in Sona Sangam; Lakshmi at Siddhavana; Ananga in Bharatashrama; Visvamukhi in Jalandhara; Tara in Kishkindhya; Pushti in Devadaru Vana; Medha in Kashmira Mandala; Bhima in Himadri; Tusti in Visvesvara Kshetra; Suddhi in Kapalamochana; Mata in Karavarohana; Dhara in Sankhodhara; Dhriti in Pindaraka; Kala in Chandrabhaga River; Sivadharani in Acchoda; Amrita in Vena and as Urvasi in Vadari; also as Medicines in Uttarakuru; as Kuskodaka in Kusadwipa; as Manmatha at Hemakuta; as Satyavadini in Kumuda; as Vandaniya in Asvathha; as Nidhi Vaisravanalaya; as Gayatri in the mouth of Vedas; as Parvathi near to Siva; Indrani in Devaloka; Sarasvati in the face of Brahma; Prabha in Solar disc; as Vaishnavi in Matrikas; Arundhati among Satis or the chaste women; Tilottama among Ramas; Maha Devi in the form of Great Intelligence or 'Samvid'; Bhramakala in the hearts of the embodied beings. Veda Vyasa told King Janamejaya that even if one recited the names of the hundred and eight Devis, the person concerned would secure immense peace of mind and of course if one visited and worshipped the Deities-at least as many as possible- he or she would attain bliss. The aftermath of Devi Sati's yogic immolation, Sadasiva's unleashed anger on Daksha and the stormy events that ensued witnessed an awful era of sorrow and aimless existence. Sadasiva went into severe Tapasya and Devas lost their usual splendour. That was the time when Danavas gained an upper hand and their Chief Tarakasura who performed rigorous penance to Lord Brahma secured a tricky boon from him of invincibility except from Sadasiva's son, knowing well that Lord Siva was upset by His consort Sati Devi's yogic end and little possibility of Sadasiva's remarriage and begetting a child even in the distant future! Out of sheer desperation, Devas approached Maha Vishnu for help.

### Devas and Trinity pray to Maha Bhagavati of 'Nirguna' and 'Nirakara'

In their own multi-disciplinary method, the entire Deva community, blessed in the presence of Trinity, made Vows to perform extreme Tapasya to please Maha Bhagavati; some resorted to continuous recitation of Her thousands of Holy Names or Her seed mantras; some executed Chandrayana Vratas of consuming one meal a day by graually reducing the fist-wise intake by each passing day; some performed 'Antar Yagna's (Inner Sacrifices) or 'Prana Agnihotra Yagna' or transforming external fire sacrifice into Interior Prana or Life Energy (in other words, Fire Sacrifice of one's Vital force). With such intense Tapasyas by Devas, Maha Bhagavati appeared and indicated that the menace of Takasura could be overcome only by Lord Kumara, the son of Maha Deva and Devi Parvati, who from Her own Shakti, would soon be born to King Himavanta. This blessing of Bhagavati was a mighty relief to all Devas who expressed their extreme gratitude to Her.They bowed to Her saying *Om Tat Twamasi*. [Om ('A: Srishti or Creation; Sthithi: Protection; Laya:Destruction),Tat (That Awareness), Twam (Eternity), Asi:('1' or self)]. In other words: The Awareness of that Great Eternal Energy is within the Self. The Eternal Energy is far beyond the Five Stages of Consciousness or Sheaths viz. 'Annamaya' (manifested or perceptible material dimension), 'Pranamaya' (energy dimension), 'Manomaya' (mind formed dimension arising out of

thought, will and emotion), 'Vijnanamaya' (dimension of experience) and 'Anandamaya' (Final dimension of Bliss). The Three Phases of 'Sat', 'Chit', 'Ananda' or Wakefulness, Deep Sleep and 'Samadhi' are likened to 'Tatvamasi', thus Devas prayed to Devi Bhagavati.

Devi Bhagavati blessed the Devas and Trinity describing Herself as Nirguna and Nirakara but to facilitate the understanding of a Reality Being of Super Force, She assumed the Attributes and Shape of a Physical body so that Her Presence is anchored in the imagination of one's mind. The Cover basically is Maya or a Make-Believe. Before Creation of the Universe, there was only the Supreme Energy and nothing else, which created Maha Maya or The Great Illusion of Existence. Maya interferes with the processs of Awakening the Reality; it is like the heat of fire, the rays of Sun, the coolnes of Moon, the force of Wind and so on. Paramatma or the Super Soul is at once identifiable in 'Saguna' form or in 'Nirguna' concept. The capacity to sift Reality from Illusion becomes enabled by Brahma Gyana which in turn emerges from 'Chaitanya' or Logic; this takes three forms viz. Icchha Sakti (the will), Jnana Shakti (where- with all), Kriya Shakti (the action be it in the form of meditation, Bhakti or Yoga). The 'Sat Chit Ananda' or the Reality Prompted Awakening of Bliss is the Final Reality! As Himavanta had the benefit of Bhagavati's Appearance, She blessed him too with the boon of Girija becoming his daughter soon and the latter would be an Extension of Bhagavati, the Cause of Causes, the Entire Creation of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva down to each atom of which Himavanta, Girija Devi, Skand Kumara, and the Demon Tarkasura would all be the actors in the forthcoming drama. Himavanta requested Maha Devi to reveal Her Magnificent 'Virat Rupa' or the Collossal Form and She obliged!

# Maha Bhagavati's 'Virat Swarupa'

Maha Vishnu and Devatas were in raptures when Himavanta's request to Maha Bhagavati to display Her Collossal Form was granted. Her upper portion of the head is Satya Loka, Sun and Moon the eyes, Vedas Her utterances, the entire Universe is Her heart, Earth is Her loins, Bhuvarloka is the navel, Maharloka is the neck, Janarloka Her face, Tapoloka the lower part of Her head, Indras and Devathas in Svarloka are Her arms, sound emerges from Her ears, Aswini Twins Her nostrils, fire is within Her face, eye brows represent Brahma, water Her stomach, Lord Yama the Demi-God of death Her larger teeth, smaller teeth Her affection, Her Maya or Illusion is Her bewitching smile, Her side looks is Creation, Her lip is modesty and lower lip is materialism, unfairness is Her back, Prajapati is Organ of creation, Oceans are Her bowels, mountains are bones, veins are rivers, body hairs are trees, hairs on Her head are clouds, Her clothings are twilights, Her mind is Moon, Vishnu Her Vijnana Shakti, and Her destroying Shakti is Rudra. Bhagavati's magnified appearanace was at once awesome and frightening, pleasing and alluring, cruel and kind, smiling but haughty. She is exceptionally radiant like several Suns and remarkably spic in Her highly gorgeous form.

# 'Ashtanga' (Eight Limbed) Yoga' Practice – Rules and Regulations

Himavantha was bewildred to witness the Virat Rupa of Devi and when She ended that view and gone back to Her normal Self which by itself was fantastic, Himavantha emboldened himself as to how he could recall Her Physical Form from time to time. Maha Devi suggested that the only plausible way to retain Her image would be through Yoga Practice. The basic step in Yoga is to integrate the 'Jeevatma' with 'Paramathma' and win over the 'Arishat Varga' or the Six enemies of lust, anger, greediness, infatuation, ego and envy. Then one follows '**Yama**' (the tenfold practice of 'Ahimsa' or nonviolence, 'Satyam' or truthfulness, 'asteyam' or non-pilfering of mind and deed; 'Brahmacharya' or celibacy, 'Mita

Ahara' or frugal eating, 'Bahya anthara Suchi' or external and internal cleanliness, 'Naithikitha' or morality, 'Daya' or mercy, 'Kshamata' or pardon and 'Sthirata' or stability), 'Niyama' (the ten fold practice of 'Tapasya' or atonement, 'Astikyatha' or unflinching faith in God, Vedas, Devas and Virtue; 'Santhushti' or contentment, 'Danaseelatha' or charity for good causes, 'Puja' or worship of Almighty, 'Siddhanta Acharana' or practice of established precepts, 'Hri'or refrain from evil acts, 'Sraddha' or fortitude in performing acts of faith, 'Japam' or repetitive and silent utterances of Manthras, Gayatri, and prayers; and 'Homams' or daily oblations to Sacred Fire) and five 'Asanas' or postures viz. 1)'Padmasana' comprising of crossing the legs and drawing the feet of legs on the opposite thighs and simultaneously cathcing the toes of the right leg with the right hand right round the back and vice versa and sitting upright with ease (Note: As this posture is practised only by expert Yogis, it would be sufficient to cross the hands on opposite thighs without streching the hands from the back); 2) 'Swastikasan' or place the soles of the feet completely under the thighs and sit erect; 3) 'Bhadrasan' or placing the two heels on the two sides of the two nerves of the testicles near the anus and catching the two heels by the two hands at the lower parts of the testicles and sitting at ease. 4) 'Vajra Asana' or the Diamond posture consists of placing the feet on the two thighs and placing the fingers below the two thighs with hands and finally 5) 'Virasan' comprising sitting cross on the hams or hollow area behind the knee in placing the right foot under the right thigh and vice versa sitting straight and at ease.

The next step in Yoga is **Pranayama** comprising three processes viz. *Puraka* or breathing in by 'Ida' or left nostril and recite 'OM' sixteen times, then Kumbhaka or retain the breath in 'Susumna'nadi and reciting OM sixty four times, and Rechaka or exhale by 'Pingala'nadi or right nostril by reciting OM thiry two times slowly. Pranayama may be done as many times as possible, say twelve times to start with and increase the number further to sixteen or so forth. Pranayama could be 'Sagarbha' or any Mantra of one's choice or Vigarbha or just recite the Pranava Mantra or OM. When one does Pranayama fast, one would sweat out and that is a good practice. But that is for beginners only. When the exercise is performed faster and longer, then one gets body shivers which is of a middle order. The ultimate is when the practice reaches the peak then one would rise in the air! Pranayama follows **Pratyahara**, which means allowing senses to travel to specific objects spontaneously and forcibly reversing the travel from the objects back to senses. One has to hold 'Prana Vayu' or Life providing air in one's body system at twelve places viz. toes, heels, knees, thighs, genitals, navel, heart, neck, throat, soft palate, nose, middle of the eye brows or 'Bhrukuti' and from these finally to the top of the head or Brahma Nadi.; this practice is known as 'Dharana' or holding up the Prana Vayu at each organ. Thereafter, the Yogi has to execute ' **Dhyana'** or meditatation by clearing the mind and concentrating one's choice of Almighy. The Ultimate peak is known as 'Samadhi' or Bliss, which could be in the form of 'Samprajnata' or 'Sa-vikalpik' when there is the consciousness of who is the Doer, what is the Doing and which is the Deed or the Actor, Action and Act, but in all these cases the Target is only one that is Eternal Almighty; simply stated in other words, Savikalpik Samadhi distinguishes the Atma and Paramathma, seeking to unify one into another. The Nirvikalpik Samadhi sounds like Aham Brahma Asmi, or God is me! Maha Bhagavati thus described in brief the practice of Ashtanga Yoga or the Eight Limbed Yoga practice viz. Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi.

# 'Nadis' and 'Chakras'

Devi Bhagavati described to Himavanta about physiological cum psychological analysis of human body, especially of various Nadis (Life webs) and Chakras. The word 'Nad' means streams; in the context of Yoga, Nadis are channels of Kundalini Energy as also of connectors of nerves or 'Snayus'. The subtle

yoga channels of energy from mind as well as 'Chitta' or consciousness of the self are through various physiological cords, vessels/tubes, nerves, muscles, arteries and veins. There are 350,000 Nadis in human body(Ayurveda) mentioned 7,50, 000 Nadis) but the principal nadis are fourteen viz. Sushumna, Ida, Pingala, Gandhari, Hastajihva, Yashasvini, Pusha, Alambusha, Kuhu, Shankini, Payasvini, Sarasvati, Varuni and Yashodhara. The most important Nadis however are the first three above. Sushumna is at the center of the spinal cord and is of the nature of Moon, Sun and Agni or Fire. It originates from Sacral plexus or a network of nerves at the spinal base upto the head at the top; it is from Moola Adhara Chakra and terminating at Sahsarara Chakra. Normally, Sushumna is inactive except when pranayama is performed. 'Ida' nadi is to the left of Sushumna, representing moon providing nectar like energy and 'Pingala' nadi is to the right side of Sushumna providing male like power. There is a cobweb like formation in the innermost area of Sushumna, called Vichitra or Chitrini Bhulinga Nadi, the centre of which is the seat of Ichha Shakti (Energy of Desire), 'Jnana Shakti' (Energy of Knoweldge) and 'Kriya Shakti' (Energy of Action). The middle portion of the Bhulinga nadi has the luminosity of several Suns, above which is the Maya Bija Haratma representing the sound like 'Ha'. Thereabove is 'Kula Kundalini' representing Serpent Fire of red colour. Outside the Kundalini is the 'Adhara Nilaya' of yellow lotus colour denoting four letters viz. Va, Saa, Sa, Sa; this is the base or Moola Adhara supported by six lotus formations. Beyond the Moola Adhara is the *Manipura Chakra* of cloud lightning colour comprising ten lotus petals representing ten letters da, dha, na, ta, tha, da, dha, na, pa, pha. This Mani Padma is the dwelling spot of Vishnu. Beyond the Mani Padma is' Anahata Padma' with twelve petals representing Kha, Ga, Gha, ma, cha, chha, ja, jha, lya, ta, tha. In the middle is Banalingam, giving out the sound of Sabda Brahma. Therafter is *Rudra Chakra* which represents, sixteen letters: a, a', i, i', u, u', ri, ri', li, lri, e, ai, o, ar, am, ah. It is in this place that 'Jeevatma' gets purified into 'Paramatma' and hence known as 'Visuddha Chakra' . Further beyond is 'Ajna Chakra' in between the two eyebrows where the 'self' resides representing two letters ha, and ksha, one commanding another or Paramatma commanding Jeevatma. Even above is the 'Kailasa Chakra' which Yogis call as Rodhini Chakra the central point is the 'Bindu Sthan'. In other words, a perfect Yogi has to perform Puraka, Pranayama, fix the mind on Mooladhara lotus, contract and arouse Kundalini Shakti by lifting by 'Vayu' between anus and genitals, pierce through the Adi Swayam Linga through various lotus petals and lotuses as described above, reach Sahasrara or thousand petal lotus and Bindu Chakra by the Union of Prakriti and Purusha. Could there be another example of the breaking of barriers as delineated in 'Lalitha Sahasranama' as follows!'Mooladharaika nilaya,Brahma Grandhi vibhedini/Manipurantharuditha Vishnu grandhi vibhedini/ Ajna Chakrantharalakstha Rudragrandhi vibhedini/ Sahasraambujarudha/ Sudha Sarabhi Varshinii / Tatillatha Samaruchih Shatchakropathi Samsthita / Mahasakthih Kundalini/bisathanthu taniyasi/

Indeed it would be rather difficult to practise Yoga on the above lines and hence would adopt 'Avayava Yoga' (limb wise) initially as described above viz. overcome 'Shadvargas' and practise Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Prathyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi and then after lapse of many weeks and months of practice one could succeed in the above discipline!

#### Brahma Gyan (The Knowledge of Almighty)

Having outlined the precepts of Yoga, Devi Bhagavati was requested by the King of Himalayas to enlighten him as to how best to acquire 'Brahma Gyan' so that the Knowledge thus gained, albiet peripherally, be harnessed to take steps towards Her. Indeed, Brahma Gyan is not simple to acquire even

to Illustrious Maharshis, Devatas and even Trinity, since its Wisdom is higher, deeper and far more mysterious and perplexing than the orbit of realisation of anybody, let alone human beings. When one refers to Brahma Gyan, it is not to be misconstrued as the knowledge of Lord Brahma of the Trinity, but the highest of all ie. the Supreme Brahman who is Devi Bhagavati Herself, whom there is indeed nothing there beyond. That particular Brahma who is eternal, imperishable, all-knowing, and all powerful is the Unique and higher than the highest or the 'Nirguna Brahma' who does take physical forms at Her ( or His) will. It is that target that one should hit by utilising the 'Bow' of meditation and the 'arrows' of OM Mantras. It is that Mystic Brahman who is the converging point of three effective paths viz. 'Sravana' (Absorbing by way of hearing), 'Manana' ( Cogitating by way of mental absorption) and 'Dhyana' ( mental concentration by way of meditation)). It is that 'Antaryamin Purusha' ( The Inner most Soul) that one has to seek and that is what Brahma Upasana all about. The 'Atma' is a bridge to 'Paramatma'. Atma or Antaryamin is encased within physical frame which is tied up with 750,000 'nadis' (Life webs) fastened to the navel as the center of wheel and this 'Antaryamin' resides in the heart. 'Prajna' or inner consciousness is a link to Maha Tatva or Prakruti on one hand and 'Paramatma'

on the other. When human beings could maintain balance of the three qualities of Sattva, Rajasa and Tamo gunas or when the five bonds of 'Samsara' or normal life are blunted if not severed, then 'Jeeva' is qualified for the entrance test for further stages of Enlightenment. [The five bonds are 'Avidya' or ignorance or lack of inclination, 'linga deha' or the raw physical form, 'Paramachchada Prakriti' bond or severe snapping of impulses or reactions whatsoever, 'Kama' bond or the pull of desires, and 'Karma' bond of fate]. The 'Jnani' (The Pursuer) of Enlightenment reaches thus the threshold of the Universe and passes by 'Sisumara' (literally meaning the Infant Killer or the dolphin shaped sea mammal) or the constellation of North Pole (Ursa Minor) where he becomes devoid of passions far beyond 'Gunas', Tatvas' and Bonds and enters the Golden Sheath or the Cosmic Egg. From there lies a sheet or a continuous path of Infinite Effulgence where there are no directions of north, east, west or south; no time measurements, no space dimensions but only 'Brahma Conscience' or 'Hiranmaya Kosa'. Maha Bhagavati Devi thus defined the 'Brahma Gyan' as the Supreme Knowledge of Herself which is neither in Heavens, nor Satyaloka, nor Vaikuntha, nor even Kailasa but in one self who transforms the self or the 'Atman' unto 'Paramatman'. Finally, the destination is within oneself and no where else viz. the heart likened with the Lotus Within! In this connection, Maha Devi emphasised the role of a Guru

(Spiritual Teacher) who is superior to one's own father; for the parental combination provides birth but the Spiritual Instructor endeavors to break the cycle of births and deaths, by providing 'Brahma Gyan'. Of course, one's father is competent to teach Brahma Vidya, other things being equal!

In the context of imparting Brahma Gyan, Maha Devi Herself provided an anectode to Himavanta. A Muni named Dadhyam prayed to Indra for instructing him Brahma Gyan. Indra agreed on one condition that he should never impart to anybody else and that his head would be cut if the Muni did so. But Aswini Devata brothers approached the Muni after a few days and assured the Muni that his head would be precut and kept safe and meanwhile a horse head would be fixed in place of the original head; from the horse head the Sage might teach Brahma Gyan to the Aswini Brothers and once Indra cut the horse head then the original head of the Sage would be replaced!

#### Bhakti and 'Punya Kshetras' (Holy Places of Pilgrimage)

Having explained Brahma Gyan, Devi Bhagavathi provided alternative routes of realising Her viz. Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga. Of these the Bhakti Marg is the simplest as it involves the least pain of the body and enables facile concentration on the target. However, this too could inflict bodily hurt if it aims doing adverse reactions against others in a typical Tamasic manner. If a rajasic kind of Bhakti is the objective to fulfil one's own desires, there is nothing unnatural about it. But the pure Satvik kind of

'Nishkama (selfless) Bhakti' is indeed the ideal as it gives an instant equation with the Object. In fact it leads to 'Para Bhakti' or highest form of dispassionate Devotion which has the pure feeling of 'Sevya' and 'Sevaka' (Master and Servant) without even targetting Salvation. That kind of devotion is contented with whatever 'Prarabdha' has decided for the devotee and despite that there is no other feeling excepting the intoxication of pure love without strings, which is similar to 'Jnana Yoga'. This extreme devotion, as Devi Bhagavati defines, is on the analogy of gold converted as an ornament or Bhakti in peak position tends to turn into 'Brahmatva' itself! Among the ways of such Supreme Bhakti, Maha Devi cited Prayers, 'Japas' (repetitive recitation of Devi's various manifestations), Group chantings of Devi's glories (Bhajans), hearing of Puranas, Mantras, Hymns and music-dance performances, observing fasts, executing 'Vraths' (functions related to pujas of specific manifestation of Devi and so on). One another manner of Bhakti is to visit places of Pilgrimage or 'Thirtha Yatras'

( Holy Temples and Rivers) for 'Darshan' and worship.

As 'Bharat Varsha'abounds Temples and Holy Rivers all across its length and breadth, Maha Devi mentioned a few illustrative names, but when one's heart is clean, each and every place of the 'Karma Bhumi' is a holy place of worship. Kolhapura on the banks of River 'Panchaganga' (in Maharashtra) is Maha Lashmi's famous Temple situated. The Deity is also known as 'Karaveera Nivasini Ambabai' and the City is known as Dakshina Kasi and a Shakti Peetha too. Matripura in Sahyadri mountains or Western Ghats (Mahur or Mahugadh in Maharashtra) is a Shakti Peetha, the seat of Renuka Devi and also the birth place of Dattatreya. Tuljapura is the abode of Tulja Bhavani (again in Maharashtra and a Shakti Peetha) and next to it Saptashringa with the Temples of Hingula and Jwalamukhi. The Temples of Sakambhari (Vaishno Devi and on Indrakeeladri -Vijayawada- in Andhra Pradesh), Bhramari (Hill top at Kasauni Town, near Almora, Uttrakhand), Sri Rakta Dandika (Arunachal Pradesh and Rakteswari near Kateel, Mangalore) and Durga (Varanasi and Kanaka Durga Temple at Vijayawada); Vindhyachala Vasini (Central India), Annapurna (Benares), Bhima Devi (Vaishno Devi), Vimala Devi

(Puri), Chandrala Devi, Kausika Devi at Kausika River (Kosi River), Nilamba (on top of Nilaparvata); Guhya Kali (Nepal), Meenakshi (Madurai), Sundari at Vedaranya (Tamilnadu), Ekambaram (Kanchi), Bhuvaneswara near Purushottama Kshetra as Parasakti; Mahalasa in South at Mallari, Yogeswari Varat, Bagala at Vaidyanath, Manidwipa as Bhuvaneswari, Yoni Mandala Kamakhya at North East (Gauhati in Assam), Pushkara as Gayatri, Chandika in Amaresa, Pushkarekshini at Prabhasa (Gujarat), Linga Dharini at Naimisharanya, Puruhuta in Puksharaksha, Rati at Asadhi, Dandini at Chamundi, Bhuti in Bharabhuti, Nakuleswari at Nakula, Chandrika in Harischandra, Trisula in Japeswara, Sukshma in Amritakeswara, Shankari in Ujjain, Sarvani in Madhyama, Margadayani in Kedara Kshetra, Mangal at Gayakshetra, Sthanupriya at Kurukshetra, Swayambhu at Nakula, Ugra in Kankal, Mahananda at Attahasa, Bhimeswari at Bhima, Bhairavi at Bhairava, Bhavani Sankari at Vastra Padma, Rudrani in Artha Koti, Visalakshi at Avimukta, Bhadrakarni at Gokarna, Bhadra at Bhadrakarnak, Utpalakshi at Suvarnaksha, Sthanivisa at Sthanu, Kamala at Kamalalaya, Muksewari at Makota, Kali in Kalanjara, Dhvani in Sankhukarna, Sthula in Sthulakeswara, and finally Parameswari Hrilleka in the lotus hearts of Jnanis. Recitation of the above names of Devi in the presence of Brahmanas during 'Shraddha' days especially, 'Pithru Devatas' would be pleased to bless. There are certain 'Vratas' (vows) to be performed by men and women, stated Maha Devi to Himavanta, as She would be enormously delighted. Some illustrations are 'Ananthatritiyaka Vrata, 'Rasakalyani' Vrata, 'Ardrananda' Vrata, to be performed on 'Trithiya' or the Third of Hindu Calendar. On a Krishna 'Chaturdasi' ie. the fourth day after the moon fall, every Friday and Tuesday too, one might observe fasting till the twilight time of the evenings and perform worship to Devi Bhagavati and terminate fasting. Two Navaratras every Spring and Autumn ie in Vasanta and Dassera seasons daily fasting and worshipping by the dusk time be observed similarly. On the third day of Sukla Chaitra the 'Dol' Festival is of significance and 'Sayanotsay' of Ashadha Purnamasi too. The 'Jagaranotsay' of Kartik Purnamasi Masa, 'Rathotsava' of the third of Sukla Ashadha, the 'Damanotsav' every Chaitra and

all the austerities of Kartika are all dear to Devi Bhagavati. In all these Vratas, puja of virgin Kumaris as though the devotees worship Devi Herself would gladden Her.

## **External and Internal Ways of Worship**

In the context of performing worship to Devi Bhagavti, two principal approaches were mentioned, the external and internal. The former kind is two fold again ie. Vedik and Tantrik. The Dharmik route is as per Vedic precepts and meditating Devi Bhagavati with 'Karma' or Sacrifice with 'Jnana' (Knowledge) and 'Bhakti' or devotion. Maha Deva Himself created Tamasic Sastras like Vama, Kapalik, Koulak, Bhairava and so on. He also created five 'Agamas' viz. Shaiva, Vaishnava, Saurava, Sattva and Ganapathiya. The 'Varnashrama' method is followed according to the precribed principles and worship Maha Devi acordingly. Another route in external worship way, is to follow the routine of waking up in the early hours of pre-dawn, pray to Maha Devi in the form of Kundalini Fire situated at Mooladhara travelling upto Sushumana Nadi, after morning ablutions and 'Sandhyavandana' as also 'Agni Homa', settle down after 'Asana', 'Sankalp', 'Bhutha Sudhhi' (purification of body elements through respiratory control) and perform 'Matrika Nyasa'. The 'Nyasa' is to be executed by arranging the seed Mantra of Hrilleka-'HRIM' by arranging the word 'Ha' in 'Mooladhara', 'Ra' in the heart, 'I' in the middle of the eyebrows and finally the full word 'Hrim' at the top of the head. The 'Nyasas' over, one should set up the four principles of Dharma (Virtue), 'Jnana' (wisdom), 'Vairagyam' (detachment) and 'Vaibhogam' ( Prosperity) in the four directions of East, South, West and North and retain the image in the Centre of Maha Devi as seated on 'Pancha Prethas' viz. Brhama, Vishnu, Rudra, Sadasiva and Maheswara underneath. Maha Devi's seat is over and above the 'Pancha Bhutas' (Five Elements viz. Earth, Water, Effulgence, Air and Sky) and 'Pancha Avasthas' or Five States of Existence, viz. 'Jagriti' (awakenness), 'Swapna' (Dreaming), 'Sushupti' (Deep Sleep), 'Turiya' (Happiness), 'Ateetha rupa'

(the status of Bliss). One should meditate with concentration by way of 'Japam' (recitation of Devi's names), 'Argham' Offer water with; sprinkling water with 'Astra Mantram Phut' for purifying the worship material as also the self, execute 'prana prathishtha' (instal Life), 'Avahana' (Invocation), 'Arghyam' (Offering Water), 'Deepam' (lighting of oil-soaked cottom wicks), Pushpam

(offering flowers), 'Naivedam' (offering elaborate eats) and various other Services to Maha Devi especially 'Kshamarpana', finally distribution of 'Prasad'.

Having described the worship methodologies of Worship, Devi blessed Himavata with Her 'Avatar' as Parvati to be born to him and be married to Lord Shankara and the Holy Couple would beget Lord Subrahmanya or 'Shadanana' who was destined by Devi to exterminate the most ferocious demon of the times and re-establish 'Dharma' once again.

## Brief description of Oceans, Dvipas, Mountains and Rivers

King Priyavrata, the eldest son of Svayambhu Manu, who ruled the entire Earth for eleven Arbuda years (one Arbuda has ten million years) measured the length and breadth of Earth by his highly luminous chariot. He woke up early mornings, and he found that one side of his bed was bright with sunshine and the other was dark. He drove by his chariot and perform 'pradakshina' (circumabulation) the Earth seven times by his mystical powers and ensured that his chariot's course was lit up as the day. Also, there were **Seven Oceans** viz. Ksaroda( Salt water), Ikshuraba ( Sugar cane juice), Sura ( Wine), Ghitoda ( Ghee), Kshiroda ( Milk), Dadhi Mandala ( Curd) and Jalodhi ( Water) and the gaps of Land formed between the

Oceans were **Seven 'Dvipas'** (Islands) viz. Jambu Dvipa, Plaksha Dvipa, Salmali Dvipa, Kusa Dvipa, Krouncha Dvipa, Saka Dvipa, and Pushkara Dvipa. Jambu Dvipa is like a lotus and has a lakh yojanas of area (one Yojana has an esimated eight miles or 13 km) containing nine Varshas in north and south of the Dvipa and has eight lofty mountains being the dividers of the Varshas and the center of the Varshas is called Ilavarta and famous Sumeru mountain is at the center of Ilavarta. This mountain is as high as one lakh yojanas with its top has an area of thirty yojanas, which was stated to be the place for most revered Sages performing meditation. On the north of Jambu Dvipa are the mountains of Nilagiri, Svetha Giri and Rsringavayu. On the South of Ilavarsha are the three mountain ranges of Nishadha, Hemakuta and Himalayas as these formed the borders of Kimpurushas and Bharat Varsha. On the West of Ilavrata are the Malyavan mountains and to the East are Gandhamadana and Nila. In two other Varshas of Jambu Dvipa viz. Ketumala and Bhadrasva are the mountains of Mandara, Suparvsvak and Kumuda. Atop Mandara are the heavenly trees of mangoes of divinely taste and thereunder is River Arunodaya on the banks of which Devas and Sages make group prayers to Devi Aruna for prosperity, health and happiness. On the east of Meru are two mountains Jathara and Hemakuta, on the West are Pavamana and Pariyatra; to the South of Meru are Kailasa and Karavira; North Sringagiri and Makaragiri; on top of Sumeru are nine Cities viz. Manovati, Amaravati, Tejovati, Samyamani, Krishnagana, Shraddhavati, Gandharvati, Mahodaya, and Yasovati besides Brahmapuri, the Abode of Brahma; of these, Indra stays at Amaravati, Fire God at Tejovati and the rest are the homes of Lokpalakas. Devi Ganga (Ganges) originating from Vishnu pada (His feet) passes through Dhruva Mandala, Chandra loka, Brahma loka from where gets divided into four channels ('Dharas') viz. Sita, Alaknanda, Bhadra and Chaturbhadra; one channel goes around Sumeru, then to Gandhamadan range, Bhadresvara and finally into Salt Ocean in East; another channel falls from Malyvan range to Ketumaheswara and submerges in Western Ocean; yet another channel of Ganges transformed as Alaknanda flows from Brahmaloka to Girikuta mountain and forests to Hemakunta in Bharat Varsha and joins the Southern Ocean and finally the Triloka Pavani Ganga named Bhadra falling from Sringavan mountain flows through the Northern Kuru Region. Many other rivers flow through the 'Karma Bhumi' and integrate the culture of Truthfulness and Virtue. 'Adi Purusha' and various Devas worship Devi Bhagavati at various Varshas (TimeDistance Capsules) like Ketumala Varsha and Nava Varsha. In Ilavrita Varsha, Deva Rudra born out of Brahma's eyebrows, resides only along with women and any male entering the region would automatically get converted as a female; this is the exclusive place of Rudra's worship to Maha Bhagavati. Similarly in Harivarsha, worship is targetted to Lord Narasimha when Lakshmi prays to Him by saying Om Hram Hrim Hrum, Namo Bhagavate Hrishikesaya. In Hiranmaya Varsha, Kurma Svarupa (Tortoise), Lord of Yoga is worshipped by Aryama, the Ruler of Pitris who meditated as: Om Namo Bhagavatey Akuparaya. In Uttara Kuru Mandala, Lord Varaha (The Gret Boar) is worshipped and Devi Prithivi praises the Lord praying 'Om Namo Mantra Tattva Lingaya Yajna kratave'. In Kimpurusha Varsha, the worship of Mahapurusha Rama is led by Lord Hanuman by saying Om Bhagavatey Uttama Slokaya, as endorsed by Devi Sita.

Bharata Varsha is of the most noteworthy and relevant region of contemporary interest. Among the most important *mountains* are: Malaya, Mangalaprastha, Mainaka, Chitrakuta, Risabha, Kutaka, Kolla, Sahya, Devagiri, Rishyamuka, Srisaila, Venkata, Mahendra, Varidhara, Vindhya, Suktiman, Riska, Pariyatra, Drona, Gobardhana, Raivataka, Kakubha, Nila, Gaurmukha, Indrakila, Kamagiri and so on. *Rivers* (besides Ganga) are Tamraparni, Chandravasa, Kritimala, Vatodaka, Vaihyasi, Kaveri, Vena, Payasvini, Tungabhadra, Krishnaveni, Sarkara, Vartaka, Godavari, Bhiramati, Nirbindhya, Payosnika, Tapi, Reva, Surasa, Narmada, Sarasvati, Indus, Andha, Charmanvati, Sone, Rishikulya, Trisama, Vedasmriti, Mahanadi, Kausiki, Yamuna, Mandakini, Gomati, Sarayu, Saptavati, Susama, Chandrabhaga, Marudbhridha, Askini and Visva. Persons given birth to in Bharata Varsha are stated to be highly fortunate as they have excellent and maximum opportunities to enjoy the 'Iham' (of the present birth) and 'Param' (Post-life celestial pleasures). They could certainly reap the advantage of the short but significant life time by enjoying all round happiness, fame and freedom, provided they follow the righteous path, devotion and sacirifice. At the same time a regulated Dharmic life would ensure heavenly bliss after their inevitable mortal termination. It is the controlled and moderate life style without excesses

of anything except Virtue coupled with awareness of Super Energy and maximum investment of the time and opportunity are the hall marks of a life worth living till the end.

Besides Jambu Dvipa, there were som Upa Dvipas also around Bharata Varsha, viz. Lanka, Svarnaprastha, Chandrasukara, Avartana, Ramanaka, Mandoprakhya, Harina, and Panchajaya.

Beyond the Seven Dvipas aforementioned viz. Jambu Dvipa, Plaksha Dvipa, Salmali Dvipa, Kusa Dvipa, Krouncha Dvipa, Saka Dvipa and Pushkara Dvipa, is situated 'Lokaloka'. This Land, between Loka and Aloka, is an open space of gold and there is no living being existing, as it would be converted into gold. The rays of Sun, Polar Star and Planets pass through the Lokaloka. Beyond the Lokaloka mountain is a radiant route passing through an oval shaped golden egg and the Sun born out of it, called Hiranyagarbha, helps demarcate the Sky, Heaven, Earth and so on.

# Sun, Planets, Dhruva, Sisumara, Skies and Sub-Terrain

Meru mountain is in the North of the Dvipas and Varshas and hence when a person finds Sun rise, that direction is known as East since Meru exists to the left of the Sun. Existence of Sun (Surya) is eternal but one feels that He sets or rises since what is Sunrise to one is Sunset for another in the exactly opposite direction. Within 15 ghatikas or six hours, Sun travels 22.70 million Yojanas (one Yojana is 8 miles or 13 km) which is the distance from Indrapuri to Yamapuri. Sun's chariot travels at the speed of 14.2 million yojanas a Muhurtha (There are 30 muhurtas in a day). The Chariot driven by Arunadeva has seven horses named after the 'Chhandas' viz. Gayatri, Usnih, Anushtubh, Jagati, Brihati, Trishtubh and Pankti and Aruna Deva sits facing the Sun God. On the Chariot sit sixty five thousand Valakhilya Rishis of thumb size chanting Veda Mantras, besides innumerable Sages, Apsaras, and Devatas. Sun's chariot has 28 million miles long and 7 million miles wide. It takes two months for Sun to cover two constellations ( Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Capricon, Aquarius, and Pisces) of Zodiac covering each of the six seasons in a year, viz. Vasanta Ritu, Greeshma Ritu, Varsha Ritu, Sarad Ritu, Hemantha Ritu and Sisira Ritu. The path of Sun at the end of the first half of a year changes upwards called 'Uttharayana' and when Sun moves downwards is 'Dakshinayana'. When Sun with Earth and Heaven takes a complete circuit of Zodiac, it then takes a full 'Vatsara'. A Vatsara denotes the movement of Sun by three kinds of speed viz. Seeghra, Manda and Samanya or fast, slow and normal in five time frames viz. Samvatsara, Parivatsara, Idavatsara, Anuvatsara and Idvatasara. Moon (Chandra) is situated one lakh yojanas higher than the Sun and is regulated by Sun's movements and speed as also cooresponds to the Dark and Bright phases of 'Krishna Paksha' and 'Sukla Paksha' or the Dark and Bright movements of Sun. Moon is the Lord of Nights and is symbolic of medicinal plants, good health and fulfiller of desires during the Sukla Paksha of a month ending Pournami, human desires, 'Sankalspas,'and good health corrsponding to Manonmaya and Annamaya; while 'Sarvomaya' provides happiness from Devas and nourishment to 'Pitru Devatas'. 'Venus' (Sukra) is two lakh yojanas above Moon and traverses along with or ahead or sometimes behind Sun and is invariably beneficient to all including humans and denotes success, prosperity, good rains and health. Mercury or Bhudha, the son of Moon, is again situated two lakh yojanas above the planet of Venus. His velocity too assumes the three stages of Seeghra, Manda and Samanya. When this planet is away from Sun, there would be bad times of natural calamities, like 'Ativata' (huuricanes, sand cum hail storms etc), 'Abhra pata' (meterioc falls from the skies) or 'Akala' ( drought). Mars or 'Mangal', the son of 'Pridhvi' or Earth is two lakh yojanas above Mercury and is generally considered as a manvolent Planet travelling three fortnights in each Rasi when its motion is not retrograde, creating tension, mischief and ill-health. **Jupiter** (Guru) too is two lakh yojanas above Mars, who passes through each Rasi once a year and is beneficient

when his motion is not retograde. **Saturn** (Sani) son of Sun again above two lakhs yojanas above Jupiter and is invariably a malefic planet, creating unrest, confusion, and miseries, taking thirty months to pass

through each Rasi. Some eleven lakh yojanas higher than Saturn is **Sapta Rishi** Mandala (the Great Bear) who is kind and just to those to practise a virtuous living.

Dhruva Mandala (The Pole Star) is thirteen lakh yojanas above the Sapta Rishi Mandala where Bhagavan Vishnu's Holy Feet rest and is the permanent residence of Dhruva (the Illustrious son of King Uttanapada, who performed unprecedented Tapasya since he as a child was spurned by his step mother and also by the consent of his father and was guided by Narada Muni to please Narayana Himself and carved a prize position as a Pole Star on the skies far above the Sapta Rishi Mandala). Maha Vishnu Himself made the exclusive dispensation for Dhruva by making him the pivot of all the planets, Stars and innumerable luminary bodies as the Pole Star! It is believed that the 'Zodiac' or the Jyotish Chakra firmly holds on all the heavenly bodies and the central position of the axis is in the Dhruva Mandala. 'Sisumara', literally meaning the killer of a Child has the body of a dolphin held integrated by the Union of Prakriti Shakti and Purusha. The contents of the Sisumara Chakra or the dolphin like body includes the Pole Star at the tail, which was also witnessed at the tail position by Lord Brahma, being prayed by Indra, Agni and Dharma. The waist of the dolfin like body of Sisumara contains the Sapta Rishi Mandala. As the coil of the dolphin like body rests on the right side, the fourteen Uttarayana Nakshatras from Abhijit to Punarvasu are found on the left side and fourteen Dakshinayana Stars from Pushya to Uttarashadha on the right side. Sisumira's back is the Holy Ganges named Ajaviti. Punarvasu and Pushya on the loins on either side. Ardra and Aslesha form the right and left feet; Abijit and Uttarashadda form the right and left nostrils; Sravana and Purvashaddha right and left eyes; Dhanishtha and Moola right and left ears; Magha and the remaining Dakshinayana stars form left side bones; Mrigasira and the rest the right side bones of shoulderes. Agasti forms the upper jaw and Yama the lower jaw, Mars the face, Saturn the organ of generation; Brihaspati the shoulder humps; Sun the breast, Narayana the heart, Moon the mind, Aswini Kumars the nipples, Mercury the Pana and Apana airs; Rahu the neck; and Kuber all over the body. Thus the Sisumara is the composite body of Devas and Bhagavan Himself. One should meditate it in the morning, noon and evening.

Rahu Mandala is situated an Ayuta (ten thousand) yojanas or eighty thousand miles under the Sun. Keeping the ancient enmity between Rahu on one hand and Sun and Moon on the other, periodical Solar and Lunar eclipses do take place as visible to human beings on the Skies as Rahu takes vengence since Sun and Moon complained to Maha Vishnu in the disguise of Mohini Devi at the time of distribution of 'Amrit' the everliving elixir, since Rahu a Danava swapped the Devas queue by deceipt and Vishnu administered His Sudarsana Discus to and cut Rahu's head who was revived as he had already consumed the elixir and was made one of the Planets. Underneath the Rahu Mandala are the Lokas of Siddhas, Vidyadharas and Charamas admeasuring an Ayuta Yojanas. Yakshas, Rakshasas, Piscachas, Pretas and Bhutas reside on the Antariksha where fierce winds blow and clouds appear too. Thereunder is Earth measuring hundred yojanas or 80,000 miles. Below the Earth, there are the sub terranian places, called the Bilva Svarga comprising seven Regions known as Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talatala, Mahatala, Rasatala and Patala, where Daityas, Danavas, and Snakes live in. Atala is known for physical lust as Bala the Danava Maya yawned thus emerging Pumschali (unchaste women), Svairini or adultress and Kamini or woman of lust and these with the help of Hatakarasa (love potion) enjoy eternal lust. Vitala is known for Hataka or gold jewellery and Sutala is the region of Bali the Danava King who conquered Indra and Devas but Vamana suppressed him and Bali created Bilva Swarga. Talatala is the land of magic powers. Mahatala is the land of fierce multi headed snakes like Kaliya and Taksha and Rasatala is the region of Daityas, Danavas and Asuras, the progeny of Kadru and Patala is the place of Vasuki, the Chief of powerful and vengeful snakes and deep down underneath is Bhagavan Anantha Deva Himself!

'Naivedyas' (Offerings) for worship of Devi Bhagavati

With a view to mitigate the sins being committed either knowingly or otherwise and the imminent eventuality of having to visit the hells for suitable punishments, the devoted persons tend to perform worship to Devi Bhagavati as 'Sva Dharma'. In this context, offerings to Devi are made at various worship times and the details of 'Naivedyas' as recommended by Nara Narayana Sages, (the sons of Dharma) to Narada for the benefit of posterity. The 'Naivedyas' after the worship be given away to pious Brahmanas and the prescribed material and the resultant benefits are stated to be certain. During the 'Sukla Paksha' period or the first half of a month after full Moon, the worship on Pratipada or the first day be provided with rice and ghee as Naivedya for security from ongoing diseases. On Dvithiya day, the material of Naivedya be sugar for longevity. Let milk be the product on the Tritiya day for temporary ailments. On the Chaturdhi day, the Naivedya might be a cake of flour for removal of obstacles. Plantains be offered on the Panchami day to improve intelligence. Honey would be the product for Naivedya to Bhagavati on the Shasthi day for enhancing body beauty; rice and jaggery be offered on Saptami day for clipping mental sorrows. Coconut is offered to Devi on the Ashtami day for freedom from repentance. On the Shukla Navami day, naivedyam is offered as fried rice for contentment in life and happiness there after. 'Til' or sesame is offered on the Dasami day for warding off fear of death. On Ekadasi Maha Devi would be pleased with the offering of 'curd' and well flattened and parched rice or grain be offered on Dwadasi day. Grains are offered as Naivedyam on the Trayodasi to seek blessings for progeny and on Chaturdasi blessings from Siva are bestowed by Devi for an offer of fried barley or such other grains. Finally, 'Payasam' (made of rice, milk and sugar) should be offered to Devi to uplift ancestors (Pitrus) to higher regions on the full moon day or Pournami. Additionally, if daily homas are also performed, the items offered to Devi would destroy all evil forces. As a rule on Sunday, 'Payasa' Naivedyam is offered; Monday: Milk; Tuesday: Plantains; Wednesday: fresh butter; Thursday: Sugar candy (Gud); Friday:white sugar; and cowmilk butter on Saturday.

Worshipping under Madhuka Tree, the monthwise offerings on each Sukla Tritiya or third day after full Moon must be: In Chaitra month Madhuka Tree be worshipped and offered 'Naivedya' of Five kinds of Food; in Vaisakha it should be 'Gud' or Jaggery, Jyeshtha: honey; Ashadha: White butter; Curd in Sravana; Sugar in Bhadrapada; Paysa in Poushya month; milk in Kartik; Pheni in Margasirsha; Dadhi Kurchika in Pausha; butter made of cow milk in Magha and Coconut in Phalguna month. During these twelve months, Devi Bhagavati likes to be addressed by these names viz. Mangala, Vaishnavi, Maya, Kalaratri, Duratyaya, Maha Maya, Matangi, Kali, Kamalavasini, Siva, Sahracharana, Sarva Mangala Rupini. Great emphasis is laid on worship under Madhuka Tree as not only a sure shield of ailments, family troubles and health problems but also a proven provision of escape from hells after one's life. Under the Madhuka Tree, one shoul pray to Maha Bgagavati as Maha Devi, Mahesvari, Maha Mangala Purini, Moksha Pradayani, Mada Dhatri (Source of Supreme Delight), Maha Moha, Minakshi, Marma Bhedini and Madhurya Rupa Shalini!

[Generally speaking any of the following items are liked by Devi Bhagavati: Gur, honey, ghee, milk, curd, butter, 'kushmanda', Modaka, Panasa, Plantain, Jambu, mangoe, Sesamum, oranges, pomegranate, Amalika, Ladu, Vatapathra, etc.]

# Portrayal and manifestations of Prakriti

Maha Muni Narayana, the son of Dharma, explained the broad outline and features of 'Prakriti' to Maharshi Narada. Of the word Prakrit, the prefix 'Pra' stands for Superior or Excellent and 'Kriti' denotes Creation. A closer focus on the word reveals 'Pra' for Satva Guna, 'Kri' Rajo Guna and 'Ti' for Tamo Guna. Satva is pure and transparent; Kri for Rajo Guna or of mixed quality and Tamo Guna, the

hider of Real Knowledge. The act of creation was the product of 'Paramatma' the Super Energy, one side of that being Prakriti and the other side is 'Purusha'. Paramatma by His Yoga or Maha Shakti (the Holy Ghost) divided Himself into two parts, one a Purusha and another the Prakriti. The 'Mula Prakriti' which emerged thus manifested into five major Forms, viz. Durga, Radha, Laxmi, Sarasvati and Savitri. Durga or the better half of Siva is the Highest Shakti, Narayani, Vishnu Maya and Parabrahma, worshipped by Brahma, Devas, Siddhas, Sages and devotees, being the Prime Energy, the Omni Fire and the Omni Light. She is praised by Vedas and Shastras as the Maha Maya, the Cause of Causes. The second among the Shaktis is Lakshmi, who is of 'Suddha Tatva' which is far superior to Satvika Guna, and is the bestower of prospertity and happiness. She is indeed the source of life, free of greed, anger, meanness, vanity and lust. She is the strength of Maha Vishnu, Rajya Lakshmi for Royalties and Griha Lakshmi for Householders, representing 'Ashta Lakshmis' viz. Adi Lakshmi, Dhana Lakshmi, Dhanya Lakshmi, Dhairya Lakshmi, Santhana Lakshmi, Vidya Lakshmi, Gaja Lakshmi, Vijaya Lakshmi. She is also the embodiment of 'Soundarya' (Beauty), 'Aishvarya' or Great Prosperity, 'Kirti' Lakshmi (Fame), 'Sahasa' Lakshmi (Enterprise), 'Vanijya' Lakshmi (Business and Trade) and 'Daya' Lakshmi. The third manifestation of Shakti is Sarasyati, the Goddess of 'Vidya' (Learning), intelligence, memory, ingenuity, wisdom, literature and poetry, Music and fine arts, argument, Vedas and Vedangas, Vyakarana ( Grammar), Mantras and Tantras, Gayatri, mental faculties, discipline, knowledge, devotion, and anything to do with Godliness. Radha is another manifestation of Shakti, who is a symbol of pure love, dedication, high quality of devotion and infatuation. She is the queen of Ras Leelas (Group dances) with several Gopikas and as many Krishnas with ecstatic singing and body movements, quite unaware of public gaze; but the Ras Leelas are hall marks of bhakti and Krishna consciousness, of Sankhya yoga or practice of Dvaita the essence of which sums up the union of 'Atma' and 'Paramatma' or Praktiti - Purusha and of the confluence of Mula Prakriti and Shiva Shakti. Prakriti Radha is far beyond the Gunas of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas verging on Nirguna or the reality position of 'Thaadatmya' (oneness). She has no 'Ahamkara' whatsoever as even remote traces of egoistic nature would rapidly erode the purity and sincerity of selfless attachment, let alone the feelings of bliss. The next Shakti is Savitri or Gayatri, who is essentially based on 'Japam' or repetitive recitation of Short Mantras to attain concentration and mental fixation on the part of Devas, other extra-territorial beings, Sages and humans. Residing in Brahma Loka and being an embodiment of Suddha Tatva, Her demeanor is of crystal clear nature and is the bestower of power of mind; She is the Sarva Siddhi Pradayani and contributor of happiness in the current life and sponsor of bliss therafter. She also provides Saubhagya and Good Fotune to those who pray to Her on lasting basis. Apart from these basic Shakties, Marshi Narayana gave very many other Shakties like Tulsi **Devi** who is the consort of Vishnu, the Shakti of sin-burning nature and bestower of well deserved boons; Mansa Devi, the daughter of Ananta Deva and disciple of Shankara, a noted Siddha Yogini, a Great Tapasvini and devotee of Lord Vishnu; a sixth part of Mula Prakriti and hence called **Shasthi Devi**, being the leading of Sixteen Matrikas who is celebrate, protects every child from Evil forces at the time of birth as an invisible Yogini and is worshipped on the sixth day after birth ( hence the name of Shashthi Devi) and again on the twenty first day; She is also worshipped in Vaisakha Month for the continued protection of a growing child. Mangala Chandi is another extension of Mula Prakriti who visits each and every household always and is pleased with worship on Mangalavar (Tuesdays). In the forms of Durga and Kali, She killed the evil brothers of Sumbha and Nikumbha, as the foolish Demon brothers who did severe Tapasya to secure boons of longevity, except from Women; little did they realise that Shakti is the eternal source of strength and the Primeval Energy unparalleled. Vasundhara Devi or Earth too is a manifestation of Mula Prakriti, bearing the entire burden of humanity and sourcing countless boons even without asking for. She is the Great Provider including food, shelter, water, fruits, flowers, gems and jewels, metals, and the greatest support for all. Her patience is eternal and distinctive. Indeed, existence is indeed impossible for any activity and the bounty of Nature is an inborn boon to humanity as a whole. There are other ramifications of Prakrtiti, viz. Svaha Devi the wife of Agni or Fire without whom no Rituals, Yainas are possible nor Dikshas and Dakshinas; the name of Deva Pitr's husband Svadha Devi's has to be used in every Homam by all Sages and humans as the Sacrifices are rendered futile otherwise. Svasthi Devi, wife of Vayu Deva, has to be remembered at any function to ensure its fulfilment as also to

bless the persons responsible for performing the function; **Pushti** the wife of Vighnewara and the Goddess of nourishment to ensure strength of humans; **Tusti** the wife of Ananta Deva to safeguard heakth; **Saptati** wife of Isana Deva to save from the pangs of poverty; **Dhriti** wife of Kapila Deva to develop the quality of patience; **Sati** the wife of Satya Deva to ensure the bonds of affection of every household; **Pratishtha**, the wife of Punya Deva to distinguish a person from the normal beings to a celebrity; **Kirti Devi** the wife of Sukarma to bestow fame and name; **Kriya Devi**, and the Goddess of action and endeavour the wife of Udyoga or enterprise. Besides there are parts of Mula Prakriti like Dharma Devi, Niralamba or without support, Priti or (contentment), Sukha (Happiness), Sraddha or faith, and Bhakti or devotion. Prakriti's manifestations also included Rohini wife of Moon, Sajna of Sun, Satarupa of Manu, Sachi of Indra, Arundhati of Vasishtha, Devahuti of Kardama, Prasuti of Daksha and so on.

# **Prakriti and Purusha- Integrated Concepts**

Sage Narayana described to Narada that both Prakriti and Purusha are reflections of each other - the two sides of the same coin. Mula Prakriti or Maya and Para Brahman or Purusha are the Eternal Entities in perfect union, like fire and blazing; Sun and rays, gold and ornaments, earthen pots and earth. They are inseperable but independent. From the word, Sakti, emerges 'Sa' as affluence and success, while 'Kti'denotes energy and strength. The word 'Bhaga' denotes prosperity and joy and added to that is 'van' or vati', again the two suffixes referring to Purusha and Prakriti respectively. Either of the Entities has the facility of being physically manifested or not and has freedom of action or in latent. The decisions taken by either of them by a kind of Supreme Computer whose readings are always hundred percent accurate and instant. The decisions are taken on the basis of empirical data of interplay of three gunas, and the stored or current accounts of good or bad actions of each and every animate or inanimate being. But physical manifestations apart, either Prakriti or Purusha has no shape nor features, Gunas or aspects, sex, age, beginning or end, time, feelings, prejudices, or any such 'vikaras' or of recognisable distinctions. The very concept of Prakriti or Purusha itself is a mind-born delusion of wide spread 'Super Net' called Maya! It was in the scenario of Prakriti and Purusha as Entities, neither separate nor dependent, that Sage Narayana delineated to Maharshi Narada the Genesis of Tri Murthies At the time of 'Brahmanda Pralaya' (Ultimate Universal Dissolution), there was a Golden Egg born of Mula Prakriti afloat on water as the life time of the previous Brahma was over. [Brahma's age is one hundred Brahma years comprising two Parardhas; His one day equals 1000 cycles of four yugas or one Kalpa, and there are fourteen Manus in each Kalpa. At the end of one Maha Kalpa of Brahma's day and night, there is a kalpa pralaya. At the end of two such Parardhas or hundred Brahma Years, there is a Brahmanda Pralaya; as now, Brahma's age is 155.52 trillion human years or the first day of His 51st year]. As the Golden Egg ( 'Brahma' or huge + 'Anda' or Egg) broken into two parts, there emerged a boy of dazzling radiance of million Suns, Who was thumb- sucking and hungry for milk, without a mother or father, but would soon be the 'Virat Swarupa' Maha Vishnu. The Boy grew fast bigger and bigger as there were innumerable Universes in His skin pores with one 'Vaikuntha' above all the Universes. In each such Universe, there are God-heads corresponding from the Trinity down- ward. One could imagine a huge Hall of mirrors arranged in a manner that there are various combinations of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara on an infinite scale. In each such mirror, there are multiple 'Srishties' (Creations) to the last details: there are thirty million Devas including Dikpalas, Planets, Bhurloka, Earth, Patala Lokas, Human beings, residents of the upper and lower regions of Earth, Sages, Devils, Raksashas, and so on. In another scenario, Virat Swarupas of Vishnu giving birth to Brahma from His navel over the lotus stalk and the cosmos, from Brahma's mind the Manasa Putras like Sanaka Kumaras, from His forehead the Eakadasa Rudras and thus the process of multiple Creations including Vedas and other Scriptures, human beings, animals, birds, Evil Forces and so on. The Multiple Virat Rupas also create Vishnu the Preserver and Siva as the Destroyer. Thus at the instance of Devi Bhagavati and Maha Bhagavan-the Prakriti and Purusha-was born the Virat Swarupa -

Maha Vishnu- who in turn replicated endless Universes, as many Virat Swarupas of the replicated Universes paid immediate allegiance to Prakriti and Purusha.

# Worship of Vidya Devi Sarasvati- 'Puja', 'Kavacha' and Hymns

Sage Narayana described the methodology of worship of Devi Sarasvati, the powerful manifestation of Mula Prakriti, the Goddess of Knowledge, Mental Faculties, Memory, 'Mantras', Literature and Fine Arts. Her symbol is 'Veena' (Lute) and Books; Her 'Vahana' (Vehicle) is 'Hamsa' (Swan) and Her male counterpart is Para Brahma. On every Sukla Panchami of Magha month and on the day of commencing education, the worship of Sarsvati is to be performed as per Kanva Sakha Yajur Veda hymns, if possible. Being clean, wearing white clothes, white flower garlands, white sandal paste and using white conchshell, one performs Ganesh Puja first, 'Kalasa Puja' (Vessel with pure water and an inverted Coconut representing the Deity), then Sarasvati Vandana and 'Shodasa Upacharas' or sixteen types of Services like 'Avahana' (Welcom), 'Asanam' (Seat), 'Padyam' (Sprinkling Holy water), 'Arghyam' (A kind of welcom drink), 'Achamaniyam' (Settling down offer of water), 'Panchamrita Snanam' (mix of milk, curd, butter, honey, and sugar), 'Vastra dvayam' (two sets of clothing), Sacred Thread or 'Yagnopaveetham', 'Abharanam' (ornaments), 'Gandham' (Sandal paste), 'Pushpa Puja'

(worship with flowers, preferably white), 'Agarbatti dhoopam' (incense stick burning), 'Deepa darsana'

( showing of lights of cow ghee soaked vicks), 'Neerajanam' (Showing of Camphor light), 'Naivedyam' or offerings of eatables including fruits, 'MantraPushpam' (Vedic Chanting) and 'kshmapana' (seeking forgiveness of procedural defects of worship). Devi Sarasvati is pleased with the recitation of the Root Mantra, 'Aim Kleem Sarasvathyai Namah'. Sage Narayana gave this Seed Mantra to Rishi Valmiki on the banks of Ganges and at the time of Solar Eclipse, Sage Bhrigu gave it to Sukracharya at Pushkara Tirtha; Brahma gave it to Bhrigu at Badarika Ashrama, Surya gave it to Yajnavalkya and so on. It is said that any one recites the Mantra four lakh times would attain Siddhas.

Brahma gave the highly energetic **Sarasvati Kavacham** – kind of defence armour -to a select few and its 'Vidhana' or procedure is also provided by Prajapati Brahma Himself. The Kavacha was composed in Brihti Chhandah and its 'Viniyoga' or application is for acquiring spiritual knowledge and fulfillment of desires. The Kavacha says:- Aim Srim Hrim Sarasvathyai Svaha: May my entire head be protected; Srim Vagdevathyai Svaha: my forehead; Aim Hrim Sarvasvatyai Svaha: to protect my ears always; Aim Srim Hrim Bhagavatyai Sarasvathyai Svaha: to protect my eyes; Aim Hrim Vakvadinyai Svaha to protect my nose always; Aim Hrim Vidyadhisthratri Devyai Svaha to protect my lips always; Aim Hrim Brahmayai Svaha to protect my teeth; Aim-a single word, to proctect my neck; Aim Srim Hrim to protect my throat; Srim to protect my shoulders; Aim Hrim Vidyadhistatri Devyai Svaha: my chest; Aim Hrim Vidyadhiswarupaya Svaha: my navel; Aim Hrim Klim Vanyai Svaha: my hands; Aim Sarva Varnatmikayai Swaha: my feet; Aim Vagadhisthatri Devayai Swaha: my body; Aim Sarva Kantha Vasinyai Svaha:my east; Aim Sarvajibhraga Vasinya Svaha: my South East; Aim Hrim Klim Sarasvathyai Budha jnanayi Svaha: my South; Aim Hrim Srim Svaha: my West; Aim Sarvam bikaiya Svaha:my North West; Aim Srim Klim Gadya Vasinyai Svaha: my North; Om Hrim Sarva Pujithayai Svaha:my Top; Aim Pusthaka Vasinyai Svah: my Below; Aim Grantha Bija Svarupayai Svaha:my Sides.

**Sarasvathi Stotram** was performed in all earnestness by Sage Yajnavalka as he was cursed by his Guru Sage Vysampayana; the Guru committed a serious crime of killing a Brahmana and was atoning for the sin for long time by paying penance and Yajnavalka offered to perform the penance all by himself, and the Guru became furious and asked him to vomit all the Mantras of Yajurveda and quit his Ashram.

Yainayalka prayed to Surya Deva who no doubt gave back the same Veda Mantras but asked to pray to Devi Sarasvati to return his memory. It was in this context that the Sage meditated the Devi by various hymns that She affixed to Vedas the three significant letters 'Anusarga', 'Visarga' and 'Chandravindu'; He recited as per this Substance: "She is the 'Vyakhya' (exposition) of all 'Sastras' and the Presiding Deity of the annotaions of these Shastras; that She is the Super Mathematician and invented the count of Numbers and Time; that She is responsible for finalising 'Siddhanthas' (Definite Conclusions) in guiding enlightened Rishis and Human experts); that She is the mammoth Sakti to provide Memory, Knowledge, Intelligence and Imagination and power of Speech; that She resolved arguments of Bhu Devi and Anantha Deva, the doubts of Maharshi Veda Vyasa and Sage Valmiki about certain doubts of 'Purana Sutras', guided Indra and Deva Guru Brihaspati on some critical explanations about 'Sabda Sastra'; that Vishnu, Mahesa and Brahma prayed to Her and so did Devas, Manus, Maharshis, and of course innumerable humans for their own advantages." As Yajnavalkya thus meditated and sang potent Hymns to Devi Sarasvati, She blessed him with sharp memory and Spiritual Knowledge to and he became an Illustrious and erudite Sage remembered for ages for his contribution of fifteen solid chapters of Vedas called 'Vajasniya Samhitas'! Even if an ignoramus prays sincerely the Goddess Sarasyati for a year regularly, he or she would turn intelligent for sure; a dumb person would gain power of speech and an illiterate would secure the capacity and strong will to get educated.

# Maha Vishnu's Directives to Sarasvati, Ganga and Tulasi

Sage Narayana narrated to Muni Narada the Origins of Sarasvati, Ganga and Lakshmi, the original spouses of Maha Vishnu. A serious trouble arose among the three about their superiority ending up in mutual curses by Sarasvati and Ganga to become rivers, while Lakshmi was somewhat neutral, thus landing Maha Vishnu in a fix. Finally, He gave them the judgment that half of Ganga be converted as a 'Jeeva Nadi' (Ever flowing River) in Bharata Varsha to be brought from Vaikuntha, the Abode of Maha Vishnu and another half to be retained in the 'Jatajuta' or the thick netted hairs of Maheswara; Half of Sarasvati too be a River visible physically only in parts (Badarikashram for eg.) and as an 'Anthar Vahini'elsewhere and another half as the Better Half of Brahma Deva; a part of Lakshmi as Tulsi Devi, a Holy Plant bestowing blessings to devotees, another part as River Padma and the remaining half of Herself as the better half of Maha Vishnu. Maha Vishnu ordained that the verdicts as above would be in force till the end of Kali Yuga. Accordingly, River Ganges was brought down from Vishnu's feet ('Vishnupada') partly to Earth in Bharata Varsha as Bhagiradhi due to the Tapsya of Bhagiradh to purify the ashes of his ancestors. Devi Sarasyati descended from Vaikuntha to Bharta Varsha and is thus known as Bharati; She is called Brahmi as a dear one to Brahma; as Vani, She presides over Speech; She is Sarasvati as she is visible everywhere in 'Saras' (Water Body) and purifies human sins, especially as Rivers. [At 'Brahma Kapala' on the banks of the Holi River at Badari, one performs worship to ancestors till date by way of 'Pinda pradana']. Devi Tulasi descended from Vaikuntha as the daughter of King Dharmadhvaja and appears in each and every household of Believers and Bhaktas in Bharata Varsha and is worshipped daily, especially by women seeking favours.[ Even the attractive fragrance of Tulasi leaves keeps evil spirits away, purifies the air and the leaves have definitive medicinal properties]. In all these manifestations of Devis-be it as Holy Rivers or Holy Plants- the purifying qualities are instant by mere 'Darsana' (Seeing) or 'Sparsana' (Touch). Indeed, these manifestations are 'Pratyaksha Devis' (Ready Evidences) in this Kali Yuga as Dharma(Virtue) and 'Nyaya' (Justice) are highly discounted, especially as the 'Kala Chakra' (Cycle of Time) rolls by.

### Universal Dissolution and Revival of Bhu Devi (Earth)

As the impact of Kali Yuga intensifies, significance of Vedas, Sastras, Holy Scriptures, Puranas would eventually diminish. Sraddhas, Tarpanas, Devotion, Yoga, Rituals, Vratas, austerities and all Godly acts would disappear. The Institution of Marriage, Property Rights, Temples, Purity of Thought and Action, Celibacy, Chastity, Respect for Elders, Family Ties, Concepts of Social System and Culture would vanish. Deceipt, Ego, Falsehood, Cruelty, and Utter Lawlessnness would prevail. Nature too would not cooperate as rivers, water bodies and crops would be affected. Earth quakes, Famines and Outbreaks of Endemics and Epidemics would be the order of the day. As the Kali Yuga reaches the peak, the whole world would be full of Atheists; trees would be of the size of a hand and men and women would be of thumb size. Lord Vishnu would then incarnate as Kalki and ride over a high long horse killing persons left and right with a long sword over three days and nights and disappear, when never-ending rain would start and the whole world would be submerged in water, indicating the commencement of a Pralaya

(The Great Dissolution). The entire Earth would disappear as there would be water only all over. Two Danavas, Madhu and Kaitabha, who would initially give tough time to Maha Vishnu Himself, get into their own trap as Vishnu would offer a boon to the brothers and they in their bravado would reply that they would give a boon instead! Then Vishnu grabs the opportunity and asks for the boon of the death of Danava brothers and they agree to be killed only where there is no water; Maha Vishnu expands His thighs and so do the bodies of Danava Brothers but Vishnu's expansion of thighs would be limit-less and the bone-marrow of the killed Danavas gets mixed with the Earth lifted by Virat Svarupa from deep waters and hence Her name as 'Medini'. Virat Svarupa's skin pores get merged with the mixture, which after 'Panchikarana' or the combine of five elements viz. one fourth each of four other 'Bhutas'

(Elements) viz. Light, Water, Wind and Sky, besides Earth mix up. Thus emerges Maha Prithvi or the Great Earth. That is the re-incarnation of **Bhu Devi**. Along with Prithvi, come mountains, Seven Seas, Seven Islands, Forests, Sumeru, the Sun, the Moon, other Planets, Indra Loka, Brahma Loka, Vishnu Loka, Siva Loka, Seven Heavens, Seven Nether Lokasa down to Patala, Dhruvatara and so on as also Bharata Varsha, its Rivers, Sacred Places and so on.

In the ages of yore in Varaha Kalpa, Brahma requested Maha Vishnu to take the incarnation of a

Boar (Varaha) to rescue the Earth from sinking down to Patala by Demon Hiranyakasipu and thus Bhu Devi is known as **Varahi** the female form of Earth. From their union was born Mangala Deva (Planet of **Mars**). Goddess Varahi is traditionally worshipped at Ambuvacha (Jataka) Ceremony, when Foundation Stone is laid before construction, when one enters a new house, as tilling is taken up anew, and digging of a well or tank is commenced and so on. She is worshipped by the Seed Mantra: *Om Hreem Klim Sreem Vasundharayai Svaha*. Maha Prithvi is a memorable example of Patience in carrying the mammoth load of all living and non living entities, the Provider of Grains, Fruits, Vegetables, Flowers, Precious Stones and Metals and is directly responsible for life of all species including those in Seas, Rivers and waterbodies as also vast multitude of non moving objects. Sins perpetrated on or in the offensive of Mother Earth are to be considered as those that attract lowest-grade punishments post-life.

## **Worship to Devi Ganga**

A King of Solar Dynasity Asamanja performed severe 'Tapasya' (meditation) to Bhagavan Sankara for sons and Queen Vaidarbhi delivered a mass of flesh. Asamanja prayed to Sankara again and he appeared in the form of a Brahmana and cut the flesh into thousand pieces that turned as so many sons. As they attained youth, the King asked them to accompany a Sacrificial Horse for performing Asamanja's 'Asvamedha Yagna'. The sons found the Horse was missing on the way, suspected and misbehaved with Sage Kapila in Yoga, who burnt all the thousand of them into ashes. It was the Grandson of Asamanja

and the son of Ansuman- the illustrious Bhagiratha, who made persistent efforts to meditate Devi Ganga, Vishnu and Sankara and finally succeeded in bringing the Holy River from Vishnu's feet to Sankara's head and down to Bhu Loka and purified the ashes of the thousand Sagara 'Putras' (Sons) and relieved their tormented souls to Heavens. The Holy River flowing as a 'Jeeva Nadi' till date across the entire 'Aryavarta' from Gangotri to the Bay of Bengal, is a unique land mark of Bharata Varsha, blessing lakhs of devotees for bathing and purifying their sins at several points dotting from Haridvar, Varanasi, Prayaga and Patna. Even a mere bathing in the River washes off several sins, and performing it with a 'Sankalpa' or resolve especially on a day when Sun passes from one Zodiac Sign to another bestows significance thrice over. Bathing on a New Moon day according to Rituals provides further importance and on the day when Sun changes course into the 'Dakshinayana' phase is definitely beneficial while bathing on the day of 'Uttarayana' course would be twice over in destroying accumulated sins. 'Ganga Snan'during the 'Chaturmasya' period, on 'Akshaya Tritiya' or 'Akshaya Navami', during 'Parva'days of 'Dussehra or Vasanta 'Navaratras', especially on the Tenth day, Pongal days, 'Magha Sukla Saptami', 'Bhishma Ekadasi', Sri Rama Navami, Solar or Lunar Eclipse days, and Maha Varuni day are good examples of the Sacred Bathing in Ganga. Let alone the bathings, especially on a few of the days mentioned above, even a sincere and hearty shout of Ganga, Oh Ganga would bestow fulfillment of one's material desires, even from a distance.

Maharshi Narayana explained to Narada the mehodology of Worship to Ganga in brief: one should have a hearty bath in Ganga, don clean clothes, be seated on the banks of the River to perform the daily Sandhyavandana first and invoke the blessings the Six Devatas viz. Ganesha, Sun, Agni, Vishnu, Siva and Sivani. Do worship Ganesha to remove the obstacles, Surya Deva for good health, Agni Deva for purification, Vishnu for wealth and power, Siva for knowledge and Sivani for salvation. Then, imagine a mental image of Ganga Devi in fulfledged form with 'Ashta Hasta' (Eight hands) fully decorated with a smiling face, ornaments, flower garlands, and armoury and above all an 'Abhaya Mudra' or a protective posture of two hands- one to provide security and another for giving away boons. The 'Dhyanam' or meditation is to be highly concentrated and serious without mind wavering on any other object or thought, excepting the Image of Ganga, in physical form to facilitate 'dhyana' or meditation. Then perform the Shodadasa Sevas viz. 'Asana', Padya', 'Arghya', 'Snana', 'Anulepaya (Ointment), 'Dhoopa' (Inscence), 'Dipa' (Light)', 'Naivedya' (Offer of Food Items), 'Tamboola' (betel leaves and nuts), 'Paniya' (cool water), 'Vastra' (clothing), 'Abharana' (Ornaments), 'Pushpa' (flowers), 'Gandha' (Sandal Paste), 'Achamaniya' (water for sipping) and 'Arati' (Camphor lighting). Thereafter, the devotee should render 'Stotras' (Hymns) to say that in Vaikuntha the River is six lakh yojanas wide and four times that in length; in Brahma Loka, thirty lakh yojanas in width and five times that in length; in Dhruva Loka it is one lakh yojanas in width and seven times as long and so on. She travels through Chandra Loka, Surya Loka, Indra Loka, Tapo Loka, Janar Loka, Mahar Loka, and Kailasa. From Indra Loka onward, the River is known as Mandakini; She has a width of hundred yojanas and ten times more of length. [At the Himalayas She is known as Jahnavi. From an Ice cave at Gangotri where it touches down into Bharata Varsha, at 10,360 feet above Sea level, She is called Alaknanda and merges into the main stream of Ganges coming from another direction of Himalayas from Sukhi; the junction is at Deo Prayag and Ganga in fulfledged form turns south west to Haridwar.]

# Worship to Devi Tulasi and 'Salagramas'

Traditionally a passionate devotee of Narayana, Deva Savarni's son Vrishadhvaja turned out to to be a fanatic of Maha Deva to the extent of criticising Narayana. Surya Deva felt hurt not because of Vrishadhvaja's devotion to Maha Deva but of the remarks against Narayana. Sun God cursed the devotee that he would be poor forthwith. This irritated Maha Deva and wished to punish Surya Deva, but Narayana pacified Maha Deva saying that the Trinity were of the same status after all. Maha Deva no

doubt reconciled but desired to punish Vrishadvaja for his foul mouth. But Vrishadvaja died and so did his son Rathadvaja. The latter had two pious sons, Dharmadvaja and Kusadvaja who worshipped Maha Lakshmi and became Kings. Maha Lakshmi blessed Kusadhvaja with a pious daughter Kamala who became a yogini called **Vedavati**. While at her Tapasya, Ravana confronted Vedavati and made amorous approaches touching her hands. She became furious and cursed him that soon enough he and his family would be destroyed; thus saying she immolated herself in Yoga Fire. Eventually, Maha Vishnu and Lakshmi incarnated as Sri Rama and **Sita** and were destined to undergo on 'Vanavasa'

(Forest Life), during which period Agni Deva in the form of a Brahmana informed that soon Ravana would plan to kidnap Sita Devi and desired that a fake Sita would be replaced by the original as advised by Devas and that this secret should not be made known even to Lakshmana. Thus the original Sita was protected by Agni and Ravana mistook the fake Devi all along. As Ravana died and Fake Sita was put to 'Agni Pariksha'( the FireTest), Agni Deva replaced the real Devi instead. Chhaya Sita was asked to practise Tapasya at Pushkara Tirtha and reappear in Dvapara Yuga as **Draupadi** in Dvapara Yuga. Thus Vedavati was known as **Trihayani**, the root cause of destroying Evil Doers in three Yugas.

Devi Tulasi was the daughter of Dharmadvaja and she too turned out to be a Tapasvini, performing extremely severe sacrifices like meditation with 'Panchagni' or Fires on five sides of her body - on four direcions and on top. Lord Brahma knew her desire of wedding Narayana Himself. He explained to her that she was fully aware that She was a 'Jatismara' (person having knowledge of previous birth), that she was Devi Tulsi Gopi in her previous birth as a maid of Radha desirous to have union with Krishna in a 'Rasakreeda' (dance performance) which was not liked by Radha who cursed her to quit but Krishna advised her to take a fresh birth as the daughter of Dharmadhvaja as a Tapasvini. Brahma in turn explained to Tulsi that there was a Gopa (Cow boy) named Sudama who was of Krishna's 'Amsa' (a part Extension) - also a 'Jatismara' - as he too was cursed by Devi Radha to become a demon now called Sankhachooda. After marrying him, Brahma said that she would eventually attain union with Krishna as the latter would curse Tulsi to become a Sacred Tree to be prayed to all over the world. Brahma blessed Tulasi to become a Siddha to secure a good husband and also taught to her Radha Mantra, Radha Kavacha, Radha Stora and the method of Radha Worship to conquer her confidence and in the long run she would secure Krishna Himself. At the same time, Sankhachooda too got enamoured of Tulsi and, with the blessings of Brahma, married her in Gandharva style. But as the Demon tormented Devas and drove them away from their seats, they went in a deputation to Brahma and further on to Sankara who approached Maha Vishnu. But the latter explained that in his earlier birth the demon was Krishna's Rasa Parishad Chief Attendant Sudama who was cursed by Devi Radha to become a Danava and as a Jatismara, he knew he had the Narayana Kavacha to protect himself, but Mahesvara could terminate him by a 'Sula' weapon that would be provided by Himself (Vishnu) and that He also would spoil the chastity of the demon's wife Tulsi, who too was a Gopi and again a Jatismari. Thus planned Maha Vishnu and asked Devas to get ready for the Deva-Danava War. Maheswara pitched His huge tent on the banks of River Chandrabhaga, sent an Emissary, Chitraratha, who was taken aback by the strength of the Danava King's mammoth army of three koti (Crore) warriors surrounding the Danava King and another seven crore moving outside. The Emissary cautioned the Demon that besides Devas, Brahma and Maha Deva under the commandership of Skanda would all be on battle and the demon's army would only be fodder to the killing sprees of the Devas side of the battle, more so since Vishnu Himself gifted a powerful 'Sula' to Mahesha to terminate the Danava King.; as such it still would not be too late for the Danavas to withdraw to Patala. But the Demon King invited all the force to fight the next morning itself! In the hundred year long battle that followed, Devas and Danavas fought close- tooth to tooth and nail to nail; Mahendra pitted against Vrishaparva, Bhaskara to Viprachitti, Agni to Gokarna, Kubera to Kalakeya, Visvakarma to Maya, Yama to Samhara, Varuna to Vikumka, Budha to Dhritaprishtha, Sani and Raktaksha, Eleven Rudras to Eleven Bhayankaras and so on. The Danava King utilised a Shakti Arrow which made Kartika senseless and Bhadra Kali made such a roar which frightened thousands Danavas to

death. Brahma used Brahmastra which proved ineffective. Siva desired to use 'Pasupathastra', but a Brahmana appeared and stopped its usage since that would destroy the whole world. Then the Brahmana (Maha Vishnu Himself) spread His Vishnu Maya and influenced Sankhachooda to part with his Narayana Kavacha and finally terminated the Danava King by the 'Sula' gifted by Narayana to Mahesvara. Meanwhile Vishnu Maya was spread again and Devi Tulasi was made to believe that the Danava King Sankachooda won the battle and Maha Vishnu assuming the form of the King was cheated as Tulsi welcomed him and got her chastity spoilt simultaneously. But she got suspicious in their union and being afraid of a curse from her, revealed Himself. She was overcome by grief as her beloved husband lost his life and worse still her chastity was affected. *Thus Tulsi cursed Vishnu to turn as a stone*.

Maha Vishnu consoled her and asked her to assume an extra-terrestrial form as His wife, as the entire drama was enacted by Himself and assured her that she would be His better half in Vaikuntha besides Maha Lakshmi and as a Tulsi Tree would bestow boons to her devotees in the entire Universe. Whatever happiness that He would receive from the 'Abhisheka' (Mantra filled bathing) of Himself thousand times would be bestowed by offering a single leaf of Tulasi; that the benefit of giving away as offerings of several cows would be equated to an offer of a Tulsi leaf; if a dying person is administered a Tusi leaf, [preferably with Ganges Water], his access to heavens is assured; whoever drinks Tulasi leaf water daily gets the benefit of performing horse sacrifices; Plucked Tulasi leaf kept in the night in a house wards off evil spirits and bad dreams; decorating Tulasi leaves on a Deity is propitious and gifting items along with the leaves is considered as auspicious to the donor and the receiver alike. Contrarily, plucking Tulasi leaves in the nights, particularly on a full Moon or the twelfth day of a month

(Pournami or Dvadasi), or twilight timings, mid-days, while applying oil, during impure days of 'Asuchi', or while donning dresses is strictly prohibited as it attracts great sins. Worship to Tulasi (Holi Basel) done with pure body and heart in a formal manner would certaily bring about excellent peace of mind and spiritual contentment. The every place of Her puja is a Brindavan or a Garden of several plants / trees. She is worshipped by the Eight names as Brinda, Brindavani, Visvapujita, Visvapavani, Tulasi, Pushpasara, Nandani and Krishnajivani. She is worshipped by the ten worded **Seed Mantra:** Srim Hrim Aim Kleem Brindavanai Svaha.

As regards Tulasi's curse to Vishnu to turn as a stone, the Lord consented to become a Stone or 'Salagram' worthy of performing worship as a Symbol of Vishnu and such special Stones are available on the banks of River Gandaki, whose Principal Deity is Tulasi Herself. Such Stones are natural formations of various sizes, forms, convolutions and 'Chakras' (circular formations), embodying armoury or ornaments of the Lord and are kept at Puja Mandirs (Worship Places) of individual households for Daily and Regular Pujas or at Public Places of Devotion. But care must be taken that the Salagram, Conchshell and Tulasi leaves are placed and worshipped all together, lest separation of any of the three items is warned is considered as a great blunder, as it might yield negative results. Normally males perform the Salagrama Puja. Further, the Pujas ought to be performed with all purity and devotion with Vedic Mantras by way of milk 'Abhishekas', flowers, Tulsi leaves, lighting, Naivedyas and such other 'Sevas' (services). Since the Pujas are to be done daily and there should not be failures on that count, and if necessary, the person(s) could be different, but the Puja be performed on a regular basis.

### Yamadharmaraja briefs Savitri – on Karma, Bhakti, Charity, Sins, Hells and 'Vratas'

First worshipped by Lord Brahma, then by Vedas and subsequently by Sages and learned persons, Savitri is an expansion of Devi Bhagavati Herself born as a human and later immortalised. King Asvapati of Bhadradesa and Queen Malati prayed to Devi Savitri under the tutorship of Sage Vasishtha as they were issueless. After the long Tapasya, there was a Celestial Voice whispering to the King that he should practise Gayatri Mantram ten lakh times; it was at that time that Sage Parasara appeared and told that

even ten Gayatri Japams would destroy the sins of a day and night; one hundred Japams of a month; one thousand of a year's; one lakh of a life time; ten lakhs of previous birth; hundred lakh japams of all births and ten times of that would destroy all the sins and open Celestial Gates. The japam is to be performed with the palm of right hand like a holeless bowel in the shape of a snake head counting the Gayatri Mantra from the right hand middle finger drawn towards the index finger from top to bottom and also with the help of a rosary. Daily japam according to the procedure at dawn, noon and dusk would bestow radiance of body and concentration of mind. A Brahmana by birth devoid of 'Sandhya vandana' is denied the acceptance of Pujas by Devas and even the ceremonies of 'Pithu Devatas' are not approved. As the King Asvapati performed the ten lakh japa as required by the Celestial Voice and the couple performed Savitri Worship as per rites by the Seed Mantra of 'Srim Hrim Klim Savitrai Svaha', Devi Savitri made Her Appearance in Physical Form and blessed the couple with a daughter- an extension of Herself and also a son later. The couple named their daughter too as Savitri. As time passed, Savitri came of age and was wedded to Satyavana, a Prince of great virtues and maturity. When the young couple were happy and together at a nearby garden, Satyavana fell down from a tree and died instantly. Lord Yama appeared in a thumb size form and started dragging away his dead-body soul and Savitri too followed. She questioned Lord Yama as to why he was dragging his body like that. Dharmaraja replied that her husband's life term was completed as per his 'Karma'. She replied that as she was fond of her husband, she would like to follow him but Lord Yama disagreed as her Karma was not yet ripe enough to die and that she could not enter His abode in her body form. The sincere and innocent way of Savitri's gueries at her young age impressed Yamaraja and thus explained in detail the Theory of Karma with its variations of 'Sanchita', 'Prarabdha' and 'Vartamana'. As Savitri kept on asking many questions, Dharmaraja kept on providing explanations on various issues like Duties, 'Bhakti' (Devotion), 'Sat' (Truth) and 'Asath' (Illusion), 'Brahma Jnana', the Five Elements, the cause and effects, the effects of sensory organs, the interplay of Gunas, Tatvas, and ways and means of Siddhis, and 'Sayujya' or Liberation. Yama Dharmaraja was so impressed with the depth of Savitri's spiritual knowledge and her searching queries as though she was testing His capacity, that he himself offered to bestow boons to her excepting that of giving back her husband's life, to which she replied that she as a 'Pativrata' (embodiment of devotion to husband) would like to beget hundred sons of hers by Satyavana, that her parents too should beget hundred sons, her father-in-law should regain his eyesight as also his lost Kingdom and that she should live for one lakh years before entering 'Vaikuntha' along with her husband! As Lord Yama had already made of up his mind perhaps, he said: 'let it be so'.

As Devi Savitri's curiosity was not still satisfied-apparently to guide the posterity- She desired to know further about **Bhakti** viz. the Prakrithik (manifested) and Nirgunaik (Formless) types, 'Nishmaka Bhakti' (Desireless) and 'Sakamaka Bhakti' (Aimed at a materialistic end). Those who perform the former kind according to their 'Varnashrama Dharma' and as per the intensity of the Bhakti, reach the higher lokas. There is also another route of charity which too is precious.

Charity without desiring return-gain certainly deserves appreciation from Gods. For eg. if a place meant as a Deva's residence (a Temple) is made available, the merit of that charity is as much as the number of particles thus donated would entitle the person a residence of as many number of years in the region of that God; if a tank is donated, the particle-period ratio is followed in Janar loka; similarly if a well of four thousand 'dhanus' or 'Hastas' (hand long) is given away, tenfold merits are gained; for seven wells, the merit is as good as that of a tank. If 'kanya daan' or performing a wedding of daughter gives the 'punya' of ten wells and if she is given away with ornaments, then the merit is double. If one plants an 'Asvattha' Tree for God's purpose, the person is blessed with ten thousand years in 'Tapas Loka' and if a flower garden is donated he lives in Dhruva Loka. 'Annadana' without caste distinction is a charity of high order. Similarly charities to Brahmanas of 'Godana' (cow) takes one to Chandra Loka for one Ayuta or ten thousand years, a white umbrella gives access to Varuna Loka, garments to a diseased one to Vayu

loka, a salagrama with garments to Vaikuntha, Lights to Agni loka, a good Site or orchard to Vayu loka and grains and jewels to a Brahmana again to Vaikuntha and so on.

**Pujas** performed on Siva Ratri, Krishna Ashtami, Rama Navami, Nava Ratras to Durga Devi, Ekadasis to Maha Vishnu, Sankranti to Sun, Krishna Chaturdasis to Savitri, Sukla Magha Panchami to Sarasvati yield immense merits too. **'Yagnas'** open doors to higher realms of Devas without any doubt. Several kinds of Sacrifices had been performed since times immemorial, like Rajasuya Yaga and Asvamedha Yaga in the lead. But 'Devi Yagna' is indeed the best and the most fruitful, as told by Dharmaraja to Savitri. In the days of yore, Maha Deva Himself performed Devi Yagna before killing Tripurasura,; Vishnu, Brahma and Indra executed several times, and the revived Daksha Prajapati did it as an atonement; Dharma, Kasyapa, Kardama, Manu, Sanatkumara, Ananta, Kapila, Dhruva and so on were all benifited by the Devi Yagna. Having prefaced thus, Yamadharma Raja taught the methodology of the Devi Yagna to Sati Savitri and asked her to go home along with her husband and live happily spreading the glories of Devi Bhagavati and finally submerge with Her.

Before her leaving, Yamadharmaraja told Savitri about the descriptions of various Sins that human beings commit and the kind of reckoning that they have to undergo in designated hells after death. It is said that those whose life-account is clear need not visit **Hells**, but it is extremely rare that such humans ever existed. There are eighty-six pits or 'Kundas' which were prominent such as 'Vahni' (Fire) to those using harsh tongue to defenceless are to fire consigned and turned out as animals; 'Tapta' to those who turn away hungry and thirsty tied to molten metal beds, and later turn out as birds; 'Bhayanaka' to abusers of Gods and Good persons to beccome serpents for several 'Kalpas; 'Gara' Kunda who do not support parents and family members is given poison for hundred years and become 'pretas' or apparitions; 'Karnamala kunda' to persons ridiculing the deaf eats wax of ears for hundred years and become deaf for as seven births; 'Gatramala Kunda' to those cheating close friends living in that pit for hundred years and becomes a fox for three births and an ass for three years more; a person committing murder to 'Majjakunda' for a lakh of years getting club-beating by Yamaraja's servants and later for seven births each as a hunter, boar, leech, cock and crow; 'Loha Kunda' (molten iron) to those who eat the food of a childless widow or of a woman bathing after menstruation for hundred years and seven births each as a crow and a diseased son of a washerwoman; 'Tamra Kunda' (molten copper) to a person comitting outrage or violence even to a pregnant wife for hundred years; 'Sura kunda' to a Brahmana eating food of a Sudra for hundred years and would perform the last rites of Sudras for seven births; 'Visha Kunda' to a person who administers poison and kills another person then he is forced to take poison for endless years, then becomes a muderer full of diseases for hundred years and becomes a leper for seven births; 'Loha Kunda' again to a killer of a Cow or his agent for four Yugas and becomes a cow in endless births; ' Damshtra Kunda for killing mosquitoes and flies where the creature concerned would torture; 'Vrischika Kunda' to a person in authority harasses a junior for money or ego; 'Saradi Kunda' to a Brahmana not performing 'Sandhya Vandana' and abandoning devotion to Hari is shut in dungeons and dark prisons, pierced by arrows and insects for as many years as the number of his body hairs and so on. In fact, there are more rigorous punishments to Brahamanas than to others in several designated Kundas for their failures, like at Manthana, Bija, Vajra, Chakra, Vakra, Kurama, Jvala, Bhasma, Tapta Suchi, Aripatra, Kshuradhara, Goka Mukhya, Suchi mukha and so on. The above list is a fringe of Kundas and Hells; there are a wide range of sins and punishments since the staggering variety of sins- quite a few of them knowingly as evidently pricking their own consciences and some really unknowingly. [ Agni Purana states that there are twenty eight Main 'Narakas' and several subsidiaries: Mahavicha (for killing a Cow), Amakumbha (for killing a Brahmana), Rourava (for killing women, children and aged), Maha Rourava ( for committing arson), Tasmira (for burglary), Maha Tasmira (for varous other social evils), Asipatravana (for killing or torturing parents), Tailampika for a tyrant crushed like an oilseed), Mahapata

( killers of animals, tree cutters, criticisers of Vedas and Devas, false witness providers; Karambhavaluka ( for a variety of evils made to stand on hot Sun sands) and so on.]

As Sati Savitri heard what Dharmaraja described about sins that human beings perform and the consequences in various hells, She was curious to know how to understand the unfailing route of reaching Maha Devi . Yamaraja explained that let alone himself, but even Sun God his father, Brahma the Principal Agent of Vedas, Maha Vishnu or Mahesvara and even Maha Bhagavati Herself would not perhaps comprehend Her own Glories! As 'Maya' or Mula Sakti, She is Prakriti and Maha Purusha Herself. Being eternal and formless, She defies definition and description. She is Matter and Matterless, Time and Eternity, Extremely near and always beyond, Form or Illusion, Space and Energy, 'Sakara' and 'Nirakara' and 'Saguna and 'Nirguna'. But one thing is certain and that is that Super Power is indeed existent and real. As such, devotion to that Super Power, which one recognises as Devi Bhagavati, is sufficient; the mere awareness is adequate and not necessarily of attainment of 'Mukti' (Salvation) by 'Salokya' (identify the Super Power as of one's own Planet)', 'Sarupya' (as of being of the same form), 'Samipya' (as being very near) and 'Nirvana' or Salvation. In other words, Devi Bhagavati prefers that Her devotees merely seek routes of devotion to Her by means of good 'Karma' or action, Service (Pujas), Charity, Bhakti (devotion), 'Yainas'; She does not insist on Mukti by Salokya, Samipya, 'Sarsti' (having equal opulence to Her) or Nirvana (Oneness). ['Salokya Sarsti Samipya Sarupaikatvam api uta / diyamanam na grihnanti vina mat sevanam janah'; My devotees do not accept Salokya, Sarsti, Samipyakatvam (one ness), even if offered these liberations, except their service to you'! Thus exhorted Yamaraja to Savitri and blessed her to serve and spread sense of devotion to one and all by living happily for one lakh years along with her husband and entire family and finally reach 'Mani Dvipa' or the abode of Bhagavati. Meanwhile, Savitri Vratas be performed for fourteen years on the Sukla Chaturdasi of Jyeshtha Month; on Bhadra Sukla Ashtami to perform Maha Lakshmi Vrata for sixteen years; a Vrata on any Tuesday of a month on Devi Mangala Chandika; a Vrata on every Suklashtami on Shashthi Devi; on Manasa Devi on every Samkranti day; on every Karthika Pournami evening after fast through the day to Radha Devi; and again every Pournami day, after day-long fast to Vishnu Bhagayati. Sayitri is the Presider of Gayatri Mantra, (the Center of Surya Mandala or Solar Orbit) and is the Mother of Vedas.

### Worship to Maha Lakshmi and Her Partial Extensions

The foremost worship to Devi Maha Lakshmi was performed by Maha Vishnu Himself, followed by Brahma and Maha Deva. Also Svayambhu Manu, Indra, various Celestial Bodies, the entire Sagehood, humanity, Sub Terrain regions and indeed the whole Universe without exception are devoted to the Goddess for Prosperity, Happiness and Wellbeing of varying kinds- Dhana, Dhanya, Kirti, Vidya, Svasthya, Ayush, Punya and Moksha. Be that as it may, Sage Durvasa once visited Vaikuntha to pray to Maha Vishnu who out of appreciation gifted a Parijata Flower to the Sage. On return from Vishnu, Durvasa met Indra and gifted the Flower to Indra, as the Sage felt that Indra would be the best of Devas who deserved the gift. But out of vanity and intoxication of power, Indra gave the Sacred Flower to elephant Iravata, not comprehending the consequences. The sordid happening offended Devi Lakshmi and She as the Rajya Lakshmi of Indraloka left for Samudra Deva (Ocean of Kshira), Her father. She declared that She would leave a place as a general rule, where there was scant respect for Maha Vishnu, where there was no worship of Maha Deva too, where Ekadasa Pujas were not performed, Brahmanas were not respected, girls of marriageable age were left unwedded for long, where purity of body and mind were poor; where no fastings, pujas, Vraths, regular Sandhyavandans were performed and so on. Thus as She left, the chain reaction shook away all concerned right from Vishnu to Durvasa and Indra. The final impact was on Indra who sought the counsel of Deva Guru Brihaspati, both visited Brahma and finally to Maha Vishnu Himself. Maha Vishnu who apparently planned the episode to teach lessons to the persons

concerned, advised the hard solution of Churning the 'Kshira Sagara' and involved Demons and Devas for the mammoth task by utilising Sumeru Mountain as the Churning Rod, Ananta Deva as the powerful string and Himself as the Kurma (Tortoise) Avatara. In the drama, Mahadeva also got a role of devouring the powerful poisonous fire 'Halahala' in His throat, thus giving Him the name of 'Neela greeva'. Various Sacred Objects emerged in the process of churning- the Ucchaisvara Horse, Kalpataru (Tree), Sacred Cow 'Kamadhenu', most significantly Maha Lakshmi Herself and finally 'Dhanvantari' the God of 'Vaidya' or of Medicine emerging with the Pot of 'Amrit', the Celestial Drink of Eternal Life of Youth. Indra was humbled and Maha Vishnu advised Maha Lakshmi to re-inter Indraloka once again. Coming fully to senses, Indra executed sincere 'Puja' formally by offering the traditional 'Shodasopacharas' the sixteen services of comfortable seat on a bejewelled carpet, Ganges water with sandal paste, flower perfumed scents, silky clothes to wear, excellent ornaments of gold and jewels, agarbathi (Incense) 'Dhupa', camphor and ghee soaked vick lighting, variety of luscious fruits, main-course food dishes, sugarcane and other juices, 'payasam' (boiled rice, cow milk, sugar and dry fruits), other Sweets, garlands, 'Achamaniya' (mouth rinsing with perfumed water), water to drink Ganga water and betel leaves with scented dry nuts as a digestive material. Thereafter, Indra meditated Maha Lakshmi with the Seed Mantra as Brahma taught him viz. Om Srim Hrim Kleem Aim Kamala vasinayi Svaha for hours together with earnest concentration. By the power of this Siddha Mantra, several illustrious personalities fulfilled their desires, like Kubera with unparalelled wealth; Daksha Savarni Prajapati and Mangala became Emperors of Seven Islands; Priyavrata, Uttanapada and Kedararaja became Emperors and Great Siddhas too. As Maha Lakshmi relaxed after the Puja so graciously, then Indra eulogised Her to say that She was Rajyalakshmi to Kings and Griha Lakshmi to house holders, Aditi or the Mother Figure to Devas, Surabhi born of Ocean, Embodiment of 'Suddha Tatva', the 'Svaha Svarupa' or the offer of Sacrifices to Agni; 'Svadha Swarupa', or food offerings to the anxiously awaiting 'Pithris' of dead persons; 'Dakshina Svarupa' (the Fees paid to Sages and Brahmanas to perform Mantra-filled Sacrifices, Vratas, and Pujas), Bestower of the Best Boons to Mankind viz. 'Dharma (Virtue), 'Artha' (Wealth), 'Kama' (Fulfilment) and 'Moksha' (Salvation) and so on. Who ever recites the Siddha Mantra, Siddha Stotra and 'Sree Suktam' thrice a day would indeed be blessed with the Four Boons of Life.

While Narayana Maharshi narrated the above to Devarshi Narada, the latter raised three doubts regarding the significance of three 'Svarupas' or Formats of Svaha, Svadha and Dakshina in the Siddha Stotra of Indra afore mentioned. About **Svaha Devi**, Devas complained that they were not properly receiving the Ghee oblations in the Fire pit of various Sacrifices and Brahma prayed to Devi Prakriti. The solution was that a part of Prakriti would beget a child from the burning power of Fire by name Svaha Devi and that she would deliver three sons viz. Dakshinagni, Garhyapatagni and Avahayagni. Whenever Sages, Brahmanas or Kshatriyas recite Mantras, the terminal component of the Mantra ought to be 'Svaha' or oherwise the entire act of the Fire Sacrifice of pouring Ghee as also the potency of the concerned Mantra would be futile like a serpent without poisonous fangs. Even during 'Dhyana' or meditation the last word has to be Svaha. As regards Svadha Devi, Sage Narayana informed the origin to Narada that Brahma Deva created Seven Pitris viz. 'Kavyahonala Somo Yamaschairyama thatha Agnivastha Barhisadah Somapah Pitri Devatah' or Kavya, Anala, Soma, Yama, Agnivastha, Barhisada and Somapa. The daily duties of Brahmanas are bathing, Trisandhya, Sraddha upto the stage of Tarpanam with 'Savya Dharana of Yagnopaveeta' or normal wearing of the Holy Thread as against 'Pracheenaveeti' or the way worn while praying to immediate Pitris of three generations of father, grand father and great grand father. Salutations to Svadha Devi are thus a must while performing daily rites like Tarpanams and most certainly on Shraddha Days. Like in the case of Svaha Devi and Svadha Devi, Dakshina Devi too is of Maha Lakshmi's partial extension. Without rendering prayers to Her to absolve the shortcomings by the Master of any Yajna, Shraddha, Vrath, formal worship or any such other activities in which Sages or Brahmanas are involved, the fruits of the prayers are quite incomplete.

Sashti Devi (Devasena) is one of the Shodasa (Sixteen) Matrikas\*, the Manasa Putri or mind-born daughter of Brahma, the better half of Skanda, the Sixth Formation of Devi Prakriti, a Siddha Yogini and the boon-giver of sons who have no sons, wives who have no wives and wealth to the needy. Basically, She is the Goddess of children. Once, King Priyavrata, the son of Dharma and Grand son of Svayambhu Manu performed 'Putrakama Yajna' being intensely craving for a son. He was no doubt blessed by a son but with scant life and protruded eye balls. Priyavrata was unable to experience the situation and readying himself to end his life but then appeared Sashti Devi, took the child on Her lap and the miracle of normalcy happened instantly. Being ever grateful, Priyavrata popularised the Devi's worship in all the three worlds since when a new born child's sixth day Her worship commenced and observe various formalities as a child grew including Nama Karana (Name-Giving) on the twenty first day the 'Annaprasana' (feeding morsels of rice and milk) after six months and so on as the Laws of the Kingdom. Also Her worship after a child's birth and other ceremonies or after recovery of a child's illness became popular as formal pujas with the Mantra on the lips of the parents Om Hrim Shasthi Devyai Svaha. [The Sixteen Matrikas are Gauri, Padma, Sachi, Medha, Savitri, Devasena, Vijay, Jaya, Svadha, Syaha, Mataro, Lokamatra, Hrishti, Pushtistatha, Tushti, Atmakuladevata, The Original Sapta Matrikas are Brahmi, Mahesvari, Vaishnavi, Indrani, Kaumari, Varahi, and Chamundi].

Mangala Chandika known for the constant worship by Mangala (Planet of Mars), the son of Bhu Devi, is also a high devotee of women all over the Universe. She was worshipped foremost by Maha Deva Himself, as She was the Prime Shakti as Chandi, an Extension of Durga, with whose active involvement that the ferocious Tripurasura was annihilated, with Maha Vishnu Himself was the carrier as a huge bull. Soon after victory, Maha Deva worshipped Chandi Devi out of gratitude formally with 'Shodasa upacharas' and meditation of the Mula Mantra: *Om Hrim Srim Kleem Sarvapujaye Devi Mangala Chandike Hum Phat Svaha*. After Maha Deva, Mangala Graha worshipped on Tuesdays

(Mangalvar each week), then King Mangala of Manu's clan, the inhabitants of the Sub Terrain Regions, and all the women elsewhere as also men desirous of Victory in various tasks. She wards off all Evils and Spirits and is an epitome for bravery and success.

Mansa Devi the mind born daughter of Sage Kasyapa is also known as Manasa Krida Shakti or Mind-Play Energy, often playful within Herself. She is worshipped by Krishna and as a Siddha Yogini having a thin body owing to contant Tapasya, thus known therefore as Jata Karu as Sage Jata Karu too was too thin. Popular as Jagad Gouri illustrious for fair colour and charm, Manasa Devi is a unique Deity highly popular in the Sub Terrain world, especially Snakes and other species of the under world and also on earth, Heavens and Brahmaloka. She is named as 'Shaivi' as an ardent devotee of Shiva, as a 'Vaishnavi' as is a Bhakta of Maha Vishnu; as Nagesvari as the Saviour of Serpents when Janamejava executed the Naga Yajna after Parishith's mortal end following a curse by a son of a Sage's son; as Naga Bhagini or Vishahari as a sure curer of poison by snake bites; as Maha Jananyuta or the Possessor of Great Knowledge; as Mrita Sanjivini as the Revivor from Death and Astika Mata or the mother of Sage Astika. Thus Mansa Devi is acclaimed as Jaratkarupriya, Jarat Karu, Jagad Mata, Siddha Yogini, Shaivi, Vaishnavi, Nagesvari, Visha hari, Mahajanayuta, Mrita Sanjivini, Astika Mata and Mansa Devi.

[ Mansa Devi Temple in Haridvar in Uttarakhand is situated atop Shivalik Hills by a rope way naned 'Udan Khatola' and is famous for fulfilling the desires of lakhs of Devotees]. The twelve lettered Seed Mantra after worship by Sixteen Services of Ahvana, Aseena, Sugandha, Padya, Dhupa, Deepa, Pushpa, Abharana, Panchamrita, Vastra, Paniya, Phala, Chamara, Naivedya, Achamaniya and betel Tamboola, followed by Stotra and Dhyana. The Seed Mantra is: *Om Hrim Srim Klim Aim Manasa Devyai Swaha*.

**Devi Surabhi** was Bhagavan Krishna's own creation along with Her calf from His left side, as the Lord desired to drink milk during the union with Devi Radha. Krishna Himself milked Surabhi in a jar and sipped with Radha which tasted like elixir. The jar became bigger and bigger to an extent that the milk far overflowed as a stream first and finally as a 'Kshira Sagara' (an Ocean of Milk). From Devi Surabhi's body pores millions of Cows emerged along with calves and since then the Universe has witnessed the

presence of plenty not only for milk but its bye products, especially butter and Ghee as the latter are significant for the Yajnas as offerings into Firepits. So much so, every household could keep cows and calves as one of the sources of prosperity and dignity. Sri Krishna the World's most renowned cowherd keeper prayed to Devi Surabhi by the seed mantra: *Om Surabhai namah* and the Go-Puja (worship of Cows) is a part of Hindu Faith, as is in vogue in households and temples. It is customary that the Food offerings on Shraddha days in terms of 'Pindas' to Pitris are fed to cows before taking the food themselves. Also cows in households are symbols of Lakshmi (Wellness) and Dharma (Virtue).

# Worship of Devi Radha and Devi Durga

The highest manifestaions of Mula Prakriti are Devis Radha and Durga, told Sage Narayana to Narada Muni. Radha (Maha Lakshmi) represents 'Prana' or Life while Durga provides 'Buddhi' or Awareness ( Jnana). The entire Universe is originated and guided by these two Shakties. The Mula Mantra to invoke Devi Radha-Radhinoti or the Fulfiller of Desires- is Om Sri Radhayi Svaha is indeed a powerful one, handed over from Krishna (Maha Vishnu) Himself to Brahma downwards. First and foremost, the 'Ashta dala' (eight-petalled) Lotus be arranged to accommodate the eight forms of Radha Shakti be invoked one by one: clock-wise East of the petal be seated Malavati with Devi Radha in the Center, Madhavi on South East corner, Ratna Mala in South, Susila on South West, Sasikala on West, Devi Parijata on North West, Parvati on North and Sundari on North East. Outside this Region be seated the Sapta Matrikas Viz. Brahmi, Mahesi, Vishnavi, Indrani, Kaumari, Varahi and Chamundi. On the Bhupuras -the Entry points of the 'Yantra' be placed the 'Ashta Dikpalas' Indra in the East, Agni in South East, Yama in South, Niruti in South West, Varuna West, Kubera North and Easana in North East, besides the Armoury of Devi be also accomodated in the outside region. Then each of the Sevas like Avahana, Asana and so on to the Devi Radha and the various Deities arranged in the Yantra be performed by reciting the Mula Mantra at each of the Sixteen Services be executed. Therafter, recitation of Thousand Names (Sahasra Namas) of Devi be performed diligently as also the Radha Stotra.

As regards worship to Durga, another part of Mula Prakrti, Maha Deva and Maha Vishnu lead the list and whoever is faced even with highly insurmountable problems are successful in their overcoming these, provided the prayers are sincere and truthful. The Mula Mantra of Devi Durga states: Om Aim Hrim Klim Chamundayai Vicchhe. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesa are the Rishis of this Mantra; Gayatri, Usnik and Anushthup are the 'Chhandas'; Maha Kali, Maha Lakshmi and Sarasvati are the Deities; Raktadantika, Durga and Bhramari are the Seeds (Bijas); Nanda, Sakambhari and Bhramari are the Shaktis; Dharma ( Virtue), Artha (Prospertity) and Kama (Desires) are the application prospects; consider the devotee's head represents the Rishis of the Mantra, mouth as the Chhandas, and the heart as the Deities; Shaktis as the right part of the devotee's body and the left part as the Bija of the Mantra. Thus fixing the above, the devotee must perform 'Kara Nyasa' as follows: Aim Hridayaya Namah, Hrim Sirase Svaha, Klim Sikhayam Vasat, Chamundayai Kavachayi Hum, Vichhe Netrabhyam Voushat, Aim Hrim Klim Chamundayai Karatalaprushthabhya Phut. Then Anga Nyasam be performed by touching the body parts concerned as follows: Aim Namah Sikhaya, (touch the tuft), Hrim Namah (touch the right eye), Klim Namah (left eye), Cha Namah (right ear), Mum Namah (left ear), ndam (nostrils), Vim Namah (on the face), Chhe(Prushtha), then, Aim Hrim Klim Chamundayai Vicche( the whole body) Dhyanam to Durga should follow to say that She as Chamundi with ten hands and ten weapons, viz. Khadga (Axe), Chakra (discus), Gada (Mace), Bana (Arrows), Chapa (Bow), Parigha, Sula (Spear), Sword, and Kapala; that She is three eyed Maha Kali with black colour, frightening to Rakshasas, with ten faces and ten feet. In case of Maha Lakshmi, She has twenty hands with a thunderbolt, water pot, Kamandalu, Padma (lotus), Pasa (noose), Surapatra ( pot for liquour), Ghanta( Bell), Sudarsana (Cutting wheel), Shakti ( Weapon) and a Danda (rod) in addition to those of Chamundi's ten hands and accompaniments; and as Sarasvathi with ten hands and armoury as of Chamundi. All the Deities be thus worshipped as per Yantra of a Triangle with an eight petal lotus format and with twenty four leaves, placing Brahma and Sarasvati on the East, Vishnu and Lakshmi in Niruti, Sankara and Parvati in the Vayavya corner, Lion in the North of the Devi, on the left side of the Devi, as also Mahisha in a corner. In the Central place be seated the

Deities viz. Jaya, Vijaya, Ajita, Aghra, Mangala and other Pita Shaktis; then worship Nandaja, Sakambhari, Raktadanta, Siva, Durga, Bhima, and Bhramari. Do worship later on the eight petals with the following viz. Brahma, Mahesvari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Narasimhi, Aindri and Chamundi. Further worship on the twenty four leaves be performed with:Vishnu Maya, Chetana, Buddhi, Nidra, Hunger, Shadow, Shakti, Thirst, Shanti, Species (Jati), Modesty, Shanti, Faith, Lakshmi (Wealth), Fortitude, Vriti, Sruti, Kirti, Smriti, Daya, Tusti, Pusthi (Nourishment), Bhranti and Matrikas. On the corners of Bhupura or entry points of the Yantra be worshipped Ganesha, Kshetrapalakas, Vatuka and Yoginis. Outside of the Yantra be worshipped to Indra and other Devas along with their weapons. Mula Prakriti be worshipped compositely according to Chandi Patha or Saptasati Stotra. Indeed this method, if followed, Mula Prakriti as Durga would indeed be beneficial for the attainment of the 'Chaturvidha' or four types of 'Paramarthas' of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha!

# Sakti 'Rupas' (Images) during Manvantaras

Variations of Primordial Shakti appeared during the tenures of successive Manu Periods as related to interesting happenings. The first Manu Svayambhu meditated hundred years to Adi Shakti by means of 'Vakbhava Mantra', given to him by Brahma. She appeared, blessed and disappeared towards the direction of Vindhya mountain and took the image of Vindhya Vasini to bless the people around. Sage Narada visited the King Vindyadri and sowed seeds of jealousy in the King's mind as quite a few other mountains were far more popular than the Vindhyas, especially Meru the biggest and tallest, which had the privilege of Suryadeva circumambulating the Sumeru as a major land-mark for facilitating time, days and nights, months, years and so on. Out of extreme envy, Vindhya Raja grew up and up to surpass the height of Sumeru and thus the routine track of Sun God was terminated and He had to change His course leaving half of the Universe as dark. As there was utter chaos and disorder, Devas, Indra and Brahma visited Vishnu, who in turn sought the advice of Praktritk Maya and accordingly, despached Agastya Muni from Varanasi to Vindhyas. The King of the Mountain reverentially bent to reach the feet of the Muni and Agasthya asked Vindya raja not to get up till he returned from Southern Bharat. Agasthya had not returned to cross Vindhyas as the Mountain continues to be bent still. During the reign of the second Manu Sarvochisa, there was the appearance of Goddess Taruni Jagadhatri, whose blessings made the Period completely foe-less. Similarly the second and third Manus-Uttama and Tamastoo secured the blessings of Devi Bhagavati not only to reign peacefully but to maintain the line of succession. In fact, Tamasa Manu conducted Nava Rathras during Spring and Autumn Seasons dutifully and Goddess Devesi blessed the Manu and his Subjects. The fifth Manu, the younger brother of the previous, named Raivata deeply meditated Kama Devi and attained Siddhis for himself as also to several of his Subjects. The Sixth Manu Chakshusa prayed to Vakbhava Devi or the Goddess Sarasvati who nodoubt appeared before the First Manu, but the current Manu declared Her as Manu Clan's Goddess and prayed to Her thrice a day as also encouraged his Subjects to worship, build temples, hold regular Pujas and Spiritual Congregations and so on. The Seventh Manu Vaivasvata Sraddha Deva too practised austerities and secured full blessings of Devi Bhagavati. The Eighth Manu, Savarni, was the illustrious son of Surya Deva and had the knowledge of previous births; in his immediate last birth he was King Suratha and was a great devotee of Devi Maha Maya. He was quite accomplished as an erudite, artloving and virtuous King but his Ministers conspired and allowed enemies to gain his Kingdom. Suratha reached Sage Sumedha's hermitage and scenting the King's previous background, the Sage taught him how to practise Maha Maya's devotion. Sumedha described the evil deeds of the demon brothers Madhu and Kaitabha who were born from Vishnu's ear-wax, secured Maha Maya's boons of Voluntary Death or 'Svachhanda Maranam'; were puffed up by arrogance challenged Brahma to fight; the latter ran for help to Vishnu who was in Yoga Nidra at that time of Pralay, but was woken up by Tamasi Bhagavati, Vishnu fought the Demon brothers but in vain. Maha Bhagavati gave a plan to Vishnu to give boons to the Demons so that they would say that they would give boons instead to Vishnu; the Demons fell in the trap; Vishnu asked them to give the boon of their death, they agreed to be killed provided there was any space left dry at Pralaya when there was no dry space at all; but Vishnu expanded His thigh-space to kill the demons finally, thanks to Maha Maya who stage managed Vishnu's victory. Similarly, Sage Sumedha described the Stories of Mahishasura and Sumbha and Nisumbha and finally King Suratha was blessed by Maha Bhagavati to reappear as the Manu Savarni now.

Very interestingly, after the eighth Manu Savarni, his predecessor the seventh Manu Vaivasvata's six sons all became sucsessive Manus from the Ninth to Fourteen, thus virtually dominating the clan of Manus; they were Kasura, Prisadra, Nabhaga, Dista, Savyati and Trisanku! They were all very virtuous and spiritual and practised Tapasya only by drinking water, breathing air and the smoke of fire for twelve years and chanting the Vakbhava Mantra which all of the previous Manus did. Finally, Devi Bhagavati appeared in the form of **Bhramari Devi** granted their boons to become invincible, excellent Kings, fathers of many sons, and famous all over. Devi Bhramaramba also blessed them as an additional boon of becoming Manus one after another! They became Daksha Syavarni, Meru Savarni, Surya Savarani, Chandra Savarini, Rudra Savarani and Vishnu Savarni, An extremely vicious Demon, named Aruna was actually responsible for innumerable atrocities all over the Universe as he was given the boons of deathlessness from wars, men, women, animals or reptiles or Devas. As Brahma granted the wishes, the Demon Aruna tormented one and all and pushed out Devas from their Seats of Power, Lords Brahma, Vishnu and Maha Deva became insufficient to subdue the Daitya. A Celestial Voice was heard that Aruna would continue to be invincible as long as the Demon would recite Gayatri Mantra; Brihaspati was sent to the Demon's abode to prevent reciting the Gayatri Mantra and he did so by arguing with Aruna that Gayatri was indeed a typical Deva Mantra commended by Vedas-the Enemy Scriptures- better be avoided for there are many other praises to Almighty through the proven means of Sacrifices instead of following the Deva's way. Fully convinced, Aruna Demon stopped reciting Gayatri Mantra. That was the auspicious time when Maha Devi appeared as Bhramara Devi with attracting crores of black bees, aptly named as Bhramara Devi, who nipped the Demon's neck with least resistance. The Devas had no bounds of joy and relief and prayed to Her with reverence and devotion that She was the 'Kutastha Chaitanya' or the Immovable and Everlasting Super Consciousness, the least disturbed by but actively involved in the processes of 'Srishti' (Creation), 'Stithi' (Existence) and 'Laya' (Destruction); She was Kalika, Sarasvati, UgraTara, Madoghra, Bhairavi, Tripura Sundari, Matangi, Dhoomavati, Sakambhari, Chhinnamasta, Destroyer of countless Demons and saviour of Trinity, Indra and Devas, and Sages, Maharshis, Rajarshis and the entire Universe always.

# **Emphasis on Dharma and Right Living**

While the Golden Rule is that one should conduct daily life according to the dictates of one's own interior conscience, it is most likely that such responses might, more often than not, either mislead or not clear owing to family, social or even self-imposed limitations. That is why the Set Regulations of 'Srutis' (Vedas), 'Smritis' (Sastras), and Puranas should be the Best Guide to Dharma, as tempered with 'Loukya' (Commonality) to the barest minimum possible. Indeed the Guidelines are determined by the Principle of 'what traffic could bear' or when one should not be considered as a complete oddity to the extent of social ostracization. At the beginning of the day when one wakes up and prays the Almighty, an honest review of the previous day by way of Soul searching would indeed be an excellent barometer. While doing so, the best posture would be 'Padmasana' or squatting with right foot on the left lap and vice versa, chin down with tongue down the palate and perform 'Pranayama' practising 'Dharana' or holding the breath. Pranayama is of six types, viz. Sadhuma (when breathing is unsteady), Nirdhuma ( when breathing is somewhat controlled), Sagarbha (concentrated with Mantra), Agarbha (without Mantra), Lakshya ( when a deity is targetted) and Alakshya ( without a target). Pranayama is the simple and ideal Yoga consisting of the Pranava Mantra OM (A+O+M), the three words eah word standing for Puraka, Kumbhaka and Rechaka respectively; in other words, use the Ida Nadi (pressing the left nostril), perform Puraka by counting A (Vishnu) thirty times and Kumbhaka O (Siva) sixty times; then Rechaka by the Pingala Nadi counting M (Brahma) by counting sixty times thus performing one Pranayama in full. The next step is indeed arduous and is possible only through active assistance of an Expert Yoga Teacher. Once a few Pranayamas are performed like this, one could take up the action of 'Shatchakra Bheda' or perforating the six chakras (Plexuses) or the nerve centers or Lotuses through which the life

forces pass viz. 'Muladhara Chakra' or half way between anus and linga mula (Sacral Plexus) with its Lotus having four petals, 'Svadhishtana Chakra' or Linga Mula (Prostrate Plexus) with its Lotus having six petals; Navel (Solar Plexus)-Manipura Chakra- with its Lotus having ten petals, Heart (Cardiac Plexus) -Anahata Chakra- with its Lotus having twelve petals, Throat or larengeal and pharengeal Plexus as Visuddha Chakra having its Lotus with sixteen petals; and Forehead (between the eyebrows) or the Carvenous Plexus named 'Ajna Chakra' with two petals of Lotus represented by the letters 'hum' and 'ksham' placed in opposite directions of the center, standing for Brahma. After breaking the Six Chakras, the Yogi seeks to carry the Kundalini Shakti to Brahma Grandha thus attaining Salvation. The blessings and guidance of a Guru is a must to take up a life-venture as this. Also excellent control of various body parts is a pre-condition, besides strengthening mental regulation and that is possible through 'Sadachara' (Ideal Life style). Following 'Varnashrama' discipline especially among Brahmanas enables to adopt the required and conditioned life pattern!

# Significance of 'Rudrakshas'

The origin of Rudrakshas [dark beads of Tree, termed Elaeocorpus Ganitrus in Latin language] or Lord Siva's tears, extensively used as Prayer Rosaries, goes back to Maha Deva's killing Tripurasura, who sought to destroy the Universe and whom all the Devas, Brahma and Vishnu failed to control. Maha Deva concentrated with His eyes wide open for several years together to create a very highly potent weapon by name 'Aghora' with which to annihilate the Demon and in the process trickled tears which produced a stream from where sprang a Rudraksha Tree. The Rudraksha Seeds are of thirty eight varieties. From Lord Shiva's right eye, signifying 'Surya Netra' (Sun God), emerged from the Trees that yielded twelve kinds of yellow colour seeds; from His left eye, signifying 'Soma Netra' (Moon) came sixteen varieties of white coloured beads, and from the Lord's third eye on His forehead representing 'Agni Netra' (Fire) came ten varieties of black colour. The white variety of the beads are meant for wearing by Brahmanas, the red colour by Kshatriyas and the black coloured beads by Vaisyas and Sudras. 'Eka Mukhi' Rudrakshas represent Siva Himself the wearing of which washes off even the worst sin of a killing a Brahmana'; two faced one represents Deva and Devi destroying two kinds of sins among 'Pancha Paatakas'; the three faced bead representing Agni Deva removes the sin of killing a woman; the four faced Rudraksha representing Lord Brahma terminates the sins of killings in general; the five faced bead is like Rudra removing sins of consuming prohibited material or places; the six faced one is the six headed Kartikeya washing off 'Brahma hatya'; the seven faced Rudraksha stands for 'Ananga' or 'Manmatha' removes the sin of stealing gold and other valuables; the eight faced bead represents Lord Vinayaka who not only removes the sins of illicit relations but also provides plenty of food, Vastras, gold and so on; Lord Bhairava is manifested in the nine faced bead standing for Contentment and destruction of several sins; the tenth faced bead represents Janardana obliterating the ill effects of Planets and demolishing the evil impact of Spirits like Pisachas, goblins and the like; the eleven faced Rudraksha stands for Ekadasa Rudras bestowing the benefits of horse sacrifices, Vajapeya Sacrifices and gifting several cows; 'Dwadasa Adityas' or Twelve Suns [Ansa, Ariman, Bhaga, Daksha, Dhatri, Indra, Mitra, Ravi, Savitri, Surya and Yama] are denoted by the twelve faced Rudraksha which yields the advantage of Gomedha and Asvamedha Sacrifices, fearlessness from cruel animals and armed enemies, attainment of kingships, and dissolution of sins of killing elephants, horses, deer, cats, snakes, mice, frogs, assses and such other animals. It is said that a thirteen faced Rudraksha is a great rarity representing Kartikeya and if available would absolve even patricidal and matricidal sins, attainment of 'Ashta Siddhis' and the capability of creating gold, silver and precious stones, thus qualifying consummate happiness. Wearing a fourteen faced Rudraksha which perhaps is an almost impossibility is like wearing Siva Himself! Meditation (Japam) is to be performed by using a twenty seven bead, or fifty four bead or one hundred eight bead rosaries and wearing a hundred and eight rosary is a constant protection of Maha Deva Himself. Wearing one-faced, five-faced, eleven-faced or fourteen-faced Rudrakshas is highly recommended. He who holds thirty on neck, fourty on head, six each on ears, twelve each on hands,

sixteen each on arms, one each on eyes, one on hair or crown, and hundred and eight on breast totalling two hundred and fifty one become Maha Deva Himself. It is stated that wearing even one bead at the time of bathing would be meritorius and similarly at the time of death too, if a rosary of beads is worn, Lord Kartikeya would halt and lessen the impact from Yama Dootas. Medical values of wearing Rudraksha malas (rosaries) are said to be immense in warding off depression, stress, diabetes, cancer, heart and blood related diseases. Close contact of body parts like head, heart, neck, ear and hands assures protection from ill health. All vedic acts are to be accompanied by wearing Rudraksha Malas like Sacrifices, Vraths, Pujas, holy baths, Shraddhas, Solar and Lunar Eclipses, Uttarayana and Dakshinayana 'Samkramanas' (entry timings), and Full Moon and New Moon days or Pournami and Pradhama days. However one should not touch or consume wine, meat, tobacco, onion, garlic and such impurities as also during mating, since these constitute atrocious insults to Maha Deva. However, Sage Narayana quoted Maha Deva telling Kartikeya that any human being irrespective of caste or even animals or other species carrying Rudrakshas would be immune from sins as an ass carrying a load of the beads died on way but had salvation!

Use of Bhasma (ash), preferably by the Fire oblation performed by Brahmanas themselves or atleast by burnt remains of cow dung, is to be smeared on forehead, shoulders and chest is as important as wearing Rudrakshas. Soon after bath, the use of Bhasma mixed with water drops as three curved lines be applied first as two top lines by the middle finger and ring finger from left to right and then the lowest line by the thumb from right to left. The applications of bhasma is to be done thrice a day, before the Tri-Sandhya Gayatri Japas. While applying the Bhasma thus, three pranayamas be preceded and 'Dhyanam' of Panchamukha (Five faced) Maha Deva viz. 'Isana' (facing South East named Eswara), 'Tatpurusha' (facing East named Maha Purusha or Tamasika), 'Aghora' (facing South named Siva with destructive cum regenerative Power), 'Vamadeva' (facing North, known as Preserver and healer) and 'Sadyojata' ( facing west representing Siva of Creative Power). [The 'Panchamukha Dhyanam' to be performed as per the relevant portion of 'Maha Nyasam'viz. 1)Om Bhurbhuassuvah-Sadyojatham prapadyami Sadyojatayayy namo namah/ bhave bhave nati bhavebhavasyaam bhavodbhavayam namah 2)Om Bhurbhuvassuvah-Vamadevaya namo jyeshthayanamo Sreshthaya namo Rudraya namah kalaya namah kalayikaranaya namo bala yikaranaya namo balapramathanaya namssarya bhuta damanaya namo manonmanaya namah; 3)Om Bhurbhuvassuvah-Aghorebhyo -thaghogorebhyo ghorathata- rebhayah/ sarvebhyassarva sarvebhyo namaste astu Rudra rupebhyah 4) Om Bhurbhuvassuvah-Tatpurushaya vidmahe Maha Devaya Dhimahe-Tanno Rudrah Prachodayat 5)Om Bhurbhuvassuvah-Esanasarva vidyanam Eswara Sarva Bhutanam Brahmadhipathih Brahmanodhipathi Brahmaassivome astu Sadasivom. Thereafter, relevant Mantras be recited to say that each of the Panchabhutas is Bhasma viz. Fire is Ash, Earth is Ash, Water is Ash, Ether is Ash and Radiance is Ash. Then apply Bhasma as prescribed above. If Bhasma is not applied, Brahmanas are not entitled to perform 'Sandhavandana' or Gayatri Japam. Contrarily, no sin could enter the body once Bhasma is applied as prescribed. This is why Brahmanas take care to apply the Tripundra by the use of the three fingers as the ring finger represents as A, the middle finger represents U and the fore finger represents M from the Pranava Mantra OAM. At the same time however, any person irrespective of caste could use 'Vibhuti' (not the Bhasma as disinguished above ie. from Yajna fire or from dried cow dung burnt) and the application of vibhuti has far reaching beneficial impact. However, care should be taken not to apply it on unclean bodies and while spitting, sneezing, coughing, using toilet and after washing off, be reapplied with clealiness ensured, since Vibhuti is Maha Deva Himself.

## Method of 'Sandhya Vandana' and worship of Devi Gayatri

'Sandhyopasana' to be performed thrice a day in the morning, midday and evening is must to the Brahmanas. The timings in the morning are the best when stars are still visible, medium when they

disappear and inferior after the Sun has risen; at midday; and in the evening as Sun is disappearing is the best, when Sun has disappeared the timing for Sandhya is medium and inferior when Stars are visible. If for any reason, it is not performed, Prayashitta Mantra be recited. Normally, the duration of the morning and evenings take two 'dandas' each or forty eight minutes. In case the Sandhya vandana is nor performed the Brahmana is as bad as a Sudra and would become a dog in the next birth. The best form of Sandhya is when it is carried out on a river bank in a temple before Devi, the one executed in an enclosure of cows is of medium value and done in a household is of inferior nature. As Devi Gayatri is the Presiding Deity of Sandhya and as She is the Originator of Vedas, Sandhya is as good as meditating all Gods and other prayers might be optional.

Sandhya vandana is to commence with 'Achamana' (Taking water into the right palm and sipping it thrice) as an opening action of Sandhya saying Om Kesavaya svaha, Om Narayanaya Swaha and Om Madhavaya Svaha while washing the hands; continue to recite Om Govindaya namah / om Vishney namah; touch the lips with right thumb from right to left saying Om Madhusunanayh /Om Trivikramaya namah; after wiping the lips, say Om Vamanaya namah / Om Sridharaya namah; sprinkle water on the left hand to say Om Hrishikesa namah; then say Om Padmanabhya namaha and sprinkle water on legs; Om Damodaraya namaha sprinkle water on head; Om Sankarshayana namah touch mouth with the three fingers of the right hand; Om Vasudevaya namah /Om Pradyumnayana namah touch nostrils with right forefinger; Om Aniruddhaya namah /Om Purushottamaya touch eyes with right thumb and ring finger; touch both the ears saying Om Adhoksaya Namah / Om Narasimhaya namah; Touch navel, right thumb and little finger and say Om Achyutaya namah; say Om Janardanaya namaha while touching breast with palm; then Om Upendrayana Namah touch the head; and finally Om Haraye Namaha / Om Sri Krishnayana Namah touching the two arm roots. Then perform Achamana by sipping pea size drop of water from the hollow of right hand palm, with the fingers tight and drawing the thumb and little finger together, silently recite Pranava Mantra and Pranayama comprising the processes of Puraka, Kumbhaka and Rechaka three times minimum and reciting Om Bhu, Om Bhuvah, Om Svah, Om Mahah, Om Janah, Om Tapah, Om Satyam, followed by Gayari Mantra: Tat Savithuh Varenya Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi Dhiyoyona Prachodayat Om Apojyoti Rasomritam Brahma Bhur Bhuvavatsuvarom. This would be followed by Aghamasana Marjana Mantra: Om Apohishtha mayo bhuvah tana Urje tadhatana Maheranaya Chakshase/ yovassivatamo rasah tasya bhajahathehanaha usiteerivamatarah/ tasma aranga mamayaha/ Yassyakshayaya jinyadha Apojana yadhachanahah.

Paramatma! As you are kind to accept our prayers, do favour us with the means of our existence like Food and so on; do bless us with your endless kindness our sincere desire to have Your divine appearance which is blissful eternally]. Marjana Mantra is to be used along with Pranava, Vyahritis viz. Om Bhu, Om Svah etc. and Gayatri Mantra. Then follows Achamana Mantras preceding morning, mid-day and evening Gayatri Mantras viz. Suryascha mamanuscha manu patayascha manu krutebhyaha papebhyo rakshantam etc; Apah punantu prithiveem tha punatumam punantu BrahmanasrutirBrahma punatunam etc; Agnischa ma manuscha manupatayascha manu kritebhyah papebhyo rakshantam etc.respectively preceding morning, mid-day and evening Gayatri Mantra. Later on, Punah Marjana Mantra viz. Hiranya varnassuchaha pavakaya sujataha etc. Papa vimochana Mantra follows. The next step is Arghya pradana Mantras relevant to morning: Udyantamantam aditya mabhidhyanan etc. while performing 'Pradakshina'; noon time: Hagumsasuchishadva surantariksha etc. and evening: sama sankalpa as morning west faced. The Common Pradakshina Mantra for morning, noon and evening is: Udyantamastam Adityamabhidhyayan kurvan etc. Thereafter Achanamam and Sandhyanga Tarpanam is as follows:-Morning: Sandhyam Tarpayami, Gayatreem Tarpayami, Brahmeem Tarpayami and Nimrujeem Tarpayami; Mid day: Sandhyam Tarpayami, Savitreem Tarpayami, Roudreem Tarpayami and Nimrujeem Tarpayami; Evening: Sandhyam Tarpayami, Sarasvateem Tarpayami, Vaishnaveem Tarpayami. Then the Key invocation or 'Avahana' to Gayatri Devi and other manifestations of the Super Energy is as per the following Mantra: Omithyekaksharam Brahma Agnirdevataa Brahmaityarsham Gayatram Chhandam Paramatmam saarupam Sayujyam viniyogam Aayatu varada Devi Aksharam Brahma Sammitham Gayatreem Chhandasammatedam Brahamajushasvame adahnat kurutey papam thadahnat

pratimuchyatev yadratrya kuruthye papam tadratyat pratimuchyatev Sarvavarnye Maha Devi Sandhya Vidye Sarasvati Ojosi Sahosi balamasi bhraajosi Devaanam dhaamanamasi Visvayurssarvamasi Sarvaayurabhi bhurom Gayatrimavahayami Savitrimavahayami Sarasvatimavahayami Chhandarshinamavahayami Sriyamavahayami Gayatrya Gayatichando Visvamitr Rishi Savita Devatagnirmukham Rudrassikha Pridhiviyoni Pranapana vyanodana samanasaprana sveta yarna Samkhyaya Sa Gotraa Gayatri Chaturvigamsat AksharaTripada Shutkuscchih Pancha Sirshopa Nayane Viniyogaha. [ The word OM is Para Brahma, Agnihotra is Devata, Brahma is Rishi, Paramatma is Svarupam; this Mantropasana is the fruit of Salvation. Gayatri Mother, we are your meditators, kindly fulfil oue desires. You are the Mother of Vedas and Vedantas; let our sins committed during the day and night be abolished at once. You are the Energy of our limbs and sensory organs, the entire source of our Being. We have the honour of inviting you to our prayers as Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Savitri, Vedas and their Meters, Visvamitra and other Rishis. Gayatri Mantra's Chhandas or Meter is Gayatri Herself, Rishi is Visvamitra, Sun is the Deity, Fire is the Face, Brahma is the head, Vishnu is the heart, Rudra is the tuft, Earth is the Creative Force, the Five types of Air, viz. Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana, Samana; Fair Complection, Samkhyaya Gotra, Comprising Twenty four Letters, three feet or steps, Six Stomachs, Five Faces (Manas, Buddhi, Chitta, Ahamkara and Pragna indicative of five directions of north, east, west and north plus the above)]. After the Ahvana or welcome, Sroutachamana and Apohishta Mantra, Anganyasa is presented. The Mantras are as follows: Om Bhu padabhyam Namaha (touch legs), Om bhuvah Janubhyam Namah(touch two knees), Om Svaha Katibhyam namah (touch hip), Om Maharnabhyai namah ( navel), Om Janat hridayaya namah ( heart), Om Tapah Kanthyaya namah (throat), Om satyam Lalataya namah (forehead). Karanyasa of the six body parts is executed viz. Om tatsavithuh: Brahmatmane Angushtham Namah Hridayaya namah; Varenyam Vishnatmane Tarjaneebhyam namah Sirase Svaha; Bhargo Devasya Rudratmaney Madhyamabhaym Namah Sikhaya vashat; Dhimahi Satyatmaney Anamikabhyam NamahaKavachaya hum; Dhiyoyonah Jnatatmane Kanishthikabham Nanah Netra trayayavoushat; Prachodayat Sarvatmane Karathala prushthabyam Namah Karathala prushthabhyam namah Astraya phut /Bhurbhuvassoromiti Digbandhah. Gayatri Mantra Japa Samkalpa is then made. Main Dhyanam is as follows: Muktavidruma hema nila dhavala chhayirmukhayir streekshanayir yuktamindu nibaddha ratna makutam tatvartha varnatmikam Gayatrrem varadabhayam kuskasassubhramka palam gadam sankham chakra dharavinda ugalam hastyirvahanteem bhaje. [Devi Gayatri's five faces are white like pearl; one is red like coral, second is yellow like gold, third is blue like neelam, fourth white like milk, and the fifth is of 'trinetra' or three eyed. We meditate Her gem studded headgear with half- moon like jewel on Her Head, and eight hands with Benedictine mudras, 'Ankusam', Gada (mace), Sankham, Chakram, Skull, and TwoLotuses.] The Mudra Dharana or performing Twenty four Mudras, as taught by Guru would be next step in the Gayatri vandanam. The relevant Mantra is: Sumukham Samputamchaiva vitatam vistrutam tadha/ dvimukham trimukhamchaiva chatuh Pancha mukham tadha Shanmukhotho mukhamchaiva vyapakaamanjalim thadha sakatam Yama Pasamcha gradhitam sanmukhom pralambam mushtikam chaiva Matsyah Kurma Varahakou Simhakrantam Mahakrantham mudgaram pallavam tadha. Lamityadi Pancha Puja to Five Elements viz. 'Lum' Prithivi tatvatmane Tripada Gayatri Devatayi Namah-Gandham parikalpayami; 'hum' Akasa tatvatmane Pushpam samarpayami; 'yam' Vayu tatvatmane Dhupam aghrapayami; 'Ram' Vahni deepam darshayami; 'Vam' Amrita tatvatmane Amrita Naivedyam; and 'Sum' sarvatvatmake Sarvopachara Pujaam parikalpayami namah. Before performing Gayatri Japam, the permission of Guru be obtained.[ The word-by-word meaning of Gayatri Mantra is: Om: Almighty God; Bhur (Embodiment of Vital Energy); Bhuvaha (Destroyer of Suffering); Svaha (Embodiment of Happiness); Tath (That Almighty); Savitur (Bright like Sun); Varenyam (The Supreme); Bhargo (demolisher of Sins); Devasya (the Divine Force); Dhimahi (May receive); Yo (Who); Na (Our), Prachodayat (Let inspire in right direction). In other words: Oh Almighty, You are the Creator of Life, Slayer of Sorrow, Bestower of Happiness and Creator of the Universee. May we receive Your Supreme Energy to raze our sins and guide us in our intellect in the right direction.] While performing Gayatri Japam mentally, one should not shake head and neck or show teeth. The number of the Japam could be hundred and eight times or fifty eight timed or at least ten times. The Japam is not performed while bathing, for Gayatri is like Fire or 'Agnimukha'. Soon

after the Japam, recite the Mantra of 'Mukta vidruma hema neela etc.' keeping a mental picture of Gayatri as just mentioned earlier and then perform Eight Mudras reciting Surabhi Jnana yonischa nischa sankham chakram cha Pankajam Linga nirvana mudraschyeshta Mudrah prakirtithah. 'Triachamanam' - Achamanam thrice- follows and then proposing 'Suryopasthanam' or taking leave of Sun God in the morning and afternoon Sandhyas and in the Evening Sandhyas propose 'Varunopasthanam' as per Mantras relevant to morning, mid-day and in the evenings respectively. Dik devata namaskaram or salutations to the Deities in charge of six directions of East, South, West, North, Upper and Nether Regions is executed followed by concluding Dhyanam, Tri achamanam and the concluding and formal Salutation from Brahma downward: Aa Brahma lokadaseshadaa lokaloka parvatat / ye santhi Brahmanaa Devasthebhyo nityam Namonamaha. Ae tatbhavam tat Parameswara arpanamastu.

Gayatri Punascharana is a step forward from simple and regular Tri Sandhya Gayatri to higher category, after reciting Gayatri Japa by twenty lakh times. This has to be executed in the presence of a Guru at a Holy Place, Temple or River bed and afer stringently following dietary and other restrictions such as prohibited months, days, Stars, Tithis, and so on. Similarly, those who have a penchant for Vaisva Deva Worship by way of Five Yajnas viz. Deva Yajna, Brahma Yajna, Bhuta Yajna, Pitri Yajna and Manushya Yajna. Other stringent penances are to practise Vrats viz. Prajapatya Tapta Krichchra, Santapana, Para Krichchra and Chandrayana. The Prajapatya Vrata of the four mentioned is for twelve days of which food is taken first three days as one mid-day meal, next three days as evening a day, further next three days any one meal unsolicited and the final round of three days without food at all. Santapana Vrat is for two days, first day consuming cow's urine, dung, milk, curd, ghee and water of kusa grass and the second day on full fast. Tapta Krichchra Vrat is for twelve days, each three days consuming hot milk, hot water and hot ghee and final three days only air respectively during each three days duration. The Ati Krichchra Vrat is to eat one mouthful food a day for three dayas and next three daysful fast. Para Krichchra Vrat is to abstain food for twelve days. Chandrayana Vrath is to decrease one mouthful a day from the day after Amavaysa, which would be a complete fast, to Pournami and increase mouthfuls each day during the next fortnight. To repeat Gayatri twenty four thousand times is as good as one Tapta Krichchira and sixty eight times is equal to one Chandrayana. Simply performing Gayatri hundred times each along with Pranayama during morning and Evening Sandhyas would qualify him for destroying sins. If he accomplishes three thousand Gayatri Japas during the 'Trisandhyas' every day and offers Arghya to Sun God, even Devas would worship him, let alone co-human beings. Sage Narayana enlightened Narada Muni and through him the posterity about the twenty four letterd Gayatri related Rishis. The twenty four Rishis are: Vama Deva, Atri, Vasishtha, Sukra, Kanva, Parasara, and the family of Visvamitra, Kapila, Saunaka, Yajnyavalka, Bharadvaja, Jamadagni, Gautama, Mudgala, Veda Vyasa, Lomasa, Agastya, Kausika, Vatsya, Pulasta, Manduka, Durvasa, Narada and Kasyapa. The twenty four Chhandas are Gayatri, Usnik, Anushthup, Bhrihati, Pankti, Trishnup, Jagati, Ati Jagati, Sakkari, Ati Sakkari, Dhriti, Ati Dhriti, Virat, Prastara Pankti, Kriti, Prakriti, Akriti, Vikriti, Samkriti, Akshara Pankti, Bhu, Bhuva, Svaha and Jyotismati. The twenty four Gayatri related **Devathas** are Agni, Prajapati, Soma, Isana, Savita, Aditya, Brihaspati, Mitravaruna, Bhagadeva, Arya, Ganesha, Tvasta, Pusha, Indragni, Vayu, Vamadeva, Mitra Varuni, Visva Deva, Matrika, Vishnu, Vasudeva, Rudra Deva, Kuvera and the twin Awini Kumaras. The twenty four Gayatri related Saktis are: Vama Devi, Priya, Sathya, Visva, Bhadravilasini, Prabha Devi, Jaya, Santa, Kanta, Durga, Sarasvati, Vidruma, Visalesa, Vyapini, Vimala, Thamopaharini, Sukshma, Visvayoni, Jaya, Vasa, Padmalaya, Parasobha, Bhadra and Tripada. Tattvas are Pancha Bhutas (Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Sky); Panchendriyas or Sensory Organs (Smell, taste, form, sound, touch); male organ, anus, legs, hands, tongue, eyes, skin, ears, speech, Life giving vital Energy and five types of Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana. The twenty four Gayatri Mudras have been aleady described as Sumukham, Samputam, Vitatham, Vistrutam, Dvimukham, Trimukham, Chatur mukham, Panchamukham, Shanmukham, Adho -mukham, Vayapakam, Anjalim, Sakatam, Yamapasam, Gradhitam, Sanmukon mukhamVilambam, Mushtikam, Matsyam, Kurmam, Varahakam, Simhakrantam, Mahakrantam, Mudgaram and Pallavam.

**Gayatri Kayacham** (Protective Armoury) which is a certain means of obliterating sins, is to precede Anganyasa, Karanyasa and Dhyanam as in the prepages. The Text of Kavacham reads as follows: May Gayatri protect my frontage, Savitri Dvi my rightside, Sandhya my backside and Sarasvati my leftside. May Devi Parvati protect my abode, Jalasayani my south east, Yatudhana Bhayankari the south west, Pavana Vilasini my north west and Rudrarupini Rudrani my north east. May Brahmani safeguard my top and Devi Vaishnavi secure my nether regions. May the Word 'Tat' in the Gayatri Mantra defend my legs, 'Savituh' guard my knees, let 'Varenyam' shield my loins, and 'Bhargah' my navel. May the Word 'Devasya' protect my heart and 'Dhimahi'my neck, 'Dhiyaha' ensure safety of my eyes, 'Yah' my forehead, 'Nah' my head and 'prachodayat' my tuft on the rear side of my head. An alternative version is:let the word 'Tat' safeguard my head, 'Sa' my forehead, 'Vi' my eyes, 'Tu' my cheeks, 'Va' nostrils, 're' my mouth, 'ni' my upper lip, 'yah' my lower lip, 'Bha' my entire face, 'rgo' cheeks, 'De' my throat, 'va' shoulders, 'Sya' my right hand, 'Dhi' my navel, 'ma' my throat, 'hi' my belly, 'Dhi' naval, 'Yo' loins, 'yo' anus, 'nah' my thighs, 'pra' my knees, 'cho' my shanks, 'Da' my heels, 'ya' my legs and 'at' my sides. This powerful Gayatri Kayacham wards off all evil forces from the physiques of the readers and the listeners alike, provides immense peace of mind, huge contentment life long and finally divine bliss at the termination of life.

Gayatri Hridaya, explicitly mentioned in Atharva Veda, is the core of Gayatri, the Mother of Vedas and its 'Pathanam' (reading), 'Sravanam' (hearing), 'Uccharanam' (reciting) or 'Mananam' (meditating) is of excellent value. Maha Vishnu Himself is the Sage of the Mantra, it is in Gayatri 'Chhanda' and its Devata is Maha Gayatri Herself. The 'Nyasa' or the alignment of the Deity and meditator has to visualize the person's head as that of Gayatri, the twin Asvini Devatas as the two rows of teeth, Sarasvati as the tongue, Brihaspati as the neck, 'Ashtavasus' or the Eight Vasus as represented on the person's chest, Parjanya or Varuna Deva on the heart, Akasa on the belly, Antariksha on the navel, Indra and Agni as the loins, Brahma as Vijnana on hip joints, Kailasa and Malaya mountains as thighs, Visvadevas on the knees, Visvamitra on the shanks, Sun's two movements to North and South viz. Uttarayana and Dakshinayana on the anus, Earth on legs, Vanaspati on fingers and toes, Rishis on body hairs, Muhurtas on nails, Planets on bones, Rithus or Seasons on blood and flesh, Years on twinklings of an eye, Sun and Moon as day and night. 'Gayatri, may I seek your shelter; do protect me from my sins.'

Gayatri Stotra was explained by Sage Narayana to Narada as follows: 'Devi Gayatri is the Mother of the Whole Universe and the Primeval Energy that is all-pervading and all-knowing. She is the Time, Space and distance. She is Sandhya, Sarasvati, Savitri, Brahmi, Vaishnavi and Rudrini. She is seen by ascetics as Brahmani riding Hamsa, Sarasvati riding Garuda and Savitri riding a Bull. They find Rigveda manifested as Savitri, Yajurveda as 'Antariksha' (Outer Space) and Samaveda as Rudraloka-all evident by Gayatri. She is Brahmani in Brahmaloka, Vaishnavi in Vishnuloka and Rudrini in Rudraloka. She is Durga Devi noticeable by the Ten Rupas as Varenya, Varada, Varishtha, Varavarnini, Garishtha, Varada, Vararoha, Nilaganga, Sandhya, Moksha, and Bhoga Mokshada. She is Bhagiradhi on Earth, Bhogavati in Patala and Mandakini in the Milky Way (Heavens). She is the all enduring Earth in Bhuloka, Vuyu Sakti (Air Energy) in Bhuvarloka, TajoSakti (Power of Light) in Svarloka, 'Siddhi' in Maharloka, Jana in Janaloka, Tapasvini in Tapar Loka, Truth in Satyaloka, Lakshmi in Vishnuloka, Gayatri in Brahmaloka and Gauri in Rudraloka. She is Om Mahat Tatva Prakriti and Samyavastha Prakriti. She is Tri Sakti combined vix. Icchha Sakti (Will Power), Kriya Sakti (Power of Action), Jnana Sakti (Power of Knowledge). She is the various Rivers like Ganga, Yamuna, Vipasa, Sarasvati, Sarayu, Devika, Sindhu, Narmada, Iravati, Godavari, Kaveri, Kausiki, Chandrabhaga, Gandaki, Tapini and Gomati; She is Kundalini, Muladhara, Vyapini, Madhyasana and Manonmayi in Brahmarandhra.

## Mani Dvipa the Abode of Devi Bhagavati

Being far superior to Kailasa, Vaikuntha and Goloka, the Sarvaloka or Mani Dvipa is the residence of Devi Bhagavati in whom the entire Creation rests! Indeed She resides everywhere and anywhere but

notionally at Mani Dvipa and the description is transcripted in detail by Maharshi Veda Vyasa apparently for the consumption of mortals to carry conviction into their consciousness. Surrounded by 'Sudha Sagara' (The Ocean of Nectar), Manidvipa has a strong iron enclosure of several Yojanas far and wide with four gates well guarded by Devas and Devis. Within the First Enclosure, there is an Enlosure of white metal made of an amalgam of zinc and tin/copper which touches Heavens and is hundred times higher than the walls of the outer Enclosure. This Enclosure is interspersed with gardens and forests with a wide range of trees and plants, flowers with intoxicating fragrances, luscious fruits along with streams of fruit juices and gregarious animals and birds of staggering variety. The third Enclosure is made of copper with a height of seven yojanas comprising several 'Kalpavrikshas', with golden leaves/ flowers and fruits yielding gems, fulfilling desires of any imagination. The King of the Gardens along with the wives Madhu Sri and Madhava Sri maintains an excellent Spring Season, where Gandharvas reside, rendering divinely songs and music. The Fourth Enclosure made of lead with its wall height is again seven yojanas and within the Enclosure are the Sanatanaka trees with flowers whose fragrance reaches as far as ten yojanas and fresh fruits providing sweet juices of great quality and its King with the two queens Sukra Sri and Sudha Sri always maintains enjoyble mild summer where Siddhas and Devas reside here. The Fifth Enclosure made of brass with a spread of ten yojanas is maintained by its Chief as a perennial Rainy Season accompanied by twelve of his wives, viz. Nabha Sri, Nabhyasya Sri, Sravasya, Rasyasalini, Amba, Dula, Niranti, Varidhara, Abhramanti, Megha Yantika, Varshayanti, and Chivunika. The Trees grown in the Gardens of this Enclosure are Hari Chandana. The Sixth Enclosure is made of walls with five-fold irons and its Gardens grow Mandara Trees and creepers; the wives of its Chief are Isalakshmi and Urjalakshmi maintaining the Season of Autumn. Here again Siddhas reside with their wives. The Seventh Enclosure of seven Yojanas of length is made of Silver, its Chief maintaining Hemanta (dewy) Season with his two wives Saha Sri and Sahasya Sri with Parijata as its main tree and flowers. The Eighth Enclosure is made of molten gold with Kadamba garden in the center with Tapas Sri and Tapasya Sri as the wives of the King and the fruits of the trees yield honey that is consumed aplenty by Siddhas and wives who are the inhabitants and the season again is dewy. The 'Navavarana' or the Ninth Enclosure is made of Pushparaga gems of Kumkum (saffron) colour which is abundant all over inside the Enclosure like forests, trees, rivers, flowers, lotuses, 'Mandapas' (Halls), pillars and so on. All the 'Dikpalakas' of High Regency reside in the Eight Directions of the Enclosure, with the thousand eye bodied Indra in the East in Amaravati on Airavata with Sachi Devi, 'Vajra Ayudha' or thunderbolt, the Celestial Apsarasas and the rest; Agni Deva in South East with his two wives Svaha and Svadha, his Vahana and other belongings; Yama Dharmaraja in the South with his 'Yama danda' (his Symbol the Celestial Rod) along with Chitragupta; Nirruti in the South West with his axe and wife representing Rakshasas'; Varuna Deva in the West with his wife Varuni and 'Pasa' (the noose), drinking Varuni honey and with the King of Fishes as his Vahana (Vehicle) and surrounded by aquatic animals; Vayu Deva in the North West with his wife, forty nine members of his Vayu family along with groups of Yogis adept in Pranayama and other practices along with his Deer Vahana; the King of Yakshas and Unparallelled Possessor of Gems and Jewels Kubera in the North along with his two Shaktis Viriddhi and Riddhi and his Generals Manibhadra, Purnabhadra, Maniman, Manikandhara, Manisvargi, Manibhushana and Manikar Muktadhari; Rudra Deva in the North East with other Rudras who are angry and red eyed, armed and mighty, frightful and revolting, fiery mouthed and detestably distorted, some times ten handed or thousand handed, odd number footed and odd number mouthed; in the company of Bhadrakalis and Matriganas, Rudranis and Pramadhaganas making 'Attahasas' or reverberating screeches and so on. Tenth Enclosure made of Padmaraga Mani inside which are the Sixty four 'Kalas' like Pingalakshi, Visalakshi, Vriddhi, Samriddhi, Svaha, Svadha and so on each of these having hundreds of akshouhini strong armies and individually each of these 'Kalas' have the unimaginable Power of destroying a lakh of 'Brahmandas' (Universes)! The Eleventh Enclosure is made of Gomeda Mani and within this are the sindestroying and beneficent Maha Shaktis viz. Vidya, Hri, Pushti, Prajna, Sinivali, Kuhu, Rudra, Virya, Prabha, Nanda, Poshani, Riddhida, Subha, Kalaratri, Maharatri, Bhadra Kali, Kapardini, Vikriti, Dandi, Mundini, Sendhu Kanda, Sikhandini, Nisumbha Sumbha Madini, Mahishasura Mardini, Rudrani, Sankarardha Saririni, Nari, Nirayani, Trisulini, Palini, Ambika and Hladini. The Twelfth Enclosure made

of Diamonds and is the dwelling place of Bhuvaneswari, and is surrounded by Eight Shakties viz. Anangarupa, Ananaga Madana, Madanantara, Bhuvana Vega, Bhuvana Palika, Sarvasisira, Ananga Vedana and Ananda Madana; each of these Main Atteandants of Bhuvaneswari has a lakh of Attendants. The Thirteenth Enclosure is made of Vaiduryas and the Residences of Eight Matrikas viz. Brahmi, Mahesvari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrani, Chamunda and Mahalakshmi. The Fourteenth Enclosure made of Indranilamani, which is the Most Auspicious Place of the Sixteen Petalled Holy Lotus with Sixteen Maha Shaktis resident viz. Karali, Vikarali, Uma, Sarasvati, Sri, Durga, Ushas, Lakshmi, Sruti, Smriti, Dhriti, Sraddha, Medha, Mati, Kanti and Arya. The Fifteenth Enclosure made of 'Mukta' or Pearls inside which reside Eight Shaktis Ananga Kusuma, Ananga Kusuma Tura, Ananga Madana, Ananga Madanatura, Bhuvanapala, Ganganavega, Sasirekha, and Gangana Vegarekha. The Sixteenth Enclosure which is made of Marakatha (Vaidurya) is hexagonal of Yantra Shape, and on the eastern corner of the Center is the Brahma with Devi Gayatri with Vedas, Sastras and Puranas as well as their Expansions; on the Western corner is Maha Vishnu and Savitri along with ther own Expansions; on the North Western corner is Maha Rudra and Sarasvati with Rudra and Parvati Expansions and Sixty four Agamas and all Tantras; on the South Eastern side is the abodes of Kubera and Maha Lakshmi; on the Western corner side are the Couple of Madana and Rati Devi and on the North Eastern side are Ganesha and Pushti Devi. The Seventeenth one is made of Prabala (Red like Saffron) Devi Bhagavati's five Elements viz. Hrillekha, Gagana, Raktha, Karailika, and Mahochuchusma; and finally, the Eighteenth Enclosure is built with Navaratnas (Nine Jewels) with Bhagavati in the Center with 'Pancha Amnayas' (Eastern Amnaya is Creation by Mantra Yoga, Southern is Maintenance by Bhakti, Western is Pralay by Karma Yoga, Northern is Grace by Jnana Yoga and Urdhva Amnaya is Liberation); ten Maha Vidyas (Kali, Tara, Chhinnamasta, Bhuvaneswari, Bagala, Dhumavati, Matangi, Shodasi and Bhairavi) and Avataras viz. Bhuvanesvaris Pasamkusavari, Bhairavi, Kapala, Amkusa, Paramada, Sri Krodha, Triptavasarudha, Nityaklinna, Annapurnesvari and Tvarita .Ratnagriha or the Crown Palace of Mula Prakriti or Maha Devi Bhagavati is beyond the Eighteenth Enclosure, built of Chintamani Gems with thousands of pillars built by Suryamani Gems or Vidyutkantamani Gems. Four huge 'Mandapas' or halls each with thousand pillars in the Palace are made of kaleidoscopic and artistic mix of 'Navaratnas' (The Nine Gems) viz. Mukta, Manikya, Vaidurya, Gomeda, Vajra, Vidruma, Padmaraga, Nila and Marakatas with dazzling lights and exhilarating perfumes suited to the Themes of the Halls designated as Shringara, Mukti, Jnana and Ekanta. In the Central place of each of the Halls, there is a Very Special Chintamani Griha or the Sanctum Sanctorum on a raised platform with a plank supported by the four legs of Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra and Mahesvara and the plank is Sadasiva Himself! The Maha Tatvas [ refer to earlier pages on Trinity's Prayers to Bhagavati] are the stair cases leading to the Upper Chambers. Mula Prakriti and Maha Purusha constitute two halves of the Physical Formation of Maha Devi cum Maha Deva with Five Faces of Each Half, with corresponding three Eyes and four arms and armoury, one hand reserved exclusively for providing boons. The Attending Sakhies are those surrounding the 'Ardhanarisara' are Icchaa Sakti, Jnaana Sakti and Kriya Sakti who are always present with the Maha Bhagavati along with Lajja, Tushti, Pushti, Kirti, Kanti, Kshama, Daya, Buddhi, Medha, Smriti and Lakshmi in their physical Forms. The Nine Pitha Shaktis Jaya, Vijaya, Ajita, Aparajita, Nitya, Vilasini, Dogdhri, Aghora and Mangala are at the constant Service. Devi Bhagavati is simultaneously present in all the Mandapas; enjoying Vedas, Hymns of Praise, and Music in Shringara Hall; freeing Jivas from bondages in Mukti Hall; rendering advice and instructions in Jnana Hall and conducting consultations in Ekanta Mandapa with Ministers like Ananga Kusuma etc.on matters of vital significance related to Creation, Preservation and Destruction of Evil. Indeed the inhabitants of Mani Dvipa are all those who have attained Samipya, Salokya, Sarupya and Sarsti. They have no Arishdvargas to overcome, no tatvas to gain, no gunas to regulate, no Yogas to perform, no ambitions or desires to fulfil. They have no concepts of time, death, age, distance, body, mind, light, season or the 'Tapatriyas'. Human beings normally tend to describe the negativity of life always but the Eternal State of Perfect Equilibrium is some thing utterly unimaginable! Maharshi Veda Vyas assured that reading, listening or imagining about Mani Dvipa and of the Glories of Devi Bhagavati would provide peace of mind, contentment and fresh springs of hope, purpose and

direction of life. Especially so, when new projects are launched and new actions are initiated as also when apprehensions, obstacles, diseases, tragedies or even the facing of death are envisaged by anybody

# King Janamejaya perfoms Devi Yagna

From the state of intense mental agitation arising out of his father's untimely death and strong resolve to perform 'Sarpa Yajna' to release Parikshit's soul to the narration of Devi Maha Bhagavatha by Veda Vyasa and the channelisation of his thinking process, King Janamejaya prostrated before the Illustrious Vyasa with enormous gratitude and relieved mind with the determination to perform Devi Bhagavati's Yajna. Veda Vyasa himself initiated the Devi Mantra to the King and conducted the ensuing 'Navaratras' with dedication. Devarshi Narada who came to the King on the completion of the Maha Yagna, informed that during his visit to Devaloka the soul of Parikshith which had hitherto been tormented had not only been freed but was on way to Mani Dvipa and that King Janamejaya had carved a name for himself too in the Devalokas!

# Devi Bhagavata 'Phala Sruti' (Benefits of Reading and Hearing)

While Devi Bhagavati gave half a 'Sloka' or Stanza to Maha Vishnu converted as a toddler on a banyan leaf floating on water at Pralaya) that 'all being witnessed was Her Maya and nothing else is eternal. , Lord Brahma Himself expanded the other half of the Stanza into Koti (Crore) Stanzas and to teach his Son Suka Muni, Veda Vyasa transcripted a condensed version of Devi Bhagavata as a Maha Purana into Eighteen Thousand Stanzas in Twelve Cantos. At the 'Phalasruti' at the end of Devi Bhagavata Vyasa blessed those who read, hear or cogitate (Pathanam, Sravanam and Mananam) with excellent guidance, prosperity, contentment,. Vyasa said that the readers of Devi Bhagavata were eligible for success in life, good offspring, knowledge and expansion of outlook in life. He assured that Devis Lakshmi, Sarasvati and Parvati symbolising wealth, wisdom and Energy respectively would stay together in the house of that person who would read Devi Bhagavata. No evil spirit could dare enter the premise of that devotee. Even small fevers and indispositions, let alone longstanding and nagging diseases would be ever suffered by such readers. Even a few pages of the Glories of Devi Bhagavati by reading or hearing Devi Bhagavata would certainly ensure purity of blood and digestive system, warding off blood pressure and diabetes among others. Indeed during the Navarathras, one's own reading or hearing from a good Brahmana would yield excellent well being and happiness.

'Na mantram no yantram thadapi cha na jane stutimaho / na cha-ahvaanam dhyanam tadapi cha na jane stuti kadha / na jane mudraasthe tadapi cha na jane vilapanam / param jane Matha thwad- anusaranam klesa haranam.'

(From Devyaparadha Kshamapana Stotram by Sri Adi Sankaracharya)- I am not conversant with Mantras, Yantras, Hymns of Praise, Invocations, Meditation, Stories of Your Glories, 'Mudras' (Signs) and implorations; yet I know that if I follow You,

I will certainly overcome my tribulations.

#### **ANNEXTURE**

## Gayatri Sahasramana (Thousand names of Devi Gayatri)

Achintya lakshana, Avyata, Arthamatri Mahesvari, Amritarnava madhayasta, Ajita, Aparajita, Animadi -gunadhara, Arkamandalasamsthita, Ajara, Aja, Apara, Adharma (She has no dharma or caste etc.),
Akshasutradhara, Akaradyaksharanta (from the letter 'AA' to 'Ksha'), Arishadvargabhedini, Anjandri-

pratiksha, Anjanadrinivasini, Aditi, Ajapa, Avidya, Aravinda nibhekshana, Antarvahisthita, Avidya dhvamsini, Antaratmika, Aja, Ajamukhavasa, Aravindanibhanana, Ardhamatara ( thus called Vyanjana – varnatmika), Arthadaananjana, Arimandalamardini, Asuraghni, Amavasya, Alaksighni, Antyajarchita, Adi Lakshmi, Adi Sakti, Akriti, Ayatana, Adityapadavichara, Adityaparisevita, Acharya, Avartana, Achara, Adi Murti Nivasini, Agniyi, Amari, Adya, Aradhya, Asanasthita, Adharanilaya, Adhara, Akasanta nivasini, Aham Tatva, Adyakshara Samayukta, Antarikshasarupini, Adityamanadalagata, Antaradhvanta nasini, Indira, Istada, Ishta Indiranivekshana, Iravati, Indrapada, Indrani, Indurupini, Ikshukodanda Samyukta, Isusandhanakarini, Indranilasamakara, Idapingalikarupini, Indrakshi, Isvari, Devi Ihatraya vivavarjita, Uma, Usha, Udunibha, Urvakaphalanana, Uduprabha, Udumati, Udupa, Udumadhyayaga, Urdha, Uddhakesi, Urdhadhogati bhedini, Urdhavahupriya, Urmimalavaggranthi- dayani, Rita, Rishi, Ritumati, Rishidevanamaskrita, Rigveda, Rinahatri, Rishimandala charini, Riddhida, Rijumargastha, Rijudharma, Rijuprada, Rigveda nilaya, Rijvi, Luptadharma pravartini, Lutadivara sambhuta, Luta divisa harini, Ekakshara, Ekamatra, Eka, Ekakanishtha, Aindri, Iravatarudha, Aimushmika prada, Omkara, Oshadhi, Ota, Otaprota nivasini, Aurbba, Aoushadha sampanna, Anda madhyasthita, Ahankara nirupini (Visargarupini), Katyayani, Kalaratri, Kamakshi, Kamasundari, Kamala, Kamini, Kanta, Kamada, Kalakantini, Kari kumbhastala bhara, Karavira Suvasini, Kalyani, Kundalavati, Kurukshetra nivasini, Kuruvinda dalakara, Kundali, Kumudalaya, Kalajibha, Kalarasya, Kalika, Kalarupini, Kamaniguna, Kanti, Kaladhara, Kumudvati, Kausiki, Kamalakara, Kamakara prabhanjani, Kaumari, Karunapangi, Kakubanta, Karipriya, Kesari, Kesavanuta, Kadamba kusuma priya, Kalindi, Kalika, Kanchi, Kalasodbhava Samstuta, Kamamata, Krakupati, Kamarupa, Kripavati, Kumari, Kunda- nilaya, Kirati, Kiravahana, Kaikeyi, Kokilalapa, Ketaki, Kusumapiya, Kamandaludhara, Kali, Karma nirmula karini, Kalahamsa gati, Kaksha, Krita, Kuatukamangala, Kasturi tilaka, Kamra, Karidragamana, Kuhu, Karpuralepana, Krishna, Kapila, Kuhurasraya, Kutastha, Kudhara, Kukusisthakhilavistapa, Khadgaketadhara, Kharbha, Khechari, Khagavahana, Khattangadharini, Khyata, Khagarajosparisthita, Khalagni, Khanditajara, Kadhakishnya pradayani, Khandendu tilaka, Ganga, Ganesha guha pujita, Gayatri, Gomati, Gita, Gandhari, Ganalolupa, Gautami, Gamini, Gadha, Gandharasara sevita, Govinda charanakranta, Gunatraya vibhavita, Gandharvi, Gahvari, Gotra, Girisa, Gamana gami, Guhanavasa, Gunavati, Gurupapa pranasini, Gurbhi, Gunavati, Guhya, Gopatavya, Gunadayani, Girija, Guhya matangi, Garuda dhvajaVallabha, Garvapaharini, Goda, Gokulashta, Gadadhara, Gokarna nilayasakta, Guhyamandala vardhini, Gharmada, Ghanda, Ghanta, Ghora Danava Mardini, Ghrini Mantra Mayi, Ghosha, Ghana Sampada Dayini, Ghantaravapriya, Ghrana, Ghrini Santhushti Karini, Ghanari mandala, Ghurna, Gritachi, Ghanavegini, Gnana dhatu mayi, Charcha, Charchini, Charuhasini, Chatula, Chandika, Chitra, Chitramalyayi bhushita, Chaturbhuja, Charudanta, Chaturi, Charitaprada, Chulika, Chitra vastranta, Chandrama Karna kundala, Chandrahasa, Charudatri, Chakori, Chandrahasini, Chandra dhatri, Chakori, Chauri, Chora, Chandika, Chanchat vagvadini, Chandrachuda, Choravinasini, Charu chandana liptangi, Chanchachachamaravijita, Charumadhya, Charumati, Charugati, Chandila, Chandrarupini, Charu homapriya, Charva, Charita, Charubahuka, Chandramanadala madhyasta, Chandramandala darpana, Chakrayakastani, Chesta, Chitra, Charuvilasini, Chitra svarupa, Chandravati, Chanrama, Chandanapriya, Chodayitri (impelling Jivas to action), Chirapragna, Chataka, Charuhetuki, Chhatrayata, Chhatradhara, Chhaya, Chhanda paricchhadha, Chhayadevi, Chhandra nakha, Chhannendriaya vishaparnini, Chhandonushtup parishtantha, Chhidropadrava bhedini, Chedha, Chhatrasvari, Chhinna, Chhurika, Chhelanpriya, Janani, Janmararahita, Jataveda, Jaganmayi, Jahnavi, Jatila, Jatri, Jaramarana varjita, Jambudvipa Vati, Jwala, Jayanti, Jalasalini, Jitendriya, Jitakrodha, Jitamitra, Jagatpriya, Jatarupamayi, Jihva, Janaki, Jagati, Jara, Janitri, Jahnutanaya, Jagattrayahitaisini, Jvalamuli, Japavati, Jvaraghni, Jitavistapha, Jitakrantamayi, Jvala, Jagtriti, Jvaradevata, Jvalanti, Jalada, Jyeshtha, Jayaghosha sphota dinmukhi, Jambhini, Jimbhana, Jrimbha, Jvalanmanikya kundala, Jinjikha, Jananirghosha, Jinjha Maruta vegini, Jhallakivadya Kusala, Nripa, Nibhuja, Tanka bhedini, Tankabana Samayukta, Tankini, Tankiganakritaghosha, Tanakiya moha rosha, Tankarakrani, Tha Tha Savdaninadini, Damari, Dakini, Dimbha, Dundamaraikanirjita, Damari-tantra margastha, Danda damuari nadini, Dandiravasaha, Dimbhalasat Krida parayana (dancing happy in battles), Dhundi Vighnesa Janani, Dakkha hasta,

Dhilivraja, Nityajnana, Nirupama, Nirupama, Narmada, Triguna, Tripada, Tantri, Tulasi, Taruna, Tara, Trivikrama padakranta, Turiya pada gamini, Turiya dityasamkasa, Tamasi, Tuhina, Tura, Trikala Sampanna, Trivali, Trilochana, Tri Sakti, Tripura, Tunga, Turanga Vadana, Timangilagila, Tibra, Tristothra, Tamasanini, Tantra matra Viseshajna, Tarimadhya, Trivistapa, Trisandhya, Tristani, Tosha Samstha, Talapratakapini, Tantakini, Tisurabha, Tuhina chala vasini, Tuiala Samvukta, Tahahara Valipriya, Tilahomapriya, Trilochana Priya, Titha, Tamala Kusumakriti, Taraka, Triyuta, Tanvi, Trisanku Parivari Priya, Talodari, Tirobhasha, Tatamka Priya vadani, Trijata, Tittree, Trishta, Tribhida, Tarunakriti, Taptakanchana Samkasa, Tapta Kanchana Bhushana, Triabaka, Trivarga, Trikalajnana dayani, Tarpana, Triptida, Tripta, Tamasi, Tumvarustuta, Tarksyatha, Trigunakara, Tribhagi, Tanuvallari, Tatkari, Tharava, Thanta, Dohini, Dinavatsala, Danantakari, Durga, Durgasura nibharhini, Devariti, Devaratri, Draupadi, Dhunda bherushna, Devyani, Duravasa, Daridya bhedini, Diva, Damodara priya, Dipta, Digvasa, Digvimohini, Dandakaranya nilaya, Dandini, Deva Pujita, Deva Vandita, Divisada, Dveshini, Danavakriti, Dinana thustha, Diksha, Daivasa- disvarupini, Dhatri, Dhanurdhara, Dhenur dharini, Dharmacharini, Dhurandhara, Dhanur Dharini, Dhanada, Dhanya dohini, Dharmasila, Dhanadhyaksha, Dhanurveda Visarada, Dhriti, Dhanya, Dhaitapada, Dharmarajya priya, Dhruva, Dhumavati, Dhumakesi, Dharma Sastra prakarshini, Nanda, Nandapriya, Nidra, Nirnuta, Nandanatmika, Narmada Nalini, Nila, Nilakanta Samasraya, Rudrani, Narayana Priya, Nitya, Nirmala, Nirguna, Nidhi, Niradhara, Nirupama, Nithyasuddha, Niranjana, Nadabimbu Kalatita, Nadabindu Kalatmika, Nrisimhini, Nagadhara, Nripanga Vibhushita, Naraka klesanasini, Narayana padodbhava, Niravadya, Nirakara, Narada priyakarini, Nanajyoti, Nidhida, Nirmalatmika, Navasutradhara, Nidhi, Nirupadravakarini, Nandaja, Navaratnadhya, Naimisaranya Vasini, Navanita priya, Nari, Nila jeemuta nisvana, Nimeshini, Nadirupa, Nilagriva, Nisisvari, Navamali, Nisumbhagni, Nagaloka Nivasini, Nava jambunada prakhya, Nagalokadhi Devata, Nupura kranta charana, Narachitta pramodini, Nimagna Rakta Nayana, Nirghata-Sama-Nisvana, Nandanodya nilaya, Nirvyahopacharini, Parvati, Paramodara, Parabrahmatmika, Para, Panchakosa vinurmukta, Pancha pataka nasini, Para chitta vidhanajna, Panchika, Pancharupini, Purnima, Parama priti, Parateja Prakasini, Purani, Paurushi, Punya, Purandarikanubhekshana, Patala tala Nimmagna, Prita, Priti vivardhani, Pavani, Pada sahita, Pesala, Papanasini, Prajapati, Parisranta, Parvata stana mandala, Padmapriya, Padmasamstha, Padmakshi, Padma sambhava, Padmapatra, Padmapada, Padmini, Priyabhashini, Pasupasa vinirmukta, Purandari, Puravasini, Pushkala, Purusha, Parbha, Parijata kusuma priya, Patirvata, Patirvatangi, Pushpahasa Parayana, Prajnavati suta, Pouthri, Putrapujya, Payasvini, Pattipasa dhara, Pankti, Pitriloka pradayani, Purani, Punyaseela, Pranatarti vinasini, Pradhyumna Janani, Pusta, Pitamaha parigraha, Pundaripuravasa, Pundari samanana, Pritujangha, Pritu bhuja, Pritu pada, Pritodari, Pravala sobha, Pingakshi, Pritavasa, Prachavala, Prasava, Pustida, Punya, Pratishtha, Pranava, Pati, Pancha arna, Panchavani, Panchika, Panjarasthitha, Paramaya, Parajyoti, Paraprithi, Paragati, Parakashtha, Pasupa hasa, Pritudara, Pitangi, Pitavasa, Pitasaya, Pisachini, Pita Kriya, Pisachaghni, Patakshi, Patukriya, Pancha bhaksha priyachara, Puthana prana ghatini, Punyagavana madhyasta, Punya-theerdha nisevita, Panchagni, Parasakti, Paramadhada karini, Pushpa kandasthita, Pusa, Poshikakila visthapa, Panapriya, Pancha sikha, Pannagopari sayani, Pancha matratmika, Prithvi, Patika, Pitrudohini, Purana nyaya mimamsa, Patali, Pushpa gandhini, Punya priya, Paradatri, Paramargaika gochara, Pravala sobha, Purnasa, Pranava, Palhabodari, Phalini, Phalada, Phalgu, Phutkari, Phalakakriti, Phanindra bhoga sayana, Phani mandala mandita, Balabala, Bahumata, Bala tapani bhumsuka, Vandaya, Balabhadra priya, Badava, Buddhi Samsthita, Bandi Devi, Bilavati, Badisaghni, Balipriya, Bandhavi, Bodini, Buddhirbanduka kusuma priya, Balabhanu prabhakara, Brahmi, Brahmana Devata, Brihaspati- sthuta, Brinda, Brindavani Vihara, Balakini, Bilahara, Bilavasa bahudayaka, Bahunetra, Bahupada, Bahu karnavatamsika, Bahu bahu yuta, Bija rupini, Bahurupini, Bindunada kalatita, Bindu nadavsa rupini, Buddhagodhanguli trana, Badarasrama vasini, Brindaraka, Brihat Skanda, Brihati, Banapatrini, Brindadaksha, Bahunuta, Vanita, Bahu Vikrama, Baddha Padmasanasina, Bilva patra talasthita, Bodhi druma nija vasa, Badhista, Bindu darpana, Bala, Varasana vati, Badabanala vegini, Brahmanda bahirantashta, Brahma kankana sutrini, Bhavani, Bhishanavati, Bhavini, Bahyaharini, Bhadra Kali, Bhujangakshi, Bharati, Bharatasaya, Bhairavi, Bhisha kankara, Bhutida, Bhuti malini, Bhagini,

Bhoganirata, Bhadrada, Bhuri Vikrama, Bhutavasa, Bhrigulata, Bhargavi, Bhu surarchita, Bhagirathi, Bhogavati, Bhavastha, Bhishangvara, Bhamina, Bhogini, Bhasa, Bhavani, Bhuri dakshina, Bhargatmika, Bhamavati, Bhaya bhandha Vimochani, Bhajaniya, Bhuta dhatri ranjita, Bhuvanesvari, Bhujangavalaya, Bhima, Bherunda, Bhaga dheyini, Mata, Maya, Madhumati, Madhu jihva, Manu Priya, Maha devi, Maha Bhagya, Maliri, Minalochana, Mayatita, Madhu manasa, Madhu draya, Manayi, Madhu sambhoota, Mithila pura vasini, Madhukaitava samharthi, Medini, Mega malini, Mandodara, Maha Maya, Maithili, Masrina priya, Maha Lakshmi, Maha Kali, Maha Kanya, Mahesvari, Mahendri, Merutanaya, Mandara kusumarchita, Manjumanjira charana, Mokshada, Manju bhashini, Madhudravini, Mudra, Malaya, Malayanvita, Medha, Marakastyama, Magadhi, Menakatmaja, Mahamari, Maha vira, Maha Syama, Manustuta, Matrika, Mahibhasha, Munudapada Vikrama, Muladharishtha, Mugha, Manipura nivasina, Mrigakshi, Mahisuradha, Mahishasura mardini, Yogasana, Yoga maya, Yoga, Youvanakasraya, Youvani, Yuddha madhyastha, Yamuna, Youga dharini, Yakshini, Yoga Yukta, Yaksha raja prasutini, Yatra, Yana bindhanajna, Yadu yamsa Sambhaya, Yakaranti hakaranta, Yajushi, Yajna rupini, Yamini, Yoga nirata, Yuta dhana bhayankari, Rukmini, Ramani, Rama, Revati, Renuka, Rati, Raudri, Raudrapriyakara, Rama Mata, Rati priya, Rohini, Rajyada, Reva, Rasa, Rajiya lochana, Rakesi, Rupa sampanna, Ratna simhasana stitha, Raktamalyambara dhari, Ratnagandha vilopana, Raja hamsa samaruddha, Rambha, Rakavali priya, Ramaniya Yugadhara, Rajitakhila bhutala, Ruru Charma Paridhara, Ratini, Ratnamalika, Rogesi, Rogasamhari, Ravini, Romaharshini, Ramachandra Pradakranta, Ravana chcheda karana, Ratna Vastra Parischchinva, Rathastha, Rukma bhushana, Lajjadhidevata, Lola, Lalita, Ling dharini, Lakshmi, Lola, Luptavisa, Lokini, Lokavisruta, Lajja, Lambothari, Lalana, Loka Dharini, Varada, Vandita, Vidya, Vaishnavi, Vimalakriti, Varahi, Viraja, Varsha, Varalakshmi, Vilasini, Vinata, Vyoma madyastha, Varijasana Samstitha, Varuni, Venu Sambhuta, Viti gotra, Virupini, Vayu mandala madhyastha, Varijasana samstitha, Varuni, Venu sambhuta, Vitihotra, Virupini, Vayu mandala madhyasta, Vidhi Kriya, Vishnu Patni, Vishnu mati, Visalakshi, Vasundhara, Vama deva priya, Vela, Vajrini, Vasudohini, Vedyakshara Paritamgi, Vajapeya phalaprada, Vasavi, Vamajanai, Vkakunthalaya, Vara, Vyasa Priya, Varmadhara, Valmiki parisevita, Sakambhari, Siva, Santa, Sarada, Saranagati, Satodari, Subhachara, Sumbhasura mardini, Sobhavati, Sivakara, Sankarardha saririni, Sona, Subhasya, Subhra, Sirah Skanda karini, Saravati, Sarananda, Sarajjyotana, Subhanana, Sarabha, Sulini, Sabari, Suddha, Sukhavahana, Srimati, Sridharananda, Sravana nanda dayini, Sarvani, Sarbhari vandya, Sadbhasha, Sadritu priya, Sadadhara sthita Devi, Shanmukha priya karini, Sadanga rupa Sumati, Surasura namaskrita, Sarasvati, Sadadhara, Sarva mangala karini, Samaganapriya, Sukshama, Savitri, Samasambhava, Sarva vasa, Sadananda, Sustani, Sagarambara, Sarvaisyarya priya, Siddhi, Sadhu babndhu parakrama, Saptarshi mandala gata, Somamandala vasini, Sarvajna, Sandrakaruna, Samanadhika varjita, Sarvottunga Sangahina, Sadguna, Sakaleshtada, Saragha (Bee), Surya tanaya, Sukhesi, Somasamhati, Hiranya varna, Harini, Hrimkari, Hamsa vahini, Kshauma vastra paritangi, Kshirabdhi tanaya, Kshama, Gayatri, Savitri, Parvati, Sarasvati, Vedagarbha, Vedaroha, Sri Gayatri, and so on.

[Reading, hearing or memorising the Great Names of Devi Gayatri with cleanliness of body and mind, devotion and sincerity as contained in Devi Bhagavata would indeed yield unimaginable fruits of destroying the gravest sins committed, ensuring prosperity and well being as also leading a disease free and contented life. Particularly significant are the eighth lunar days when the Gayatri Saharsanamas are rendered in the company of Brahmanas of pledge, after one's own daily Sandhya vandana, Dhyamam, Japam, Homam and absolute concentration and commitment, on a strictly 'Nishkama' basis or without anticipations of results. The Saharanamavali ought not to be made available indiscriminately to anybody for bravado or cheap publicity. A strict caution is being imposed that only those really deserving persons of 'Achara' and dedication should have access to these Mighty and Highly Powerful Mantras of Devi Gayatri.]

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# ESSENCE OF GANESHA MAHIMA

( GANESHA PURANA SAARAAMSHA ADDED)

Compiled, composed and interpreted by V.D.N.Rao, Chennai.

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### **PART I**

Over view of Puranas: Ganeshaavirbhaava-swarupa- sindura varna-naamakarana- vividha naamaas or Ganesha's Origin- Form-Colour-several names

Relevant portions of Essence of Puranas and other scripts from Kamakoti.org website

#### **Brahmanda Purana:**

Encounter of Bhargava and Ganesha, Face-Off by Parvati and Shiva-Krishna's identity.

## Brahmavaivarta Purana:

Encounter of Bhargava and Ganesha, Face-Off by Parvati and Shiva-Krishna's identity

#### Brahmavaivarta Purana:

Ganeshaakhyaana: Utpatti, Shani Veekshana, Kashyapa's curse to Shiva, 'Eka Danta due to fight with Parashurama, Ganesha kavacha and Mahatmya-Ganesha's encounter with Devi Tulasi:

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#### Varaha Purana:

Priority Invocation and adoration on Chaturthi

#### Vishnu Purana:

Tulasi Devi and Ganesga shaapa

## Soundarya Lahari by Adishankara:

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# Ganesha Purana Mahatmya

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ANNEXTURE: Ganesha Gakaara Sahasra Naamaavali

## **PREFACE**

Betwixt Maha Maya and Parameshwara is Ganesha, the singular symbol of auspiciousness, endeavour and success with the primacy of worship from Tri Mutis downward to charaachara jagat. He is the very essence of the entire Universe which is surfiet with Taapatrayaas viz. . Adhi Bhoudika- Adhyatmika and Adhi Daivikas; Ishana Trayas of Praaneshana, Daraa- putra- dhana - sukheshana and Dharmeshana; Trikaranas of Mano -vaachya karmanas; Trikalpa Kaalamaana of Padaardha-Paridhi-Paramanu /Matter-Space-Atom; Trigunas of Sat-Rajas-Tamas. He represents Tri Shaktis of Brahmini, Vaishnavi and Rudranis; Trividha Rishis viz. Brahmarshi, Devarshi, Rajarshi; Trikaankshaas of Kanta-Kanaka- Keerti; Chaturvidha Purusharthaas, Chatur varnas, Chaturaashramas; Chaturvedas; Pancha Bhutas, Pancha bhakshyas, Pancha koshas of Annamaya, Praanamaya, Manomaya, Vigyanamaya and Ananda maya; Panchagnis, Panchendriya. Pancha Tanmatras, Arishad vargas, Shad Chakras Chakras of Moolaadhara, Swadhishthana, Manipura, Anaahita, Visuddha, Agjnaa and Sahasraara; Shat Karmas of Sandhya Vandana, Tarpana, Japa, Homa, Devaarchana, Swaadhyaaya, Atithi Seva; Shat Vedangas: Siksha, Vyakarana, Kalpa Grandha, Nirukta, Chhandas, and Jyotisha; Sapta Lokas, Sapta Dwipas of Jambu, Plaksha, Salmaali, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaka and Pushkala and Sapta Patalaas of Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talaatala, Mahatala, Rasatala and Patalas; Sapta Samudras: Lavana, Ikshurasa, Sura, Ghrita, Dahi, Ksheera and Suswada jala; Sapta Parvatas of Sumeru, Kailasa, Malaya, Himalaya, Udyachala, Agastyachala, Suvela and Gandhamadana; Sapta Kratus viz. Shodassi, Ukta, Purushi, Agnishtoma, Aptaryama, Atiratra, Vajapeya, and Goshava; Ashtanga Yogas of Yama- Niyama- Aasana- Pranaayama-Pratyahara-Dharana-Dhyana-Samadhi. Ganesha is actively assisted by Ashta Loka Paalakas: Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirruti, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera and Ishana; Ashta Bhiravas viz. Kaala, Asitaanga, Rudra, Krodha, Kapala Bhishana, Unmatta and Samharas as Ashta Bhairavis for Graha Shanti viz. Mahakali, Neela Saraswati, Chhinna mastaka, Shodashi, Kahairavi, Dhumavati and Bagalamukhi; and Ashta Lakshmis of Dhanya, Dhairya, Santaana, Vijaya, Vidya, Bhagya, Gaja and Varada; Ashta Matrikas Brahmani, Vaishnavi, Maheshwari, Aindri, Vaarahi, Chamunda, Naarasimhi and Kaumari; Ashtaavasus are viz. Aapa, Dhruva, Soma, Dhara, Anila, Anala, Pratyusha and Prabhasa; Nava Durgas Shailaputri, Brahmacharini, Chandraghanta, Kushmanda, Skanda Mata, Katyayani, Kaala Ratri, Maha Gauri, and Siddhi Dhatri; Navagrahas and most certainly the Dashavataras of Vishu, apart from Vishvadevas, Ekadasha Rudras, Dwaadashaadithyas, Daitya Daanava Pishachadi evil forces too! Such is the singular balancer of Dharma-Adharma ,Truth and Falsity, and Maya and Paramatma is Ganesha!

Having been associated with translating into English a few scripts as a drop in the oceanic Dharma Prachara of Kanchi Mutt, a late realisation has dawned as to how indeed Ganesha Mahima in a *telling form* has been missed in my contributions, as perhaps Lord Ganesha's grace has not been commanded so far. Now, with some contentment, may this brief script be placed with prostrations at the 'paada padmaas' of Maha Swami of Kanchi Mutt. Indeed, I am specially indebted to HH. Vijayendra Saraswati for his pro active instructions, guidance and encouragement for well over a decade with his blessings.

**VDN** Rao

Chennai

## **ESSENCE OF GANESHA MAHIMA**

# ( GANESHA PURANA SAARAAMSHA ADDED)

Ganaanaam tvaa Ganapatigm havaamahe kavim kaveenaamupashravastamam, jyeshtha raajam Brahmanaam Brahmanasapat aa nah shrunootibhih seeda saadhanam/ Rig Veda 2-23-1

#### Introduction

Each and every Hindu with belief of Dharma, irrespective of caste or gender, wakes off from bed in the morning remembering Ganeshwara to ensure that through out the following day and night sleep into the bed, should pass off without obstructions, hurdles or mishappenings and with contentment, be it from family, surroundings and society, without no shows of evil energies. Equally significant is that all Hindu families all over the world do unfailingly perform the Vinayaka Chaturthi Vrata on the Shukla Chaturdhi of Bhadrapada Month each and every year religiously with faith, dedication and austerity. Invariably the Vrata irrespective of caste, creed and by man-woman-child and social barriers is observed to one's own devotion.. Not only this but Ganesha Smarana is a must preceding all the Devata Vratas, Yagjnya Karyas, upanayana-vivaha-and auspicious deeds like Griha Praveshas, and even all social functions- be they Shravana- Pathana - Shraavya- Nartanaadi Kalaa related ones to ensure their successful completion.

Following pages seek to provide in the <u>Part I</u>, an over view of Puranas on Ganesha's origin-form-several names and titles, Ganesha as a destroyer of Evil-hurdle remover, primacy of worship and abheestha siddhi. Relevant portions of the Essence of Puranas as also sources like Essence of Soundarya Lahari, Essence of Dharma Sindhu, Essence of Popular Stotras, Bharat Yatra Smriti as published by the website of kamakoti. org./ books section and by google are also narrated. Other Sources too have been tapped too.

Besides, Part II of this Script, Essence of Ganesha Purana is added.

#### **PARTI**

Over view of Puranas: Ganeshaavirbhaava-swarupa- sindura varna-naamakarana- vividha naamaas / Ganesha's Origin- Form-Colour-several names

Ganesha's Origin:

Shiva Purana mentions that in in the Shveta Varaha Kalpa Devi Parvati mentioned to her maids Jaya and Vijaya that there was none else worthy of worship excepting her own body sweat which eventually took the form of an outstanding form of a boy named Ganesha. The Purana further states: When Nandi was asked to bar entry into the Interior Place of Parvati as She was taking bath, Nandi no doubt prevented but Bhagavan still entered and She was not amused. She decided to create an idol of a boy which was infused with life and empowered Him to challenge anybody with the necessary powers. The boy followed the instruction and did not allow entry even to Shiva. The Pramadha ganas were asked to teach a lesson to the boy by Shiva but they were defeated in no time. Shiva Himself decided to force His entry but to no avail. Finally, an irritated Bhagavan snapped the boy's head and Parvati became furious and Her angry manifestations surprised Shiva Himself. She insisted that the boy be brought to life forth with. Shiva suggested locating anybody sleeping in the northern direction and the Shivaganas were able to trace only

an elephant. The severed head of the boy was fixed with that of the elephant and He was revived. The assembly of Deities who first fought with the boy and witnessed the entire scene earlier decided that any function in the World ought to be commenced with worship of Ganesha foremost as He is the Lord of preventing impediments and of providing success. Ganesha's worship on Bhadrapada Sukla Chathurdhi is a must all over Bharatadesa as one is dreaded of becoming a victim of undeserving blames since Moon God received a curse from Ganesha that whoever saw the Moon on the particular Chaturdhi night without worshipping Him would become a sure target!

Vamana Purana details the origin of Gauri of gaura varna from Parvati Devi and then proceeds with the birth of Ganesha: Parvati's Tapasya led to reappearance as Gauri: After the Sacred Wedding, Shankara and Parvati moved around freely in enjoyment and asked Vishwakarma to build a glorious home for them, performed Yagna worthy of Grihastaashrama and the couple were nicely settled down. One day out of fun, Parama Shiva addressed Devi Parvati as Kaali or of dark complexion. She felt that his fun was unbearable and left for serious Tapasya to Brahma deva and secured golden complexion. As she discarded her earlier Form, Indra requested her to give away the earlier Form to him and since she was materialised from Krishna Kosha or of deep blue nature, she was named as Katyaayani;, she was also called as Koushiki since she was materialised from Brahma kosha and since Indra called her as his sister, Indra too was known as Koushika. Indra then asked Katyayani /Koushiki to reach Vindhya Parvata and thus she became Vindhyavaasini and Indra gifted a Lion as her Vahana /Carrier. After this incident, Devi Uma who discarded her earlier Rupa now replaced with Suvarna Rupa and identified herself as Gouri. Maha Deva was too pleased and both the couple spent some thousand years in Garhastya all by themselves ignoring the out side contacts, which had terribly distressed Devatas and the entire Universe was upset too. Indra and Devatas were concerned about fresh threats of Indratwa as there were forebodings to that effect and approached Brahma who wished that Mahadeva's continued immersion in the stage of 'Manmoha' for Gauri would contitinue before Daityas would gain strength; this concern got Indra and Devas worried and tried to somehow manage an entry to Shiva's abode but found that sneaking into the adode would not be possible as Maha Nandi was holding the security. Even while Indra and Devatas were waiting outside the Abode, Agni took the form of a Swan and sneaked in and having assumed a Sukshma Rupa conveyed to Parama Shiva that Indra and Devas were waiting outside to desperately meet him. Maha Deva stepped out and let Indra and Devas come inside; he said that since he was actually enjoying Devi Gauri he was disturbed and any of the Devatas should take over the weight, radiance and power of Parama Siva's 'Shukra' (Semen)! Surya and Chandra felt that they might be unable to do so but Agni Deva emboldened himself and asked Shiva to release the Sukra so that he could consume it. Shiva did so and then he asked Indra as to what was the emergency about! Indra had respectfully entreated to terminate the period of enjoymernt so that he could very kindly concentrate on many tasks pending. As Maha Deva agreed to do so, Indra and Devas returned to Swarga and he narrated the incident to Parvati and the latter got furious that the disturbance caused by Indra and Devas was indeed frustrating and cursed Indra and others that since they did not allow to let her bear a child at the nick of time, they too would become childless! Ganeshotpanna: In an angry and vexatious mood, Gauri entered the 'Snaana shaala' and asked her maid Malini to massage her body and as the maid applied flavoured milk cream the sweat of her angry body got evaporated; when massaged Gauri's body collected body dirt and made a figure viz. Ganesha with four hands, broad chest and handsome and later on resumed her bath and left later to Puja Mandir to worship Maha Deva. Thereafter, Parama Shiva entered the same Abhyagana Griha (bath room), and noticed the Ganesha Pratima apparently made by Parvati's body dirt during her

Abhyangana. Maha Deva added his body dirt too to the Pratima and made an addition of an elephant trunk to the Murti which as he took his Snaana got washed his own sweat, bhasma and sacred water. The Pratima came alive as the combined body dirt, sugandhas and water and Shiva told Parvati that he was their own son! Gauri was surprised to see their child with an elephant face and excellent features and embraced him: Yattadangamalaadwiyam krutam Gajamukham Naram, Tatah preetaa Girisutaa tam putram parishashvajey/ Murdhina chaina -mapura -aghnaaya tatah Sarvobraveedumaam, Naayakena vinaa Devi tava Bhutopi Purtakah/ Yasmaajjatastato naamnaa bhavishyati Vinaayakah, Yesha vighna sahasraani Suraadeenaam harishyati/ Pujayishyanti chaivaasya lokaa Devi charaacharaah, Ityava muktatwaa Devaastu Dattavaamstanayaaya hi/ Sahaayantu Gana Sreshthamnaamnaa khyaatam Ghatodaram, Tathaa Matruganaa ghoraa bhutaa Vighna karaaschaye/Tey Sarvey Paramoshena Devyaah preetyopa- paadinah, Devi cha Sasutam drustwaa paraam mumadavaapacha/ (Maha Deva asked Shailaja Devi to find her own son and the latter embraced him who was materialised by the body dirts of hers and his as the child was a charming boy with an elephant face; Shiva said that the child was born without any 'Nayaka' and thus would be called Vinayaka, who could forestall thousands of Vighnaas of Devas. The entire Universe would worship Ganesha said Parvati who created Ghatodara Ganaas to assist him as also Matru Ganaas and Vighna Bhutaas to destroy who did not worship him. Devi Parvati felt exremely happy and contented with the arrival of Ganeswara!

# Ganesha swarupa- Sindura Varna

Before the puja related to any Devata involving mantra - tantras- upaasana, fulfill-ment of each and every task, Ganesha's invocation is a must. *Svarupam mantra yantranaam Devataanaam visheshatah*, *agjnaatvaa bhajate moodho na siddhim praanuyaat kvachit/* Skanda Purana describes that Ganesha's Gajaanana swarupa is replete with all the 'shubha kalshanas' or auspicious features and traits as Gambheera-Charurhasta-Saptarakta-Shadunnata-Pancha deergha- Pancha sukshma-and trivisteerna as mentioned in Saamudrika Shastra.Ganesha's body colour is of sindura varna. As explained in Shiva Purana, as Devi Parvati applied that ointment as Shiva replaced with the head of an elephant. Ganesha Purana states that Ganesha as a boy killed Daitya named Sindura and the odour of the daitya's blood was smeared by Ganesha on his body.

## Ganesha's naama karana and Vividha naama

Various Puranas pronounced the names of Ganesha as Gajapati, Gana naayaka, Gajavaktra, Gajaanana, Ekadanta, Lambodara, Shurapakarna, Chaturhasta, Paasha-ankusha-parashu-kamala-aksha sutra-Danta dhaari, Naaga yagjnopapeeti, Chandra shekhara, Mooshakadhwaja, Mooshaka vahana, Raktavarna, Raktavastradhaari, Raktagandhaanulepita and Raktapushpa supujita. According to Varaha Purana, Devi Parvati got infatuated with astonishment on seeing a sky like form of Parama Shiva himself in Ganesha and instantly understanding the 'stree swabhava' or woman like feeling, Shiva then cursed Ganesha as Gajavaktra or Elephant Faced, Pralamba jathara or Lambodara with huge belly and Sarpopaveeti or of Serpent made yagjnopaveeta. As Shiva was serious while the curse, he sweated profusely and the drops convedrted his body blue and thus got Vinaayaka generated and commissioned with the consent of Tri Murtis as well, as the Head of Pramadhaganas and thus henceforth became popular as Ganesha-Ganapati-Ganaadhipa-Gananaayaka. Brahma Vaivarta Purana defines Ganesha as 'Ga' as 'Jnaanaartha vaacha' and 'Na' is of 'Nirvaanaartha' or bliss and thus the combination of Naayaka (husband) and Samyoga (union) or of Shiva and Parvati. Agni Purana while describing the Ganesha Puja Vidhana and the Anga

nyaasa, Peetha Puja, Maanasopachaara Puja and Gayatri Mantra, then describes the various names of Ganesha as Ganapati-Ganaadhipa, Ganesha, Gana Naayaka, Ganakreeda, Vakratunda, Eka damshtra, Mahodara, Gaja Vaktra, Lambakukshi, Vikata, Vighna naashaka, Dhumravarna, and Mahendra. In the peetha puja, the hridyaya nyaasa gives the names of Mahodara, Danda hasta, Jaya, Ganaadhipa, Gana naayaka, Ganeshwara, Vaktra tunda, Ekadanta, Utkata, Lambodara, Gaja Vaktra, Vikataanana, Vighna naashana, Dhumra varna, Mahendra and Vighnesha. Likewise, Garuda Purana details in the course of Ganesha Puja, the Dwaadasha Namaas of Ganapujya, Vakratunda, Eka damshtra, Traimbaka, Neelagreeva, Lambodara, Vikata, Vighna Raaja, Dhumra varna, Bhaalachandra, Ganapati and Hastimukha, Brahmanda Purana narrates SAPTA KOTI VINAAYAKA'S ADHIPATYA like Aamoda, Pramoda, Sumukha, Durmukha, Arighna and Vighnaharta. This Purana highlights 'Tantra grandha prabhaavita' 51 Ganesha Naamaas viz. Vighneshwara- Vighna raaja-Vinaayaka-Shivottama-Vighvakrit-Vighna hartaa-Avighnarata-Gana naayaka-Ekadanta- Dvidanta-Gaja vaktra- Niranjana-Kapardavaan-Deergha mukha-Shankukarna-Vrishabha dhvaja- Gana naadha-Gajendraasya-Shurpakarna- Vrishabha dhwaja- Gana naadha-Gajendrasya-Shurpakarna-Trilochana-Lambodara-Maha naada- Chaturmurti-Sadaashiva-Aamoda-Durmukha / Durmada-Sumukha-Pramodaka- Ekapaada-Dvipaada / Dvijihva-Shura-Veera-Shanmukha-Varada-Vaamadeva- Vakratunda-Dvidantaka-Senaani-Graamani-Matta-Vimatta-Matta mushaka vaahana-Jati-Mundee-Khadgee-Varenya-Vrishaketana- Bhakshapriya-Meghanaada-Ganapa-Ganeshwara. Mudgala Purana enumerates the following 33 Ganesha Swarupas: Bala Ganapati-Taruna Ganapati-Bhakta Ganapati-Veera GanapatiSiddha Ganapati-Ucchishtha Ganapati-Vighnesha-Kshipra Ganapati-Heramba-Lakshni Ganapati-Maha Ganapati-Vijaya Ganapati-Vijaya Ganapati-Vijaya Ganapati-Vijaya Ganapati-Urdhya Ganapati-Ekaakshara Ganapati-Vara Ganapati-Tryakshara Ganapati-Kshipraprasaadana Ganapati-Haridraa Ganapati-Ekadanta Ganapati-Srishti Ganapati-Uddanda Ganapati-Rinavimochana Ganapati-Dhridha Vinaayaka-Dwimukha Ganapati-Trimukha Ganapati-Yoga Ganapati-Simha Ganapati-Durga Ganapati-Sankatahara Ganapati.

<u>Daitya hara Ganesha-vighna naashana-agra pujyata-puja vidhana-abheeshta siddhi / Ganesha as the destroyer of Evil- hurdle remover- primacy of worship</u>

Daitya hara: As in the case of Tri Murtis and Shakti Forms, Ganesha has had the reputation of uprooting all the forms of Evil and preserve Peace and Auspiciousness in the Universe. As per Linga Purana, Lord Shiva stated that the manifestation of Ganesha is to destroy Daityas and save Brahma vaadis. Mudgala Purana details various manifestations of Ganesha as of killing Daityas: Vakratundaavataarascha dehaanaam Brahma thaarakah, Matsaraasura hantaa cha simhavaahanagah smtitah/ Ekadantaavataaro vai dehaanaam Brahmadhaarakah, Madaasurasya hantaa sa aakhuvaaha -nagah smritah/ Mahodara iti khyaato Jnaana Brahma prakaashakah, Mohaasurasya shatruvaim aakhu- vaahanagah smritah/ Gajaananah sa vigjneyah saankhebhyah siddhi daayakah, Lobhaasura prahartaa vai aakhugascha prakeertitah/ Lambovataaro vai Krodhaasura nibarhanah, Shakti Brahmaakhugah sad yat tasya dhaaraka uchyate/ Vikato naama vikhyaatah Kaamaasura vidaahakah, Mayura vaahanash -chaayam Sourabrahmadharah smritah/ Vighnaraajaavataarascha shesha vaahana uchyate, Mamata--asura hantaa cha Vishnubrahmoti vaachakah/ Dhumra varnaavataarascha abhimaanaasura naashakah, akhuvaahana evaasou Shivaatmaatu sa uchyate/

Vakratunda sporting the back on a roaring lion killed *Matsaraasura*. Seated comfortalby as a 'mooshaka vaahana', the Lord with His 'ekadanta' the single tusk destroyed *Madaasura*. Mooshaka vahana Ganesha as manifested as Mahodara killed *Mohaasura*. Assuming the title of Gajaanana killed *Lobhaasura* while

as Lambodara destroyed *Krodhaasura*. The outstanding evil of the Society viz. *Kaamaasura* was subdued and killed by Ganesha as Mayura Vahana while as Sesha Vahana Vighna Raja killed *Mamataasura*. As Mooshaka Vaahana, Maha Ganesha destroyed *Abhimaanaasura*. Thus as Vakratunda-Ekadanta and such 'avataaraas', Ganesha destroyed Matsara, Mada, Moha, Lobha, Krodha, Kaama, Mamata and Ahankaara naamaka asuras.

[ Speaking of Arishad Vargas viz. Kama krodha lobha moha mada matsaras or excessive desires, anger, selfishness and avarice, infatuation, ego and jealousy, Gita states in Sankha Yoga: Dhyayato vishayaan pumsah sangaste -shuupajaayate, sangaat sanjaayate kaamah kaamaat krodhobhi jaayate, Krodhaat bhavati sammohah sammohaat smriti -bhramshah, smritibhram -shaad buddhinaashah buddhi naashaat pranashyati/ or 'Worldly affairs are the causes of desire; non fulfillment of desires leads to frustration and grief or discontentment; this mental state develops anguish and instability; this anger coupled with wrong judgment affects discretion and further failures. Hence the unique role of Ganesha oppressing the aberrations of human life]

Vighna Naashaka: Various Puranas assert that Ganesha Puja bestows vighna nivaarana, Roga Mukti by Surya Puja, Atma shuddhi by Agni puja, Moksha Laabha by Vishna puja, Jnaana prapti by Shiva puja and Ishvarya-Sukha- Laabha by Durga puja. Varaha Purana clarified that in the days of yore, there was often the tendency of Satyavartis or persons of virtue were invariably subjected to difficulties while others of negativity and evil were scot free. While realising the tendency, Lord Shiva created akaasha like Figure named Ganesha to reverse and reform the tendency of evil to be destroyed and save the persons of virtue as the slogan of 'Satyameva Jayate'. Skanda Purana refers to Ganesha Puja ab initio of 'Samudra Madhana' or the Great Churning of Ksheera Sagara madhana by both Devas and Danavas and thus the end result was 'Amrita', despite massive difficulties like steadying of Mandhara Mountain causing Kurmaavatara of Vishnu and haalaahala agni contained by Shiva as Garala kantha! Linga Purana asserted that Shiva emphasised the ablolute necessity of initiating any task of Shrouta- Smaarta-Loukika karmas. The Purana exclaims that while Tri Murtis and all the Deva Devis make it a fixed necessity for initiating any task, could humans, be they are high intellectuals or below normal, be exceptions unless they are blessed by Ganesha!

Agra Pujyata of Ganesha: Shiva Purana underlined that Shiva assured and bestowed the blessing to Ganesha that in the entire Universe the latter ought to be venerated foremost for any and whatsoever task being performed. Any kind of Deva Vandana- Kaarya kramana of anykind ought to be initialled only after invoking Ganesha. It states: Etat pujaam puraa kritvaa paschaad pujya vayam narah/ Linga Purana states: Jagatretra sarvatra tvam hi Vighna Ganeshwara, sampujyo vandaneeyascha bhavishyasi na samshayah/ Varaha Purana states: Bhavascha Deveshu tathaa mukheshu kaaryeshu chaanteshu mahaanubhaavan, agretu pujaam labhateannyaa cha vinaashaayishyasya kaarya siddhidam/ Brahma Vaivarta Purana asserts: Sarvaagre tava pujaa cha mayaa duddaa Surottama, sarvapuujyascha Yogeendro bhavava vastetyuvaacha tam/ The Purana also states: Pujaasu sarva Devaanaamagre sampujya tam janah, pujaaphalamavaapnoti nirvighnena vrithaanyathaa/ Brahmanda Purana states that Lord Krishna gave the boon that Ganesha has to be accorded the honour of Agra Pujyata and so did Devi Lalitha granted the blessing likewise. Bhavishya Purana states Eka dante Jagannadhe Ganeshe tushtimaagate, pitru deva manushyaaghaaha sarve tushtanti Bharata/ Whosoever pleases Vighna Naashaka foremost should indeed be bestowed with contentment by Pitru-Deva-Manashyas. Further, Skanda Purana assures: Yo kaamamabhidhyaaya Gana naadham prapujayet, sa tam sarvamaapnoti

Maheshvara vacho yathaa/ Maheshwara directed all those seeking fulfillment of desires ought to venerate foremost. Ganesha Purana is emphatic that Ganesha's agrapujyata is 'anivarya' or a firmly established truism- be it for any kind of deed- be it vidyaarambha-griha pravesha-yaatraa rambha-shtouta- smaarta-dhaarmika-loukika karyaas; failure to do so by way of Ganesha Smarana-Vandana-Pujana is asking for troubles as history is replete with numberless instances as proven in Purana- Itihaasaas.

Abheeshta Siddhi: Skanda Purana assures: Aputro labhate putram dhana heeno mahaddhanam shatrujjyati sangraame smritvaa tam Gana naayakam/ Mere thoughtful greeting to Ganesha with sincerity would fulfill the desire for excellent progeny, prosperity and victory in battles and encounters as well as success in life. The Purana in varied references states: Yo naaree patinaa tyaktaa durbhagaa cha virupitaa, saasoubhaagyavaapnoti Gananaadhasya pujayaa/-- Sarvakaaryeshu ye martyaah purvamenam Ganaadhipam, smarishyanti na vai teshaam kaaryahaanirbhavishyati/--Ye tvaam sampujayishyanti karyaarambheshu sarvatah, kaarya siddhinam sandeshasteshaam bhruuyaad giraa mama/- Vivaahe kalahe yuddhe prasthaane krishi karmaani, praveshecha smared yastu bhaktipuurvam Vinaayakam/ Tasya yad vaancchitam sarvam prasaadaat tasya siddhiti/ Those women deserted by their husbands due to their physical or mental disabilities are surely rid of their misfortunes by their dedicated Ganesha Puja-What all tasks are initiated by Ganesha Puja are sure to be succeeded without any hurdle or negativity. Be it in the context of weddings, or wars, or any kind of field works like agriculture and so on, Ganesha Puja with sincerity ought to reap success undoubtedly. Skanda Purana is quoted further: Praataruddhhaya yo matryah smeded Devam Vinaayakam, tasya taddinajaataani siddhim krityaani yaantih/--Smritvaa vaa pujayitvaa vaa yah kaaryaani karishyati, bhavishyant na sandehaasosyaa vichalichaani cha/ Parama Shiva assures that human beings who initiate their tasks and duties even as they conclude their night long sleep and wake up remember Ganesha with their sincere prayers to Him ought to proceed with self confidence, undoubted and smooth success through out the day till their bed time. In this very context, Brahmanda Purana is quoted: Jaatakarmaadi samskaare garbhaadaanaapi cha, yaatraayaam cha vaanijyadou yuddhe Devaarchani shubhe, sankate kaamyaasiddhyaardham pujayed yo Gajaananam, tasya sarvaani karmaani siddhayantaiva na shamshayah/ In reference to various samskaaraas such as Garbhaadaana- Naga Bali - Krucchrama-Prajapatya Vratas, and Prayaschittas - Duttata, Putra Kameshti, Pumsavana and Seemanta, Jaata Karma, Sarva Shanti Prayogas on Sishu janma, Nakshatras and Yogas, Janma Nakshatra Shantis, Nama Karana, Dola- Arohana, Anna Prashana, Karna Vedha, Chooda Karma, Kushmanda Homa, Vidyaarambha, Upanayana, Vivaahaadi kaaryas, Griha Pravesha Ganesha Puja is a forerunner performed with dedication for abheeshtha siddhi and auspiciousness. Similarly Ganaadhipa Puja is the starting point for wars or encounters, yatras, krishi karmas, and so on. Ganesha Purana aptly Summarises in this context: Sumukashcha kapilo gajakarnakah, Lambodascha vikato vighna naasho Ganaadhipah/ Dhumraketurganaadhyaksho bhaalachandro Gajaananah, dwaasashaitaani naamaani yah pathecchrunuyaadapi/ Vidyaarambhe Vivaahecha pravesho nirgame tathaa, sangraame sankatechiva vighnastasya na jaayate/

# Relevant portions of Essence of Puranas and other scripts from Kamakoti.org website

# **Brahmanda Purana**

Encounter of Bhargava and Ganesha, Face-Off by Parvati and Shiva-Krishna's identity: After exterminating Kartaveerya, Parashu Rama continued the killings of his hundred sons besides quite a few of the Kings who came to assist Kartaveerya; some five of the late King's sons ran for their lives. There after a highly elated Bhargava reached Narmada to take bath and proceeded to Kailass where Maha Deva and Devi Parvati stayed for thanks giving. He saw Nandeswara, Maha Kaala, Raktahsha, Virupaksha, Bhairava, Baana, Ruru, Veerabhadra, Chanda, Bhrigi, Ekaadasha Rudras, Vidyadharas, Bhuta-Preta-Piscachas, Yaksha, Brahma Raakshasa, Kimpurushas and Kartikeya on the left entrance and Ganesha on

the right. Ganesha asked Rama to wait as Shiva and Parvati were alone and that he wanted to find their convenience to enter. Rama was restless and felt uncomfortable to have been stopped by a Boy like Ganesha. There was an argument and Parashu Rama raised his axe which Ganesha disliked and lifted up Bhargava with his trunk and swirled him around when Rama saw Bhur-Bhuvar-Swar-Tapo-Urthwa-Mahar- Jana- Satya-Vaikuntha- Golokas and from there dropped Rama into Sapta Pataalaas and back to Kailasa again. This happened before all who assembled there and a highly fuming Bhargava shot his Parashu which partially broke Ganesha's tusk. As nearly half of his tusk fell down, Earth was shaken with spills of blood, Sapta Samudras witnessed reverberating sounds of upheaval, Earth got quaked and there was univeral commotion. Devi Parvati who heard the uproar and insinuated Maha Deva that he treated Bhragava like his son and Bhargava gave a gift to Ganesha with a broken trunk! Shiva understood the taunt in the words of Parvati and her face off in the context and heartily remembered Krishna. As Krishna and Radha made their appearance, the entire family of Shiva, Parvati, Genesha and Skanda greeted them; Bhargava too having greeted the former fell on the feet of Devi Parvati sheepishly and she did not respond. Shri Krishna sought to pacify saying: 'Bhavabhayahaarini! Bhargava Rama fell on your feet seeking your pardon for his indiscretion and rashness. He stated: Shrunu Devi Mahaabhaago Vedoktam Vachanam mama, Yac chhutvaa harshitaan nunam havishyasi na samshayah, Vinaayakasto tanayo Mahatmaa Mahataam Mahaan/ Yah Kaamah Krodha Udvego Bhayam naavishatey kadaa, Veda Smriti Puraneshu Samhitaasu cha Bhamini/ Naamaanya -syopadi shthaani Supunyaani Mahatmabhih, Yaani taani pravakshyaami nikhilaaghaharaanicha/ Pramathaanaam Ganaayecha naanaa rupaa mahabalaah, Teshaameeshastwayam Yashmaat ganeshastena keerttah/ Bhutaani cha Bhavishyaani Vartamaanaani yaanicha, Brahmaandaanyaakhilaan- yeva Yasmimllambodarah sa tu/ Yah sthiro devayogena cchinnam samyojitah punah, Gajasya shirasaa Devi tena porokto Gajaananah/ Chaturthihmuditaschandro darbhinaa shapta Aturah, Anena vidhruto bhaaley Bhaalachandrasthatah smrutah/ Shaptah puraa Shaptabhistu Munibhih Samkshayah gatah, Jaatavedaa deeptobhudynaasou Shurpa -karnakah/ Puraa Devaasurey yuddhey Pujito Divipadganaih, Vighnam nivaarayaamaasa Vighnanaashath smrutah/ Adyaayam Devi Raamena kuthaarena nipaatyacha, Dashanam Daivato Bhadreyhyekadantah krutomunaa/ Bhavishyatyatha paryaaye Braahmano Haravallabhey Vakreebhavishyattundatwaadvakra tundah smruto Budhaaih/ Evam tavaasya putrasya santi naamaani Parvati, Smaranaatpaapa haarini Trikaalaanu- gataanyapi/ (Devi! Bhavabhaya haarini! Do condone Bhrargava who fell on your feet for his momentary fault. Indeed Ganesha your son is one who conquered Kaama (Desire) -Krodha (Anger)-Udvega (Neurosis) and Bhaya (Fear) and his names are highlighted in Vedas and Puranas as they were sin-destroyers; he is Pramatha Gana Natha, Ganesha, Lambodara as he keeps the past-present-future happenings of the Brahmanda in his Udara or belly; he is Gajaavana since due to destiny his head was replaced by that of an Elephant; in the past the Chaturashi Chandra was cursed by Ganesha and Krishna got affected by the blame and thus Vinayaka secured the encomium of Bala Chandra; therefore Chandra's radiance was subject to growth and decadence. Similarly Sapta Rishis cursed Agni but Vinayaka rekindled Agni again and thus got the name of Jaataveda. Ganesha got the name of Shurpa Karna as his flappy ears could winnow the grains from dirt and pebbles signifying the capacity to sift truth and falsehood. Vinayaka secured the name of Vighna Naayaka as he destroyed obstacles and difficuties at the time of Devaasura battles. Thus for each name of Ganesha there was an occurrence or backround and from now on he would be called 'Vakratunda' or Crooked Trunk in future. Devi! Let me bestow to Ganesha the boons that in course of time, human beings should worship Ganesha first before Jataka and other Samskaaraas or Birth and Name Giving Ceremonies, Yatras, launch of Commercial Activities, or Vratas or before any Puja performance).

Devi Radha further stated: *Prakritih Purushaschobhavanyonyaashraya vigrahow, Dwidhaa bhinnow* prakaashetey Prapanchesmin yathaa tathaa/ Twam Chaahamaavayordevi bhedo naivaasti kaschana, Vishnstwamahamevaasmi Shivo dwiguna- taam gatah/ Shivasya Hridaye Vishnurbhavatyaa rupamaasthitah,Mama Rupam Samaasthaaya Vishnoscha hridaye Shivah/ Isha Ramo Maha Bhaage Vaishnavah Shaivataam gatah, Ganeshoyam Shivah Saakshaat Vaishnavastam Samaasthitah/ Eaitayoraavayoh prabhavoschaapibhedo na drushyatey, Evamuktwaa saa Radhaa krodey krutwaa

Gajaananam/ (Prakriti and Purusha are never disconnected and are mutually dependent. It might look that we are two distinct Entities but You and I are the same and we have no difference at all. The concept that I am Vishnu and You are Shiva is indeed absurd and both the Forms are just the same. Ganesha is the Vaishnava Entity called Shiva and Bhargava Rama is the Shaiva Entity named Vishnu. So saying Radha placed Ganesha on her lap and affectionately touched his chins and as soon as that the cuts on his cheeks dried up and Devi Parvati too lifted Bhargava and caressed his tresses. Rama Ganeshas were together again and Krishna kept Skanda on his lap and there was thus a happy union of Shiva and Krishna! As the task of thanks-giving to Maha Deva and Shri Krishna were accomplished splendidly, Parashu Rama returned home and narrated the entire story of his Tapasya and attaining the Bhakti of Maha Deva, his Tirtha Yatras and accoplishing the Maha Krishnaamrita Stotra, battle with Kaartaveerya and his killing, his encounter with Ganesha, Devi Parvati's subdued anger as Ganesha's trunk was hurt by his 'Kuthaara' and Radha-Krishna Darshana. Jamadagni Muni stated that the vicissitudes experienced by Rama must have been due to the sin of killing Kshatriyas and that Bhargava should atone it through Tapasya again for twelve years. But unfortunately, history repeated again and the five sons of Kartaveerya attacked Jamadagni once again and having killed him took away his head as a souvenir! Bhargava Rama's elder brothers performed 'Uttara Kriyas' (obsequies) to the deceased father. On his return from his twelve-year long penance for atonement as instructed by his father, Bhargava Rama faced a similar situation! This time his reaction was that of a filial duty rather than revenge and launched twenty one systematic attacks of Kartaveerya's sons and indeed of as many as twelve thousand Kshatria Kings and their male progeny searched from the nooks and corners of Earth and wiped out the traces of that Vamsha. Then he and his brothers got dug up Pancha Sarovaras at Kurukshetra and filled them up with the blood oozing heads and mutilated bodies of the Kshatriya Vamsha and performed Pitru Tarpanas and Shraddhas as per Shastras and pleased the Pitras with Snaana-Daana-Mantra-Bhojana- Dakshinas to seek lasting redemption to Pitras to attain higher lokas. The famed Syaantaka Tirtha at Kurukshetra continued to be the Sacred Place for Pitru Karyas. Bhargava further proceeded to Gaya Kshetra to continue the Pitru Karyas at the illustrious Chandra Paada where again the Pitru Devatas receive and bless the 'Karthas' of their offerings till date at the above Tirthas irrespective of any caste or creed. Pinda Pradanas and Tarpanas performed at these Sacred Tirthas with faith and devotion are stated to bestow the best of one's on going life and in the unending series of lives ahead.

#### **Brahmavaivarta Purana:**

Ganeshaakhyaana: Utpatti, Shani Veekshana, Kashyapa's curse to Shiva, 'Eka Danta due to fight with Parashurama, Ganesha kavacha and Mahatmya-Ganesha's encounter with Devi Tulasi: Maharshi Narayana recounted to Narada Muni the account of Ganesha commencing from his birth, the significant events that followed with impact on Universal welfare and his 'Mahatmya'. Maha Deva advised that Devi Parvati should perform a Sacred Vrata Punyaka in favour of Shri Hari which was like a 'Kalpa Vriksha' that fulfilled all kinds of desires including 'Uttama Putra Prapti'; this Vrata was the best like Ganga among Rivers, Shi Hari among Devatas, Shiva among the Vaishnavites, Brahmana among Chatur Varnas, Pushkara among Tirthas, Tulasi dala among leaves, Parijata among flowers, Ekadashi among Punya Tithis, Ravi Vara among the a week days, Margasirsha among the Maasas, Vasanta among Ritus, Mother among the Gurus, wife among the closest relative, Mango among the fruits, Pati among Priyajanas, son among the Bandhujanas, Priya bhashana among sweets, Puranas among Kavyaas, and so on. Bhagavan Shiva appointed Sanat Kumara as the Purohit of the Vrata along several Rishis to acquire Puja materials and intiated the proceedings of the year-long vrata on Magha Shukla Trayodashi with the objective of securing an extraordinary male child with Vishnu's 'Amsha'. Brahma and many important Devas arrived to attend the Vrata, besides innumerable Maharshis and Rishis like Kapila, Kratu, Vasishtha, Pulaha, Atri, Gauthma, Bhrigu and Markandeya. Dharma Putra Nara-Narayanas, Dikpalakas, Devatas, Yakshas,

Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Vidyadharas and so on.Bhagavan Vishnu and Devi Lakshmi too arrived, to initiate the Maha Vrata. Vishnu Deva addressed the illustrious gathering and blessed Devi Parvati for performing this unique Vrata which would grant her the benefit of thousand Rajasuya Yagnas and Golokanath Shri Krishna himself would be born as partial 'Amsha' to the Shiva-Parvati pair. He further declared that the boy to be born would have over thousands of epithets like Ganesha the house hold word in Trilokas and as the Lord of Ganas; Vighna nighna as he would bless that no obstacles would be faced by the Performers of any deed the Worlds over; Lambodara since his Bhaktas would pamper and offer him food specialities that he liked and his stomach would be thus elongated; Gajaanana since an elephant face would be fixed on his shoulders soon; Ekadanta as he lost one of his tusks in an encounter with Parashurama. Lord Vishnu ordained that if Ganesha were not worshipped no puja would be ever successful anywhere in the Trilokas. As the Vrata was executed perfectly as per the prescribed 'Vidhana', the illustrious guests were treated in high esteem, appropriately gifted and respectfully provided unique 'Bhojanas'. Then the question of Dakshina was raised by the Purohit Sanat Kumara for successfully conducting the Vrata; he said that either Devi Parvati would part with the Tapsya that she had been putting in all through her life or give away her husband Parama Shiva. Devi Parvati argued that if her Vrata were to be fruiltful by givng away either her Tapasya or her husband, then the vrata was not worth it, except that she would beget a son and secure Dharma! It was like performing puja to a tree by ignoring the interest of the Bhumi! A husband would be more worthy to a Pativrata than obtaining hundred sons! As Parvati was arguing like this, Vishnu offered the solution of giving away Shiva as Dakshina and got him back in exchange of cows which were of Vishnu Swarupa. Evenwhile Parvati was not satisfied the solution, Sanat Kumara performed 'Purnaahuti' of the Vrata and Maharshis recited the Swasti Mantras and the Sacred Vrata was concluded. But Parvati was none too happy about the deal suggested by Vishnu. However she offered one lakh cows in exchange of her husband, especially since Vedas underlined that the price of a cow was that of a husband. The problem was still not settled as Sanat Kumara said as to what would do with one lakh cows in place of an invaluable Shiva! Devi Parvati was non-plussed since neither she was able to secure the Vrata Phala by getting a son of Krishna Amsha as assured by Vishnu, nor could even get the 'darshan' of Shri Krishna. Just as her mind was disturbed on these lines, there descended a big blaze from the high skies like thousand Suryas and all the dignitary Deities present looked up in awe and dread; Vishnu, Brahma, Mahadeva, Dharma, Saraswati, Savitri, Lakshmi, Himalaya and various Devatas. Devi Parvati was overcome at the vision of an all encompassing radiance and broke into grateful tears that after all the Vrata that she performed was indeed triumphant and that the Mula Purusha had acknowledged its success! She was literally dazed and prayed to that huge illumination and Paramatma obliged her with his physical vision for a while eventually the vision disappeared. Sanat Kumara released Shiva, gifts were given away liberally to all the invitees, excellent food was served, music and dance were displayed and Shiva and Parvati knew no bounds of joy. Meanwhile a hungry Brahmana appeared on the scene and after taking food counselled the couple about the Parama Tatwa of the Unparalelled, Ever lasting Truth and about the Most Compassionate Supreme Power and he too disappeared suddenly. Even as Parvati was utterly bewildered in that stage of heightened astonishment and shock with incidents happening so swiftly that she was in unbelievable dreams, an 'Akash Vani'was heard loudly and clearly that Shiva and Parvati should immediately reach their Mandir: The Celestial Voice said: 'Jaganmaataa! Please be composed and see for your self your own son in your Chamber; he is indeed the Goloka Pati Paratpara Shri Krishna Him self! The boy is the sweet fruit of the Magnificent Tree of the Punyaka Vrata that you had so successfully accomplished! It is that Parama Teja which the highest yogis dream of visioning; it is that Adi Purusha whom Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are constantly

absorbed in with Dhyana; and it is that Punya Rasi Swarupa whose very thought dispels all Vighnas of all Beings in Trilokas who is lying playfully in your bed chamber indeed!!'As soon as the Akashavani Devi Saraswati made the celestial announcement, the Shiva-Parvati couple made a swift dash into their Mandir, embraced the child by quick turns and gave 'Mangala Snaana'; even before the Snaana, all the Devatas, Dikpalakas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Maharshis got collected and instantly Vishnu, Brahma, Dharma and their spouses were anxiously waiting for the Darshan of the Sacred Child. Vishnu blessed the child with 'Deerghaayu'/ long life, Vignaan like that of Shiva, and 'Sarva Pujyata'/ Worship worthiness soon! Brahma said that the child's fame and Shakti be known all over at once. Maha Deva blessed his son that like himself he should become a Daata (Philanthropist), Hari Bhakta, Buddhimaan, Vidyaavaan, Punyavaan, a Jitendriya and Shanta Murti. Dharma Deva blessed to be a Dharmika / the Form of Virtue, Sarvagjna/ the All- Knowing, Dayaalu / Kind hearted, and 'Shri Hari Samaana' equivalent to Shri Hari. Devi blessed him to be a resident of each and every home and be an ever charming and Powerful source of Strength to every body. Saraswati blessed him Dharana and Smarana Shakti /Memory Power, Vivechana Shakti / Thinking Power and Kavita Shakti (Power of Imagination). Veda Maata Savitri blessed that he should become a Veda Gnaani. Vasundhara (Bhu Devi) blessed Ganesha to be an emblem of Kshama (Forbearance), Sharana daata (Provider of Refuge), Ratna Sampanna (The Fund of Opulence), Vighna Rahita and Vighna naashaka (The destroyer of Obstacles). Parvati blessed Vinayaka to excel in his father's traits as Maha Yogi, Siddha, Siddha pradaata, Shubha karaka / Giver of Auspiciousness, Mritunjaya / the Conqueror of Death and 'Atyanta Nipuna' or the Embodiment of Skills. Those who read or hear about the 'Ganesha Janma Vrittanta' are blessed in several ways: the childless would get children, the poor gets rich, the wifeless gets wife, the diseased gets healthy, an unfortunate woman gets fortunate, a spoilt child gets discipined, money lost gets recovered and an unhappy person finds himself extremely joyful.

Shani veekshana: Once Devi Parvati happened to meet Lord Shaneswara the Planet and the son of Surya Deva during the Festive days of Ganesha's birth celebrations and asked him to bless the child. Shani Deva declined politely as his looks falling on a newly-born (or for that matter on any person) would not be auspicious to the child, since he was cursed by the daughter of Gandharva King called Chitraratha, to whom she was engaged as decided by his father. Unfortunately, he encountered the woman when she was about to have her bathing after menses; she cursed Shaneswara that whom soever he would see a person even by mistake would have his head cut! Parvati did not take what Shani Deva said seriously and prevailed on him to bless Ganesha. Although Shani Deva glanced the child through the corners of his eyes, Ganesha's head droppped abruptly and Devi Parvati fainted at this sudden tragedy. The dropped head of the boy reached Goloka and Vishnu realised as to what had happened. He jumped on Garuda and flew towards North to locate any 'Praani' sleeping northward and found a bull elephant; its head was sliced with his Sudarshana Chakra and fixed the elephant head in place of the head of Ganesha and blessed the child foremost after the fixation of the elephant head and returned to Kailasa. After getting better from her faint, she found Vishnu who had completed the task of fixation of the elephant head. Meanwhile Maha Deva realised what all happened and so did Brahma, Dharma and Devatas. Vishnu blessed Ganesha and gifted his Kaustubha Mani; Brahma gifted a precious kireeta /headgear, Dharma a Ratnaabharana and all other Devatas followed suit. As Devi Parvati became exremely upset with Shaneswara, she cursed him to become 'Angaheen' but Devas requested Devi Parvati to reconsider her lightening the curse especially she took Shaneswara's warning lightly, she reduced the severity of her curse by revising it that Shaneswara might turn lame for ever. On his very first puja, with

'shodashopachaaraas' or the first puja, after Ganesha's as executed by Vishnu Ganesha's celestial form emerged and he blessed Ganesha that at each Puja, Vrata, or at the shubhaaramha of any Sacred Deed, prathama puja must be performed to Vighnanayaka himself; then Vishnu garlanded him with a 'Vanamaala'. Vishnu performed the 'nama karana' (name giving) in the presence of Devas, Maharshis and Munis; he gave eight names: Vighnesha, Ganesha, Heramba, Gajaanana, Lambodara, Ekadanta, Shurpa-karna and Vinayaka. Devi Parvati made Ganesha sit on a golden chair, gave 'Padya' with the holy waters of Ganga, Godavari etc.; offered Akshatas, flowers, chandana, Kasturi, Agaru Dhupa, Deepa, and Naivedya with a variety of Bhakshya, Bhojya, Lehya, Choshya and Paniyas, besides a wide range of fruits. Tri Murtis and their spouses, Devas and Devis, Menaka and Himalaya had all chanted the Mantra: OM Shreem Hreem Kleem Ganeswaraaya Brahma ruupaaya chaaravey, Sarvasiddhi pradeshaaya Vighneshaaya Namo namah/

Bhagavan Vishnu then recited the Sacred Ganesha Kavacha to Shanaischara as follows: Samsaara mohanasyasya Kavachasya Prajapatih, Rishirscchhandascha Brihati Devo Lambodarah Swayam/ Dharmaartha kaama moksheshu viniyogah Prakirtitah/ Sarveshaam kavachaanaam cha saarabhutamidam Muney, Om Gam Hum Shri Ganeshaya swaahaa mey paatu mastakam, Dwatrimshadaksharo Mantro mey sadaavatu/ Om Hreem Kleem Shreem Gamiti cha Satatam paatu lochanam, Taalukam paatu Vighneshah Satatam Dharani taley/Om Hreem Shreem Kleemiti cha satatam paatu naasikaam/ Om Gaim Gam Shoorpakarnaaya Swaaha paatwadharam mama,Dantaani taalukaam jihwaam paatu mey shodashaaksharah/ Om Lam Shreem Lambodaraayeti swaahaa gandam sadaavatu, Om Kleem Hreem Vighnanaashaaya swaah karnam sadaavatu/Om Shreem Gam Gajaananaayeti swaahaa skandham sadaavatu, Om Hreem Vinaayaketi swaaha pushtam sadaavatu/ Om Kleem Hreemiti Kankaalam paatu Vakshahsthalamscha gam, Karow Paadow sadaa paatu Sarvaangam Vighna nighnakrit/ Praachyam Lambodaram paatu Aagneyyaam Vighna naayakah, Dakshiney paatu Vighnesho naairrutyaam paatu Gajaananah/ Paschimey Parvati putro Vaayavyaam Shankaraatmajah, Krishnashyaamshaschottarey cha Pari purnatamasya cha/Eshaanmekadantascha Herambah paatu chordhvatah, Adho Ganaadhipaha paatu Sarva pujacha Sarvatah/Swapney Jaagaaney chaiva paatu maam Yoginaam Guruh/ Iti tey kathitam Vatsa Sarvamantrougha Vigraham, Samsaara mohanam naama Kavacham Paramaadhbhutam, Shri Krishnena puraa dattham Golokey Raasamandaley, Vrindaa vaney vinitaaya Mahyam Dinakaratmja/ Mayaadattam cha tubhyam cha yasmai kasmai na daasyasi, Param Varam Sarva Pujyam Sarva sankata taaranam/ Gurumabhyarchya vidhivat Kavacham Dhaarayetu yah, Kanthevaa dakshiney baahow sopi Vishnurnasamshayah/Ashwamedha sahasraani Vaajapeya shataanicha, Shatalaksha Prajastopi na Mantrah Siddhi daayakah/ This 'Samsaara Mohana Kavacha's Prajapati is Rishi, Brihati is the Chhanda, Swayam Lambodara Ganesha is Devata; Dharma, Artha, Kaama and Moksha is the 'Viniyoga'; this entire Kavacha is of great essence: Let the Mantra Om gam hum Shri Ganeshaaya swaaha safeguard my head; the Dwadashokshara Manta save my forehead; let Om Hreem Kleem Shreem Gam protect my netras / eyes; may Vighnesha protect my ear lobes; let the Mantra Om Hreem Shreem Kleem protect my nose; let the Mantra Goum Gam Shurpaanyaya Swaha guard my lips and tongue; let the Mantra Om Lam Shreem Lambodaraaya Swaaha secure my cheeks; may the Mantra Om Kleem Hreem Vighna naashaaya swaaha keep my ears safe; let Om Shreem Gam Gajaananaaya swaahaa secure my shoulders; may the Mantra Om Hreem Vinaayakaaya swaaha guard my rear part of my body; let Om Kleem Hreem protect my 'kamkaal'/ skeleton and the Mantra Gam save my chest. Let Vighna-nihanta provide safety to my hands, feet and the entire body! May Lambodara save my Eastern side, Vighnanayaka the Agneya side, Vighnesha the Southern side, Gajaanana the Nirruti

side, Parvati putra the West, Shankaraatmaja the Vaayavya side, Shri Krishna the North, Ekadanta the Ishaana kona, Heramba the Urthwa bhaga / skyward, and Ganaadhipa the 'Adhobhaga' the underground. May the 'Yogi Guru' procect my while asleep or awake. This is how I explained the whole 'Samsara Mohana naama Kavacha'to you Suryanandana Shaneswara. This Kavacha was bestowed to me when I attended the 'raasa leela' convention at Goloka and this should be divulged to one and all. If a person wears the Kavacha after Guru Puja, it shall indeed safeguard him or her and bestows the boons of performing thousand Ashwamedha Yagnas and thousand Vaajapeya Yagnaas. The Siddhi of this Kavacha is attainable after hundred lakh japas of it.)

Kashyapa Munis curse to Shiva: Besides the Shani Vikshana, there was another reason for Ganesha's Elephant head. Once Surya Deva attacked two demon brothers Mali and Sumali and the ever-kind Maha Deva saved the brothers by throwing his Trishul on Surya and the latter became motionless with a serious injury on his chest and his chariot fell down too. The whole Universe came to stand still, the highly frightened Devas were stunned at the happening and the Univrse was drowned in complete darkness. The highly griefed father of Surya Deva, the powerful Kashyapa Muni, was shattered and gave a curse to Maha Deva that just as his son's chest was broken open by the Trishul, Shiva's future son too would drop off as suddenly. The momentary anger of Shiva got cooled down and from his Yogic powers recovered Surya's normalcy. The demon brothers received their retribution at once as they became victims of dreaded diseases as their limbs were dried up and they lost their strength and shine. Brahma advised that since they annoyed Surya and contracted the incurable diseases, they had to worship Surya himself to please him. He taught the remorseful demons the method of worship to Surya, his Stuti and Kavacha and regained their might and sheen. But Kashyapa Muni's curse as irretrievable and Ganesha's head had to be replaced.

Parashu Rama's encounter with Ganesha and loss of the latter's half-tusk: The famed Emperor Kartaveeryarjuna visited the Ashram of Maharshi Jamadagni as he and his huge army was tired by the dusk; the kind Maharshi treated the Emperor and army with excellent food and 'Atithya' or hospitality becoming of their stature. The Emperor wondered as to how a Sage could afford such royal meals and generosity. The Muni explained that this was all due to the grace of Surabhi Kamadhenu. A jealous Kartaveerya desired that Surabhi was worthy of the custody of an Emperor but not a poor Muni and that Jamadagni would better give charity to him so that the huge army could be properly taken care of their food needs by Surabhi, whose security also would be provided from enemy Kings since the safety of all the Subjects of the Empire was after all his responsibilty! Jamadagni replied that Maharshis would only accept charity but not give to Emperors, that Subabhi was awarded by Indra and that neither he nor Surabhi could be given away in charity without Indra's permission, and as regards Surabhi's safety, she had adequate might and mind to conquer any enemy. As mutual arguments got heated up, Kartaveerya decided to take away the Cow by force and Surabhi was prepared for the fight when Sage Kapila at the instance of Brahma Deva prevented the altercation. But, the hurt ego of Kartaveerya propelled him to revisit the Ashram of Jamadagni and killed him with the Shakti sword gifted to him by Dattatreya. Jamadagni's wife Renuka Devi became uncontrollable and prepared herself as a Pativrata to immolate herself. Parashu Rama, the son of Jamadagni and Renuka arrived at the Ashram and took a vow not only to kill Kartaveerya but the entire race of Kshatriyas and offer Tarpan of blood to the departed soul of his father. Brahma Deva advised Parashurama to visit Shivaloka and please him with his darshan. Shiva was indeed pleased when Parashurama gave details of his 'Pratigna' to avenge the death of his father and also root out the Kshatriya Vamsha as a whole. On hearing this Bhadra Kaali got furious but Parashu Rama

broke into tears by narrating the extremities that Kartaveerya in particular and all the contemporary Kshatriya Kings in general were assuming alarming proportions against the Brahmanas, Sages, Maharshis and the very concept of Virtue and justice. Shiva was convinced and awarded a magnificent Trailokya Vijaya Maha Kavacha, besides innumerable 'Astras' to Parashurama like Nagapasha, Pasuhpatastra, Brahmastra, Agneyastra, Narayanastra, Vayavyastra etc. After practising the Trailokya Vijaya Kavacha at Pushkara Tirtha and pleased Parama Shiva, Parashurama then started his battles with Kshatriya Kings like Matsya Raja, Suchandra, Kaalistavana, Sahasraaksha, and finally the invincible Kartaveeraarjuna who was a Symbol of Kshatriyas who were all fortified with Kavachas and blessings from several Devas and Devis, including Maha Deva himself. It was at that moment of Glory when Parashurama avenged his father's killing and when the atrocities that thousands of Kshatriya Kings perpetrated on humanity and virtue were ended -recalling Shri Krishna's human incarnation that Narayana would take birth as and when Dharma was in jeopardy-that Parashurama desired to meet Maha Deva and Ganesha objected to the meeting! As he entered Kailasha, Parashurama witnessed Nandeswara, Mahaa Kaal, Pingalaksha, Vishalaksha, Bana, Virupaaksha, Vikataasha, Bhaskaraksha, Kaala Bharava, Ruru Bhairava, Rudraganas, Vidyadharas, Bhuta Preta Piscachas, Yogendras, Yakshas, Kimpurushas and Kinnaras. As Parashurama passed through several layers of security, finally he landed at the Place where Mahtma Ganesha stopped him. The great veneration, he greeted Ganesha and requested him to allow into the Interior of Shiva. Parashuram utilised all his tactics of justification and persuasion but Ganesha became stiffer than ever. When all kinds of requests, entreaties and prayers to Ganesha failed, Parashurama lifted his 'Parashu' and Skanda Deva intervened and tried to keep him cool. But still when Parashurama tried to force entry; Ganesha lifted his trunk, looped the latter with his trunk and encircled the hapless Parashurama round and round to show him Sapta Dwipas, Sapta Parvataas, Sapta Sagaras, Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, Swarloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka, Dhruvaloka, Gauriloka, and through him into one of the Oceans, lifted him again and showed him Vaikuntha and Goloka where he had the vision of Shri Krishna too. As this playful activity of Ganesha was in progress, the mighty Parashurama hit one of Ganesha's tusks with the 'Parashu' (axe) that Maha Deva himself gifted and the tusk fell off as blood gushed out. As this accident took place, Kartikeya ran towards his parents with fear. The resting parents were shocked and Devi Parvati's instant reaction was to kill Parashurama but being the Loka Mata restrained herself and addressed Parashurama as follows: You are born in Brahma Vamsha to one of the illustrious sons viz. Maharshi Jamadagni and also the son of Renuka of Lakshmi Amsha. You are one of the greatest devotees of Maha Deva. How did you do this to my son! Shiva Deva is your Guru since he taught the Trailokya Vijaya Kavacha and countless Astras from him. Is this the Guru Dakshina that you thought fit to give your Guru! You could have perhaps given a better Dakshina of cutting Ganesha's head instead of breaking his tusk only! My son Ganesha no doubt has the Shakti of destroying crores of cunning animals like you but was only playful with you; yet you have wantonly hurt him by breaking his tusk not as an accident but with vengeance! You may know that he is of Paramatma Shri Krishna's 'Amsha' and the Deity who receives the foremost puja all over the Universe!' As she addressed Parashurama with great restriant and reasoning, he felt ashamed of himself, greeted his Guru Shiva in his own heart and prayed to his 'Ishta Deva' Shri Krishna. Devi Parvati visioned a Brahmana boy who met her earlier at thet time of Ganesha's birth; Maha Deva too had the vision of the boy like a quick flash and disappeared. Meanhile, Vishnu appeared and analyzed the critical situation that had arisen out of the serious sin done by Parashurama since what he had was tantamount to Guru Ninda and downright betrayal of the faith that Shankara gave to his sishya! Vishnu further said that Parashurama was momentarily taken by folly as otherwise he too was like Ganesha or Kartikeya; as the Universal Deities with responsibilities like Shiva and Parvati might not impose personal

angles into such happenings. Vishnu extolled Devi Parvati in extolling Ganesha as follows: Ganeshamekadantam cha Herambam Vighna nayakam, Lambodaram Shurpakarnam Gaja Vaktram Guhaagrajam/ Naamaashtartham cha Putrasya Shrunu Maata Haripriye, Stotraanaam saarabhutam cha Sarva Vighna haram param/ Jnaanaartha vaachako gascha nascha nirvaana vaachakah, Tayoreesham param Brahma Ganesham pranamaamyaham/ Ekashabdah pradhaanaartho dantascha Balavaachakah, Balam pradhaanam sarvasmaadeka dantam namaamyaham/ Deenaartha vaachako hescha rambah palaka vaachakah, paripaalakam deenaanaam Herambah pranamaamyaham/ Vipattha vaachako vighno Nayakah khandanaarthakah, Vipat khandana kaarakah namaami Vighnanaayakam/ Vishnudatthaaischa naivedyairyasya Lambodaram puraa, Pitraa datthaaischa vividhairyandey Lambodaram cha tam/ Surpakaarou cha yatkarnaam Vighnavaarana kaaranou, Sampadyow Jnaana rupow cha Surpakarnam namaamyaham/ Vishnu prasaada pushpam cha yanmurdhni Munidattakam, yat Gajendra vaktra yuktam Gaja vaktram namaamyaham/ Guhasyaagrey cha jaatoyamaavirbhuto Haraalaye, Vande Guhaagrajam Devam Sarvadevaagra pujitam/ Yetanmaashtakam Durgey Namaabhih samyuktam param, Putrasya pasya Vedey cha tadaa kopam thathaa kuru/ Yetanmaashtakam Stotram naanaartha samyutam shubham, Trisandhyam yah pathennithyam sa sukhee sarvato jayee/Tato Vighnaam palaayantey vaina teyaad yathoragah, Ganeswaraprasaadena mahajnaani bhaved dhruvam/Putraarthi labhatey putram Bhaaryaarthi vipulam striam, Maha jadam Kaveendrascha vidyaa vaancham bhaved dhruvam/ (Mother Parvati! your son has eight names viz. Ganesha, Ekadanta, Heramba, Vighnanayaka, Lambodara, Shurpakarna, Gajavaktra, and Guhaagraja. Please listen to the meanings of these names; this Great Stotra is the essence of several Stotras and is the demolisher of all kinds of obstacles. In the word Ganesha, the letter 'Ga' is 'Jnaanaartha vaachaka' and 'na' is 'nirvaana vaachaka'; the letters 'Ga', 'na' and 'Isha' together denote the 'Isha' or the Supreme of 'Ganas'; thus one should say: I greet Ganesha. In the word Eka dantha, Eka is pradhaanaarthak and Danta is Bala vaachaka; thus it is said: I salute Eka danta. In the word Heramba, 'Hey'is Deenaartha vaachaka and 'ramba' is paalana vaachaka and the total meaning would be the Administrator of Deenaas or the Needy who seek asylum. In the word 'Vighna naayaka', Vighna is vipatti vachaka and naayaka is khandanaarthak vachaka, meaning thereby Ganesha is the demolisher of hindrances. Lamba + Udara or Ganesha has an Extended Tummy as he is fond of consuming large quantities of Savouries and sweets; I adore 'Lambodara'! My salutations to you, 'Surpakarna'! with surpaakara/Vikrita/ strained + Karna or ears. 'Gajavaktra' or Elephant faced Deva, my prostrations to you! 'Guhaagraja' or the elder brother of Guha Deva / Skanda; I pay my reverences to you! Devi Parvati! Kindly listen to the Sacred Eight Names of Ganesha and bear with me before getting angry, if need be. Those who recite these names during the three Sandhya timings with sincerity and devotion would always be happy and victorious, from whom any kind of obstacles run away like snakes approaching Garuda. By the great grace of Ganeswara, those who have no children would be blessed with children, those who have no wives would have them too and those who have the least intelligence would flourish as Vidwans and Poet. Parashurama prostrated before Devi Parvati and begged her of pardon that he as her own child should, since she was the 'Jagat Janani'/ the Mother of the Universe and said that the he had perpetrated a sin to his Guru and Gurupatni of which he was ashamed. He also performed Puja to Ganesha who too excused Parashurama for his indescretion, for which Ganesha too claimed partialresponsibility.

<u>Ganesha's encounter with Devi Tulasi:</u> As Devi Tulasi was seeking to perform Tapasya on the banks of Ganga, she saw Ganesha a young and handsome youth moving about enjoying the refreshing coolness of the River. Tulasi was readily attracted to him, drew him into conversation by amply indicating her

fascination to him and finally proposed to him for marriage with him. Ganesha was taken aback and spurted that she was like his own mother and what was more that he hated to be drawn into any marriage in life as the very concept of family was abhoring to him; he said that the institution of marriage was the terminator of Hari-Bhakti, the destroyer of Tapasya, the indestructible knot of 'Bhava Bandhana' or the inescapable rope of family ties, the demolisher of Tatwa Gyana, the closure of the Moksha dwara and the end of personal freedom. Ganesha therefore advised the Kanya to seek somebody else as her life partner and leave him free. Devi Tulasi got terribly annoyed with Ganesha's weird arguments and the way that he discarded her summarily. She cursed Ganesha that he would be married definitely despite his wishes and Ganesha gave a reverse curse that since she was insensitive of other's feelings, she would become a the wife of a demon (Shankhachooda) and subsequently become a Tree. On realising the backround of each other, they complemented each other as Tulasi was destined to the wife of Narayana and Ganesha was the famed son of Maha Deva and Parvati Devi. But Tulasi leaves should not be offered in Ganesh Puja, excepting just one leaf perhaps! The above references of the Mahatmya of Vinayaka along with his spouses of Siddhi and Buddhi could indeed by multiplied!

Shiva Purana: Ganeshopanna-Ganesha Chaturthi Vrata-

Ganeshotpanna: When Nandi was asked to bar entry into the Interior Place of Parvati as She was taking bath, Nandi no doubt prevented but Bhagavan still entered and She was not amused. She decided to create an idol of a boy which was infused with life and empowered Him to challenge anybody with the necessary powers. The boy followed the instruction and did not allow entry even to Shiva. The Pramadha ganas were asked to teach a lesson to the boy by Shiva but they were defeated in no time. Shiva Himself decided to force His entry but to no avail. Finally, an irritated Bhagavan snapped the boy's head and Parvati became furious and Her angry manifestations surprised Shiva Himself. She insisted that the boy be brought to life forth with. Shiva suggested locating anybody sleeping in the northern direction and the Shivaganas were able to trace only an elephant. The severed head of the boy was fixed with that of the elephant and He was revived. The assembly of Deities who first fought with the boy and witnessed the entire scene earlier decided that any function in the World ought to be commenced with worship of Ganesha foremost as He is the Lord of preventing impediments and of providing success. Ganesha's worship on Bhadrapada Sukla Chathurdhi is a must all over Bharatadesa as one is dreaded of becoming a victim of undeserving blames since Moon God received a curse from Ganesha that whoever saw the Moon on the particular Chaturdhi night without worshipping Him would become a sure target!

Ganesha Chaturthi Vrata: Scheduled on Bhadrapada Shulka Chaturthi every year, the Vrata is a popular and an auspicious function is observed in several parts of Bharat by all the members of households and by all Varnas to ensure fulfillment of long standing desires, 'Vidya' (education), good health, wealth, longevity and most importantly clearance of obstacles and assurance of success as 'Vighneswara' is the Foremost Deity of Sanction to be appeased for the accomplishment of any task to be undertaken not only by human beings but even Devas, Rakshasas and even Trimurthis! Once Ganesha's younger brother, Kartikeya, was stated to have attempted the scripting of the characteristics of men and women but Ganesha seemed to have frustrated the attempts of Kartikeya who almost did the description of 'Purusha Lakshanas' but left the effort concerning the features of women. In fact, Kartikeya felt so angry that he pulled out one of the tusks of Ganesha. When Parameswara intervened and enquired about his own 'Purusha Lakshanas', Kartikeya described about Shiva that he was a 'Kapaali' and of none-too pleasant a visage, Shiva got irritated and threw away the Script in the Sea. Shiva commanded 'Samudra' (the Sea) to complete the Script of the Characteristics of Women and retrieve the Script of Kartikeya about men. Hence the Scripts were named 'Samudrika Shastra'. Even now, the Idols of Ganesha are presented as holding a part of his tusks with one of his hands! Another context which prompted Shiva to let Brahma authorise Ganesha to become the 'Gana Nayaka' and 'Vighna Rajah' was when even ordinary and often

egoistic human beings in Krita Yuga had no bounds and barriers in performing deeds that they were not expected to do; also there was no access to human beings to get bad dreams or omens so that they would realise forewarnings not to indulge in such avoidable activities. This was the reason why human beings had to be aware of warnings of impediments and non-achievements and as such all the beings in Srishti are made to realise perforce that there would never be a ready and unquestioned admittance to the gates of success, without proper propitiation of Vighna Deva.!

After comfortably seated on his throne, the Idol of Vighna Rajah is welcomed for initiating worship by the devotees with 'Snaan' or bathing with scented waters and 'Panchamritams' being the mix of milk, curd, honey, fruit-pulp and coconut water. While performing the 'Snaan'/'Abhisheka', the following 'Mantra' be recited: Sahasraaksham shata dhaaramrushibhih paavanam kritam, thena twamabhishin - chaami paavamaanyaha punantutey/ bhagamtey Varuno raajaa bhagam Suryo Brihapatih, Bhagam - indrischa Vaayuscha bhagam Saptarshayo daduh/ yatey Kesheshu dourbhaagyamseemantey yaccha Murdhani, Lalaatey karnayo rakshanoraapastadughnantu tey sadaa/ After the 'Mantra Snaan', the devotee should offer palm-ful of flowers by reciting the Mantra: Rupam dehi yasho dehi bhagam Bhagavati dehi mey, Putraan dehi dhanam dehi Sarvaan Kaamaamscha dehi mey, Achalaam Buddhim mey dehi Dharaayaam Khyatimevacha / (Hey Bhagavati, Kindly bestow to us attractive appearance, reputation, vivacity, ideal progeny, prosperity and fulfillment of all our desires; do grant me steady intellect and status in life!). Following formal worship to Ganesha, his Wives Buddhi (Wisdom) and Siddhi (Accompishment), Shiva, Devi Parvati, Devi Lakshmi, Surya, Kartikeya, and other Devas, Brahmanas are satisfied with Bhojan, Vastras, Dakshinas and Gifts.

While Ganesh Puja is performed on Bhadrapada Shukla Chaturthi regularly, there is basically no specific time of Tithi, Nakshatra and Maasa restraints. Like performing Devi Gayatri Mantra daily, Ganesha Gayatri too could be a daily recited Mantra, viz. *Mahakarnaaya vidmahey Vakratundaaya dheemahi tanno Dantih prachodayaat*; in fact worship of Vighneswara is a 'must' before any 'Puja' as prescribed in Vedic faith. Specifically speaking however, Chaturthi in Bhadrapada Shukla Paksha has added significance since that day happens to be an auspicious day for Shiva worship too. That is also the day of devotion to a married woman's parents-in-law to achieve 'Sowbhagyata' or longevity of her husband and propitiousness to all the members of the family, since Puja on that day has the double advantage of Shiva and Ganesha. Further, worship on any Shukla Chaturthi coinciding with Bhoumavara (Tuesday) bestows contentment and pleasure, besides 'Soundaryata' (beauty and grace) to women, since that day signifies the Mangala Deva-the 'Tejas' of Shiva and Parvati transferred to Bhu Devi- who wears blood-red Vastras and of fiery nature- also popular as Kuja, Rakta, Veera and Angaraka.

#### Skanda Purana

Ganesha Vrata Puja Vidhana in detail: The foremost prayer to Ganesha states: Sumukhaschaika dantascha kapilo Gajakarnikah, Lambodarascha vikato Vighna Raajo Ganaadhipah, Dhumaketur-ganaadhyashah phala chandro Gajaanah, Vakra tundah Shurpakarno herambahskanda purvajah, Shodashaitaani naamaani yah patheh shrunuyaadapi vidyaarambhe vivaahecha praveshe nirgame tathaa, sangraame sarva kaaryeshu vighnastasya na jaayate, abheepsitaartham pujito yassurairapi, sarva vighnacchide tasai Shri Ganaadhipaye namah/ Then follow the Sankalpa, Kalasha puja, 'Shodaashopa-chaara' or the formal Services to Ganesha with Dhyaana-Aavaahana-Vaahanaadis and Shuddhodaka Snaana- Vastra-Yagnopaveeta-Gandha-Pushpa-Phala- Dhupa -Deepa- Avasara Naivedyas-Tambula - Neeraajana-Achamaniyas - Mantra pushpa- pradakshina namaskaarasa- are offered in the opening phase of the Puja stating: Ganaadhipa prasaadam shirasaa grihnaami/ Thus one's own head is adorned with 'akshata-pushpas.Then commences the further phase of Phala Siddhi Vinaayaka Puja with Praana pratishtha: Asya Shri Vara Siddhi Vinaayaka praana pratishthaapana mantrasya, Brahma Vishnu

Maheshwaraa Rishah, Rikyajursaamaadharvaani chhandaamsi, praanah shaktih paraadevataa, hraam beejam, hreem shaktih, hruum keelakam, mama Varashiddhi Vinaayaka praana pratishthaa shiddhyarthe jape viniyogah/ <u>Kara nyaasa:</u> hraam angushthaabhyaam namah, hreem tarjanibhyaam namah, hruum madhyamaabhyaam namah, hraim anaamikaabhyaam namah, hroum kanishthikaabhyaam namah, hrahah karatala prishtaabhaam namah; Anga nyaasa: hraam hridayaaya namah, hreem shirase swaaha, hroom shikhaayai vashat, hraim kavachaaya hum,hruum netratrayaaya voushat, hrahah astrraaya phut/ Bhurbhuvassuromiti digbandhah/ Dhyaanam: Raktaambhodisthapotollaasadaruna sarojaadhiroodhaa karaabjaih, paasham kodandamikshhoodbhava maliganapyankusham pancha baanaan/ Bibhraanaa srukkapaalam trinayana lasitaa peena vakshoruhaadhyaa devi baalaaka varnaa bhavatu sukha kree praana shaktih paraanah// Hraam hreem krom ya ra la va sha sah om/ Varasiddhi Vinaayaka! Praanah mama praanah Varasiddhi Vinaayaka jeevah mama jeevah vaangnahshrotra jihvaa ghraanaih ucchvaasa rupena bahiraagatya, asmin bimbe-asmin kalashe- asyaam pratimaayaam-sukhena charan tishtthantu swaaha/Mantram: Asuneete punarasmaasu chakshuh punah praanamihanodhehi bhogam, jyokpashyema Suryamuccharantamanumate mridayaanasswasti, amritam vai praanaa amritamaapah praanaanena yathaa sthaanamupahyayate// Swaamin sarya jagannaatha yaayat pujaayasaanakam, t aayatyam yathaa preetibhaavena bimbesmin sannidhim kuru/ Aavaahito bhava, sthaapito bhava, suprasannobhava, varado bhava, avakunthitobhava, sthiraasanam kuru, praseeda prasseda praseeda// Mantrah: Aaa twaavahantu harayassacheta sashvaitairashaisah ketumadbhih vaataajavairbalavadbhirnojavairaayaahi sheeghram mama havyaaya sharvom/( while reciting this mantra, akshata-pushpas be kept on the head of the Idol and offer some naivedya like a fruit and gud to signify the 'praana pratishtha'.

Pujaa praarambhah: Bhava sanchita paapougha vidhvamsana vichakshanam, Vighnaandhakaara bhaswantam Vighnaraajamaham bhaje/ Shurpakantham Gaja vaktram chaturbhujam, Paashanaang - kushadharam Devam dhyaayetsiddhi Vinaayakam/ Uttamam Gananaathasya vratam sampatkaram shubham, Bhaktaabheeshtapradam tasmaad dhyaayettam Vighna naayakam/ Dhyaayet Gajaananam Devam taptakaanchana nannibham, Chaturbhujam mahaa kaayam sarvaabharana bhushitam/ Dhyaayaami-Atraagaccha jagadvandya suraasuraarchiteshwara, Anaatha naatha sarvajna Gauri garbhaa samudbhava/Aavaahayaami- Mouktikaih Pushparaagaischa naanaaratnairviraajitam, Ratna simhaasanam chaaru preetyartham pratigruhyataam-Aasanam samarpayaami/ Gauriputra namastestu Shankara priya nandana, Grihaanaarghyam mayaadattam grihaanad -viradaanana: Paadyam samarpayaami/ Anaadha naadha sarvagjna geervaana varapujita, Grihaanaachamanam Deva tubhyam dattam mayaa prabho-Aachamaniyam samarpayaami- Dadhiksheera samaayuktam madhvaajyena samanvitam, Madhuparkam grihaanedam Gajavaktra namostute-Madhuparkam samarpayaami/ Snaanam panchaamritairdeva grihaana Gana naayaka, Anaadha naatha sarvagjna Girvaana gana pujita/

Panchaamrita snaanam samarpayaami/[Milk-Aapyaayasva sametu te vishvatassomavrishniyam, bhavaa vaajasya sangadhe-Shri Vinaayakam snapayaami; Curd:Dadhikraavno akaarsham jishnorash - vasyavaaginah, Surabhino mukhaaratprana aayugumshitaarishat-Shri Vinaayakam dadhnaa snapa - yaami/Ghee:Shukramasi jyotirasi tejosi Devovassavitot punaatvat chidrena pavitrenavapoh Suryasya rashmibhih-Shri Vinaayakam aajyena snapayaami/ Honey:Madhu vaataa rutaayate madhu kharanti sindhavah, maadhveernassvantyoshadhih- Shri Vinaayakam Madhunaasnapayaami/ Sugar:Swaaduh pavaswa dishyaaya jinvane swaadurindraaya suhave tu naamne swaadurmitraaya Varunaaya Vaayave Brihaspataye madhumaagum adaabhyah- Shri Vinaayakam sharkaraa snapayaami/] Phalodakam: Yaah phalineeryaa aphalaa apushpaa yaascha pushpineeh Brihaspati prasutaastaa no munjavagumhasah- Shri Vinaayakam phalodkena snapayaami/ Shuddhodakam:Gangaadi sarva tirthebhya aahrutairamalair - jalaih, snaanam kurushva bhagannumaaputra namostute/ Shri Vinaayakam shuddhodaka snaanam kaarayaami/ Mantram: Aapohishthaa mayobhuvah, taana urje dathaatana, maheranaaya chakshase, yovasshivatamo rasah, tasya bhaajayate hanah, ushiteeriva maatarah, tasmaa arangamaamavah 'yasya

kshayaaya jinyatha' aapo janayathaa cha nah//Vastram: Raktayastra dwayam chaaru Deyayogyam cha mangalam, Shubhaprada grihaana twam Lambodara Haraatmaja/ Shri Vinaayakam Vastra yugmam samarpayaami// Mantram: Abhivastraa suvasanyaanyarshaabhidhenoh sudughaahpuyamaanaah, Abhichandraabhartaveno hiranyobhyashvaan rathino devasoma//Yagnopaveetam: Raajatam Brahma sutram cha kaanchanamchottareeyakam, grihaana Deva sarvagjna bhaktaanaanishtadaayaka/ Shri Vinaayaka yagjnopaveetam samarpayaami/ Mantram- Yagjnopaveetan paramam pavitram prajaapateryatsahajam purastaat, Aayushyamagryam pratimuncha shubhram yagjnopaveetam balamastu tejah// Gandham: Chandanaagaru karpura kasturi kunkumaanvitam, vilepanam Surashreshtha preetyartham pratigrihya taam/ Shri Vinaayakam gandhaan dhaarayaami/ Mantram: Gandhadwaaraam duraadharshaam nityapushtaam kareeshineem, Ishwareegum satyabhutaanaam twaamihopahvaye shriyam/ Akshataalankaaram: Akshataan dhavalaan divyaan shaaliyaamh tandulaan shubhaan, grihaana paramaanada Shambhu putra namostute/ Shri Vinaayakaaya Alankaranaartham akshataan samarpayaami/ Mantram: Aayanete paraayane durvaarohantu pushpineeh, hradaascha pundareekaani samudrasya grihaa ime/ Pushpa Puja: Sugandhaani cha pushpaani jaatikundamukhaani cha,Eka vimshati patraani sangrihaana namostute/ Shri Vinaayakam pushpaih pujayaani/Athaanga pujawith flowers:Ganeshaaya namah paadou pujayaami-Ekadantaayanamah gulphou [ankle joints] pujayaami-Shurpa karnaayanamah jaanuni[knees]pujayaami-Vighna Rajaya namah janghe pujayaami[ankle]-Aakhuvaahanaaya namah uru [ thigh] pujayaami-Herambaaya namah katim [loin]pujayaami-Lambodaraaya namah udaram [ tummy] pujayaami-Gana naathaaya namah naabhim [umbilical chord] pujayaami- Ganeshaaya namah hridayam [ heart] pujayaami-Sthula kanthaaya namah kantham [ throat] pujayaami-Skandaagrajaaya namah skandham[ shoulders] pujayaami-Paasha hastaaya [hands] pujayaami-Gaja vaktraaya [ face] vaktram pujayaami-Vighna hantre namah netrou [eyes] pujayaamu-Shurpakarnaaya namah karnou [ears] pujayaami-Phaalachandraaya namah lalaatam [forehead] pujayaami-Sarveswaraaya namah shirah[ head] pujayaami- Vighnaraajaaya namah sarvaanyangaani [ all the body parts] pujayaami/ Atha ekavimshati or 21 Patra Puja: Sumukhaaya namah Maachi patram pujayaami-Ganaadhipaaya namah Brihati patram pujayaami-Umaadhipaaya namah bilwa [bael or stone apple tree leaf considered as highly sacred for Shiva-Uma- Ganesha-Skanda Kumara pujas]-Gajaana naaya namah durvaa yugmam [ two pieced -grass] - Harasunave namah dutthura patram pujayaami-Lambodaraaya namah badari patram pujayaami-Gahaagrajaaya namah apaamaaragapatram pujayaami-Gaja karnaaya namah tulasi patram [ exceptionally] pujayaami- Ekadantaaya namah chuta patram[mangoe leaf] pujayaami-Vikataaya namah karaveera patram pujayaami- Bhinna dantaaya namah Vishnukranta patram pujayaami- Vatave namah daadimi patram pujayaami-Sarveswaraaya namah Devadaaru patram pujayaami-Phaalachandraaya namah Maruvaka patram pujayaami-Herambaaya namah sindhuvaara patram pujayaami-Shurpakarnaayana mah jaati patram pujayaami-Suraagrajaaya namah ganaki patram pujayaami-Ibhavaktraaya namah shami patram pujayaami-Vinaayakaaya namah ashvattha patram pujayaami-Surasevitaaya namah Arjuna patram pujayaami-Kapilaaya namah arka patram pujayaami-Ganeshwaraaya namah eka vimshati patraani pujayaami/

# The Sahasra naama/ Ashtottara Pujaam samarpayaami/

Dhupam: Dasaangulam guggulopetam sugandhi sumanoharam, Umaasuta namastubhyam grihaana varadi bhava/ Shri Varasiddhi Vinayaka namah dhupamaaghraapayaami; Mantram: Dhurasi dhurva dhurvatam dhurvatam yosmaan dhurvati tam dhurvayam vayam dhurvaamah/ Deepam: Saajyam trivarti samyuktam vahninaadyotitam mayaa, Grihaanamangalam Eshaputra namostute/ Shri Vara Siddhi Vinaayakam deepam darshayaami; Mantram: Uddipasya swajaatavedopaghnam nirrutam mama,

Pashugascha mahyamaahaya jeenanancha disho dasha, maanohigumsih jaatayedo gaamashyam purusham jagat, abhibhradaghna aag hi shriyaa maa paripaalaya/ Naivedyam: Sugandhaan sukrtaamschiva modakaan ghritapaachitaan, naivedyam grihyataam devachanamudgaih prakalpitaan// Bhakshyam bhojyamscha lehyamcha choshyam paaniyamevacha, Idam grihaana naivedyam maaa dattam Vinaayaka/ Shri Varasiddhi Vinaayaka namah Maha Naivedyam samarpayaami/ Mantram: Deva savitah prasuva satyamtvartena parishimchaami Amritamastu Amritopastaranamasi swah, Udaanaaya swaah, samaanaaya swaah, Brahmane swah/ Madhye paaneeyam samarpayaami, hastou prakshaalanam samarpayaami, paada prakshaalanam samarpayaami, shuddhhaachaneeyam samarpayaami// Taamboolam: Poogiphalasamaayuktam naagavallidalairyutam, karpura churna samyuktam taamboolam pratiguhyataam/ Shri Vara Siddhi Vinaayaka Swaamine taamboolam samarpayaami/Suvarna Pushpam: Sadaanandada Vighnesha pushkalaani dhannaanicha, Bhumyaam sthitaani Bhagavan sweekurushva Vinaayaka/ Shri Varasiddhi Vinaayaka namah suvarna pushpam samarpayaami/Neeraajanam: Ghritavarti sahasraischa karpurashakalaistathaa, neeraajanam mayaa dattam grihaana varado bhava/ Shri Varasiddhi Vinaayaka namah Neeraajanam darshayaami- neeraajanaanantaram aachamaniyam samarpayaami/ Mantram: Hiranya paatram madhoh purnam dathaatimadhavyosaaneeti, ekadhaa brahmana upaharati ekadhaiva yajamaana aayustejo dadhaati/Durvaa yugma puja: Ganaadhipaaya namah durvaayugmam pujayaami-Umaaputraaya namah---, Aakhuvaahanaayananah--, Vinayakaaya namah---, Isha putraayanamah---, Sarvasiddhipradaayanamah--Ekadantaaya namah--, Ibhavaktraaya namah---, Mooshaka vaahanaaya namah--, Kumara gurave namah/ Mantra Pushpam: Yopaam pushpam veda pushpavaan prajaavaan pashumaam bhavati- Chandra maa vaa apaam pushpam--Agnirvaa ---/ Ganaadhipa namastestu Umaaputraagha naashana, Vinaayakeshatanay sarva siddhi pradaayaka/ Ekadantaika vadana tathaa Mooshaka Vaahana, Kumaara gurave tubhyamarpayaami sumaanjalim/ Pradakshinnopachaaraan: Yaani kaani cha paapaani janmaantara kritaayacha, taani taani pranashyanti pradakshina pade pade/ Paapoham paapa karmaaham paapaatmaa paapasambhavah, traahi maam kripayaa Deva sharanaagata vatsala/ Anyathaa sharanam naasti twameva sharanam mama, tasmaad kaarunya bhaayena raksha raksha janaardana/ Pradikshanam karishyaami satatam modaka priya, Namaster Vighna raajaaya namase vighna naashana/ Shri Vara Siddhi Vinaayakaaya namah Atma pradakshina namaskaaraan samarpayaami; Chatram aacchhaadayaami, chaamaram veejayaami, nrityam darshayaami, geetam shraayayaami,aandolikaamaarohayaami,Ashyaanaarohayaami, Gajaa naarohayaami, samasta Raajopachaara shaktyupachaara bhaktyupachaaramantropachaara devopachaara sarvopachaara pujaam samarpayaami/ Punararghyam: Arghyam grihaana Heramba sarva bhadra pradaayaka, Gandha pushpair yuktam paatrastham paapa naashana/ Praarthana: Yam Brahma vedaanta vido vadantiparam Purusham tathaanye, Visyodgateh kaaranameeshwaram vaa tasmai namo Vighna vinaayakaaya/ Namastubhyam Ganesaana namaste vighna naashana, Ipsitam me varam dehi paratra cha paraam gatim/ Vinaayaka namastubhyam satatam modaka priya, Nirvighnam kuru me deva paratra cha paraam gatim, Nirvighnam kurume Deva sarva kaaryeshu sarvadaa//Vaayana daanam: Respective Mantas of the Provider and Reciever: 1) Ganeshah pratigrihnaat Ganesho vai dadaati cha, Ganeshastaarakobhyaam Ganeshaaya namah/ 2) Devasya twaa savituh prasave asvinoh baahubhyaam pushno hastaabhyaamaadade/

<u>Vinaayaka Vrata Katha</u> is essentially heard or read with attention and devotion besides being self adorned or blessed by elders on head with akshatas and flowers to ward off the curse of chandra darshana as Lord Krishna himself was a victim of seeing the reflection of Moon in the milk yielded inside the vessel on

Ganesha Chaturthi; Krishna was subsequently troubled and doubted of robbing 'Shamankaka Mani' of Satraajit which yielded tons of gold daily!

Vinayaka vrata concludes with Vrata kathaashravana as follows: Aaseetpuraa Chandra vamshe Rajaa Dharma iti shrutah, swaraajye Daivayogena jnaatibhih kutilair -hrute/ Anujairbharyayaasaardham jagaama/ Gahanam vanam bahuvriksha samaakeernam naanaa mriga samanvitam/ Bahu pakshikulopetam vhyaaghra bhalluuka sankulam, tatra tatra samaa vishtaa Munayo Brahma vaadinah/ Aadithya sannibhaah sarve sarve vahni sama prabhaah tejo mandala sankaashaa vaayu parnaambu bhakshakaah/ Agnihotrarataa nityamatitheeh naam cha puujakaah urthvabaahu niraalambaah sarve muni ganaastathaa/ Taan pashyan Dharma Raajopi sambhramena samanvitah Sutaashramam samaa saadya Sutam drishtvaa sa sambhramah/ Natvaacha bhaaryayaa saardhamanujaih samupaavishat/ King Dharmaraja who lost his Kingdom pursuant to the grave injustice perpetrated by his villianous cousins proceeded to a huge forest called 'Nainishaaranya' along with his wife and loyal brothers. The forest was infested with cruel animals, birds of varied colours and squeeks and awe inspiring trees and creepers - at once frightening and yet manificent. The dethroned King also discovered congregations of Brahmavaadi, tapasvis, hands raised and standing or 'Padmaasana' brahmanas performing 'agni kaaryas, tapasyaas' and Yoga. He then further proceeded to find the cynosure of Ashramas headed by Suta Maharshi and addressd him as follows. Dharma uvaacha/ Suta Suta mahaa pragjna sarva shastra visharada/ Vayam cha bhaaryayaa saardham jnaatibhih paripeeditaah, swaraajyam sakalam chaiva putraaschhapahritaa hi nah/ Tava darshana maatrena sarvam duhkham vinaasitam, mamopari kripaam kritvaa Vratam bruuhi dayaanidhe/ Suta Maha Muni! You have digested the essence of all Shastra Dharmas. Our cousin Kauravas had betrayed and did enomous injustice to us as a result of which we were evicted from our own kingdom thus proceeding perforce into the forest with wife and brothers. We have however got immense relief by your 'darshan' Do very kindly teach us with a way out to recover our lost kingdom especially by the instruction of performing aa appropriate 'Vrata'to regain our lost kingdom again. Suta uvaacha/ Vratam sampatkaram Nruunaam sarva soukhya pravardhanam, shrunudhvam Pandavaah sarve vrataanaam uttamam vratam/ Rahasyam sarva paapaghnam putra poutraabhivardhanam Vratam Saamba Shivenaiva Skandasyod bhoditam puraa/ Kailaasa shikhare ramye, naanaa muni nishevite, mandaara vitapi praante naanaa mani vibhushite/ Hema simhaasaanaaseenam Shankaram loka shankaram, prapaccha Shanmukhastushuto lokaanugraha kaankshayaa/ Skanda uvaacha, kena vratena bhagavan soubhaagyamatulam bhavet, putra poutraan dhanam labdhyaa manujah sukhamedhate/ Tanmeyada Mahadeya yrataanaamuttamam yratam, Ishyara uvaacha- Astichaatra mahaa bhaga Gananaadha prapujanam/ Sarva sampatkaram shreshthamaayuh kaamaardha siddhitam maase Bhadrapade shukla chaturdhyaam vratamaacharet/

Skandakumara addressed Parama Shiva even as the latter along was his mother Parvati Devithe Unversal Parents- as the latter were amidst several Sages comfortably seated on a golden throne studded with most precious and proverbial nine gems; he requested that keeping in view 'loka kalyaana' or universal auspiciousness the latter be kindly advised as to what precisely the best possible 'Vrata' or a Penance with clean body and mind accompanied with devotion and 'indriya nigrah' or control of body mind. 'Which outstanding Vrata would readily bestow prosperity, long life and best progeny! Parama Shiva elaborated his reply. Praatah snaatvaa shuchirbhutvaa nitya karma samaacharet swashaktyaa Gananaadhasya swarnaroupya - mathaakritim/ Athavaa mrinmayam kuryaadvittashathyam na kaarayet, swagrihasottare deshe mandapam kaarayettatam/ Tanmadhyeshtadalam padmamyavairvaa tandulenavaa, pratimaam tatra samsthaapya pujayitvaa prayatnah/ Sveta gandaakshataih

pushpairdurvaangkura samanvitaih, dhupair deepascha naivedyairmodakairghritapaachitaih/ Eka vimshati samkhyaani neerikela phalaanyapi, rambhaa jambu kapitthoughaanikshukandhaashchaavatah/ Evamanya phalaapuupair naivedyam kaarayetsuta, nritta geetaischa vaadhyascha puraana pathanaadibhih/ Tarpayengana naadham cha vipraan daanena shrotriyaan, bandhubhih swajanaih saardham bhunjiyaa taila varjitam/ Evam yah kurute marto Gananaadha prasaadatah, sidhyanti sarvakaaryaani naatra kaaryaa vichaaranaa/ atah prabhaate vimale punah pujaam samaac haret, mounjeem krishnaajinam dandamupaveetam kamandulam/ Paridhaanam tathaa dadhyaadyathaa vibhavamuttamam, upaayanam tato dadyhaachaarya svashaktitah/ Anyebhyo dakshinaam dayaadbraahmanaan bhojayettatah, trailokyeshrutam chai tad vraataanaamuttamottamam anyaischa Deva munibhir gandharvaih kinnaraihstadhaa, cheernametad vratam sarvaih puraa kalpe Shadaanana/ Iti putraaya Sharvena Shanmukhaayoditam puraa, evam kurushva Dharmagjna Gananaadha prapujanam/Vijayaste bhaveennityam satyam satyam vadaam -yaham,etad vratam harischaapi damayanti puraakarot/ Ganesha Vrata to overcome 'Vighnas' to humans-and celestial beings alike is scheduled on Bhadrapada Shukla Chaturthi on which day the Performers are required to get ready with clean body and heart, get ready with an idol made of gold or silver or atleast by earthern cakes, place it towards the northern direction of the house, decorate the idol suitably and place it in the middle of a eight leafed diagram filled up with well spread out rice flour and commence the shodashopa -chaara puja of avaahana-praana pritishtha-pushpaadi puja along with dhupa-deepa-naivedya of bakshya- bhojya-lehyachoshya- phala-paaneeyas and various other services like 'gaana-natya-purana pathanaas' and finally bhojanaadi services of the 'prasadaas' to bandhu-aapta jana- bhojanas and 'satkaaras' especially to the learned brahmanas; a follow up with a similar puja next morning by way of 'punah puja' too is scheduled. This is the broad framework of the Ganesha Puja which has outstanding fall out benefits and is appliacable human beings irrespective of Varnas Brahmana-Kshatriya-Vaishya-and even lower castes too; besides Deva-Daanava-Yaksha-Kinnara- Gandharva-Apsraraadis are no exceptions universally.

Krishno Jaambavateemaagaad ratnamchaapi syamantakam, Damayasti Nalamchiva vratasyaasya prabhaavatah/ Shakrena pujitah purvam Vritraasura vadhe tathaa, Ramadevena tadvaccha Sitayaa maargane tathaa/ Bhageerathena tadvaccha gangaamaayatanaa puraa, Amritodpaadanaardhaaya tadhaa Devaasurairapi/Kushthavyaadhiyutenaapi Saambenaaraadhitah puraa, evamuktastu Sutena saaujah Pandunandanah/ Pujayaa maasa Devasya putram Tripuraghaatinah, shatru sangham nihatyaashu praaptavaan Raajya- mojasaa/ Pujayitvaa mahaabhagam Ganesha siddhidaayakam, siddhyanti sarvakaaryaani manasaa chintitaanyapi/ Tena khyaatim gatoloke naamnaa Siddhi Vinaayakah, Vidyaarambhe puujitaschet Vidyaa laabho bhavedhruvam/ Jayamcha Jayakaamascha putraardhee labhate sutaan, patikaamaac ha bhartaaram soubhagyam cha Suvaasinee/ Vidhavaa pujayitvaa tu vaidhavyam naapnuyaatkvachit, Brahmana khsatriyo vaishvah shudrovyaapathaastriyah/ Arbhakaschaapi bhaktyaa cha vratam kuryaad- yadhaavidhi, siddhyanti sarvaakaaryaani Gana naadha prasaadatah/ Putra poutraabhi vriddhim cha gajaadyaisvaryamaapnuyaat/Lord Krishna performed Ganesha Vrata and Ganesha Deva blessed Krishna to secure both Satya Bhama and Jambavati as his consorts and Syamantaka Mani as a bonus. King Nala regained Damayanti again as Nala was cursed to turn into an ugly dwarf and out of shame left Damayanti for twelve years; they were reunited only on Nala devotedly executed Ganesha Vrata as the loving couple were reunited.

Lord Indra the Chief of Devas was able to kill Vritrasura after Ganesha was pleased with Indra by the latter's Vrata Puja. The most tenacious Bhagiradha was able to undergo several vicissitudes in bringing Ganga from Vaikuntha from the feet of Bhagavan Vishnu to Bhuloka only to wash off the ashes of Sagara

Putras of his ancestors but only performing Ganesa Vrata. Lord Rama too obeserved Ganesha Vrata puja systematically before searching for Devi Sita in Lanka from the clutches of Ravanasura. As Lord Krishna's own dear son Samba as the latter suffered from leprosy owing to Durvaasa Maharshi's curse, Krishna too obereved Vinayaka Vrata with faith and diligence and as a result cured the deadly disease. Thus Itihasas stand proof of the outstanding advantage in performing Ganesha Vrata with faith and dedication. Be it that at the initiation of a child's preliminary education or aspiration to initiate a battle, or a desire to secure an ideal wedded life, especialy of unwedded maidens, or a sumangali woman wishing for long and contented wedded life, or a widow seeking a never ever repeat of widowhood in the lives to come, or 'putra poutraabhivriddhi' or happy line of progeny ahead seeking, the definite answer indeed is the performance of Ganesh a Vrata with dedication.

The Vrata could be performed by persons- man woman-child- of 'Chaturvarnas' of any Society, clan or faith and that would ensure success in their lives ahead with contentment and fulfillment. The proceedings of the Vinayaka Vrata are vouchsafed vide Skanda Purana.

#### Vamana Purana

Parvati's Tapasya led to reappearance as Gauri: After the Sacred Wedding, Shankara and Parvati moved around freely in enjoyment and asked Vishwakarma to build a glorious home for them, performed Yagna worthy of Grihastaashrama and the couple were nicely settled down. One day out of fun, Parama Shiva addressed Devi Parvati as Kaali or of dark complexion. She felt that his fun was unbearable and left for serious Tapasya to Brahma deva and secured golden complexion. As she discarded her earlier Form, Indra requested her to give away the earlier Form to him and since she was materialised from Krishna Kosha or of deep blue nature, she was named as Katyayani;, she was also called as Koushiki since she was materialised from Brahma kosha and since Indra called her as his sister, Indra too was known as Koushika. Indra then asked Katyayani /Koushiki to reach Vindhya Parvata and thus she became Vindhyavasini and Indra gifted a Lion as her Vahana /Carrier. After this incident, Devi Uma who discarded her earlier Rupa now replaced with Suvarna Rupa and identified herself as Gouri. Maha Deva was too pleased and both the couple spent some thousand years in Garhastya all by themselves ignoring the out side contacts, which had terribly distressed Devatas and the entire Universe was upset too. Indra and Devatas were concerned about fresh threats of Indratwa as there were forebodings to that effect and approached Brahma who wished that Mahadeva's continued immersion in the stage of 'Manmoha' for Gauri would contitinue before Daityas would gain strength; this concern got Indra and Devas worried and tried to somehow manage an entry to Shiva's abode but found that sneaking into the adode would not be possible as Maha Nandi was holding the security. Even while Indra and Devatas were waiting outside the Abode, Agni took the form of a Swan and sneaked in and having assumed a Sukshma Rupa conveyed to Parama Shiva that Indra and Devas were waiting outside to desperately meet him. Maha Deva stepped out and let Indra and Devas come inside; he said that since he was actually enjoying Devi Gauri he was disturbed and any of the Devatas should take over the weight, radiance and power of Parama Siva's 'Shukra' (Semen)! Surya and Chandra felt that they might be unable to do so but Agni Deva emboldened himself and asked Shiva to release the Sukra so that he could consume it. Shiva did so and then he asked Indra as to what was the emergency about! Indra had respectfully entreated to terminate the period of enjoymernt so that he could very kindly concentrate on many tasks pending. As Maha Deva agreed to do so, Indra and Devas returned to Swarga and he narrated the incident to Parvati and the latter got furious

that the disturbance caused by Indra and Devas was indeed frustrating and cursed Indra and others that since they did not allow to let her bear a child at the nick of time, they too would become childless!

Ganeshotpanna: In an angry and vexatious mood, Gauri entered the 'Snaana shaala' and asked her maid Malini to massage her body and as the maid applied flavoured milk cream the sweat of her angry body got evaporated; when massaged Gauri's body collected body dirt and made a figure viz. Ganesha with four hands, broad chest and handsome and later on resumed her bath and left later to Puja Mandir to worship Maha Deva. Thereafter, Parama Shiva entered the same Abhyagana Griha (bath room), and noticed the Ganesha Pratima apparently made by Parvati's body dirt during her Abhyangana. Maha Deva added his body dirt too to the Pratima and made an addition of an elephant trunk to the Murti which as he took his Snaana got washed his own sweat, bhasma and sacred water. The Pratima came alive as the combined body dirt, sugandhas and water and Shiva told Parvati that he was their own son! Gauri was surprised to see their child with an elephant face and excellent features and embraced him:

Yattadangamalaadwiyam krutam Gajamukham Naram, Tatah preetaa Girisutaa tam putram parishashvajey/ Murdhina chaina —mapura -aghnaaya tatah Sarvobraveedumaam, Naayakena vinaa Devi tava Bhutopi Purtakah/ Yasmaajjatastato naamnaa bhavishyati Vinaayakah, Yesha vighna sahasraani Suraadeenaam harishyati/ Pujayishyanti chaivaasya lokaa Devi charaacharaah, Ityava muktatwaa Devaastu Dattavaamstanayaaya hi/ Sahaayantu Gana Sreshthamnaamnaa khyaatam Ghatodaram, Tathaa Matruganaa ghoraa bhutaa Vighna karaaschaye/Tey Sarvey Paramoshena Devyaah preetyopa- paadinah, Devi cha Sasutam drustwaa paraam mumadavaapacha/ (Maha Deva asked Shailaja Devi to find her own son and the latter embraced him who was materialised by the body dirts of hers and his as the child was a charming boy with an elephant face; Shiva said that the child was born without any 'Nayaka' and thus would be called Vinayaka, who could forestall thousands of Vighnaas of Devas. The entire Universe would worship Ganesha said Parvati who created Ghatodara Ganaas to assist him as also Matru Ganaas and Vighna Bhutaas to destroy who did not worship him. Devi Parvati felt exremely happy and contented with the arrival of Ganeswara!

# Varaha Purana

Priority Invocation and adoration on Chaturthi: As Devas faced a strange problem of recurring failures as and when they take up a fresh assignment whereas Demons seemed to be going ahead with novel operations, they approached Lord Shiva and Devi Parvati to provide a solution. In reply Bhagavan Shiva started thinking that among the 'Panchabhutas' (Five Elements), there was an identifiable personification of a Deity among Prithvi (Earth), Varun (Water), Tejas (Fire) and Vayu (Wind God), but how was it that 'Akash' (Sky) did not have? By so thinking Lord Shiva laughed loudly and Devi Parvati could guess by her Jnana Shakti (Power of Introspective Knowledge) what Bhagavan was laughing boisterously about. From that energetic hilarity with an open mouth emerged a replica of Shiva who was strong, handsome and powerful whom Devi Parvati kept gazing and got mesmerised. Lord Shiva got annoyed by the instant reaction of Devi Parvati, became jealous of the Super Boy and infact got angry and cursed him saying that he would possess an elephant face, disproportionate belly and serpented Yagnopaveeth (Holy Thread). Shiva was still angry and from His body hair roots kept on multiplying innumerable 'Vinayaks' resembling the original and Lord Brahma flew over the Sky and as 'Akashvani'( a loud announcement from the Sky) declared that Devas should be grateful to Lord Shiva to have provided the solution to the problem posed by them and that the various forms of Vinayak which got materialised would indeed

ensure that as and when Devas and human beings initiated a task that they should invoke the blessings of Vinayaka foremost. As the announcement from Brahma was heard, Lord Shiva was then cooled down and addressed Vinayaka endearingly as follows:

<u>Ganesh Puja:</u> Vinayako Vighnakaro Gajasyo Ganesha naamaacha Bhavasya Putrah, Yethecha Sarvam thava yanthu Bhruthya Vinayakayaah Kruura drishtah Prachandah-Vucchushma daanaadi vuvruddhva dehaha Karyeshu siddhim prati paadayanthah, Bhavaamsva Deveshu thadha makeshu kaaryashu chanteshu Mahanubhavat-Agreshu Pujam Labhatenyatha cha Vinashayishyastatha kaarya siddhim'

(Hey Putra! Vinayaka, Vighnakara, Gajavadana, Ganesha, Shankara Putra; all these cruel-eyed, harsh and angry Vinayaks will be your servants; those who are desirous of giving well earned materials as 'daanas' or alms be provided with Siddhis or boons. At Yajnas or various Propitious Tasks, all the devotees shall be provided the highest veneration, lest their tasks or worships be discounted').

As Devas performed 'Abhishek' (Sacred Bath to Ganesha, they extolled him as follows: 'Namasthe Gajavaktraya Namasthe Gananayaka, Viyayaka Namastestu Namaste Chanda Vikrama-Namastestu tey Vighna kartha Namaste Sarpa Mekhala Namaste Rudra Vaktrotha Pralambaja -tharaashrita- Sarva Deva Namaskaarad avighnam kuru Sarvada/ ('We greet you Gajavadan, Gananayak, Prachanda Vikram, Vighna kartha, Naga bhushana, Rudra Mukha Utpanna, Lambodhara, Avighna Karak, Kalyan Pradata; Sarva devas are greeting you, Kindy ensure that we enjoy Avighnam always).

Since Ganapati was born on Chaturthi, this day of each month is worthy of His worship; but Bhadrapada Sukla Paksha Chaturdhi is the most auspicious day for a fulfledged worship with 'Shodasa Upacharas' or Sixteen Services of Avahana (Welcome), Asana (Seating), Padyam (water for washing feet), Arghya (water for sipping), Snana or body wash, Gandham (Sandal wood paste), Dhupam (Incense), Deepam (offering lights), Naivedyam (Food and Fruits) Tambula (betel leaves and nuts), Paneeya (coconut water), Vastram (clothing), Alankaram (Decoration), Abharanam (Jewellery), Stotram (Extolling) and 'Arati' (Camphor lighting).

# \_Vishnu Purana

<u>Tulasi Devi</u> was called Sati Vrinda. Her husband, who was named Jalandhara, was a very cruel daitya and used to harass the rishis and munis and destroy their sacrifices. Lord Vishnu therefore had to set about killing him, but due to the purity of his Jalandhara's wife, Sati Vrinda, and her devotion for her husband, he could not do so. So Vishnu took the form of Jalandhara and stole her virginity. Only after doing this was he able to rid the world of Jalandhara and restore peace and harmony. When Sati Vrinda discovered the trick Lord Vishnu had played on her, she cursed him to become a shaligram, an oval stone used in sadhana and worship, in his next incarnation. Vishnu then gave Sati Vrinda the boon that in her next birth she would incarnate as Tulasi, and be worshipped everywhere. That is why Tulasi is virtually married to Shaligram.

In fact Padma Purana describes in great detail about the magnificence of Tulasi: Veda Vyas told the congregation of Sages that Bhagavan Maha Deva described the benefits of Tulasi Tree (Holi Basil) to Kartikeya as it is highly auspicious, desire-fulfilling, very dear to Bhagavan Vishnu and hence called 'Vaishnavi'; in fact, Vishnu considers Tulasi on par with even Lakshmi and far above the ranking of all other leaves and flowers. Daily worship to Bhagavan Vishnu with Tulasi leaves is considered as effective and propitious than even Daana, Homa, Yagnya and Vratas. Needless to say that Tulasi Puja to Bhagavan Vishnu bestows brightness, happiness, luxury items, fame, Lakshmi, noble ancestry, good wife and

children, wealth, health, 'Gyan', Vigyan, Veda and Vedanga, Shastra, Purana, Tantra and Samhitas. Keeping a Tulasi Garden nearby is as effective and easy as keeping Lord Shri Krishna Himself and thus retaining Devi Lakshmi, Brahma and all other Devas. Thus a short-cut method is worshipping Tulasi to be able to keep all the Deities happy. As a corollary, Pretahs, Piscachas, Kushmandas, Brahma rakshasas, Bhutas and Rakshasas are nowhere in the vicinity and so would be far away from sins, fears, diseases and wants. In Kali Yuga, one effective way is to perform Tulasi Puja, Kirtana, Dhyana, Dharana and other means of worship to dry out and burn off all kinds of Sins and consolidate the path of reaching Swarga and Moksha. Bhagavan Shankara stated: Pujaney kirtaney dhyaney ropaney dharaney Kalou, Tulasi dahatey paapam Swarga moksham dadaaticha/ Upadesham dadeydasyaah swayamaacharatey punah, sa yaati Paramam Staanam Madhavasya niketanam/ Lord Vishnu said that in all those tasks which were dear to him like Yagnas, Vratas etc. worship with even with one Tulasi leaf enhances the value of such tasks. Further, those who worship Tulasi attain the same fruits of worshipping Gurus, Brahmanas, Devatas and Tirthas. If one retains a leaf of Tulasi while dying has a path leading upwards to heavens. Those who worship Tulasi regularly and sincerely would not have to take 'Punarjanma' (another birth)! Mere 'Namocchharana' or taking the name of Tulasi frightens Asuras but pleases Vishnu immensely; blessed are those in Kali Yuga who perform puja of 'Shaligramas' or Replicas of Maha Vishnu with Tulasi. What could Yama Raja say to Tulasi: Tulasyamrita janmaasi sadaa twam Keshava Priyey! Keshavaartha chinomi twaam Varadaa bhava shobhaney/ Twadanga sambhavairnityam pujayaami yathaa Harim, Tatha kuru Pavitrangam Kalou mala vinaashini/ (Tulasi! You are born from Amrita and are the beloved of Kehava always. I select excellent leaves from your Tree for the puja of Bhagavan. Do become the provider of boons from this Puja and enable it in a manner that it pleases Bhagavan Keshava. Mother Tulasi! Only you could clean up the mess of Kali Yug and provide a sense of direction to absolve me of my sins). [Tulasi leaves yield a volatile oil called eugenol possessing anti bacterial properties which are anti- microbial, anti-inflammarory and expectorant promoting maximum respiratory assistance].

It is against background that Tulasi Leaves are forbidden in Ganesha Puja. Though Tulsi is considered as very auspicious but due to involvement of curse it is prohibited to use tulsi leaves at the time of pooja; one might notice in the course of the Eka Vimshati or 21 leaf pujas of Ganesha puja just one tulasi leaf is offered to Ganesha as an exception. Once Lord Ganesha was engaged in deep meditation. As Ganesha was doing pooja, there came Tulsi. The moment she saw Ganesha, she fell in love with him and requested him to take her as his wife.But Lord Ganesha had turned down the offer but on her continued pestering cursed her that she would marry a demon. After the curse Ganesha took pity on Tulasi and blessed her be to be Lord Vishnu's beloved.

# Soundarya Lahari by Adishankara

Ganesha and Skanda brothers as the dear sons of Devi Parvati as toddler babes: Samam Devi Skanda dvipa vadana peetam sthanayugam, Tavedam nah khedam haratu satatam prashnuta mukham/Yadaa lokayaa shankaaa kulita hridayo haasa janakah, Sva kumbhou Herambah parimrishati hastena jhhaditi/ Stanza 72. Jaganmaata! Kameswara premaratna mani pratipanastani! 'Stana dvayaas' or both the breasts are the representation of motherhood. These are also the symbols of Kameswara's deep love and attachment as demonstrated by Ganesha and Kumaraswami both enjoying the milk feed even as Gaja Mukha is awed to wonder and fondle the 'Gaja stambha sthalas' or trunks of an elephant. Amba! may we beg of you to let us the Saadhakas too to enjoy the 'jnaanaamrita ksheeraa' or the milk of knowledge and wisdom of your breast milk too. Devi! Jagat pujya paada Vinayaka and Maha Shakyaanvita Kumara Swami are your illustrious sons - one whose recital is not performed, auspiciousness becomes elusive while the younger Kumara, the Deva Senapati the Commander in Chief of 33300 Deva soldiers is protector of Tri Lokaas!

Pandita Lakshmidhara explains: Devi! Your the milk of your 'vakshojaas' was shared together your

renowned sons, Kartikeya and Ganapati. As there were doing so, Ganesha was looking askance and asked whether somebody was stealing his own 'kumbh' and held it tight; this became a high tone humour to their parents. Amuu te vakshojaav amrita rasa maanikya kutupau, Na sandeha spando nagapati pataake manasi nah; Pibantau tau yasmaad avidhita vadhuu sangama rasikou, Kumaarau adyaapi dvirada vadana krouncha dalanau/ Shri Maata! Naabhyaalawaala romaali lataa phalakuchadwayi/ It appears that your breasts are like amrita rasa maanikya kutupau or 'maanikya nirmita amrita kumbhas' and that is how your sons Ganesha and Kumaara continue to be like the milk sucking boys without aging and signs of youth or old age and continue to be worshipped for ever! 'Naabhyalavaala' or the 'naabhi sthaana' is Shri Chakra's Manipoora Sthaana and 'Romaali'is the 'Sushumnaa Maarga'; 'Kucha' is the 'Aaamika sthaana' and 'aashvaasa kosha sthaana' being the 'Ida-Pingala naadee maarga'. In other words, 'anaahatashtaana' is the Saadhaka's Kundalini Siddhi Maarga!

MAHA SWAMI of Kanchi firmly establishes that Jagajjanani's breast milk is far superior to amrita the divine ambrosiaa. The Lords Ganesha and Kumara who have Amba's breast milk remain eternally boyish - certainly nor boy like- and do not age: *Kamaaraau adyaapi!* That is even to day the remain boys! Maha Swaami's interpretery analysis is that the greaness of Amba's breast milk is such that Her children are 'jnaana' personified and they have no 'Kaama'! '*Adhvidita vadhuu sanga rasikau Kumaarou*/ or they are not obsessed with 'stree bhoga'. Maha Swami asserts that Aacharya himself was an example in this matter, let alone Ganesha and Kumara! Maha Swaami states that in Southern India Ganapati is believed to be a Brahmachari, while Subrahmanya has two consorts, Valli and Devasena. In the Northern India, Ganesha has two consorts viz. Siddhi and Buddhi. In any case, Amba's breast milk is not the normal but of Jnaana!

#### Dharma Sindhu

Chandra Darshana on Siddhi Vinaka Vrata night be avoided to save from allegations: Siddhi Vinayaka Vrata is celebrated all over Bharata Desha on Bhadrapada Shukla Chaturthi with the Charurthi extending upto Madhyaahna. If Triteeya and Chaturthi are on both the days, then the determining factor is whether Triteeya is longer or Chaturthi is on that day. If the Vrata falls on a Sunday or Tuesday, it has an added significance. Atra Chaturdhyaam Candra darshaney Mithyaabhi dushana doshastena Chaturthaamuditasya panchamyaam darshanam Vinaayaka Vrata dinepi na doshaaya/ Purva diney saahaynamaarambhya pravruttaayam haturtheem Vinaayakavrataabhaavepi purvadyureva Chandra darshaney dosha iti sidhyati/ Chaturthaamuditasya na dasrshana miti pakshetu Avishta panchashnar muhurtamaatra Chaturthi dinepi nishedhaapattih/Ideenaam lokaastu eekatarapaksha -ashrayena Vinaaka Vrata diney eva Chandram na pashyanti na tudaya kaaley darshana aaley vaasatvaa satvey nyamenaashrayanti/ Darshaneyjaatey taddosha shantaey: On this Chaturthi, Chandra darshana is believed strongly to 'Mithyaapavaada' or false allegations. In case, Chaturthi occurs in that evening and Chandra Darshana was performed but Vinayaka Vrata is performed on the Chaturthi day, it does not matter. But Chandra Darshana on the next morning must be avoided at any cost. People tend not to do so and this would result in the 'dosha'; the ready remedy is to perform the Vrata sincerely and avoid Chandra Darshana on that day but certainly witness the same on Panchami Raatri on Chandrodaya. If by mischance, Chandra darshana is seen on Chaturthi, then the atonement Mantra be recited viz. Simhaha Prasenavadheessimaho Jambavataah hatah, Sukumaarodeestavahyeshas- shamantakah/ Iti Shlokla Japa Karyah/ ( A lion killed Prasena the younger brother of Satraajit; Jaambavanta killed the lion and gifted away the 'Shyamantaka Mani'to you Kumara! This Shloka be rendered for the Praayaschitta definitely). Vrata Vidhaana: After accomplishing 'Praana Pratishtha' the formal Mantrik-Way of

according life to Ganeswhwara Idol, the Devotees of each and every of family-relations and friends should then perform 'Shodaashopa-chaara' or the formal Services to Ganesha with Dhyaana-Aavaahana-Vaahanaadis and Shoddhodana Snaana- Vastra-Yagnopaveeta-Gandha-Pushpa-Phala- Naivedya of Modaka-Laddu and so on with twentyone 'Durva Yugmaas' reciting Ten Names of Ganesha viz. Ganaadhipa, Umaaputra, Aghanaashaka, Vinayaka, Isha Putra, Sarva Siddhi Pradaayika, Ekadanta, Hastimukha, Mooshaka Vaahana and Kumara Guru.

## **Other Sources**

Bhu Pradakshina by Karikeya vs. Matru-Pitru Pradakshina by Ganesha: In 'Sveta Varaha Kalpa', the two anecdotes about Kartikeya and Ganesha- the Illustrious Sons of Siva and Parvati- were narrated by Lord Brahma to His Son Devarshi Narada. As both the Brothers came of marriageable age, the question arose as to who should be married first and the parents decided that whosoever could circumambulate the entire Universe first would get the choice. Kartikeya flew off by His carrier- a peacock- without even waiting for a minute, Ganesha who applied His mind and recalled what Vedas stated that a single 'Pradakshina' of one's parents would yield the fruit of 'Bhu pradakshina'. Even half way through the full circle of the World, Sage Narada intercepted Kartikeya and conveyed that Ganesha's wedding with Siddhi and Riddhi was in progress already (they were blessed with two sons Kshema and Labha eventually).

Kartikeya felt cheated by the parents and retired at Krouncha Mountain and the parents brought Him back by cajoling the dear son who felt hurt! It is on this day of Kartika Pournami, Kartikeya's 'darshan' is considered as most auspicious.

Ganesha supresses Kubera's arrogance: By His very name, Vinayaka is a Jnaana Swarupa or the Symbol of Wisdom and Knowledge. Yet, any third party seeking to exhibit their own supremacy - especially by Devas, He could hardly stomach the false superiority. Lord Kubera the King of Yakshas once hosted a lavish feast and among other dignitaries called on Shiva and Parvati; the noblest couple responded that due to their preoccupations, they might have to regret but would ably deputise Lord Ganesha. At the scheduled time and day, all the Devas arrived and Ganesha too. Kubera was so happy as streams of Deva ganas were arriving at Alkapuri and felt proud of himself. Ganesha too arrived and showed\_off condescendingly remarking to other dignitaries nearby that Parvati Parameshvaras were busy and deputed Vinayaka instead. Then the dinner commenced with great pomp, while the invitees had thouroughly enjoyed the nine course dinner. Meanwhile however Ganesha whose appetite was unending made thousands of servers kept their beelines gasping and tottering the supply lines. As the three crore strong Deva Ganas were bemused witnessing the failure of lakhs of servers and cooks alike, Kubera was put to shame and ran to Parameshvara couple to Kailasha with a a fist ful cooked rice by way of his offering to the illustrious Universal Parents of Maha Deva and Maha Devi. Ganesha with dissatisfied appetite too was already present there with His parents. The benign parents found a gasping Kubera running from Alkapuri to Kailasa cowed down and demoralised while prostrating Shiva- Parvati- and above all to Ganesha too.

Renowned Ganesha Temples in Bharat and elsewhere as dotted in the length and breath devoted to Hindu Dharma. The most sancrosant and age old Ganesha Temples in Bharat are the following 21 Kshetras: *Moreshwara:* Mayuresha Ganesha is stated to be of Ganapatya 'Mukhananda' Kshetra which is some 35 km from Pune in Maharashtra; *Prayaga* in Uttar Pradesh is 'Omkara Ganapati' stated to have been installed in the Adi Kalpa of the Yore and worshipped ever thereafter; *Dundiraja Ganapati* at Kashi Mandir; At Kalamba village near Pune is *Chantamani Ganapati* stated to have worshipped by Lord Indra to alleviate the curse of Gautama Maharshi and is famed to reduce the extremely difficult hardships of the devotees with faith. *Adosha Ganapati* on Nagpur-Chhindwaa line at Saamner is famed as Shami

Vighnesha Kshetra which was stated to have been worshipped by Vamana Avatara of Lord Vishnu to be able to suppress Bali Chakravarti and demanded three feet viz. Prithvi-Paatala-Antariksha Lokas. Pali Ganapati or Ballal Ganapati again in Maharashtra was stated to have worshipped by a Vaishya boy of Pali in Kulaba Dt. for salvation . Mangala Ganapati at Pariner on the banks of Narmada was the Kshetra where Mangal Graha was stated to have worshipped. Phaala Chandra Ganesha near Parbhani on the Kachiguda-Manmad- where Parbhani Jyotir Linga is also situated where Lord Chandra was stated to have worshipped nearby the Sacred Godavari River flows at a place called Ganga Masale. A place called Rakshasa Bhuvana on Kachiguda Manmad Railway Line again there is Vigjnana Ganesha Khetra where Lord Dattaatereya venerated. Very near to Pune Yevur, Lord Brahma himself was stated to have worshipped Vighnanaashaka Ganesha to ward off al hurdles and obstacles before launching his creation. The eleventh manifestation of the twenty one series of Pracheena Ganesha is at Siddhitek on Mumbai-Raichur Railway Line named Siddhi Ganesha who was worshipped by Lord Vishnu Himself before he launched offensive against the invincible Madhu Kaitabha Demons in the form of Hayagriva. This Siddhi Vinayaka of Siddhitek was also venerated by Maharshi Veda Vyasa before he launched the onerous task of dividing the Single Veda into the present Chatur Vedas. Lord Shiva himself adored the 'Tripuradhwamsa' Ganesha as the twelfth in the current series of Prachina Ganapati Deva at Manipura Kshetra at Rajan gaon near Pune. at the launch of the battle with the Asura. The next significant Ganesha Kshetra is of Vijaya Mangala Ganeshwara at Vijayapuru / Vijaya Mangala on Chennai- Mangalore Railway line as Ganesh Deva was manifested to destroy Analasura. At Kashypashrama yet unknown about his where abouts, Kashyapa Maharshi was stated to have meditated at his Ashram and constantly worshipped for Loka Kshema. At Jalesha pura, Tripurasura too performed puja for victory. The where abouts of these Kshetras were not known. At Lehyadri near Pune in Juwar Taluk, Devi Parvati worshipped Ganesha to be born as her most popular son as Putra Ganesha. At Berol or Ailapur near Ellora near Aourangabad, right within the premises of Ghrishneshwar Jyotir Linga afore mentioned, Ganesha Murti was set up by Skanda Deva as Lakshya Vinayaka. At 'praacheena' Pravala Kshetra called Padmalaya Tirtha, on Mumbai- Bhusaval Line of Railways, Karta Veeryajuna venerated both Ganesha and Shesha Sarpa on the banks of Ugama Sarovara. At Naamalagao from Jalna to Beed road is the Amalaakama Kshetra, Lord Yama Dharma Raja was stated to have worshipped Ganesha to ward off the curse of his mother on the banks of Sadbuddhiprada Tirtha. The penultimate 'pracheena' Ganesh is at Raja sadana Kshetra where Sindurasura was killed by himself and taught *Ganesha Gita* to Varenya Raja and eversince became popular as 'Ganapati Rajur Kshetra'. Among the most illustrious Pradhana Ganapati Kshetras of the times immemorial, the twenty first and ever popular one is at Shveta Vighneshwara Kshetra at Kumbhakokam in Tamilnadu on the banks of the Sacred River Kaveri Sudha Ganesha Murti who was worshipped by Deva Danavas before the churning of Ksheera Sagara for the manifestation of Amrit!

Extensive presence of Ganesha Temples elsewhere: It is not a possible task of counting country wide presence of Ganesha Mandirs as each and every village, township, city is replete with them all at countless street corners, for all the Hindus and of other faiths would not only venerate as a habit but many are even obssessed with His presence, since who indeed is such as to ignore the launch of any action seeking auspiciousness! All the same some of the very popular Ganesha Temples- quite apart from subtemples in the main temples of Devas and Devis, are mentioned:

Andhra: Hydereabad/ Secunderabad at Nampalli, Karvan Shahu, Vijay Nagar, Lalguda, Turkman gate, Station Road, Marepalli, Lalapet, and Mahindra Hills; Bhadrachalam, Draksharama, Kalahasti, Kanipakkam; Rayadurg, Vijaywada- *Bihar* Sharif, Deoghar; Mandara Parvat; Raj Griha, Masai near

Arra;Ramgarha, Ucchita- *Delhi* Siddha Buddhi Vinayaka, Sarojini Nagar, Vinyaka Mandir, Connaght Place-*Goa*:Khandole,Bandiwade-*Gujarat*: Bhadra Ganapati in Ahmedabad; Baroda Siddha nadha;Dushiraraj Ekadanta, Sarvarkar Ganapati; Dharangadhara Eka Danta; Girnar Mt. Revati Ganapati; Modhera,Navari, Samlaji; Somnatha Durga Kuta Ganapati; Baijnatha Ganapati;- *Karnataka*: Bangalore: Panchamukha, Jambu Ganapati at Malleswaram; Dodda Ganapati at Kempegouda; Gokarana;Hampi Vighnantaka; Kollur Pancha Mukha Ganapati-*Kashmir*, Srinagar: Near by, a rock at the rock bottom of Hariparbar worshipped as Ganapati Bhimaswamin; Ganesh Bal Swayambhu on Rivar Lidar and Ganesh ghati nearSharada shrine-*Kerala*: Shrimadnant Temple's Trigarsthapit Ganesha; Kochi's Royal Palace's Dasha Hasta Panchaloha Murti; Panangad Swayayambhu Murti; Calicut's Maha Ganapati; Guruvayur's Ganesha Temple; Maha Ganapati near Kasargod; Tiruvanantapura's Agrasala Ganapati' Pazhavangadi Ganapati and Mangala Vinayakar-*Madhya Pradesh*'s Amarkantak Dwibhuja Siddhi Vinayaka; Indore's 4m tall Bada Ganesh; Omkareshwar'sPancha Mukha Ganesgha; Ujjain's Chintamani, Bade Ganesh and Nishkalankeshwar Ganesh;

Maharashtra's Ashta Vinayaka Temples: Mayureshwara at Moregaon; Siddhi Vinayaka at Sidditek; Ballala Vinayaka at Pali; Varada Vinayaka at Madha; Vighneshweara at Ojhar; Girija Mataa Temple at Lohyadri near Pune; Maha Ganapati at Ranjan gaon and Chitamani at Theur. Besides, Maharashtra is flooded with Ganesha Temples such as Vakratunda at Aawas; Swami Vighnesha at Adosha near Nagpur; Ganesha and Hanuman as Protective devatas at Ahmednagar; Laksha Vinayaka at Berola; Mangala Murti at Chinchwad; Ganapatiphule the famed Swayambhu near seashore a in Ganesh form hill worthy of Parikrama; Dasha bhuja Lakshmi Ganesha at Hedvi in RatnagirinDt. Where Magh Ganesha Jayanti is performed on grand scale; Cave Ganesha at Junnar; Digambar Siddhi Ganesha at Kadav; Ekachakra Ganesha where Bhima of Pandavas worshipped before killing Bakasura; Chitrakuta Ganesha at Nanded; Shri Ganapati with trunk turned its right and is spiritually awaken as at Nagpur; Modakeshwara at Nasik; Dagdusetha Halwai Ganapati at Pune; Dashabhuja Vinayaka erected by Peshwas at Pune; Tishuna Ganapati at Pune; Ganapati Murti like Hanuman of 1.8 m with mace and slim stomach near Pune; Swayambhu Ganesha installed over a Shiva Linga on the banks of River Krishna ar Sangli; and Siddhi Vinaka Temples at at Prabha Devi and Jetha Kapad Market; besides at Borivilli, Dadar and Goregaon-

Odisha: Maha Vinayakla Temples at Cuttak; Siddhi Vinayaka at Dashashvamedha Ghat on the banks of Vaitarani; Ganesh Cave at Khandagiri near Bhuvaneshwar and Ajanatha Ganesha in the Jagannadha Temple at Puri. Tamil nadu: There are as many as 120 Vinayaka Temples in Chennai alone, literally at every important street! Examples are Ishta Siddhi Vinayagar Temple, Sundar Vinayagar at Gandhi Nagar, Ananda Vinayagar at Madhya Kailash in Adyar Greenways Road; Poiyya Varada Vinayagar at Alwar pet, Prasanna Vinayagar Temple, Flower Bazar, some 20 plus Vinayagar Temples in George Town alone, as many as 22 in Mylapore; Vara Shakti Vinayagar Temple at Nanganallur to name just a few. Tamilnadu: Eacchanari Vinaygar Temple with an ancient idol of Asia's biggest 6 ft height and 3 ft width is popular in Coimbatore. Pilliarpatti Karpaga Vinayagar of rock carved idol of 4<sup>th</sup> century antiquity is famed in Tirupatthur with its trunk hurled to the right side near Karaikudi. Kubhakonam is famed with Ucchipilliar, Sudha Ganesha, Adi Kampatta Vinayagar and otherTemples; Tiruvalanchuzhi Koil etc.Madurai, besides at Mayapuram, Nagapattinam, Tiruchentankudi near Nalliyam with Vatapi Ganapati and so on. In Chennai, Adi Nandi Vinaka, Ashwattha Vinayaka, Balachandra Viyayaka, Chakra Vinayaka, Sarvasiddhi vinayaka, Selva- Shiva- Shakti; Siddhi- Vallabha-Venatesha and so on.In *Uttara* Pradesh, Omkara Ganapati at Allhabad and Dhundi Raja at Varanasi are popular. Ashtabhuja Temple at Vadanagar on the banks of Hoogly is popular in West Bengal.

In South East Asia Ganesha Temples are popular in Nepal, Bangladesh, Tibet, China, Mangolia, Cambodia, Indonesia especially in Bali / Java; Malyasia, Nepal, Singapore, Malayeshiya, Srilanka while in Australia especially Brisbane, Adelaide and Melborne; Canada mainly at Brapton, Scarborough, Toronto in Ontario and Edmonton in Alberta; Manikka Vinayakar Aalayam in Paris; in Germany at Haltingen; Hamm and Heilbronn. In South Africa, Vinayaka Temples are popular at Durban, Ladysmith and Mt.Edgecombe. In London Shri Ganapati Temple is popular at Effra Rd; while in USA at Anchorage in Alaska, Flushing and Flushing Meadow in New York; Nashville in Tennessee; Pheanix in Arizona, Salt Lake City in Utah and Seattle in Washington.

# Maha Ganesha Prayers

- 1. Shuklaambara dharam Devam shashivarnam chaturbhujam, prasanna vadanam dhyaayet sarva vighnompashantaye/ The singular Deva who dons spotless clothes with four arms and ever pleasant face viz. Ganesha be prayed to with devotion to root out all kinds of impediments and difficulties.
- 2. Agajaanana padmaarkam Gajaananamaharnisham aneka dantam bhaktaanaam eka dantam upaasmahe/ May we worship Gajaanana the elephant faced God with a single tusk who is the darling boy of Devi Parvati and delight her face like Sun blooms the lotus and thus please the devotees like me ensuring our safety and fulfilment of desires.
- 3.Om Ganaanaamtva Ganapatigm havaamahe kavim kaveenaamupashravastamam, Jyeshtha raajam Brahmanaam Brahmanaspat aa nah shrunvaritibhih seeda saadanam/ May we appeal to you the very First Deity, the Lord of Lords, the foremost Poet and Scripter, the Supreme of Spritual Knowledge and wisdom. Be with us in our hearts to bless and purify all our deeds and duties.
- 4. *Vakratunda mahaa kaaya koti Suryasamaprabha, nirvighnam kurumedeva sarva kaaryeshu sarvadaa*/ Maha Ganesha with collossal body and elephant head resplendent with the radiance of billion Suns! we beseech you with all humility and devotion to destroy all obstacles and ensure success in our deeds of virtue.
- 5. Gajaananam bhuta ganaadi sevitam kapittajambuphalasaarabhakshitam, Umaasutam shoka vinaasha kaaranam namaami Vighneshwara paada pankajam/ Gajaanana Deva! You are ever followed by a huge band of 'bhuta ganas' as your followers as you enjoy your favorite fruits of kapittha and jamboo / wood and rose apples! As the elder son of Devi Uma, you have the reputation of being as 'Avighna Deva' as the destroyer of sorrows and impediments. May we prostrate at your lolus feet for success in our deeds.
- 6. Sumukhaschaika dantascha kapilo gaja karnikah, Lambodarascha vikato Vighna naasho Ganaadhi pah/Dhumraketurganaadhyaksho phaalachandro Gajaananah, dwaadashaitaani naamaani yah pathe-cchrunu yaadapi/ Vidyaarambhe Vivaahecha praveshe nirgame tathaa,sangraame sankate chiva vighnastasya na jaayate/ Sumukha Ekadanta -.Kapila Gajakarnika -Lambodara -Vikata- Vighnanaasha Ganaadhipa- Dhumraketu Ganaadhyaksha Phalachandra Gajaanana-- these are the twelve titles of Ganesha once recited, no obscacles could ever be faced at the beginnings of Vidyaaramba- Vivaha- the Beginning or even Exit such as of successful battle field and any such of Acts of auspiciousness.

- 7. Eka dantam maha kaayam tapta kanchana sannibham, lambodaram vishaalaaksham, vandeham Gananaayakam/ We bow with awe stricken admiration and veneration the single tusked, giant bodied, huge bellied, large eyed and of molten gold like complexion.
- 8. Eka dantaaya vidmahe vakra tundaaya dheemahe, tannno Danti prachodayaat/May the Glorious Ganesha with Single Tusk and Curved Trunk induce and inspire of all of us to lead us to the path of Dharma or Unfailing Righteousness.
- 9. Vinayako Vighnakaro Gajasyo Ganesha naamaacha Bhavasya Putrah, Yethecha Sarvam thava yanthu Bhruthya Vinayakayaah Kruura drishtah Prachandah-Vucchushma daanaadi vuvruddhva dehaha aryeshu siddhim prati paadayanthah, Bhavaamsva Deveshu thadha makeshu kaaryashu chanteshu Mahanubhavat-Agreshu Pujam Labhatenyatha cha Vinashayishyastatha kaarya siddhim/ (Vinayaka, Vighnakara, Gajavadana, Ganesha, Shankara Putra; all these cruel-eyed, harsh and angry Vinayaks will be your servants; those who are desirous of giving well earned materials as 'daanas' or alms be provided with Siddhis or boons. At Yajnas or various Propitious Tasks, all the devotees shall be provided the highest veneration, lest their tasks or worships be discounted').
- 10. Namasthe Gajavaktraya Namasthe Gananayaka, Viyayaka Namastestu Namaste Chanda Vikrama-Namastestu tey Vighna kartha Namaste Sarpa Mekhala Namaste Rudra Vaktrotha Pralambajathara ashrita- Sarva Deva Namaskaaraad avighnam kuru Sarvada / ('We greet you Gajavadana, Gananayaka, Prachanda Vikrama, Vighna kartha, Naga bhushana, Rudra Mukha Utpanna, Lambodhara, Avighna Karaka, Kalyana Pradaata; Sarva devas are greeting you, Kindy ensure that we enjoy Avighnam always)

## GANESHA PANCHAKAM

Mudaa karaatta modakam sadaa vimukti saadhakam, Kalaa dhara avatamsakam vilaasi loka-rakshakam/ Anaayakaika naayakam vinaashitebha daityakam, nataashubhaashu naashakam namaami Vinaayakam/ Ganesha! My prostrations to you as you have in your hands a 'Modaka' with which you seek to usher joy to your devotees; holding Chandra as your ornament to bring in contentment to them; as the supreme master providing protection and destroy evil energies within; and to surrendering devotees to gift all round auspiciousness.

Natetara atibheekaram navodita Arkabhaasvaram, namatsuraari nirjaram nataadhika aapaduddharam, Suraishvaram nidheesvaram Gajeshvaram Ganeshwaram, Maheshvaram tamaashraye Paraatparam nirantaram/ To those who out of arrogance do not bow to Devas, Vinayaka! You deliver them a frightning form but to the God Fearing devotees of faith, you gift them with benign form of Ushah kaala Surya of glory; You are ever fresh and never tiring not to mention of decay, always greeted by Devas reverentially; ever instant to pull out from deep sorrows and difficulties; indeed you are Sureshvara, Nidhishvara, Gajeshvara and Ganeshvara or the Deva of Devas- Deva of Opulence-Deva with an Elephant Face and Deva of Devas and the Great God Maheshvara Himself; My earnest prostrations to you in total surrender.

Samastaloka Shankaram nirasta daitya kunjaram, daraitarodaram varam varebha vaktram aksharam, kripaakaram kshamaakaram mudaakaram yashaskaram manaskaram namaskrtaam namaskaromi bhaasvaram/ Maha Vinayaka! Our sincere salutations to you as the Flagship of Auspicious Power behind Trilokas and the Great Eliminator of all the external evils and the internal demonaic forces;

Ganesha! Your huge body is truly representative of Prosperity, Boon-Giving benevolence and Imperishable Nature at once. You are Kripakara-Kshamakara-Mudakara-Yashaskara-Manaskara or He who showers grace-forgiveness-joy- glory and wisdom! Our heart felt dedications to you with earnestness.

Akinchanaartimaarjanam chirantanokti bhaajanam Puraari poorvanandanam Suraarigarvacharvanam/
Prapancha naasha bheeshanam Dhananjayaadi bhuushanam, Kapoladaana vaarananam bhaje PuraanaVaaranam/ Maha Ganesha! You are the refuge of those who are tormented by sufferings, you are the
elder brother of Kartikeya and the proud elder son of Tripurantaka as also the destroyer of the pride and
arrogance of Daitya Danavas. You are the Head of the Illustrative Pancha Bhutas or the Five Elemens
and the Enjoyer of the juices of Itihasa Puranas which are the representation of the grace of virtue and
nyaaya as your symbols ever active seeking to destroy the evil and ever protect positive energies of the
Universe!

Nitaanta kaanta danta kaantim antakaantaka aatmajam, Acintya ruupam Anta heenam Antaraaya-krantanam/ Hrdantare nirantaram vasantameva Yoginaam tameka Dantameva tam vichintayaami Santatam/ My reverential greetings to Vighnesha! Your form of grace is of Ekadanta readily endearing your devotees; your glory is of the gracious son of Parama Shiva who has the potent break to Yama the Antaka Himself! Your elusive form is Inconceivable and Limitless, yet Cuts through the Obstacles of His Devotees. Gana Nayaka! You continually abide in the cave of the heart of the Yogis. Ekadanta! We are ever in our hearts as youindeed are unique!

Mahaa Ganesha Panhca Ratnam aadarenna yonvaham, Prajapati prabhaatake hridi smaran Ganeshvaram/ Arogataam adossataam susaahiteem suputrataam samaahitasayurasstta bhuutimabhyupaiti sochiraat/ Who so ever recites the Unique Ganesha Pancharatnam with Devotion, utter at the early mornings contemplating on Sri Ganeshvara in their Hearts will get free from diseases and vices, will get auspicious Spouses and Good Sons, will get Long Life and the Powers soon.

# Sankata Naashana Ganesha Stotraashtakam by Narada

- 1. Pranamya shirasaa Devam Gauri putram Vinaayakam, bhaktaa vaasam smarennityam aayuh kaamyaardha siddhaye/ Prostrations to you Devi Gauri's illustrious son Vinayaka; your devotees in millions seek your blessings for their longevity and fulfillment of their desires.
- 2. Pradhamam Vakratundam cha Eka dantam dviteeyakam, triteeyam krishna pingaaksham Gaja vaktram chaturdhakam/ Prostrations to you Ganesha as you have four glorious titles as Vakratunda-Eka danta-Krishna Pingaaksha and Gaja vaktra.
- 3. Lambodaram panchamam cha shashtham Vikatamevacha, saptamam Vighna Raja and Dhumra Varnam tadhaashtakam/ Maha Ganesha! You shine with further names four more titles of fame viz. as Lambodara, Vikata, Vighna Raja and Dhumravarna.
- 4.Navamam Phaalachandram cha dashamam tu Vinaayakam, ekaadasham anapatim dwaadasham tu Gajaananam/ Vigneshwara! Your ninth to twelfth titles of popularity are Phaala Chandra, Vinayaka, Ganapathi and Gajaanana.
- 5. Dvaadashaitaani naamaani trisandhyam yah patthennarah, na cha vighnabhayam tasya sarvasiddhikaram param/ Those devotees who memorise the above twelve titles of Ganesha with faith

and dedication in the mornings- days- and nights would never ever encounter hurdles and hardships while are assured of 'sarva siddhis' or alround success.

- 6. Vidyaardhi labhate vidyaam dhanaardhi labhate dhanam, puraardhee labhate putraan mokshardhe labhate gatim/ By so memorising the magnificence of Lord Ganesha, the students attain higher levels of studies and of knowledge, lovers of prosperity accomplish riches, the aspirants of good progeny get blessed with sons of success, and those seeking immortality attain bliss and eternity.
- 7. *Japed Ganapati stotram shadbhirmaasaih phalam labhet, samvatsarena siddhim cha labhate naatra samshayah*/ A six month long Ganapati dhyaana would yield the desired results while year long meditation with devotion assures total fulfillment surely.
- 8. Ashtabhyo braahmanebhyascha likhvitaa yah samarpayet, tasya Vidyaa bhavetsarvaa Ganeshasya prasaadatah/ In case, a group of superior vedic brahmanas are assigned the task of pathana- mananalekhana of the glories of Maha Ganesha, accomplisment of all round knowledge is assured indeed.

# **PART TWO**

## ESSENCE OF GANESHA PURANA

(Ganesha Purana has two 'Khandas' viz. Upaasana Khanda and Kreeda Khanda: Upasana Khanda has 92 chapters while Kreeda Khanda which has 155 chapters is not included here in.)

Chapters 1-9: <u>King Somakanta a leper- Meets Bhrighu who commends Ganesha- King in past was Duratma Kaamaanda whose single deed Ganesha Temple repairs</u>

In the twelve year long Maha Sabha organised under the auspices of Shounaka Maharshi, Suta Maha Muni narrated Ashtaa Dasha Maha Puranas viz. Agni-Bhavishya -Bhagavata-Brahma-Brahmaanda-Brahma Vaivarta- Garuda-Kurma- Linga-Markandeya-Matsya- Narada-Padma-Skanda-Shiva-Vamana-Varaha-Vayu-Vishnu and Ashtaadasha Upa Puranas viz. Bhargava-Brihad Naradeeya- Devi Bhagavata-Durvaasa- Ganesha-Hamsa-Kapila-Kalika-Mudgala-Nandi- Narasimha-Paraashara- Samba- Shiva Rahasya- Sthala Puranas-Surya-Vashishtha-Varuna and Vamana upa purana. Ganesha Purana is so reputed that its significance is not possible to describe even by Brahma and Sesha Nag too. However, an attempt is being made.

In Sourashtra of Bharata, there was a King named Somakaanta with five Mantris named Rupavaan, Vidyaan, Kshemankara, Jnaanagamya and Subala. The Queen was named Sudhrama a Pativrata and a son Hemakuntha who was very courageous and an able fighter in battles. Dharmatma King Somakantha owing to misfortune was suffering from leprosy. As he was unable to administer the Kingdom he decided to leave the throne and decided to leave to forests and his wife too decided to accompany him; even the Prince too decided to leave temporarily along with the parents and let the Ministers help the governance. Even the forest life, the King taught and trained the Prince about various Vidyas or Learnings viz. Aahnikaachaara- Sadaachara-Neeti Shaastra and the nuances of Raja Dharma and eventually coronated as the King. Somakantha retained with him two of the Ministers viz. Subala and Jnaanagamya. As Somakantha and the rest while travelling through the forests, they met Rishi Chyavan, the son of Bhrigu Maharshi and the Rishi took them all to Bhrigu ashram. Bhrigu hosted the entire party and pleased with the background of Somakantha initiated with the recitation of Ashtottara shata -108 names- of Ganesha and performed 'prokshana' with the 'mantra jala' into the nasal holes of

the King; instantly the latter's 'papa-purusha' or the sinful qualities were washed off and instantly the King gained enormous height and his face got brightened and asked for eats to assuage his hunger. Maharshi Bhrigu asked the King to eat plenty of dry mango leaves so the the paapa purusha inside the body would turn to ashes. Thus Bhrigu Tirtha gained the popularity of curing 'kushthu roga'. Bhrigu then advised the highly refreshed King to recite Ganesha Purana with devotion. Veda Vyasa after Veda vibhajana lost his memory power and Lord Brahma advised Vyasa to perform Ganesha Puja with bhakti.

With his divya drishti or celestial vision, Bhrigu Maharshi the narrated King Somakantha's account of the laatter's his previous life; the King was a Vaishya named Kaamand married to a woman named Kutumbini born to Chidrupa and Sulochana at Kolhapura near Vindhyas. As both the parents passed away, Kaamand became suddenly rich and in the first felt enthusiasm of plentitude did one laudable task of 'jeernodhaarana' of a Ganesha Temple but enentually became a victim of bad habits with the parental properties and his wife with children left him to her parents. In course of time, he took to thieving, drinking, betting, and eventually got imprisoned and after jail breaking ran into jungles and took to hunting, killing passers by so on. He then encountered a virtuous Brahmana youth named Guna -vardhana who cursed Kaamand that he would suffer in various Hells for ages but instead of repenting, he mercilessly buchered the Brahmana who was just married! In this way, he carried on his entire life by looting and killing men-women and children attacking the near by villages and towns. As Kaamand in his old age started looking back his past life became intensely repentant with diseases, loneliness and sheer helplessness. He took to begging on streets and with the help of the begged money, though as a very late realisation sought to charity to brahmanaas but the latter abhored and refused the daanas even at one glance at him. In a retrospective mood, he exclaimed that all the life long heinous tasks and unpardonable sins through out his life and wondered that atleast one noble task could be performed even at in the fag end of his life. Even this decisive resolution the alms collected daily came in liberally; he noticed that a Ganesha Temple was in ruins and even as he decided and committed to improve the state of the temple; he made a public declaration to reconstuct, the charity money poured in from the public: Jeerna devaala yoddhhaare bhavatte matiruurjitaa, dhanam swam vipulam veekshyakuupya ratnaadi samyutam/ Tatonaadih paraa murtir ganeshasya vane shubhaa, jeerna devaalaye kshudre sthitaa te kathitaa dvijajaih/ Tatoti vistrutaam deergham chatustorana samyutam, chatur dwaaram suruchiram chatuh shikhara shobhitam/ Naanaa stambhachitam naanaa vedibhih parivaaritam muktaapravaalaratnaadyaih khachitam ruchiraanganam/ Nanaapushpadrumayutam naanaa phaladrumaishchitam chaturdikshu chaaru yaarimayayaapi yiraaji -tam/ Praasaadam nirmitastad drayyam te yyayam gatam, kinchit striyaa cha putraischa sahrudibhavar -bandhubhirhritam/ Tato naatichire kaale pancha tatvamcha gatobhavaan, yaamya dutairbandhastvaamaadito bhrusham/ As per Kamada's resolve, contrary to the advice of a group of Brahmanas to somewhat repair the Temple, elaborate reconstruction plans were initiated. The New Temple was totally reconstructed with strong foundation, broad and high ceilings, huge Simhadwaaras or Entrances, four broad entry points and exits, four high sub entry gates, four high 'gopuras' chiselled with Ganesha's abhaya mudras, praanganas or interior doors with 'toranas' or running lines decorated with pearls, rubies, diamonds and other nine gems, fragrant and fresh flowers and plants with a huge fruit garden as a backdrop, besides a host of free stay and dining facilities of running streams of devotees, friends, and men- women-and children. In course of time, Kaamad left the Paancha Bhoutika Shareera of earth-water-agni-air and the skies.to join the Maha Pancha Tatvas.

On arriving Yama Loka, Kaamada's Soul was directed to Kardama Naraka. Lord Yama asked the soul whether it would like to enjoy the Punya or Paapa. The reply was that in case his punya account be experienced, then he could be born as the King of Saurashtra but with kushthu disease. This was how King Somakaanta retreated to forest life with his wife and two noble ministers yet with the kushthu roga and got expunged by Bhrigu and got formally familiarised of Ganesha Mahatmya!

Chapter 10: <u>Veda vibhajana</u>, <u>scripting of Puranas and Epics like Maha Bharata by Veda Vyasa due essentially owing to invoking Ganesha:</u> Ganesha Purana vividly describes vide Chapter 10: Pursuant to Veda Vibhajana as Rig-Yahus- Saama- Adharvva Vedas, Veda Vyasa's mental sharpness got suddenly

dipped and his efforts to take up the challenge of scripting eighteeen Maha Puranas to show the beackon light on the values of Dharma and Nyaaya or Virtue and Justice to the posterity. He approached Brahma Deva who stated that Vyasa did not invoke Ganesha for blessings and hence the problem. Naayanaam sambhutah Paraasharyo mahaa munih, ateetaanaagatajnaanee Veda Shaastraartha tatvavit/ Kritvaa Vedam chaturbhaagam tadardha jnaanasiddhaye, sa vidyaamada garvena Puraanam kartrumaarambhat/ Sampatti saadhanam naiva ktitavaanmangalam puraa, Ganeshasya natim vaapi stutim vaa tasya vaa kvachit/Tato vighnaabhi - bhutahsamartham kanchan naamasmarat bhraantirevaabhaktasya lokike pathi/Nitye naimittike kaamye shroute cha karmaani, vyaakhyaayaaturyeda shaastraanaam sarvagjnasya satopihi/ Aoushadheebhischa mantraischa bhagna veerya ivaahiraat, tastambhe svaatmaani Bhrusham taddvetum naadhyagacchat/ Tato gacchat Satyalokam dhaataaram prashtumaadaret vismayaakraanta hridayo hreenah paraasharo munih/ Naraayaaamsha Paraashara Muni's son Veda Vyasa who is a top expert surfiet with the awareness of the past, present and future and tatva jnaani, who had the reputation of Veda Vibhajana, got self opined of his talent was puffed up in course of time and prepared himself to script Puranas. But he ignored performing salutations to Ganesha Deva and invoking him with veneration. Despite the knowledge of nitya- naimittika-kaamya kaaryas and shrouta- smaartha karmaanushthaana, he tended to forget the Primacy of Ganesha Smarana and as though he got subued by oushadhi-mantra prayoga was disabled to maintain his mental and intellectual balance. While wondering as to what was wrong with himself approached Lord Brahma for a solution, prostrated before him and asked with humility and dedication.

Vyasa then asked Brahma: 'I am indeed subject to misfortune as an intolerable disability has attacked me; I had genuinely desired to alert the common public in Kali Yuga suffering from deep ignorance of sadaachaara-ahnikaachaara and never suffer from 'akarmanyata-naastika and veda nindita- mada bhramita'. But for whatever reason am unable to see properly, hear, remember, and even think; do very kindly get my normalcy and alertness. Brahma replied: Anyathaa kurvatah pumsah kritam bhavati chaanyataa, buddhdyaa yuktyaarjanevaapi guruunucha laghunicha/ Kaaryaani saadhayedadheemaatra garvaatra cha mastaraat, vaahanatvam samaapanno garvena tu khageshwarah/ Matsaraatraashitam sarvamaambikeya sutenacha, matrasaadeva Raamena kshatramutsaaditam puraa/ Yonaadi nidhanidhano Devo jagat kartaa jaganmayah, jagaddhaataa jagatkartaa sadasadvyaktamavayayam /Yo katrumanyathaa katru shaktah katrucha sarvadaa, yasyaagnaavashagaa nityam Devaa Indrapurogamaah/ Aham Vishnuscha Rudraschaa Suryaagnivarunaadayah, yo vighnahartaacha bhaktaanaam vighna kartetarasya cha/ Tasmimstvam kritavaan garvam svavidyaa bala samshriyaat, sarvajnaataabhimaanena na kritam pujanam tvayaa/ Smaranam vaa Ganeshasya praarambhenyasya vaa tathaa, na kritam cha tvayaa Vyaasa tena bhraantistavaamagha/ Aarambhe Sarva kaaryenaam praveshe vaapi nirgame, shroute smaarte loukike yosmruto vighnam karoticha/ Those who seek to take up any task whatsoever are not sure of success and positivity of the end result as one could land in trouble too as of 'aarambha shuratva' or high mindedness in the initiation of the task. Intelligent persons of calibre have an open mind and tread their feet with mental balance without pride or prejudice. The moral is that no task be performed with 'matsara' and 'garva' or narrow mindedness / jealousy. Due the ego and arrogance, Garuda Deva had become the driver of Vishnu and Dhritarashtra to to jealousy brought Kauravas to doom, while Parashu Raama due to sheer arrogance sought to uproot the clan of kshatriyas and kings. Bhagavan Ganesha is anaadi nidhana / adyanta rahita or Timeless and Ancient Most, jagat karta-jagat swarupa-jagadhhara-jagat samhara-sadasad swarupa-Sat-Asat-Rupa and Vyaktaavyakta Avikari Deva. Indeed Indraadi Devas, Tri Murtis, Surya-Agni-Varuna and all the Gods worth mentioning are under His hold but yet, He is under control of His bhaktas. He is indeed vighna harta yet to abhaktas, He is vighna karta. Thus Brahma admonished and advised to invoke Ganesha with humility and faith with none of the negative qualities of before taking up the scripting of Purana-Itihaasas with trust and devotion. Hence the Ganesh Purana reiterates: Aarambhe Sarva kaaryenaam praveshe vaapi nirgame, shroute smaarte loukike yosmruto vighnam karoticha/ At the beginnings of any kaarya,- be it the initiation or termination, or shroutasmaarta-loukika or auspicious or death related or any kind of daily routine worldly actions, Ganesha smarana is a must.

The Essence of Bharat Yatra Smriti published by the website of kamakoti, org. is quoted as follows: 'It is stated that Yatris be advised that after visiting the famed Temple of Badari Narayana, they should also visit the Tapta Kunda or the Agni Tirtha right nearby the famed Pancha Shilas viz. Garuda Shila, Narada Shila, Markandeya Shila, Narasimha Shila and Varaahi Shila. From Tapta Kunda where Yatris enjoy a refreshing bath in hot water of about 45 degree heat and then reach the most renowned **Brahma Kapala** a fairly large platform signifying Lord Brahma's skull of one of his heads relieved by Lord Shiva as he was annoyed with Brahma as the latter got attracted to the beauty of his own creation Saraswati fit to be his own daughter. It is at this Kapala Vimochana Tirtha where Brahma performed severe Tapasya for atonement of his sin that yatris profer Pitru Shraddhas. From Brahma Kunda as Ganga flows and Alaknanda takes a turn from the mountains alongside Brahma Kapala. Then there are Atri-Anasuya Tirtha, Indrapada Tirtha, Mata Mandir, Nara Narayana Parvata, Chakra Tirtha, Satpatha and so on. From Satpatha upward the mountainous terrain is extremely difficuld to ascend and once one could do so would find a circular shaped Soma Tirtha might be visible but probably as a sheet of ice and its vicinity one might find if fortunate the Nara Narayana Mountain. On way from Satpatha to Badarinath occurs Alaknanda's another bank and Vasudhara which is about five miles from Badarinath is the Sangam Place of Sarastati leads to Keshava Prayag and Manaagram where Veda Vyas cave is accessible inside which Vyas scripted Eighteen Maha Puranas; a few meters away is situated <u>Ganesh Guha /cave</u>. The Legendary background states that while Veda Vyasa was mentally scripting the Puranas, Ganesha agreed to write with his trunk on Taala Patras on the mutual agreement that Vyasa should pronounce in a non stop flow while Ganesha should write down in a non stop manner too simultaneously with no slips or interruptions on either side! ]

# Chapters 11-13: Vyasa enquired of details of Ganeshopaasana- His Virat Swarupa and Avataras-

Upaasana Vidhi: Brahma explained to Veda Vyasa: There are as many as seven crore Upasana Mantras of which sheeghra-siddhi kaaraka mantras are noteworthy: the significant ones are of 'shadakshara' *Vakra tundaaya hum* as well as the single lettered mantra '*Gam*'. Repeated repetition of these mantras ought to attain mukti, dhanyata and siddhi praapti. But the mantra is totally ineffective to naastikaas, shraddaa- abhaavaas, veda- devata nindakaas, krura duraacharis, ashuchis and all kinds of casualness and non belief, and tend to become victims of negative results and obstacles in their efforts. Only shraddhhaalu-veda paathi, saabhilaashas,shastragjnas and mridu svabaavis are only eligible for the Mantra. As regards Ganeshopasana vidhi the following is stated:

Vighnanyupsham yaanti sadupaasaka darshanaat, namasyanticha bhutaani sthaavaraneeya charaanicha/ Atasteham pravakshyaami Mantramekaaksharam shubham, tadanushthaana maatrena v aanchitam samavyaapyasi/ Anushthaanam pravakshyaami yathoktam Shambhunaa mama, snaanam kritvaa dhoutavastre paridhaaya shuchirnarah/ Chailaajina kushouh kritvaa svaasane saadhakah sudheeh, tasmin sthitvaa bhutasuddhim praanaanaam sthaapanam tathaa/ Antarbahirmaatrukaanaam nyaasam kritvaa tvatindritah, praanaayaamam tatah kritvaa mula mantram japan idi/ Mantrasandhyaam upaaseeta aagamoktaam yadaa vidhi, aapaadamastakam Devam dhyaatvaa nishchalachetasaa/ Maanasai rupachaaraistam pujayate susamaahitah, tato japed yathaashakti parascharanamaargatah/ Anukule bhavedyaavad varam daantu Gajaananah swarupam darshayedyaavat taavajjapaparo bhavet/

Upasakas of Ganesha should invoke foremost and recite the Ekaashrara Mantra which Brahma handed over by Parama Shiva Himself. The practioners ought to assume 'bahyaantasshuchi' or cleaniness of body and mind wearing clean clothes, be seated on 'kushaasana' or 'mriga charma'and perform bhuta shuddhi or 'shaareerika and maanasika paapa dvesha manina' followed by 'Atmapraana Pratishtha' followed by 'antarmaatruka nyaasa' and 'bahirmaatrika nyaasa' and then along with the Moola Mantra perform 'praanaayaama'[ Devi Bhagavata Purana describes Ashta Matrikas as Brahmani-Vaishnavi- Maheshwari-Indrani-Kaumari- Varaahi- Chamunda and Narasimhi. Devi Purana also mentions Gana naakika / Vinayika and Maha Bharavi too. Varaha Purana adds Yami ,Yogeshvari born of Shiva's flames . Maha

Lakshmi is mentioned elsewhere] Besides Sandhya Vandana, then keeping Ganesha's sacred feet, perfom the continous 'manana' or concentrated 'ekaagrata' and Mantra Japa. This procedure of Upaasana is certain to yield results. In fact, Brahma's advice to Veda Vyasa was that the latter should continue the Mantra Japa and Maanasika Puja uptil 'Ganesha Saakshatkaara'!

Virat Swarupa Ganesha profiling with Tri Murtis:

Omkaara rupee Bhagavanuktaste Gana naayakah, yathaa sarveshu kaaryeshu pujayesau Vinaayakah, Mantraah sarvaagame proktaa anye ye nishphalaascha te,Sadasadravyaktamavyaktam sarvam hi Gananaayakah/ Bhagavan Ganesha is Omkaara Swarupa. Agamaas stressed the fact that the prefix of OM is essential before the suffix of Ganesha. His is how Deva-Siddha-Muni-Raakshasa-Kinnara-Gandharva Chaarana-Naaga-Guhyaka-Manushyas as welll as charaachara praanis are required to pray and worship Vinaayaka. Once, the Universe witnessed 'Pralaya' when Vayu of Pancha Bhutas blew most fiercely as mountains were shattered and as well as the Ashta Dishas or the Eight Directions; on the Sky the 'dwaadashaadityas' got united and 'agni jvaalaas' swallowed and sucked all the waters in rivers and oceans. Lord Brahma who constructed the Universe too was dormant. After a long lapse of 'kaala maana' or the time cycle was non-functional, then commenced a feeble sound which gradually developed to a thunderous 'naada' of A-U-M resounded frequently and from an all pervading luminosity emerged a huge shape in the form of Ganesha on the sky. [Thus without the Omkara beeja mantra prefixed, Ganesha Puja is thus ineffective and futile]. Lured by the 'maaya' or hallucination of Ganesha as Maha Naada OM, Tri Murtis commenced the search to identify 'IT'; they searched Sapta Urdhva Lokas (Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, Swarloka, Maharloka, Janarloka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka), Sapta Patalaas ( Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talaatala, Mahatala, Rasatala and Patala); Dasha Dishas or Ten Directions but could not locate the origin of the Omkaara naada. They meditated intensely and finally visioned in their mental horizons. Then they percieved a 'Koti Surya prateekaasha tejoraashi' or of a crores worthy of Grand Luminosity's dazzle as the breath of Tri Murtis was overtaken by their consciousness and a Skywide Figure got manifested gradually.

Avataaras : Vyaasa uaacha: Panchaasyam chaturaasyancha sahasramastakaancha tam, Gajaasyam varadam Devam kathamete pratushtavyuh/ Brahmovaacha: Prasaadonmukha vighnesha kripaapaanga nireekshanaat, praatbuddhi prasaadaaste keshaastam nunuvastadaa/Brahma Vishnu Maheshwara vaacha: 'Ajam nirvikalpam niraakaaramekam niraalambam advaitam, param nirgunam nirvishesham nireeham param Brahmarupam Ganesham bhajem/ Gunaateetamaadyam Chidaananda rupam Chidaabhaasakam sarvagam jnaana gamyam, Munidhyeyamaakaasha rupam Paresham Param Brahmarupam Ganesham bhajem/ Jagatkaaranam kaarana jnaana rupam Suraadim Sukhaadim Yugaadim bhajem/ Rajo yogato Brahma rupam Shrutijam Sadaa kaaryasaktam Hridaachintyarupam, Jagatkaaranam Sarva vidyaa nidhaanam sadaa <u>Brahmarupam</u> Ganesham nataah smah/ Sadaa satvayogam mudaa kreedamaanam asuraaneena harantam jagatpaalayantam, anyekaavataaram nijaa agjnaanhaaram sadaa 'Vishnu Rupam' Ganesham nataasmah/ Tamoyoginam Rudra rupam Trinetram jagaddhharakam taarakam jnaana hetum/ Anekaagamaih svam janam bhodayantam sadaa 'Sharvarupam' Ganesham nataah smah/ Tamastomahaaram trayeeveda saaram parabrahmapaaram, Munijnaanakaram vidure vikaaram sadaa <u>'Vighna rupam'</u> Ganesham nataah smah/ Nijair oaushadheeh - tarparyantam karoudhaih suroudhaan kalaabhih sudhaasraavineebhih, dineshaamshusantaapahaaram dvijesham Shashaanka rupam Ganesham nataah smah/ Prakaasha swarupam nabhovaayurupam vikaaraadi hetum kalaakaala bhutam, aneka kriyaaneka shakti swarupam sadaa Shakti rupam Ganesham nataasmah/ Pradhaana swarupam Mahattatva rupam, dharaavaarirupam digeeshaadirupam, asat sat swarupam jagad hetu bhutam Sadaa Vishva rupam Ganesham nataah smah/

Vyasa said: Ganesha is Five Countenanced, Four Faced, and Thousand Headed. How did Varada Vinayaka's praises were made by Brahma Deva! Then Brahma replied: By way of His benign looks, how

did the Tridevas had reacted: They replied that Ganesha was: Ajanma-Nirvikara-Eka Maatra-Niralamba-Advaita-Aanandapurna-Para-Nirguna-Nirveshasha-and Para Brahma who is Ever Worshipped. He is also Gunaateeta- Aadi Swarupa- Chidaananda Rupa- Chidaabhaasaka-Sarvatra gaami-Jnaana praapya-Muniloka dhyaanadhaarana rupa-Aakaasha Rupa- Parameshvara-Jagat kaarana- Kaarana ajnaana karana / Kaarana itself knows nothing about Ganesha-Devaadideva- Sukhaduhkha kaarana-Yugaadi vidvaamaana-Ganaswaami-Jagadvyaapi- Vishva vandya-and Sureshvara. We greet Brahma Rupa Ganesha with Rajoguna the Veda jnaata -Srishti kaarya samalagna- Hridayaachintya rupa-Jagatkaarana-Sarva Vidyaa Nidhaana and Sadaa Brahma Ganesha! We greet Satva guna yukta- kreedaa paraayana- aneka avataata dharana-asura naashaka-jagat paalaka-nija bhakta aginaana haaraka Vishnu rupa Ganesha. We greet Tamogunaashrita Rudra Rupa Ganesha-Trinetra-jagat samhaara kaarana-taaraka-jnaana kaaraka- nija bhakta aagama jnaana pradaata Shiva swarupa Ganesha. We greet Vighna Rupa Ganesha the Tamohaara-Agjnaana haara-Triveda saara-Munijnaana kaara and Vikaara vidura. We greet Surya swarupa Ganesha the andhakaara naashaka-bhaktaagjnaana haara- Vedatrayee saara-Parabrahmapaara-muni jnaana pradavikaara doora. We greet Shashanka Rupa Ganesha the auoshadhi kaarana-kalaanidhi-sudhaa shraava kaari-dvija raaja. We greet Shakti Rupa Ganesha- the Prakaasha swarupa-Aakaasha rupa- Vayu rupa-Vikaaraadi kaarana rupa-kriya rupa-and aneka shakti kaarana. Finally, Ganesha Deva assumes Pradhaana Prakriti rupa-Mahat Tatva / buddhi rupa-Prithivi rupa-Jala rupa- and Disha Swaami Swarupa of Indra-Agni-Yama-Nirruti-Varuna-Vaayu-Kubera and Ishaana as also Sad-Asad Rupa-Jagat hetu Vishva Ganesha!

Maha Ganesha himself affirmed: Yadartham kleshitaa yuuyam yadarthamiha chaagataah, preetoha - manayaa stutyaa varam mattho vrineeta tam/ Kritam cha mama yat stotram bhavadbhirbhaarvita - atmabhih, stotraraajamiti khyaatam bhavishyati madaagjnayaa/ Idam yah pathet praatarutthaaya dheemaamstrisandhyam sadaa bhakti yukto vishuddah, sa putraamsu striyam sarvakaamaan labhet Parabrahma rupo bhavedantakaale/

Prajaa! So far you have been struggling in your lives with undue hurdles and obstacles; You may now ask me for boons, as I feel satisfied with your euologies and earnest prayers. The Stotra Raja which you have recited with devotion and faith shall be popular for ever. By the recitation of this stotra at tri kalas or morning- midday-evenings along with sons and family shall undoubtedly be blessed with their wishes!

Chapters 14-18: <u>Ganesha shakes up Brahma who postpones Shrishti- Upadesha of Ekaakshara Mantra- and Shrishti resumes - Brahma felt the need for Ganesha Puja and to perform 'Upachaaras' manifests two spouses as Ganesha's wives viz **Siddhi and Buddhi-** Highlights of Brahma Srishti</u>

Brahma acquired the accomplishment of Veda-Purana-Aagama- Shastras-and the secrets of Shrishthi of the 'Charaachara Jagat' by the blessing of Ganesha. But he got puffed up with pride. As he initiated the process of Creation but faced innumerable hic-ups and hurdles, he postponed the Srishti Karya for the time and spent his time with the drink of honey from flowers. Then he had a dream of a Boy with three eyes, five hands, a deep well like face, burnt hands, three fingers, ten heads, five feet each with three fingers, elongated teeth and such frightening features. The boy made such frightening sounds sending shivers to Brahma. He fisted him fast with his fists and kicks, shook his entire body yet with care and cajole. As Brahma extolled for long with dedication and devotion, the boy exclaimed: You have developed 'jada- buddhi' or degenarated mind set over the passage of time and hence I am giving you the Ekaakshara Mantra and its punascharana and after reciting the mantra with devotion ten lakh times as per the procedure prescribed. Then only you might be blessed with my clearance to intiate the 'charaachara srishti.' Accordingly, Brahma initiated the 'upaasana' of the Ekaakshara Mantra as a rock with determiation by overcoming hunger and thirst, limbs and senses for thousand Divya Vatsaras, even as his body emenated ferocious flames. Ganesha witnessed the gradual evolution and mental fitness of Brahma as the latter was so radiant like crores of Suryas with garlands of fires around his body as though

the Three Lokas were about to become ashes and the Sky and Earth get unified as a single entity! It was then that Ganesha appeared before Brahma with his hands shining with Parashu, Kamal, Maala and Abhaya Mudra - the axe-lotus-rudraaksha garland and his hand with the insignia of fearlessness as Brahma got bewildered with astonishment. Ganesha replied in a sky-resounding voice that Brahma need not be afraid: Na bhayam kuru Lokesha sa evaaham samaagatah, yenate mantra aadesha swapna Ekaaksharah shubhah--mayi prasanneham yadyatte idi vartate, mayi prasanne sarvam tad bhavitaa naatra samshayah/ Loka Swaami Brahma Deva! Not be afraid; I have arrived right here where I bestowed you the Ekaakshara Mantra and by practising the Mantra as I prescribed, I have arrived and am ready to fulfill your requirement. Brahma replied: Yo Vedaanaam sashastraanaam jnaaninaam yoginaamati, sarvopanishadaam chaiya gocharo nakadaacxhana/ Sa punyanichayairmedya yaatahg pratyakshataam vibhuh anaadinidhanonantoprameyo nirgunopicha/ Yadi prasanno Devesha Vighnesha karunaakara, tava bhaktim dhrudhaam dehi yayaa duhkham na nah sprushet/ Idaaneem dehi saamarthyam naanaa nirmaane mama, vighnaani cha sham yaantu yadi tushtosi me prabho/ Gajaanana uvaacha: Evamastu kurushva tvam srishtim naanaa vidham bahum, maam smritvaa sarva vighnaani naasham vaasvanti sarvatah/ Dhridhaa bhaktih shubham jnaayam matprasaadaad bhayishyati, ni shankam kuru kaaryaani sarvaani Chaturaanana/ What all the outstanding knowledge of Ganesha by way of Vedas, Shastras, and the various Upanishads or any other source of Jnaana of the generations hence forth be absorbed into me. Parama Deva! You indeed are Samasta Prabhu-Adyanta rahita-Ananta-Aprameya/ Aseema-Ajeya, and Nirguna.Karunaakara! Devesha!Vighneshwara! If only you are pleased, grant me dhridha bhakti which generates your confidence and Vighna shanti. As Brahma extolled Ganesha, the latter replied 'evamastu'; Be blessed to initiate all kinds of Srishti with my blessings and confidence.

# Siddhi and Buddhi as Ganesha's spouses for 'Upacharas'

Muniruvaacha: Evam labdha varo Brahmaa pujayaamaasa tam Vibhum yadyacchittechintayat sa tatthatdevipatishthate/Pujaartham Deva Devesya prasaadatah, dakshinaavasare dvai tu kanyake samupasthute/ Chaaru prasanna nayana vadanaih suviraajite, anekaratna khachita naanaalankaara shobhite/ Divya gandha yute divya vastra maalaa vibhushite, te tasmai dakshinaartham sa kalpamaayaamaasa padmabhuh/ Rambhaagarbhena neeraajya divya pushpaanjalim dadou, sahasranamaabhih stutvaa pradakshinamathaa karot/ Namasya praarthayaamaasa deenaanaam Shankaro bhava, evam sampujanastena brahmanaa parameshthitaa/ Tatah prasanno Bhagavaan vighnahartaa Gajaananah, Siddhi Buddhee griheetvaa te antardhaanamagaad vibhuh/ Kastatah kaaramaamaasa srishtim purva vadaayataam, aagjnayaa Parameshasya prasaadaaccha prasatradheeh/ Munis stated: This is how Brahma performed Ganesha Puja: To enable the Puja, Brahma manifested my his mind borne 'upacharikas' or helpers with the consent of Ganesha Himself viz. Siddhi and Buddhi. They are extremely beautiful and graceful with arresting looks and exellently ornamented. They are of divya gandha-divya vastras-divya maalaa dhaaris. They performed neeraajana, pushpaanjali, sahasra naama stotra and pradakshina. There after, Brahma prostrated to Ganesha with earnestness seeking blessings to himself as also crores of bhaktas like him. Pleased by the worship, Ganesha accepted Siddhi and Buddhi as His 'saha dharmachaarinees' or Life Patners. Then Brahma initiated Srishti with the benign glances of Ganesha.

[Ganesha's wedding: Some devotees of Ganesha presume that He was a bachelor but others feel that his life partners would have to match up with his own Maha Devi Swarupa's magnificence. But keeping in view of His presence with a peculiar physical features and as he continued to be a bachelor, he was angry and upset and even Deva ganas- let alone human beings, were troubled at the wedding ceremonies by sending groups to mice at the wedding functions and creating problems at the eateries and wedding party residents. Groups of Devas appealed to Brahma Deva and the latter had to seek a solution. This was how, He had to create two 'kanyas'. According to Shiva Purana, both Ganesha and Skanda Kumara were desirous of Prajapati's daughters Siddhi and Buddhi and Ganesha had won and Siddhi begot Kshema or Prosperity / Shubha or auspiciousness and Laabha or Profit to Budhi. In any case, whenever Ganesha is

present, *siddhi* 'success' and *buddhi* 'wisdom' are not far behind. Ganesha's relationship with the Ashtasiddhis or the eight spiritual attaintments obtained by the practice of yoga are the eight glorious powers are represented by a group of young women who surround Ganesha. In the Shakta worship of Ganesha, the Ashta Siddhis are addressed as eight goddesses. In Ganesha Purana, these personified Ashta Siddhis are used by Ganesha to attack demons viz. 'Devantakas' are known as Anima: to reduce one's body even to the size of an atom; Mahima or to expand body in sizes infinite; Garima; Laghima or becoming weightless; Prapti or possessing unrestricted access to any place in the world; Prakamya or fulfillment of any wish; Ishitva or possessing absolute Lordship and Vashitva or to subjugate all.]

Brahma Shrishti: Initially, Lord Brahma from his own consciousness created seven Maanasa Putras viz. Atri.Angirasa, Pulastya, Marichi, Pulaha, Ktatu. Bhrigu, Vashishtha, Daksha and Narada. These Sapta Putras readily consented to carry on further Sristhi. But other Manasika Putras viz. Sanaka-Sanaatana undertook lifelong vows of celibacy against the wishes of Brahma and wandered through out the universe without materialistic nor spiritual interest but to teach and travelled together even having learnt Vedas from the father. Then Brahma created Chaturvarnas: Brahmanas from his face, Kshatriyas from his arms, Vaishyas from his thighs and the lower class from his feet. The Brahma created Sthaavara Jangamas or the Moving and Immovable Beings, Oceans, Rivers, Mountains, Trees and Plants, and so on. From his own heart he manifested Chandra, his eyes and vision the Surya Deva, and from his ears the Vayu Deva.

Padma Purana is quoted: Brahma's first Srishti being Maha Tatva, the creation of Tanmatras was known as Bhuta Sarga or the Second Srishti; Vaikarika or Satvika Ahankara was the third Srishti of Indriyas or Aindriya Sarga; the Fourth Srishti is the Mukyha Sarga related to Mountains, Forests and other Sthaavara Srishti; the fifth Srishti relates to Pashu-Pakshi (Animals and Birds); the seventh Srishti was called Deva sarga or Urthva faced and was of Devas; and Seventh Srishti was of Manava Sarga; the Eighth was of Anugraha Sarga which could be of Satvika or Tamasic nature and finally the Ninth Srishti called the Kaumara Sarga which could be of Prakrita or Vaikrita Marg. Depending on the carry forward of one's own balance of 'Papa-Punya' of the previous time-frame preceding the Pralaya, placement of lives was commenced by Brahma in the New Age. Arising out of his 'Manasika Samkalpa' (Mind born Proposal), Brahma created various species including Devas, Asuras, Pitaras and human beings. From his thighs, the evil Asuras emerged and as per his free will various birds were created. From his stomach surfaced cows, his shoulders the wolves; his face created horses, elephants, asses, nilgais, deer, camels, etc.each species multiplying several others. Brahma's body hairs created fruits, roots and foodgrains. From his right extreme face, Brahma created, Gayatri Chhandah, Rig Veda, Tivritstoma, Rathantara, Agnihoshtha yagna; from South-faced he created Yajur Veda, Tristhub Chandas, Panchadasha stoma, Brihatsaama, etc; Sama Veda, Jagati Chhanda, Saptadashastoma, 'Vairupa' etc; from the Western face; Brahma created Ekavimshatstoma, Atharva Veda, Aptoryama, Anushthup chhanda, and Vairaja from the Uttaravarti Mukha. Miscellaneous 'Pranis' were created from any of the limbs of Brahma. To sum up thus at the beginning of the Kalpa, Prajapati Brahma created Devas, Asuras, Pitaras and human beings as also of Yakshas, Pishachas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Siddhas, Kinnaras, Raakshasaas, Lions, Birds, Animals and Reptiles. Focussing attention on human beings now, Bhishma asked the highlights of Varnashrama Vidhi and Pulastya Muni explained that Brahma created Brahmanas from the face, Kshatriyas from 'Vakshasthali' (chest), Vaishyas from thighs; and Shudras from the feet. These four Varnas are the important constituents of 'Yagnas'; Devas are satisfied wirh their respective portions of 'Havis' (oblations) to Agni and being pleased with the Yagnas, Devas bestow good rains and good crops which leads to material prosperity. The hearts and hands of every body tend to be clean and social customs and virtuous living would go hand in hand. Prajapati decided the duties of the Four Varnas, depending on the professions that human beings tended to follow like Brahmanas performing Yagnas, Vratas, Temple Tasks, and enabling various religious deeds of Virtue in favour of the members of three other Varnas etc.; Kshatriyas discharging the responsibilities of Kingship, Administration, Security against external enemies, collection of taxes and maintenance of Internal Law and Order; Vaishyas performing business, farming, trading and all matters involving finance, provision of materials to others by allowing reasonable

profits for the services given etc. and Shudras supporting the members of the Three Varnas in the discharge of duties being undertaken by them. Brahma materialised the above various kinds of Creations by applying his mental faculties but was not quite satisfied as the next generations so created were not adequate to fill in the universe; therefore he created Sages like Bhrigu, Pulaha, Kratu, Angira, Marichi, Daksha, Atri and Vasishtha, in addition to the four 'Manasa Putras' viz, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanat Kumaras. As not all these sons were interested in family lives, Brahma created Rudra from his forehead and decided that half of the body be a woman; thus Eleven Rudras got materialised along with as many Rudranis who had a variety of Rupas ranging from 'Sowmya' (composure), 'Krura' (unkindness), 'Shanta' Peacefulness), 'Shyama' (darkness), 'Gaura' (wheatish) and such other colours. Further on, Brahma created Swayambhu Manu and the latter's wife Shatarupa; the Manu couple gave birth to sons Priyavrata and Uttanapada and daughters Prasuti (married to Daksha) and Akruti (married to Ruchi Prajapati). To Prasuti and Daksha were born twenty four daughters, thirteen of whom were Shraddha, Lakshmi, Dhruti, Pushti, Tushti, Megha, Kriya, Buddhi, Lajja, Vapu, Shanti, Sidhi, and Kirthi (all these thirteen were married to Dharma); eleven more daughters were Khyati, Sati, Sambhuti, Smriti, Preeti, Kshama, Sannati, Anasuya, Urja, Swaha and Swadha; they were wedded respectively to Bhrigu, Shiva, Marichi, Angira, Pusasthya, Kratu, Atri, Vasishtha, Agni and Pitras. The sons of Daksha's daughters were Kamak by Shraddha, Darpa to Lakshmi, Niyam to Dhriti, Santhosh to Tushti, Lobha to Pushti, Shruta to Megha; Danda, Vinay and Naya to Kriya, Bodha to Buddhi, Vinay to Lajja, Vyavasayak to Vapu, Kshema to Shanti, Sukha to Siddhi, and Yash to Kirti. These were all the sons of Dharma. Kaam and Nandi gave birth to Harsha, the grand son of Dharma. Bhrigu and Khyati gave birth to Devi Lakshmi who was Lord Narayana's wife. Bhagavan Rudra accepted Sati as his wife (Daksha's daughter) but Devi Sati sacrificed her life pursuant to Daksha's Yagna to which Rudra was uninvited but Sati insisted in attending it; she felt highly insulted by her father Daksha who also offended Rudra Deva and Rudra eventually destroyed Daksha Yagna.]

Meanwhile, as Maha Vishnu was in Yoga Nidra, and from his ears, emerged Loka vikhyaata Daityas brothers named Madhu and Kaitabhas with their poisonous and sharp tongue cursed Brahma srishti and challenged Brahma even as Shesha Naaga on which Lord Vishnu hissed reacted violently and the huge sound reverberated universally. Vishnu was heckled and challenged whether he could fight them with bare hands without the aid of Shankha-Chakra- Gada; having fought the Daityas for five thousand years finally approached Maha Devi the Yoga Nidra. The prayer by Brahma states: Yoga Nidra Devi!You are of the swarupas of Svaaha-Svadha-Sudha; of Tri Maatras of Akaara-Ukaara-Makaaraas, Ardha Maatra of OM, Srishti- Stiti-Samhara Kaarini-Veda Trayi Swarupa-Svara rupa-Kaak Ratri- Adyanta Rahita-Raatri Rupa-Maha Maya-Parvati. Do kindly bless Maha Vishnu to enable Madhu-Kaitabha Daityas as they had your blessings in the past and as that fund of your kindness gets exhausted, it is time that they are ended up. Vishnu then approached Shiva and the former stated: Vinaayakamanacchaiva gatosi ranabhumikaam, shaktiheenascha tenaasi subhrushankleshavaanapi, Ganesham pujaitvaiva vraja yuddhhaaya maarisha, sa cha tou maayayaa mohayashataam praapayishyati/ Matprasaadena dushtou tou yidhishyaasi na samshayah/ Uktaa Ganeshasaiva mantraanaam saptakotayah, tatraapi cha mahaamantraasteshvapye kaasksharo mahaan/ Shadaksharascha bhagavastayorekam vadaami te/ Vishnu Deva! Now you should perform Ganesha Puja and then only go into the battle with Madhukaitabhas who ought to me subdued and killed. Vishnu requested Shiva for the procedure for Ganeshopaasana. And the latter replied: Ganesha mantras are stated to be some seven crores but two are stressed as a Shadakshara Mantra - Vakra tundaaya hum or better still a unique Ekaakshara Mantra viz. Gam. Vishnu did the 'anushthaana' or the prescribed practice most reverentially as prescribed and readied Himself to destroy the Daitya brothers.

[ Devi Bhagavata is quoted: When Maha Vishnu was in Yoga Nidra in a comfortable posture of lying on the bed of Ananta Naga, two Demon brothers named Madhu and Kaitabha were born from the wax of Maha Vishnu's ears. Their birth was a mystery and unknown as felt by the brothers themselves whose physical forms grew fast and strong day by day, even as they were playing in the ocean surroundings, killing various kinds of aquatic species for food or play. Coming of age in course of time, the Demon

brothers with huge bodies and proportionate common sense too, realised that there must have been a Massive Force which alone could have given birth to them. From the air, they heard a sound 'Vagbija' the Seed Mantra (Seed 'Bija' and 'Vak' the Speech of Goddess Sarasvati). To start with fun, but later on with maturity, they kept on practising the sound for years together, little realising the impact of the Mantra's repetition. In fact, they became so obsessed with the Mantra that they neither had food nor sleep, but with full concentration and utmost sincerity. 'The Parasakti's Voice emerged from the Skies that the Danava brothers would be invincible in the entire Universe provided they were united and fight twosome. Blessed by Maha Devi, the two brothers became swollen with pride and eventually attacked Lord Brahma Himself. On realising that they were unconquerable, Brahma who was seated on the lotus-head sprouting from Maha Vishnu's navel, tried the age-old four means. He tried to use 'Sama (Counselling) 'Dana' (Gifting or bribing), 'Bheda' (put one against another) and finally 'Danda' (Punish), but neither of these media appeared feasible; he ran away to Vaikuntha for protection but Maha Vishnu was in Yoga Nidra. Brahma had thus prayed to Yoga Nidra Devi to prompt Maha Vishnu to wake up. It was actually Maha Maya's discretion which mattered as Vishnu Himself could not regain consciouness on His own. The concentrate of 'Tamo Guna' - Maha Maya - was earnestly prayed to by Brahma, as this was a prestige issue for him and the entire domain of Gods! Maha Maya left Vishnu free and He was fully woken up to face the challenge of the hour, viz. to either manipulate or massacre the brothers, Madhu and Kaitabha. Lord Vishnu invited the brothers to fight with Himself. The fight continued for five thousand years but without a tangible result. As the Demons were clashing one after another and Lord Vishnu was in duel singly, the latter asked the brothers to give a break as it was against Justice that they took alternate positions while He was alone. During the break, Vishnu prayed to Ganesha and Maha Shakti and complained that the fight was unfair and that they were also given by Her the boon of voluntary death or 'Svacchanda Maranam'. Maha Shakti realised the lacuna in the duel and advised Vishnu to give boons to the brothers so that a way out would automatically open up. Meanwhile, Maha Shakti agreed to be present at the fight in physical form and disturb the concentration of the Demon brothers by casting Her fake amorous looks. This encouraged Vishnu to convey the Demons that their duel with Him was of great quality and thus He was ready to give boons to them. They got into the trap as they boasted that they were prepared to give boons to Him instead of the other way around. Vishnu grabbed the opportunity and said that He be given the boon of their death by killing each other! The brothers gave an excuse that the boon could be given only provided there was no water or wetness in the Ocean. Vishnu expanded his thighs manifold so that there could be adequate space for the killings. The Demons expanded their bodies too and thus the thighs of Vishnu and the body sizes of the brothers kept on increasing horizontally and vertically proportionately. Finally, the illusion created by Vishnu proved stronger and the brothers had to yield to their own killings. Thus Maha Shakti who assumed human physique and paved the way to the killings of the Danava brothers without breaking the Rules of 'Dharma Yuddha', partly by trickery and partly by Maya or Illusion.]

Chapters: 19-29:Link Episodes of Bhima-Vallabha-Ballal all stressing Ganesha Mahima

Lord Brahma narrated the stories of King Bhima in Vidarbha of Koundinya Nagar with his wife Charuhaasini and Minister Sumantu. The King couple were putraheenas and as such were denied of access to Swarga and havya in Deva Karyas and kavya in pitru kaaryas. As such their life was useless despite their wealth, fame, and virtue. They discarded the kingdom and approached Maharshi Vishvamitra at his 'ashram' for a solution. The Maharshi stated that the couple neglected the worship of their Kula Devatas and Kula Dharma and as such the couple were not blessd with a son. He then narrated that story of a King in the past named Vallabha and queen Kamala but eventually were blessed with a son after seven years who however was born without the faculties of vision, hearing, and as a kubja or of very short- stature of ugliness born with bad body smell. King Vallabha spent fortunes to treat the son, apply several 'mahou shadhis', practised tapa-japa-yoga-deva puja and tirtha yatras but to no avail. In the course of time, the boy received samskaraas such as naama karana as Daksha. Several mantra- japa-oushadhi prayogas and even 'tapas' were practised. Finally, the King got vexed up and asked his wife to

get out of his kingdom along the unfortunate. At the exit of the miserable Queen with the most unfortunate son, she took to begging for livelihood. Once as she started to commence the begging, she left the boy in a Shiva temple and in the course of a providential touch of the boy by the winds that crossed a Brahmana who was an extraaordinary Ganesha Bhakta, the boy was blessed with Ganesha darshana! Bhakteratishayaat saakshaatkrite Lambodarena sah, chakshushman shruti sampanno diyya dehobhavattadhaa/ Ja harsha Kamalaa tyaktwaa sarvam duhkham nireekshya tam manjulaam sukhadaam vaachamuccharantam muhurmuhuh/ As the Ganesha Bhakta due to his 'punya prabhaava', the boy was able to see-hear-touch normally and recovered all the possible body features with excellenence along with the vision of Ganesha too. Queen Kamala on return from begging was stunned to total disbelief with joy and kept on kissing and embracing the boy. The word about the miracle spread like fire and the citizens were taken aback seeking meetings of the mother and son. Resumed the pactive of begging again and the public started donations on ample scale. In course of time, the donating public asked the boy of his antecedents. Then a kind Brahmana taught Ganeshaaraadhana Vidhi and the mantra :Om Gam Ganapataye namah/ In course of time, both the mother and son practised with bhakti-indriya nigraha to the extent of Vayu bhakshana and extreme dedication. As they did so for long number of years, finally Ganesha granted his 'saakshaatkaara darshana'as in the form of a brahmana as they both lost their consciousness, broke up in bliss and hailed Ganesha as follows: Swami! You are Chaturbhuja, Mahakaaya, Gaja vadana, Ati Sundara, Aneka Surya samana dyuti dhara, Ratna kaanchana muktaavanmakuta dhara, Ratnamaya mastaka, Ekajaanunipaatena, Kati sutrakanchana mudra samyuta, Maha jatharodara, Ardha maanaya-ardha gaja shareera, Brahmana yesha dhari Maha Vighneshwara and so on. Paramatma Ganeshwara was pleased with the praises of Daksha and his mother and confirmed that He himself performed the upadesha of the Ashtaakshara Maha Mantra viz, Om Gam Ganapataye namah to Daksha and his mother as Mudgala Maharshi. As Ganesha disappeared, Daksha and Devi Kamala were suffused in bliss and soon searched for Mudgalaashram and the Maharshi too was moved with Ganesha Himself and performed the upadesha of the Ekaakshara Mantra Ga and instructed the son and mother to practise their life long!

This was how Maharshi Vishvamitra narrated the story of Vallabha and Kamala to King Bheema. The King wondered as to how Daksha the then miserable boy got near Brahmana called Mudgala who actually was Ganesha himself and again how the duo of Kamala and Daksha secured Ganesha Darshana so easily! Then Maharshi narrated another link episode. In Sindhu Desha in the village of Palli, there was a vaishya named Kalyana and his wife Indumati who were blessed with a boy named Ballal. The boy along with his friends were performing worship to a stone made Ganesha pratima in a forest nearby. Eventually they made a Mandapa / platform and were conducting daily dhyaana-mantra japa-bhajana-and keertana. The word was spread in the village that the group of youngsters were immersed in Ganesha Puja fron dawn to dusk and especially Ballal had been getting weak in the body. As the head of the village complained to the vaishya and his wife that Ballal was wasting time of the self and other youngsters. The vaishya visited the place of puja in the forest and destroyed the platform and threw away the stone idol of Ganesha. Further the boy beat and tied by a rope. But on return from the forest, the vaishya turned blind- mute and deaf. At the spot when Ballal was beaten and tied by a rope, a Brahmana arrived and freed him even as the wounds of the beatings on Ballal's body disappeared. On return from the forest of the husband and the state in which he arrived, Indumati the mother ran towards the forest to witness the possible condition of Ballal; but the boy was as usual immersed in the puja. On realising the arrival of the agitated mother, the ever smiling boy embraced the mother with the joy of concluding the present puja as also the pleasure of seeing his mother, stated that he was normally conducting the puja and there was no need for her anguish after all, thanks to the help and kindness of a pious brahmana who visited the place of havoc and brought him solace and normalcy to enable him to perform the puja. Ballal stated: Kasya maataapitaa kasya kasya putrothavaa sahat,Vigna raaja kritam sarva maanushyaakhilam smritam/ Tasmaantam pitaa bhadre maataa Devo Vinaayakah, yo tathaa kurute karma sa tathaaphalamashnute/ Tasmaanmama pitaa bhadre maataa Devo Vinaayakah, yo tathaa kurute karma sa tathaa phalamashnute/ Mayaa samarpito jeevo Deva deva Gajaanane, tena jeevastathaa jnaanam mama dattam subhaktitah/ Prasaad bhanjaad deva

ksheepanaattaadnaanmama, Vinaayakaati bhaktistya tathaa praaptam phalam shubhy/ Vichaaryamaane na tvam me maataa vaa pitaapicha, sravasya hi pitaa devo maataa devo Gajaananah/ Sa yeva jnaanadastraataa sahitaam, sarvaswarupo Devendro Brahma Vishnu Shivaatmakah/ Ballal stated as follows: Who else are a mother, father, children or friends excepting Bhagava Ganesha! As per one's own 'karma' is the 'phala' too. I have dedicated my entire life to Ganesha and so does His decision. May He bless me with 'jnaana pradaana'. Mere destruction of His temple and idol would matter the least as that only reflects one's mentality and soon enough the perpetrator received the outcome. Yet in the final anaysis the doer of good or bad is Bhagavan Himself as He is the giver and taker either of wisdom or evil as He is the Kaala Swarupa, Sarva swarupa, Deva swarupa and Trimurti Swarupa too as we are all His play things! Eventually, a magnificent temple got constucted as Ballal Vinayaka Devaalaya. Maharshi Vishvamitra thus concluded the chain of one's births and deaths and rebirths to King Bheema and Charuhaasini as in the case of Vallabha and Kamala- and Kalyana and Indumati as the respective sons of the latter couple were Daksha and Ballal.

Vaishya Kalyan's story is resumed: The Vaishya was tormented with several body blisters, blood flowing body parts and as a deaf-dumb-and blind misereies of living. His wife Devi Indumati on return from Maha Bhakta Ballal's temple witnessed the indescribable experiences of her husband. Bhakta Ballal from his spiritual inspiration and futuristic vision intimated of the future of the Vaishya that the latter would be reborn as King Vallabha and Queen Kamala. King Vallabh's son Daksha subseqently renovated at a Ganesha Temple nearby a township Koundinya's adjacent forest and worshipped the Idol by intensely reciting the Ekaakshara Mantra which Mudgal initiated to him. One early morning he dreamt that an elephant king garlanded him with a 'ratna maala' and his mother assured that soon enough Daksha would be honoured to son become a King of anyother kingdom.

In an adjacent Kingdom in Koundinya Nagar, King Chandrasena passed away childless. His Ministers Manoranjan and Sumant had on the completion of Antyeshthi, Trayodashah, and Aurdhva dehika kritya convened a Maha Sabha with all the top citizens of the Kingdom to decide upon the next King in the presence of reputed Vedic Pundits and Senior citizens of repute as also in the presence of Mudgala Muni. It was decided that the Royal Elephant would carry a flower garland among the Princes of many kingdoms as seated there along with Prince Daksha too who was destined to thus become the King of Koundinya. Daksha's father King Vallabh too attended along with Queen Kamala whose interpretation of Daksha's early morning 'swapna' was indeed true. In course of time, a neighbourly King Veerasena announced that his daughter would wed King Daksha and in the lineage were born eventually named Brihadhbhaanu- Khadgadhara-Sulabha-Padmaakara-Vapurdeepti-Chitrasena-and King Bheema.

Maharshi Vishwamitra then did upadesha of Ekaakshara GaneshaMantra to King Bheema and instructed him to practise it in the temple uplifted by Daksha for Ganesha Puja for the fulfillment of his desires by way of Dharma-Ardha-Kaama- Mokshas. The King was then blessed a son and named him as Rukmandada. As he came of age, the Prince came into close stewardship of Kapila Muni who taught the Prince of the principles of Dharma, especially oriented to Kshatriyas. At the ripe time, King Bheema performed Rajyaabhisheka to Rukmanada.

King Rukmangada once went on a hunting spree in a forest and dropped in the ashram of Muni Vaachaknavi and the Muni's wife Mukunda. He greeted the Muni couple and sought a night halt for dinner and rest. Mukunda made amorous proposals to the King and sought union with him. She entreated the King and argued: Those males who perform 'stree balaatkaara' are indeed destined to visit naraka lokaas but as females especially of my background of being a Muni Patni 'swayam svecchaa' makes the offer would be an exception. Yet since the King refused, the enraged Muni Patni, out of jilted feelings, gave a curse to the King that he would be a victim of 'kushthu'/ leprosy. The King having become a leper moved out of the ashram and sat brooding under a Vata vriksha discarding food and water.

Under the Banyan tree, Narada Muni while passing the ashram noticed the King. Narada advised the King to visit Kadamba Nagar in Vidarbha Desha for worship in the famed Chintaamani Vinaayaka Temple, and proceed to Ganesha Kunda for bathing to accomplish instant cure by asserting that he noticed a maha kushthu low class person bathed in that Kunda and came out as Gana Devas took him away and flew up by a pushpaka vimana. There after the bath his kushth roga would be washed off and he could enter the Siddhi Vinaayaka temple with sincere devotion for the worship. Thus on attaining the cure, the King could also perform charities to brahmanas as also to the unfortunate needy. The King felt so happy and relieved while profusely conveying gratitude and prostrating at the feet of Brahmarshi Narada and said: Bhavaaddarshanaam sadhuunaam paropakarane matih/Anyathaa bhramane krityam na lokeshu praddashyate,Lokeshu varshate meghah sheshena dhriyate dharaa/ Upakaaraaya Suryopi bhramateraharnisham dvija! Samasya sarvabhuteshu sarvagjnasya tavaagratah/ Anaabhigjnena moodhena kim vaktavyam Dayanidhe, prucche tathaapi Devarshi samshayacchenanaaya vai/ Narada Mahamuni! I am exremely curious to learn as to why and how Maha Saadhus like you are intent and ready to help the needy by their timely guidance to overcome situations beyond their control! Otherwise, there is absolutely no need for you to assume 'vibbhinna loka bhramana' or the global circulambulations! Why indeed the far clouds bring rains onto earth; why Shesha Nag wears celestial 'manis' of radiance but to balancing and illuminating the earth and thereunder! Why the Pratyaksha Bhaskara is active non stop by spearding his splendour day in and day out! Dayanidhi Narada! Why are you keen on helping and solving critical difficulties of the unfotunate hapless like me! Narada justified the genuine questions of King Rukmangada and narrated the legend of Maharshi Gautama and Parama Pativrata Ahalya.

# Chapters 30-34: <u>Indra assuming Maharshi Gautama's form takes to bed Devi Ahalya</u>, the latter's wife - a <u>supreme Pativrata</u>:

Brahmarshi Narada states: He visited Lord Indra at Amaravati as the former complimented Narada as a Triloka Sanchari; Narada replied that his latest was 'mrityuloka' and chanced to meet Rishi Gautama in his ashram along with his wife Devi Ahalya; he also said that Ahalya was supremely pretty and her exquisiteness and grace was 'par excellence' in the Three Lokas that he ever visited as the Apsraas and all the Swarga based feminine beauty and charm was truly negligible. After Narada's social call was over, Indra visited Gautama's ashram; the Maharshi was busy with his morning duties and left the ashram. Meanwhile Indra assumed the Rishi's form and entered their bedroom. Devi Ahalya was stunned to see Maya Gautama in her bed room and exclaimed whether the Muni had not left for the duties but lying in the bed. Indra in the maya rupa said that he short circuited the puja and desired to go into bed with her as he was attacked by 'kaama baana', fondled her red and luscious and body parts and slept with her as she replied that there would be no other stree dharma as she ought to be a Pativrata and chirruped: Karyeshu Dasi, Karaneshu Manthri; Bhojeshu Mata, Shayaneshu Rambha, Roopeshu lakshmi, Kshamayeshu Dharitri, Shat dharmayukta, Kuladharma Patni/ and fell into the bed of Maayavi Gautama! Then Indra showed his own form and Arundhati was astonished and shocked as a stone. Even in the bed she felt a doubt that the body which she fondled was of different odour. As Indra disappeared, she was lost in thoughts. As the husband returned, she fell straight at his feet as the Maharshi out of his 'divya drishti'/ celestial vision as what all had happened. He stated that: In respect of mantra-ayush-grihacchidra especially related to griha parivaara, rati karma-aoushadhi seva-maana sammaan as also avamaan and daama, a wise person should be discreet in advertising in public. Thus the Maharshi gave a 'shaap'to Devi Ahalya to turn into a stone since Ahalya was unable to distinguish the form- nature-and actions in comparison to a Para purusha and got mixed up with the his body parts and semen- albeit Indra was the Lord of Swarga. Then he gave a shaap to his dharma patni to instantly become a stone till such time Lord Shri Rama, in the course of vana vaasa would receive his 'paada sparsha'. On learning about the Maharshi's shaap, Indra got shivers like a sand storm got shatterd by a mountain and instantly assumed the form of a cat and ran away from the scene. Realising that Indra fled away, the Maharshi cursed Indra to assume a swarupa as broken into thousand parts. As Indra who killed Vritraasura a Brahmana was carrying the ill-reputation of brahmana hatya, one of the Pancha Maha Paatakas of Stree hatya, Bhruna /

Shishu hathya, Brahmana hatya, Go hatya and Guru hatya / Guru Bharya Gamana, realised that the shaap of Maharshi Gautama and rued deeply as to how could show up his face in Deva Sabha as he was expected to preach the principles of dharma while unable to observe and follow himaself, let alone enforce it! Indra decided: *Praanibhir bhujyate karma shubham vaashubham, tiryag yonim samaadaadya khapishyeghamaatmanah, nalinee kundmale tishtheheen idragopagaruupadhruk*/All the 'jeeva rasis' in srishti- from Indra to an insect-ought to reap the fruits of their past acts and as such I ought to assume tiryak yoni or the form of a 'pashu pakshi keetaka' and thus decide to become a worm as an Indragopa keetaka.'

[ Reference on Pativratas: Sapta Pativratas: Ahalya, Draupadi, Sita, Tara, Mandodari, Anasuya and Sumati: An explanation of a Parivrata refers to Ahalya though she slept with Indra but she had her husband Muni Gautama was genuinely on her mind and when turned into a stone due to Gautama's Shaap Rama purified her too for her dereliction due to her ignorance; Draupadi though she married Pancha Pandavas since all the Pandavas were of the Amsha of Indra whose virility was distributed to Devi Kunti through Yama Dharmaraja to beget Yudhishtara, Vayu Deva to beget Bhima, Arjuna from his (Indra's) own and Ashwini Kumars from Devi Maadri as Nakula and Sahadeva apart from the fact that Draupadi was Indra's better half viz Sachi Devi who was originally Yagneshani the daughter of Agni as clarified in Markandeya Purana; Devi Sita despite Ravana's pressure tactics had only Rama always; Devi Tara the wife of Vaali but the Tradition of Kishkindha allowed Sugriva to marry after Vaali's death as approved by Rama himself and Mandodari of course was a fixation on Ravanasura despite his infatuation with Sita; Anasuya the wife of Atri and the the illustrious Kardama Prajapati; Sumati who was an outstanding Pativrata who adored her husband a Leper and even prostrated before a woman whom her husband desired to sleep with.]

As Indra hid himself as a Indragopa Keetaka, Deva Guru Brihaspati and Devas approached Maharshi Gautama with the sincere prostrations and requested him to withdraw the shaap or atleast mitigate it. The Maharshi initially reacted stating that a person of Indra's stature as he was a kapati-shatha-dushta-avivekiand pashchaattaapa rahita paapi and his paschaattapa would be futile. Yet, as you are all urging sincerely then Indra even in the keetaka form be taught with the Shadakshara Ganesha Mantra as Ganesha was always a 'sarva karta-sarva harta-sarvapaata-kripaanidhi-Brahmavishnu Shivaatmika and Mahasiddhi pradaayaka'. The vidhivatra Shadakshara Ganesha Mantra pleased Indra and the Gautama shaapa to Indra got diluted and hence forward Indra would hence forward would assume a divya deha become a sahasra netra instead of 'shasra shareera chheda'. Indra while assuming his normal swarupa- albeit with mitigated curse by Gautama, had foremost reached the Maharshi's feet and thanked him profusely.

There after, Indra seated under a kadamba tree, practised Ganesh'a shadakshara mantra for thousand years and Ganesha gave his benign darshan and blessed him as that the place, came to be famed as Kadambara Chintaa Mani pura and eversince that the Chintamani Sarovara had become reputed as a place as the abode of Abheeshta Siddhi Chintaamani Vinayaka where Indra Himself contructed a huge temple with a sphatika murti with golden frame.

[Reference on on Indra's Brahma hatya Maha Paataka from Devi Bhagavata Purana: Prajaapati Visvakarma, the famed Architect of Devas, had a son named Trisira or the three headed Brahmana boy who used to practise ascetism with one head, drink wine with another and look around in all directions with the third. Being an ardent student of Vedas, he was always engaged in severe Tapasya, especially 'Panchagni Sadhana' hanging upside down a tree branch exposed to Summer Sun, winter cold and heavy rainy season without food conquering worldly desires. Being highly suspicious of the intentions of Trisira who might pose problem his own throne, Indra despatched Apsarasas to disturb Trisira's rigorous meditation but to no avail. Indra thus killed him even when he was in meditation, even as he knew that killing a pious Brahmana in meditation was the highest possible sin. Furious with Indra's dreadful deed,

Visvakarma performed an inexorable Sacrifice by 'Abhichara' process (taking revenge) reciting Atharva Veda Mantras, created a mountain like and ferocious boy with the sole objective of killing Indra. The huge boy was named Vritra or who could save his father as Vrinjina. Visvakarma equipped him with all kinds of war tactics and divine armoury including a swift and sturdy Chariot, a 'Sudarshan' like Disc, and a'Trisula' like spear. As Vritra grew, Indra was getting nervous and approached Deva Guru to prevent any risk from the Demon. Brihaspati warned Indra that he should better be prepared for a Big Battle as the forebodings were not conducive, as after all Indra had committed a heinous crime of killing a Brahmana out of pride and fear. Meanwhile Vritra formulated his plans of attack and grouped a vengeful and desperate army of Danavas as his support. As the dooms day arrived, Indra and Devas were attacked and a furious Danava clan fought for hundred years and Indra leapt for life from Elephant 'Airavata' and ran by foot and Varuna, Vayu, Agni and all other Planetary heads and Devatas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras and so on fled too incognito. At one stage Vritra caught hold of Indra and literally devoured him. All the Deva Chiefs prayed to Deva Guru to some how save Indra and Brihaspati managed Vritra to yawn with his mouth wide open and somehow helped Indra to manage to bale out from his mountain-cave like mouth of Vritra! As Indra and Devas fled and hid themselves from Vritra, the latter ruled Heavens for thousand years and Devas continued sporadic efforts to defeat Vritra and Danavas but to no avail. Indra and Devas approached Maha Deva for help and together along with Maha Vishnu prayed to Maha Devi and got Her blessings. Some senior Sages went in a delegation to Vritra requesting for truce with Indra and Devas. Vritra agreed that the truce be agreed provided that his death should take place neither during day or night, with a dry or liquid substance or by wood, stone, thunderbolt and similar substance. The Sages agreed to the conditions. But Vritra's father Visvakarma cautioned the son that past history was a witness to Indra's vicious acts and that he would certainly strike Vritra at an opportune time; he said that Indra was such a crook that he killed the foetus of his own mother's sister Diti by entering into her womb by Anima and other Siddhis and killing it into pieces; by taking the form of Sage Gautam and cheated the Sage's wife Ahalya into bed, and recently killed Trisira on the suspicion that he might usurp his throne and so on. In course of the function like 'Suthika Sauchak'ie one month after birth till 'Samavartan' or boy returning from 'Gurukula' after studies. Meanwhile Rahul came to realise that Varun had been demanding the Naramedha and ran away. After some time when he came to know that his father was exremely ill with dropsy as a result of Varuna's curse, Rahul wanted to return home but Lord Indra advised him against it. Sage Vasishtha the well wisher Guru of Harischandra suggested that an alternate way of performing Naramedha as approved by Scriptures was neither day nor night but the twilight time. It was wrongly deduced that it was Indra who killed Vritra, but the actual position was that Maha Bhagavati entered and energised the Sea foam and terminated Vritra. That was why Maha Bhagavati was known as 'Vritranihantri'. [ Srimad Maha Bhagavatha Purana stated that Maha Vishnu advised Devas to implore Sage Dadhichi to spare his backbone which was converted into a thunderbolt by Visvakarma the Architect of Devas with which was killed Vritra by Indra.] Badly hurt by the sense of guilt that he killed a Brahmana the result of which would be that of a Great Sin of 'Brahma paataka' as this would be a second sin of killing Trisura, who was also a Bramhana, Indra felt miserable and hid himself in the stalk of a lotus in Manasarovar lake. As Indra was absconding for a long time, another Indra King Nahusha was installed, and puffed up by the new position Nahusha asked for Sachi Devi to serve him, as he was the King then. Sachi asked for some time Indra befriended Vritra and when the latter was roaming on the Sea beach he took advantage of the situation and sent his thunderbolt to dip itself in the froth of the Sea waves and killed Vritra as the time to make sure that her husband was really hiding or dead. She prayed to Devi Maha Bhagavati and explained her predicament to Her. Maha Devi asked Sachi to accompany a female messenger named Visvakama; they went by an air-borne vehicle to Manasarovar where she met Indra who was frightened with the sense of guilt hiding inside the stalk of a lotus. On narratinig the happenings of the new Indra, his desire to own Sachi as his wife, her asking him for time, praying to Maha Devi and the messenger Visvakama helped locating Indra, the latter advised Sachi to allure Nahusha into a forest by a Vehicle meant for Sages. She returned to Nahusha who borrowed the 'Vimana' (air plane) of Sages who understood the deceipt of Nahusha and allowed both of them to board the vehicle saying: SARPA SARPA, which had the double meaning of 'Get In and go' and also 'Serpent,

Serpent'!The Great Muni was whipped by Nahusha to let the Vehicle go fast. The Vehicle dropped Nahusha in the thick of a forest who took the shape of a huge serpent and picked up the real Indra and Sachi Devi back to Heavens safe, when all the Devas were happy that original Indra returned! Nahusha secured his liberation only after the Maha Bharata was over and the Five Pandavas passed through the forest and King Dharmaraja answered the questions correctly from his serpent formation and liberated him too. By the Grace of Devi Bhagavati, Indra was reinstated and the curse of his 'Brahma Hatya Pathaka' (killing a Brahmana) was already dissolved by way of atonement and sufferance in hiding at 'Manasarovara'. Such was the Supreme Justice that Devi Maya did to every being without favour or prejudice. The powerful 'Karma' or Fate works equitably to Tri Murthis downward to a grass blade, but the norms change with the passage of Yugas from Satya to Treta to Dvapara and Kali Yuga when the percentage of Gunas would witness radical change by way of reduction to Satvik, medium to Rajas and maximum to Tamas and when the peak reaches to Tamas, it then would be time for Universal Dissolution!]

## Chapters 35-38: King Rukmangada-Brahmana Grutasmada- Bhadraka/ Varada Ganesha

As Sage left having narrated the above episodes, Brahma continued: King Rukmangada's army arrived, and he detailed the episodes which Narada Brahmarshi narrated epecially at the magnificence of the Chintamani Ganeshwara Ttirtha snaana; as he along with the army reached and performed the bath in the Tirtha, the King's body glittered and he assumed a divya deha or a celestial body. As they all performed a group puja and Brahmana daanaas, the King found a vimana arrived and Ganesha ganas asked him and the queen to alight it for the pratyaksha darshana of Ganesha. Then Ganesha Ganas asked that he could also take by the Vimana the late parents Bheema and Charuhasini and so on provided that he should take shuba snaana in the Ganesha kunda and perfom 'aavaahana' or invocation to the dead parents and so on and offerings of tarpanas to them as in the form of 'kushas'. Likewise his chosen persons of his kingdom too might be accommodated in the vimana provided them too take theit sacred snaana in the Tirtha Kunda. Indeed all the persons of high virtue from the Royalties and their chosen accomplished Ganesha saakshatkara!'

Brahma then narrated the episode of great brahmana of high virtue named Grutasamada. 'Chanchala manostree'or a flippant minded maha sundari named Mukunda was once siging and dancing alone in lonely garden and Lord Indra while passing was taken aback by her outstanding beauty and grace; he asumed the form of King Rukmangada and enticed her and slept with her even as she was protesting the so called King. On return, she quietly informed her husband Maha Pandita Vaachankavi about the garbhadharana. Eventually the boy Grutsamada was born and the elated Vaachankavi performed the series of samskaaraas upto vidyaaramha-upanayana-brahmacharya- guru nivasa- veda pathana and made him as a renowned Pandita as the worthy son of Maha Pandita. Once the shraddha karma of the father of the King of Magadha was performed, the King in that connection convened a Maha Sabha where among others Maharshis were also invited. Among the Maharshis, Atri too was present. A Grutsamada too sought to speak but Maharshi Atri interruped stating that in the sabha of Maharshis an upstart Pandita whose ancestry was questionable should not be allowed to be present, much less to participate! He futher said that he was born to the late King Rukmaangada and you think that you were the son of Maha Jnaani Vaachanavi! Gusamada was non plussed totally and shouted: Muneeshvaraas! In case it is proved that he was the son of King Rukmangada then he get burnt into ashes and rushed to his mother. Devi Mukunda confessed that indeed Rukmangada was the actual father! Grutsamada replied: Most abhorable woman! I have taken a vow in the Maha Raja sabha of Maharshis and Renowned Intellectuals that if I were born from your union with Rukmaangada, I would be an offering to Agni Deva; now I would give you a shaap that you would become a thorny tree with countless fruits of needle like thorns so that even animals would abhor you! The equally anger mother shouted back saying that even disregarding the fact of

matrutva you gave me the shaap and now I should gave you a return shaap to you Grutsamada: 'you would become a brahma rakshasi after your 'praana tyaaga'!

Grutsamad on turning as Brahma Rakshasa wandered in a forest named Pushpaka in which Maha Munis observed tapas; having taken their blessings, he commenced a kathora tapas invoking Ganesha with dhyana, by vaayu bhakshana standing by his single foot finger for thousand years. As Maha Ganesha was pleased and blessed Grutsamad as the worshipful Brahma Rakshaasa with 'saakshaatkaara', the latter sought the boon to popularise Pushpaka Vana as Ganesha Pura. Maha Ganesha asserted that in Treta Yuga the Pushpaka Vana would be famed as Manipura, in Dvaapara Yuga as Bhanaka, and in Kali Yuga as Bhadraka. Granting the boons accordingly and disappeared Grutsamada set up a temple named <u>Varada</u> Ganesha.

There after Grutsamad after discarding the Brahma Raashasa swarupa became popular as Maha Muni and performed 'maha yaginas'. By his mere sneeze, a bhayankara balaka got generated and the Maha Muni performed 'upadesha' of upadishta mantra to the boy and the latter practised the mantra assiduously and Ganesha stood before him and asked him as to who were his parents. The boy replied: Maha Ganesha! Knowing fully well about the present-past and future, why are you asking me about my background! Yet, since you asked me, may I reply! I was born by the sneeze of the Maha Muni. But, you indeed are my mother-father and everything. Bless me to provide me the capacity to rule Tri Lokas! Maha Ganesha smiled as Grutsamad Maha Muni did the upadesha of Rig Veda Mantra: Ganaanaam tvaa Ganapatim havaamahe kavim kaveenaamupashravastamam, jyeshtha raajam Brahmanaam Brahmanasapat aa nah shrunootibhih seeda saadanam/ and commanded the boy to perform severe tapsya, as the latter did so for fifteen thousand years as dasha dishas emitted agni jvaalas and Deva Daityas got frightened while Maha Ganesha as rolled up his trunk up and down form shadowing Surya too stood before the boy. On hearing the flip flop reverberation of the trunk the boy's eyes opened up to vision Bhagavan Ganeshwara with four arms decorated with Parashu-Kamala-Japa M aala and modaka. He blessed the Balaka to control Trilokas with the name Tripura and none else except Parama Shiva could destroy the Tripuras and even Indraadi Devas-Brahma and Vishnus too would be able to control you!

#### Chapters 39-45:

Tripurasura performs severe tapasya to Brahma Deva who directed to invoke Ganesha-The pleased Ganesha and grants ability to control three lokas, Brahma-Vishnu- Shiva Lokas too. Brahma directed Tripurasura to construct a Ganesha Temple by installing a Ganesha Pratima made of Kashmira stones. The Asura then built Ganeshapura in the state of Assam in Bharata Desha and picked up popularity as Tripura sthaana. The Asura then invoked Ganesha with Veda Mantras, as the Lord was pleased with the unpecedented devotion of Tripurasura and granted the boon of Trailokyaadhipatya as also the control of Brahma Loka- Vaikuntha and even of Kailasa! Having instantly occupied Bhuloka with no resistence, imprisoned all the Tapasvis, spread hatred for Svaahaakara-Svadhaakaara- Vashtkaara, Vedaadhyayana and Sadaachaara; he appointed Bhimakaaya Daitya as the Governer in Bhu loka. He brought Pataladi Seven Lokas of Atala-Vitala-Sutala-Rasaatala-Talaatala-Mahatala and Patala too, bodily enjoyed Naga kanyas; he appointed Vajradanta daitya as the Governor for local administration. Then he attacked Svarga loka and subued Indra. Tripusaasura then proceeded to Brahma Loka and even before his awareness, Brahma hid himself insider the lotus stalk that emerged from the Vishnu naabhi and having imprisoned Tapasvis. Vaikuntha was the next target where Vishnu Deva who was conveniently absent there. Tripurasura then appointed Chanda and Prachanda- his manasa putras as his chiefs in Brahma and Vishnu Lokas respectively. He proceeded to Kailasa Mountain and by the his own 'baahu bala' or the strength of his own hands shook the mountain and made it mobile! Devi Parvati embraced Lord Shiva out of awe and wonder. Shiva confronted the asura and asked as to what would he like to do. The Asura asked Shiva to donate the Kailasa Mountain so that he would be free for riding the mountain'; Maha Deva smiled and thought that after all the Asura was short lived and agreed and as such moved out of the Mountain along with Pramadha Ganas , Devi Parvati and the Temple there atop too.

Then Maha Ganesha assumed the form of a Dvija named Kalaadhara and comlplimented Tripuraasura for his magnificent accomplishments of life which never heard of in the past-present or future! The Asura enquired of the Vidvan as what was his specialisation since he called himself a vidvan. Kaladhara replied: Pareshaam sampadam drushtvaa kim syaattama Suradvisha, vinaayaatte prasannoham kalayaa te dadaami vai/ Kaancham raajatam loham Tripuram shara samdhitam, rama tatra sthirayo Daitya chirakaalam yathaa sukham/ Abhedayam devagandharvairmaanushairuragairapi, kalpitaarthapradam tattai kaamagam kaamadam shubham/ Asura! Of what avail could be the wealth of Lokas and their temporary commandership. I am offering you three permanent Tri Puras made of gold-silver and steel. This should bestow permanent Lordship to the three puras for lasting sukha prapti for your total contentment. These Three Puras are indestructible by Deva-Gandharva-Manushyas and as such your life as also that of your followers ought to be a lasting sailing on the flows of bliss! So asserting and handing over the three arrows with which to attack even Parama Shiva while utilising three arrows! Tripurasura was fully submerged in Ganesha Maya thus! Then Tripurasura then gave return gifts to Kaladhara viz. ten villages, cows, high value vastras, and jewellery. As Kaladhara left for his ashram, Tripurasara still felt that the gifts given to the Brahmana notwithstanding, a more precious gift ought to be given to him for the Tripuras made of gold-silver-metal with which to attack even Paramashiva. He declared to the Brahmana: Shankaram kinkaram manye na cha devataah, aanayitvaa pradasyaami taam Murtim dvijapungava/ Brahmanaagra! I am of the strong faith and belief that Shankara is the singular Parama Deva unparalleled. And I shall soon gift you such a Chintamani Ganesha Murti which Shiva himself had been venerating!

As Brahmana Kaladhara, as Ganesah himself in the form of left the fortress of Tripurasura, the Asura sent his 'chaturangani' soldiers by walk-horsebacks-elephants and warring -fit chariots to bring the idol of Chintamani Ganesha from Kailasa. There followed a severe battle of the Asura sena with Pramatha ganas of Shiva sena. As the asurasena was unable to resist the defence of Shiva ganas, Tripurasura himself reached and challenged Shiva himself. Even as the soldiers of Tripura were shattered, the asura utilised vaarunastra and Shiva retaliated by using vaayavyaastra; in further relalliation the asura made the prayoga of agneyaastra while Shiva utilised parjanyaastra but as a result of the preceeding agneyastras emerged a sky high vikruta svarupa purusha and Shiva sena fled away out of fright for life. Meanwhile Devi Parvati who was closely following the proceedings of the battle got worried and left for the solace of her father Himavanta. Kartikeya who accompanied Shiva to the battle front as well as Shiva himself were worried about the safety of Devi Parvati and thus concluded the battle. Meanwhile instead of chasing Shiva sena got wise and decided to somehow steal the Idol of Chintaamani Ganesha from the Temple and retreated.

A brooding Parama Shiva looked back at the just concluded high drama and the resultant loss of Chintamani Ganesha idol which was worshipped by the self, Brahmarshi Narada appeared on the scene and Shiva gave a review of the just concluded events. Narada warmed up Maha Deva by revealing the magnificence of the former: Maha Deva! You are Sarvgjna, Sarva Vidya Swaami, Sarveshvara, Sarvakarta, Sarvamukha swarupi, Sarvaharta, Sarva niyanta, Sarva samardha, Shadaishvarya sampanna [viz. Yuddha praveenata, Sarva netra, Trupti, Adyantarahita, Aluptashakti, Swatantrata, and Ananta Shakti are the Shadaishwaryas as given in Shiva and Kurma Puranas]. Yet, You had not performed Ganesha Puja formally and hence this present defeat with Tripurasura! If only you disallow the free movement of Tripurasura among the three cities of TRI PURA by using a single arrow unified into one single arrow, Mahishasura's extermination would be possible and you should win the battle hands down! As advised as per Narada, Maheshwara meditated Ganesha for hundred years and the laatter responded with his darshan with Pancha Mukhas representing Pancha Bhutas of Bhumi-Water-Agni-Air-and Sky as also Pancha Tanmatras of Rasa-Rupa- Gandha- Sparsha-Shabdas, Pancha Jnaanendriyas and Pancha Karmendriyas besides the creation of Gandharva-Yaksha-Pitara-Manushya-Devarshi- Deva Gana-

Brahma-Indra-Rudra- Vasu-Sadhya and Charaachara Jeevas, besides Trigunas of Satvika-Raajasika-Taamasika gunas and Srishthi- Sthiti-Samhaara-Tirodhaanas of Kaala maana! Maha Ganesha was pleased and bestowed the Maha Mantra 'GA' to Shiva; He assured that with this Maha Mantra, Shiva should be able to destroy the Tripuraasura!

## Chapter 46: Ganesha Sahasra Naama with Nyaasa-Dhyaana:

Vyasa Maha Muni was blessed by Brahma Deva and bestowed Ganesha Sahasra Naama which Ganesha Himself gave to Shiva as follows:

Viniyoga: OM asya Shrimad Ganesha divya sahasra naamaamrita stotra maalaa mahaa mantrasya Shri Maha Ganapatirrushih Shri swaanandesho Brahmanarspatir devataa, naanaa vidhaani cchandaasi, GAM beejam, TUM shaktih,SVAAHA keelakam, sakala vighna vinaashana dwaaraa Shri Brahmanaspati preetyartham jape viniyogah/

Karaadi Nyaasa: Ganeshvaro Ganakreeda ityangushthaabhyaam namah, Kumaaragurureeshaaneti tarjanee -bhyaam namah, Brahmaanda kumbhaschidvyometi madhyamaabhyaam namah, Rakto Raktaambara -dhara ityanaabhikaabhyaam namah/Sarvasadguru samsevya iti kanishthikaabhaam namah/ Luptavighnah subhaktaanaamiti karatalakara porishthaabhyaam namah/

Hridayaadi Nyaasa: Chaandaschandobhava iti hridayaaya naah, nishkalo nirmala iti shirase svaah/ Srishthirsthitilaya kreedaa iti shikhaayai vashat/ Jnaanam vigjnaanamaanandam iti kavachaaya hum/ Ashtaanga yogaphalabhuditi netratrayaaya voushat/ Ananta shiva shaktisahita ityastraaya phat/ Iti digbandhah/

Dhyaanam: Raktaambhodisthapatollasad aruna sarojaadhiruudham trinetram, paashamchavaankushaadhyaam parashumabhayadam baahubhirdhaarayantam/ Shaaktyaa yuktam gajaasyam prithutara jatharam Siddhi Buddhi sametam,Raktam chandraartha moulim sakala bhaya haram Vighna Raajam namaami/ Shri Siddhi Buddhi sahitaaya salakshanaabhaaya shri svaanandeshaaya Brahmaanaspataye -saangaaya saparivaaraaya sashaktikaaya saayudhaaya savaahanaaya saavaraaaya namah/ Iti naama maatrena maanasaih panchopachaaraih sampujya pathet/ As though a huge boat is floating in a red ocean a red lotus floats on which is comfortably seated Maha Ganesha surrounded by a group of elephants with trinetras and chaturbhujas as armed with paasha-ankusha-parashu- and abhaya mudra; He is of maha shakti, Gajaanana, Siddhi-Buddhi bharya sameta, Arunima Varna, Ardha chandra mastaka dhara,and Vighna Raja Ganesha. May we prostrate to him. We seek to tender paancha maanasopachaaraas reciting: Om lam prithivyaatmakam gandham samarpayaami, om ham aakaashaatmakam pushpam samarpayaami, om yam vaayavyaatmakam dhupam samarpayaami, om ram vahanyaatmakam deepam saarpayaami, om lam amritaatmakam naivedyam samarpayaami; tadanantaram Sahasra naama stotra pathanam samarpayaami/ Shri Maha Ganapatiruvaacha:

## Ganesha Sahasra Naamaavali:

'Ganeshvara, Ganakreeda, Gananaadha, Ganaadhipa, Ekadamshtra, Vakratunda, Gaja vaktra, Mahodara, Lambodara, Dhumravarna, Vikata, Vighnanaayaka, Sumukha, Durmukha, Buddhi, Vighnaraaja, Gajaanana, Moda, Pramoda, Aamoda, Suraananda, Mahotkata, Heramba, Shambhara, Shambhu, Lambakarka, Mahabala, Nandana, Alampat, Bheema, Meghanaada, Gananjaya, Vinaayaka, Viruupaaksha, Dheerasura, Varaprada, Maha Ganapati, Buddhipriya, Kshipraprasaadana, Rudrapriya, Ganaadhyaksha, Umaaputra, Agha naashana, Kumaaraguru, Ishaanaputra, Mooshaka vaahana, Siddhipriya, Siddhipati, Siddhi, Siddhivinaayaka/ Avighna, Tumburu, Simhavaan, Mohini priya, Katangkata, Rajaputra, Shaalaka, Sammita, Amita, Kushmandasaama sambhuta, Durjaya, Dhurjaya,

Jaya, Bhupati, Bhuvanapati, Bhutapati, Avyaya, Vishvakarta, Vishvamukha, Vishvarupa, Vinirguna, Kavi, Kavi Rishabha, Brahmanya, Brahmaspati, Jyeshtharaaja, Nidhipati, Nikdhipriyapatipriya, Hiranmaya puraantasthaa, Suryamandala madhyaga, Karaahitadhvastasalila, Pushadantabhita, Umaangaka kelee kutuki, Muktida, Kulapaalana/ Kireeti, Kundali, Haaree, Vanamaali, Manomaya, Vaimuhva hata daitva danta sri. Paadaa hatve -iitasthiti. Sadvojaata suvarnamanjamekhali. Durnimitta hrit, Duhsvapna drishta shamana, Gunee, Naada pratish -thitaa, Surupa, Sarva netraadhivaasa, Bibhraajinupura, Peetambara, Khandarada, Khandendu krita shekhara, Chitraanga, Shyaamadshna, Bhaala chandra, Chaturbhuja, Yogaadhipa, Taarakasya purusha, Gajakarnaka/ Ganaadi raaja, Vijayasthira, Gajapati dhvaji, Deva deva, Smarapraanadeepaka, Vaayu keelaka, Vipischa varada, Nadonnadbhinna mahachala, Varaaha vadana, Mrityunjaya, Vyaaghraajinaam -bara/ Icchaashaktibhava, Deva traata, Daitya vimardana, Shambhuvaktrodbhava, Shambhukopaja, Shambhu haasya bhuh,Shambhu teja, Shiva shoka haari, Gauri suvaavaha, Umaangamalaja, Gauri teje -bhu, Svadhurnibhava, Mahanaada, Girivarshmaa, Shubhaanana, Sarvaatma, Sarva Devatma, Brahma muurthaa, Kakupashruti, Brahmanda kumbha, Chidvyomabhaala, Satya shiroruha, Jagajjanmala vonmesha niveshaa, Agnyarkasoma drik, Gireendraikarada, Dharmaadharmoshtha, Saama brimhita, Grahakshara -darshana, Vaanijihva, Vasava naasika, Bhrumadhyasamsthita kara, Brahma vidyaamadodakah, Kulaachalaamsa, Somaarkaghanta, Rudra shirodhara/ Nadeenada bhuja, Sarpaanguleeyaka, Tarakanabha, Vyomanaabhi, Shrihridaya, Meruprishtha, Arnakodara, Kukshisya yaksha gandharva raksha kinnara maanusha, Prithiveekati, Srishthilinga, Shailoru, Dasrajaanuka, Paataala jangha, Munipaata, Kaalaangush - tha, Trayeetanu, Jyotirmandala laangoola, Hridayaalaana nishchitaa, Hritpadma karnikaashaaliviyat keli sarovara, Sadbhaktdhyaana nigada, Pujaavaari nivaarita, Prataapi, Kashyapa sutaa, Ganaka, Vishtapi, Balee, Yashasvi, Dharmika, Jeta, Pradhama, Prathameshwara, Chintaamani dveepa pati, Kalpadruma vanaalaya, Ratnamandala madhyasthaa, Ratna simhaasanaashraya/ Teevra shiroghritapada, Jvaalinimouli laalita, Nandaanandita peethashri, Bhogaadaabhushanaasana,/Sakaama daayinee peetha, Sphuradugraasa -nanaashraya, Tejovatee shiroratnaa, Satyaanityaavasintasit/ Samvitapaarshnikaa, Peenajangadha, Kambu kantha, Lamboshtha, Lamba naaska/ Bhagnavaamarada, Tungasavyadanta, Mahahanu, Hrasvanetra traya, Shurpakarna, Nibida mastaska/ Stambaakaarakumbhaagra, Ratna mouli, Nirankusha, Sarpahaara katee sutra, Sarpayagjnopaveetaman, / Sarpakoteera kataka, Sarpagraivaangada, Sarpakakshodara bandha, Sarparaajottaracchada/ Raktaa, Raktaambaradharaa, Raktamaalya vibhushana, Raktekshana, Raktakara, Raktataalvoshtha pallava/ Sveta, Svetaambaradhara, Svetamaalva vibhushana, Svetaatapatra ruchira, Sveta chaamaraveejita/ Sarvaavaya sampurna, Sarvalakshana lakshita, Sarvaabharana shobhaadyaa, Sarva shobhaa samanvita/ Sarvamangala maangalya, Sarvakaarana kaarana, Sarvadai kakara, Sharangi, Beejapuri, Gadaadhara/ Ikshuchaapadhara, Shulee, Chakrapani, Sarojabhrit, Paashee, Ghritotpala, Shaali manjari bhrit, Svadantabhrit/ Kalpavallidhara, Vishvaabhayadaikakara, Vashee, Akshaya maalaa dhara, Jnaanamudrayaan, Mudguraayudha/ Purna paatri, Kambudhara, Vidhrutaakshasumodaka, Karasthaagra- phala, Chutakalikaabhruta, Kuthaaravaan/ Pushkarastha swarnaghatee purna ratnaabhi varshaka, Bharati -sundarinaatha, Vinaayaka rati priyaa/ Maha Lakshmi priyatama Siddha lakshmi manorama, Ramaa -ramesha purvaanga, Dakshinomaamaheshwara/ Mahee Varaaha vaamaanga, Rati kandarpa paschima, Aamoda moda janana, Sapramodamodana/ Sumedhita samriddhishree, Ruddhi Siddhi prayardhana, Madanaayatyaashritaanghri, Krita dourmukhya durmukha/ Dattha soumukhya Sumukha, Kaantikanda- litaashraya vighnasampallavopaghna, Sevonnidramada drava/Vighnakrutminna charana, Dravini shakti samvrita, Teevraprasanna vadana, Jvaalinee paalitaika druk/ Mohini mohana, Bhogadaayini kaantimandi -ta, Kaaminikantayukta Shri, Tejinyadhishthaika dhruk, Vasundharaamodanna drumahaa shankanidhi -prabhu, Namad vasumatimouli maha padma nidhiprabhu/ Sarva sadgurusamsevya, Shochishkesha hridaashraya, Devendra shikha, Pavana nandana/ Agrapratyagnayana, Divyaastra prayoga vit, Airaavataadi sarvaashaavaaranaa varana priya, Vajraadi astra pareevaarana chanda samaashraya, Jayaajaya parikara, Vijayaa vijavaavaha/ Ajitaarchita padaabja, Nityaanitya vitamsitah, Vilaasineekritollaasa, Shoundee soundarya mandita/ Anantraananta sukhada, Sumangala sumangala, Jnaanaashraya, Kriyaadhaara, Icchhaashaktinishevitaa/ Subhaga samshrita padaa,Lalitaa Lalitaashryaa, Kaamilini keli Lalitha/ Sarasvatyaashraya, Gauri nandana,Shri

niketana, Guruguptapada, Vaachaasiddha, Vaageeshvaropati/Nalinee kaamuka, Vaamaaraama, Jyeshthaa manorama,Roudree mudritaa paadaabjaa, Hreuum beeja, Tunga shaktika/ Vishvaadi jana traanaa, Swaahaa shakti sukeelaka, Amritaabdi kritaavaasa, Madaghoornita lochana/ Uchhistha Ganapa, Ucchishtha Ganesha, Gana naayaka, Sarvakaalika samsiddhi, Nityasevya, Digambara/ Anapaaya, Ananta Shakti, Aprameya,Aiaraamara, Anaayila, Apratiratha, Achyuta, Amrita,Akshara/ Apratirkya, Akshaya, Ajayya, Anaadhara, Anamaya, Amala, Amoghasiddhi, Advaita, Ahora, Apatimaanana/ Anaakaara, Abdhi-Bhumi-Agni balaghna, Avyakta lakshana, Aadhaara peetha, Adhaara, Aadhaaraadheyavarjita / Aakhuketana, Aaashaarapuraka, Aakhumaharatha, Ikshusaagara madhyastha, Ikshu bhakshana laalasa/ Ikshuchaapaati rekashri,Ikshuchaapa niveshitaa, Indragopa samaanashri, Indraneela samadyuti/ Indeevara dalashyama,Indumandala mandita,Eedhyapriya, Idaabhaga, Idaadhama, Indirapriya/Isahvaaku vighna vighna vidhvamsi, Itikartavyatepsita, Ishana mouli, Ishaana, Ishanapriya, Eertiha/ Ishanmaatra kalpaanta, Ihaamatra vivarjita, Upendra, Udbhuta mouli, Unduraka pati priya/ Unnataanana, Uttunga, Udaaratridashaagrani, Urjasvaan, Ushmalamada, Uhapoha duraasada/ Rigyajussaama nayana, Ruddhi siddhi samarpaka, Rujuchittaika sulabha, Runatraya vimochana/ Swabhaktaanaam lupta vighna, Suradvishaam lupta shakti, Vimukhaarchana luptashri, Lootaa vishphota naashana/ Ekaara peetha madhyasthaa, Ekapaadakritaasana, Ejitaakhila daithyashri, Edhitaakhila samshaya/ Aaihikaamushmika Ishvaryaprada, Aishvaryashovathi, Airaavata samonmesha, Airaavatanibhaanana/ Omkaara vaachya, Omkaara, Ojasvaan, Aoushadhipati, Aoudaarya niddhi, Aoudaara dhurya, Aounnatya nishvan/Suraanaagaankusha, Ankushaakaara samsthita, Samasta visargaantapadesha parikeerjita aha/Kamandaladhura, Kalpa,Kalabhaanana, Karma saakshi, Karma kartaa, Karmaakarma phalaprada/ Kadamba golakaakaara, Kushmaanda gana naayaka, Kaarunyadeha, Kapila, Kathaka, Katisutrabhrut/ Kharva, Khadgapriya, Khadgi, Khaantastathaa, Khanirmala, Khalvaatshringa nilaya, Khatvaangi, Khaduraasada/ Gunaadhya, Gahana, Gastha, Gadyapadyasudha arnava, Gadyagaanapriya, Garjageeta, Geervaanapurvaja/ Guhyaachaara rata, Guhya, Guhyaagmani rupita, Guhaashaya, Gudaabhdistha, Gburugamya, Guroguru/Ghanthaa ghargharikaamaali, Ghanta kumbha, Ghatodara, Dankaaravaachya, Dankaara, Dankaara kaara shundabhrit/ Chanda, Chande shwara sahruda, Chandesha, Chanda vikrama, Charaacharapati, Chintaamani, Charvana laalasa/ Chhanda, Cchandodbhava, Chhandadurlakshya, Cchanda vigrah, Jagatryoni, Jagatsaakshi, Jagadeesha, Jaganmaya/ Japa, Japapara, Jaapya, Jihvaasimhaasana prabhu,Janjjallolallasaddaana-Jhankaara bhramaraakula/ Tangkarasphaarasamraava, tangkaara mani nupura, Thadyapallavaantstha sarva mantreshu siddhida/ Dindimunda, Daakineesha, Daamara, Dindimaapriya, Dhakaninaada mudita, Dhouka, Dhundhi Vinaayaka/Tatvaanaam Parama Tatva, Tatvampada nirupita, Taarakaantara samsthaana, Taraka, Taarakaantaka/ Sthaanu, Sthaanu priya, Sthaata, Sthaavara jangama jagat, Daksha yagjna pramathana, Daataa, Daanava mohana/ Dayaavaan Divyabhava, Danda bhrit, Danda naayaka, Dantaprabhinnaabhra maalaa, Daityavaarana daarana/ Damshtraalagnadvipaghata, Devaardhaarttagajaakriti, Dhanya, Dhanapati bandhu, Damshtraagnadvipaghato Devaarthaattha gajaakritih/ Dhhanyo Dhanapaterbandhurdhanado dharaneedharah/ Dhyaanaika prakatodhyeyo dhyaanam dhyaana paraayanah/[ 100] Nandyo naadapriyo naado naada madhya pratishthitah, nishkalo nirmalo nityo nityaanityo niraamayah/ Param Vyoma Param dhaama Paramaatmaa Param padam, Paraatparah Pashupatih Pashupaasha vimochakah/ Purnaanandah Paraanandah Puraana Purushottamah, Padma prasanna nayanah Pranataaginaana naashanah/Pramaanapratyayaateetah Pranataarti vinaashanah, Phani -hastah Phanipatiphootvaakaaraphaanitapriyah/ Baanaarchitaanghriyugalo baalakeleekutuuhali, Brahma Brahmaarchit pado Brahmachaari Brihaspatih/ Brihattamo Brahmaparo Brahmanyo Brahmavidpriyah, bhrukshepadatta lakshmiko Bhargo Bhadro Bhayaapahah/ Bhagavaan bhakti sulabho bhutido bhuti bhushanah, Bhavyo Bhutaalayo Bhoga daataa Bhrumadhya gocharah/ Mantro Mantrapatir mantree Madamatta manoramnah, mekhalaaheeshvaro manda gatir madanibhekshanah/ Maha balo Maha veeryo Mahaa praano mahaamanaah, Yagjno Yagjnapatir Yagjna goptaa Yagjna phalapradah/ Yashaskaro Yoga gamyo Yaajiko Yaajakapriyah, Raso Rasapriyo Rasyo Ranjiko Raavanaarchitah/ Raajya rakshaakaro Ratna garbho Rajyasukhahpradah, Lakshyaa Lakshaprado Lakjshyo Lakshastho Langaagapriyah/ Laanpriyo Laasyaparo Laabha krulloka vishrutah, Varenyo Vahnivadano Vandyo Vedaanta gocharah/ Vikartaa Vishvatashcchakshurvidhaataa Vishvato mukhah, Vaamadevo Vajrineta

Vajrivajri nivaaranah/ Vishvabandhana vishkarambhaadhaara vishveshwara vibhu sharad brahmaa, shampraapya shabhu shaktiganeshwarah/ Shaastaa Shikaagra nilaya, Sharanya, Shambareshwara Shad ritu kusumasragvi Shadaadhaara Shadakshara/ Samsaara vaidya Sarvagjna Sarvabheshaja bhaashanbah Srishthistiti lkaya kreeda Sura kunjarabhedaka/ Sinduurita mahakumbha Sadasadvyakti daayakah Saakshee Samudra mathana Syasamyedyah Syadakshina/ Swatantra Satyasankalpa Saamagaanarata Sukhee Hamsa Hastipishaacheesha havana Havyakavya bhuk/ Havya Hutaapriya HrishtaHrullokyaa mantra madhyaga Kshedraadhipa Kshamaabhartaa Kshamaa paramaayana/ Kshipra kshemakara Kshemaananda Kshonisuradruma Dharmaprada Atharda Kaamadaata Soubhaagya yardhana/ Vidyaprada Vibhavada Bhakti mukti phalaprada Aabhirupyakara Veerashri prada Vijayaprada/ Sarva vashakara Garbhadosha haa Putrapoutraadya Medhaaprada Keerthidaataa Shokahaaree Dourbhaagya naashana/ Pratrivaadi mukha stambha, Ruushtha chitta prasaadana, Paraabhichaara shamana Duhkhaha Bandha mokshada/Lava-truti-kalaa-kaashta-nimesha-kshana-ghati-muhurta-praharadivaanakta- aharnisha/ Paksha-maasa-ayana-varsha-yuga-kalpa-mahaalaya-raashi-taaraa-tithi-yogavaara-karana-amshaka/ Lagna-horaa-kaalachakra-meru-saptarshi-Dhruva- Raahu- Manda-kavi-jeeva-Budha-Bhouma-Shashi-Ravi/ Kaala- Srashthaa-Vishvasthiti-Staavarajangama jagat-Bhu-Aapa-Agni-Maruta-Vyoma-Ahamkaara-Prakriti Pumaan/ Brahma-Vishnu- Shiva-Shakti-Tridasha-Siddha-Kinnara-Pitara-Yaksha-Raakshasa-Manushya-Pashu-Khaga/ Samudra-Sarita-Shaila-Bhuta- Bhavya-Bhavod bhava-Saankhya-Paatanjala Yoga-Purana-Shruti-Smriti/Vedaanga-Sadaachara-Meemaamsa-Nyaaya vistara-Ayurveda-Dhanurveda-Gaandharva Veda-Kaavya naataka/ Vaikhaanasa- aagama-Bhaagavata-Saatvita samhita-Panbcha raatra aagama, Shaiva-Paashupata-Kaalaamukha-Bhairava shaasana/ Shaakta-Vinayaka-Soura-Jaina- Arhata samhita-Sadasad-Vyakta- Avyakta-Sachetana- Achetana/ Bandha-Moksha-Sukha-Bhoga Yoga-Satya-Anu-Mahaan-Svasti-Hum phat-Svadha-Svaaha-Shroushat-Voushat-Vashat- namah/ Jnaana- Vigjnaana-Ananda-Bidha-Samvita-Shama-Yama- Eka-Ekaaksharaadhaara-Ekaakshara paraayana/ Ekaagri-Ekaveera-Ekaaneka svarupadhruk-Dvirupa-Dvibhaja-Dvaksha-Dvrada-Dveepa rakshaka/ Dvimaatura- Dvivadana-Dvandva heena-Dvayaatiga-Tridhaama-Trikara-Tretaa-Trivarga phaladaayaka/Trigunaatma-Trilokaadi-Trishakteesha-Trilochana-Chaturbaahu-Chaturdanta-Chaturuatma-Chaturukha-Chaturvidhopaayamaya-Chaturvarnaashramaashraya-Charurvidha vachovritti parivritti pravartaka/ Chaturthee pujana preetaa- Chaturthi tithi sambhava-Panchaaksharaatma- Panchaatma- Panchaasyaa-Panchaktruta krit/ Panchaadhaara-Pancha varna Panchaakhara paraayana- Panchataala-Panchakara Panchapranava maatrika/ Pancha brahma maya sphurthi-Panchaavaran vaaritaa-Pancha bhaksha priya-Pancha baana-Pancha shivaatmaka/ Shatkonapeetha-Shadchakra dhaama-Shadgrandhibhedaka-shadhvadhvaanta vidhvamsi-Shadangula mahaa hrida/ Shanmukha-Shamkhabhraata-Shadshakti parivaarita, Shadvaira varga vidhvamsee-Shadmuurdhana bhanjanaa/ Shattarka duura - Shatkarmaa-Shadguna-Shadrasaashraya- Sapta paataala charana-Saptadveepodara mandala/ Saptasvarloka makuta, Saptasaptivaraprada, Saptaanga raajya sukhada, Saptarshi gana vandita/ Sapta cchandonidhi, Sapta hota, Saptaswarashraya, Saptaabdhi keli saagara, Saptra maatru nishevita/ Saptacchandomodamada, Saptacchando makhaprabhu, Ashtamurti dhyeya murti, Ashta prakriti kaarana/ Ashtangayoga phala bhrid, Ashtapatraambujaasana, Ashtashakti samruddha shri, Ashtaisvarya pradaayaka/ Ashtapeethopeethashri, Ashta maatruka samaavrita, Ashta bhairava sevya, Ashtaavasu vandya, Ashta murti bhrit/ Ashtachakrasphuran murti, Ashta dravya havish priya, Nava naaga sandhyaasandhyaasee, Nava nidhyanushaasita/ Navadwaarapuraadhaara, Nava dwaara niketana, Nava naaraayana stutya, Nava durgaa nishevita/ Nava naatha mahaanaatha, Nava naaga vibhushana, Navaratnaa vichitraanga, Nava shakti shirodhrita/ Dashaatmaka, Dashbhuja, Dashaadikpati vandita, Dashaadhyaaya, Dasha praana, Dashondriya niyaamaka/ Dashaakshara mahaa mantra, Dasheshyaampivigrah, Ekaadashaadi rudrastuta, Ekaadashaakshara/ Dwaadashoddandadordanda-Dwadaastra niketana, Trayodashaabhidaabhi bhinna vishvedevaadhi daivata/ Chaturda shondra varada, Chaturdashaamaniprabhu, Charurdaahadi vidyaadi vidhaadhya, Chaturdasha jagatpati/ Pancha dashaasaama, Panchadashee sheetaamshu nirmala, Shodashaadhaara nilaya, Shodashaasvara maatrika/ Shodashaanta padaavaasa, Shodashedru kalaatmika, Sapdasheekalaa, Saptadasha, Sapta dashaakshara/ Ashtadasha dweepa pati, Ashtaadasha puraanakrit, Ashtaadashoushadhee srashta, Ashtaadasha vidhismrita/ Ashtaadasha lipi krita, Ashtaadashavijaatikrit, Ekavimshatpuman, Ekadasha -

anguli pallava/ Chaturvishati tatvaatma, Panchavimshaakhya purusha, Sapta vimshati Taaresha, Sapta vimshati yoga krit/ Dvaavimshad bhairavaadheesha, Chatustrimshan mahaa hrada, Shadtrivimshad tawa sambhuti, Ashta vimshadkalaa tanu/ Namade konapanchaashaan marud varga nirargala, Panchaashada -kshara shreni, Panchaashaad Rudra vigrah/ Panchaashad Vishnu shakteeshakteesha, Panchaashan maatrukaalaya, Dvipanchaashad vapuh shreni,Trishthakshara samshraya/ Chatushtyanra nirnetaa. Chatusshasthi kalaa nidhi, Chatusshashthi mahaa siddhi yogineevrinda vanditaa/ Ashta shashti mahaa teertha kshetra Bharava bhaavana, Chaturnavati mantraatmaa, Shannavatyadhika prabhu/ Shataananda, Shata dhruti, Shata patraayakekshana, Shataaneeka, Shata mukha, Shatadhaaravaayudha/ Sahasra patra nilaya,Sahasra phani bhushana, Sahasra sheersha purusha,Sahasraaksha, Sahasrapaad/ Sahasra naama samstutya, Sahasraaksha balaapah, Dasha sahasra phani bhrit phaniraajakritaasana/ Ashtaasheeti sahasraigha maharshi stotra paathita, Lakshaadheesha priyaadhara, Lakshaadheesha manomaya/ Chaturlaksha japa preeta, Chaturlakshaprakaashita, Chaturasheeti, Laksha jeeva deha samsthita/Koti Surya prateekaasa, Koti chandaamshu nirmala, Saptakoti mahaa mantra manditaavayavadyuti/ Shivod bhavaadyashta koti vinaayaka dhurandhara, trayastrimshad koti surashreni pranata paaduka/ Ananta devataa sevya, Ananta shubha daayaka, Ananta naamaa, Anantashri, Anantaananta soukhyada/ Ananta Shakti sahita, Ananta muni samstuta, Ananta muni samstuta/ Om namah/

Iti Shri Vaunayakam naamnaa sahasramidamoritam/

#### Ganesha Sahsranaama Pathana Vidhi and Phala shruti

Ideal time for the pathana-shravana-manana-and puja is the brahma muhurta in the early dawn to reap the fruits of aayu-aarogya-ishvarya-kshema-dhairya-vigjnaana. Yet, Ganesha puja daily with utmost devotion besides repeated recital paves the way eventually to vasheekarana siddhi- abhaya from Shakini, Dhaakini, Yaksha, Rakshsaas-Shatkarma siddhi of Shaanti, Vaseekarana, Stambhana, Vidveshana, Ucchhaatana, Maarana- Ashtamahima siddhi viz. Anima, Laghima, Garima, Praapti, Prakaamya, Ishitva, and Vashitva-Trikaala Jnaana of Bhuta, Vartamaana and Bhavishyas. In fact, nirantara stotra of Ganesha Sahasranama and Puja by a majority in the Society- in popular sabhas, temples and Kshetras would keep away Dushta Shaktis, Durbhikshaas, ativrishtis, anaavrishties, and onslaughts of mooshaka-shalabha-shuka-vanya mriga- shatru baadhas. Any household where Ganesha Sahasra naama pathana is a regularity, there could enter alakshmi- defame- defeat-disease but plentiful prosperity- popularity-peacefulness and piety. Ganesha Sahasra Naama Stotra Japa- Paatha- Puja kartas besides those who hear, debate about, annotate, explain the meaning and enjoy in various ways and means or even retain the publication shall be blessed.

# Chapter 47-48: <u>Pursuant to Ganesha Sahasra Naama pathana-puja</u>, <u>Parama Shiva destroys the hither to invincible Tripuraasura</u>

After duly invoking Ganesha, Parama Shiva who is indeed capable of Vishva Samhaara by Himself - as He himself blessed his son Ganesha to receive the boon of 'agra pujatva'-proceeded with the mission of Tripuraasara Vadha. He manifested a chariot representing Prithvi with Surya Chandras as the Ratha Chakras, Brahma as the 'Saaradhi; Himalayas as his 'dhanush', Maha Vishnu as his arrow, and Ashvini Kumars as two 'Ashvas'. By reciting the Ganesha's ekaakshara mantra GA, he sounded the resounding Dasha Dishas and raised his 'pinaka dhanush'with 'Vishnu Baana' while the Dharti- Shesha Naaga- entire forestry on earth, oceans and mountains trembled as the birds on the skies ran helter-skelter revolving circularly while the Devaadis in Trilokas were totally taken aback with awe and fright. As Parama Shiva released the arrow, 'agni jvaalas' spread across trilokas and the mammoth army ran back with alarm but turned into ashes instantly: Amunchattam yadaa baanam tadaa dagdham nabhasthalam bhumandalam saptataalam jvaalaa maalaabhi ranjasaa, drushtvaa papaala daityendrah sa sainyah pura samshrayah, javenaagaccharh sopya dahaddaityam puratrayam/ Daitya dehagatam tejo bharga dehe layam yayou, pashyataam sarva sainyaanam daitya daanava rakshasaam/ Even as Tripurasura witnessed the entire

army turned into ashes along side daitya- daanava- rakshasaas, the arrow was shot at him with speed and flames the Tri Puras too got burnt to ashes instantly. Akasavani announced the tragic but inevitable end of the Asura attained mukti. Then the celebrations got initiated as Apsaras danced, Gandharvas sang melliflously, Chaaranaas praised, Kinnaras took to instrumental music, and 'dasa dishas' showered flowers in Trilokas, while Brahmarshi Nadara and Muni ganas took to stutis to Maha Deva!

# [Linga Purana describes how Maha Deva exterminates 'Tri-Purasuras'

As Skanda Deva killed Tarakasura, the three sons of the latter viz. Vydyunmaali, Kamalaaksha and Tarakaksha were united and perf ormed relentless Tapasya to Brahma seeking invincibility. As Brahma clarified that none among the Beings were immortal, they scaled down their wishes to the following: they would build three flying 'Puraas' or Cities which could move about freely in the World and individually none of the Nagaris could ever be destroyed but only in a group simultaneously. Indeed this was a peculiar boon that was asked by the Danava brothers, but Brahma agreed all the same. The famed Daitya Builder Mayasura created three Nagaris, viz. a Golden one in Swarga Loka for Tarakaksha, a Silver Nagari for Kamalaksha in Antariksha and a Loha Nagari in Bhuloka for Vidyunmala; all secured fortresses which were impregnable even by Devas and other celestial Beings, let alone others like Manavas. The Nagaris were luxurious with all the comforts of Swarga with Kalpataru Gardens in place and Pancha Bhutas of Earth-Water-Illumination-Air and Sky under control; Gandharvas and Kinnaras were at service with sonorous music and song while Apsaras were made to dance at command. The Tripurasuras harassed Devaganas and threw them out of Swarga and their respective abodes. They approached Bhagavan Vishnu who created innumerable Shaktis but the army of the Asuras destroyed the Shaktis; Vishnu realised that not only the Tarakaaksha and brothers but all the follower Daityas had the unique feature of Maheswara Linga worship as per prescribed procedure and thus became difficult to control by the Vishnu Senas. Vishnu then created a Mayaawi Purusha who quietly entered the Tripuras and having impressed the Daityas with his knowedge of Shastras and Siddhis misled them successfully to neglect 'Shroutra Smartas' and Shiv Linga Puja. They also left the Varnashtam Dharmas, belittled women which caused Lakshmi to gradually desert them and relapsed to Adharma. That was the opportune time for Vishnu to approach Maha Deva and prayed to him: Maheswaraaya Devaaya Namastey Paramatmaney, Naraayanaaya Sharvaaya Brahmaney Brahmarupiney/ Shaswataayahyanantaaya Avyaktaaya cha tey Namah/

Then Devas also joined Vishnu's prayers: Namah SarvaatmaneytubhyamShankaraayaa trihaariney, Rudraaya Nila Rudraaya Kadrudraaya prachetasy/ Gatirnah Sarvadasmaabhir -vandyo Devaari mardanah twamaadistwa mananta schaakshayah Prabhuh/ Prakiritih Purushaha Saakshaatsrashtaa Hartaa Jagadguro, Traataa Netaa Jaatyasmindwijaanaam Dwija Vatsala/ Varado Vaangmayo Vaachyo Vaachya Vaachikavarjitah/Yajyo muktyardhameeshaano Yogibhiryogavibhramaih/ Tadrutpundarika sushire yoginaam samsthitah sadaa, Vadanti Surayah samtam param Brahmaswarupinam/ Bhavantam tatwamityaayarsteyjo taashim Paratparam, Paramaatmaa namityaahurisma- jjagati tadvibho/ Drushtam hrutam sthitam Sarvey jaaya maanam Jagadguro, Anoralpataram prahurmahatopi Mahattharam/ Sarvatah Paanipaadam twaam Sarvatokshishiromukham, Sarvatah Shrutimallokey Sarvamaavrutya tishthasi/ Maha Devamanirdeshyam Sarvajnam twamanaamayam, Vishwarupam Virupaaksham Sada Shivamanaamayam/ Koti Bhaskara samkaasham Kotiseetaamshu sinnibham, Koti kalaagnisankaasham Shadvimsha kamanee shwaram/Pr avartakah Jagatyasmin Prakruteh prapitaamaham, Vadanti Varadam Devam Sarvaavaasam Swayambhuvam/ Shtutayah Shrutisaaram twaam Shrutisaara vidojanaah/ Adrushtamasmaabhiraneka murtey vinaa krutam yadbhavataatha lokey, Twameva Daityaan-sura bhutasanghaan Devaan Kinnaraan sthaavara jangamaascha/ Paahi naanyaa gatih Shambho Vinihatyaasurottamaan, Mayayaa mohitaah Sarvey bhavatah Parameswara/ Yathaa tangaa lahari samuhaa yudhyantichaanyonyamapaam nidhowacha, Jalaashrayaa Deva jadikrutaascha Suraasuraastadwadajasya sarvam/

Sutavuvaacha: Ya yidam praataru-tthhaaya shuchirbhutwaa japennarah,shrunuyaadwaa stayam punyam sarvakaamava -apnuyaat/ Namastey Maheswara, Deva, Paramatma, Naraayana, Sharva Brahma and Brahmarupa, Shaswata, Ananta, Avyakta! Our salutations Sarvatma, Shankara, Artihara, Rudra, Nila Rudra, Sarva Vandya, Prakriti, Purusha, Srashtaa or Creator, Harta or destroyer, Jagad Guru, Traata, Neta, Brahmana Vatsala, Varada, Vangmaya, Vaachya, Vaachikavarjita, Ishaana, Yogi, Yoga vibhrama, Pundarika, always surrounded by Yogis, Brahma Swarupa, Bhavanta, itya Teja, Paratpara, Paramatma, Jadguru who visions, hears, resides all over in the Universe; Sarva Paani-Paadam, Sarvatokshi shiromukha, Maha Devaamanirdesha, Sarvatina, Vishwarupa, Virupaaksha, Sada Shiva, Koti Bhaskara Sankaasha, Koti Sheenshu Sannibha, Koti Kalaa sankaasha, Fulfiller of Twenty Six Great Desires, Sarva Vaasa, Swayambhuva, Pravartaka, Jagat Swami, Prakriti's Pataamaha, Vadanti, Varada, Sarva Vaasa, Swayambhu, Shruti Saara, Adrushta, Ekaaraneyka Murti, Sukshmaati Sukshma; You are the Sarva Swarupa representing Daityas-Devas-Bhuta-Kinnara-Sthaavara-Jangamaas. Shambho! We have no other place of refuge excepting you; the Universe is engulfed with Maya or Delusion; just as the huge waves of an Ocean gush to the shore and meekly get destroyed by striking it, Jalaashraya Deva; You are the Sarvam or the Infinite and the Eternal Truth! Suta Muni said: Any person on rising early morning and securing cleanliness from within and without recites the above Stotra by Vishnu and Devas to Parameswara would gain excellent results of Punya and fulfillment).

As Devas and Vishnu visioned 'Trishulapaani Shankar' relaxing with Devi Parvati and /Mahatma, Nandi, they saw that 'Bhuta bhavishya Swami'whose eyes were red like 'Agni kundas' and physique was shimmering with thousand Suns with a pleasant countenance ornamented with a Bala Purna Chandra. Having pleased Parama Shiva thus, Devas explained the gravity and seriousness of the crisis created by the Tripura Daityas who not only unseated and tormented Devas and Celestial Entities but were also sending shock-waves all over the Universe, humiliating Sages, frightening women and children, making mass-scale carnage and blood bath of humanity and uprooting Dharma and age-old Values and Principles. Parameshwara infused confidence into the demoralised Devas; [having invoked Maha Ganesha] asked them to construct an exceptional chariot with unique specifications: Prithvi as the Ratha / Chariot, Meru and Mandara Mountains as axles, Surya and Chandra as Chakras made of gold and silver respectively, the Four Vedas of Ruk-Yajur-Sama and Atharva acted as the horses; Shukra, Brihaspati, Budha, Mangal, and Shanaischara seated on the Ratha ready to charge; the famous serpents viz. Takshaka, Karkotaka, Dhanajaya and Padmadwaya acted as the strings which were tied to the horses; most poisonous snakes like Surasa, Devashuni, Sarama, Kadru, Vinata, Shuchi, Trusha, and Bubhuksha were used as arrows; Mrutyu, Brahmahatya, Gohatya, Balahatya and Prajaabhaya were loaded on the Chariot so that they get activised as maces; Omkara and Vashatkara were the symbols on the Ratha; Sinivali, Kuhu, Raaka and Anumati - the 'Adhishtana'/ in charge Deities of Chaturdashi, Amavasya, Suddha Purnima, Pratipadika Purnima respectively were used as auxiliary strings to the horses; the dhanush made of six 'ritus'/ seasons which is safeguarded by Devi Ambika herself never to be broken; the specific arrow with which to kill the Tripurasura was strengthened by Vishnu, Soma and Agni and its head propelled by Agni and Chandra by its rear and Vishnu Maya smeared all over; and the extreme poison of Nagaraja Vasuki was loaded to ensure stability and speed of the arrow; Vayu was made in charge of the high velocity of the Chariot and finally Brahma was the Charioteer and Sesha Naag was made in charge of the personal security of Brahma as also of the Chariot. Yama Raja with his buffalo, Kubera on his serpent, Indra on Iravata, Ganeswara by his Mushika Vahana, Karikeya on his Peacock, Nandeshwara with his Shula running behind and sides of the Ratha were in full preparedness. Maharshis Bhrigu, Bharadwaja, Vasishtha, Goutama, Kratu, Pulastya, Pulaha, Marichi, Atri, Angira, Parashara, and Agastya were there too at the kick-start of the Battle to recite Veda Vachanas and Shiv Stutis. The Pramatha ganas were ready to charge as the army against the opponents- all swarmed around the Rath. Meanwhile, Sage Narada reached the Tripuras and tried his best to mend his ways, give back Indrapuri to Devas and avoid the worst ever battle in which the indestructible Tripuras would be destroyed along with the Three Demons as Maha Deva himself was approaching these Places with full preparation. Instead of talking peace, the Demons alerted their vast armies, and prepared for turning their defensive positions to that of an offence. On the

instruction of Shankara Deva, Indra took his enormous army and attacked Tripura. As the Deva Sena made a highly offensive assault in full force, what with the revenge and frustration experienced by them for long as they were out of power as also owing to the excellent backing of Maheswara, they seized the best part of Tripuras. While quite a few Danavas sought to escape for their lives through the exit gates of Tripuras, Pramatha ganas calculated that the enemies would try to sneek out at those points and buchered thousands of Danavas. The remaining Danavas inside the Trinagaris were utterly confused by contradictoy shouts that Taraka died or Shiva was defeated. In that melee, a srong contingent of Danavas quickly regrouped their men and material to make offensive attacks under the leadership of Vidunmali and Maya. Ganeswara divided Tripuras in three regions as Nandeswara was attacking Vudyunmali, while he was in position against Maya. Meanwhile, Vidyunmali threw a 'Parigha' on Nandi who was hurt and the enraged three 'Parshadaganas' named Ghantaakarna, Shankukarna and Mahakaal retaliated; they assumed the Forms of Ganeswara and assailed Vidyunmali by making the roars of lions. Even while the Parswaganas were about to leap on Vidyunmali, the hurt Nandikeswara hurled a Rudra Shakti on the demon who fell down like a mountain. There was utter silence among Danavas who were stunned and retreated. But, the highly cunning and crafty Mayasura chased the Ganas of Ganeshwara to divert attention of his own men from the fallen Vidyunmali to the Ganesha ganas. Mayasura created rains of Agni, crocodiles, snakes, huge mountains, lions, tigers, trees, black deers, eight-legged 'Sharabhas'/ a species of oversized deer, torrential rain and powerful sand storms. As Taraka came into the battle field, Devas too appeared in full force, including Yamaraja, Varuna, Bhaskara, Kartikeya heading a Deva Sena of a Crore, with Indra, Shanaishchara, Chandra, and Rudras. The 'Maayavi' Mayaasura created several Wells full of herbal juices for envigoration and Danavas were in high spirits as their body strength increased manifold. But Keshava took the form of 'Vrishabha' and drank up the juice along with Devas and dried up the wells and Devas occupied the Tripuras finally. Mayasura and other Daityas were forced to hide in the Sea. That was the decisive moment when there was an all-out battle on the seashores. Shankara divided the 'Trideva maya' arrow into three parts and released it at the Pushya Yoga time when Tripuras were destroyed in one go. Devas then went ecsatic and the huge shouts of Victory to Maha Deva resounded across the Sky from where Gandharvas and Kinnaras sang hymns of praises, Apsaras danced and Maharshis recited Vedas and Shiva Stotras.

Brahma praised Parama Shiva in a chorus as follows: Praseeda Deva Devesha Praseeda Parameshwara, Praseeda Jagataam Naatha praseeda anandadaayyaya/Panchaasya Rudra Rudraaya Panchaasatkoti Murtaye ,Atmatrayopavishtaaya Vidyaa tatwaaya tey namah/ Shivaaya Shiva tatwaayaa Aghoraaya Namonamah, Aghotaashtaka tatwaaya Dwadashaatmasva rupiney/ Vidyutkoti prateekaasha mashtakaamsha sushobhinam,Rupamaana sthyaaya Lokesmin samsthitaaya Shiyaatmaney/ Agniyarnaaya Roudraaya Ambikaardha shareeriney, Dhavala Shyaama raktaanaam Mukti daayaamaraayacha/ Jyeshthaaya Rudra rupaaya Somaaya varadfaayacha, Trilokaaya Tridevaaya Vashatkaaraaya vai namah/ Madhye gagana rupaaya Gaganasthaaya tey namah, Ashta kshetraashta rupaaya Ashta tatwaaya tey namah/Chaturdhicha Chaturdhaacha Chaturdhaa samsthitaaya cha, Panchaghaa panchagaachaiva Panchamantra shaririney/ Chatusshashthi prakaaraaya Akaaraaya namo namah, Dwaantri shatattawa rupaaya Ukaaraaya namonamah/ Shodashaatma swarupaaa Makaaraaya namonamah, Ashtadhaatma swarupaaya Ardha maatraatmaney namah/ Omkaaraaya namastubhyam chaturthaa samsthitaaya cha, Gaganeshaaya Devaaya Swar-geshaaya namonamah/Saptalokaaya Paataala narkeshaaya vai namah, Ashtakshetra rupaaya Paraatpara -taraaya cha/Sahasra shirasey tubhyam sahasraaya cha tey namah/ Sahasra paada yuktaaya Sharvaaya Parameshtiney/Navaatma tatwa rupaaya Navaashtaatmaatma shaktaye, Punarashta prakaashaaya tathaashaashta murtaye/ Chathusshashtadyaatma tatwaaya Punarashti vidhaayacha, Gunaashtakavrutaayaiva Guniney Nirgunaaya tey/ Mulasthaaya Namastu bhyam Shaaswastaanavaasiney, Naabhi mandala samsthaaya hridi nisswana kaariney/ Kandharecha sthitaayaiva Taalu ranghna sthitaayacha, Bhrumadhey samshitaayaiva naada madhye sthitayacha/ Chandra bimba sthitaayaiva Shivaaya Shiva rupiney, Vahni Somaarka rupaaya Shattrimshacchakti rupiney/Tithaa Samvrutya Lokaanvai pasupa bhujagaatmaney, Triprakaaram sthitaayaiya tretaagni mayarupiney/ Sadaa Shiyaaya Shaantaaa Maheshaaya Pinaakiney, Saryinaaya Sharnyaaya

Sadyojaataaya vai namah/ Aghoraaya Namastubhyam Vaasudevaaya teynamah, Tatpurushaaya Namostu Ishaanaaya namonamah/ Namastrinshat prakaashaaya Shaantaateetaaya vai namah, Ananteshaaya Sukshmaaya Uttamaaya Namostutey/Ekaakshaaya namastubhyameka Rudraaya tey namah, Namastrimurtraye tubhyam Shri- Kanthaaya shikhandiney/Anantaasana samsthaaya Anantaa yantakaariney. Vimalaaya Vishaalaaya Vimalaangaaya tey namah/Vimalaalaya samsthaaya Vimalaayartaartha rupiney, Yogapeethantarasthaya Yoginey Yogadaayiney/Yoginaamhridi samsthaaya sadaa nivakarashukavat, Pratyaahaaraaya tey nityam Pratyaahaara rataayacha/Pratyaahaara rataanaam cha pratisthaanasthitaayacha, Dhyaanaaya Dhyaana rupaaya dhyaanagamyaaya tey namah/ Dhyeyaaya dhyeyagamyaaya Dhyeya dheyadhaanaaya tey namah,Dhyeyenaamapi Dhyaayaay Namo Dhyeyatamaayatey/ Namonamah Sravavidey Shivaaya Rudraaya Sharvaaya Bhavaaya tubhyam, Sthulaaya Sukshmaaya Susukshmasukshma sukshmaaya Sukshmaaya Sukshmaartha videy Vidhaatrey! Adyantashunyaaya cha Samsthitaaya tathaa twasunyaayacha Linginecha, Linginey Lingamayaaya tubhyam Lingaaya Vedaadimayam Sakshaat/ (Be compassionate and benevolent Parameshwara, Jagannatha, Ananda Swarupa, Avyaya, Panchamukha Rudra! You are of Panchaashat koti /Five hundred crore Forms and 'Atmatraya'; Vidyaa Tatwa, Shiya, Shiya Tatwa, Aghora, Ashtaka Tatwa, Dwadasha atma Swarupa, Vidyutkoti Swarupa, Shivaatma, Agni Kaarana, Roudra, Ambikaartha Sharira /Artha Naareeswara; Dhavala-Shyaama Rakta yuta; Muktidaana, Amara, Jyeshtha, Rudra Rupa, Soma, Varada, Triloakaaya, Tridevaaya, Vashatkaara, Gagana rupa, Ashta Kshetra, Ashta rupa, Ashta Tatwa; Chaturdha, Chaturdstha Samsthita, Panchadha, Pancha Mantra Swarupa; of Chathus -shasthi or Sixty Four Forms; Akaara; Dwantrishat Tatwa Rupa Ukaara; Shodashaatma Swarupa Makaara; Artha Maatra Swarupa, Omkaaraaya; Gaganeshaaya, Devaaya, Swargeshaaya; Sapta lokaay; Paataala Narakeshaaya; Ashta Kshetraaashta Swarupa; Paraatpara; Sahasra Sirasa, Sahasraaya, Sahasraya, Sahasra paada yukta, Sharva, Parameshthi, Navatma Tatwa Swarupa, Navaatshtaatmaatma Shaktaye, Punarakshta Prakaasha, Ashta ashtaMurtaye, Chatusshashtaasta Murtaye; Ganaashtavritaaya, Guna, Nirgunaaya; Mulasthaaya, Shaswata sthaana vaasiney, Naabhi mandala samsthaaya; Hridi nisswana kaariney, Bhrumadhyaey; Naadamadhyaye, Chandra bimba sthitaa, Shiva, Shiva Swarupiney, Vahni Somaarka Rupa, Shadtrimsha cchakti rupiney, Tretaagnimaya rupiney, Sadaa Shiva, Shaanta, Mahesha, Pinaakiney, Sarvjnaaya Sharnya, Sadyojaataaya, Aghora, Vaamadeva, Tatpurusha and Ishaana! Salutations to you Maha Deva, you are Trishatprakaasha, Shaantaateeta, Anantesha, Sukshmaaya, Uttama, Eka Rudra, Tri Murti, Shri Kantha, Shikhandi, Anantaasana, Anantaantha kaara, Vimala, Vishala, Vimalaanga, Vimalaasansthaana, Vimalaarthaartha Rupa, Yoga peethaantastha, Yogi, Yoga dayani, Yogahrudi samsthaaya, Nivaakashuka, Pratyaahaara, Pratyaahaara ratha, Dhaaranaaya, Dhaaranaamita ratha, Dhaaranaabhyaasa yukta, Puratsaa samthita, Dhyana-Dhyana Rupa-Dhyanagamya-Dhyeya-Dhyaya gamya- Dhyeyadhyaana and Dhyeya tama; Shivaya, Rudraaya, Sharvaaya, Bhavaaya, Sthulaaya Sukshmaaya, Su Sukshma-Asukshma-Sukshmaaradhavidhi; Maha Deva! you have neither beginning nor end and basically you are 'Shunya'as you are Nothingness but of the Totality of Everything! You are indeed the Linga yet the 'Alinga', the Lingamaya, Lingaaya and Sakshaat Vedaadimaya!) Brahma further stated that Maha Deva had indeed possessed the capability not only to destroy the Tripuras after all, but the Trilokas at the Time of Pralaya or the Great Extermination and that it was His Maya and Play that he gave a long to the Daityas as per their destinies! As Brahma prayed to Maha Shiva as above, the latter was visibly happy and having smiled at Devi Parvati, blessed Brahma, Vishnu and all the Devatas as Indra and Devas were re-instated instantly to their respective positions.

Those who read or hear the account of 'Tripurasura Samhara' with physical and internal cleanliness would be blessed: *Paapaisha muchatey jantuh shrutvaadhaayamimam shubham, Shatravo naashamaayaanti sangraamey vijayibhavet/ Sarva rogairna baadhyet Aapadena sphrushanti tam, dhanamaayuryasho vidyaam prabhaavamatulam labhet/*]

Kartika Purnima Mahatmya- Tapasya Parvati's 'digbhranti' at Shiva vijaya approaching Himavanta:

Brahma Deva continued to Vyasa Maha Muneeshwara that after exterminating Tarakasura and the army, the body remains of the latter were burnt off on the eve of Kartika Pournami while the day long battle was most auspiciously concluded ushering an era of Peace and Joy. This Tithi marks the 'asurasandhya' and Triloka Vijaya against Evil when all the Beings of Earthly or Celestial origin seek to venerate and celebrate with snaana-daana-japa-homas, especially at the krittika nakshatra heralding Bahula Pournami having celebrating the day long Shiva Puja. Madhyaahna kaala Shivarchana is stated to be most auspicious. [Dharma Sindhu is quoted: **Kartikeya Darshana**: Kartika Purnima with the Yoga of Krittika Nakshatra is of Maha Punya and in Rohini Yoga is called 'Maha Kartiki'. Kumara Kartikeya's Darshana in the Kartika Purnami- KrittikaYoga bestows such prosperity as would not be available for 'Sapta Janmaas' or Seven Births and the on born in this Yoga Kala would be an ideal Vipra with extraordinary learning of VedaVidya. If Surya in Vishakha and the Dina Kakshatra is Krittika then that glorious time is of Padmaka Yoga. This is considered as highly significant at Pushkara Tirtha when Triparaakhya Deepa Daana is most auspicious.]

An awe-struck Tapasya Devi Parvati at the Shiva Vijaya devastating Tripurasura cried with joy and addressed Shiva to have missed the opportunity to assist him too . Out of over joy, she mentally approached her father Himavanta to share the victory. She was indeed aware that the key to success was due to her own son Ganesha whom Parama Shiva too initiated his efforts and plans entirely with the clearance. Himavanta had instantly decided to learn the full details of Maha Ganesha Puja Vidhana.

## Chapters 49: Details of Ganeshopavaasana-Puja Vidhana

Attaining 'bahyaanatara shuchi' or physical and mental purity in the morning with Ganesha Smarana, a 'saadhaka' initiate Ganesha Puja with the basic inputs of Ganesha Pratima and collects puja dravyas required such as suitable 'aasana', clean waters, ashta gandhas, akshatas, red flowers, guggula, ghrita and taila deepas, camphor, taamboola, various fruits especially sugarcane, sugar and sweets, betel leaves and nuts, milk and curd and white rice and white tilas and rakta varna clothes. With such detailed and elaborate preparatory inputs, initiate the formal puja:

Dhyaanam: Ekadantam shuurpakarnam Gaja vaktram Chaturbhujam, Paashhaankura dharam Devam Modakaan vibhratam karai/ Rakta pushpamayeem maalaam kanthe haste paraam shubham, bhaktaa - naam varadam, Siddhi Buddhibhyaam sevitatam sadaa/ Brahma Rudra Hareendraih samshutatam paramarshibhih/ Ganesha has a Gaja vadana or an elephant face with a single tusk, shurpa karna / ears like winnowing fans, four shoulders, with his hands decorated with paasha-ankusha- modaka and abhaya mudra; he is also decorated with garland of red flowers and a highly auspicious garland around his neck. He is always accompanied with his wives viz. Siddhi and Buddhi / Fulfillment and Intelligence of highest order. He bestows Siddhi and Buddhi to his 'sadhakaas'. In other words, He bestows siddhi and buddhi in the form of accomplishment and realisation as well as the chaturvidha purushaarddhas viz, Dharma-Artha- Kaama- Mokshas. Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu and Indraadi Devas besides Naradaadi Devarshi0 Brahmarshis too pray and extoll Ganesha.

Aavahana: *Aagaccha Jagadaadhara Suraasura vraarchita, Anaadhanaatha Sarvagjna geervaana pari pujita/* Ganesha is invoked as he is jagadaadhaara, shreshtha Deva, asura pujita, anaadha naadha, sarvagjna, Geervaana / Deva pujita, Ganesha! Bestow your live swarupa with brilliance.

Aasanam: Swarna simhaasanam divyam naanaa ratnasamanvitam, samarpitam mayaa Deva tratvam samupaavisha/ Deva! may we offer you -notionally atleast- a golden throne bedecked with most precious jewels for your comfortable seating.

Paadyam: *Deva devesha Sarvesha! Sarva teerthaahritam jalam, paadyam grihaana Ganapa gandha pushpaakshatairyutam*/ Sarveshwara! May we offer you by way of 'paada prakshaalana' with the sacred waters fetched from tirtha nadis with gandha-pushpa-akshatas.

Arghyam: *Pravaala muktaa phala pancha ratna taamboola jaambunadamashta gandham, Pushpaaksha tair yuktamamoghashakte datta mayaarghyam saphalee kurushva*/ Amogha shakti Ganesha, may we offer you Arghya scented with pearls and pancha ratnas, taamboola,suvarna, ashtagandha yukta pushpaakshataas.

Achamaneeyam: *Gangaadi sarva tirthebhyah praarthitam toyamuttamam, karpurailaalvangaadi vaasitam sweekuru prabho!* Maha Prabho! May we offer you Gangaadi sacred tirtha 'mantra jalaas' with sugandha dravyas like 'karpura lavangaadi' ingredients as being served to you with humility and dedication.

Tailodavartanam: *Champakaashoka vakula maalateemogaraadibhih, vaasitam snidhataa hetum tailam c haaru pratigrihyataam*/ May we offer you the 'sugandha taila'/ the heavily scented oil flavored with the essence of champa-ashoka-vakula-maalati- moga adi pushpas!

Payah snaanam: *Kamadhenu samudra bhutam sarveshaam jeevanam param, paavanam yagjna hetuste payahsnaanaardhamarpitam*/ Maha Ganesha! We seek to offer you pure and sacred cow milk as of kaama dhenu itself for your bathing!

Dadhi snaanam: *Dhenu dugdha samudbhutam shuddham sarvajana priyam, mayaaneetam dadhivaram snaanaartham pratiguhyataam*/ Devaadhipa! We would like to offer you clean and pure curd of cow to enable you to take your sacred bathing.

Ghrita snaanam: *Navaneeta samutpannam sarva santosha kaaranam, yagjnaangam devataahaaro ghritam snaatum samarpitam*/ Ganesha Prabho! We offer to you the fresh butter made ghee for your sacred bath which seeks to provide happiness which is specially reserved for Yagjna kaaryaas as food to Devas!

Madhu snaanam: *Pushpasaara samudra bhutam sarva tejo vivardhanam, sarva pushtikaram Deva madhu snaanaarthamarpitam*/ Deva! As honey bees collect honey from flowers, that plentiful pure honey is collected in Pushpa saara samudra; it is that kind of Madhu samudra which is being offered to you for your 'madhu snaana' as that ensures body shine and mental alertness.

Sharkara snaanam: *Ikshusaara samudrabhutam sharkaraam sumanoharam,malaapaharineem snaatum grihaanatvam mayaarpitam*/ Parama Deva! May we now offer you the Sugarcane juice which is as tasty as what is collected from the Ikshu Saagara for your bathing; that precious snaana is joyus, healthy, body cleanser and refresher. [**Sapta Samudras:** Lavana or Salt, Ikshurasa or Sugarcane juice, Sura or Wine, Ghrita or Classified Butter, Dahi or Curd, Ksheera or Milk and Suswada or Sweet Water]

Gud snaanam: Sarva maadhuryataa hetuh svaadu sarva priyankara, pushti krut snaatum -aaneetam ikshu saagara bhavo gudah/ We request you with veneration to bathe in the sweet waters made of jaggery which is a typical yet extremely sweet and tasty bye product of Ikshu saagara; indeed this jaggery is delicious loved by and all as it is a ready energiser too.

Thus as you conclude your snaanas in milk-curd-ghee-honey-sugar waters and jaggery waters, Mahanubhava! We have the unique honour if you accept the following services too!

Madhuparkam: *Kaamsye kaamsyena pihito dadhimadhvaajya puritah, madhuparko mayaaneetah puujyaartham pratigruhyataam*/ Deva! may we offer you a madhuparkam contained in a brass vessel covered with a brass plate as soaked in with honey and ghee to see through the puja in the offing most successfully, with your blessings.

Shuddhhodaka snaana: *Sarva teerthaahritam toyam mayaa praarthanayaa vibho, suvaasitam grihaanedam samyaksnaantum Sureshwara*/ Sureshwara! We offer you the holy waters from several tirthaas which are nicely scented and pure after the series of snaanaas/

Vastram: *Raktavastra yugmam Deva! loka lajjaa nivaaranam anarghyamati sukshmam cha grihaanedam mayaarpidam*/ Devaadhi Deva! we request you to very kindly accept a shining twin valuable yet thin red vastras to aviod 'drishti' by public on your radiance soon after your 'snaanaas!

Yagnopaveetam: Raajatam Brahma sutram cha kaanchanottareeyakam, bhaktyopapaaditam Deva grihaana Parameshvara/ Parama Deva! may we indicate our fortune to host and revere with faithful devotion to offer your majesty a silveren Brahma Sutra and a golden 'uttareeya'. Kindly accept and oblige the devotees.

Aabhushana: *Aneka ratna yuktaani bhushanaani bahuunicha tattad ange kaanchanaani yojayaami tavaaagjnyayaa/* Ganesha! We seek to offer you as many golden ornaments studded with invaluable 'nava ratnaas' as decorative of your physical parts and enjoy ourselves with happiness and your blessings.

Raktachandnaanulepana: *Ashtagandha samaayuktam raktachandanamuttamam, dwaadashaangeshu te Deva lepayaami kripaam kuru/* Jagadeshvara! May we be allowed to smear rakta chandana tilaka mixed with 'ashta gandhaas' on all over of your physical parts and bless us. [**Ashta Gandhaas:** A divine perfume made of eight natural fragrant herbs viz. *Chandanngaru karpoora rochana kumkumam madam raktachandanayaayaadi Ganapatyamudaahrutam/*]

Akshataa: *Raktachandana samishraatuta tandulaamshitalakopari, shoubhaagyai sampradaasyaami grihaana jagadeeshwara*/ Jagadeeshwara! We seek to apply rice mixed with raktachandana tilaka - akshataas as a further beautification of your facial surface for our one satisfaction and pleasure!

Pushpaani: *Paatalam karnikaaram cha bandhukam raktapankajam, mogaaram maalatee pushpam grihyataam Parameshwara*/ Parameshwara! We offer you all kinds of fragrant flowers of your choice like of Paatali vriksha, bandhuka pushpa, red lotuses, mogara pushpa and maalati flowers for your pleasure.

Pushpa maalaas: *Naanaa pankaja pushpaischa grathitaam pallavairapi, bilva patra yuktaam maalaam grihaana sumanoharaam*/

Dhupam: Dashaangeshu guggulam dhupam sarvasougandha kaarakam, sarva paapa kshayakaram tvam grihaana mayaarpitam/ Our offering of 'dhupam' of 'guggulam' /'saambrani' whose fragrance gets speard all over as sarva vyaapaka is most devotedly being made as you may bless us as the sarva paapa haarini and usherer of auspicsiousness.

Deepam: Sarvagjna sarva lokesha tamo naashanamuttamam, grihaana mangalam deepamagalamdeepam Devadeva namostute/ Sarvagjna 'Loka Deva'! Offerings to you with respects as the brilliance of this Lamp is such as to demolish darkness around and usher in 'sarva mangalam' - an alround auspicious - ness.

Naivedyam and Uttaraaposhanam: Naanaapakvaanna samyuktam paayasam sharkaraanvitam, naanaa vyanjana shobaadhyam shaallokanamuttamam/ Dadhi dugdha ghritairyuktam lavangaasamanvitam, mareechi choornasahitam kvathikaavatakaanvitam/ Rajikaadhaanya samyuktam metheepushtham satkramam, hinjeeraka-kushmaanda-mareechi maashapishtakaih/ Sampaaditaih supakvaascha bhaariitairyattakairyutam, modakaapoopaladdhukashashkuleemandakaadibhih/ Parparairaapi samyuktam naivedyamanrutaan -vitam, haridraarhingu lavana samhitam soopamuttamam/ Sasaamudram grihanedam bhojanam kuru saadaram/ Sutrupti kaarakam toyam sugandham cha pibecchayaa, tvayi trupte jagadtrupe nitya trupte mahaatmani/ Uttaraaposhanaartham te dadya toyam suvaasitam, mukhapaani vishuddyartham punastoyam dadaami te/ May we offer Bhagavan naivedyam of all types of bhakshya-bhojya-lehya-choshya-paneeyas including: Pakvaanna yukta paayasas-naanaa prakaara shaalyodanas or cooked rice varieties of curd-milk-ghee-vegetables-churnas and chutneys made of dhaniya, methi, hing, jeera, mustard, kuushmaanda, mirchi- pickles of mango and various vegetablesmodaka-apuupa like sweet phudi, maalpua; laddhu-shashkuli/ khachodi- mandaka or roti of wheat/ maida, paapad fries, vegetable fries, variety dals, and so on. Thus having enjoyed the naidedya bhojana, we request you Bhagavan to consume as much of 'sugandhita jala' / tasty and sweet waters to your satisfaction; if you are contented, the entire 'jagat' gets contented too! After Bhagavan states *Triptaasmi!*, then Uttaraaposhna vidhi, extra water is offered to Ganesha with 'sugandhita jala' and further such pure water is offered to wash his hands and feet too.

Phala / Taamboola Seva: Daadimam madhuram nimbu-jambaamra-panasaahikam daakshaarambhaa phalam pakva karkandhuh kharjuram phalam, naarikelam cha naaringamaanjeeram jambiram tathaa/ Urvaarukam cha Devesha phalaanyetaani gruhyataam/ Mukha paani vishuddartham punasteyam dadaadime/--Sachanda pooga chuurnaadhyam khaadya khaadi- rasamyutam, elaa lavanga sammishram taamboolam kesaraanvitam/ Devesha! Do kindly accept the juicy fruits being offered to you with devotion like daadima-karkandhu, kharjura, naarikela, naarangi, anjeera, jamboora / lemon, and urvaaruka. Thereafter, chandana to apply to the palms and churnaas for good digestion finally 'taamboola' with karpoora- cloves- nuts-kesari and five betel leaves with 'ilaachi'.

In reference to Bhojana Nirnaya there are a handful do's and dont's addressed to common public as follows: Panchaardre bhojanam kuryaat prangmukho mounmaasthitah, Hastou Paadou tathaa chaasyameshu panchaardrataa mataa/ (A dvija is to face east and be seated with 'Panchaadrata' or maintain wet on both the palms, two feet and the mouth, says Vyasa) Devala Maharshi prescribes: Padou prakshalya hastou cha dvirachamya vaagyatah, raangmukhonnaani bhumjeeta sdhuchi peethamadhishthitah/ (one should wash the feet and hands and be seated down on a 'peetha', a wooden plank, to perform two 'Achamanas' or taking water from the right palm and commence the bhojana). Achamyaiya cha bhumjeeta bhuktyaa chopasprushedapah, Anaachaastu yoshneeyaat prayaschitteeyatehisah/ (A bhojana without achamana and touching water calls for a Prayaschitta or atonement). Atri Muni requires to keep one's feet on ground but on the seat while eating with cleanlines and silence and that type of an ideal bhojana yields 'atiratra phala'. But, to keep on one's feet on the seat is forbidden as that tantamounts to 'Go maamsa bhakshana'! Manu states: Ayushyam prangmukho bunkte Yashasyam Dakshina mukho, Shriyam pratyanmukho bhunkte rutambhunkte hyudanmukhah/ (Taking bhojana facing East bestows longevity, facing South provides good reputation, facing West yields opulence and facing North fetches 'Varchas') Apastamba suggests: Yatnena dharayed viprah pavitram dakshine kare, bhunjaanastu visheshena chaanna doshairna lipyate/ (Wearing a darbha tied to right hand while taking food would demolish all types of deficiencies of the food consumed) Bhojana paatras or food vessels be made of gold, silver, bronze or aluminium. A brahmachari, or widow or Yati is disallowed eating in bronze plates nor resort to oil baths and betel leaf consumption. Pracheta Muni states: Panasaamra naalikera kadali bilva patrake, Bhojanam kaamsya paatrena chandraayana phalam labhet/ Palasha padma patreshu grihi bhukvaindavam charet, Brahmachari yateenaantu chandrayana phalam labhet/ (Pracheta Muni explains that eating in panasa, mango, coconut, plantain, and bilva leaves fetches the blessing of having performed 'chaandraayana vrata'; but bhojana in palaasha and lotus leaves

demands performing the same vrata! If this kind of positive type of bhojana is consumed, brahmacharis and sanyasis are stated to have performed chandrayana vrata's punya.) Manu prescribes 'bhojana karana vidhana'or the method of good eating: Pujayedashanam nityam adyaacchaitada kutsayan, Pujitamhyashanam nityam alamurjam prayacchati/( Always bhojana is worship-worthy and should never be found fault with! This type of proactive way of eating-without expressing criticism or personal preferences of taste, form and colour would secure satisfaction and strength) Sumantu states: Annam nidhaapya darvyaatu na hastena kadaachana, Pujayitvaa tadannam cha aaposhanantu samantrakam/ (Annam should never be served with hand but only with a ladle or server; it should be worshipped with mantras and eaten after duly performing 'Aouposhana') Vyasa details the following: Annam drishtvaa pranamyaadou praanjalih kathayettaatah, Asmaakam nityamastvetat iti bhaktyaathavandayet/( On seeing food, first greet it with hands and say: 'Asmaaka nitayamastvetat') After reciting the Gayatri Mantra, 'abhimantra' and 'Satyamdvartena parishanchaami' during the day time and for night bhojana: 'Rutamtvaa satyena parishanchaami' be uttered. Gokhila Muni is quoted here: Vyahriti bhirgaayatryaabhimatrasya rutam twaam satyena parishinchaameei saayam satyam tvartena pareeshinchaamiti praatah parishenchaameeti praatah parishichet/(Parishechana or sprinkling of water be done along with Gayatri Mantra with vyajhritis or extensions, and perform 'Abhimantrana' reciting Satyam tvartena parishinchaami / Rutamvaa satyena parisinchaami.) Svaahaantaah pranavaa -dyaasha naamnaamantraastu Vaayavah, Jihvayaitatgrasedannam dashanaistu na samsprushet/ (Shaunaka muni says that at this juncture, the dvija should commence taking 'Anna' in the fingers reciting: Om pranaya svaaha, om Apanaya svaaha, om vyanaya svaah, om udaayanaaya svaah, om samaanaya svaaha or the Pancha Pranas, om Brahmane svaaha the sixth word, without yet touch the teeth) Smriti saara describes further: Madhyamaanaamika angushthaih grihetaannam mitam punah, Pranaaya chetya paanaay vyaanaayacha yathaakramam/ Udaanaaya Samaanaaya svaaheti juhuyaat kramaat/ (Anna be picked up in small morsels by right middle and ring finger pressing the thumb and take in reciting Pranaya svaha, Apanaya svaha, Vyaanaya svaha, Udaanaya svaah and Samaanaya svaaha as though performing homa into the mouth of fire!) Ravissomastathaa chaagnir vyaayuh parjanya evacha, Param Brahma tathaitaascha Devataah parikeertitaah/ Vaamena paatram sprushtvaat praanaahut yathaa charet, Praanena vishta ityaadi syaahaachaiyaahutir bhayet, Eyam praanaahuteerhutyaa tathaa chaatmaahutih tadaa/ (Touching tthe jalapatra with his left hand, the bhokta should glorify Surya Chandras, Agni, Vayu, Varuna and Parabrahma and perfom 'ahutis' in their favour with the mantra of Pranenivishta Suryaya svaaha, Chandraya svaha and so on and then the Atmaahuti to the Self, as detailed by Krishmna Bhatta in Ahnika saara sangraha) Atri Maharshi states: Shabdenaapah peetvaa shabdena ghrita paayasam, Shabdenaaposhanam kritvaa suraapana samam bhavet /( While in the process of the bhojana, the slurp sounds of water, milk, ghee paayasa and the like are as satisfying as 'Suraapaana'!) Vyasa describes that during the course of Bhojana, the dvija is to maintain silence: Mounam vaacho nivritti syaat naatra bhaashaana samskritam, Naanya daiveranam Vishnum sadaa dhyaayeccha keertayet/ Devataabhidaanam cha prayatah ityaaoastamba vachanam devataantara vishayam/ Kabale kabale chaiva kuryaadgovinda keertanam, Naashoucham keertanetasya pavitram Bhagavan harih/(The silence that one has to maintain during the bhojana is neither to hold the tongue, nor to dis-use the language, but mainly to be engaged in 'dhyaana' or meditation of Vishnu with his several names like Keshava, Narayana, Madhava, Govinda and Madhusudana. Each gulp of food that the bhokta takes in, would purify the intake and glorify the Lord!But at the same time Shandilya Muni says that since one has to ask to break the silence occasionally as to what items of food were to be served as repeats, it is not always possible but to break the silence as and when required!) Markandeya proiritizes the eats at the bhojana: Ashneeyaattanmanaa bhutvaa purvantu madhtam rasam Lavanaamlou tathaa madhve katutiktaadikam tatah/ Praak dravyam purusho shneeyaan madhyetu kathinaashanam, Ante punardravaashetu balaarogyena munchati/ (While commencing the bhojana, the first item for consumption should be a sweet juice, then savouries, in between try bitter and sour items, hard eats, liquids etc.) Vyasa forbids eating as follows: Hastashvya rathayaanoshtramaa sthitonaiva bhakhayet, Smashaanaabhyam -tarasthovaa Devaalaya gatopiva/ Shayanastho bhunjeeta na paanisthamna chaasane, naardravaasaa naadrashirana chaayagjnopaveetayaan/ Na veshtita shiraschaapi notsanga krita bhajanah, Naika vastro dushta madhye sopaanata —

ssapaadukah/ Na charmopari samsthasha charmaa -vestita paarshvayaan/ Graasa sesham na chaashneeyat peetga shesham pibennara, Shaaka mula phalekshunaam danta chhedaainna bhakshayet/ Bahoonaam bhunjataam madhyena chaashneeyaat -varaanvitah, Vridhaanavikaredannam nocchishthah kutrachit vrajet/( One should not eat seated on an elephant, horse, chariot or camel, nor in a burial ground, a temple or in a bed; food is also forbidden to be consumed on a seat, with wet clothes, wet hair or without yagnopaveeta the Sacred Thread. Bhojana is forbidden with streched legs, with hands on the feet or thighs and in a bed. Meals should not be taken with wet clothes, or wet hair and without yagnopaveeta. Bhojana is also forbidden with covered head, with a single vastra, keeping a plate on the thighs, in the company of bad elements, on steps, with footwear, and seated on skins and leather items. One should not eat from others plates nor drink other's water or drinks. Half cooked items be avoided and teeth should not be strained trying hard fruits and sugarcane. One should try to keep pace with co-eaters, not disorder the amount served and never consume 'ucchishtha' or half consumed items of others much less carry it elsewhere.) Yastveka pamktou vishamam dadaati snehaadbhayaadyadivaardha hetoh Vedeshu drishtaa mrishibhischa geetaam taam Brahma hatyaam munayo vadanti/ (Yama states that in case a grihastu serves food better and partially to a person in a 'pankti' or a line of guests either due to friendship or fear or any other consideration then Vedas and Rishis warn him of the great sin of Brahma hatya!) Parashara Muni declares: Eka panktyupavishtaanaam dushkritam adduraatma -naam, Sarveshaam tatsamam taavad yaavadpanktinnabhidyate/Agninaa bhasmanaa chiva stambhena salileni cha, dvaarenachaiva margena pankti bhedo budhai smritah/(In case there is even one element of mischief in a 'pankti' or a line of guests, then the blemish would have to be shared by all in that pankti! This is so because even if there are fires, or ashes, or a pillar, or a threshold or a demarcating lane; this is what wise men believe!) Smrti Ratna describes certain do's and don's in the context of bhojanas: Shayanasthona bhumjeeta na paanistham na chaasane, Sakuryaat skandanam shabdam krodhamanyatra chintanam/ Shishunaam bhartrunam chaapi shvachandaalaadi darshanam, Ashuchinaam tathaa madhye prekshataamapya nashnataam, Naakale vishayuktamchanaashnee yadahutam tathaa/ Ucchshta sparshanam jnaatvaa tat paatram parihrityacha, Tatah paschaadgomayena Bhumim samanulipyacha/ Anyatpaatram nidhaayaiva tadannm pariveshayet, Parishyaamchyaatha bhunjeeta bhojanetuna doshabhaak/Eka panktishu bhunjaano braahmano brahmanamsorushet, Tadannamatyajan bhuktyaa Gayatrashtakam japet/ Uddhrutya vaama hastena trishaartah salilam pibet, Vaamenaivapibettoyam bhojaner paatramatyajan Tyajan pibettu rudhram atyagannamritam pibet/(It is forbidden to be seated on a bed, keep food on it and eat; do not make sounds while eating; never eat with anger nor while frighening children; do not eat in the presence of dogs and low class persons. Do not eat amid persons not eating or gazing at those as they eat. Do reject food at late timings and also that food which is not offered in 'naivedya' to Bhagavan. Once having realised that a glass of water in which already somebody drank in it is provided to a person, then that patra be replaced but not the bhojana. While in one pakti or a lane of eaters, one brahmana should not touch a co brahmana and having done so perform Gayari hundred and eight times but need not reject the bhojana already served. In the course of a bhojana, drink water with left hand without leaving the patra; it is stated that so drinking without leaving the patra in one go is like drinking 'amrita' but other wise it is like drinking blood!) Vyasa Maharshi cautions as follows: Shleshma bhrumhvyachani kotsargo na annakale prashasyate, Bali maangalya japyaadou na home na mahaajane/ (Acts like heavy coughing, loud cleaning or gargling of throat with 'sheshma', loud yawning are forbidden and uncivil at public eatings, japa homa groups and in the midst of congregations). Referring to 'Bhakshya-abhakshya' or material worthy of consumption or otherwise, Aparaarka detailed as follows: Jaati dushtam kriyadushtam kaalaashraya vidushitam, Samsargaashraya dushtam vaa sahrullekham svabhaavatah/ Lashunam grunjanam chiva phalaanu kavakaadicha, Vaartaaka nalikaa laabu hyave yaajnaati dushitam/ Nabhakshayetkriyaa dushtam yaddushtam patitaabhih, Kaala dushtam tu vigjeyam asnaahaaktam chirasthitamk, Dadhi bhaksha vikaarascha madhu varjam tadishyate/ Suraalashuna samsprushtam peeyushaadi samanvitam, Samsargaaddhushya -tetaddhi shudrochishthavadaacharet/ Vichiktsaasu hridaye yasminnaanne pajaayate, Sahullekham tu vigjneyam peeyushaadi svabhaavatah/ (It is always advisable to discard any thing or anybody which is spoilt by way of the background of Jaati or nativity, kriya or action or samsarga or association. Material worthy of discarding due to 'jaati' are among onions,

lassan, brinjal etc. Whatever is procured or cooked by the characterless and conductless men or women who suffer from 'kriya dosha' too are worthy of discard. Another variety of material that sufer from 'Kaala dosha' or invalidated by time like old curd, milk and vegetables etc. too must be rejected for use. Yet another category suffering from 'Samsarga dosha' or wrong association and interaction with persons of fallen sections of the Society should be dispensed with instantly. Should there be any prick of conscience, food or related material be rejected.) Parashara Maharshi prescribes atonement for the consumption of questionable food items: Piyusham shveta lashuna vrintaaka phalagrinjanam, Phalaandu vriksha niryaasa Devasya kavakaanicha/ Ushtri ksheeramaviksheera maginaad bhunjate dvijah, Triraataramupavaasena panchagavyena shudhyati/ Shveta shabdah lashina vrintaakaabhyaam sambadhyate tena, Krishna vaartaa ka raktalashunaadaa nedam vratamityuktam/ (Consumption of peeyusha or beaten cheese of cow milk after delivery, white onion called 'lasun', hing or asafetida, round brinjal, clove, camel milk or sheep milk, and such unworthy material calls the atonement or 'prayaschitta' by way of fastings of three nights and 'pancha gavya sevana' or eating the mix of five cow products of milk- curd- ghee-dung and urine. However, black brinjal and red lasan are exceptional for consumption) Manu Smriti prohibits the consumption of the following: Shuktaanihi dvijonnaaninabhumjeeta kadahana, prakshaalitaani nirdoshaanya apaddhamoyadaa bhavet/ Veeryahaaniryashohaanih pragnaa haanista dhai vacha bhavettasmaattato raatrau dhaatreem yatnena varjayet/ Dhaanaa svaadennacha divaa dadhisaktoomstathaa nishi, Sarvaamcha tila sambandham naadyaadatamayam prati/ Triktaardraka dadhishroun aa tilashaakaani nishyadan, Tyajyate rupayaan –cchreebhih pushpita stree rataadyathaa/ Sakaamsyam naarikelaambu kaamsyecha rasamaiksghavam, Taamra paatra yutam gavyam ksheeram cha lavanaanvitam/ Ghritam lavana samyuktam Suraakalpam vivarjayet, Praktyaksha lavanam naadyaat pakvam para grihaagatam/ (Stored and sour of cooked rice should not be consumed by dvijas unless as 'aapaddharma' or the very last resort. Dhaatri or Amla fruit products be certainly avoided in the nights as there is a risk of losing masculinity, name and fame. Dhaanaa or Coriander seeds, curds in the nights and frequent fried items are avoidable. Ginger, curd, and tilas are forbidden to women in menstruation periods as the are likely to affect brightness, speech and prosperity. Coconut water in bronze utensils, sugarcane juice in copper and salted milk or ghee act as high intoxicants. Eating salt alone without dissolving with other items affects the body organs. Similarly cooked items from others are avoidable) Vyasa describes the bhojana niyamas further: Asati Tulasi chaiva Dhatri phala mathaachytam, Yasodare pravartante tasya sannihito Harih/ Bhakshyam bhojyamcha lehyamcha Namo Naraayantiyah, Abhimantrva sprushan bhuntey sa yaati paramaamgatim/Yatyannam yatipaatrastham yati naaproshitam chayat, Annatrayam nabhoktavyam bhuktvaa chaandraayanam charet/ Apaliptasya murkhasya dushra vrittasya durmateh, Annamashraddhaanasyayobhunkte bhruna aasvai/Tyajedanupaneetaannamandhasya patitasyacha, Vedaadhyayana heenasya kanyaa vikrayinastathaa/ Daridrasyacha murkhasya yati nindaa parasyacha, Ayaajyam yaajakasyaannam nrmaryaadasya karshinah/ Devadroha parasyaanam tathaa vigjnana dooshinah, Dagdhaanga syaayasair divyaih soma vikrayinastathaa/ (He who has in his belly the 'Asati' or a typical sweet cake of rice flour, tulasi leaves and dhaatri or amla is stated to be near and dear to Shri Hari. He who does 'abhimantra' with 'Namo Narayanaya' to the 'bhakshya-bhojya-lehya' varieties of food as offering to Vishnu and then consumes along with co-devotees is destined to attain 'parama gati'. In the event of robbing the exclusive food kept for a Sanyasi, preserved by him to eat and ready for his prokshana before consumption, then the thief would have no remission at all except by undergoing chandrayana vrata. If the food meant for a handicapped, foolish, below average, and careless person is robbed then he is stated to have committed 'bhruna hatya' or killing an embriyo! One should never consume the food offered by one who has no yagnopaveeta, a blind one, a characterless person, one who does not practise Vedaadhyayana, a dealer of brides, a poverty stricken one, a below par intelligent, a critic of the holymen, one who performs evil- oriented agni karyas, a critic of the learned and a dealer of intoxicant liquors and one with an iron-burnt body parts. Bharadvaaja and Parashara expressed views of an act of omission and of commission each as follows respectively: Niraachaarasya viprasya nishiddhaa -charanasya cha, Annam bhuktvaa dvijah kuryaaddhi namekama bhojanam/- Sadaacharasya viprasya tathaa Vedantavedinah, bhuktvaannam muchyate paadahoraatra antaraan narah/ (In case a learned dvija consumes food served by a faithless vipra of least principles and scruples, then the dvija should better

forgo a daily meal. On the other hand, if a dvija enjoys the food from a principled vipra then even overnight the former is rid of the burden of his own sins!) Vishnu Maharshi stipulates that whosoever of dvijas accepts and eats Paarvana shraddha bhojana has to execute six pranayamas, recites Gayatri Mantra ten times and consumes water ten times too as also perform sandhyopaasana in the evening when only he assumes 'Shuddhatva' or purity of body and mind. Another imporant regulation of bhojana is prescribed byVyasa in connection with Solar and Lunar Eclipses: Suryagrahetu naashneeyaat purvam Yaama chatushtaym, Chandragrahetu triyaamaam stree baala vriddhaaturairvinaa/Grastodaye vidhoh purvam naaharbhojana maacharet, Grastodite tathaa Suryena raatrao bhojanam charet/ Samvatsaryaikamapi charet kruccham dvijottamah, Agjnata bhukta shudhyartham jnyaatasyatu visheshata/ (With the exception of the aged, women and children, dvijas must follow the principle of 'no food' during the four yaamas preceding the solar eclipse and three yaamas before Chandra grahana. The general principle is that the day before Chandra grahana and the night before the Suryagrahana, bhojana is avoided. To purify one's body and mind, the blemish of bhojana knowingly or other wise, it is better that one kruccha vrata is performed annually in any case!)

After bhojana, the conclusion would be: Amritaapidhaana maseetya vashipya jalam pibet, tachesham rouravetyuktvaa baliprante visarjayet/ (After saying 'Amritaapidhaanamasi' and then drink up the remainder water in the drinking vessel and continue reciting the Rourave mantra that follows, while leaving water drops at the 'bali sthaana' keeping some morsels for the negligible praanis like ants and flies) Rouravepunya nilaye padmaarbudani vaasinaam, Ardhinaamudakam dattam akshayyamupatishthti/ (The mantra means: may these water drops be plentiful to relieve the tortures being experienced by the padmaarbuda nivasis of rourava naraka) Apasrutya tatah paschaat gunushaan shodashaacharet, Viprasya dakshine bhaage Devaastishthani yatnatah, Aaseena eva gandushaan vaamabhage visarjayet/ (Now, clean the mouth gargling sixteen times and throw out the mouth water to the left as Deva ganas would be present to the right side of the vipra.) Gautama Muni states: Aaachantah punaraachaamedayam Gow ritimantratah, Dripadaam vaa triraavartya sarvapaapa pranaashineem, Hastou nidhrutya angushthaabhyaam aknorambu vinikshipet/ Sharvaatim cha Sukanyaam cha Chyavanam shakramashvinou, Bhukta maatram smaredyastu chakshstasya naheeyate/ (Then, perform 'aachamana' thrice with the drupada mantra or that of 'Ayam gouh' and with raised hands press the eyes and the right thumb with water; this act would help improve vision by the grace of Sharvaati, Sukanya, Chyavana, Indra and Ashvini Devatas) Maharshi Vyasa desires that after the bhojana prakriya, the Vipra should take up 'adhyayana' of Itihasa Purana Vedas to enable proper digestion of food consumed: Bhuktaavai sukhamaasthaaya tadannam parinaamayet, Itihaasa puraanaakhyaam Vedardhaanupa brumhayet/ Shankha Muni warns as follows: Divaa svaapam na kurveeta gacchennaiva divaastriyam, Aayuh khayakari nidraadiyaa stree punya naashani, Vridhaa vividha vaakyaani pariyaadaashcha varjyayet/ (None should neither sleep nor have a woman as daytime sleep reduces longevity and physical contact of a woman destroys punya nd lead to avoidable problems) Supugam cha supatramcha churnena cha samanvitam, Pradadyaaddvija varyebhyaha taamboolam charvayedbudha/ Aayuh pragnyaabalam buddheeretah shaktirvinashyati, Jihvaa rasam na gruhnaati sadaa taambulacharvanam/ (After the bhojana, one should offer 'taambula' or betel leaves and betel nuts to those having the bhojana including the self as taambula provides satisfaction, but repetitive tambula bhakshana destroys mental alertness, physical strength and self-confidence.) ].

# Ganesha Pujaavidhana is continued:

Pradakshina- Aarati- Stuti paatha: Eka vimshati sankhyaayaah kuryaaddeva pradakshinaah, pade pade te Devesha nashyantu paatakaanicha/ Aoudumbare raajate vaa kaamsye kaanchana sambhave, paatre prakalpitaan deepaan grihaana chakshutarpakaan, panchaaraatrim pancha deepairdarpitaam parameshwara/Stotrarnaanaavidhaih suuktaih sahasranaamaabhisthatah,upavishya stuveetainah krutvaa sthirataram manah/ Deenaadheesha Dayaanidhe Suraganaih samsevyamaan dvija, Brahma Ishaan Mahendrasesha Girijaa Gandharva Siddhaih stuta/ Sarvaarishta nivaaranaika nipunaa Trailokya naadha prabho, bhaktimme sakalaam kurushva saphalaam kshaantvaaparaadham mama/ Iti Murtim samabhyarcha dandayan pranipatyacha, japen mantram tato Devi sarva siddhi pradaayakam/ The bhaktas are required to perform 21 pradakshinas / circumambulations to Ganesha Pratima again and again with bhakti and prostrate before it finally so that each step in the pradakshina dissolves the clustered sins of the devotee. Parameshwara! By keeping five radiant 'deepas' arranged on a plate made of copper or brass or silver, 'deepaaraadhana' be performed with clean mind and thoughts, we seek to offer you five 'aaratis' as a gesture of our gratitude for your continued and presence among us with patience to let us perform the services dutifully. Indeed the 'aarati' to ensure that the 'timirandhakaara' or the endless darkness in our minds and thoughts are smashed up with your extraordinary radiance and omni- presence. Deenaa naadha, Dayaanidhana, Devagana pujita, Brahma-Rudra-Indra-Shesha Naaga-Parvati- and gandharva / siddha sannuta and 'Dvai Maatura' [Mother Parvathi created an image of Ganesha out of the sandalwood paste on her body. She then immersed the idol in the sacred waters of Ganga and it came to life. Thus Lord Ganesha is also called Dvaimaatura meaning 'of two mothers' and also Gangeya meaning 'the son of Ganga.'] Bhagavan Ganesha!You are the singular one to destroy 'sarvaarishtaas' or arishtaapashakuna-anishtaas from Tri Murtis- down to staavara jangamaas / the charaachara jagat! Thus the bhakta-saadhakas once again prostrate to Siddhi Buddhi Bhaarya Sameta Maha Vighna Vinayaka!

# Chapters 50-51: Ekaakshara Mantra Sadhana- Parvati teaches to Himavanta and Shiva to Shanmukha

Several matras in invoke Ganesha had been in vogue, stated Devi Parvati and advised her father Himavanta as follows: Ekakakshara Mantra gam is required to be recited 150,000 times with 'bahyaantassuchi' assuming padmaasana without 'vishaya vaasana' whatsoever. The shadakshara mantra ' vakra tundaya hum' needs to br recited likewise with full control of senses and desires 10 lakh and 10 thousand. The number is required to be increased accordingly. Either of the Ekaakshara or shadakshara mantras be taken up on Shravana shukla paksha, for anushthaan for a month for karya siddhi. Eka Murti puja yields vastu-dhana-pashu- santana prapti is assured; like wise, dwi murti puja gives asaadhya kaarya siddhi, tri murti puja rajya prapti and sarva sampatti, chatur murti puja provides fulfills chatur vidha purushardhaas of dharmaardha kaama molshas; pancha murti puja results in sarva bhouyma raajatva; six murti puja provides srishthi-sthiti-pralaya samadhatya; seven / eight murti puja yields bhuta-vartamanabhavishya jnaana; Dasha Murti Pujana would please thirty three crore Devas, Indra- Agni-Shiva-Vishnu as also Muni Ganas including Sanakaadi Maharshis. Ekaadasha Ganesha Pratima puja draws the attention and 'adhipatya' or supremacy of Ekaadasha Rudras and is required to perform that king of ekaadasha Ganesha puja is called for 'ati sankata kaala' or emergencies only.[Puranas like Maha Bhagavata named Aja, Eka -paada, Abhirbudhnya, Twashta, Rudra, Hara, Shambhu, Tryambika, Aparajita, Ishana and Tribhuvama. Vishnu Purana states Ekadasha Rudras as Ardha Naaree Shiva- Parvati Swarupas of Manyu, Manu, Mahmasa, Mahana, Shiva, Ritu -dhwaja, Ugraretasa, Bhava, Kaama, Vamadeva and Dhirtavrata and the counterpart Rudranis as Dhi, Vritti, Ushana, Uma, Niyuta, Sarpi, Ila, Ambika, Iravati, Sudha and Diksha]. Dwaadasha Ganesha Murti puja yields instant relief in similar situations of extraordinary difficuties. Such dire situations would also demand Dwaadasha Ganesha Murti puja as a result of which provides contentment to Dwadasha Adityas viz. viz. Indra, Dhata, Parjanya, Pusha, Twashta, Aryama, Bhaga, Vivishwan, Amshu, Vishnu, Varuna and Mitra. [Among these twelve Adityas are stated as: Indra

the Chief of Devas ruling Amaravati and destroying Daityas and Danavas from time to time. Dhata being in the Status of Prajapati took up the task of Creation; Parjanya in the Form of Sun rays rained all over the Universe; Pusha is in the form of Mantras engaged for Prajaaposhana; Twashtha is present in the form of 'Vanaspati' and 'Aushadhi' (Vegetable Oils and Herbal Medicines); Aryama who provides protection and relief to humanity; Bhaga is in the form of Earth and Mountains; Viviswan in the form of Agni / Fire and is the cooking facilitator of food as also of the destroying power; the ninth name of Surya Deva is Amshu or of the form of Chandra Deva who provides coolness and pleasure of existence; Vishnu is the tenth name of Surya who constanly checks the evil forces in the World and slays Danavaas and establishes virtue from time to time by assuming Incarnations; Varuna is the eleventh appearance present in water as the source of life and fertility staying in Oceans, Rivers and various water profiles; and finally, Mitra or form of propitiousness and help to humanity. In whatever form he might be, Surya Deva is indeed the 'Karanam, Kaaranam and Karta' or the Act, Action and the Supreme Actor in the drama of Life! Bhakti (Devotion), Shraddha (fortitude) and Puja (Worship) sum up the meanings of human life! The corresponding Twelve Names of Aditya are stated to identify with the Twelve Months of a Year viz. Chaitra with Vishnu, Vaishakha with Aryama, Jyeshtha with Viviswan, Ashadha with Amshuman, Shravana with Parjanya, Badrapada with Varuna, Ashwin with Indra, Kartika with Dhata, Margasirsha with Mitra, Pausha with Pusha, Magha with Bhaga and Twashta in Phalguna. Surya Deva has thousands of Kiranas (Rays) of which four hundred rays, known as Chandana generate Vrishti or rains; three hundred kiranas of yellow colour provide coolness entitled Chandra; three hundred more rays coloured white bestowing Aushadhis, Swadha, and Amrit by which human beings, Pitras and Devas are all happy. The names of the twenty most important rays are stated to be Heti, Kiran, Gow, Rashmi, Gabhasti, Abheeshu, Ghan, Usnu, Marichi, Naadi, Deedhiti, Saandhya, Mayukha, Amshu, Saptarchi, Suparna, Kara and Paada. (Source: Bhavishya Purana) Dhata, Parjanya, Mitra, Aryama, Pusha, Shakra, Varuna, Bhaga, Twashta, Anshumaan and Vishnu as per Brahma Purana].

Puja of Ashrottara shata - one hundred and eight Ganesha Pratimas in one go by single Saadhaka assures the accomplishment Ashtasiddis. [Ashta Siddhis: or Supernatural Powers are Anima or the ability of miniaturising oneself; Mahima is turning one self giant like; Laghima is the capacity to get oneself unusually light; Garima is to make the Self too gross and heavy; Prapti is to achieve any kind of mental desire; Prakamya or providing fulfillment of other's wishes; Vashitwa or capacity to control any other Party; Ishitwa or fully dominating over others as wished. Among many other Siddhis include Para Kaaya Pravesha or totally entering other's body and even Soul; Doora Shravana or distant hearing, Doora Darshana or Distant Vision or ability to see things or actions any where from other places; Manojavam or reaching a place as fast as a thought as also thought reading; Kamarupa or assuming the physical form of another Being-be it a moving species or an immobile like a mountain etc; Swacchanda Maranam or the gift to die at one's own wish; Deva Saha Kreeda Anudarshanam or the gift to view Deva Devis playing among themselves; Yatha Sankalpa Siddhi or accomplishing any thing by a mere thought; and so on. ]

Finally, puja of one lakh Ganesha Murti Puja leads to Mukti Prapti.

<u>CAUTION</u>: Samishthi Ganesha Pratima Puja is not-repeat, not to be a samishthi maanusha puja to samishta pratimas but a single and singular dhanya saadhaka puja to samishtha Ganesha Pratimas.

Accordingly as per Devi Parvati's upadesha, Himavanta initiated Ganeshopaasana with twelve Pratimas on Shravana Shukla Chaturthi observing austerities till Bhadrapada Shukla Chaturthi by constant recitals

of ekaashara / shadakshara mantras and upavaasaaas; on the previous day of the scheduled Chaturthi the intensity of austerities was doubled up with agni karyas, dashaamsha tarpanas and previous night jaagaranas, besides brahmana - bandhu bhojanas, daana-dakshinas and other ancillaries followed by pratima parikrama and finally pratima visarjana in running sacred waters.

As prompted by Devi Parvati, Parama Shiva then teaches to Mayura Vahana Skanda explaining that without Ganesha Vrata - Puja-Japa', all the dharmika and vijaya karyas in the universe from Tri Murtis to Indraadi Devas, Celestial Beings, Daitya-Denaavaadi practitioners of adharma and humans and indeed human beings, let alone the sthaavara jangamas would never succeed in their respective efforts and activities. Without Ganesha Puja, samasta yagjna-tapa-homa-daana karyas are non starters with impediments and failures, and sarva siddhis of ihika-aamusmika aspirations get reversed. On the other hand, Ganesha naama smarana, puja, vrata and such karyas with pure faith and devotion pave the way for any type of success in proportion to the extent and intensity of dedication. Parama Shiva and Paraashati bestowed this unique blessing to Ganesha of 'Agra Tamboolaarhata' which is irreversible which is abided by the bestowers themselves as a proof of their successes vide battles viz. Tripuraasura and Mahishaasura, let alone Skanda Kumara's victory in his Tarakasura Samhara! As Shiva explained the utmost significance of Ganesha Mahatmya to Skanda, the latter sought to learn the full details. Shiva gave the Ganesha pujana krama as given in the previous pages. In course of the detailing the Vrata, the latter cited examples of the beneficiary kings of dutifully performing the Ganesha Vrata.

## Chapters 52-55: Chakravarti Kardama, King couple Nala-Damayanti and Chitraangada-Indumati

Devi Parvati enlightened Himavanta about a Chakravarti named Kardama and his 'purva vrittanta' as also of other Kings Nala and his queen Damayanti besides of King Chitrangada and queen Indumati. King Kardama was a 'dharma paraayana' and the ruler by a huge empire enclosing oceans and earth. Once Bhrigu Maharshi arrived in the Royal Court and the King welcomed and extended all possible courtesies becoming of King. In the course of conversation, the latter requested the Maharshi to very kindly indicate his 'purva janma vrittanta' as the Maharshi indeed had the vision of Bhuta-Vartamaana- Bhavishya Jnaana. Bhrigu Maharshi then explained that King Kardama was in his previous birth as a hapless Kshatriya although virtuous yet struggling to eke out daily family needs. Totally dejected in life left his home without the awareness of wife and children and wandered aimlessly and happened to reach the ashram of Maharshi Soubhari and narrated his tale of misfortune especially after the acidic remarks of his wife and children, but now he was a terrible victim of hunger, thirst and neglect. The Maharshi assuaged his hunger, thirst and utter negligence and over some time to regain his normalcy. He then taught the Kshatriya about the Ganesha Vrata-puja- sadaa smarana with utmost dedication by all the chaturyarnaas of a Society to demolish duhkaas and - paapas committed knowingly and otherwise and finally lead to the path of enlightenment. The Kshatriya then enquired of Ganesha's form, nature, origin and details of his vrata and puja. Maharshi replied: Yad Brahmam nityam virajam vishokam jnaana swarupam paramaardha bhutam, anaadimadhyaantapaaram Ganaadhipam tam pravadanti santah/ Yasmad omkaara sambhutiryatovedaa yato jagat, yena sarvamidam vyaaptam tam viddhi Vinaayakam/ Indeed it is that Brahmaswarupa who is nitya, viraja / veetaraaga, shokarahita, jnaana swarupa, Parama Satya rupa, aadi-madhyaanta-rahita, ananta, whom 'aastikas' firmly believe with utmosr faith and following. He is born of Omkaara Shabda and from whom Vedaas and the Universe emerged and of Him that one titles as GANESHA! He is accompanied with the Shakti Svarupas viz. Siddhi and Buddhi denoting Realisation and the Means of Accomplishment. Thereafter, the purpose, methodology and details of Ganesha Vrata Vidhana. Pursuant to the holy visit by Bhrigu to Kardama Chakravarti, the latter spent the rest of his life in 'Ganeshaadhaarana' and paved the path of attaining 'Saamraajya' as what Kardama attained.

Devi Parvati further enlightened her father Himavanta about the episode of <u>Nala Chakravarti</u> of Nishidha Desha. Nala's glory as a 'dhaarmika saamraat' got spread across the globe and even attracted the

admiration of Indra Himself. Nala's wife was Damayanti, one of the world renowned Sundaris: Damayantee bharyaa seedayasya soundaryamandiram, damaitvaakhilaan doshaanshriyah saaram pragruyaacha/ Nirmitaa Brahmanaa yasmaad damayantee tatah smritaa, Damayantyi trilokasya naareenaam chaarutaamadaat/ Nala's wife was Damayanti, the abode of 'soundarya'; apparently Lord Brahma concentrated all the elements of beauty without any blemishes whatsoever and hence that name of Damayanti! Into the Court of Nala arrived on a very auspicious day the Maharshi Gautama and Nala welcomed the Maharshi with devotional prostration. In the course of conversation, Gautama expressed his awe and admiration of the Chakravarti's acomplishments and narrated about the enormous 'purva janma sukrita' of the Chakravarti. In his previous birth, Nala was an unfotunate and poverty stricken kshatriya named Pippala. As in the case of Kardama's background, Pippala too underwent similar misfortunes and approached Koushka Rishi who advised to observe penances, vrata and pujas to Ganesha for a month. The Maharshi too extolled Ganesha: Kartaa sarva lokaanaam pitaa maataa jagadguruh, Brahmendra Shiva Vishnuunaam Gajaanana kritaani tam/ Sarva loka karta, Maata, Pita, Jagadguru, besides Brahma-Indra-Shiva - Vishnu and others too dutifully and faithfully venerate alone. [Nala the King of Nishadha, was chosen by Damayanti as her husband in a swayamvara. Demon Kali desired and vowed to test Nala from the path of Dharma/ Virtue as also to separate Nala and Damayanti. Such was the purity of Nala that it took twelve years for Kali to find a small fault in him as Nala played a game of dice and gambled away his wealth and the kingdom. Nala and Damayanti had to live in forests for three years where they were separated. Nala, under the influence of Kali, deserted Damayanti and went away. In the forest, he saved Karkotaka a Naga from a fire. Karkotaka Naga out of gratitude foresaw Nala's eventual incidnets ahead and as a precaution hissed poison and transformed Nala into an ugly dwarf named Bahuka and advised him to serve King Ritupana of Ayodhya. He also gave Nala a magic garment which would restore him to his original form. Nala went to King Rituparna and served him as an excellent cook and received accolades for his 'Nala Paakaas' as famed dishes cooked. In course of time, Damayanti the deserted queen under her father visited Rituparna a co-king on a holiday and offered a riddle to Rituparna in a series of such Royal visits to confirm whether Nala might be present in that kingdom. On hearing that Damayanti was going to marry another husband, Bahuka took Rituparna and drove the chariot fast. He reached Vidarbha from Ayodhya in a few hours. Damayanti recognized Nala out of his mannerisms and he came to his original form. Nala taught his skill to Rituparna, and the latter taught Nala to magically control dice. After undergoing many hardships, in spite of which Nala never deviated from the path of righteousness - apparently by regularly performing Ganesha Vratas- overcame the influence of Kali and regained his kingdom.].

As Devi Parvati informed of the glory of renowned Chakravatis viz. Kardama and Nala, the episode of King Chandrangada and Queen Indumati of Malwa is not any less significant. The King was not only unusually handsome but a famed warrior was also an expert practitioner of Garima, Mahima, Vashitwa, Ishitwa and such Ashta Sidhis. He was also a Maha Gyani, Yagjna-daana-Veda Vedanga Paarangata. Devi Indumati was an outstanding pativrata, sarvaanga sundari and an expert in household karyas. The King was also a renowned hunter too. Once on a hunting spree of Vanya mrigas as accompanied by his ministers, senapati, and soldiers, the King and entourage faced Rakhasas. Even as he alerted the followers to run back, the group of Rakshasaas killed and ate them off. One of the Rakshasaas, was a charming Rakshasi who held the King tightly and forcibly embraced and kissed him and as the latter somehow loosened her grip ran away directionless amok and reached a Sarovara which sank into Naga Loka. But Naga Kanyas surrounded them and took him to Paataala Loka. The King of Naga Loka sought to enquire of his where abouts and background. In reply, Naga kanyas insisted that he should marry them. Chandra angada explained that he was an Ekapatnivrata and severally explained what all Veda Shastras stressed about 'Maanava Dharmas' and kept on resisting the wedding offers of Naaga Kanyaas. Meanwhile in the Kingdom of Malwa was agog with the horrible news of the missing King and his entourage and the

Queen was shocked and fainted senseless. On her recovery, Veda Panditas and Ministerial Advisers explained that Her husband was the rarest among the Kings and equally rarest of humans ever of the very symbol of Dharma: *na bhuto na bhavisyati!* But death in human life is an inevitable and eternal fact and sooner or later every praani has to jump on to the cycle of Kaala maana!

Devi Indumati who had graduaally experienced the reality of life took up to widowhood reconciled that after all she was blessed as a 'Suputra Maata'. Twelve years passed by and suddenly Brahmarshi Narada approached Indumati and affirmed that her husband was indeed a 'Vidyaamaan and a dhanya jeevi' and she need not at all cry over his absence. He advised her further to don coloured dresses, wear golden ear rings and jewellery and decorate back her body including hands, feet, waist and fingers besides wearing mangala sutra just as suvaasinis. She was astonished by what a no less a Maharshi like Narada Himself had advised. She invited a massive gathering of Punya Strees / Punistris and right in the presence of Narada and among the mangala vaadya dwanis got her past glory back. Thereafter Narada Brahmarshi performed the upadesha of Ganesha Mantras, Ganesha vrata puja vidhana, Godaanaadi parikriya, and so on. At the Vrata Samaapti, Ganesha's blessings seemed to have come as a reality. Indeed by His grace, the Naaga Kanyas who kept the King in shackles in a prison had changed their minds and allowed them to float up on earth in a shackled condition around a tree as the onlookers who freed him enquired of his background and restored the King. Meanwhile the Prince was practising 'aamarana' mantra recitals near the ill fated sarovara and the agitated Queen reached there too even as a strange and loud voice resounded the skies that King Chirangada had arrived!

#### Chapters 56-59: Episodes of King Shurasena, Bhakta Bhrushundi, Krura Naamala and of King Kritaveera

Lord Brahma narrated the episodes of King Shurasena and of Maha Paapi turned Bhakta Bhrukuti to Veda Vyasa as further revealed to Maharshi Bhrigu. King Shurasena ruled Bhutala from Madhya Desha's Sahasra Naamaka Suramya Nagar who was an outstanding practitioner of Dharma, with profound knowledge of Vedavedaangas, yagjna karta, shadgunya of Sandhi-Vigrah-Yaana- Aasana, chaturupaaya of Saama-Daana- bheda - danda with a chaturanga bala sena. His wife named Punyasheela even surpassing the qualities of reputed pativratas. Once, as the King was chairing his Rajya Sabha with his Ministers and all other members, there flew around a Divya Vimana even an extremely wicked sinner suffering kushthu vyadhi in the public outside the portals of the Sabha shouted that earth had quaked as of severe 'bhukampa' and with that curse of the sinner fell down Indra's Vimana which got force-landed with earth shaking sound as every body in the public witenessed Lord Indra himself came out with all his splendour and glory even along with Deva ganas. The utterly astonished King and the Minsters prostrated to Indra and the accompanists and complimented the unimaginable fortune that landed in the Kingdom and himself. Lord Indra in his thunderous tone stated that due to the sinner kushthu's statement that the vimana fell down near the Rajya Sabha! Lord Indra further stated that his celestial flight was actually destined to Bhrushundi Ashram the location of which was intimated to him by Brahmarshi Narada and having concluded the visit to that Ashram and witnessed by himself with awe and seen Ganesha Rupadhaari Bhrukuti Himself and after obtaining the blessings on return to Swarga Loka, this force landing of Indra Vimana allowed me and Devas to share our blessings to you with congratulate your Praja for the Dhama Paripalana and auspiciousness, but for the kushtu rogi's malevolent sneeze.

Indra coninued his conversation to King Shurasena by describing the background of Mahatma Bhrushundi. In dandakaaranya, there was a cruel fisherman named Naamala who was a practitioner of robberies, vyabhichaara, dyutaa kreeda and madyapaana whom the society abhored and rejected. One day as he was bathing in Ganesha Tirdha, he saw Muni Mudgala and forcibly entered the latter's ashram with the objective of killing the Muni. As he raised his sword, his hands trembled despite his efforts and the Muni displayed pity rather than anger. This mood of the Muni had transformed the psyche of the Evil to sincere requests for pardon and Namala fell straight at the feet of the Muni with utmost remorse and reverence intead of revenge and anger, which never ever was his trait all along his life sofar! The Muni then lifted the prostrating Naamala and having blessed him, explained the power and magnificence of Ganesha, changed Naamala's name as Bhrushudni even as the fac ed got transformed with elephant face with a forehead with two trunks protruded on the face and and eventually did the upadesha of Ganesha Ekaakshara Mantra - 'Ga'. Eversince then Maha Bhrushundi had turned into Sage of fame that reached and brought Indra Deva and all other Devas to Earth! Blessed be the Tapah Sthali named Naamala Siddha Kshetra reputed thereafter!

Inquisitive King Shurasena asked Indra to elaborate the episode of Kritaveera who had the reputation of being a Mahabalashaali, Dhanurdhara, Satyavaadi, Daana- Yagjna karta, and an outstanding Emporer. Unfortunately however Kritaveera and his wife were 'putraheenas'. The ever dejected Royal couple convened a 'Sabha' which was attended by Ministers, Senapatis, and the Public and declared retirement having given away Raja mudra-Dhana kosha-and so on and left the kingship with 'mrigacharma' attire for the forests. Sage Narada visited Pitruloka and intimated Kritaveera's departed father that his son proceeded to forests as he and wife were putraheenaas. Meanwhile Sage Bhrushundi's entire family including parents and other sons, daughters and children were burnt to death in a massive fire accident and were forcibly taken away to kumbhipaaka naraka by Yama dootaas. Bhrushundi was also perturbed and performed Sankata Chaturthi Vrata most ardently and the departed souls of Pitru ganas were relieved of the naraka's tribulations were replaced with swarga soukyhas.

As Brahmarshi Narada being alarmed at news of Kritaveeraa's forest retreat, the latter's father in pitru loka approached Brahma and apprised that despite the glory of Dharmatma Kritaveera, how was it that he was putra heena! Brahma indicated that the King's praarabdha kaala account was getting terminated and that it was time to get blessed with a son soon by dutifully performing Ganesha Puja. In the past, Kritaveera out of arrogance and self pride had killed twelve sadbrahmanas and thrown away in a ditch. As Kritaveera became aware of this, he along with wife returned to the Kingdom from the forest retreat and observed day long purification by fast and on the eve of Maagha Krishna Chaturthi on seeing Chandra on the sky and at the early morning perfom prayers shouting Ganesa, Ganesha and initiate the day long puja [as detailed in earlier pages] and by the same evening having performed tilaa snaanas and punah puja as prescribed followed by nritta-geeta-sangeeta- vadya festivities and raatri-jaagarana. And then by Ganesha's blessing, King Kritaveera assuhred himself that his 'suputra aakaansha' ought to be fulfilled most certainly!

## Chapter 60: Angaara Graha as Bhumi Suta- Bharadvaaja the father-Angaaraka Ganesha Vrata Mahima:

Maha Muni Bharadvaaja during his routine 'anushthaana' glanced an Apsara Kanya did maanasika sambhoga and the resultant semen fell on Bhumi.Bhu Maata brought up the child with initial 'samskaaras' like Jaata Karma-Naamakarana-Annapraashana-Choodakarana-Vidyaabyaasa. The child's body gradually assumed the sparkling red colour skin gradually. Then at the time of Upanayana, the child Angaaraka enquired as to who was his father. Bhu devi invoked Bharadwaaja Muni and the latter embraced Angaraka, performed Upanayana and brought him up as a veda-shaastra praveena. Angaaraka

then took to severe tapas in favour of Ganesha for thousand years on the banks of River Narmada. Pursuant to this severe Tapas, Dasha Bhuja Maha Ganesha blessed Mangala with His 'saakshaatkaara darshana' on the eve of Maagha Krishna Chaturthi as Angaaraka broke out with blissful tears in his red eyes and prayed: 'Vighnanaasaka, Vighna karta, Suraasura swaami, samasta shakti vriddi kara, niraamaya, nitya, nirguna, gunatraya viccheda, Loka paalana karta, Brahma vetta, Brahma rupi Ganesha, akshyaalakshya swarupa, Durakshana naashaka Ganesha--and fell down in prostration in trance. Maha Deva Ganesha in 'meghamaada swara' expressed his satisfaction with the severe tapasya of Angaraka and asked for a boon to be granted: Mangala replied: Maha Deva! May I be blessed with Amrita paana to secure lasting fame in Trilokas as Mangala Kaaraka as one of the Nava Grahas or the permanent planet as stationed on Aakaasha ever praised by sarva pranis as *Dharani garbhasambhutam* Vidyurkanti sama prabham, Kumaram Shakti hastam tam Mangalam pranamaamyaham/ Being the son of Bhu Devi Mangala Deva is of the flashy Lightning and he too like Lord Subrahmanya the embodiment of Power and Courage ever worthy of worship! Ganesha further blessed: Amritam paasyase samyag devaih sah Dharaasuta, Mangaleti cha naamnaa tvam loke khyatim gamishyasi/ Angaaraketi raktadtvaad Lohitaangascha lohitam, Kumaarastvam kujo bhoumo vasumatyaa yatah sutah/ Angaaraka Chatur thyaam ye karishyanti vratam naraah/ Bhumi putra! Along with various Devas, you too would qualify and resort to 'amrita paana'in Swarga loka, besides gain popularity and fame in Bhuloka as Mangala Graha. Angaraka! Due to your blood red colour body, you should be also popular as Lohitanga or Lohita. You would also be called as Kumara, Dharani Garbha, Kuja and Bhouma. Those all who observe Angaraka Chaturthi Vrata would most certainly reap the advantage of observing Sankata Chaturthi Ganesha vratha and that is never ever facing 'nirvighnas' life long and swarga prapti thereafter!

# Chapter 61: Ganesha's 'shaapa' to Apahasa Chandra-Chandra praardhana- Ganesha restricts 'shaapa' to Chandra Darshana on Ganesha Vrata on Bhadrapada Chaturdhi

Well before initiating the process of Creation, Brahma visited Parama Shiva in Kailasa for blessings as the latter was in special conference with Ganesha and Kumara seekings their boons. Shiva offered similar boons and an angry Ganesha left the place in anger. The very first universal creation by Brahma was a casuality for a while too. The disturbed face of Ganesha with anger was indeed distorted and Chandra laughed away at such form of Ganesha. Ganesha gave a shaap to Chandra that whoso ever saw the Moon would reap 'maha paatakas' and left to his abode. As a result of the shaap, the utterly confounded Chandra got drowned in Maha Saagara. Chandra realised in retrospection realised that a Parama devata of Ganesha's stature who was a Jagatkaarana beyond Ashta Siddhis was laughed at as a mere child and laughing at him away at him and the consequence was indeed inevitable. Meanwhile, Agni and other Pancha Bhutas led by Indra realised that the univeral balance would get distorted in the absence of Chandra on the sky and having approached Bhagavan Ganesha prostrated to him with the prayer: Deva Deva! You are indeed worthy of seeking boons of all the Beings of the Universe from charaachara jagat to Tri Murtis downwards! We seek your blessings to preserve the Balance of the Universe. It was the 'aparaadha' by Chandra that had led to Universal Distortion. We had all lined up to pray and seek pardon to Chandra by lessening the impact of your shaapa in the interest of Loka Kalyaana. In his reply, Ganesha stated that he was nodoubt satisfied with the prayers and would seek to lessen the heavy impact on Universal Balance. Chandrama on the sky might be salutation worthy by one and all in the Srishti for a year or six months, or three months, yet continue to remain on the sky but with gradually decreasing and increasing of his brightness renewable fortnighly but on Bhadrapada Shukla Chaturthi night, Chandra darshana would attract 'kalahas' and should certainly be avoided. Then Chandra with his the partially mitigated Ganesha shaapa stood before Chandra with repeated and thankful prostrations with guiltful face and heart and commended Ganesha whose largesse was bountiful with genuine gratitude.

[Ganeshvara is known for weakness for eats, especially sweets. Once he ate all through a day and at early hours of night gathering the remaining sweets walked home slowly with a heavy stomach and got

stumbled and fell down to earth, as the sweets were scattered and his dress was torn. An embarrassed Lord Ganeshwara stood up and regained composure. Chandra Deva had witnessed the scene as the short statured- pot bellied-trunk faced Ganesha falling with heavy eating could hardly control his boisterous laughter. A boiled up Ganeshwara shouted at Chandra with terrible anger saying that without pitying my fall with sympathy as a responsible Deva had behaved with a loose moralled laughter of a mean human being. 'You are arrogant, unsympathetic, ill behaved and irresponsible presuming you are charming and blemishless! Here is my curse to you that henceforth you would disappear from the sky and never show your face again.' Indeed the curse was too harsh as the entire order of the Universal System would be upset! A totally shaken up Chandra begged of Ganesha's forgiveness of his blatant stupidity and arrogance! Ganesha the hallmark of forgiveness smiled yet might not be able to retrieve the curse but with a proviso of lessened heavy impact of the curse that the Moon would gradually reduce in his appearance and that there would be only one day when no increase in the size of Moon yet on the subsequent days would keep increasing in size and finally glow on the fifteenth day in till full size. More over since Chandra laughed on the Chaturthi of Bhadrapada month and on that very day when special Ganesha Puja is observed by and all, sighting the Moon- much less observe devotion to him, would face difficuties ahead, but these problems would be solved if reminded of the story of Krishna and the 'Shyamantaka Mani'!--

Lord Krishna's second wife was Devi Satyabhama-of the Amsa of Bhu Devi- the daughter of Satrajit who secured a 'Shamantaka Mani' from Surya Deva which yielded eight maunds (38 kg per maund) of gold daily! Krishna found Prasena the brother of Satrajit wearing the jewel and desired to wear it but was declined. Later on he sported the 'Mani'when he was on a hunting spree and unfortunately got killed by a lion, which took fancy to the Mani and carried it. Jambavan the bear- and an active associate of Shri Rama of the earlier Yuga-killed the lion and took the 'Mani'to his cave. Shatrajit alleged that Krishna must have killed his brother to take away the Mani. Desirous of disproving the allegation, Krishna traced the deadbody of Prasena and following the footsteps of a lion and of a bear entered the cave of Jambavan and fought the latter for many days; finally Jambavan realized that Krishna was Rama himself, apologized to him and not only returned the Shamantika but also requested Krishna to accept his daughter Jambavati in wedding. Shatrajit was profusely apologetic for the baseless allegation that he made against Krishna and offered not only the Shamantaka Mani but also his daughter Satyabhama in wedding. The unnecessary blame that Krishna was subjected to was due to the fact that he did not worship Ganesha on Bhadrapada Shukla Paksha Chaturthi as it was strongly believed by the Public of all Varnas ought to observe the Vinayaka Vrata that day formally and reverentially!] (Skanda and Padma Purana)

### Chapters 62-69: Durvaaka puja mahatmya in the course of Ganesha Vrata puja

Narrating the puja mahatmya to Ganesha- especially on Bhadrapada Shukla Chaturthi Vrata, Lord Brahma explained to Veda Vyasa the special significance of Duraakura Puja. [Vedic religion and culture teaches a scientific and healthy way of life. Now, the 21 leaves used in Ganesh Pooja. These are: Maasi patram- Brihadi- Bilva-Dhuurvam-Dhuttaara-Badari phala-Apaamarga- Tulasi- Choota patra-Karaveera-Vishukraanta- Aamalaka-Maruvaka- Sindhuura-Jaati malli- Gandali- Shami- Bhingaraaja- Arjuna-Daadimi- and Devadaaru.

[In this connection, Ganesha Chaturthi Puja as per Skanda Purana as detailed in the earlier pages about the eka vimshati patra puja be refreshed: Atha ekavimshati or 21 Patra Puja: *Sumukhaaya namah Maachi patram pujayaami-Ganaadhipaaya namah Brihati patram pujayaami-Umaadhipaaya namah bilwa [bael* 

or stone apple tree leaf considered as highly sacred for Shiva-Uma- Ganesha-Skanda Kumara pujas]Gajaananaaya namah durvaa yugmam [ two pieced -grass]- Harasunave namah dutthura patram
pujayaami-Lambodaraaya namah badari patram pujayaami-Gahaagrajaaya namah apaamaaraga
patram pujayaami-Gaja karnaaya namah tulasi patram [exceptionally] pujayaami- Ekadantaaya namah
chuta patram[mangoe leaf] pujayaami-Vikataaya namah karaveera patram pujayaami- Bhinna dantaaya
namah Vishnukranta patram pujayaami- Vatave namah daadimi patram pujayaami-Sarveswaraaya
namah Devadaaru patram pujayaami-Phaala chandraaya namah Maruvaka patram pujayaamiHerambaaya namah sindhuvaara patram pujayaami-Shurpakarnaayana mah jaati patram pujayaamiSuraagrajaaya namah ganaki patram pujayaami-Ibhavaktraaya namah shami patram pujayaamiVinaayakaaya namah ashvattha patram pujayaami-Surasevitaaya namah Arjuna patram pujayaami/
Kapilaaya namah arka patram pujayaami-Ganeshwaraaya namah eka vimshati patraani pujayaami/

In Jaambanagari in Dakshina Bharaata, there was a kshatriya named Sulabha with Samudra as his wife. Sulabha was a gunavaan, daanavan, dhanavaan, balavaan, and dharmavaan. Samudra was very beautiful, attractive, pativrata and atithi sevika. Once a Brahmana named Madhusudana arrived at the doorstep of the kshatriya's doorstep asking for 'bhiksha'. As Samudra with Sulabha were deeply engaged in Purana pathana, a bhikshu like beggar with semi clad, unclean and dirty knocked the door and got disturbed badly. Sulabha's diversion was rather annoying having lost his cool chided the beggar, little realising that the latter was a Maha Pandita Brahmana. The latter with his mantra shakti gave a curse to Sulabha to turn him into a 'vrishabha' and instantly the house wife Samudra got fainted at the Pandita's curse. On recovery, she displayed a sarpini swarupa and gave a return curse to the Brahmana that he would become a donkey. The Brahmana out of further vengence further cursed that in her next birth she would be a chandaali suffering from poverty and misery, eating 'abhakshyas', and performing most detestable tasks.

The Chandaali, once grown up with the passage of time turned into an old, ugly, toothless and deplorable form. As once she was aimlessly wandering in a nearby the village lanes, she stumbled into the premises a Ganesha Temple with a large open space with many kinds of huge trees attracting colorful and chirrupping birds, plants of varied types and even an ashram of yogis and upaasakas some of whom immersed in swaadhyaaya, brahmana groups and so on. Domestic animals like donkeys and bulls too freely roaming in the open area. In side the premises, there was the Ganesha temple; as the chandaali peeped in rather surrupticiously, she observed that quite a few bhaktas were immersed performing Ganesha puja being observed in connection with Ganesha Chaturdhi Vrata of Bhadrapada Shukla Chaturthi. She was specially attentive to the 21 patra puja and so on. Instantly she collected 21 different leaves from the area and made a semblance of Ganesha Pratima with the pulp of earth and water sprinklings and performed the soulful puja by merely addressing the pratima as Ganesha-Vinayaka-Vighnesha- Deva deva and so on repetitivley with the 21- leaves and flowers on the banks of a stream nearby. With the creepers, grassroots, leaves and flowers as aasiduously collected, a successful and contented puja was thus performed with bathed cleanliness and devotional faith. Meanwhile a fighting bull and a donkey rushed in where the chandali was so far performing the puja. The pratima's trunk and even a portion of the head were broken and the prasad that the chandali prepared was partly eaten away. The chandaali got terribly angry and started beating the donkey and the bull and the resultant screamings and resounding noises created a turmoil and the bhaktas performing the Ganesha vrata and the groups of yogis and swaadhyaayis around the tremple locked up the gates outer premises. The resultant cries of helplessness of the chandaali and the animals were very obviuosly noted by Ganesha Himself even as Deva Vimana landed at the temple premises welcoming the three original swarupas of Samudra-Sulabha and Madhusudana who were invited by apsaras- gandharvas with nritya-gaana mangala- dhwanis. Indeed such is the durvaaka puja 'mahatmya' in the course of Ganesha Puja Vidhana!

[ Maha Narayana Upanishad describes the sigfnificance of 'durvaa yugma puja' in a general context as follows:

Significance of durva grass: Sahasra paramaa Devi shata mulaa shataankura, sarvah hastu me paapam durvaa duhswapna naashani/ (Far superior to thousands of purifying agencies the 'durva grass' with double fold with ten inches length and hundreds of roots and sprouts, embodying the divine energy of Devi Shakti, destroys various kinds of blemishes and impurities of all beneficient acts meant for all religious and worships to divinities, besides uprooting the effects of evil dreams. Proper religious acts prescribed in the Scriptures by dwijas especially 'shrotria brahmanas' are always habitual of utilising the 'durvara yugma' and the saying is: durvaa amritasambhutah shatamulaah shataankuraah, shatam me ghnanati paapaani shatamaayurvivardhati/

Kandaat kandaat parohanti parushah parushah pari, eva no durva pratanu shahasrena shatenacha/ Each stalk of durva grass in the folds as prescribed could multiply as hundreds and thousands in number and so would be the progeny of one's 'vamsha' by its spiritual use into hundreds and thousands.]

About the outstanding significance of Durvankura Puja, Ganesha himself informed his Ganaas that even Shesha Naaga and Brahma would be unaware, let alone Maharshis and Maha Munis. Once Brahmarshi Narada tried to explain to Indra about duurvankura puja mahima in reference to Ganesha by narrating an episode about Koudinya Maharshi, a strong upaasaka of Ganesha with his ashram in Dakshina Bharata. He set up a Ganesha Idol near a peaceful sarovara and practised the shadakshara mahamantra of Ganesha. His wife too performed puja to the pratima but was hardly satisfied; the Maharshi then asked her to perform the puja with 'durvara yugma' for quicker result of joy and revealed the episode of Yamadharma -raja in a Maha Sabha was witnessing a dance performance of Apsaras as witnessed by Deva- Maharshi-Gandharvaadis as Apsara Tilottama was dancing away and in the course her dupattha flew away and her breasts were exposed while Yama himself was tempted to embrace her and the semen fell on the ground as a 'vikruta mukha jwaalaa yuktapurusha' made such a shriek which resounded all over the earth. Maha Vishnu tried to face the 'vikruta jwaalaa mukha purusha' but realised that the latter was none else but Ganesha Himself who would not tolerate trangression of the precincts of Dharma, be it even Yama! Samasta Deva-Maharshi ganas led by Vishnu himself prayed to Ganesha and following the elaborate stuti-strotras the latter appeared on the horizon a mountain sized in baala swarupa with abhaya hasta. The iwaalaa swarupa The latter however transform into a normal form and Brahma- Vishnus intensified their prayers and entreated him to reduce his huge form to normalcy to enable with puja. Brahma created manasi kanyas viz. Buddhi and Siddhi; Vishnu offered ati komala padma and Ganesha turned into a Padma paani. Varuna Deva gifted cold water to reduce the impact on the Baala swarupa's jathgaraagni in tha Balaka's udara and hence the name as Lambodara.. Shiva gifted agni from his kantha while 80 thousand Maha Munis offered amrita tulya 21 durvaankuras to decorate Ganesha Mastaka with exceeding bhakti! As such outstanding gifts were offered by Tri Murtis, Devas and notably the durvaankuras by Muni Ganas with which the future generations of bhaktas could offer their venerations, Bala Swarupa Ganesha appeared in his normal form! Deva Ganas manifested Kaalaanila prashamana Mandira and as such Koudinya Maharshi asked his dharmapatni to perform Ganapati Puja with 21 durvaaraka yugmaas.

Maha Muni Koundinya further informed Indra about Loka sanchaari Narada's visit to Lord Ganesha Himself. The latter was delighted and after the preliminary formalities asked Narada about the latter's latest visit earlier to Bhuloka. Narada referred to Mithila and its King Janaka. The King was a renowned dharmatma, daana karta, vigjnaana vetta, and Maha Jnaani. Narada further exclaimed whether the glory and popularity was essentially to Ganesha Puja. Then Ganesha desired to test the King and approached him as a Kushthi (leper) and very old brahmana with unbearable body odour spitting blood all over and with halted body movement. Even urchins avoided the leper and crowds of the public ran away. He reached the rajadwaara and declared to the guards in shouting and highly agitated tone that he wished to

dine along with the King. Informed by the secret agents of the arrival of the old leper brahmana, King Janaka wondered that Lord Parameshwara Himself might have arrived at the gate and wondered that his glory on earth might be recorded in human history! As the decripit old kushthu brahmana strutted in tremblingly, the King instructed for food be served at once and disregard of all types of manners ate away the varied specialties of royal food decicacies without break. Then he remarked that the host King no doubt spread away delicacies no doubt and he thought that the hapless hungry leper would eat it like a raksha, but had the Majesty realised that the citizens of the Kingdom had felt that the 'dhaanya' was looted by the King through his middle men lanlords; this was why the King needed to be alerted! The King put down his head in shame as the beggar leper left in disgust and he went around the city and did the prachaara among the houses of the Kingdom that the King ignored the Public interest! The public kept quiet without reaction as after all they could not afford to do so. Then Ganesha he entered the home of poverty stricken 'dwija dampatis'/ brahmana couples named Trishira and Dampati.

The poor brahmana couple who merely squatted on earth in half nakedness as mosquitoes and worms were spread out. They were however immersed in Ganesha Puja with pushpas and patras. At the end of the puja, they offered the left over puja dravyas viz. the pushpa patras to eat even by self denial. Ganesha smiled and remarked that he had just returned from the dining table of the King but the panchabhakshya bhojana offered there could not give him as much of contentment as their offering with bhakti even to a miserable leper like him. He stated: Mithilaadhipateh keertim shrutvaaham khshudeto bhrusham, tripikaamaha samaayaato nasa triptim mamaakarot/ Karmanaa daabhikenaiva satvam parirakshate, mama truptikaram kinchidgrihe chedasti deeyataam/ Could the show of 'dambha'- self pride-in the 'mahaa daanaas', dharma karmnas like yaginas and charities of a King be weighed against genuine devotion! Therefore do offer me the left over patras after the puja. The Brahmana couple exclaimed as to how the ocean like royalty and his unimaginable food saturated with niceties be comparable with a drop of water! Then Ganesha appeared before them and said that nishkama karmas with truthful devotion ought to be commended most certainly and should secure moksha to the brahmana couple. Meanwhile, King Janaka who was put to shame by the leper brahmana, visited every household of the poor and resorted to 'annadaana' and gradually improved his name as an 'annadaata maha raaja'. He also visited the abode of the brahmana couple and equipped it with all facilities.

After performing the acid like testing of King Janaka, Ganesha returned to Indra and asked him to donate him that much gold as eqivalent to 21 durva yugmas. Indra asked his wife Shachi Devi who sent a messenger to Kubera. The latter exclaimed that Shachi had apparently fallen a prey to the vyaamoha for Indra and that was why she asked for a meagre weight of 21 durva yugmas but why not much and far more! Any way Kubera called for 21 durva yugmas and placed a small quantity of gold but the weighing balance did not even move. More gold was placed but to no movement; further gold was weighed too but no movement again and again; the entire gold stock of Kubera's treasury which was of mountain heaps too failed the balance. He ordered in desperation that the entire gold from all over Alkaapuri be placed on a huge balance against the paltry durva yugmas of 21 then again there a was no sucsess. Meanwhile Indra arrived on his Iraanata Elephant and brought all the gold in swarga loka yet again to no avail!Shiva, Vishnu, Kubera, Varuna, Indra, Agni, Marutaadi Devas along with Deva, Devarshi; Siddha, Vidyaadharas arrived at the Ashram of Maha Muni Koundaya.

## Chapters 70-73: Sankata Vigneshwara Puja Vidhaana, Mahatmya, Vrata Udyamana, Kaartaveerya janma

Recalling that King Kritaveera performed Ganesha Vrata on Bhadrapada Shukla Chaturthi with utmost devotion (ref chapter 59), he had a dream of his late father reminding of the King's yet unfulfilled wish to beget a son of fame. The King was then prompted by the celestial dignitaries in chain viz. Narada-Indra-Brahma and learnt of the methodology of observing Sankata Chatuthi Vrata which ought to result in the fulfillment of the desire. Then the Vrata vidhana is as follows:

Sankapam: Sankalpam kaarayet samyag dhyaatvaa Devam Gajaananam Ganesham pujayet bhaktyaa mantrairaagama sambhavaih/

Vigrah Pratishtha: *Pratishthyaat pujayet tam dhyaanan DevamGajaananam/* 

Dhyanam: Eka dantam maha kaayam tapta kaanchana sannibham, Lambodaram vishaalaaksham jvalit paavaka lochanam/ Aakhupushtha samaaroodham chaamarairveejitam ganaih, shesha yagjnopapeetam cha chintayet tam Gajaananam/ Iti Dhyaanam/

Aavaahana: Aagaccha Deva Devesha sankataanmaam nivaaraya, yaavad vratam samaapyet taavatut twam sannidhou bhava/ Sahasrasheershaityaavaahanam/

Aasanam: Ganaadheesha namastestu Sarvasiddhipradaayaka, aasanam grihyataam deva sankataan - maam nivaaraya/ Purusha evam aasanam/

Paadyam: *Umaaputra namastestu namaste Modakapriya, paadyam grihaana Devesha sankatam me nivaaraya/ Etaavaasanasya- Padyam/* 

Arghyam: Lambodara namastestu ratna yuktam phalaanvitam, arghyam grihaana Devesha sankatam me nivvarya/Tripaadurdhvaityaturarghyam/

Aachamaneeyam: Gangaadi sarvateertabhyah aahrutam toyamutamam, grihaanaachamaneeyaardham sankatamme nivaaraya/ Tatoviraadam aachamaneeyam/

Panchaamrita snaanam: Payidhadhi ghritam chaiva sharkaraa madhu samyutam, panchaamritam grihenadam sankatam me nivaaraya/

Snaanam: Narmadaa Chandra bhaagaa cha Ganaasangamajairjalaih snaapitosi mayaa bhaktyaa sankatam me nivaaraya/

Vastram: Ibhavaktra namastubhyam grihaana Parameshvara, vastra yugmam Ganaadhyaksha sankatamme nivaaraya/ Tasmadyagjnaat sarvahuta ruchet vastram/

Yagjnopaveetam: Vinaayaka namastubhyam Parashudhaarine, upaveetam grihaanedam sankatam me nivaaraya/

Gandham: Ibhavaktra namastubyam namo mushala vaahana,chandanam grihyataam deva nivaaraya/ Tam yagnamiti chananam/

Akshata: Ghritakumkumasamyutaas tandulaah sumanoharaah, akshataasterpitaam deva sankatam me nivaaraka/ Ityakshataam/

Pushpaani: Champakam mallikaa durvaa pushpajaatiranekashah, grihaana tvam Ganaadhyaksha sankatam me nivaaraya/ Yatpurushamitimiti pushpam/

Dhupam: Lambodara Mahakaaya Dhumraketo suvaasitam,dhupam grihaana Devesha samnatam me nivaaraya/Braahmanosyeti dhupam/

Deepam: Vighaandhakaara samhaara kaaraka Tridashaadhipa,deepam grihaana Devesha sankatam me nivaaraya/ Chandamaa manaso Chandrama manaso Jatha, Chaksho surya ajaayatha/Mukhad Indras cha Agnis cha, Praanad Vayuaaajayatha/From his mind was born the Chandrama (moon) and his eyes became the powerful Surya (sun). From his mouth were born Indra (lightning) and Agni (fire), and his breath/life gave rise to Vayu (air)

Naivedyam: *Modakaapuupa ladduuka paatasam sharkaraanvitam, pakkaannam saghritam Deva, naivedyam pratigrihyataam/ Naabhyaa aaseedati naivedyam/* 

Phalam: Naarikela phalam draakshaam rasaalam daadimam shubham, phalam grihaana Devesha sankataanme nivaaraya/Iti phalam/

Taamboolam: Kumkumailaalvaangaadi nagavalleedalaanicha, tamboolam grihyataam Deva sankatam me vinaashaya/ Yat purushenoti taamboolam/ Iti taamboolam/

Dakshina: Sarvapreetikaram Deva hiranyam sarva siddhitam, dakshinaartham grihaanedam sankatam me vinaashaya/ Saptaasyaasannithi dakshinaam/

Durvaka Puja: Om Ganaadhipaaya namah, Om Umaa putraaya namah, Om agha naashanaaya namah, Om Ekadantaaya namah, Om Ibhavakatraaya namah, Om Mushaka vaahanaaya namah, Om Vinaayakaaya namah, Om Isha putraaya namah, Om Sarvasiddhi pradaaya namah, Om Lambodaraaya namah, Om Vakta tundaaya namah, Om Modaka priyaaya namah, Om Vighnadhvamsa kartrenamah, OmVishva vandyaaya namah, Om Amareshaaya namah, Om Gaja karnaaya namah, Om Naaga yagnopaveerine namah, Om Bhaalachandraaya namah, Om Parushu dhaarine namah, Om Vighnaadhipataye namah, Om Vidyaa pradaaya namah/

Neerajanam: Karpuraanalaa samyuktamasheshad aghougha naashanaartham, neeraajanam grihaanesha sankataamnaam vimochaya/ Iti neeraajanam/

Stuti: Tvameva vishvam srujaseebhavaktraa tvameva vishvam paripaasi deva, tvameva vishvam harasekhilesha tvameva vishvaatmaka aavibhaasi/ Iti stutih/

Namaskaarah: Namaami Devam Gananaadhameesham Vighneshwaram vighna vinaasha daksham, bhaktaartiham bhakta vimoksha daksham vidyaa pradam vedavidhaanamahyam/ Itri namaskaaram/

Thus' Sankata Vighnesha Vrata Vihaana' in brief/

King Kritaveera was then provided a list of beneficiaries of outstanding personalties who were blessed by Ganesha who had successfully performed the Sankata Chaturthi Vrata with faith and devotion.

Skanda left home ingonito to perform tirtha yatras once then the terribly worried Devi Parvati performed the Sankata Ganesha Vrata and on its successful conclusion Skanda arrived home to Kailasha.

Maha Muni Agastya drank up the entire ocean to kill Kalakeya daitya;

[In the vicinity of Pushkar Tirtha were 'Ashramas' of illustrious Mararshis like Agastya. A highly vily and valiant Danava named Kalakeya was in battle with Devas for many years and he kept another mighty Danava called Vritrasura as a shield in between him and Devas. With folded hands, Devas approached Brahma to get rid of Vritrasura as well as Kalakeya. Brahma suggested that Vritrasura was invincible due

to unprecedented boons given by Parameswara and the only way out was to approach Sage Dadheechi and beg him for his back-bone which could materialize a mighty 'Vajrayudha' which alone could destroy Vritrasura. Devas prayed to Sage Dadheechi and keeping in view the holy task of killing Vritrasura, the Sage agreed to sacrifice his backbone and hence his life. As Vritasura was eliminated by the vajyaayudha and a demoralised Kalakeya and asuras too hid in the Ocean resorted to nightwarfare and nocturnal killings of lakhs of human beings in sleep and once again threatened the balance of power between the Davanvas and Devas. Indra and Devas approached Lord Vishnu who in turn and declared that the only Sage Agastya, who averted crises like when Nahusha occupied the chair of Indra on highly temporary basis and created embarrassment and havoc in the worlds and punished him subsequently and when Vindhyachala grew up in height compared with Meru Mountain obstructing the passage of Surya and subdued Vindhya by asking him to bend in reverence and not allowing to stand up till date, Agastya Muni, having faithfully performing Sankata Ganesha Chaturthi Vrata drank up the water of the Ocean exposing Kalakeya and followers. The dried up Ocean was replenished by Ganga; another version was the replenishmen was my the Maha Munis mutra and hence tha salty taste!]

Similarly, Nala Damayanti episode vide chapter 42 above amply demonstrated the Ganesha Puja phala.

The episode of Pradyumna the son of Lord Krishna and Rukmini Devi was popular in the context of Sankata Chaturthi Ganesha Vrata as Pradyumna was well advised by Rukmini to faithfully observe the vrata and discover the weeks old mysterious disappearance of of her grandson Aniruddha and the Vrata once concluded the boy was recovered! There after King Kritaveeya pathni gave birth to a boy but he was a vikalaanga without arms and legs as thought a mountain was brought down and a mouse emerged! Yet, the Ministers and even the well wishing public assured the royalties and hoped that in course of time the boy should become normal. The King then became weak and diseased and at the instance of the Ministers and public the boy was named as Kaartaveeyaarjuna. Some 12 years passed as Mahatma Dattatreya arrived and called on the Royalties. The latter stated that he had arrived to look up the son and said that since the Royal Couple did not observe the Sankata Chaturthi Vrata rather casually observed with quite a few lapses in the vrata vidhana partly due to the feelings of royalty. The Mahatma then tendered the Ekaakshara Ganesha Mantra and assured that in the long time course of the 'mantraacharama' with perseverance, Ganesha Himself would appeare before the King.

[Markandeya Purana describes the glory of Dattatreya: Avadhuta Dattatreya as an Avatar of distinction was considered as 'Dutta' or awarded by Trimurtis and born to Sage'Atreya' and Sati Anasuya, Dattatreya is a combined 'Avatar' (Incarnation)- He was a mystic Saint Par Excellence called 'Avadhuta' or of the eccentric type. The word 'Ava' denotes 'bad materials' and 'dhuta' denotes 'washed away' thus meaning that he washed away all bad things. Such a Person is stated to be of Pure consciousness in human form. Depicted as a Three headed Avatar, representing the Three Gods of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva; the Three 'Gunas' of Rajasik, Satvik and Tamasik nature; Three Stages of Concsiousness viz. Jaagrat-Swapna and Sushupti or awakenness, dreaming and dreamless Sleep; and the Thee Time Capsules of Past, Present and Future. Dattatreya is picturised as seated in meditation along with his Shakti, under an 'Udumbara' Tree of fulfillment of desires on a Rock- a Gyana Peetha, along with Four Dogs denoting the Four Vedas. He was considered as the Guru of 'Ashtanga Yoga' or the Eight-folded Yoga comprising Yama (Truthfulness and Morality), Niyama (Cleanliness and discipline), Asana (Right Posture), Pranayama (Control of Life Force), Pratyahara (Withdrawal of Senses from Wordly objects and desires), Dharana (Concentration), Dhyana (Meditation) and Samadhi (Alignment of Super Consciousness with Almighty). The main Principles of 'Dattatreya-following' are Self-Reailisation and of God, Inter-relation of God-Man and Creation, Overcoming Ego by Yoga and Renonuciation, and Gyana or Enlightenment and the inavitability of a Guru. Even from the childhood, Dattatreya was replete with 'Vairagya' (Renunciation), but his followers and admirers were several. He always desired to have privacy, introspection and aloofness and shunned adulation, popularity and proximity. That was why he avoided

company and preferred staying indoors. With a view to escape from the attention of Muni Kumars, he meditated on the banks of a Sarovaras' incognito in disguise for innumerable years. He was inside water practising 'Ahstanga Yoga' (Eight Limbed Yoga) and finally emerged with a façade of a being a drunkard, a debauch and a degraded person devoid of morals and social values. He displayed nudity with a youthful and coquettish woman, in obscene poses, while drinking and in a loose-mannered fashion. Despite these efforts of being corrupt, care-less and licentious, the followers of Dattatreya did not get deterred but made great efforts to get closer to him. As King Kartaveeryarjuna, the thousand armed tyrant who was a great devotee of Dattatreya was killed by Parasurama who resorted to destroy Kshatriya kings to avenge great Sage Jamadagni's death was avenged, the left over Ministers and Royal Family members sought to install the Prince Arjun as the King, but he refused as Kingship would lead to violence, lack of mental peace and death. There upon, Sage Garg advised the reluctant Prince to visit Sahyadri Mountain where Mahatma Dattatreya stayed as he was the incarnation of Bhagavan Vishnu and the illustrious son of Sage Atri and Sadhvi Anasuya an outstanding Maha Pativrata. Sage Garg told Prince Arjun that Indra was badly defeated in a battle with 'Daityas' (Demons) and consulted Deva Guru Brihaspati who replied that Indra should immediately worship and seek an audience with Dattatreya. Indra approached the latter but he said that he was not in a fit condition as the Avadhta was drunk in the amorous and unclean company of a woman. Being aware of the misleading statement of Dattatreya, Sage Garga replied that just as the powerful and auspicious Sun rays did not become impure by touching either a chandala or a Brahmana, the holy union of Lakshmi and Vishnu could never ever be construed as unclean and unholy! Indra returned again to Mahatma Dattatreya who smiled since He was only testing Indra's sincerity. He then asked to challenge the most leading Daityas to a Battle in His presence at His Place; the Daityas assembled (into a trap) and asked to show up in the presence of Maha Lakshmi. The Daityas were mesmerised by Devi Lakshmi's form and face, even forgetting that they were challenged to a fight, became extremely passionate. Dattatreya once again smiled and told Indra and Devas that for sure the Daityas would be defeated now as they kept Lakshmi on their head indicating that she would leave them all now. He explained: Nrunaam paadasthita Lakshminilayam samprapachhyati, sakthnoscha samsthita vastram ratnam naanaa-vidham vasuh/ Ratnam naana-vidham vasuh/ kalatrada krodhasthapatya

Manorathanpuurayati purushaanaam hrudisthithaa/ Lakshmirlakshmivataam sreshthaa kantastha kantha bhushanam, Abheeshta bandhu daaraischa tatha slesham pravaasibhih/Mrushtaannam Vaakya laavanya majnaamavitathaam tatha, Mukhastithaa kavitvam cha yacchhatyu-dadhi sambhavaa/ sirotata samtyajati tathonyam yaatichashrayam, seyam shirogata daityanaparisthitajaati saampratam/ (Devi Lakshmi when falls on the feet of human beings blesses them with happy homes, falls on either of the thighs bestows clothes and jewellery, on secret place blesses with life-partners, on the lap gives children, on the heart fulfills all the desires, on the neck gives ornaments on the necks, beloved distant relations and good company of women; if Lakshmi falls on the face of human beings she approves attraction and brightness of the visage, accomplishments and a literary outlook. But if Lakshmi falls on one's head, then she is ready to leave the person concerned.) Thus, Dattatreya advised Devas to take up arms and attack since his vision would further weaken the Demons; also, when the Demons have committed the sin of becoming highly passionate over another person's wife, their strength would get diluted. Devas attack over the Demons was readily successful and Indra regained his Throne in Swarga Loka. Sage Garg advised Prince Arjun, the son of Kartaveeryarjuna to pray to Dattatreya who gave the Prince considerable confidence and courage to face the institution of Kingship boldly].

Chaptter 73 continued: Subsequently, the Royal couple commenced the mantraacharana as 'niraahaaris' and 'vayu bhakshakas', seated firmly on an island like area of a sarovara with a grand and decorated Ganesha Pratima with indescrible nishtha. Maha Ganesha who tested their 'atula nischayaatmika nishtha' for 12 years gave His 'saakshaatkaara', a Prince of Grandeur viz. 'Kaarta - veeraarjuna' stood with 'sahasra hastas' about to release five hundred arrows with as many hands while thunders were heard alround and lightnings were flashed all over the skies. As the Bhu Chakravarti stood up, pancha bhutas realised his presence and Yama Raja became aware. Ganesha addressed Kaartaveeryaa

that he would not only gain 'khyaati' all over for his valour but also be a 'dharma paraayana' being the Universal Messenger of virtue and justice. Endowed with the blessings of Ganesha, the Co-Kings rushed in before Kaartaveerya to serve him as their 'Saamanata Rajas' and eventually the Chakravarti built a grand Ganesha Temple of 'Pravaala Ganapati' and inaugurated it with pomp and show attended by Samanta Rajas, Veda Panditas and public. In the course of time, the Temple attained enormous fame as the center for annadanaas, charities and 'virvad sabhas'.

#### Chapters 74-76: Kushthti with background of maha patakas relieved by 'GAJAANANA' Mantra

As the public in the Kaartaveeryarjuna Saamrajya was happy, peaceful and contented, in another context, there was a King Shurasena [ref earlier chapters 56-59] who despatched his men to ascertain whether any of his praja had performed the Sankata Ganesha Chaturthi Vrata. The Royal messengers brought the information that a Kushtha grasta low caste old woman in a far flung village had recently alighted a celestial vimana. On investigating the antecedents of the woman, the King realised that a in the Bangla Desha there was pretty kshatriya woman named Saarangadhara whose daughter named Sundara a well married woman with her husband named Chitra but was in the habit of 'para purusha saangatya' since she was a 'dashaatmaka nritya nayaki [ swaadheena pati-vaasakamajjya- virahotkanthika- khanditakalahaantarita- Vipralabdha-proshitapatika-and abhisaarika] attracted to as she was a nrittya. Her husband caught her red handed but she and killed him with a knife on the spot and carried on with her paramour. Her neighbours heard the noises and the King imprisoned for life and after her death was taken to narakas and after her retribution was reborn as a miserable kushthu woman of low class. As she grew old one she once slept off till the evening outside a Ganesha Temple, woke up with hunger and strutted into a nearby house where she witnessed the householders performing Sankata Ganesha Vrata till chandrodaya while the latter gave prashada to her at the door step. All through the Vrata she was taking the name of Ganesh with utmost 'shraddha' and the Lord despatched a pushpaka vimana. Inside that very Vimana, she noticed Lord Indra whose travel to Grutsamada ashram was interrupted at the sight of the kushthu woman earlier!

Having heard the chain events of Chapters 56-59 viz. Episodes of King Shurasena, Bhakta Bhrushundi, Krura Naamala and of King Kritaveera, King Shurasena himself got anxious to observe the Sankashta Ganesha Vrata himself. He approached Vashishta Maharshi who prescribed the 'vrataacharana' date as Maagha Krishma Chaturthi Tuesday and as Ganesha blessed the King and the pushpaka vimana appeared again when his bhaktajanas too were accommodated too but the problem of the kushthi woman got repeated once again. King Shurasena followers suggested as to how the paapa vimukti of the kushthu woman.

In Gouda desha was a jnaani tapasvi Brahmana Durva along with his wife Savitri and son Budha. Budha was brought up by the parents with several comforts and unusual pampering and became almost a loafer, liar, rebellious, vagabond youth and became a victim of a veshya and madira. The parents were alarmed with no food and water and made all posible efforts to bend his habits of a drunkard and debauchery. Eventually he killed the father following verbal exchange of words. In utter disgust, he also killed his mother too in over-drunkenness. The neigbours completed the dahana samskaaras and the year long obsequies too with highest regards for the 'unique dharmaacharana atmas'. Some time later, 'maha paapi' Budha visited the hermitage of Muni Kalaabhi and the laatter was in bath, he attacked his wife and forcibly dragged her to bed for 'balaatkaara' and she gave a 'shaap' to turn as a 'kushthi' in the next birth as he had turned out as a pitru ghaati , maatru ghaati, stree ghaati, 'madya paana karta' and 'gurutalpa -gaami' and finally 'ghora naraka prapti'. The Kusthi woman by the vimana as advised by the King's followers whispered in the kushtis ears the four lettered Mantra GAJAANANA and her recital of the

Mantra instantly washed off the entirety of 'doshas' still as remnants of past maha patakas for eligibility of the vision of Ganesha.

## Chapters 77-82: Jamadagni-Kaartaveerya- Kaama dhenu-Kartaveery kills the Muni- Parashuramaavatara

King Shurasena approached the ashram of Maha Muni Jamadagni the famed wife Renuka Devi in Shveta Dvipa's Sahyaadri Parvata and their illustrious son Parashurama who was in Naimisharanya for Vidyadhyayana. The Muni having extolled Sankata Charurthi Ganesha Vrata said his son Parashurama had already observed the Vrata as prescribed. Thereafter, Chakravarti Kartaveerya visited the Ashram of Jamadagni couple with his countless chaturanga bala akshouhinis who were taking refreshing bath and swim. The Muni couple invited the Chakravarti and the huge army and hosted a fabulous and highly rich and lavishing lunch with pancha bhakshya bhojana. Well before this lunch invitation the Muni Couple prostrated before the Kamadhenu in the ashram's backyard and entreated her to preserve their dignity to fulfill the invitation of lunch for the Royal Guest of honour and his mammoth number of the army. The shocked Chakravarti exclaimed as how such massive bhojana was possible to an equally huge army and requested the Muni and wife to explain out of his astonishing miracle. As they revealed the truth of mother Kamadhenu's grace and help, instantly the Chakravarti raised his tone and asserted that each and every asset in his command ought to be under his command. The Muni replied: Chakravarti! I am after all a Muni eking my life with what ever 'kandamula bhakshana' is possible in forests; how do you realise that this ashram could offer 'pancha bhaksshya paramaannas' to the Royalties and 'akshouihinis' of sena is possible otherwise. You are of Vishnu swarupa and accepted my 'aatithya' as that is a great honour and trilokas could proudly state that Chakravari Kaartaveerya was honoured by his visit along with his glorious sena which was of akshouhinis strong and the Muni served fabulous meal with pancha bhalshyas! But still the Chakravarti kept on insisting that Kamadhenu ought to be taken awayeven by force and left the ashram in a huff and disgust, even as the Muni kept on pleading and finally stated that the Chakravarti visited the ashram as a green parrot but finally turned as a crow!

The Chakravarti who left in despair redoubled with the design of stealing kamadhenu overnight. He despatched his army men who freed the celestial cow which made reverberating noises while she became breathless and after kicking its legs flew away to skies in pitch darkness. An aweful earth tremor followed and the army ran away in fright. Noticing the havoc that had happened, Kaataveerya appeared on the scene and so did the Ashramavasis and the Mahamuni couples. As the Chakravarti faced the Muni couple, Maha Saadhvi Renuka showerd curses on Kaartaveerya and having warned the interference of the former aimed at the Muni's chest and killed him with the proverbial ekavimshati / 21 arrows and left away. The disheartened pativrata could hardly do the 'smarana' of Parashurama who was in long tapasya, even as Kartaveerya shot five arrows on her chest and the 'ashramavaasis' ran away helterskelter!

Having dutifully initiated the 'dahana samskara' of the parents that followed with the assistance and blessings of Mahatma Dattatreya by 'smarana'. Soon after the 'antyeshti karma' (shava yatra- dahana-daaha yagjna-udaka karma-pinda daana-sapindeekarana etc), he called onMahatma Dattaatreya with his shaven head and face narrated the details of the happenings about the Chakravarti's visit to the ashram, the enjoyment of the hospitality of the unique parents with the active help of Kamadhenu of Tri Murthi swarupini, his departure on the polite refusal to partwith Kamadhenu, the nocturnal attack and of the army, the killing of Kamadhenu, his subsequent visit to the ashram to kill his unique parents and the

antima smarana of his mother and cremation formalities that followed. On the fifth day of the obsequies, Parashurama got terribly agitated witnessing the matru swarupa and cried much and as the days of the karma karyas, the mrita swarupas were distorted and dimmed in their physical parts. On the final day after karma kanda, the images of the parents were radiant and blissful which demolished his fears and got kindled the fires of revenge and retribution totally replacing with child like fears and helplessness!

Parashurama prostrated to the vision of Devi Renuka and asked her about the 'sarvayyapta keerti' of sahasra baahu chakravarti Kaartaveerya and his historic valour and courage and how indeed could he stand alone and face him with all the strong army behind him! Devi Renuka replied that if only Parshurama performed severe tapas to Maha Deva Shiva sincerely with devotion, he could ensure victory single handed against even the universal hero like Kartaveerya. Parashurama followed the mother's counsel and Maha Deva having been pleased with the prayers after his 'saakshaatkara' bestowed the upadesha of the shadakshara Ganesha Maha Mantra with which Parushurama recited one lakh timed with unrelenting bhakti followed by dashaamsha homas and Maha Ganesha stood before him even as Parashurama broke into his rapturous praises. Ganesha was pleased and handed over a Parashu and accorded a 'parashu' with which to destroy Kaartaveerya who nodoubt had been no doubt commenced his life within the precincts of dharmaacharana initially but transgressed the limits to the extent of murdering Muni dampatis and in that process killing the illutrious Go Mata the holiest cow in the Over Lords's Creation! Ganesha had implicitly instructed Parashurama to destroy the ambitious and arrogant human Kaartaveerya and also the equally cruel and sinful clan of Kshatrias too! As a sequel to parashu daana to Jamadagi-Renuka putra Parashu Rama armed with the Parashu gifted by Ganesha as prompted by Maha Deva himself shouted thunderously at Kaaraveerya and army and killed them all in no time and in the same sweep killed the Khatriyas and the clan is as many as 21 attacks recalling as many arrows of Kaartaveerva's bow broke his father's chest!

Brahmanda Purana is quoted as follows: The illustrious Incarnation of Bhagavan Vishnu as Bhargava Rama was the son of Jamadagni Muni and the grandson of the famed Bhrigu Maharshi and Devi Khyati. As instructed by his father and grandfather, Bhargava Rama performed stringent Tapasya in an Ashram in a deep jungle and visiting Maharshis like Bhrigu, Atri, Kratu, Jaabali, Mrikunda were impressed with the highconcentration of Bhargava Rama who was seeking to target Shiva in his penance. In course of time, Maha Deva was pleased with Bhargava Rama's devotion and appeared in disguise as a hunter who presented a repulsive person with dark complexion and red eyes with bow and arrows and crude sword and knives of varied sizes and sharpness. He introduced himself as Tosha Pravarsha the Master of The Forest and that no knew person should step in the Forest, much less raise a Hermitage. Even Indra would not be able to reside in this forest without my permission, he said. The hunter then asked Rama as to was he and for what purpose that he was staying in the Forest for such a long time. The former replied that he was performing Tapasya to Maha Deva Shambhu and that he would like please that Sarveshwara, Sarva Sharanya, Abhaya prada, Trinetra, Sarvaina, Tripuraantaka and Shankara. The Hunter heckled at Parashu Rama and said that he was wasting his time. In the course of conversation, Parashu Rama realised that the Hunter was not an ordinary human being; he knew a lot of Shiva as the so called hunter mumbled that Shiva did Brahmahatya and that he snipped Brahma's fifth head. The Hunter further told Parashu Rama that after all he was trying to absolve himself of the sin of his mother's killing! (Once Jamadagni left for Tapsaya and his wife Renuka Devi went to a river to fetch water and witnessed Prince of Mrittikavati Chitraratha was enjoying swims in the river with his women and momentarily Renuka felt envious of the women; Jamadagni noticed that his wife committed a sin and on returning back to his Ashram he asked his sons to kill her for the sin; none of his elder sons were prepared

but Prarashshu Rama sliced her neck and killed her at once; apparently, Jamadagni was able to revive Devi Renuka by his Mantra Shakti!). Bhargava Rama then realised that the hunter must be a Siddha! The Hunter further heckled Rama that his Tapasya was futile as he left his old father and killed his mother! Bhargava Rama then asked the hunter to identify himself: Was he Indra or Agni or Surya or Chandra or Vayu or Yama! You have come here to test my sincerity of Tapasya. Mahatma! Do reveal your self, thus prostrated Bhargava Rama and as soon as he stood up, Maha Deva revealed himself and a confused Rama in an ecstatic trance praised him as follows: Namaste Nilakanthaaya Nilalohita murtaye, Namastey Bhuta nathaya Bhuta yaasaaya tey namah/ Vkyataayyakta Swarupaaya Maha Devaaya, Shivaaya Bahurupaaya Trinetraaya Namo nanah/ Sharanam Bhaya Sharva twadbhaktasya Jagatpatey, Bhuyonanyaashrayaanaam tu twameya hi paraayanam/ Yanmaya- aprakrutam Deva duruktam vaapi Shankara, Ajaanataa twaam Bhagavanmama tatkhshantu- marhasi/ Ananyavedya Swarupasya Sadbhaavamiha kaha pumaan, Twaamrutey tawa Sarvesha Samyak Shakreti Veditum/ Tasmaatwam Sarvabhavena praseeda mama Shankara, Naanyaasti mey gatistubhyam Namo bhuyo namo namah/ (Nilakantha, Nilalohita, Bhutanaadha, Bhuta vaasa! You are Perceivable yet impossible to Perceive, Maha Deva, Shiya, Bahurupa, Trinetra, Sharva! Indeed I am your faithful devotee and you are my final refuge; I might have talked lightly about you thinking that you were a normal hunter! Do pardon my ignorance and indiscretion; who else is capable of recognising your own magnanimity excepting yourself! I have no recourse else than surrendering myself to you totally!) Shiva replied to Rama: 'My Child! I am pleased with your Tapasya. I really wish I could bestow every Shakti to you although You deserve it. Yet, you are still not yet ripe enough to withstand the Rudra Shakti and the ralated 'Astraas'; hence you have to perform further Tapasya, resort to Sarva Tirtha Darshanaas and approach me when you consider fit. Subsequently, Bhargava Rama was engaged in Tirtha Darshanaas, fastings, Tapas, Homas, Japas, Snaanaas and other sacred deeds and moved about a lot in Bhumandala. Later, as per the instructions of Maha Deva returned to his Ashram and settled for his Shiva Puja. Meantime, there was a terrible battle between Devas and Asuras and the latter approached Maha Deva for help. Shankara then asked Mahodara to reach Parashurama to bring from his Ashram in Himalayas and the latter was instruced by Shiva to destroy the Asuras. Bhargava was bestowed with a variety of powerful Astra-Shastras and devastated Asuras in large contingents even while the remnants ran away to Rasatala. The victorious Bhargava returned to his Ashram and installed an Idol of the 'Kiraata' who confronted him in the Forest and worhipped him with flowers, Chandana, Dhupa, Dipa and Naivedyas. As Shankara made an appearance along with Marudganas and Devas, Rama fell on his feet and extolled him as follows: Namastey Deva Devesha Namastey Parameshwara, Namastey Jagatonaatha Namastey Tripurantaka/Namastey Sakalaadhyaksha Namastey Bhakta Vatsala, Namastey Sarva Bhutesha Namastey Vrishabhadhwaja/ Namstey Sakalaadhisha Namastey Karunaakara, Namastey Sakavaabvaasa Namastey Nilalohita/ Namah Sarva devaa ri gana naashaaya Shuliney, Kapaaliney Namastubhyam Sarvalokaikapaaliney/ Smashanavisiney nityam Namah Kailasa vaashiney, Namostu Paashiney tubhyam Kaala kutavishaashaney/ Vibhavemara vandyaaya Prabhavey tey Swayambhuvey, Namokhilajagatkarma saakshibhutaataaya Shambhavey/ Namastripathagaaphena bhaasigaadrendumouliney, Maha bhogindra haaraaya Shiyaaya Paramatmaneyt/ Bhasmasancchaanna deheaaya namorkaaginindu chakshushey, Kapardiney namastubhyamandhakaasura mardiney/ Tripura dhwamsiney Daksha Yagna vidhwamsiney namah, Girijaakuchakaashmeeraviranjita mahorasey/ Maha Devaaya mahatey Namastey Krittivaasasey, Yogidhyeya swarupaaya Shivaayaachintya tejasey/ Swabhakta hridayaambhoja karnikaa madhyavartiney, Sakalaagama siddhanta saararupaaya tey namah/ Namo nikhila yogendra bodhaanaayaamritaatmaney, Shankaraakhila vyapta mahimney Paramatmaney/ Namah Shartvaaya Shaantaaya Brahmaney Vishwa rupiney, Adi madhyaata heenaaya Nityaayaavyakta murtayey/ Vyaktaavyakta swarupaaya sthula sukshmaa- tmaney namah, NamoVedaanta Vedyaaya Vishwa Vigjnaana rupiney/ Namahsuraasura shreni mouli pushpaarchita anghnaye, Shri Kanthaaya Jagaddhaatrey Loka Kartrye namo namah/Rajogunaataney tubhyam Vishwa srishti yidhaayiney,

Huranyagarbha rupaaya Haraaya Jagadaadiye/ Namo Vishwaatmaney Lokasthitivyaapaara kaariney, Satwa vijnaana rupaaya Paraaya Pratyagaatmaney/ Tamoguna Vikaaraatya Jagatsamhaara kaariney, Kalpaantey Rudrarupaaya Paraapaa videy namah/ Avikaaraaya Nityaaya namah Sadasadaatmaney, Tawa yattatrajaananti Yoginopi Sadaamalaah/ Twaamavigjnaaa durjeyam Samyad Brahmaadayopi hi, Samsaranti Bhayey nyunam na tatkarmaatmikaaschiram/ Yaayannapaiti charanou tayaa- inaana vighaatinah, Taavadbhhramati Samsaarey Panditochetanopivaa/ Sa yeva Dakshah sa krutisa Munih sa cha Painditaha, Bhavatascharanaambhojey yena Buddhih sthirikrita/ Su Sukshmatvena Gahanah Sadbhaayastetrayimayah, Vidushaamapi mudhena sa mayaa Jnaaya-tey kattham/ Ashabdagocha ratwena Mahimnastwa saampratam, Stotumupyanalamsamyaktwaa- maham jadadhiryatah/ Tasmaanagnaanto vaapi mayaa Bhakyaiva Samstutah, Preetascha Bhava Devecha naunutwam Bhaktavatsalah/ (Devadeva! Jagannaadha, Tripuraantaka, Sakala adhyaksha, Bhaktavatsala, Sarva Bhutesha, Vrishabhadhwaja, Sakalaadhisha, Kanukaakara, Skaklaavaasa, Sakala Devaarigana Naashaka, Shuli, Kapaali, Sarva Lokaika paala, Nitya Smashna Vaashi, Kailasavaasi, Pashayukta, Kalakuta- visha Vibhu, Amarvandya, Swayambhu, Shaktivaan, Sagatkarma Sakshi, Shambhu, Chandramouli, Sarpakantha haara, Shiya, Paramatma, Vibhuti sanchhanna deha, Suryachandraagninetra, Kapardi, Andhakaasura mardana, Tripura dhwamsi, Daksha Yagna Vinaashaka, Yogijana Dhyeya, Achintya Rupa, Bhakta hridayaambhoja karna madhya varti, Sakalaagama Siddhaanta Saara Rupa, Sakala Yogendra Prabhu, Shankara, Sakala Vyaapta Maha mahimna, Paramatma, Sharva, Shaanta, Jagadbrahma, Vishwarupa, Adimadhya rahita, Nitya, Avyakta, Vyaktaavyakta Swarupa, Sthula Sukshmaatma, Vedanta Vedya, Samasta Vishwa Vigjnaana Swarupa, Suraasurasangha Shreshtha puja paada, Shrikantha, Srishti karta, Lokakarta, Rajogunaatma, Hiranyagarbha, Paratpara, Pratyagatma, Tamoguna Vikaara, Jagatsamhaara, Kalpanta Rudra Rupa, Parapara-Vida, Avikara, Nitya, Sadas adaatma, Buddhi Prabodha, and Buddhindriya Vikara! My salutations to you as you are manifested in various Forms as Vasu-Rudra- Marud-Aditya- Saadhaya and Ashwini Kumaaras! You are Avikara, Aja, Nitya, Sukshma Rupa! You are not controllable and unimaginable even by Brahma! Those who continue in ignorance about you and your three major features of Srishti-Sthiti-Samhara are engaged in the cycle of births and deaths; as even great Scholars are unaware about you, what could I realise about you! Indeed your magnificence is far beyond description and voice; thus I am unable to commend you as my Stuti properly yat I know that you are affectionate to your Bhaktas!) Maha Deva was indeed gratified with this kind of touching prayers and bestowed to him all kinds of Astra-Shastra Vidyas, their usages and withdrawing capacities; a outstanding horse; a distinctive chariot, a peerless bow and bunch of arrows, a distinctive Kavacha or body shield, Beeja Mantras whose recitation could either annihilate the worlds or shower blessings to his followers and in short provided unique Siddhis to Bhargava Rama equipping him with invincible powers enabling him to punish the Evil wherever it existed and at the same time to protect the virtuous and the noble.

King Kaartaveeryarjuna and his invincibility: The most valiant and invincible King of the times Kaartaviryarjuna of Haihava Vamsha was contemporary to Bhargava Rama halted at the Ashsram of Jamadagna once along with his huge army which was tired and famished on an afternoon when Sun was hot and severe; the army did not have the strength to move forward and decided to rest. The King knew that the Ashram would not have the resource to feed the contingent but the Muni did provide excellent food to them. The King wondered as to how the Muni was able to do so and discovered that the Celestial Cow Kama -dhenu was in the Ashram and fulfilled all the requirements of the inmates of the Ashram. The King desired to take away the Kamadhenu to his kingdom but Jamadagni declined politely initially and refused flatly later. The King returned to his Kingdom but sent his Minister to manage to bring the Celestial Cow, if necessary by force. Finally force was used and both the Muni and the Kamadhenu resisted till the last but were tortured; Jamadagni Maharshi was almost killed and Kamadhenu flew to Heaven! The soldiers returned only with the calf which was a wasted exercise since without the mother the calf was no avail anyway. On return to the Ashram, Devi Renuka found her husband lying dead in a pool of blood and fainted and after recovering from the shock with some passage of time, she cried incessantly enquiring about Bhargava Rama. Rama returned from the forest to fetch wood and flowers for

homa and puja and was non-plussed about what all had happened. He witnessed his mother beating her chest again and again numbering twenty one times and took a vow that not only King Kartaveeryarjuna would be butchered but would also attack Kshatriyas as a race would be slaughtered twenty one times and wipe out traces of them all; for quite some time now Kshatriyas were harassing Brahmanas and Sages on many counts, mostly out of fear that Brahmanas were gaining upper hand due to their knowledge and out of fear of an inferiority complex. Renuka decided to jump into fire along with her dead husband in the execution of the old practice of 'Sati Sahagamana' but a Celestial Voice stopped her attempt as Jamadagni's life would by revived once again. Bhrigu Maharshi came to learn of his son's death and on seeing his body stated that if he the Maharshi spent all his life as per Vedas and performed all virtuous deeds including Yagnas and Tapas, then Jamadagni his son should rise up from his death bed and sprinkled sacred weater on the dying body and up came Jamadagni fully resuscitated due to the glory of Bhrigu. But Bhrigu after full recovery came to realise Bhargava Rama's vow to kill Kartaveeryarjuna and felt sad, not only because that revenge was never the principle of a Brahmana but killing a King by one of his own Subjects would tantamount to 'Rajavadha' which was as atrocious as killing one's own father! Moreso King Kartaveeryarjuna was not only an illustrious King of extraordinary prowess but also an outstanding devotee of Bhagavan Dattaratreya. This created a predicament to Bhargava Rama as there was a vow to kill the King and the Kshatriya Vamsha in twenty one attacks and on the other hand there was the considered advice tantamounting to an instruction of his father not to do so. Jamadagni then advised to pray to Brahma Deva and act according to his considered advice. Brahma too was not acceptable to either of the vows taken by Bhargav and affirmed that it would not be in order that if simply one King perpetrated a sin, there would be little justification to eradicate the entire Kshatriya Vamsha in twenty one battles! Yet, he blessed Rama to recite a Krishna Kavacha tittled 'Trailokya Vijaya' and visit Shiva Loka to seek his blessings in the matter. As Bhargava Rama with great difficulty managed an audience with Shiva, the latter too felt that it was not an easy task to terminate King Kartaviryarjuna who by his mere frown a great warrior like was disarmed and had to flee! However, the ever merciful Mahadeva suggested that he like Skanda Kumara should practise not only the Trailokya Vijaya Mantra but several other powerful Mantras like Nagasatra, Paashupata, Brahmastra, Narayanastra, Agney astra, Varanyastra, Gandharvatra, Garudastra, Jrumbhanaastra and many other Astraas; Rama then bowed with the greatest possible happiness and fulfillment to Shiva, Devi Parvati, Ganesha, Skanda and Nandi Deva and returned to his father Jamadagni, fully overjoyed.!]

[Nilamata Purana describes Parashurama, his annihilation of Kshatriyas and his connection with Kashmira as follows: In the context of describing Bhagavan Vishnu's images in Kashmira, King Gonanda wondered as to why the Vishnu's Idol installed by Bhrigu Maharshi in his Ashram on the Mountain named Gridhrakuta was transferred nearby his Ashram by Parashurama for veneration. The reason was not far to seek since Parashurama avenged the murder of his father Maharshi Bhrigu by the noted King Kartaveervarjuna of Haihaya Clan of Kshatriyas in particularas also of Kshatriyas in general for their oppression of their Subjects and more specifilally of Brahmanas in specific; Bhargava Rama attacked Kshtriyas in as many as twenty battles with their Kings and kinsmen and destroyed them on mass-scale to ensure that there were hardly any traces of the then much hated Kshatriyas left in Bharata Varsha. A few remnants of Kshatriyas fled away to the safe haven of Kashmira on the banks of Rivers Madhumati and Rajanirmala and even from those Places, Parashurama hunted and eradicated them like Rudra Deva himself with his own hands full of their blood. It was in that frame of ferocious and vengeful mind, that he transferred the Idol of Keshava from the hermitage of his father Bhrigu to his own 'Ashram'. Then he undertook a trip to Kurukshetra to convey his revenge against the acts of cruelty that Kshatriyas perpetrated to his father and forefathers. But he had a vision that his forefathers were so merciful that they desired him to desist from further acts of violence and atone his actions of vindictiveness and take up a Tirtha Yatra (pilgrimage) to Holy Kshetras: Tena paapena tey Putra shareeram kalmashamyadaa, Tasmaad vrajaswa Tirthaani Paananaartha mihaat -manah/ Bhavishyaasi yathaavan twam Shuddha dehascha putrakah, Naapaishyati hi tey taayat karebhyoh rudhiram drudham/ Yadaa karau yirudharau Putra tawa Bhavishyatah, Tadaa twam nirmaleebhutah tapah kuru yathaa sukham/ (Since your physique

has absorbed several sins in the killings, you need to undertake Tirtha Yatraas as your hands are still sullied with blood; there after, you should perform penance with clean heart and soul). Rama then left for several Sacred Places, reached Gridhrakuta in Kashmira, bathed at the confluence of Rivers Saraswai and Sudha, did 'Tapasya' at Partheswara, moved on to the River Punyoda originating from Brahmasara which was renamed as Ramahrada after him, proceeded further to the Residence of Ananta Deva a Chief of Nagas, installed an Idol of Saranga and rested there at the 'Ashrama swami'after a hectic activity of pilgrimages. He then had a luminous vision of Madhusudana which was as follows: Tushaarachaya sankaasam Swetaambhara vibhushitam, Mukutenaarka varneyna kundalaschaiva viraajitam/ Chaturbhujam Chaturbaahum Chaturvedaashrayaanvitam, Shariradhaaribhih Shaastreyrudeerita jayaviswanam/ Tam drushtwaa pranato Raajasam -tushtaava Madhusudanam/(The vision of Madhusudana resembled a mass of frost, robed in white, embellished with a Sun-coloured 'kireeta' (coronet), ear rings of rare brightness, four faced, four armed and as an embodiment of four Vedas carrying powerful weaponssmeared with the blood of enemies along with joyful shouts of victory).On viewing the Unique Revelation, Parashurama extolled Madhusudana as follows: Namastey Deva Devesha pranataarti vinaashana, Chaturmurti Mahamurti Chaturveda Mahaabhuja/ Govinda Pundarikaaksha Varaahaadya Namostutey, Damshtrogrodbhuta Bhubhaaga Samchurnita shilocchaya/ Twam Sadaiva Varaahosi yenedam dhyaaryatey Jagat, Karajaagravinirbhinna Hiranyakash purasey/ Namastubhyam Nrisimhaaya Jwaalaa maalaa kulatmaney, Trivikramaaya Devaaya Namastey Vijigeeshavey/ Somabhushita vaktraaya Namoswashirasey Prabho, Twam Deva Sarva Devaanaamparaagatih/ Twam Deva Sarvadevaanaam Duhkhitaanaam paraa gatih, Indriaayaaneendrayarthaascha Maha bhutaani yaanicha/ Mano Budhistathaivaatmaa Avyaktam Purushodbhavam, Satvam Rajastamaschaiva Brahma Vishnu Maheswarah/ Twayaa Sarvamidam Vyaaptam Trailokyam sacaraacharam, Twayaa vinaa na Pashyaami kinchideva Jagattraey/ Twattesjasaa Maya Deva nihataah Kshatriyaah Bhuvih, Koti samkhyascha nihataah Saimhikhya Mahabalaah/ Sookshmaatisukshmascha Devesha Mahadbhdyopi mahattarah, Ksheerodakanyaadayita Kamarupa Namostutey/ Kaamakaamada Kaamaaripujitaagha vinaashana, Chaturbhih satatam vaktrey Padmajanmaabhi samstuta/ Kaamoham tey karishyaami Jagatkaarana kaarana, Stuta Trailokya naathesha Sarvathaiva Namostutey/ Namah Paarsveshu tey Deva Namastey Sarvatah Prabho, Parvateshu Samudreshu Lokeshu Gaganey tathaa/ Namastestu Namastestu Sarvatraiva Namostutey, Yevam Stutastu Ramena Ramamaah Janardanah/ Rama Rama Mahabaaho Varam Varaya Suvrata, Veeryena tapasaa Deva Stotrenaanena Suvrata/Paritushtosmi tey Vatsa yathaa naanyasya kasyachit/(Namaste Deva! You are the demolisher of the miseries of those who seek your protection; you are the Four Faced, the Unique Faced, the Embodiment of Four Vedas and the Mighty Armed; you are Govinda, Pundarikaaksha, and Varaha Deva who lifted the entire Bhumi by the sheer grit of your jaws; you are the most fierce Nrisimha Deva who assumed a matchless Man-Lion Form and tore off with your iron nails the most muscular chest of the Hiranyakashipu Daitya who tormented the Three Lokas as the repulsive symbol of cruelty and violence; you are the Vamana Deva who as a Brahmana boy sought an 'insignificant' charity of mere three feet from the famed King Bali and expanded your Physique to occupy the whole Universe comprising the Upper Lokas, Earth and the Underworlds; the Hagreeva Deva with Soma adorned in his mouth who killed Madhu Kaitabha Demons and restored Vedas stolen by them from Brahma; you constitute the corporeal limbs and their end-uses; the Exterior senses; Inner faculties and the heart and soul of the all the Beings in Creation; the Pancha Bhutas of Earth, Water, Radiance, Wind and the Sky; the Satwa-Raja and Tamas Gunas or the basic features of the Beings; the all-pervading, the all knowing, and the all-mighty; and the minuscule-yet the massive; and indeed the most Incomprehensible and the Form less couched in Maya or the huge Illusion.Deva Deva! Your are the Lakshmi Swarupa, Kama Swarupa; the Root, ramification and the exterminator of Kama / Desire; the Basis of the Bases; the Mountains, Oceans, Lokas, and the Sky and the Vara/boon and the Varaya the Boon Provider). It was on these lines that Parasurama extolled and as Janardana was pleased with the gallantry, atonement and the commendation of his Admirer, the latter's request to shift Vishnu's Idol installed by his father Sage Bhrigu at Parasurama's own 'Ashram' from the top of Gridhrakuta Mountain.]

## <u>Chapter 83-87:Mayura Ganesha-Tarakasura-Kamadeva-Shiva weds Parvati- Varada Chatirthi vrata-</u> Kumara kills Tarakasura

After avenging his parents demise by killing Jagadveera Kartaveeryaarguna and annaihilating Kshatriyas in a series of twenty one attacks symbolising the number of arrows with which the Chakravati killed his father single handed, backed up by his unique Ganesha Puja, Parashurama being one of Maha Vishnu's 'dasaavataaras' resorted to Tirtha Yatras of Bharat desha. In the course of the Yatras, he visited Mayureshvara Ganesha Temple. Recalling that Maha Ganesha gave his 'saakshaatkaara' to him, and realised that the temple was reminiscent of Shiva Parvati wedding and recalled the entire flash back of Daksha Yajna dhvamsa- Devi Sati's yagjnaahuti-Shiva tandava fury-Shakti peethas- Shiva's extreme tapsya-Devi Parvati's bhakti and service the Shiva the tapasvi-Indra Deva's secret plan to the wedding of Shiva Parvati and the eventual Kumara sambhava- - Brahma's boon to Tarakasura that only Skanda could kill Tarakasura- Manmatha's flowery and amorous arrows disturbing Shiva tapasya - Trinetra Prayoga burning Manmadha shareera yet surviving by Maya Shakti- eventual birth of Kumara and Trakasura vadha for loka kalyana by Mayura Vahana Skanda Kumara!

As Loka Kantaka Tarakasura's arrival on the scene of Prithvi pursuant to Brahma's boon of invincibility, the Asura resorted to destroying 'varnaashrama vyavastha', 'veda brahmana kaaraagaara', 'stree maana bhangas', harrassing tapasvis and Devadi Celestials, and declared: 'I am Ishvara, Sarva Devata-Brahmana-Kula Devata'! Maha Munis, Indraadi Devas and the Celstial Beings approached Lord Vishnu who was in Yoga Nidra and approached Parama Shiva who left kailasa and was in severe tapasya in deep mountain caves 'in cognito'. Then there was an 'aakasha vaani' announcement that only Shiva Putra Skanda could destroy Tarakasura, and Indraadi Devas broke into rapturous dances. They made a desperate appeal to Maha Maya Shakti, Loka Rakshaakari, Paratparakala: then a thunderous voice was heard that they should initiate prayers to Devi Parvati of my 'amsha' had already appeared as Himaputri to reach Parama Shiva for performing nitya seva of Shiva - as a bhilini or mountain tribe woman to serve the laater for fetching puja dravyas like flowers, fruits etc in his tapasya and the eventual life patner as consequent to 'Daksha Yagjina Dvamsha' and vairaagya of Maha Deva. As Maha Maya thus assured, Indra and Devottamas convened a 'Meet' and the resolution was that Manmadha and Devi Rati be at once summoned to cooperate in the Maha Deva Karya of Shiva- Parvati parinaya! Kaama Deva with the request to Agni Deva to be involved in the divine task of Tarakasura Vadha so that even the 'achanchala manas' of Parama Shiva in deep tapsya might be diluted.

Kama Deva having reached the picturesque spot where Lord Shiva was in deep tapasya, he found the atmosphere was clean with gorgeous and green surroundings of huge trees, splendid and aromatic flowers, transparent flows of water, and in all a highly romantic yet ideal background for concentration. Manmadha hid himself in the bushes but the Lord realised that there appeared to be slight disturbance of plant trees and winds. From his celestial vision, he discovered Manmadha with pointed flowery arrows in both of his hands! Shiva twisted his eye brows even as the phala chandra on his head was alerted and raised his tone saying: who had created this sinful creature facing death! Kamadeva trembled in fear and prayed to Indraadi Devas in waste and looked up Maha Deva seeking pardon but the latter opened up His third eye above His eyebrows opened up with a single flap and Manmadha was done to ashes instantly. Indraadi devaas were frightened in shudder and approached Maha Deva in repeated prostrations seeking his pardon as they did so only for Loka Kalyaana! Meanwhile Bhilini appeared, eased the tensions as thus displayed, cooled down Shiva gradually, pardoned the prostrating Indraadis in shivers and lightened the total atmosphere with light humour of the Bhilini, as Parama Shiva too smiled and invited the 'bhilini' and flew off by the Nandeeswara to Kailasa!

Ever during the honey moon period for several years, Devi Parvati continued her feelings of guilt in her inner conscience recalling the desperate and frustrated beggings of Indraadi Devas. In a distressed and

frantic Brihaspati the Acharya of Indradi Devas appeared in her vision while samasta devaganas headed by Indra was performing Maya Yagina for the destruction of Tarakasura. As intructed by Brihaspati and Indra, Agni Deva approached Devi Parvati and Shiva as a mendicant at their doorstep for begging; the startled Parama Shiva even advising Parvati to don her vastras at once, dropped his semen. Agni was taken aback as even a drop of the semen could burn off Prithvi and the entire samsaara could be turned into ashes. By this instant reaction, Agni swallowed the drops and spitted off the drops in Holy Ganga and purified himself and left away. Agni could never bring in sukha-shantis to the Lokas theresince! That was time when Surya entered the Tula Raasi in Shouramaana Kartika Month, when Agni Deva sought for Deha Shuddhi in the 'ushah kaala' snaana in pavitra Ganga and spitted off and got self purification, Agni could never bring in sukhs shantis to Lokas eversince. As Agni exited, Six Krittika Devis too were also seeking shuddhi snaanas and inadvertanly swallowed drops of Parama Shiva's veerya but spitted off too on the 'sarkhandas' / grass roots on the river bank. Sage Narada seeking Shivadarshana noticed this scene in his microscopic vision and instatnly carried the 'sarkhandas' or the grass roots on the banks of Ganga to Devi Parvati and eventually a Six headed Shanmukha was born to Devi Parvati as caused by the Six Kritthika Devis! Narada exclaimed as follows: Aagacchantaa maya drishto Gauri! Maarge tavaatmajah, Shanmukho dwaadashaa bhujo Suryakoti samaprabhah/ Gangaateere nipatisti tasyakste Shanmukho nu kim,koti kandarpashobhaadyo garjitakhobhitaakhilah/ Katham nishthutaakaari Gauri sundara baalake/ Devi Parvati! On my way to Kailasa, I noticed your magnificent and unparalleled son in an embroy form as with six faces and twelve hands with 'koti Surya samaana kanti' on the banks of holy Ganga. By his birth, samasta lokas are reverberated with shrieks of joy and relief!

On seeing the glorious countenance of Kumara, Devi Parvati was elated with 'tanmayata' as her breasts automatically sprang up with streams of milk and embraced and showered kisses on his cheeks, especially with his touch with mouth to start sucking. She then ruminated as where was Agni- Ganga-Krittikas-and Narada, leave alone Parama Shiva! As the boy grew up there was the namakarana ceremony for which Brahma Deva and Deva Guru Brihaspati arrived. The experts decided that since the Kumara was born in the month of Kartika, the boy's first name should be Kartikeya besides very many. However, since Six Krittikas were on the scene of his birth the boy be named as Shanmatura and Shanmukha or Shadaanana... Since the Baalaka was destined to demolish Tarakasura, he be named as Tarakajit. Since he was born from Shiva veerya, he also be named as Skanda Deva. As the boy was to eventually be the Chief of Deva Sena, he be named as Senapati. In the celebrations of naama karana festival of Kumara, Devas and Muni gana were in raptures, Apsaras danced away, Narada Tumburas joined the musical reverbarations of Gandharvas, and the entirety of three crore Devatas headed by Indra and overseen by Trimurtis blessed Kartikeya heartily. On this happy occasion, Indra and Devas who were already in attendance sought a special darshan of Karetikeya, made a special puja to him and as the latter was pleased, honoured Kartikeya to be the Head of Devasena with the title of Senapati. They then politely broached the topic of Lokakantaka Tarakasura vadha. As years rolled by with Kartikeya's vidya prapti and yaginopayeeta dharana, Kartikeya became mentally and physically mighty far behind his childhood experiences like his enamour to reach and kiss Chandra Deva and Brahma made a timely warning politely! But now, Kumara had since accomplished buddhi of Brihaspati and shakti far beyond of Indra. Eventually he met his parents Shiva and Devi Parvati, praised Shiva on his famed victories like against Tripurasura! Indeed, You are Sarvagina, Sarvaantaryaami and Savavyaapi! Do very mercifully instruct me such a unique vrata pujavidhana which is 'sarva siddhi daayaka, putra sampadvrisddhi daayaka, sarva paapa naashaka and dharmaartha kaama daayaka and most importantly sarva shatru vijaya shubha daayaka'!

Parama Shiva then taught the **Varada Chaturthi Vrata Vidhana** to be observed on <u>Shravana Shukla Charuthi</u>. After performing on that morning following nitya naimittika dharma krityaas, construct a mandapa decorated with 'ikshu-chaamara-pushpas', install a 'vastra yugmaavita kalasha' with 'ashtadala kamala', get the 'purohita yukta puja dravya proksshana', and initiate 'shodashopachaaraas' addressing Maha Ganesha along with 'naivedya' of bhakshya- bhojya-choshya-lehya-paaneeyas padardhaas of 21 varieties, followed by 21 numbered durvaara puja, and aarati by 21 mangalya strees, followed by 21

brahmana bhojana[ from the view point of economic limitations to as many in odd numbers atleast one] accompanied by dakshina -vastra- phala daanaas and swasti vaakya- pradakshina prostrations to Maha Ganesha. Punah puja and Pratima visarjana in saced water flows would mark the swasti of the vrata. This procedure be observed as a carry forward to Bhadrapada Shukla Chaturthi.

As Shiva taught the Vrata vidhana, Skanda performed the vrata and further recited repeatedly for long, the 'Ganesha ashtaakshara mantra' as taught by Maha Vishnu, apart from the 'shadaakshara Ganesha maha mantra' taught by Shiva. Maha Ganesha in his pratyaksha swarupa, embraced Skanda and bestowed him the title of Mayura dhwaja and assured Kartikeya that the Lokakantaka Tarakasura oaught to be killed by the 'Khyati Mayura dhwaja Kartikeya' with ease and disappeared. Thus fully equipped with 'Gansha's blessings and appropriate armoury challenged the all powerful Tarakasura hither to invincible. Deva sena now headed by Skanda destroyed the asura in a quick offensive almost instantly. The offenssive led by Kartikeya was no match to the Lokakantaka Tarakasura! Veda Vyasa then wondered and enquired of Brahma Deva as to where precisely Skanda left away after the universal celebrations of victory subsided, Brahma replied that he left by his Mayura Vaahana to Ghrishneshwar one of the famed dwadasha Shiva Lingas [ Nandiswara in Shiva Purana described the Most Celebrated Twelve Jyotirlingas of Maha Deva as follows: Kedarnath in Himalayas, Bhima Sankar in Dakinya, Viswesvara in Varanasi, Triambaka on the banks of River Gautami, Somnatha in Saurashtra, Mallikarjuna in Sri Sailam, Maha Kala in Ujjain, Amareswara at Omkara, Vaidyanatha in Chitha Bhumi, Nageshwara at Daruka, Rameswara at Setu Bandhana, and Ghrishneswara.] Thereafter as Lord Brahma informed Veda Vyasa, Skanda Deva after his 'anushthaana', performed the installation of Lakshmi Vinayaka, entered the Ela kingdom and blessed the King and its citizens.

[ There are three versions of Skanda Deva janana in <u>Padma Purana, Skanda Purana and Matsya Puranas; especially in regard to Skanda Kumara Janma</u>

Padma Purana first; It traces back the birth of Takakasura and his destruction by Lord Kumara Swami as follows: Sage Kashyap blessed his wife Diti to give birth to a great warrior 'Vajranga' who like a diamond was unbreakable and indestructible. Diti desired to avenge the killing of several Asuras in the past by Indra and asked Vajranga to defeat and bring down Indra imprisoned in person; on doing so, Diti put Indra to shame and released him saying that his subduing was worse than his death. Meanwhile, Vajranga did severe Tapasya to Brahma and the latter created Varangi as the wife of Vajranga. Brahma gave a boon to the pair that a Maha Shaktivaan called Tarakasura would be born after being retained for thousand years in confinement. There were harsh earthquakes and sea-uprisings when the Asura was born and the parents were filled with wild joy and excitement. As the boy attained youth, he turned out to be a frightening demon and developed friendship with other Asuras like Kujambha and Mahisha. Eventually, he reached a Pariyatra Mountain to perform Tapasya without food for hundred years, for another hundred years by consuming only dried leaves and for additional years by drinking water only. Brahma was pleased and gave a boon of invincibility except for a child of seven days of age, to be born of Shiva. After securing the boon from Brahma, Tarakasura raised a huge army of ten crore well-versed and trained soldiers along with the armies of renowned Asuras like Mahisha, Kunjara, Megha, Kaalanemi, Nimi, Manthana, Jambhaka and Sumbha. As Tarakaura declared war with Indra and Devas, Indra commissioned Vayu Deva as an emissary as per the advice of Deva Guru Brishaspati, but the mission failed and so did the proverbial Four ways of 'Rajaniti' or the Art of Politics viz. Sama (War-Counselling), Daana (luring by gifts), Bheda or by using the dividing politics of the opponents and Associates and finlally 'danda' or actual war. Yamaraja was the Senapati, the Commander sitting over his Vahana Buffalo; Indra sat on his Durjayta ratha (chariot) with Malini as his driver; and all other Devas like Agni, Vayu, Varuna, Kubera, Chandra and Aditya, besides Ashvini Kumars, Marudganas, Sandhyaganas, Yakshas, Gandharvas etc. But

Tarakasura was too powerful to Devas whose soldiers were badly bruised and ran without direction. Indra and Devas approached Brahma and he replied that none excepting a seven day son of Shiva and Devi Parvati, called 'Kartikeya' could kill Tarakasura and none else in the world. At this juncture, Indra prayed to Sage Narada to advise further plan in the context of the birth of Kartikeya. The Sage designed a routemap of action, first to approach Himavanta and his wife Mena as also Parvati to prepare them to wed Mahadeva; to secure access to Mahadeva for his consent to let Parvati assist the former in his daily Pujas and approach Kama Deva and Rati Devi to stealthly despatch 'Pushpa Baanas' or Amorous Arrows of Love in favour of Parvati while she was in service to Mahadeva. But the Plan did not quite succeed as Mahadeva's eyes searched for Kama Deva and burnt him off with his third eye. As Devi Rati prayed to Maha Deva, the latter assured that Kama Deva would soon be created again as 'Ananga' or devoid of Physique. As Devi Parvati was shaken by the news of Kama Deva's turning into ashes, she decided to take to Tapasya; her father Himavan addressed the daughter to say: 'U' 'Ma' meaning 'Don't do so'! But still she left to such a Place to perform rigorous Tapasya where even Devas did not desire to visit and was so inaccessible at the heights of Himalayas. As the Plan as scripted by Narada Muni was not yet in place, Indra prayed to 'Sapta Rishis' to intervene. The Rishis tested her unambiguous decision to perform the severe Tapasya by arguing with her that she was bent on marrying Maha Deva and none else; in fact she became angry with the Rishis that she reacted sharply against them and even condemned them to suggest any other name as her spouse excepting Shiva Deva. Sapta Rishis approached Maha Deva, underlined Parvati's strong mental make up to wed only Maha Deva and emphasised the angle of 'Loka Kalyan' or the Universal Cause of destroying Tarakasura which could be accomplished only through the wedding with Parvati. Taking the consent of Maha Deva, Saptarishis negotiated the transaction of the holy wedding of Shiva and Parvati successfully and smoothly. At the appointed Muhurtha, the Greatest, the Most Auspicious and Most Unique Wedding of Shiva Parvati was celebrated in which Vishnu and Brahma along with Lakshmi and Vani took active part and so did Indra, Devas, Dikpalakas, the Planets along with their spouses; Yakshas, Danavas, Kimpurushas, Pramathaganas and Piscachas were all thrilled; Gandharvas sang tuneful songs, Apsaras danced away to their glories and Maharshis and Muniganas chanted Vedas and Hymns. Such an event was neither commemorated in the Yugas that preceded nor followed. As Devi Parvati and Shiva were enjoying their post-wedding life in beautiful gardens and Sarovars, one fine morning Parvati desired to take her bath and sought to clean up her body dirt after applying scented oils and made an idol of a handsome boy whose head resembled that of an elephant. Shiva played with that idol of a boy for a while and threw it in Ganga who was Parvati's companion. Ganga brought the idol back from the flow and interestingly the boy became real with life and Devas called him as Gajanana and worshipped him; Brahma gave Gajanana the authority to head Ganas and was called as Ganapati or Ganadhyaksha eversince. Equally fascinating was the incident of Devi Parvati having planted an Ashoka Tree out of sport with Shiva. In a light moment, Indra, Brihaspati, Devas and Maharshis asked Parvati as to what kind of fruit would emerge from the tree and Parvati was extremely delighted with the query. She replied that if any thoughtful human being where there was inadequate water supply at a Place would dig up a Well, then that person would attain Swarga for as many years as the drops of that Well! She further said that if ten such wells were dug up, the 'Punya' would be ten times more; if ten bigger water bodies were dug up the 'Punya' would be tenfolded more; if ten Sarovars were dug up the resultant fruits would be tenfold more; ten Sarovars would equal the donation of a Kanya (virgin) and such ten donations would equalise one Vriksha (Tree)! Brihaspati, Devas and Rishis were stunned with the reply that Parvati gave and returned to their respective places thinking deep about what Devi Parvati stated! For a number of years, Shiva and Parvati were in a joyful mood after their marriage and there was little news for Indras and Devas about the possible arrival of Kartikeya who alone could terminate Tatakasura. Agni Deva took the form of a parrot and entered the Palace of Shiva and Parvati who found that Parvati was enjoying a bath in a Sarovar playing with lotus flowers and Lord Shiva was resting in his bed. She found six Krittikas in the Sarovar and told them that she was desirous of seeing the water drops inside the lotus bulbs; the Kritthikas replied in fun that they would show the water drops

provided they allow them also to share the joy of a child in her 'garbha'! The Krittikas further said that they should allow them too to own the child as their own as much as that of Devi Parvati and she agreed to the mutual deal; Krittikas showed the water drops inside the lotus bulb and drank them. As soon as she drank the water drops, there emerged a handsome and healthy boy from Devi Parvati's right abdomen with Sun-like luster and a powerful Physique wearing a 'Shula' and 'Ankush' in both of his hands. He was called 'Kumar' as many entities claimed parentage maily of course by Lord Shiva and Devi Parvati but also the Krittikas and even Agni. The boy had six brilliant faces and was popularly called by several names viz. Vishakha, Shanmukha, Skanda, Shadaanana and Kartikeya. Brahma, Vishnu, Indra and various Devas gifted the Child several valuable souvenirs like Chandan, Malas, Dhup, Toys, Umbrellas, and Bhushans and instantly appointed him as the Senapati or the Commander-in-Chief of Devas. Lord Vishnu presented several 'Ayudhas' or Arms; Kubera provided ten lakh of Yaksha Sena; Agni gave his Tej (Radiance) and Vayu provided speed as his 'Vahan' (Chariot). Kumar desired to ascertain as to what he could do for them and in one voice they wanted the demon Tarakasura to be killed and Kumar assured saying: So be it! Inspired by what Skanda Deva guaranteed, Indra sent an emissary to Tarakasura saying that soon Indra and Devas would arrive to destroy the demon and his followers. Danavas wondered that an additional Shakti must have joined the Deva Sena as otherwise they would not dare send a messenger alerting them to come prapared for a battle! Tarakasura remembered Brahma's boon to him with the qualification of the risk of his death in the hands of a boy! Even Kalanemi and other Daityas had creepy feelings about the might of the stranger who joined the Deva Sena. As Tarakasura saw finally saw the socalled additional Shakti, he laughed away and made fun of the baby boy; he said that Devas did great injustice in projecting him ahead of them so that they could conveniently run away if need be! Kumar replied that there was no need to make fun of us since in a battle of 'Shastras', there was the brain power that was important but not the brute force; moreso, one did not require a huge serpent to kill an opponent but even a tiny snake could finish off the enemy by a small bite of poison! Bala Surya was always difficult to look at and never under-estimate a boy! Even as Kumar's reply was over, the Asura threw a musala but the reply by way of a mighty Chakra from Kumar was instantaneous. The Daitya threw a metallic Bhindipal which Kumar stopped merely by one of his hands. Kartikeya targetted a ferocious mace which made ear-blowing sound and the demon was hardly able to escape its impact. The demon then realised that this boy was not an ordinary kid and one had to be tough with him; he used a very powerful Shastra which was undone by Kartikeya instantly. Then Kartikeya came into his form and massacred thousands of demons and the so-called mighty demons like Kalanemi could hardly defend themselves and ran away to save their skins. As a last resort, Tarakasura hit Kumar's vahana of Peacock and going wild with this act, Kumara finally used the 'Nirmal Shakti' in his hands and threw it with force and speed and the Shakti dazzled the demon's vision; he tried his best but could not evade it since it flew behind wherever he went and ultimately pierced into his heart as the mountain-like Tarakasura fell making a thud, like a cloud-burst and the handful soldiers of the huge army of Davanas left behind alive ran for their lives. Devas went into a state of ecstacy with loud shouts and battle-cries of relief showering fragrant flowers all around, Gandharvas sang earsplitting songs of victory, Apsaras danced with gay abandon and the whole Universe wore a memorable look of unprecedented carnival. Vishnu and Brahma were highly satisfied that finally Dharma an Nyaya were vindicated by Kumara. Maha Deva and Devi Parvati seated on Nandi with Ganesha and Kartikeya flew across to Kailasa Mountain witnessing festivities all along the route!Devas affirmed that whosoever read, or heard or analysed the Story of Kartikeya would be blessed; his life-span would increase, would become healthy, popular, and contented in life without unfufilled desires and at the end of Life would qualify for Salvation.]

Skanda Purana too describes extermination of Tarakasura as follows: Lord Siva was engaged in continuous 'Tapasya'in recluse and was disinterested in usual activities following the self-immolation of Devi Sati's life after Daksha's insults at Daksha Yagna. The Demon Tarakasura did rigorous penance and obtained a boon of invincibility except by a child of Lord Siva as the latter was in meditation and was

very unlikely to wed and beget a child. Meanwhile King Himavant was blessed with a daughter Girija as Devi Bhagavati's incarnation and at her age of eight approached Lord Siva to help Him for His daily pujas and Bhagavan agreed reluctantly. In course of time as Girija continued to serve Parama Siva in the chores of worship, the Deities, who were frustrated with the dreadful deeds of wickedness of Tarakasura hurting Devas, Sages, and the Righteous Beings, planned that Manmadha the God of Love along with Devi Rati would use his flowery arrows to kindle thoughts of Love in Bhagavan's mind in favour of Devi Girija as a stepping stone for their wedding to beget a son to Siva and Girija who alone could kill the imperishable Tarakasura. But the plan of Devas got badly misfired, since Bhagawan's third eye of fury opened and Manmadha got burnt as ashes. The inconsolate Rati Devi appealed to Lord Siva as after all it was at the behest of Devas that Manmadha acted for a 'Devakarya' or a Divine Task and the brunt was borne by her husband! Devi Girija assured Rati Devi that she would help to revive Manmadha and also please Bhagavan to ask for her hand in wedding. She commenced such rigorous meditation as would shake up the whole Universe by not taking food for long, not even consuming dried leaves dropped from trees thus earning an epithet of 'Aparna' and finally even discarding water. As the Trilokas were ablaze with the heat of her Tapasya, Devas and Sages approached Lord Vishnu who assured that Bhagavan Siva was indeed a 'Purana Purusha' or the Most Ancient, approachable to one and all with clean mind; Varenya or Varaneeya (Devotion worthy) and the Paratpar Paramatma. Thus along with Brahma and Devas, Vishnu prayed for the vision of Pinakadhari Maha Deva who was in a Yoga Samadhi with Vasuki Serpent as Yagnopaveet or the Sacred Thread, Kambal and Aswatar Snakes as His earrings, Karkotak and Kulik as wrist ornaments, Shankh and Padma Serpents as shoulder ornaments, tiger skin as loin cloth, Bhagirathi Ganga and Ardha Chandra or half moon on His head inside the jatajut or His twisted hair and Blue Throat, while Nandi Deva too was nearby. As Lord Brahma eulogised Maha Deva, slowly the latter opened His eyes and described the prevailing situation created by Demon Tarakasura, Brahma's boon that only Bhagavan's son could kill him, the efforts made by Himaraja and Devi Girija whose Tapasya of extreme nature was bursting into flames across the Universe, the burning of Manmadha and Sati's agitation and finally the grand request being submitted to Bhagavan to wed Devi Girija which would eventually lead to the birth of an Illustrious Son who would exterminate the hazardous Demon Tarakasura.Bhagavan replied that as far as Kama Deva was concerned, the decision to burn him off was justified as all the Devas and such other Celestial Beings who had been victims of passion and worldly temptations were unstable of mind and action thas far and after Kamadahan or the destruction of Kama, they would all be like Himself and could all now concentrate in Samadhi the pursuance of Truth and Virtue and seek real bliss of Sat-Chit-Ananda; Bhagavan further said that 'Kama' would inevitably lead to 'Krodha' or anger, Krodha would lead to 'Sammoha' or infatuation and rigidity of thinking, Sammoha would further lead to 'Bhrama' or Maya / Illusion which would for sure camouflage Reality or Truth or the Everlasting; thus Kama the root cause be better put ablaze. Meanwhile Parvati was fully engrossed in high meditation. Bhagavan Siva was indeed impressed but desired to test her sincerity and unswerving attachment to Him. He took the form of a Brahmachari and enquired from Devi Girija's associates around her as to who she was and why was she performing such severe Tapasya? The associates replied to the queries and the Brahmachari had a hearty laugh that the Tapasya of such severity was a sheer waste as the Tapaswini was replete with ignorance since Rudra was an abhorable and wild person with a 'kapaala' (skull) in hand, a dweller of Smashaan (Burial Ground), an odd exhibitionist of poisonous serpents all over His Body, a bearer of Tiger skin as Loin Cloth, an unkempt and ugly hair style with water flowing from head, always in the highly inauspicious and disgusting company of Pisachas, Goblins, Pramatha Ganas and a typically crazy creation of God! This beautiful and attractive lady coming of a wonderful family background could indeed wed a Demi-God like Indra, Dharmaraja, Varuna Deva, Kubera, Vayu or Agni, but never ever that horrible species like Rudra! Devi Parvati got infuriated with white anger and asked the Brahmachari to be lifted and thrown out at once to have affronted such Mahatma; the stupid and arrogant person was an unpardonable sinner, a Veda-dushak and a brainless brute! Bhagavan Siva then showed up in His real form to Devi Parvati who felt shy and reminded Rudra that She was a reincarnation

of Devi Sati and that She gave birth to Devi Meena with the immediate and noble cause of begetting a Son, who alone could free the Universe from the great peril of Tarakasura. On being asked her by Lord Siva for a boon, Devi Parvati desired that Bhagavan should approach her father Himavanta to allow Him to wed her! To this Siva replied that Parvati had indeed declared her real form of Maya or Illusion and that of Maha Tatva which was a display of the interaction of three Gunas of Satva, Rajas and Tamas and that He would never extend His hand to 'receive' as Bhagavan was always a 'Giver'!!However, Bhagavan Siva deputed 'Sapta Rishis'-the illustrious Seven Sages viz. Marichi, Atri, Angeera, Pulasthya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasishtha- to Himavant's residence to formally present Devi Parvati and Himavant proposed his daughter to wed Siva after consulting the bride's mother Mena and the co-Mountains like Meru, Nishadh, Gandhamadan, Mandarachal and Mainak. The Sapta Rishis who conveyed the most auspicious news to Siva and suggested that Lord Vishnu be immediately called and along with Him Lord Brahma, Indra, Dikpals, Devas, Rishiganas, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Nagas, Siddhas, Vidyadharas, Kinnaras, Apsaras and their spouses and cohorts. Sage Narada among the Sapta Rishis was commissioned to personally invite Vishnu, Brahma, Indra and Devas. Gargacharya was asked to supervise the rituals of the wedding and Viswakarma constructed the 'Mangala Vedika' or the Auspicious Platform to perform the Wedding and oversee the decorations. Chandra provided coolness in the atmosphere, Surya the luminosity, Vayu Deva blew fragrant airs and Indra organised dance, music and instrumental extravaganza. The Bridegroom arrived on Nandi, accompanied by Vishnu, Brahma and Devas, Maharshis, Pramathaganas, Rakshasas, Ghosts, Goblins, Pisachas and Spirits. Indeed the unprecedented and the Most Glorious Wedding of Siva-Parvati was the unique talk of the entire Universe. At the Wedding 'Muhurat', Himavan declared: 'I, Himavan of the Gotra and clan of Mountains have the greatest privilege of offering the hand of my daughter Devi Parvati to Parama Siva in the august presence of Brahma and Vishnu. In turn, I wish to know the Gotra and Vamsa of Bhagavan'. As Sage Narada lifted his Veena instrument, Himavan stopped Narada not to play on it as a reply about the Gotra and Vamsa of Bhagavan; Narada told Himavan that the Gotra and Vamsa of Maha Siva was 'Naad' or Sound and that was why Narada lifted the Veena as a reply! Bhagavan is 'Naadamaya' or the Embodiment of Naada and one could realise Siva only through Naada, as He has no Gotra and no Vamsa since He is above these nomenclatures and yet belongs to all Gotras and all Vamsas. He has neither beginning nor end; He is the Most Supreme Energy beyond comprehension! Then Himavan gave the 'Kanyadaan' or the offering of his daughter saying: 'Imam Kanyaam thubhyamaham dadami Parameswara! Bharyartham prathi gruhneeshva' (Parameswara! I am offering my daughter as your 'Dharma Patni'; kindly accept). After wedding, Maha Deva and Devi Parvathi moved on to Mountain Gandhamadan to a luxurious and lonely place for their honeymoon. As Bhagavan's virility was so potent that parts of humanity were getting destroyed and Vishnu asked Agni Deva to take the form of a Hermit and asked Parvati to donate it and extended his hand which was immediately consumed by Agni even before Her eyes. Parvati got angry and cursed Agni to become 'Sarva Bhakshak' or he who consumes everything. Agni could not bear the brunt of the virility of Maha Siva and begged Him to show a way to pass it on to someone; Siva advised that the same be planted into virtuous women and Sage Narada annotated that such women of high merit taking bath on an early morning in the instant month of Magha would be attracted to Agni and his hot flames and they would be the best choice for the transfer of the virility in particles. As advised by Narada, Krittikas approached Agni seeking warmth from the cold morning and Agni transferred some drops of virility to the ladies through their skin pores. Kritthikas got pregnant and their angry husbands gave a curse to them to roam on the Sky. They became Stars in a constellation and aborted their pregnancies. The major portion of the virility got left however on top of the Himalayas which was lifted by a crane and pushed into Ganges and the drops which were radiant like fire sparks got meshed up in the river bed plants (Sarkhand) of Ganges, who carried the foetus to a secluded place in the bushes thus emerging a Six Headed Child Kartikeya! As soon as the boy of highly chiselled face and limbs was born with extraodinary splendour, there was such illumination that travelled all over the Three Worlds instantly. Siva Deva and Devi Parvati appeared at once on their Vrishaba carrier and were overwhelmed with

parental love and affection. Soon Brahma, Vishnu, Indra and the entire Devaloka assembled and so did Rishis, Yakshas, Gandharvas and all Celestial Beings. Veerabhadra and Pramathaganas as also the whole entourage of Maha Deva were ecstatic with boundless rapture. Devas put their chins up with indescribable relief that it would not be far for the greatest menace of Takakasura to be devastated by the new arrival on the scene! The whole atmosphere was of liberation, festivity and celebration. The Deities commenced preparations of war to kill Tarakasura but a Celestial Voice was heard that victory would be assured only under the Leadership of Kartikeya and hence all the Devas requested Skanda to become the Chief of the Army of Devas. Meanwhile, Devasena, the daughter of Mrityu Devata, became his wife and hence Skanda was known as Deva Senapati. Kartikeya led the army of Devas of the rank of Indra, Agni, Vayu, Kubera and Yama Dharma Raja and was seated on an elephant. Tarakasura arrived with a huge army of mighty warriors who dominated and controlled the opponents intially. Indra's 'Vajra' was overpowered by Tarakasura's weapon called Shakti and wounded Indra. King Muchukunda who fought for Devas and sought to stop the domination of Daityas but Tarakasura felled him on the ground; Muchukunda wanted to use the 'Brahmaastra' but was restrained by Sage Narada as that weapon would no doubt create havoc but would be ineffective to destroy Tarakasura and hence Kartikeya would have to be warmed up gradually. Veerabhadra swang into action and slaughtered thousands of Demons; Tarakasura realised that Veerabhadra was not easy to control and thus used his 'Maya' and assumed a thousand arms. Lord Vishnu suggested that the time was ripe to kill the Big Demon before he became more powerful and asked Skanda to charge him. With his mighty weapon Shakti on hand, Kartikeya chased Tarakasura but the latter retaliated with his own 'Shakti' and even got Skanda unconscious for a while. After quickly recovering his poise, Kartikeya prayed to his parents and released the Maha Shakti which was fortified with the blessings of Bhagavan and Bhagavati and finally annihilated Tarakasura who incidentally was a Great Siva Bhakta! But Siva Himself was so pleased at the valour of the lad who was more than a match to the Greatest Demon of the times who sent shock waves across the Three Worlds! While Devas and Gandharvas were engaged in unending praises and noise of resounding musical notes, Rishis were engaged in Vedic Hymns to please Kartikeya and there was ecstasy across the Globe. Whoever reads or hears the details of the historic victory of Deva Senapati over the obnoxious Demon would be rid of Sins of even great severity and magnitude. Sage Viswamitra recited the following Ashtottara Namavali (108 names) about Skanda Deva on the most significant day of Kartika Pournami of which Kartikaya is fond of as follows:(1)Brahmavaadi (Profounder of Parama Tatvas) (2) Brahma (Creator and the Reciter of Vedas) (3) Brahma Vid (The Exponent and Interpreter of Brahma Gyan) (4) Brahma Vatsala (The beloved of Lord Brahma) (5) Brahmanya (Brahmana Bhakta) (6) Brahmadeva(7)Brahmad (The Donor of Brahma Gyan) (8) Brahma Sangrah (The absorber of Vedardha or the Para Brahma's reality) (9) Sarvotkrushta Parama Teja (The Highest of All of Super Luminosity) (10) Mangala Mangala (The Most Propitious of the Propitious)(11) Aprameya Guna (He who has countless qualities) (12) Mantra Mantraga (The Quintessence of Mantras) (13) Savitrimaya (Full of Pranava or Omkara) (14) Sarvatra Aparajita ( Always unconquerable) (15) Sarvatmika Mantra (The universally applicable Mantra) (16) Deva (Replete with Divinity) (17) Shadakshara Vatam Vara (The best reciter of Om Namassivaya) (18) Gava Putra (The Illustrious Son of Cow or Ganges) (19) Surarighna (The Destroyer of the Enemies of Devas) (20) Sambhava (He who makes the Impossible possible) (21) Bhava bhaavana (The Creator of the Universe in the form of Brahma) (22) Pinakini (The Carrier of Pinakini Dhanush in the form of Shankara)(23) Shatruha (The Terminator of Opponents) (24) Swetha (He assumes the form of a white Mountain or Himalaya) (25) Guudha (Born in a hidden place or He who has latent Shakti) (26) Skanda (He who jumps while walking) (27) Suraagrani (The Chief of Suras)(28) Dwaadasha (Who has twelve eyes and ears) (29) Bhu (Bhu mandala Swarupa or the Form of Earth) (30)Bhuvah (Antariksha Rupa or Of the form of Sky) (31) Bhavi (Bhavitva Rupa ) (32) Bhuva Putra (Bhumi Putra as Siva's manliness was absorbed into Earth) (33) Namaskruth (Saluted by one and all) (34) Nagaraja (The King of Serpents)(35) Sudharmatma (Epitome of Virtue) (36) Naka Prushtha (He is the Base of Swarga as He is the Saviour of Devas) (37) Sanatan (He is Eternal) (38) Hema garbha (Born of Siva's gold-like semen) (39) Mahagarbha (Born of

several mothers) (40) Jaya (Victorious) (41) Vijayeswara (The Deity of Victory) (42) Karta (The Performer) (43) Vidhata (The Preserver) (44) Nithya (Everlasting) (45) Nithyarimardana (The constant destroyer of enemies) (46) Mahasena (The Chief of a huge army) (47) Maha Teja (The most Illuminated) (48) Virasena (Commander of a Valiant army) (49) Chamupati (The Leader of Militia) (50) Surasena (The Principal of an intrepid band of soldiers) (51)Suradhaksha (The Supreme Head of Devas) (52) Bhimasena (The Chief of a terrifying military) (53) Niramaya (Devoid of illness) (54) Shouri (The most gallant Son of Shankara) (55) Patu (Smart and Enterprising) (56) Maha Teja (The highly radiant) 57) Viryavan (Personification of Might) (58) Satya Vikram (Courageously Truthful)(59) Tejogarbha (Agni Putra) (60) Asuripu (Antagonist of Demons) (61) Suramurthi (A byword for Devas) (62) Surojit (More gutsy than Devas) (63) Krutajna (Grateful to those who stand by Him) (64) Varada (Bestower of windfalls) (65) Satya (Satyavadi or He who stands for Truth) (66) Sharanya (Protector of those who seek refuge) (67) Sadhu Vatsal (Affectionate and kind to the Good) (68) Suvratha (Benefactor of those who perform good Vrathas) (69) Surya Sankash (Luminous like Sun) (70) Vahnigarbha (Begotten of Agni) (71) Ranotsuk (Enthusiastic of Battles) (72) Pippali (Consumer of Pippali)(73) Seeghraga (Travels at top speed) (74) Roudri (Son of Rudra) (75) Gangeya (Son of Ganges) (76) Ripudarun (Demolisher of Foes) (77) Kartikeya (Son of Krittikas)(78) Prabhu (Highly accomplished) (79) Kshanth (Forgiving and Patient) (80) Neela-damshtra (Blue Thoated) (81) Mahamana (of large heart disposition) (82) Nigrah(Possessive of Restraint) (83) Netha (Leader) (84) Suranandana (Provider of happiness to Devas) (85) Pragrah (Controller of Enemies) (86) Paramananda (Extremely blissful) (87) Krodhagna (Alleviates the anger of Devotees) (88) Thad (Producer of heavy sound) (89) Vucchrit (High stamper of feet) (90) Kukkuti (Keeper of Cock as chariot flag) (91) Bahuli (Possessor of many useful implements) (92) Divya (Has Divine illumination) (93)Kamad (Fulfilled of desires) (94) Bhurivardhan (Has extreme amusement) (95) Amogh (Unconquerable and ever successful) (96) Amritada (Endower of Amrit) (97) Agni (Agni Swarup) (98) Shatrughna (Terminator of Opponents) (99) Sarvabodhan (Provider of Knowledge to one and all) (100) Anagha (Devoid of sins) (101) Amar (indestructible)(102) Sriman (Highly Prosperous) (103) Unnati (High Profiled) (104) Agni Sambhava(105) Piscacha Raja (King of Piscachas and Siva Ganas) (106) Suryabha (Akin to Sun God in radiance) (107) Sivatma (Siva Swarupa) and (108) Sanatana (Eternal). Phalasruti: Those who recite the Ashtottara of Kartikeya become fearless, contented, and happy; a pregnant woman reads or hears the Ashtottara would be blessed with a son of virtue and fortune; and if unmarried girls read they are sure to secure ideal husbands.]

Matsya Purana's Skandopaakhyaana now: Brahma Manasa Putra Prajapati Dhaksha married Veerini and they were blessed with sixty daughters; of these daughters, ten were married to Dharma, thirteen to Maharshi Kashyapa, twenty seven to Chandra Deva, four to Arishtanemi, two to Bahuka and two to Krushaswa. Kashyapa's wives were Aditi, Diti, Danu, Vishwa, Arishta, Surasa, Surabhi, Vinata, Taamra, Krodhavasha, Ira, Kadru and Muni. Aditi begot Devendra, Upendra, Surya and all Devatas. Diti gave birth to Hiranyakashipu and innumerable Daityas. Danu gave birth to Danavas; Surabhi the cows and other animals; Vinata the birds like Garuda; Kadru the Nagas and other repitles; and so on. As Devas and Daityas developed mutual hatred and enemity, there had been periodical battles and each time Daityas defeated and occupied Swarga for long spells of time, Devas with the help of Narayana were regaining Swarga again and there had been as a result mass killings of Daityas and Devas had been enjoying the last laugh! Diti was unable to bear this let-down time and again. Kashyapa Muni taught to perform a severe Vrata which she performed meticulously for thousand years and after some time got pregnant. Indra came to know the purpose of Diti's Vrata viz. to bless her to conceive a boy who could terminate Indra and Devas, Indra ultilised his powers / Siddhis of Anima and Parakaya; entered her womb and cut the foetus with the help of his Vjrayudha seven times making seven slices from each of the seven parts thus making forty nine 'Marudganas'. After this tragic end, Diti once again prayed to Kashyapa to grant her a son who was indestricutible even by a Vajra and as result of ten thousand years of Tapasya there was a mighty Daitya called Vajranga was born to Diti. As per Diti's instruction Vajranga brought Indra imprisoned to

his mother. But Brahma and Kashyapa asked Vajranga to release Indra by saying: Apamaano Vadhah proktah Putra Sambhaavitasyacha, Asmadvaakyena yo mukto viddhitam mrutamevacha/ (Son! Respectable personalities like Indra ought to feel humbled and humiliated; hence release Indra on my instruction.). Brahma also created Varangi so that Vajranga would wed her. Brahma instructed the couple to perform Tapasya in dfficult situations, some times by raising hands, sometimes sitting with Panchagnis around, sometimes sitting in deep waters and invariably without food and even water. Finally, the couple was blessed with a mighty and unique son, named **Tarakasura**. Fully understanding the purpose of his birth which his parents had strived for after performing thousands of years of Tapasya as also to fulfill the singular ambition of his grand mother to destroy Indra and Devas, Tarakasura took a vow at a grand conference of Daityas and Danavas-the descendents of Diti and Danu- and proceeded to Paritraya Parvat (the western side of Aravali and Vindhya mountain range and observed strict Tapasya during hundred year time-slots by rotation by way of 'Niraahaara' (without food), Panchagni (in the midst of Five huge Fire bodies) in sizzling summers, 'Jala madhya' inside in chilled running water in the worst winter nights, eating only fallen dry leaves, etc. Brahma had no option but to present himself and ask for his boons. He bargained of absolute invincibility and deathlessness but finally agreed that only a seven days long boy could kill him, if at all! Not far from the day when Brahma bestowed the boons, Tarakasura redesigned and reformed his lines of Military Forces and attacked Indraloka. A long-drawn and ferocious Devasura-Daitya ensued when there was considerable blood-shed in either side. Danaveswara Grasan and Yama Dharma Raja, Jambha and Kubera, Durjaya and Varuna, Mahishasura and Chandra, Kalanemi and Surya were the prominent opponents. As it looked that Devas were at the moment of collapse under the leadership of Tarakasura, Lord Vishnu sat on Garuda Deva and alighted on the battle field. All the Asuraleaders surrounded Vishnu and rained Astras against him in one go; Kalanemi shot sixty arrows, Nimi hundred arrows, Mathan fired eighty arrows, Jambhaka seventy, Shumbha ten powereful Astras, and many others as many as they could at just one target, viz. Narayana. Bhagavan Vishnu responded to all these arrows and shot severally and on one-to-one basis. The battle continued on and on; inspired by Vishnu Deva, Indra regrouped Deva Sena by strenghening patches and enlarging the volumes of the Deva Sena by recalling Yakshas, Gandharvas, and Kinnaras who brought their own powerful weapons. Vishnu called up for the assistance of Ekadasha Rudras viz. Kapali, Pingala, Bheema, Virupaksha, Vilohita, Ajesha, Shasana, Shasta, Shambhu, Chanda and Dhruva. The Rudra Swarupas dominated the battle field by annihilating thousands of Daityas. Maha Daitya Gajasura was torn into pieces and his skin was draped over the body of Kapila Rudra the Daityas made 'hahaakaaras' when they ran helter-skelter. Indra attacked Daitya Nimi and thumped his chest with his 'Vajraayudha'. At the humilation of the death of Gajasura by Rudra, Jambhasura challenged Indra and after a fearful skirmish, Lord Indra shot Brahmastra and the Daitya was killed instantly. But fully armed by the boon of invincibility, the end result was that Tarakasura over powered Devas, Vishnu was indeed aware of the boon to Tarakasura and withdrew from the battle and the defeated Indra and Devas were dislodged from Swarga. Indra and Devas reached Satyaloka to seek Brahma's help and the latter predicted that soon the King of Himachala would be blessed with a daughter named Parvati who would be married to Parama Shiva and the couple would beget a child named Skanda; that boy after attaining seven days should kill Tarakasura. Brahma further told Devas that meanwhile they would have to be patient and that he had already chalked out action plans till the objective was achieved. Having assured Devas thus, Brahma called for Devi Vibhavari (Ratri Devi) and briefed her that Shiva's earlier wife Sati Devi had immolated herself as she could not control her emotions arising out of her own father's (Daksha Prajapati) misdeeds of insulting Bhagavan Shiva, that the latter avenged Sati's self-immolation by destroying Daksha Yagna and Daksha and that Shiva was at the moment not in a mood to remarry but that the Sacred Wedding between him and Devi Parvati was of top urgency since the child of their union could save the entire universe as their son could only kill Tarakasura as per the boons that the Demon secured. The instruction of Brahma to Devi Vibhavari therefore was as follows: Virahokanthitaa gaadham Hara sangama laalasaa, Tayoh sutapta tapasoh samyogah swaacchhubaananey/ Garbhastaaney cha tanmaatruhu swena ruupena rajjaya/ ( As both the

'Tapaswinis' would be tempted to unite with each other, she should enter Devi Parvati's 'garbha' and imprint Shiva Deva's manly image there). Then the virility so discharged would be carried by Agnideva and the Sarovara's reefs that would carry the drops would help Krittikas to bring up the boy from the spills-over of Shiva's virility; Devi Parvati would then retire to bed and would know only later that she gave birth to a boy. In the action plan, the next step as devised by Indra was to stimulate Shankara with feelings of romance and to create favourable situations around; indeed Kamadeva was able to succeed momentarily but when Shiva understood the game plan; Manmatha was burnt into ashes by Shiva's 'humkar' followed by the opening of third eye in a split-second!Devi Rati was stunned at the sudden turn of events, since she felt that the Act of Madana Kumara was to usher in propitiousness and happiness as the worst menace of three Lokas would be rid of by the end of Tarakasura, pursuant to Shiva-Parvati's wedding and the hastening of their son's auspicious birth. Unfortunately, her husband became the victim, for no fault of his, as the entire drama was enacted by Indra Deva, who too could not be blamed since each step in Lord Brahma's Action Plan was for the great advantage of the Universe as a whole. She stooped down at her husband's ash-heap and while crying incessantly prayed to Bhagavan Shiva as follows: Namah Shiyaayaastu Niraamayaaya Namah Shiyayaayastu Manomayaya/ Namah Shiyaayaastu Suraarchitaaya, Tubhyam Sadaa Bhakta Kripaaparaaya/ Namo Bhayaayaastu Bhayodbhayaaya, Namostu tey Dhwasta mano bhavaaya/ Namostutey goodha mahaa vrataaya, Namostu Maaya Gahanaashrayaya/ Namostu Sharvaaya Namah Shivaaya, Namostu Siddhaaya Puraatanaaya/ Namostu Kaalaaya Namah Kalaaya, Namostutey Jnaana vara prasaadaaya/ Namostutey Kaalakalatigaaya, Namo Nisargaamala bhushanaaya/ Namostvameyaandhaka mardakaaya, Namah Sharanyaaya Namo gunaaya/ Namostutey Bheemaganaanugaaya, Namostu Nanaa bhuvanenakartrey/ Sarvaavasaaneyhyavi naasha netrey, Namostu Naanaa Jagatey Vidhhaatrey, Namostu tey Chitra phala Prayoktrey/ Namostu Bhaktaabhimata pradaatrey, Namah sadaa teybhava sanga hatrey/ Ananta rupaaya sadaiva tubhyamasya kopaaya namostu tubhyam/ Shashaanka chihnaaya sadaiva tubhya mameya maanaaya namah stutaaya/ Vrishendrayaanaaya Puraantakaaya, Namah prasiddhaaya Mahoushadhaaya/ Namostu Bhaktya abhimata pradaaya, Namostu Sarvaarti haraaya tubhyam/ Charaachara vichaaravar maachaarya mutprekshita bhutasargam/ Twaamindu moulim sharanam prapanna Priyaaprameyam mahataam Mahesham/ Prayacchamey kaamayashah samruddhim, Punah Prabho jeevatu Kamadevah/Priyam binaa twaam Priya jeeviteshu, Twattoparah ko bhuvaneshwahaasti/ Prabhuh Priyaayaah prasavah priyaanaam, Praneetaparyaaya paraparaarthah/ Twameyvameko Bhuvanasyanaatho Dayaalurnmeelita bhakabheetih/(Parama Shiva! My salutations to you; you are the Spotless; the mental reflection of all the Beings; worshipped by all the Devas always; the epitome of kindness to the devotees; the Supreme Creator of the World; you burnt up Kamadeva, my husband and my deferential apologies to you for the diturbance caused when you were in a confidential Vrata. Kindly accept my devotion since you do protect those and who take refuge as they become victims of the forests of 'Maya'; You are the Punisher as well as the Provider of Propitiousness; the Kala Swarupa / Appraiser of Time as also of Achievements since you are the Supreme Gyani / with the knowledge of those who transgress limits of time; You are the Form of Nature and the Wearer of Sacred and Untainted Ornaments; You possess spontaneous Might and destroy Evil Forces like Andhakaraasura; the Nirguna devoid of features and the point of ultimate refuge; You are the Creator of several Worlds and the Scripter of many Universes; the bestower of multiple benefits, the patented destroyer at the time of Pralayas as also the saviour of a few Beings at such extreme situations; the Enjoyer of the due 'Yagnaphala' which is liberally distributed to devotees; the demolisher of worldly desires; you possess myriad forms but your anger is unbridled; you are the coolness of Moon, the Symbol of self-esteem, the eulogy to all, the carrier of Nandi, the obliterator of Tripuras, the Source of 'Aushadhis'/ medicines, the donor of desires, the remover of all difficulties, the Ultimate Regulator of 'Acharas'/ 'Vichaaras'-traditions and customs; The 'Acharya' or the Unique Guide to the Moving and Immobile Object; The Over Seer of the entire Srishti; the Provider of Coolness and radiance to the Moon of his head; the Unparalelled Personification of Pure Love, Maheshwara! do kindly bestow everlasting fame and name to my husband Kama Deva with which he would get back to life; You are the one and

only Saviour who could bring blossoms to his ashes; who else in the Universe could be competent to get my husband back to Life!). Pleased by the 'Stuti' of Rati Devi, Maha Deva cooled down from his anger and pacified her to assure that she would secure her husband back after some time and would be popularly called 'Ananga'. Disturbed by the happenings that happened as Kama Deva was burnt by Maha Deva and Devi Rati's distress, Devi Parvati was rather disllusioned and decided to proceed to perform Tapasya. Her father gave her encouragement and said: Umeti Chapaley Putri! na kshamam taavakam vapuh, Sodhum klesha swaruupascya Tapasah Soundarya darshiney/ (My daughter, you are too restless; 'U'-stands for THIS and MA-stands for: 'do not do this'; in other words: 'you do not have to perform 'Tapasya'; Your slender and tender body is not capable of withstanding Tapasya). As Himavan was pleading to his daughter not to think of Tapasya thus, there was a Celestial Voice (Akasha vaani) addressed to Himavaan which asserted that Parvati should not think in terms of Tapasya; Umetinaama tey naasyaa Bhuvaneshu Bhavishyati, Siddhim cha Murtimatyashey Saadha vidhyanti chintitaam/ (Himaraja! what you uttered was that your daughter was really 'Chanchala' or highly unsteady and wavering; in the entire Universe her name shall be everlasting and would always be bestowing boons to the fulfillment of her 'Bhaktas'). Indra Deva who was anxious to take further steps in expediting Shiva-Parvati's wedding, called up the illustrious Sapta Rishis to ascertaining the mind of Devi Parvati by visiting her personally and once convinced to visit Parama Shiva too to find out his inclination too. The Chief Negotiators were thus engaged in the delicate task which however had to be given a soft and swift push; they reached Parvati first and presented to her a negative picture of Shiva stating that he was perhaps not an appropriate candidate befitting her beauty and grace and that she might as well seek of another 'greater' and more presentable and qualified husband; they argued that he was a semi-clad, uncouth, funnily dressed, resident of 'Smashaanas'/ grave yards, kapala dhari / wearer of skulls, bhikshukh / mendicant, with frightening eyes, apparently looking mentally unsound! Devi Parvati was rather annoyed and even surprised at the opinions expressed by the Sapta Rishis of their popular standing and affirmed: Naaham Bhadraah kileycchaami Rutey Sharvaat Pinaakinah, Sthitamcha taaratamyena Praaninaam paramam twidam/ Dheebalai –shvaryakaaryaadi pramaanam mahataam mahat, Yasmaatra kinchitaparam sarvey yasmaat pravartatey/Yasvaishwaryamanaadyantam tamahamsharanam gataa, Eshamey Vyaavasaayascha deerghoti vipareetakah/ (Bhadra Purusha Saptarshis! I am not at all ready to wed any unsteady and pettyminded entities, excepting Pinakadhari Shankara Maha Deva; despite what might be described about the greatness of other suitors, I am most emphatically anchoring my hopes on him, as he is the most certainly outstanding Maha Purusha, whose might, mind and magnificence are unparalelled. This unflinching resolution of mine might look odd to you; you may either concede or quit!). As the Saparshis heard Devi Parvati, they were overjoyed; they said they were only testing her resolve before approaching Maha Deva to sound his mind. May this determination of yours be fulfilled soon! After all, how could the radiance of Surya be without Surya! How could the sparkle of a diamond be without the diamond! How could the meaning of 'Aksharas' (letters / alphabet) be detached from their 'meaning/ implication'! Similarly how Devi Parvati could be disconnected from Maha Deva! So saying, the Saptarshis proceeded to Himalaya Mountain peak to meet Parama Shiva to sound him on the subject of the most auspicious wedding of Shiva-Parvati. They met the Veeraka the Dwarapalaka and sensitised him about the purpose of their visit and in course of time, Bhagavan met the Saptarshis. The latter being an Omniscient he said: Jaaney loka vidhhanasya Kanyaa satkaarya mutthamam, Jaataa praaleya shailasya samketaka nirupanaah/ (I am aware that for the welfare of the whole world, the role of this damsel is quite significant; she is the daughter of Himavaan and you are desirous of proposing her for this task). Satya mutktah kanthitaah sarvey Deva kaaryaarthamudyataah, Teshaam twaranti chetaamsi kinthu kaaryam vivakshitam/ (This is indeed true that there has been considerable enthusiasm and haste, yet there would be some slow down in completing the task). Lokayaatraanugantavya viseshana vichakshanaihi, Sevantey they yato Dharma tat pramaanaayaat parey sthitaa/ (The Vidwans would do well in properly following the formalties and the established traditions of 'Dharma', since this action plan would constitute a regular standard to the posterity). The implication of what Maha Deva stated was fully understood by Sapta Rishis and they left

to the Palace of Himavanta instantly. They conveyed to Himavanta and his wife Mena the exciting news of Maha Deva's implicit consent to offer himself as the bridegroom to Devi Parvati. Mena said that normally the parents of the bride would propose an alliance but the bridegroom proposed instead! Anyhow, she asked that they might as well approach Parvati directly. The Rishis replied that the ground was already prepared and Parvati was in fact performing Tapasya only to accomplish Shiva's hand. In any case, they would approach her as a formality and in response, Parvati terminated her Tapasya and came back home. Parvati felt so anxious that the previous night before the wedding preparations commenced was like ten thousand long nights. Next morning at the 'Brahma Muhurta, the propitious acts were initiated; the 'Shadritus' or the Six Seasons arrived; Vayu Deva and Varuna Deva took up the cleaning operations of the huge mountain range to receive the Wedding Guests; Devi Lakshmi set various arrangements including the golden and silver vessels required; Chitamani and many other jewels were spread all over; Kalpa Vriksha and Kamadhenu were pressed into service; all kinds of 'Aoushadhis', 'Rasaayans', and 'Dhatus' turned up to be of use in the food preparations. There at the 'Gandhamaadana' Mountain range, assemblies of Maha Munis, Nagas, Yakshas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras started hotting up. Brahma intiated the make-up of Parama Shiva and for a start, combed the 'Jatajutas' / the coarse hair and set the position of 'Chandra Khanda' right; Devi Chamunda decorated a big 'kapaala' on one side of Shiva's broad head and said that once a son was born from the wedding, the latter should fill up the skull with the blood of Tarakasura and gift that Kapala to her to enjoy the drink! Vishnu arrived with a golden 'Kirita ('head gear) studded with 'Nava Ratnas' and well-ornamented with live snakes which added to the luster of the 'Sarpa Manis' on the heads of the snakes; Indra arrived in haste with the 'Gaja Charma' Elephant Skin and draped it on the body of Shiva; Lord Vayu took over the charge of Nandeswara and took great pains to swathe a gold-laced white silk bejewelled with nine gems decorated on the back to make a cushioned seat on which Maha Deva could be seated comfortably; 'Loka Sakshis' (Ready Universal Evidences) Surya, Chandra and Agni Devas lit up the 'Three Netras'/Three Eyes with renewed radiance and radiation and garnished them with dark clouds as eye-tex; Preta Raja Yama Deva embellished Shiva's broad forehead with 'Chita bhasma' in three straight lines and ornamented his fore arms and wrists with strings of human bones; Kubera gifted invaluable jewellery made of nine gems studded in pure gold worn along with a heap of live and hissing snakes, while Varuna brought special 'Kundalas'/Ear rings with coiled Vasuki and Taksha serpents. As the bride groom got ready and sat comfortably on Nandeswara, the procession commenced with firm and dignifiedly slow steps and Bhu Devi was in shivers with each step of Nandeswara carrying the Supreme Lord of Trilokas, and behind him were Vishnu, Brahma, Indra, Dikpalakas, the Nava Grahas, Devas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Pramatha Ganas and so on each with their wives, unless they had already reported to duty at the bride's Palaces. Veerak, the Dwarapalaka of Maha Deva, in the lead was addressing hoarse the surging crowds ahead of the 'Ratha' to make way and let it pass; after all, when Maha Deva was himself moving ahead, could any one in the hysteric mass of humanity resist the temptation of catching a glimspe of Bhagavan! Behind the Dignitaries following the procession were the celebrations of singing Gandharvas, dancing Apsaras, and the tuneful Kinnaras, further followed by Maharshis, Sages and Brahmanas reciting Vedas and Sacred Hymns. The whole Universe was charged with myriad emotions as the groom's party arrived at the bride's palace. At the 'Kalyana Mandapa', the Parvarta Raja Himavan was in a state of dazed ecstacy since Parama Shiva himself was his son-in-law. Pranateynaachalendrena Pujitotha Chaturmukhah, Chakaara vidhinaa Sarvam Vidhimantra purah saram/ (Parvata Raja performed puja with respects to Brahma and with the full course of formal Mantras, the wedding was celebrated in tradition and dignity); Sharveyna Paanigrahana maagneena saakshikamakshatam, Daataa Mahibhrutaam Natho hotaa Devaschaturmukhah/ Varah Pashupati Saakshaat Kanyaa Vishaaranistathaa (Then Parama Shiva wedded Parvati with Agni Saakshi or in the presence of Agni, when Daata / donor was Himavaan, Brahma as Hota (the Head Priest), Shiva as the bride groom and bride as Aranibhuta Devi Parvati.). Devas were extremely happy that the best was yet to happen; Indra gifted a golden umbrella, Gandharvas sang tuneful songs, Apsaras danced to their best, Kinnaras organised instrumental extravaganza and the

whole world cebebrated, but of course Daityas and Danavas who had ruled for thousand years were highly dejected quite understandably. After a few days the new couple of Shiva and Devi Parvati took permission of Parvata Raja Himavaan and moved back to Mandarachala. Years passed by and Shiva and Parvati continued to enjoy their marital bliss. Out of fun, Bhagavan Shiva teased Parvati once as follows: Shareerey mama tatwaangi sitey bhaasya sitadyutih, Bhujaangee vaasita shuddhaa samslishtaa chandaney tarow/ Chandraatapena sampruktaa ruchirambaraa tathaa, Rajaneevaasitey pakshey drushti dosham dadaasimey/ (Devi Parvati! As your physical colour is rather dark and mine is fair, it looks that a dark serpent is circling a chandana tree! Also, there is a similie -comparison- of a shining Moon against the background of dark cloud on the sky!). Understandably, Parvati was not amused, and in fact, badly hurt, when Shankara made these remarks even as a joke. Instantly, she left out home and proceeded to perform 'Tapasya' to Brahma for a number of years to change her body colour. Any amount of pleading and supplication by Shiva did not change her mind. Meanwhile, the son of Andhakasura and the brother of Bakasura called 'Aadi' performed strict 'Tapas' to Brahma Deva and asked for the boon of 'Amaratwa' or immunity from death. As Brahma could not grant this advantage, Aadi amended the request that he should be able to convert his Body Form as per his wish; Brahma agreed provided that the Daitya could do so only twice. As Veerak was guarding the Entry Point of Shankara and as it was not possible to enter 'Shiva dwar', Aadi converted his Form as a snake and entered Shankara's abode through an under ground hole and slithered in; thereafter Aadi assumed the Form of Devi Parvati, approached Maha Deva and pretended that she had given up Tapasya as the severity of meditation just to change of body colour from 'Krishna Varna' to 'Gaura Varna' was not worth the strict regimen. Parama Shiva was happy initially that she changed her mind and returned back to him. But on second thoughts and knowing that Parvati would not take a flippant decision to return without achieving her objective, he suspected the fake Parvati and killed the 'Mayavi' Daitya. The original Parvati Devi's Tapasya pleased Brahma Deva and blessed her to change her body colour as she pleased either as of Gaura (white) Varna or of Shyama Varna: Parvati returned home to Maha Deva but the unwitting Veeraka, the 'Dwarapalaka' refused her entry to her own house! As any amount of convincing did not help Veeraka, Devi Gauri was tired out to reason him and finally gave a 'Shaap' that he would be born as a human and after the duration of the curse would return to her again. Parama Shiva was so excited as Gauri entered his interior bed room that a delegation of Devas headed by Indra was turned out saying that he was busy. Indra detailed Agni Deva to take the form of a parrot and peep in through a window as to what was happening inside their bedchamber. Exactly at that time, the parrot peeped in when Shiva-Parvati were actually seen in action on their bed; Shiva noticed the parrot and recognised Agni. He scolded Agni and said now that he created 'Vighna' (obstacle) between him and Parvati and hence he might as well rectify the situation by drinking up his virility. The highly explosive drops shining like molten gold punctured Agni's belly and got spread over the Maha Sarovar nearby. Several lotus flowers which got sprouted all over in the deep waters emitted strong and fragrant scents and the intoxication affected 'Krittikas' who happened to bathe in the Sarovar; the Krittikas desired to take the lotus leaves home but Devi Parvati jocularly remarked to the Krittikas that she could take the drops of water on the lotus leaves as well. In turn Krittikas joked that they would take the water home, provided the child born of the water consumed by them should have equal right to the motherhood of the boy so born! As the deal was struck between Kritthikas and Parvati, the Krittika damsels gave the lotus leaves as also the water drops to Parvati. Subsequently, Devi Parvati drank up the water around the lotuses and from her right and left 'kukshis' gave birth to two male children later united into one and the child who had the extraordinary radiance of Surya Deva; each of the Six Krittikas shaped up one head each of the child; thus the boy was named 'Kumara' by Parvati; 'Kartikeya', 'Shanmukha', 'Shadvaktra' by the Krittikas and as 'Vishakha' or the different 'Shakhas'/ branches of the lotus leaves that carried the golden drops. On Chaitra Shukla Shashthi, the child was declared as the 'Deva Senapati'/ the Commander-in- Chief of Devas. Vishnu gifted varieties of 'Ayudhas'/ Arms and 'Astras' or Mantrik Arrows. Kubera presented him a lakh-strong of yaksha army. Vayu Deva gave him a 'Mayura Vahana'/ Peacock Carrier, while Twashta Prajapati gifted a toy in the form of a Cock

which could change its form as the boy wished. All the Devas presented souvenirs, prostrated before Skanda and extolled him: Namah Kumaaraaya Mahaa Prabhaaya Skandaayacha Skandita daanayaaya, Navaarka Vidyutdyutaye Namostutey, Namostutey Shanmukha Kaamarupa/Pinadwi nanaabharanaaya Bhartrey Namo raney Daarudaaranaaya, Namostu teyrka pratima prabhhaya, Namostu Guhyaaya Guhyaaya tubhyam/ Namostu Thrailokya bhaayaapahaaya, Namostutey Baala kripaa paraaya,Namo Vishaalaamala lochanaaya, Namo Vishaakhaaya Maha Vrataaya/Namo Namastestu Manoharaaya, Namo namastestu Ranotkataaya, Namo Mayurojjwala vaahanaaya, Namostu Keyura dharaayatubhyam/ Namo Dhrutodagna pataakiney Namo Namah Prabaavapranataaya testu, Namo Namastey Varaveerya shaalininey, Kripaaparo no bhava Bhavyamurtey/Kripaaparaa Yagnapatim cha stutwaa, Viromirowam twamaraadhi paadyaah, Yevam tadaa Shadwadanam tu sendraa mudaa santhushta Guhastatastaan/ (Our Greetings to You, Kamarupa Shanmukha! You are Kumara, the radiant son of Maha Shiva and the destroyer of Danavas; your physical form is the glow of rising son and of the heat of Agni; you are appropriately adorned, the Army Chief of Devas; the dreadful on the battle front; Guhya Rupa, the abolisher of fear in Trilokas in the Form of a Child; gifted with broad and clear eyes; Vishaakhaa! Our reverences to you as the practitioner of Maha Vratas; you are a terror in battle fields although of pleasant visage otherwise; you have a peacock as your carrier and wear a Keyura / wrist bangles; the high flier of flags; the bestower of boons to devotees; the high profile symbol of courage and strength; you possess a Magnificent Form. This was how Indra and Devas extolled Skanda.) Even as Kumara was replying to assure Devas that very soon the desire of retrieving their lost glories would be fulfilled, an emissary of Tarakasura arrived and conveyed their Chief's message to Indra with a warning not to repeat his past mistakes of challenging a giant Daitya of the stature of that great Tarakaura who shook up the Universe and converted Devas as his servants; he also remarked that instead of playing balls and toys, the baby boy Skanda should gradually get acclimatised to battle fields and face mighty Asuras much later in life! As Tarakasura was in a jocular mood, Skanda Deva said: 'Taraka! Never under-esimate the 'Shakti' of a kid; can you not realise that a baby serpent could perform permanent damage to you and that a boy who has 'Alpaakshara Gyan'in releasing 'Astras' could reach you directly to Naraka! Even while Skanda was conversing like this, Taraka threw a 'Mudgara' (hammer) and an agile Kumara destroyed it with his 'Vajraayudha; Taraka threw a 'Bhindapaal' which was destroyed by Kumara's own hands. Skanda materialised a Gada / Mace and despatched it against Kalanemi Daitya who became furious and rained a stream of Arrows. These arrows had little impact on Skanda. Instead, Kalanemi and his associates were thrashed by Kumara and they had to sprint from the battle lines. Takakasura then appeared center-stage and was furious in releasing a powerful arrow which hurt Kumara Swami's 'Mayura Vahana'; The infuriated Skanda and threw the most potent'Shakti Baana' which was indeed the decisive point that sealed Tarakasura's fate and the greatest menace in the Trilokas who dominated the scene for thousands of years was finally destroyed, even as Devas sounded 'dundhubhis' (large drums) and showered rose petals which filled up the Earth, Sky and the Nether lokas with the fragrance of Parijata flowers from Swarga. Gandharvas and Kinnaras sang melliflous praises of Kumara and his proud parents, Apsaras were ecstatic and Sapta Rishis recited Mangala Mantras. Those who read or hear about the glories of Skanda would neither have sins nor diseases but lead a contented life ahead!]]]

## <u>Chapters 88-89: Bhasmmita Kaamadeva-Devi Rati appeals to Shiva and dehatyaaga- Shiva's boons to</u> Rati Manmadhas for subsequent birth as pairs as Pradyuma and Mayavati

Brahma Deva addressed Veda Vyasa and said that after Manmadha got turned into ashes as Shiva opened his third eye, Manmadha's wife was shocked and appeared running to the spot and incessantly cried while prostrating before Parama Shiva. She addressed Shiva saying: *Namaami Devam Girijaasahaayam Vrishadwajam Bhaala vilochanam cha, yah prati lokaan khalu satvayuktonirmaati lokaan rajasaa gunena/ Yah svecchayaa samharatekhilesho jagattamovishthatanur maheshah, yo vai kapaalam vahate janaanaam bhikshaashanah puurayatekhilaarthaan/ Deenaanukampe bhagayaan mahesho gata* 

priyaayaah sharanam mamaastaam, kartrum tathaa kartrumadeeyan satvah shakyonnathaa kartruma peeha devah/ 'Girijaa sahaaya Pashupati! I prostrate before you as the Triguna swarupa of satva-rajotamogunaas with which you are the Srishthi-Sthiti-Samhaara Karaka! As Kapaladhari, you as with a begging bowl seek booms to humans! You are the symbol of mercifulness and could you not bless my husband 'Kaama' back to life and revive his existence!' So saying she sacrificed her life instantly staring at the angry countenance of Parama Shiva. It was precisely then that Maha Daitya Narantaka the ally of Tarakasura in the Naaga Loka and freely killed the Naagavasis right in the presence of Shesha Naaga himself and proceed further to the rest of adholokas viz. Sapta Patalaas [ Brahma Purana details in this context: Renowned as Bilwa Swarga, the lokas underneath the Seas occupy as much an area as Prithvi; the span of Earth is seventy thousand vojanas, height too is as much. The expanse of Patalas too is as much too; these lokas are Atala, Vitala, Nitala, Sutala, Talatala, Rasatala and Patalas and each of these lokas has an expanse of ten thousand yojanas. The colour of these lokas is black, white, yellow, red, grey and golden respectively. The inhabitants of these lokas are Daityas, Danvaas and Nagas. Having visited these lokas, Brahmarshi Narada called these Patalas as Bilwa Swarga and even better than Swarga. These lokas enjoy extreme illumination from the 'Manis' (diamonds) on the hoods of the Nagas; Narada said: the powerful rays of Surya Deva provide radiance but not heat during the days, while Chandra Deva gives brightness but not too much of coldness. The inhabitant serpents and Daityas revel in themselves with festivities and luxurious delicacies of food, wine and intoxication for long hours of time without concerns and worries. They enjoy good time by way of swims in Sarovaras, rivers and lotus-ponds and deal with all kinds of valuable possessions. Underneath these Lokas shines Bhagavan Vishnu's 'Tamoguna Rupa' as Sesha Naga named as Anantha, worshipped by Siddhas, Devatas, Devarshis and Daityas alike. Lying under the entire Universe, the mighty Sesha Deva bears the brunt of the Prithvi and the 'Charaachara Jagat']. Parama Shiva recalled the soul of Devi Rati and assured her that her dear husband would be reborn as Pradyumna as the son of Rukmini-Shri Krishna and that she would be always alive yet unseen till Pradyumna would attain his punarjamna and be reborn as his wife everafter. Meanwhile, Shiva bestows to her the 'upadesha' of Ekaakshara Ganesha Mantra GA.

Chapter 89 details the Pradyumna Mayavati vritthanta as follows: The Souls of Kamadeva and Rati Devi performed bhakti-shraddhayukta ekadasha Ganesha Mantra for long. Lakshmi Swarupa Rukmini the 'patthamahishi' of Lord Krishna dreamt that Ganesha blessed her to soon concieve a Triloka vijaya Pradyumna soon. Meanwhile Manmadha's soul in the process of 'ekaakshara mantranushthaana' performed the vision of installing a Ganesha Murti pratima and named him as Mahotkata Ganesha. Pradyumna was born but even as a child was stolen from Lord Krishna's palace by a demon named Shambhara but threw the child away in a sea. A huge fish gulped the child and the fish was caught by a fisherman and presented back to Shambhara. Unaware of the contents of the fish, it got landed on the table of the Royal kichen and the cook named Mayavati cut the stomach of the fish and found a crying boy in it and little realising the boy's antecedents brought him up the lot of affection. Brahmarshi Narada appeared and revealed the antecedents of Pradyumna who over the years grew up as a young and handsome youth with the born gift of extraodinary intelligence. She took the youth to Rukmini Krishna palace and as they were pleasantly shocked as they did have the vision of the boy's return home. Devi Mayavati however put the condition of returning the youth only after their consent to her wedding with the prince, despite the age difference and the youth agreed as he too was fond of her more like a lover than a mother!

[ Vishnu Purana provides the details briefly: Pradyumna was born to Rukmini and Krishna and the son looked exactly like Krishna. When he was hardly ten days old, Demon Sambara kidnapped the child not knowing that he was the son of Krishna threw him in the Sea as a huge fish ate him but the child was safe in its belly. A fisherman caught hold of the big fish and presented it to the King Sambara who in turn gave it to Mayavati the head cook of the King's kitchen who cut the fish to find an attractive baby inside.

At that very juncture, Brahmarshi Narada appeared in the kitchen and revealed the Story to Mayavati of Lord Rudra turning 'Manmadha' (Cupid) into ashes when he and Rati (Cupid's wife) aimed Floral Arrows. Lord Rudra gave boons that in their next birth, Cupid would be born as Lord Krishna's son Pradyumna and Mayavati as Rati. As Pradyumna grew as a youngman, Mayavati desired to marry him despite wide difference of age. Pradyumna was popularly known as 'Vyuha' as the Lord of Intelligence, along with three of His other names viz Vasudeva (Lord of Consciousness); Sankarshana (Lord of Individuality) and Aniruddha (Lord of Intelligence). Eventually Pradyumna killed Sambara, married Mayavati and stayed with Rukmini and Krishna at Dwaraka].

Another episode of Pradyumna's son Aniruddha and Usha were too relevant to further emphasize the glory of Sankata Ganesha Vrata: [Devi Usha the daughter of Banasura fell in love with Anituddha the grandson of Krishna and Rukmini and brought Aniruddha by her magical powers to her living private place by force. Krishna, Balarama and Pradyumna, having performed duly the Ganesha Sankata vrata were able to fort of Banasura- which was far away from Dwaraka to Assam- attacked Banasura. The asura, a Shiva bhakta, surrendered after a fierce battle and requested him to let Aniruddha marry his daughter as she was madly in love with the youth. With the formal consent of Aniruddha, the couple were brought back to Dwaraka with celebrations by a royal chariot with festivities.

Chapters 90-92: Vyalambodara Ganesha-Kashyapa and his progeny attracted to Ganesha Mantras naming Ganesha variously with His glory! As once Bhagavan Shiva was annoyed the Seha Naga around his neck he threw him off to earth and the latter ran for the 'sharana' of Ganesha and practised the Shadakshara Ganesha Mantra for thousand years and finally Ganesha along with Siddhi and Buddhi gave his vision. He blessed and honoured the Maha Sarpa right around his waist and since then Ganesha enriched his keeri as Vyalambodara. The ever grateful Adi Shesha raised a significant Ganesha Temmple naming Ganesha as Dharanidhara. Following a'Maha Pralaya', Brahma initiated 'punah srishti' and in the process was born Kashyapa. The latter retired to 'maha vanas' and practised Ekaakshara Ganesha Maha Mantra for long and Ganesha was blessed to promote and strengthen 'srishti' as the Muni wedded Diti, Aditi, Danu, Kadru, Vinata adi illustrious wives. The progeny of the men and women thus procured had all become Ganesha's significant seva-sevikas. To Diti and Aditi were born Daityas and Devatas, from Danu were born Danavas, and from others were born as Kinnara, Yaksha, Sidda, Chaarana, Guhyaka, Sarpaaadis. Kashyapa taught Ganesha Mantras for lasting longevities and name for generations; some were taught ekaakshara-shadaakshara-panchaakshara-dwaaashaakshara manras as per their proclivities and behaviur patterns either by their buddhi or otherwise. They were directed to meditate Ganesha as chaturbhuja- shad bhuja-ashtabhuja- dasha bhuja-dwaadasha bhuja-ashtaadasha bhuja- or sahasra bhja in varied forms as boys, youth and old as also as riding muushaka-simha-mayura vahanas.

[ Kashyapa Maha Muni's background is vividly described in Brahma Purana as follows: Daksha couple gave birth to sixty eight, ten of whom were married to the Dharma Deva and thirteen Kashyapa Maharshi, twenty-seven daughters were married to Soma or Chandra. The remaining daughters were married to the Arishtanemi, Vahuputra, Angirasa and Krishashva Maharshis. The ten daughters who were married to the Dharma Deva were named Arundhati, Vasu, Yami, Lamba, Bhanu, Marutvati, Sankalpa, Muhurta. Sadhya and Vishva. Arundhati's children were the material objects of the world. Vasu's children were the eight gods known as the Vasus. Their names were Apa, Dhruva, Soma, Dhara, Salila, Anala, Pratyusha and Prabhasa. Anala's son was Kumara. Because Kumara was brought up by goddesses known as the Krittikas, he came to be called Kartikeya. Prabhasa's son was Vishvakarma. Vishvakarma was skilled in architecture and the making of jewelry. He became the architect of the gods. Sadhya's children were the gods known as Sadhyadevas and Vishva's children were the gods known as Vishvadervas. The twenty-seven daughters of Daksha who were married to Soma are known as the nakshatras (stars). Kashyapa married thirteen of Daksha's daughters. Their names were Aditi, Diti, Danu, Arishta, Surasa, Khasa, Surabhi, Vinata. Tamra, Krodhavasha, Ila, Kadru and Muni. Aditi's sons were the twelve gods

known as the adityas. Their names were Vishnu, Shakra. Aryama, Dhata, Vidhata, Tvashta, Pusha, Vivasvana, Savita, MitraVaruna, Amsha and Bhaga.Diti's sons were the daityas (demons). They were named Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakashipu, and amongst their descendants were several other powerful daityas liked Bali and Banasura. Diti also had a daughter named Simhika who was married to a danava named Viprachitti. Their offspring's were terrible demons like Vatapi, Namuchi, Ilvala, Maricha and the Nivatakavachas. The hundred sons of Danu came to be known as danavas. The danavas were thus cousins to the daityas and also to the adityas. In the danava line were born demons like the Poulamas and Kalakeyas. Arishta's sons were the Gandharvas (singers of heaven). Surasa gave birth to sarpas, the snakes. Khasa's children were the Yakshas (demi-gods who were the companions of Kubera, the god of Wealth) and the Rakshasas. Surabhi's descendants were cows and buffaloes. Vinata had two sons named Aruna and Garuda. Garuda became the king of the birds. Tamra has six daughters. From these daughters were born owls, eagles, vultures, crows, water-fowl, horses, camels and donkeys. Krodhavasha had fourteen thousand children known as nagas (snakes). Ila gave birth to trees, creepers, shrubs and bushes. Kadru's sons were also known as nagas or snakes. Among the more important of Kadru's sons were Ananta, Vasuki, Takshaka and Nahusha. Muni gave birth to the Apsaras (dancers of heaven). Diti's children (daityas) and Aditi's children (Adityas) continually fought amongst themselves. On one particular occasion, Devas succeeded in killing many of the demons. Thirsting for revenge, Diti began to pray to her husband, Kashyapa that she be given birth to a son who would kill Indra, the king of the Devas.Kashyapa found it difficult to refuse his wife outright but gave a condition that she would have to bear the son in your womb for a hundred years. Diti resolved to do so but Indra came to know about Diti's resolve and was waiting for an opportunity to save himself. There was an occasion when, tired after her prayers. Diti went to sleep without first washing her feet. This was an unclean act and it gave Indra the required opportunity. He adopted a miniscule form and entered Diti's womb. With his weapon vajra, he sliced up the baby inside the womb into seven parts. The baby naturally began to cry at the pain. Indra kept on saying, 'ma ruda' that is, 'don't cry.' But the baby, or rather its seven parts, would not listen. Indra thereupon sliced up each of the seven parts into seven more sections, so that there were forty-nine sections in all. When these forty-nine sections were born, they came to be known as the Maruts, from the words - ma ruda- that Indra had addressed them. Since Diti had not been able to adhere to the conditions her husband had set, the Maruts did not kill Indra. They instead became Indra's followers or companions, and were treated as Devas.]

Maha Muni Kashyapa assuringly taught the generations of his progeny and was never tired of performing upadeshas to each one in his sons and daughters, grand sons and grand daghters and further on: to munis as 'Ekadanta', to gandharvas and kinnaras as 'Kapila', to Guhya - Chaarana - Siddhas as 'Gaja karna'; to Manushras as 'Lambodara; to Vanya Mrigas as 'Vikata', to Parvata Vrikshas as 'Vighna Naashaka', to Pakshis as 'Ganaadhipa', to Jalaashayaas as 'Ganaadhyasha', to krumi-keetadis and oushadhi- Vanaspatis as 'Bhala chandra', and to all Sachetana Pranis as 'Gajaanana'.

Sumukhaschaika dantascha kapilo gaja karnikah, Lambodarascha vikato Vighna naasho Ganaadhi - pah/Dhumraketurganaadhyaksho phaalachandro Gajaananah, dwaadashaitaani naamaani yah pathe-cchrunu yaadapi/ Vidyaarambhe Vivaahecha praveshe nirgame tathaa,sangraame sankate chiva vighnastasya na jaayate/ Sumukha - Ekadanta -.Kapila - Gajakarnika -Lambodara -Vikata- Vighnanaasha - Ganaadhipa- Dhumraketu - Ganaadhyaksha - Phalachandra - Gajaanana-- these are the twelve titles of Ganesha once recited, no obscacles could ever be faced at the beginnings of Vidyaaramba- Vivaha- the Beginning or even Exit such as of successful battle field and any such of Acts of auspiciousness.

## Ganesha Purana Mahatmya

Ganesha Purana 'shravana-pathana-manana' is stated as 'manushya janma-marana- mukta hetu', sahasra tulya swarna daana, shrouta -yagjnaanushthaana, koti kanyaa daana, gosahasra daana, Vedanga sahita Veda Shastra paatha paraayana, and 'Itihaasa-Ashtaadasha Purana shravana-pathana paaraayana'. Bhuta-Preta-Putana-Bala graha nivaarana as also sarvaabheeshtha pradaana are assured. Ganesha stotra paraayana with the 'avagaahana' of the inner meanings would ward off maha paatakas, and 'sheeghra manoratha praapti'. Sarva Tirtha snaana, Panchaagni Saadhana, and the resultant sthita pragjnatva are facilitated by Ganesha Purana!

#### Conclusion

Ganesha occupies pride of place in Hindu Dharma.

Bharata Varsha gradually adopted Videsha Samskrti; new culture, life-style and even new psyche. In the process, the Vedic Dharma witnessed some changes in the process of evolution. As the Rulers changed, so did the cultures yet the core remained intact. Buddha/ Ashoka created a new versions of Hinduism; Vikramaditya resisted the onslaught of Barbarians like Shakas, Mlecchhas, Yavanas, Tursharas, Parasikas (Persians), and Hunas.Shatavahanas controlled Shakas, Chinese, Bahmikas, Kamarupas, Rome and Ishaamashih (Jesus Christ). King Bhoja resisted the cult of Prophet Mahammad. But Pathans overpowered Prithviraja and thus the Bharata Varsha witnessed some dissipation of Hindu Dharma. The Varnashrama gradually became a virtual non-entity excepting in somewhat feeble and diluted forms.

The glorious contribution made by renowned 'Acharyas' to revive and sustain Hindu Dharma is incredible; the illustrious Acharyas included Ramananda, Nimbaditya, Madhavaachrya, Jayadeva, Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Chaitanya Maha Prabhu, Shakteyas and so on. The role of Regional Kings like Shivaji and even Kings of alien Dharmas like Akbar-as Hindu influence in reverse-was evident on the large canvas of Hinduism. Sweeping changes were made by the British Rule in the entire life style of Indians and the considerable inevitable mix of races diluting the Dharma. Yet, *aakaashat patitam toyam yadhaa gacchati saagaram, Sarve deva namaskaarah Keshavam pratigacchati!* Indeed, there are innumerable paths in several directions to reach the mountain top to attain the Unique Paramatma.

Indeed there have been divisions even of Hindu thought: Adi Shankara is the exponent of 'Kevala Advaita' or Fundamental Monism; Ramanujacharya is an ardent exponent of Visisthta Advaita or of Qualified Monism; Nimbakaacharya is the exponent of Bhedaabhedavaada or of differential-non differential discipline; Madavacharya is the exponent of Dualism of Paramatma and Jeevatma; Vallbhacharya is the exponent of Suddha Advaita or Pure Monism.

Then came the Brahmo Samaj movement heralded by Raja Rama Mohan Roy which no doubt was essentially Hinduism be defied that Hindu Scriptures ought to be catholic and the Samaj pioneers read out publicly to Christians and Muslims too. After a long spell the movement got dissipated.

Anti-Vigraha Aaradhana Movement, Athiesm, Nastikata are the weeds in some pockets yet.

But all these interpratations notwithstanding, the realism that death is the Truth, the thought that all the beings in srishti are but the birds in their respective cages and 'praanas' finally evaporate with their karmas of pluses and minuses are weighed for 'punarjanmas' in the Time Cycle till the jump off into eternal bliss which is but an illusion is possibe.

Meanwhilet the core of Hinduism; Vedic Culture survives, albeit incorporating and absorbing external and internal influences in the process of evolution, and continues in its quentessential form. And so does

the glory of Tri Murtis, Tri Shaktis, and countless Devatas and significantly of **Ganesha** the Prime Deity whose glory is unchallengeable in the Hindu Dharma as the primeaval icon of knowledge, adored and admired by Buddhi and Siddhi.

Ganesha Vrata, puja, naama smarana, with faith and dedication are expected to transform the Lives in the ongoing and hencefoth lives but absorption of Maha Ganesha into one's psyche is the fundamental truth! The narration of His Janana, primacy of his worship even by Tri Murthi down to Indraadi Devas, sarva pranis, his child hood kreedas, vindication of his supremacy to Chandra deva, Kubera, Devi Tulasi, and so on, and subsequently the Ganesha Purana Saaraamsha detailing mortals including Maha Munis like Veda Vyasa, Kashyapa, and a series of Chakravartis such as Kartaveeryaarjuna and of famed Kings of varied Rajyas, besides of even maha paataka manushyas who were blessed by his total surrender

In the Essence of Ganesha as also Ganesha Purana Saaraamsha, the major highlights constitute the Ganesha Vrata Vidhana and the Ganesha Sankata Vimochana Vratha details . Skanda Purana's Ganesha Vrata Kadhaa Shrayana Vidhana too is elaborated.

Vakratunda mahaa kaaya koti Suryasamaprabha, nirvighnam kurumedeva sarva kaaryeshu sarvadaa/Maha Ganesha with collossal body and elephant head resplendent with the radiance of billion Suns! we beseech you with all humility and devotion to destroy all obstacles and ensure success in our deeds of virtue.

# ANNEXURE: GANESHA GAKAARA SAHASRA NAAMA

ॐ श्री महागणपतये नमः ॐ गणेश्वराय नमः ॐ गणाध्यक्षाय नमः ॐ गणाराध्याय नमः ॐ गणप्रियाय नमः ॐ गणाप्राया नमः ॐ गणाप्राया नमः ॐ गणाप्राया नमः ॐ गणाप्राये नमः ॐ गणाप्राये नमः ॐ गणाप्राये नमः ॐ गणाप्राये नमः ॐ गणाधिपाय नमः ॐ गणाप्राय नमः ॐ गणाप्राय नमः ॐ गणाप्राया नमः ॐ गणाप्रायाय नमः ॐ गणाप्राया

वरप्रदाय नमः ॐ गणस्तुताय नमः ॐ गणप्राणाय नमः ॐ गणसर्वस्वदायकाय नमः ॐ गणवल्लभमूर्तये नमः ॐ गणभूतये नमः ॐ गणेष्ठदाय नमः ॐ गणसौख्यप्रदाय नमः ॐ गणदुःखप्रणाशनाय नमः गणप्रिथितनाम्ने नमः ॐ गणाभीष्टकराय नमः ॐ गणामान्याय नमः ॐ गणख्याताअय नमः ॐ गणवीताय नमः ॐ गणोत्कटाय नमः ॐ गणपालाय नमः ॐ गणवराय नमः ॐ गणगौरवदाय नमः ॐ गणगर्जितसंतुष्टाय नमः ॐ गणस्वच्छंदगाय नमः ॐ गणराजाय नमः ॐ गणश्रीदाय नमः ॐ गणभीतिहराय नमः ॐ गणमूर्धाभिषिक्ताय नमः । १००

ॐ गणसैन्यपुरःसराय नमः ॐ गुणातीताय नम ॐ गुणमयाय नमः ॐ गुणत्रयविभगकृते नमः ॐ गुणिने नमः ॐ गुणकृतिधराय नमः ॐ गुणशालिने नमः ॐ गुणप्रियाय नमः ॐ गुणपूर्णाय नमः ॐ गुणभोधये नमः ॐ गुण भाजे नमः ॐ गुणदुरगाय नमः ॐ गुणागुणवपुषे नमः ॐ गुणशरीराय नमः ॐ गुणमण्डिताय नमः ॐ गुणस्रष्टे नमः गुणेशाय नमः ॐ गुणेशानाय नमः ॐ गुणेश्वराय नमः ॐ गुणसृष्टजगत्संगाय नमः ॐ गुणसंघाय नमः ॐ गुणैकराजे नमः ॐ गुणप्रविष्टाय नमः ॐ गुणभुवे नमः ॐ गुणीकृतचराचराय नमः ॐ गुणप्रवणसंतुष्टाय नमःॐ गुणहीनपराङ्मुखाय नमः ॐ गुणैकभुवे नमः ॐ गुणश्रेष्टाय नमः ॐ गुणज्येष्टाय नमः ॐ गुणप्रभवे नमः ॐ गुणज्ञाय नमः ॐ गुणसंपूज्याय नमः ॐ गुणप्रणतपादाब्जाय नमः ॐ गुणिगीताय नमः ॐ गुणोज्ज्वलाय नमः गुणवते नमः ॐ गुणसंपन्नाय नमः ॐ गुणानन्दितमानसाय नमः ॐ गुणसंचारचतुराय नमः ॐ गुणसंचयसुंदराय नमः ॐ गुणगौराय नमः गुणाधाराय नमः ॐ गुणसंवृतचेतनाय नमःॐ गुणकृते नमः ॐ गुणभृते नमः ॐ गुण्याय नमः ॐ गुणाग्रयाय नमः ॐ गुणपारदृशे नमः ॐ गुणप्रचारिणे नमः ॐ गुणयुजे नमःॐ गुणागुणविवेककृते नमःॐ गुणाकराय नमः ॐ गुणप्रवणवर्धनाय नमः ॐ गुणगृढचराय नमः ॐ गौणसर्वसंसारचेष्टिताय नमः ॐ गुणदक्षिणसौहार्दाय नमः ॐ गुणदक्षिणतत्त्वविदे नमः ॐ गुणहारिणे नमः ॐ गुणकलाय नमः ॐ गुणसंघसखाय नमः ॐ गुणसन्स्कृतसंसाराय नमः ॐ गुणतत्त्वविवेकाय नमः ॐ गुणगर्वधराय नमः ॐ गौणसुखदुःखोदयाय नमः ॐ गुणाय नमः ॐ गुणाधीशाय नमः ॐ गुणालयाय नमः ॐ गुणवीक्षणालालसाय नमः ॐ गुणगौरवदात्रे नमः ॐ गुणदात्रे नमः ॐ गुणप्रभ्वे नमः ॐ गुणकृते नमः ॐ गुणसंबोधाय नमः गुणभुजे नमः ॐ गुणबंधनाय नमः ॐ गुणहृद्याय नमः ॐ गुणस्थायिने नमः ॐ गुणदायिने नमः ॐ गुणोत्कटाय नमः ॐ गुणचक्रचराय नमः ॐ गुणावताराय नमः ॐ गुणबांधवाय नमः ॐ गुणबंधवे नमः ॐ गुणप्रज्ञाय नमः ॐ गुणप्राज्ञाय नमः ॐ गुणालयाय नमः ॐ गुणधात्रे नमः ॐ गुणप्राणाय नमः ॐ गुणगोपाय नमः ॐ गुणाश्रयाय नमः ॐ गुणयायिने नमः ॐ गुणदायिने नमः ॐ गुणपाय नमः ॐ गुणपालकाय नमः ॐ गुणहृततनवे नमः ॐ गौणाय नमः ॐ गीर्वाणाय नमः ॐ गुणगौरवाय नमः २००।

ॐ गुणवत्पुजितपदाय नमः ॐ गुणवत्प्रीतिदाय नमः ॐ गुणवते नमः ॐ गीतकीर्तये नमः ॐ गुणवद्भद्धसौहृदाय नमः ॐ गुणवद्वरदाय नमः ॐ गुणवत्प्रतिपालकाय नमः ॐ गुणवत्प्रणसंतुष्टाय नमः ॐ गुणवद्रचित -द्रवाय नमः ॐ गुणवद्रक्षणपराय नमः ॐ गुणवात्प्रणयप्रियाय नमः ॐ गुणवच्चक्रसंचाराय नमः ॐ गुणवत्कीर्तिवर्धनाय नमः ॐ गुणवद्गुणचित्तस्थाय नमः ॐ गुणवद्गुणरक्षणाय नमः ॐ गुणवत्योषणकराय नमः ॐ गुणवच्छत्रसूदनाय नमः ॐ गुणविसिद्धिदात्रे नमः ॐ गुणवद्गौरवप्रदाय नमः ॐ गुणवत्प्रणवस्वांताय नमः ॐ गुणवदुगुणभूषणाय नमः ॐ गुणवत्कुलविद्वेषि विनाशकरणक्षमाय नमः ॐ गुणिस्तुतगुणाय नमः ॐ गर्जत्प्रलयांबुदनिःस्वनाय नमः ॐ गजाय नमः ॐ गजाननाय नमः ॐ गजपतये नमः ॐ गर्जन्नागयुद्धविशारदाय नमः ॐ गजकर्णाय नमः ॐ गजराजाय नमः ॐ गजाननाय नमः ॐ गजरूपधराय नमः ॐ गर्जते नमः ॐ गजयूथोद्धुरध्वनये नमः ॐ गजाधीशाय नमः ॐ गजाधराय नमः ॐ गजासुरजयोद्धुरय नमः ॐ गजदंताय नमः ॐ गजवराय नमः ॐ गजकुंभाय नमः ॐ गजध्वनये नमः ॐ गजमायाय नमः ॐ गजमयाय नमः ॐ गजिश्रये नमःॐ गजगर्जिताय नमः गजामयहराय नमः ॐ गजपृष्टिप्रदाय नमः ॐ गजोत्पत्तये नमः ॐ गजत्रात्रे नमः ॐ गजहेतवे नमः गजाधिपाय नमः ॐ गजमुख्याय नमः ॐ गजकुलप्रवराय नमः ॐ गजदैत्यघ्ने नमः ॐ गजकेतवे नमः ॐ गजाध्यक्षाय नमः ॐ गजसेतवे नमः ॐ गजाकृतये नमः ॐ गजवंद्याय नमः ॐ गजप्राणाय नमः ॐ गजसेव्याय नमः ॐ गजप्रभवे नमः ॐ गजमत्ताय नमः ॐ गजेशानाय नमः ॐ गजेशाय नमः ॐ गजपुंगवाय नमः ॐ गजदंतधराअय नमःॐ गर्जन्मधूपाय नमः ॐ गजवेषभृते नमःॐ गजच्छदाने नमः ॐ गजाग्रस्थाय नमः ॐ गजयायिने नमः ॐ गजाजयाय नमः ॐ गजराजे नमः ॐ गजयूथस्थाय नमः ॐ गजगर्जक -भंजकाय नमः ॐ गर्जितोज्झितदैत्यासिने नमः ॐ गर्जितत्रातविष्टपाय नमः ॐ गानज्ञाय नमः ॐ गानकुशलाय नमः ॐ गानतत्त्वविवेचकाय नमः ॐ गानश्लाघिने नमः ॐ गानरसाय नमः ॐ गानज्ञानपरायणाय नमः ॐ गानागमज्ञाय नमः ॐ गानांगाय नमः ॐ गानप्रवणचेतनाय नमः ॐ गानध्येयाय नमः ॐ गानगम्याय नमः ॐ गानध्यानपरायणाय नमः ॐ गानभुवे नमः ॐ गानकृते नमः ॐ गानचतुराय नमः गानविद्याविशारदाय नमः ॐ गानशीलाय नमः गानशालिने नमः ॐ गतश्रमाय नमः ॐ गानविज्ञानसंपन्नाय नमः ॐ गानश्रवणलालसाय नमः ॐ गानायत्ताय नमः । ३००।

ॐ गानमयाय नमः ॐ गानप्रणयवते नमः ॐ गानध्यात्रे नमः ॐ गानबुद्धये नमः ॐ गानोत्सुकमनसे नमः ॐ गानोत्सुकाय नमः ॐ गानभूमये नमः ॐ गानसीम्ने नमः ॐ गानोज्ज्वलाय नमः ॐ गानांगज्ञानवते नमः ॐ गानमानवते नमः ॐ गानपेशलाय नमः ॐ गानवत्प्रणयाय नमः ॐ गानसमुद्राय नमः ॐ गानभूषणाय नमः ॐ गानसिंधवे नमः ॐ गानपराय नमः ॐ गानप्राणाय नमः ॐ गणाश्रयाय नमः ॐ गनैकभुवे नमः ॐ गानहृष्ट्राय नमः ॐ गानचक्षुषे नमः ॐ गनैकदृशे नमः ॐ गानमत्ताय नमः ॐ गानरुचये नमः ॐ गानविदे नमः ॐ गनवित्प्रियाय नमः ॐ गानांतरात्मने नमःॐ गानाद्व्याय नमः ॐ गानभ्राजत्स्वभावाय नमः ॐ गनमायाय नमः ॐ गानधराय नमः ॐ गानविद्याविशोधकाय नमः ॐ गानाहितघ्राय नमः ॐ गानेन्द्राय नमः ॐ गानलीलाय नमः गतिप्रियाय नमः गानाधीशाय नमः ॐ गानलयाय नमः गानाधाराय नमः ॐ गतीश्वराय नमः ॐ गानवन्मानदाय नमः ॐ गानभूतये नमः ॐ गानैकभूतिमते नमः ॐ गानताननताय नमः ॐ गानतानदानविमोहिताय नमः ॐ गुरुवे नमः ॐ गुरूदरश्रेणये नमः ॐ गुरुतत्त्वार्थदर्शनाय नमः ॐ गुरुस्तुताय नमः ॐ गुरुगुणाय नमः ॐ गुरुमायाय नमः ॐ गुरुप्रियाय नमः ॐ गुरुकीर्तये नमः ॐ गुरुभुजाय नमः ॐ गुरुवक्षसे नमः ॐ गुरुप्रभाय नमः ॐ गुरुलक्षणसंपन्नाय नमः ॐ गुरुद्रोहपराङ्मुखाय नमः ॐ गुरुविद्याय नमः ॐ गुरुप्रणाय नमः ॐ गुरुबाहुबलोच्छ्याय नमः ॐ गुरुदैत्यप्राणहराय नमः ॐ गुरुदैत्यापहारकाय नमः ॐ गुरुगर्वहराय नमः ॐ गुरुप्रवराय नमः ॐ गुरुदर्पघ्ने नमः ॐ गुरुगौरवदायिने नमः ॐ गुरुभीत्यपहारकाय नमः ॐ गुरुशुण्डाय नमः ॐ गुरुस्कन्धाय नमः ॐ गुरुजंघाय नमः ॐ गुरुप्रथाय नमः ॐ गुरुभालाय नमः ॐ गुरुगलाय नमः ॐ गुरुश्रिये नमः ॐ गुरुगर्वनुदे नमः ॐ गुरवे नमः ॐ गुरुपीनांसाय नमः ॐ गुरुप्रणयलालसाय नमः ॐ गुरुमुख्याय नमः ॐ गुरुकुलस्थायिने नमः ॐ गुणगुरवे नमः ॐ गुरुसंशयभेत्रे नमः ॐ गुरुमानप्रदायकाय नमः ॐ गुरुधर्मसदाराध्याय नमः ॐ गुरुधर्मनिकेतनाय नमः ॐ गुरुदैत्यगलच्छेत्रे नमः ॐ गुरुसैन्याय नमः ॐ गुरुद्युतये नमः ॐ गुरुधर्माग्रण्याय नमः ॐ गुरुधर्मधुरंधराय नमः ॐ गरिष्ठाय नमः ॐ गुरुसंतापशमनाय नमः ॐ गुरुपूजिताय नमः ॐ गुरुधर्मधराय नमः ॐ गौरवंधर्मधराय नमः ॐ गदापहाय नमः ॐ गुरुशास्त्रविचारज्ञाय नमः ॐ गुरुशास्त्रकृतोद्यमाय नमः । ४००।

ॐ गुरुशास्त्रार्थनिलयाय नमः ॐ गुरुशास्त्रालयाय नमः ॐ गुरुमन्त्राय नमः ॐ गुरुश्रेष्ठाय नमः ॐ गुरुमन्त्रफलप्रदाय नमः गुरुस्त्रीगमन दोषप्रायश्चित्त- निवारकाय नमः ॐ गुरुसंसारसुखदाय नमः ॐ गुरुसंसारदुःखभिदे नमः ॐ गुरुश्लोघापराय नमः ॐ गौरभानु खंडावतंस ते नमः ॐ गुरुप्रसन्नमूर्तये नमः ॐ गुरुशापविमौचकाय नमः ॐ गुरुकांतये नमः ॐ गुरुमहते नमः ॐ गुरुशासनपालकाय नमः ॐ गुरुतंत्राय नमः ॐ गुरुप्रज्ञाय नमः ॐ गुरुभाय नमः ॐ गुरुदैवताय नमः ॐ गुरुविक्रम संचाराय नमः ॐ गुरुदृशे नमः ॐ गुरुविक्रमाय नमः ॐ गुरुक्रमाय नमः ॐ गुरुप्रेष्ठाय नमः ॐ गुरुपाखंडखंडकाय नमः ॐ गुरुगर्जितसंपूर्णब्रह्माण्डाय नमः ॐ गुरुगर्जिताय नमः ॐ गुरुपुत्रप्रियसखाय नमः ॐ गुरुपुत्रभयापहाय नमः ॐ गुरुपुत्र परित्रात्रे नमः ॐ गुरुपुत्रवरप्रदाय नमः ॐ गुरुपुत्रार्तिशमनाय नमः ॐ गुरुपुत्राधि -नाशनाय नमः ॐ गुरुपुत्रप्राणदाय नमः ॐ गुरुभिक्तिपरायणाय नमः गुरुविज्ञानविभवाय नमः ॐ गौरभानुवरप्रदाय नमः ॐ गौरभानुसुताय नमः ॐ गौरभानुत्रासापहारकाय नमः ॐ गौरभानुप्रियाय नमः ॐ गौरभानवे नमः ॐ गौरववर्धनाय नमः ॐ गौरभानुपरित्रात्रे नमः ॐ गौरभानुसखाय नमः ॐ गौरभानुप्रभवे नमः ॐ गौरभानुमत्प्राण शनाय नमः ॐ गौरीतेजःसमुत्पन्नाय नमः ॐ गौरीहृदयनन्दनाय नमः ॐ गौरीस्तनंधयाय नमः ॐ गौरीमनोवाञ्चितसिद्धिकृते नमः ॐ गौराय नमः ॐ गौरगुणाय नमः ॐ गौरप्रकाशाय नमः ॐ गौरभैरवाय नमः ॐ गौरीशनन्दनाय नमः ॐ गौरीप्रियपुत्राय नमः ॐ गदाधराय नमः ॐ गौरीवरप्रदाय नमः ॐ गौरीप्रणयाय नमः ॐ गौरच्छवये नमः ॐ गौरीगणेश्वराय नमः ॐ गौरीप्रवणाय नमः ॐ गौरभावनाय नमः ॐ गौरात्मने नमः ॐ गौरकीर्तये ॐ गौरभावाय नमः ॐ गरिष्ठदृशे नमः ॐ गौतमाय नमः ॐ गौतमीनाथाय नमः ॐ गौतमीप्राणवल्लभाय नमः ॐ गौतमाभीष्ट्रवरदाय नमः ॐ गौतमाभयदायकाय नमः ॐ गौतमप्रणयप्रह्वाय नमः ॐ गौतमाश्रमद्ःखघ्ने नमः ॐ गौतमीतीरसंचारिणे नमः ॐ गौतमीतीर्थदायकाय नमः ॐ गौतमापत्परिहराय नमः ॐ गौतमाधिविनाशनाय नमः ॐ गोपतये नमः ॐ गोधनाय नमः ॐ गोपाय नमः ॐ गोपालप्रियदर्शनाय नमः ॐ गोपालाय नमः ॐ गोगणाधीशाय नमः ॐ गोकश्मलनिवर्तकाय नमः ॐ गोसहस्राय नमः ॐ गोपवराय नमः ॐ गोपगोपीसुखावहाय नमः ॐ गोवर्धनाय नमः ॐ गोपगोपाय नमः ॐ गोपाय नमः गोकुलवर्धनाय नमः ॐ गोचराय

नमः ॐ गोचराध्क्षाय नमः ॐ गोचरप्रीतिवृद्धिकृते नमः ॐ गोमिने नमः गोकष्टसंत्रात्रे नमः ॐ गोसंतापनिवर्तकाय नमः ॐ गोष्ठाय नमः ॐ गोष्ठाश्रयाय नमः ।५००।

ॐ गोष्ठपतये नमः ॐ गोधनवर्धनाय नमः ॐ गोष्ठप्रियाय नमः ॐ गोष्ठमयाय नमः ॐ गोष्ठामयनिवर्तकाय नमः ॐ गोलोकाय नमः ॐ गोलकाय नमः ॐ गोभृते नमः ॐ गोभर्त्रे नमः ॐ गोसुखावहाय नमः ॐ गोदुहे नमः गोधुग्गणप्रेष्ठाय नमः ॐ गोदोग्ध्रे नमः ॐ गोपयःप्रियाय नमः ॐ गोत्राय नमः ॐ गोत्रपतये नमः ॐ गोत्रभवाय नमः ॐ गोत्रभयापहाय नमः ॐ गोत्रवृद्धिकराय नमः ॐ गोत्रप्रियाय नमः ॐ गोत्रातिनाशनाय नमः ॐ गोत्रोद्धारपराय नमः ॐ गोत्रप्रभवाय नमः ॐ गोत्रदेवतायै नमः ॐ गोत्रविख्यातनाम्ने नमः ॐ गोत्रिणे नमः गोत्रप्रपालकाय नमः ॐ गोत्रसेतवे नमः ॐ गोत्रकेतवे नमः ॐ गोत्रहेतवे नमः ॐ गतक्लमाय नमः गोत्रत्राणकराय नमः ॐ गोत्रपतये नमः ॐ गोत्रेशपुजिताय नमः ॐ गोत्रविदे नमः ॐ गोत्रभित्तात्रे नमः गोत्रभिद्वरदायकाय नमः ॐ गोत्रभित्पुजितपदाय नमः ॐ गोत्रभिच्छत्रुसूदनाय नमः ॐ गोत्रभित्प्रीतिदाय नमः ॐ गोत्रभिदे नमः ॐ गोत्रपालकाय नमः ॐ गोत्रभिद्गीतचरिताय नमः ॐ गोत्रभिद्राज्यरक्षकाय नमः ॐ गोत्रभिद्वरदायिने नमः ॐ गोत्रभित्प्राणनिलयाय नमः ॐ गोत्रभिद्धयसंहर्त्रे नमः ॐ गोत्रभिन्मानदायकाय नमः ॐ गोत्रभिद्रोपनपराय नमः ॐ गोत्रभित्सैन्यनायकाय नमः ॐ गोत्राधिपप्रियाय नमः गोत्रापुत्रप्रीताय नमः ॐ गिरिप्रियाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थज्ञाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थकृते नमः ॐ ग्रन्थग्रन्थिदाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थविघ्नघ्ने नमः ॐ ग्रन्थादये नमः ॐ ग्रन्थसञ्चारये नमः ॐ ग्रन्थश्रवणलोलुपाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्ताधीनक्रियाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थप्रियाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थार्थतत्त्वविदे नमः ॐ ग्रन्थसंशयसंछेदिने नमः ॐ ग्रन्थवक्ताय नमः ॐ ग्रहाग्रण्ये नमः ॐ ग्रन्थगीतगृणाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थगीताय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थादिपूजिताय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थारंभस्तुताय नमः ग्रन्थग्राहिणे नमः ॐ ग्रन्थार्थपारदृशे नमः ॐ ग्रन्थदृशे नमः ॐ ग्रन्थविज्ञानाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थसंदर्शशोधकाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थकृत्पूजिताय नमः ग्रन्थकराय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थपरायणाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थपारायणपराय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थसंदेहभंजकाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थकृद्वरदात्रे नमः ॐ ग्रन्थकृते नमः ॐ ग्रन्थवन्दिताय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थानुरक्ताय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थज्ञाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थानुग्रहदायकाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थान्तरात्मने नमः ॐ ग्रन्थार्थपण्डिताय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थसौँ हृदाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थपारङ्गमाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थगुणविदे नमः ॐ ग्रन्थविग्रहाय नमः ग्रन्थसेवते नमः ॐ ग्रन्थहेतवे नमःॐ ग्रन्थकेतवे नमः ॐ ग्रहाग्रगाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थपुज्याय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थगेयाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थग्रथनलालसाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थभूमये नमः ॐ ग्रहश्रेष्ठाय नमः ॐ ग्रहकेतवे नमः ॐ ग्रहाश्रयाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थकाराय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थकारमान्याय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थप्रसारकाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थश्रमज्ञाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थांगाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थभ्रमनिवारकाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थप्रवणसर्वाङ्गाय नमः ॐ ग्रन्थप्रणयतत्पराय नमः ॐ गीताय नमः ॐ गीतगृणाय नमः ॐ गीतकीर्तये नमः ॐ गीतविशारदाय नमः ॐ गीतस्फीतये नमः ॐ गीतप्रणयिने नमः ॐ गीतचंचुराय नमः ॐ गीतप्रसन्नाय नमः ॐ गीतात्मने नमः ॐ गीतलोलाय नमः ॐ गीतस्पृहाय नमः ॐ गीताश्रयाय नमः ॐ गीतमयाय नमः ॐ गीततत्वार्थकोविदाय नमः ॐ गीतसंशयसंछेत्रे नमः ॐ गीतसङ्गीतशासनाय नमः ॐ गीतार्थज्ञाय नमः ॐ गीततत्वाय नमः ॐ गीतातत्वाय नमः गताश्रयाय नमः ॐ गीतसाराय नमः ॐ गीतकृतये नमः ॐ गीतविघ्नविनाशनाय नमः ॐ गीतासक्ताय नमः ॐ गीतलीनाय नमः ॐ गीताविगतसंज्वाय नमः ॐ गीतैकदृशे नमः ॐ गीतभृतये नमः ॐ गीताप्रियाय नमः ॐ गतालसाय नमः गीतवाद्यपटवे नमः ॐ गीतप्रभवे नमः ॐ गीतार्थतत्वविदे नमः ॐ गीतागीतविवेकज्ञाय नमः ॐ गीतप्रवणचेतनाय नमः ॐ गतभिये नमः ॐ गतविद्वेषाय नमः ॐ गतसंसारबंधनाय नमः ॐ गतमायाय नमः ॐ गतत्रासाय नमः ॐ गतदःखाय नमः ॐ गतज्वराय नमः ॐ गतासुहृदे नमः ॐ गताज्ञानाय नमः ॐ गतदृष्टाशयाय नमः ॐ गताय नमः ॐ गतार्तये नमः ॐ गतसंकल्पाय नमः ॐ गतदृष्ट्विचेष्टिताय नमः ॐ गताहंहारसंचाराय नमः ॐ गतदर्पाय नमः ॐ गताहिताय नमः ॐ गताविद्याय नमः ॐ गतभयाय नमः ॐ गतागतनिवारकाय नमः ॐ गतव्यथाय नमः ॐ गतापायाय नमः ॐ गतदोषाय नमः ॐ गतेः पराय नमः ॐ गतसर्वविकाराय नमः ॐ गजगर्जितकुञ्जराय नमः ॐ गतकंपितमुपृष्ठाय नमः ॐ गतरुषे नमः ॐ गतकल्मषाय नमः ॐ गतदैन्याय नमः ॐ गतस्तैन्याय नमः ॐ गतमानाय नमः ॐ गतश्रमाय नमः ॐ गतक्रोधाय नमः ॐ गतग्लानये नमः ॐ गतम्लानये नमः ॐ गतभ्रमाय नमः ॐ गताभावाय नमः ॐ गतभवाय नमः ॐ गततत्वार्थसंशयाय नमः ॐ गयासुरशिरश्छेत्रे नमः ॐ गयासुरवरप्रदाय नमः ॐ गयावासाय नमः ॐ गयानाथाय नमः ॐ गयावासिनमस्कृतय नमः ॐ गयातीर्थफलाध्यक्षाय नमः ॐ गयायात्राफलप्रदाय नमः ॐ गयामयाय नमः ॐ गयाक्षेत्राय नमः ॐ गयाक्षेत्रनिवासकृते नमः ॐ गयावासिस्तुताय नमः ॐ गायन्मधुव्रतलसत्कटाय नमः ॐ गायकाय नमःॐ गायकवराय नमः ७००

ॐ गायकेष्टफलप्रदाय नमः ॐ गायकप्रणयिने नमः ॐ गात्रे नमः ॐ गायकाभय -दायकाय नमः ॐ गायकप्रवणस्वांताय नमःॐ गायकप्रथमाय नमः ॐ गायकोद्गीतसंप्रीताय नमः ॐ गायकोत्कटविघ्नघ्ने नमः ॐ गानगेयाय नमः ॐ गायकेशाय नमः ॐ गायकांतरसंचाराय नमः ॐ गायकप्रियदाय नमः ॐ गायकाधीन विग्रहाय नमः ॐ गेयाय नमः ॐ गेयगुणाय नमः ॐ गेयचरिताय नमः ॐ गेयतत्वविदे नमः ॐ गायकत्रासघ्ने नमः ॐ ग्रंथाय नमः ॐ ग्रंथतत्वविवेचकाय नमः ॐ गाढानुरागय नमः ॐ गाढांगाय नमः ॐ गाढगंगाजलोद्वहाय नमः ॐ गाढावगाढजलधये नमः ॐ गाढप्रज्ञाय नमः ॐ गतामयाय नमः ॐ गाढप्रत्यर्थिसैन्याय नमः ॐ गाढानग्रहतत्पराय नमः ॐ गाढाश्लेषरसाभिज्ञाय नमः ॐ गाढनिर्वृत्तिसाधकाय नमः ॐ गंगाधरेष्ट्रवरदाय नमः ॐ गंगाधरभयापहाय नमः ॐ गंगाधरगुरवे नमः ॐ गंगाधरध्यानपरायणाय नमः ॐ गंगाधरस्तुताय नमः ॐ गंगाधरराध्याय नमः ॐ गतस्मयाय नमः ॐ गंगाधरप्रियाय नमः ॐ गंगाधराय नमः ॐ गंगांबुसुन्दराय नमः ॐ गंगाजलरसास्वाद चतुराय नमःॐ गंगानिरताय नमः ॐ गंगाजलप्रणयवते नमः ॐ गंगातीरविहाराय नमः ॐ गंगाप्रियाय नमः गंगाजलावगाहनपराय नमः ॐ गन्धमादनसंवासाय नमः ॐ गन्धमादनकेलिकृते नमः ॐ गन्धानुलिप्तसर्वाङ्गाय नमः ॐ गन्धलुभ्यन्मधुव्रताय नमः ॐ गन्धाय नमः ॐ गन्धर्वराजाय नमः ॐ गन्धर्वप्रियकृते नमः ॐ गन्धर्वविद्यातत्वज्ञाय नमः ॐ गन्धर्वप्रीतिवर्धनाय नमः ॐ गकारबीजनिलयाय नमः ॐ गन्धकाय नमः ॐ गर्विगर्वनृदे नमः ॐ गन्धर्वगणसंसेव्याय नमः ॐ गन्धर्ववरदायकाय नमः ॐ गन्धर्वाय नमः ॐ गन्धमातङ्गाय नमः ॐ गन्धर्वकृलदैवताय नमः ॐ गन्धर्वसंशयच्छेत्रे नमः ॐ गन्धर्ववरदर्पघ्ने नमः ॐ गन्धर्वप्रवणस्वान्ताय नमः ॐ गन्धर्वगणसंस्तृताय नमः ॐ गन्धर्वार्चितपादाब्जाय नमः ॐ गन्धर्वभयहारकाय नमः ॐ गन्धर्वाभयदाय नमः ॐ गन्धर्वप्रीतिपालकाय नमः ॐ गन्धर्वगीतचरिताय नमः ॐ गन्धर्वप्रणयोत्स्काय नमः ॐ गन्धर्वगानश्रवणप्रणयिने नमः ॐ गन्धर्वभाजनाय नमः ॐ गन्धर्वत्राणसन्नद्भय नमः ॐ गन्धर्वसमरक्षमाय नमः ॐ गन्धर्वस्त्रीभिराराध्याय नमः ॐ गानाय नमः ॐ गानपटवे नमः ॐ गच्छाय नमः ॐ गच्छपतये नमः ॐ गच्छनायकाय नमः ॐ गच्छगर्वघ्ने नमः ॐ गच्छराजाय नमः ॐ गच्छेशाय नमः ॐ गच्छराजनमस्कृताय नमःॐ गच्छप्रियाय नमःॐ गच्छगुरवे नमः ॐ गच्छत्राणकृतोद्यमाय नमः ॐ गच्छप्रभवे नमः ॐ गच्छचराय नमः ॐ गच्छप्रियकृतोद्यमाय नमः ॐ गच्छातीतगुणाय नमः ॐ गच्छमर्यादाप्रतिपालकाय नमः गच्छधात्रे नमः ॐ गच्छभर्त्रे नमः ॐ गच्छवन्द्याय नमः ॐ गरोर्गरवे नमः ॐ गत्साय नमः । ८००।

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(Ganesha Gakaara Sahasra Naama Samapti)

### ESSENCE OF KAMAAKSHI VILAASA

**PREFACE** 

On the conclusion of the Series of Essence of Puranas in English, HH Vijayendra Sarasvati of Kanchi mutt at Kanjeevaram, Tamil nadu instructed me to highlight Shri Kamakshi Vilasa, as Maharshi Markandeya described in the Vidya Khanda of Markandeya Maha Purana in great detail. Translations in Telugu and Tamil are also available.

The 'Essence of Kamakshi Vilasa' has fourteen chapters viz. Devi Kamakshi as Tripura Sundari, Kanchipura as Bhuloka Vaikuntha, Hastishaila Mahatmya, details of Varadaraja Swami, the vastness and significance of Vegavati River, Rudra shaala, The Sacred Tree of Ekaamra, Ekaamreshwara and Tapah Kamakshi, SarvaTirtha Mahima in the Bhuvana Vaikuntha, Kamakoti Nagara Nirnaya, Kamakoti 'bilwa' or the secret passage, glories of Maha Tripura Sundari, eminence of Janardana deva the destroyer of fears and difficulties, and superiority of Devi Kamakshi overMaha Deva Shiva Himself!

Till date, a holy visit to Kanchi ever sustains lasting experience; the unity of the roads connecting the followings of Varada Raja Swami and Ekamareshwara is unique. And the outstanding ability to unify the routes of Shiva and Vishnu are truly amazing as reinforced by the Maha Shakti Devi Kamakshi's outstanding presence at Kanchi; in the Ultimate Analysis one needs to deeply meditate the Power *par excellence*which is 'Avyatam Shasvatam Vishnum Anantam Ajam Avyayam' or the UltimateTruth is Unmanifested, Boundless, All Pervasive, Endless, Unborn, and Everlasting.!

I am ever beholden to the lasting blessings of HH and the confidence that he has reposed in me to let larger audience reach in translating the original and present the same as Essence of Shri Kamakshi Vilasa into English.

It is my humble opportunity to reach larger readership in English as already released vide the website kamakoti.org/news.

V. D. N. Rao, Chennai

### ESSENCE OF SHRI KAMAKSHI VILASA

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#### ESSENCE OF SHRI KAMAKSHI VILASA

Shri Maha Tripura Sundaryai Nanamah, Shri Devi Kamashyai Namah

Ayodhyaa Mathuraa Maayaa Kashi Kaanchi hyavantika Puri Dwaravati chaiva Saptaitaah Mokshadaayikaah/

Prathamopaadhyaaya-Devi Kamakshi as Tripura Dhaarini

As a part of Markandeya Purana's Vidya Khanda, King Suratha\* prostrated before Maharshi Markandeya and requested him to enlighten him about the Secret and the hitherto undisclosed details of 'Peetha Trayas'. The Maharshi explained that in the entire Bhu Mandala spread over fifty crore yojanas, there indeed were sixty four thousand 'Maha Peethaas' (Abodes) of Devi of which sixty Peethas were Superior; fifty of these were the selected ones buttwenty four ones were further selected; among these closely selected Peethaas were eighteen in numeber but finally Three of the Outstanding Peethaas were Kamaraja Peetha which was also known as 'Vaakbhava Kutaa' or of Vaakbhava Beeja – Aim, which was worshipped by Bhagavan Hayagriva; the second one was called Jaalandhara Peethawhich was Madhya Kutaa or of Manmadha Beeja-Kleem, which was worshipped by Bhrigu Maharshi; this was called as 'Jwaala Mukhi Kshetra' some call it as the Jwalaa Mukhi Temple in the Area of Mannur near Ongole in Andhra Pradesh and some others opine that this is in Assam as the Temple of the same name]; the third one was called Odyaana Peetha known as the Shakti Kutaa of the Shakti Beeja-Souh, which was worshipped by Veda Vyasa Maharshi in Kamarupa Region [stated to be in Assam]. Of these Three Outstanding Peethaas called the Tri Peethas, the Kamaraja Peetha is stated to be in Kanchipura in Dakshina Bharat situated near the Sea towards East and this Samudra was blessed that there were no restrictions of bathing in it irrespective of day and night and would be eligible for 'Vishnu Pada Prapti'. To the Nirruti (South West) of the Eastern Sea within a sixty yojana distance was a Sacred River called River Dakshimna Pinakini; the Shiva Dhanush or Shiva's Bow which was lying on Bhumi (Ground) was lifted by Bhrigu Maharshi and as he lifted it up there sprang a River named by the Maharshi as Pinakini and blessed the River that whosoever bathed in it would be freed from all his/her sins and would attain Vishnu Loka. To the Vayavya (North West) of the Eastern Sea was situated within a seven Yojana distance, a Sanctified Shilaahrada or a Rocky Water Bodywhere Lord Hanuman washed 'SanjeeviniOushadhi' (Indigenous Medicine) and enabled Lord Lakshmana to get revived in the latter's battle with Indrajit the son of the Ramayana Epic's King Ravana; this Tirtha was blessed to any person bathing in the Holy Water would live long and then achieve Vishnu Loka. To the Ishana (North East) of the Eastern Side of the Shilaahrada was situated Swami Pushkarini Tirtha which indeed was River Viraja; in the days of yore Bhagavan Narayana desired to wed Padmavati and on assuming the Form of a Siddha Muni directed each of his disciples to bring in the waters of various Tirthas which was basically converted as Viraja River, eventually named as Swami Pushkarinki; those who would bathe in this consecrated Tirtha would enjoy fulfillment of life.

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<sup>\*</sup>King Suratha was defeated by enemies and took refuge in the Ashram of Sage Sumedha and the Sage taught the Shodashaakshari Mantra of Devi Chamundi; a Vaishya named Samadhiwho was disenchanted with his family alsoapproached the Sage and was taught the Traykshari Mantra of Devi; both the King and the Vaishya did severe Tapas and Devi gaveboons to King to regain his Kingdom and Vaishya who opted for Salvation secured his wish. (Source: Devi Bhagavata)

Significance and Advantage of the age-old Kanchipura's Location:Dundeera Mandala ruled by the virtuous King Dundeera and the region was the famed *Maha Balipuram* whichwas originally constructed Bali Chakravarti who made severe Tapas to Parameshwara and secured great affluence and fortune before defeating Devas. To Nirruti (South West) of Maha Bali Pura was *Devaki Pura*where King Ugrasena worshipped Hara Deva and sighted a maiden named Devaki and thus the Place was known by that name. Brahma Deva created a Place called *Virinchi pura*for the sake of Apsara Rambha to the Vayavya (North West) of Devaki pura where Rambha worshipped Mahesha and was blessed by the latter to get closer to Indra. To the Ishanya (North East) of Virinchi pura was a Place called *Naagahala*where Maha Deva devoured 'Haalahala' during the course of Deva-Danavas' churning of 'Ksheeraabhdhi' to obtain Amrita (nectar); not far from this Area was *Tapovana* where Devi Parvati meditated for long and got hallowed. To the West of Mahabalipura were *Triveni Sangama pura*which yielded the benefit of bathing in Triveni Sangama at Prayagaand *Vyaaghra Vana* where Parama Shiva performed Shiva Tandava (Cosmic Dance) at the request of Maharshi Vyaghra Paada who meditated and pleased Shiva.

Almost of walking distance of Vyaghra Vana was *Ksheeraabdhi Nagar*where Narayana obliged a Bhakta with the vision of Bhagavan's lying postureon the Ocean of Milk. Again not distant from Ksheeraabhi Nagari was *Nandi Gangaapura* where Maha Deva showed his kindness to let a Chandala bathe in Ganga which emerged through a 'Vrishabha Mukha' or the mouth of bull and the Chandala was blessed to attain Kailasha. In the midst of a rectangular around Nandiganga pura was a Place called *Brahma Shaala* where Brahma performed Ashwamedha Yagna. Hardly one yojana away from Triveni Sangamapura was the Abode of *Paanchaalikaa Durga* which was a Hari Kshetra and hardly away from there was*Kanyakeswara* a Shankara Kshetra. *Surya Pushkarini* was the Sacred Tirtha (Sarovara) and right on the banks of the Tirtha was *Sweta Vishnu*Temple; the other side of the Tirtha called *Chandra Pushkarini* were the abodes of *Kshetraangi Durga* and *Paanchaalika Durga*.

Such were the hallowed environs of Kanchi Kshetrawhere Bhagavan Vishnu stayed and Bhagavan Shiva too resided there itself. However Maha Shakti's prominence was predominant: *Maha Shakti Prabhaavaadhyam Shakti praadhaanya Vaibhavaat, Vinaasha rahitam Kshetram Tasmaatsatya vrataahvayam/*( As Shakti's influence was of primacy, this Kshetra was indestructible and as such was of Eternal Truth; hence it wasreplete withSatya Vrata.) The Kshetra wasfull of Temples put up over River and hills and thus designated as 'Bhaskara Sanjnaka' or representative of Surya Deva; it was also representative of tall bilwa trees and hence called 'Daijasa Sanjnaka' or representative of Celestial Beings.

Shiva Shaktyaatmikam Kshetram tathaa Hari Haraatmikam, Yaatma Shaktirmaha Mayaa saa Mayaa Swagunairdwidhaa/ Vishnu Shakti Bhaavaabhyaam Nirgunaa hyekadhaa cha saa, Tatra pravartatey Devee Sagunaa Trividhaatmikaa/ Tasmaatsaa Mahaa Khsetrey Sunya Streepumsa bhedatah, Trividhaatmakarupaadhyam Kshetram Shaaktaahvayam varam/( This Kshetra is 'Shiva Shaktyaatmika' or of the Soul of Shiva Shakti. It was also 'Hari Haraatmika' or of Vishnu and Shiva Swarupas and of Maha Maya Swarupa or the Parama Shakti basically being Eka Rupa or of Unique / Singular Form who is Nirguna or Featureless yet of Sagunatmika or of the Three Features of Satva-Rajo-Tamo Gunas. The Parama Swarupa was of Two Forms of Vishnu and Shakti and also of Shiva-Keshava-Shakti Rupa devoid of Male-Female distinction).

Thus Kanchi Kshetra was Trividhaatmaka or of Three Rupas surrounded by 'Sadhujanaas' or of the Virtuous. Indeed, this was the unique Place on Earth where Kailasa, Vaikuntha and Shripura were visioned simultaneously. Its trees were like 'Kalpa Tarus' fulfilling wishes; its water was like of Ganges; human beings were like Devas; Stones were like Shiva-Keshavas; its light was purifying and winds were sin-destroyers and Siddhas and Rishis were all 'Moksha gaamis' or steadily desirous of and targetting for

Moksha. Maharshis had thus designated the entire Dundeera Mandala as Kanchi Mandala. The Sacred Water Body 'Ksheeroshini' passed through the Mandala; it was firmly believed that this Water Body was in the Form of 'Sudha' or nectar flowing from Mother Lalitaa Parameswari's breasts in Krita Yuga, like Ksheera Vahini in Treta Yuga, like ghee in Dwapara Yuga and Sweet and Sacred Water Flow in Kali Yuga bestowing Atma Jnaana, eradicating the sorrows of old age and untimely deaths besides Mokshaafter life.

Maharshi Markandeya thus initiated the description of Kanchi Kshetra to King Surathaand asked him to concentrate on his further narration. In the remote past, Brahma realised that Skanda Kumara attained brillianceand glory due to his drinking of Maha Devi's milk and with the aid of Maha Mantra instructed by Maheshwara performed sincere Tapas and Dhyana for hundred years; Paraa Devi was pleased and commanded Ksheera Devi to materialise a Flow of Milk and Brahma was delighted to drink plentiful to his heart's contentment with four of his faces and the eternal flow of milk assumed the Form of a River of Milk and flowed downward on the Southern side of Bharat as four rivuletsnamed Samaagamana Vrittha, Baahu, Kundalini and Gadaand having travelled via Kanchi terminated into the Eastern Sea. Brahma then provided a boon that whoever bathed in the Ksheera Nadi would gain the memory of previous births and of 'Satya Jnaana' or of the Knowledge of Truth to enable them to accomplish Kaivalya. Countless human beings took advantage of Brahma's boons and attained Salvation. In fact, one Vipra who in his earlier lives perpetrated several serious sins became a frog and with the awareness of the past life having been devoured by a snake in the previous life, attained Salvation due to its bathing in the Sacred Rivulet Kundalini.

Trirupa Dharini Kamakshi: Once Brahma decided to perform Tapasya and Yagna to Devi Kamakshi to secure a boon of reviving the dead back to life as also to prevent death to those who lived and entered a hole for privacyin the Temple in Kanchipura; in order to avoid disturbance as also to safeguard the Place of his worship wherehe materialised two Daityas viz. Madhu and Kaitabha from Narayana's ears. After some time Devi Kamakshi got annoyed with the behaviour of Daityas and assuming the Form of Narayana nipped their heads. On learning of this development, Brahma got enraged and suspected Vishnu to have killed Mathu-Kaitabhas. Vishnu denied his involvement of the murders of Madhu-Kaitabhasand pointed his fingers at Rudra. Brahma approached Rudra with great angerand the latter looked to release Pashupataastra at Brahma but meanwhile Rudra disappeared andHari stood there instead! Brahma got utterly confused and left the place in awe.

Paschat Kaanchi Maha Kshetry Twayvakta Jyotiraamakah, Sa Shiva Shankarasshambhu Mahapralayakey Vibhuh/ Chuta beejaakrutirbhutwaa Babhaavekaamra sanjnayaa, Tathaiva Bhagavan Vishnurtejasaa vyaktavigrahah/ Brahmaashwa medhayaagnou babhou Varada ityapi, Tasmaadvishnu Mahaadevou taa Vibhou Shakti revahi/ Saa Shaktitraya Kaamaakshi trividhaa tatra saa Paraa, Tasyaa Vilaasastrividhah Hari Shakteesha bhedatah/

Then there was an Avyakta Jyoti Swarupa of Shiva assuming 'Chuta Beejaakriti' or of the Form of Mango seed with the Sanjna (Symbol) of Ekaamra; and Vishnu of Avyakta Rupa had manifested himself with the Sanjna of Varada from the Agni of the Ashwamedha Yagna performed by Brahma. Thus Shiva and Keshava both were of Shakti Swarupa and not different, affirmed Maharshi Markandeya to King Surata. Hence that Parashakti in Kancheepura was Ekaamranadha, Varada Raja and Kamakshi as the Trirupa Dharini. Whosoever reads or hears about the Magnificence of Devi Kamakshi and her Trirupa Shaktiwould fulfill their desires; 'Mushtimaatra' or fistful Anna Daanam in Kanchi Kamakshi Pura would equate Kuru Kshetra 'Tilaadaanaphalam'!

Dwiteeyadhyaaya-Kanchipura as Bhuloka Vaikuntha

Vapaaparimalollaasa Vaasitaadhara Pallavam, Mukham Varada Raajasya Mugdhasmitamupaamhe! (I implore Shri Varada Raja Swami's charming and petite smiling face which is like the tender and ever-fragrant flower bud; so described Markandeya to King Suratha.)

In Kanchipura, there was Kshetraangi Durga; to her Agneya was Purandeswara Swami and to his South was Panchali Durga. A Simhalaya was built to Panchali Durga which again was stationed the afore mentioned Kshetraangi Durga. In the Center of this Square was shining the idol of Varadaraja Hari. Any charity performed in this Kshetra was stated to get multiplied by a crore and was thus acclaimed as Punya Koti Kshetra. To the Agneya of the Kshetra was Vighneswara whom Brahma worshipped before he performed Vaajapeya Yagna to ward off obstacles. There was also Kartikeya to the east of Ganesha whom Brahma worshipped before performing an Ashwamedha Yagna. Brahma also worshipped Panchalika Durga to Kartikeya's Southern side as also Kshetraanigika Durga as the latter killed Hayasura before executing Hayamedha Yagna. To the south of Kshetraangika was Kambudharini Durga who was worshipped by Bhagavan Vishnu and secured his Shankhu or conchshell. Baanaambika Durga resided in the Village of that name to Kambudharini's 'Agneya Disha' and to her Southern side was Swayambhu Koteshwara Shiva whom Brahma worhipped; Brahma also worshipped to Manikantheshwara in whose honour Brahma did an Ashwamedha Yagna. To the Ishana of Manikantheshwara was Satyanadheshwara who bestowed the boon of thousand eyes to Lord Indra. A Digambara Vishnu in a lying posture was positioned in the Northern direction of Satyanadheshwra and the Digambara Hari destroyed the ego of Devi Vani. A Guha Simha Vishnu resided to the Agneya of Digambara and to the Nirruti of Guha Simha Hari was Ashta Bhuja Vishnu who fell down Maya Kali and sat on her head. Vidyakunda naama Hari was the Southern Resident of Ashtabhuja Vishnu and this Hari killed Kapalika the practitioner of Evil Mantras. To the North of Vidyakunda Hari was Deepaadhaara Janardana who terminated Maya Vahni and held a 'Deepa' by his hand. That Vidyakunda showed to the King Tundeera the Swarupa of Vaikuntha Hari who was in the direction of Ishanya. Lord Janardna was the resident of Vaikuntha Haris's Ishanya and Janardana tore the stomach of a daitya and drank his blood thus converting his body blood red. To this blood red Janardnana Bhudevi worshipped with flowers and secured Chaturbhuja Vishnu as her husband. There were two Lizards of Gold and Silverhung on a ceilng girder to the East of Chaturbhuja Vishnu and these Lizards were two Brahmanas cursed by Indra! To the Southern side of these Lizards were twenty four steps which were originally built by Vishwakarma the Builder of Devas for use at Shri Shaila Kshetra. To the western side of the Steps Devi Lakshni was wedded to Hari and occupied Vishnu's 'Ardhaasana'. There was a 'Punyakoti Sangjnika Vimana' gifted by Mahendra to Vishnu to the Ishanya of Lakshmi Devi and to the Vayavya of the Vimana was Adisesha Sarovara and whosoever took bath there, especially on Saturdays, and prayed there would scure 'Kaveri Snaana Phala'. Not far from there was Bhaktodaya Tirtha in which bathing on Ekadashiswould yield Ksheerabdhi Snaana phala; Pourandara Tirtha Snaana on Wednesdays provided Yamuna Snaana phala; similarly Panchalaka DurgaTirtha Snanaa during Shravana Nakshatra provided Victory in all deeds as Devi Kalika gave Sudarshana chakra gave Sudarshana Chakra to Vishnu and Dhanishtha Nakshatra Snaana in the same Tirhtha would grant Viraja Nadin Snaana. In all in the Varadaraja Hari Kshetra, there were the Abodes of one Vighneshwara, one Shanmukha, Three Residences of Shivas, Eight of Janardana, their F ive Mudras and five of Tirthas.

The Agneya direction of Kanchipura was acclaimed as *Bhuloka Vaikuntha* and all the Residents of the Kshetra were virtually 'Vaikuntha Vaasis'. This Vaikuntha had Five Names of Fame viz. Hari Kshetra, Punya Koti, Vaikuntha, Hasti Shaila and 'Tri Srotas'. Of this Hallowed Land of Hari was associated with certain Legends of Hari Bhaktas: There was a Brahmana named Gargi who was of 'Sindhu Tira' of Vasishtha Gotra, a follower of Rig Vedaand a Resident of Baanakunda Nagara, who was an incorrigilbe sinner with all blemishes like Para Daara, Paraanna Bhokta, and Duraachaara Paraayana ie. fond of other's wives, others' food and other's 'Aacharas'/ or Traditions. Once the Brahmana spent a night on an

Amalaaki / Amla or Goosebury Treeon a Chaitra Month and reaped plenty of Goosebury fruits for his family; when a Brahmana traveller on way happened to reach the same Amlaka Tree and requested Gargi to give him a few Amla fruits, he readily gave the fruits which quenched the Brahmana's thirst; Gargi also directed the Brahmana as tohow to reach a water pond nearby. Gargi who belonged to the BaanakundaNagari died eventually and promptly Yama dutas claimed Gargi to take him away to Narakas. But Vishnu's followers made a counter claim saying that firstly Gargi belonged to Hari Kshetra and that *prima facie*, he should reach Vaikuntha; what was more Gargi gave away plenty of goosebury fruits to a Traveller Brahmana and saved the latter from considerable thirstand also showed him the way to a water body. On both these counts Gargi should attain Swarga! When Dharma Raja approached Vishnu, the latter explained that Gargi was a confirmed sinner through out his life, but he was a Brahmana, Vishnu Bhakta, and saved the life of the Traveller and as such he deserved Vishnu Loka since fire would burn off the material that white ants destroyedtoo. Indeed, whosoever reads or hears the Legend of Gargi would realise the significance of 'Hari KsheraNivasa'!

# Triteeyodhyaaya-Hasti Shaila Mahima

Markandeya Maharshi described the Significance of Hasti Shailato King Suratha: Hasti Shaila was an ornament of Hari Kshetraand was famed among the Punya Koti Kshetras of Bharata where Mahendra became an Elephant as a victim of Devi Saraswati's 'shaapa' (Curse). At one stage, Saraswatiassumed self-pride and arrogance that she was the Goddess of Learning in the whole Universe. Similarly, Devi Lakshmi felt egoistic that she was the root-cause of Wealth and Prosperity par excellence. Both Saraswati and Lakshmi entered into arguments claiming mutual seniority of statusand importance and reached Mahendra to decide. Indra replied that Lakshmi was indeed superior since not only because he was the consort of Narayana but also because she was the Root Cause of 'Bhoga Bhagyas' or of Wealth and Fulfillment and moreover she was the mother-in-law of Saraswati. On hearing this Saraswati got furious and became highly critical of Mahendra as characterless as 'Ahalyaachaara' or the Spoiler of Ahalya Devi, arrogant, partial-minded and power monger and as such cursed him to turn out to be an elephant. Devi Lakshmi was ever-merciful and understanding; she assuaged his hurt feelings with the curse and stated that none could cross the lines of Fateor 'karma praarabdha'. She counselled Indra that on descending from Swarga to Bhuloka he should as an Elephantserve andworship at Simhachala Kshetra near Dandakaaranya to worship Nrisimha Deva as also commend Prahlada; seek from Prahlada the 'Naarasimhaanishtubha Maha Mantra' to qualifyfor entry into Hari Kshetra in Kanchipura and meditate the compassionate Hari. Indra followed the precise advice of Maha Lakshmi; Samgruhya Mantraraajaanam Naarasimha mahamanum, Tadeka Dhyaanatasshakra Divya Jnaanamprajaayatey/ Tadjnaana kushalatwam hi Harikshetra praveshadam, Avashaaccha bhavetatra Mantramadhaanumuttamam/ (After securing the Maha Mantra, Indra entered Hari Kshetra and performed concentrated Dhyana on a mountain) Then Narakesari witnessed Indra in the Form of an Elephant, pierced his sharp nails through its thick skin, broke into his heart with his Yoga Shakti by assuming a 'Bimbaakaara' when Indra was engrossed in deep Dhyana. While seeing the Bimba, Indra was surpised to see two Brahmana Boys on themountain. Indra asked as to who they were; they replied that they were the sons of Shringabheri Muni of Shandilya Gotra, that they were named Hema and Shukla, that their Guru was Gautama Maharshi who instructedthemto fetch water from Bhadra River, that while bringing the pots of the water they kept the pots down and went up a tree to cut 'Samidhas' (twigs), that a lizard fell in the pot of water and that one Yaksha cursed the boys to become lizards. The lizardsfell on the back of the Elephant while they were cutting the twigs and that elephant was none other than Indra! The boys then said that per chance, they as lizards fell on the back of the Elephant who entered Hari Kshetra.Indra who too got relieved of the Saraswati Shaapa touched the lizards who became Brahmana boys again and thankedIndra profusely. Indra in turn commended the Hasti Shaila as the most Sacred Mountain and blessed it:Mudaa Shailaaya Devendro Dattavaanvaramutthamam, Ekaadashyamahoraatram

Vishnossankeertanena cha/ Yatphalam Tatphalam Nrinaam Hasti Shailasya Darshanaat, Iti datwaa VaramShakro Gatasswabhavanam Mudaa/ (Those 'Maanavas' who visit the Hasta Giri and worshipit day and night on Ekadashaas by fasting and singing 'Harinaama' would indeed reap memorable fruits).

One instance of the Experience of Ganu Brahmana would suffice to amplify the significance of Hasti Giri told Markandeya Maharshi to King Suratha: There was a Brahmana named Ganu of Bhardwajasa Gotra and an Expert in Shukla Yajurveda living on the banks of River Sarayu; he was also an adept in Dhanurveda or a Dhanur Vidya or the Art of Archery! But this Brahmana misused his expertise in Archery and cheated the tourists and travellers by frightening them and earning enornous money. On learning of the dirty ways of Ganu Brahmana as a menace to the travellers, one strong and valiant hero overpowered the Brahmana, tied him up, shavedhis head, insulted him and threw him in a gutter. Ganu Brahmana was put to shame and while travellingfor some time reached Kanchi Kshetra providentiallyand went up the Hasti Giri and out of exhaustion collapsed and died. Surprisingly, 'Vishnu Dutaas' were waiting Ganu Brahmana to lift him to by Vimana to Vishnu Loka! Maharshi Markandeya assured that whoever would read out or hear the account of 'Kari Giri Darshana' should be rewarded with Hasti Shaila Darshana Phala!

# Chaturdhyaaya- The Splendour of Varadaraja Swami

Sincerely greeting that Paramatma acclaimed as Varada Raja Swami, Maharshi Markandeya revealed the Glories of that Jagatsrashta who appeared in Kanchipura following the successful conclusion of the famed Ashwamedha Yagna executed by the Chaturmukha Brahma. Atha tatra Nripa Shreshtha Hari Kshetra dharaataley ta Vaarana Shailasya shringey Devaadhiraajakah/ Vartatey Varadastatra Jaganmohana Vigrahah, Shankha Chakragadaabheetirdadhaanassyaamalaa krtih/ Sarva bhushaa bhushitaango Neela maanikya sundarah, Divya Padmadalodbhaasinayanadwaya shobhitah/ Shri Vatsa Shri Dharashyasshriman Shringaara rasa shevadhih, Sachaamararamaa bhubhyaam Savya dakshinayoryutah/ Padmanaabho Ratna garbhah Kiriti Kundaloojjwalah, Punya kotathyaam nivaasena Punyakoti Padaanvitah/ Abheeshta Varado Vishnuh Puraa Padmaasanaaya cha, Srishti danda pradaataa cha Sarjana hetavey/ Sadaham Sampravakshyaami Puraavrittam Charitrakam, Tasya Shravana maatrena Sarva Paapaih pramuchyatey/ (Shri Varada Raja Swami excelledhimself in the Hari Kshetra on the Hasti Shaila Shikhira bestowing desired boons to humanity as Devadhi Deva, 'Trijaganmohanaakaara' or he who mesmerised Trilokaas with his strikingly charismatic Form, as the Holder of Shanhka-Chakra-Gadaabhaya mudra, with his Indra Nila/ Blue Sapphire coloured Body, with lustrous Lotus Eyes, ornamented with a wide ranging variety of jewellery, adorned with Kaustubha Mani on his chest, hand fanned for mild coolness by Ramaa and Bhumi Devis, as the Epitome of Shingara Rasa or Romantic Classical Love, wearing a Nine Gem studded Golden Head- gear of brilliance, earlobesdecked with Mani Kundalas, and in all as an exotic and enchanting Figure 'par excellence'! He was the Cause of Creation and Extermination. Indeed hearing about his splendours itself would destroy one's sins and blemishes!).

As in the previous Adhyaaya, Lakshmi and Saraswati asked Brahma to give his honest opinion as to the superiority between them and almost immediately Brahma favoured Lakshmi Devi. Sarasvati was highly disappointed and even annoyed with Brahma and took away the 'danda' or an Insigniathat Vishnu once gave to her which was the power of Brahmaenabling the latter to undertake Srishti or Creation of 'Charaachara Jagat'or of the Moveable and Immovable Beings. Thus the action of Brahma to create was disabled. Brahma did not wish to entreat Sarasvati to return the Srishti Danda but left for Himalayas to perform penance to Vishnu to request for an Emblem with Vishnu Amsha to Create instead of a Sarasvati-oriented Crest. Vishnu was pleased with Brahma's Tapas and directed Brahma to perform hundred Ashwamedha Yagnas. Brahma then decided that instead of performing hundred such Yagnas it

would be sufficient to execute one Yagna at the Hari Kshetra and asked Vishwakarma the Architect cum Builder of Devas to construct a huge Yagna Shaala right opposite the Idol of Narasimha; he discarded Saraswati as his partner at the Yagna but preferred Buddhi Devi as his 'Yagna Patni' to share the duties of a wife as prescribed. Brahma invited Devas, Devarshis like Narada, besides Gandharva-Yaksha- Kinnara-Apsara; Siddha-Saadhya-Muniganaas and decided to perform a Year-long Yagna; he worshipped Ganeshwara first to facilitate the Yagna without obstaclesand then worshipped Yoga Narasimha Swami and initiated the Yagna with formal Mantras by appointing Kumara Swami as Adhavarvu, Maheswara as Udagaata, Varuna as Prastota, Yama Dharma Raja as Hota and Indra who performed hundred such Yagnas in the past as the Yagna Brahma. Since Brahma did not invite Saraswati to participate, she was furious and created powerful flames with her Maya Shakti with a view to destroy the Yagna but the Saviour of the Hari Kshetra viz. Vishnu arrested the Maya Shakti's both the hands and disabled her. Saraswati took it as a challenge and released Kapalika Shakti but Vishnu in the Form of Nara Simha destroyed the Shakti. Enraged by her discomfiture, Devi Saraswati released 'Daithyaastra' but Daityaari Narayana made the Astra futile. Vagdevi then created 'Karaala Vadana Kalika' and instructed the Maha Shakti to demolish the Yagnabut Vishnu assumed an Eight-Hand Swarupa and having suppressed the Shakti sat firm on her shoulders. Finally with all her powers being overcome, Saraswati was humiliated and swooned out of anger and frustration and took the Form of 'Pralaya Swarupi'called Vegavati River with disastrous speed from Brahmaloka down to Earth heading towards the Hari Shaila. Vishnu sensed the impending danger and decided to resort to her 'maanabhanga' or assault her physically; having become nude he stood before the lightning flash of gushing waters and like a Huge Log lied acrossagainst the flow. Saraswati having visioned Narayana's nuditywas thus put to shame and without being able to face him entered a 'Bhu bila' or a big fissure of Earth and escaped. Then the Yagna commenced without any hindrance; the Yagna Pashu or the Sacrificial Horse was let loose and returned invincible and at the successful completion of the year long Yagna, the 'Purnaahuti' or the Ultimate Offering to Agni as the climactic Homa of Cow's ghee was accomplished and Brahma visioned a Massive Flood of Illumination on the Eastern Sky and offered wide and palmful of concentrated homage to that Spendour. That was the most awaited Moment of Sweta Varaha Kalpa's Vaivasva Manvantara- Krita Yuga- Nrisimha Bhagavatmika Samvatsara- Vaishakha -Shukla Paksha- Chaturdashi's Hasta Nakshatra Suryodaya when Devadhi Deva the Supreme Lord of the Universe manifested himself from the Yagna Homaagni' as Varada Raja Swamiand handed over the Insignia of Srishti to Brahma Deva. The latter went into raptures and placed the Insignia on his chest with tears of joy and got non-plussed momentarily. After recovering from the pleasant shock, Brahma Deva installed Bhagavan on the Hasti Shaila on a 'Suvarna Simhasana'or a Golden Throne in the presence of Devas and other Celestial Beings and Maharshis; in order to cool down the charged and excited atmosphere as also to supposedly quench the thirst of Narayana who was just manifested from Agni, Brahma performed 'Abhisheka Snaana' to Varadaraja with potful thousands of Kamadhenu's ghee with chantings of Sacred Veda Mantras and offered 'Shodashopacharaas' or the traditional Sixteen Services such as Aasana- Vastra-Yagnopaveeta-Gandha-Dhupa- Deepa-Pushpa- Phala-Naivedya- Tambula-Mantra Pushpa-Sangeeta-Veda Pathana-Tambula-Chhatra-Chaamaraas. The formal Pujas was followed bybhojanas (Hearty Meals) served to Special Invitees with Bakshya-Bhojya-Lehya-Chokshya-Paneenias to all concerned in the Maha Yagna. Also Anna Santarpana or Free Meals were organised to the entire citizens of Kanchipura. Vishwakarma made a 'Pratibimba Swarupa'or Replica of Aalaya'; and 'Nagara' Pradakshinas or Temple wise and Nagari wise Pradakshinaas or circumambulations were done on Elephant-back; in fact daily worships, Bhojanas and 'Gajotsavas' were also organised eversince. Pleased by all these arrangments, Varada Swami addressed 'Brahmaadidevaas' and Munis: Yathaaham Virajaa teerey mama Vaikuntha pattaney, Jagadyyaapana sheelaayaad Vishnurityabhidhaayutah/ Prasiddho niyasaamyatra tathaa Kaanchipurottamey, Harikshetram samaashritya Sarvaabheeshta pradaanatah/ Varadaabhidhayaa khyaato nivasaami nirantaram, Sarvey bhavanto madbhaktaassada maddarshaney rataah/ Sarvadaattraiva

tishthantu Vaikunthaadati paavaney, Varshey Varshey Meshamaasi mama Janmadiney Shubhey/ Ghritadhaaraa sahasraabhishechanam mama pujanam, Utsavamcha prakurut Viprabhojana purvakam/

(My Bhaktaas! Just as I had settled in Vaikuntha on the banks of River Viraja and got spread all over the Universe as Vishnu, I will now reside in the Hari Kshetra of Kancheepura; hence those desirous of visioning me could do so with my name as Varada or he who would be the Bestower. In fact I will stay here for good thus making Hari Kshetra as significant as Vaikuntha if not even better! You may therefore even reside at this Kshetra. Every year on my birthday during Mesha month you should all therefore perform 'Goghritha dhaaraa sahasra -abhishekaa'or thousand Abhishakaas of Cow Ghee( bathing) of my Murti and celebrate this day as a Festival and of 'Brahmana Bhojana.) Then Brahma Deva addressed all the Invitees of the Yagna to follow the instruction of Varadaraja Swami and assured that those who would participate in the Festival on as instructed would secure 'Maha Phala'.

Maharshi Markandeya narrated to King Suratha one telling instance about a devotee who actually experienced this kind of Maha Phala: In the past, one Vaadaadhyaayi Vipra named Bhanuvarna of Gokula on the banks of River Yamuna visited Kanchipura and happened to perform 'Ghritaabhisheka' most coincidentally on the 'Janmadina' of Varadaraja Swami at the Hari Kshetra and on return to Gokula after some time passed away; Bhanu varna was being flown to Swarlokaby Devaganaas to honour him with the status of Indra but 'Haridootaas'intercepted his Soul and took it away to the Everlasting Vishnupada; such indeed was the graceful gesture of VaradarajaSwami! Whoever recites the above account of Varadaraja Swami would certainly secure Varadaraja Darshnana, as assured by Maharshi Markandeya.

# Panchamaadhyaaya-Vegavati Prabhaava

Markandeya Maharshi greeted Devi Saraswati who was frustrated and as Vegavati merged with River Payoshni but having departed from the latter after fifteen yojanas made her Sangama(final fusion) with the Eastern Ocean; Vegavati was also reputed as 'Punyakoti' since is she entered the Punya Koti Kshetra. As she had the 'Maanabhanga' by herview of Vishnu's nakedness, she went to Paataala andresorted to a highly austere Tapasyato Narayana with the request to him to absolve her from the sins of disrupting her 'Pativratya' and 'Maanabhanga' and purify her body and mind; she prayed to Vishnu to give her the boons of 'PavitraTatwa' and attainment of normalcy in her strained relationship with her husband Brahma. The ever-merciful Narayana assuaged Saraswati's woundedfeelings and stated that she should leave her ego and repent for her arrogant deeds of fighting with Brahma and even himself, that she was after all of his 'Amsha', that she should merge with the Saagara and at that very time she would be blessed with his boons so that Chaturmukha would possess her back as his own and everything would be a closed Chapter. Thus Saraswati secured the pardon of Brahma and Vishnu and they both gave boons to Vegavati as whosoever bathed and swam in that River would pave their paths to Moksha eventually.

An illustration was narrated by Markandeya Maharshi to King Surata about a Brahmana named Dhoumya of Gangaapura on the banks of Ganges who no doubt was an erudite scholar of Sama Veda and richbut was a womaniser and a victim of venereal diseases; eventually he changed his life-style out of remorse and came to know that a visit toHari Kshetra and bathing in the Sacred Vegavati River would cure him of his diseases and destroy his sins. Accordingly he undertook a journey to Hari Kshetra for a holy dip in the River Vegavati and darshan of Varadaraja Swami. On his return to Gangapura he was a fully transformed person physically and mentally and at the termination of his life secured Vishnupada.

Markandeya recommended to the devotees of posterity that recitation of the following Dwadasha Slokas while taking bath in the Sacred Vegavati River followed by Hari Kshetra Darshana would readily obtain 'Baahyaantara Shuchi' (physical and internal cleanliness):

Gangaayaa Dakshiney bhaagey yojanaanaam Shatadwaye, Pancha yojana maatrena Purvaambhodestu Paschimey/

Vegavatuttarey theerye Punyakotyaam Hariswayam, Varadassarvabhutaanaa madyaapi paridrusyatey/

Vapaa parimalollaasa Vaasitaadhara pallavam, Mukham Varada Raajasya Mugdhasmitamupaasmahey/

Yo dadaati Harikshetrey daanam yaadharthya bhavatah,Koti Yagjna phalam labdhwaa Vishnulokam sa gacchati/

Yo Vasey Harikshetrey Kshaanaarthwam vaa tadarthakam, Muktassa Sarva Paapebhyassaakshaat Vishnurnaraakrutih/

Punyakoti vimaanaankam Tatwa Sopaana bhushitam, Nrisimhaadhishtitaguham Hastishailam Namaamyaham/

Ekaadashyaamahoraatram Vishnossamkeertanenacha, Yatphalam tadbhavey Nrunaam Hasti Shailasya darshanaat/

Brahmayagjna samudbhutam Divya Maanikya Sundaram, Jagadaadi Gurum Devam Varadam ta Maham bhajey/

Harijanmadiney kaamchyaam Ghrita dhaaraa sahasrakaih, Varadam yobhishimcheta Koti Yagjna phalam bhavet/

Koti Brahma pratishthaayaam yat phalam labhatey narah, Tatphalam samavaapnoti Sakrudvarada sevayaa/

Namastey Brahma Patni! Twaam Saridrupaam Sarasvateem, Sarva paapa prasamaneem Vegavatyabhidhaam stumah/

Yah Pumaan Praatarutthaaya Snaana Kaaley Pathecchhuchih, Shloka dwaadasha paathena taduktaphalamaapnuyaat/

(Whosoever would recite or hear the 'Vegavati Prabhaava' as above would secure the 'Vegavati Nadi Snaana phalam').

Shashthyadhyaaya -Rudrashaalaa Mahatmya

Markandeya Maharshi extolled Ekaamreshwara Linga as follows to King Suratha:

Umaasamaalingana samkraanta kuchakumkuma karakankana mudritam, Lingamekaamra naathasya saikatam Samupaasmahey/

( I greet Ekaamreshwara Linga who has the shining imprint of thewrist ornament coloured red due to the 'Kumkuma' of Uma Devi's breast-embraceof her husband!)

To the Southern side of Sweta Prabhaava Vishnu in Kanchi Mandala was the Sacred Presence of Gayorahana Shiva and to thelatter's West was Kanyakeshwara Shiva. Kailaasanatha Shiva was placed to the North of Kanyakeshwara. In the center of this Square-at the Vayavya of Kanchipura- was 'Rudra Shaala' where there was a powerful Shiva Linga whose 'Archanaabhisheka' was stated to bestow the fruits of Koti Lingarchana and that was why this Shiva Linga was called Rudra Koti. Nearby the Rudrakoti and Gaayaadhirohana Shiva was Vikata Ganapatiwho in the past gifted Suradshana Chakra to Vishwaksena and almost adjacent to Vikata Ganapati was a Rasaala Vriksha and underneath the Tree was Shanmukha Deva; Maharshi Markandeya claimed that it was under that Rasaala Vriksha he attained 'Sangjnaata Jnaanatwa'. In the Eastern Side of the Rasaala Vriksha was Pralaya Bandhini Durga as she brought Ganga River under control. To the South of Pralaya Bandhini wasSampatkariDurga who out of consideration for Rishis killed Gajasura. Nearby Sapatkari was Renuka Durga who bestowed an eye to Vipra named Jambuka in the past. A little far from Renuka Durga was Veera Vareswari who mitigated the anger of Veerabhadra after destroying Daksha Yagina. Gayaadhihorana Shiva rewarded the boon of 'Sasharira Swarga'or Entry to Swarga along with Mortal Body to King Yayati while Jwara Hareshwaraprovided relief from 'Maheshwara Jwara'to Devas and Rishis, Anekapeshwara Shiva gifted Vajraayudha to Mahendra to kill Vritraasura and Kailasa Shivagranted Kailasa Nivaasa to King Tundeera in the past.Paschimeshwarasaved Vaalakhilyas from their fright of Rakshoganaas. Vishweswara Shiva was the only Deva who could absorb from Ganga of all the sins of those who bathed in her. Dounakanteswara rewarded 'Khadga Shulas' to 'Douna Kantaas'. Smashaaneshwaraenabled his own Shakti Lalitambika to kill Bhandasura.

To theNirruti of SmashaaneshwarawerePandava dutaKrishna, Chandrageeva Madhava, andSweta Varnaalll of Janaardanaamsha.Pandava Duta Krishna sought peace from Kauravas before Maha Bharata Yuddha, Chandragriva Madhava wore Chandra dyuti around his neck and Sweta Varna was illuminated by Chandravarna Daitya in darkness.

From Sweta Varna Janardana towards Ishanya was the abode of Choraikaamreshwara where interestingly Rudra assumed the Form of a Thief before manifested himself as a Shiva Linga! Markandeya Maharshi was also installed as a Vigraha as per the instruction of Maha Deva himself! To the north of Markandeya was Elaalaka Ganga sharing Shiva's 'Ardhaasana'. Dhavalaikaamra nayaka near Choraikaamreshwara viewed Ganga and assumed a Linga Swarupa, adjacent to whom was Veerabhairavaas 'Smashana Paalaka'or the Sentinel of Smashana under Shiva's instruction. There was aGanga Tirtha to the Vayavya of Virabhadraeven a mere touch of its waters would fetch Shambhu Loka; Devi Parvati granted a boon that 'snaanaas' in that Tirtha on Mondays would yield Jahnavi Snaana Phala. There was also a Mangala Tirtha to the Agneya direction of Ganga Tirtha and Kuja Deva secured relief from his Agni Swarupaand as such Kuja Deva gave a boon to all those taking bath in that Tirtha on Tuesdays would secure the Punya of Saraswati Snaana. To the Nirruti direction of Mangala Tirtha wasJwaraha Tirtha where Munis and even Devasused to take baths in it and those persons who bathed in it would be blessed with Kapila Tirthga Snaana. There was also a Pandava Tirthatowards the Vayavya of Jwara Tirthawhere Bhagavan Krishna endeared Pandava Brothers and mutually resolved a Friendship Pact; mere darshana of thewaters would destrory one's sins and 'Sparsha' (touch) would secure Shambhava Loka while bathing during the Roudra Nakshatra provided 'Krishna Nadi Snaana Phala'.

Thus in this Sacred Place of Ekaamreshwara there were the presences of a Vighneswara in the Rudra Shaala, Skanda, four abodes of Durgas, Eight Shiva Murtis, Three Vishnu Murtis, Five Mudras, and four Tirthas as per Shiva's instructions. Kanchipura Vayavya pradesha was stated as Bhu Kailasa by Rishis within which there were five glorious Places viz. Rudra Shaala, Rudra Koti, Kailasa, Ekaamra and Maha Smashaana. A person spending even a minute in the RudraShaala would be relieved of all kinds of sinsand could be identified as a human being with 'Shivaamsha'; in the past, several residents of this

Kshetra were stated to have completely avoided even the visuals of Naraka Lokas and excelled in 'Shambhupada'.

There was a talein vogue in Kanchipuraabout aBrahmana named Koushika who stayed in 'Elaapura' on the banks of River Krishna. He was an evil-minded, avaricious and cunning person; he had fields inhis possession stated to have underground 'Nidhis' or deposits and the local beliefs in the vicinity were that the Nidhis could be obtained if sacrfices of good and learned Brahmanas were performed then the Nidhis could be made available so that the owner of the concerned landmight become very rich from the underground deposits. Koushika sought the help of Experts with the knowledge of such underground Nidhis and identified such locations. Then he used to lure travellers into the Village who were good and learned but poor and helpless; he would take such unsuspecting strangers to his home, feed themwell, provide themwith expensive dresses and gifts and after a few months kill them as human sacrifices and excavate those specific and pre-identified areas to secure the deposits and earn plenty of wealth. In the process of attracting the unsuspecting strangers, only once Kaushika made available to a thirsty traveller a glass of butter milk most sincerelyand generously as a strange exception. In course of time, the villagers came to realise the source of Koushika's ill-gotten wealth and the King of the Land imprisoned and tortured him in the prison to have killed several innocent victims as human sacrifices. As he was subjected to extreme torture, Koushika died in the prison itself. The Followers of Lord Yamadharmaraja dragged Kaushika's tormented Soul on way to Narakas. But Rudra's men seized Koushika's Soul having forced Yama's Followers despite the latter's specific orders. A hurt Yama visited Rudra Loka and complained of this great injustice to Rudra Deva. Then Rudra replied: Bhumanalestu Sukshetram Rudrashaaletu Vishrutam, Tatkshetravaasiney Purvey Viproyam paapa sattamah/ Dadou Viprayaa tatkrodam matkukshou tat prashasyati, Tasmaattagjnaana maatrena mama bhaktoti punyavaan, Esha Satkarma samyukto nishpaapi matpadochitah/

(There was a Sacred Place called Rudra Shaalaunderneath the Earth in the possession of Koushika; no doubt he might have committed atrocities in ignorance. But as a Traveller Rudra himself in disguise visited Kaushika and he quenched his thirst with genuine kindness! The person who stayed in that Rudra Shaala was the most blessed being ever and since that person pleased Rudra himself and provided butter milk with sincerityand genuineness—abeit once only-should deserveRudra Loka! Such indeedwas the significance of Rudrashaala and its stay there! Whoso ever reads or hears of this above incident with sincerity and faith would be blessed with 'Rudra Shaalaa Nivaasa Phala'!)

Saptamaadhyaaya- The Significance of Ekaamra Vriksha

Shiva beeja samudbhutam Vedashaakhaabhirujjwalam, Mrukandutanayaadhaaram Rasaalam tam Namaamyaham/(I commend that Rasaala Vriksha viz. Ekaamra Vriksha, which sprang from the Shiva Rupa Beeja or of the Seed of Shiva and vivified with Branches of Vedas and scripted by Maharshi Markandeya)

In the illustrious Rudra Shaala to the East of Pandava Tirtha there was an Ekaamra Vana which was maintained Deva Parvati herself that was full of Sacred Trees and inhabited by Maha Munis. In this 'Vana' wasa famed Rasaala Vriksha called Ekaamra also popular as 'Rudra Koti' since the Tree was situated in Rudra Shaala. The upkeep and safety of this Tree was entrusted by Maharshi Markandeya in the past. The background was providing this responsibilty was as follows: there were 'Chatusshasti koti' or Sixty Four Crores of Shiva Shaktis whom all no doubt Shiva was fond of. But in course of time, they claimed equal status and seating arrangement on par with Devi Parvati! Shiva explained to the Shaktis that Parvati's position was far above that of various Shakis and it was not possible to equate her eminence with that of theirs. The Shaktis stated that Shivawas being unfairly partial to Parvati! Was she

superior to themin Knowledge or Grace and Beauty or Susheelata / Sadgunas or Excellence in Romance! They thus challenged him to prove her superiority. Shiva smiled as the Vastras of all the Shaktis slided down their bodies and they had to make desperate efforts to hide their nudity but Devi Parvati's dress was intact. The Shaktis felt ashamed of their nakedness and Devi Parvaticlosed Shiva's three Eyes while the Shaktis were swiftly getting dressed up again. As per the Time calculation of Devas, a full 'Muhurta' elapsed while the Shaktis were getting dressed up again. During this time, Surya Chandraagnis perished; the entire Universe vanished and the Charaachara Jagat became extinct; there was utter darkness and Maha Pralaya! However Markandeya was still breathingalthough struggling to gasp finding no way to save himself in that pitch darkness andhopelessly praying to survive. He then narrated to King Surataas follows:Aadhaara Kaankshayaan tasmin Kaaleham Parameshwaram, Sadaa Shiveshaana Rudra Hari Brahmaadi kaaranam/ Devi Divya tanou leena chittam Kaameshamavyayam, Mahaa Tripura Sundaryaa Naayakam Nirgunam smaran/ Aadhaaramatra Devesha Dehimey twam kataakshatah, Iti Sampraapya Devesham Jalagarbheyvi- sham shramaat/ Tatah kripaanidhisshambhustatra madrakshaneycchayaa, Chidrupo Rudra shaalaayam vasannavyaktatejasaa/ Chuta beejaakrutirbhutwaa Chaturaamnaaya shaakhinam, Vrikshamutpaadayaamaasa swabeejaatthatra Shankaraha/ Bhitwaa jalanidhim tatra tadjjalaadbhahi raayaou, Atha tacchutavrikshopi kshanena Vavrudhey kramaat/ Tatsshaaakhaa vibhushaadhyam Pralayaateetamunnatam, Athaaham tam tarum drushtwaa taduparyeva samsthitah/ Pralayaarnava -maalokya vismayaannischalaakritih, Tamchutam Shiva rupena dhyaatwaa Saakshaatparasshivah/(I prayed to that Avyaya- Nirguna Kameshwara who was the 'Kaarana Bhuta' or the Original Cause of the existence of Brahma-Vishnu-Rudra-Ishana-Sada Shiva and who was absorbed in the thoughts of Tripura Sundari's Divya Vigraha; then I meditated Maha Deva desperately to provide me a holdand entered thedepths of Pralaya Saagara. Dayanidhi Shankara apparently decided to save me and stood firm in the Rudra Shala; there was the Form of a Mango Seed whichgerminated within no time, a huge Saala Vrisha with Chatuveda Shaakhaas pierced through the Pralaya Water. It was amazing thatthere was a Maha Vrisha that grew suddenly and survived in the Pralaya and the Maharshi since rescuedgot self-convinced that Maha Deva himself assumed the Swarupa of the Vriksha).

Seated on a peacock Shanmukha Skanda sat on the top of the Tree enjoying ripe mango fruits and Maharshi Markandeya enquired as to who that Six-Headed boy was. Kumara Swami replied that whenever there was a Pralaya, this Kanchipura was rescued by the kindness and splendour of Maha Tripura Sundari and that was why this Kanchi Kshetra was famed as 'Pralaya Jit'or the Victory of Pralaya; this Rasaala Tree was of Shankara's own Self and whoever consumed the fruits of the Rasala would become Veda Vidya Guru and attain 'Koti Lingarchana Phala' by the grace of Maha Deva.

Markandeya narrated the above experience of his own about the Ekaamra Vriksha Mahima to King Suratha and further illustrated the Tree's significance as follows: There was aVipra named Krouncha who lived on a 'Shringi Shaila'or a Mountain Top on the banks of Tungabhadra River; he stole a Golden Shiva Linga from a Temple and eked his livelihood. He begotsixteen sons but due to the sin of stealing the Golden Linga they were 'Linga heenas' or devoid of male organs. Highly disappointed by this calamity, he visited 'Rudra Shaalaa Kshetra' along with his entire family and rested under the Rasaala Vriksha just for a few moments; he then experienced the miracle of gaining the masculinity of his sons and eversince then continued his life at Kanchipura itselftill his death and achieved Rudra Loka. Such was the grandeur of the Ekaamra Vriksha. Whoso ever recited or heard about the glory of the Sacred Tree sincerely with faith would secure the fruit of residing under the shade of the Rasaala!

Ashtamaadhyaaya: The Glories of Ekaamreshwara and Baalaa (Tapah) Kamakshi

Suprasannam Mahaa Devyaa Nitya Kalyaana Sundaram, Mahaapralayapaapaghnam Rasaaleshamaham Bhajey/

(By greeting Ekaamreshwara who manifested himself by destroying the effects of Maha Pralaya, who enjoyed the grace of Devi Parvati always and who provided auspiousness to one and all, Maharshi continued the narration of Kamaakshi Vilasa to King Suratha)

Devi Parvati installed a Grand Shiva Linga made of sand to the East of Ekaamra Tree in the Rudra Shaala: Hastapramaanaamulaat Kadali kusumaakritih, Umaalinganasankraanta kuchakankana mudrutah/ Kshitilingaswarupascha chutalingaakriti Swayam, Sadaa Shivaanugrahaatmaa sa Chatur murti madhyagah/ Shivaamshasshivajasshuli Kailaasaatsamupaagatah, Mrigaankushavaraabhiti viraajita Chaturbhujaha/ Kundendudhavalaakaaro Nitya Kalyaana sundarah, Vyaaghra charma paridhaano Gajacharmottareeyakah/ BhasmoddhulitaSarvaangastrinetra Shashi Shekharah, Sachaamombikaa Gangaa Savya Dakshina sevitah/ Gangaabhujangavilasat jataamakuta manditah, Rudrakotyaam nivaasena Rudrakotiriti shrutah/ Ekaamra nilayasshambhuh Puraav Devyaa stuto harah, Mahaa Pralaya Paapaghnah punah Kalyaana hetavey/ (Then Maha Deva Linga who manifested himself was of hand size, of the shape of Plantain TreeFloweras though with the Mudraas / imprints of Parvati's hand-bracelets caused by her embracing her husband Shiva; the Prithvi Linga was of Sada Shiva Swarupa; Chaturmurti madhya or the Middle of Four Deities; Rasaala Lingaakaara or of the Linga of Mango Shape, Shivaamsha Sambhuta or manifestation of Shiva; Shiva Sanginnaata, Shuladhaari, Kailasa vaasa, Abhaya Viraajita Chaturbhuja or upbeat with Protective Four Hands, Dhavala Chandraakaara or of the Shape of Full Moon, Nitya Kalyaana Sundara or Ever Propitious, Vyaaghra / Gaja charma dhara or the wearer of Tiger / Elephant Skins as his colthing; Tri Netra, Bhasmadhulita Sarvanga or he who smeared ash all over his body; Chandrasekhara; ornamented with Ganga and Serpents around his head gear covering his knotted hair; with Ganga and Ambika serving with their hand fans on both the sides; and the resident of Rudra Kshetra famed as Rudra Koti! Thus Haimavati commended Shambhu who resided as and at the Ekaamra Mahiruha Mula!

As Devi Parvati then recalled to Shiva about the incident of Shaktis and herclosing his Three Eyes when Pralaya took place as described in previous pages, she suddenly noticed that Maha Deva's golden coloured Body had turned blue and asked him about the possible reason for this colour-tranformation. Shiva replied that actually Devi Parvati herself was responsible for this since she closed his three eyes to save her of the embarrassment of all the Shaktis getting naked and due to that unpardonable sin that she committed there was Pralaya and the whole sequence of happeningsfollowed! Parvati felt ashamed of her action that caused the entire havoc and fell on his feet begging of Maha Deva for a remedy to atone of her incorrigible sin.Parama Shiva then instructedParvati to manifest herself as baby child at Badarikaashram and a childless Maha Muni named Katyaayana would bring her up with great care and affection till she attained Eight Years. Later on , the Bala could bestow Moksha to the Muni and collect his 'Yoga Danda'/ Stick, Japamaala/ counting beads, Deepas, Chaamaras or hand fans used for worship, Pustaka or Books, Vyaghraasana or Tiger skin to sit on, Ganga Tirtha, Ganga-sand and umbrella to proceed to Varanasi for meditation.

Maha Deva stated that there would be a 'Kshaama' or drought in Kasi and then Parvati should distribute 'Anna' (food) to one and all and secure the Epithet of Annapurna Devi. Thereafter she should travel to South and settle down at a Place which would called Kanchipura!

Yatra Vyaaghraasanam Soma Vrittham tat Sutrakam Ghatam, Saikatam Linga Rupam cha Japaaksho Bilwa maalikaa/ Nagabhushanam chhatra Trishulam Yoga dandakam, Chaamaram Yuvati yugmam Vyanjanam Shukarupakam/ Ghata deepa dwayam vahni rupam Dhenuscha Pustakam, Vidyaadharam Suchikaam cha Taptamudram cha Saankuram/ Gangaatirtham Payorupam Bhavedyattra Manonmani, Tat Kanchinagaram viddhi tatra Somasuvrittakey/

(Where there is Vyaghraasana, Soma Vrittha or an Edifice to install Shiva Linga, Sutrakam or pipe to drain holy water after Abhishka, a Saikata Linga or a Sand-made Linga, Japamaala, Bilwamaala, Naagaabharana or Ornaments of Serpents, Chhatra/ Umbrella, Trishula, Yoga danda, Chaamara, Yuvati Yugma or two maids, a Shuka or Parrot, Ghata Deepa Dwaya or Two Deepas made of Mrittika, Vyajana or fan made of Yak's hair, Dhenu or Cow, Pustaka, Vidyadharam, Diksuchika, a Tapta Mudra, Gangaajala and such other Sacred items utilised for Shiva Puja would be the Place called Kanchi Nagara where Devi Parvati should settle down!

Maha Deva instructed Devi Parvati further that she should perform daily 'Ksheeraabhisheka' to the 'Saikata Linga' on the Soma Vrittha along with Soma Sutra adorned with Bilwamaala and Nagaabharana, while carrying Trishula, Yoga danda and parrots on her shouldersas chaamara would be served by two maids on the sides and offering 'Naivedya' of Mudgaankura or of sprouted greengram; she should then execute Dhyanaamid 'Panchaagnis' standing on 'Suchakoparitalaas'. Shiva then assured that her 'Maha Paapa'in causing Pralaya by closing his Three Eyes would be washed out.

Following Maha Deva's instuctions, Devi Parvati commenced her atonement by converting hership as a Baby in Varanasi where Katyayana Maharshi brought her up till she was of eight years as a Baala, then as Annapurna during thedrought period saving Varanaasi from hunger and providing Moksha to the King of Kashi and down to Dakshina Bharata having carried all the Puja Dravyaas as prescribed by Shiva above. Having searched for a suitable Place in Kanchipura, surprisingly she discovered a Single Mango Treeand named it as Ekaamra Vrikshaand decided to perform severe 'Tapas' under it. MeanwhileBrahmarshi Narada who was on a Tirtha Yatra arrived at Kanchipura and spotted an Eight year old Baala preparing herself to perform Tapas under the shade of the Maha Chuta Vriksha. As he approached her she conveyed to him that she decided to marry Chandrachuda Shankara, that she was physically and mentally prepared to carry out Tapasand requested him to helpher. Narada was extremely delighted and gave to her 'Upadesha' (Instruction) of 'Pancha Baana Mantra' and left Southward. Devi Parvati commenced her Tapas as Tapah Kamaakshi on her 'Janma Nakshatra'; she performed such severest and most austere Pancha Baana Japa that createdflames of Kaamaagnitargetted to Shivawhich could not be endured by him any longer; he then directed Devi Ganga to reach the Tapaswini at once. Ganga then attracted three crore fifty lakh Tirthaas from Shiva's body-hair roots and having assumed the Swarupa of Maha Pralayatravelled at such top speed and heavy sound towards where Gauri as Tapah Kamakshi wasin meditation that even Gauri shouted 'Kampa' 'Kampa' as she was badly disturbed in her concentration of Tapas; as her two companions viz. Maha Kaali and Durga arrived, Gauri instructed them to forestall the gushing flow of Ganga. Durga Devi stood against the Pralaya Jala and displayed the Kapaala in her hands with a Signal called 'Vishwa Bhakshana Sanjnaka'; but that massive flow of high tides had the insrtuction of Shiva to Ganga and thus Shiva was offended as was terminated by the show of a Kapaala. Devi Kaalika supplemented her efforts and stopped and diverted the flow and Gauri commended Kaalika and gave her the encomium of Mahaa Pralaya bandhini. But the offended Shiva threw with anger a piece of his 'Jataajuta' and the fury of Ganga that emerged from the knotted hair of Shiva was simply unconquerable! Since the sound and fury of the rushing water was unstoppable not only by her maids but even by herself, Gouri Devi prayed to her brother Purushottama so that her Tapas would not be disturbed. Janadnana then assumed a gigantic Swarupa from Earth to Sky wearing Chandra around his neck as Chandra- Kanthaakya; Parvati shivered with fright that instead of Narayana, Maha Deva appeared himself as that huge Figure wore Chandra around his neck. But Narayana asked Gauri not to get frightened, that Massive Figure was himself and that soon Maha Deva would arrive as he was merely testing Gauri's tenacity to perform Tapasya!!Devi Gauri then tightly embraced the Shiva Linga and having closed her eyes said most emphatically and desperately that Maha Deva was her ultimate refuge! Meanwhile, Chandrakanthaakya Vishnuappeared in a smaller Form and assured Parvati that he would continue to reside before where she resided.

During the Taamasa Kalpa- Bhautyaakhya Manvantara- Kritha Yuga- Bhavanaamaka Vatsara - Chaitra Shukla Pournami- Uttara phalghuni Tritiya Paadaaramba when Kurmaavataara took place, Mahadeva held Tapah Kamakshi, lifted her and got her seated on his left lap. Then Devi Kamakshi prostrated before Maheshwara and returned to her seat. Shiva then addressed Hari in the presence of Brahmaadi Devas, Muniganaas, Nandi and Rudra ganaas to say that he gave a promise to Agastya Maharshi to celebrate his wedding with Gauri every year and hence he as Gauri's brother could now commence the Celebrations. Hari then made an open announcement and Invitation to one and all while all the Devas and Devis took up various preparations rightaway. Some took charge of cleaning and illuminating the Streets of Kanchipura, Vishwakarma got ready with the construction and decoration of a huge Hall and Stage Arrangements, Gandharvaas and Kinnaraas held the duty of organising musical and dance extravaganzas, some assumed the charge the kitchen and catering, some others took care of Invitations and Protocol. Devis Lakshmi, Saraswati and Indrani were fully in charge of all arrangements concerning the Bride and the minute details of her dresses, ornaments, perfumes, flowers and so on suited to each function during the Grand Wedding. Sapta Maharshis were concerned with the procedure of the wedding and details of step-wise functions, the Mantra mix, the Homaas and men and material required. As the Run-Up before the Wedding Day, there were celebrations for nine days with singings and dances, feasts and festivities, Shiva Pujas and Abhishekas, Vedaadhyanas and Shiva / Parvati Stutis and Group Chantings of their Glories.

On the arrival of the most auspicious 'Sumuhurta' on the Tenth Day of the Celebrations in Uttaraphalguni Shubha Nakshatra, Maha Deva accompanied by Nandi and Pramathaganaas was most reverentially welcomed by Narayana accompanied by Brahma and Indra and was ushered to the Vivaha Vedika when Sapta Rishis prostrated and recited 'Ahwaana' Veda Mantras. Deviganaas including Lakshmi, Vani, Indrani, the wives of Dikdevatas and of Sapta Rishis accompanied Shri Kamakshin Devi with bhakti to the Vivaha Vedika where Paramshwara was already waiting. Sapta Rishis in itiated Sankalpa and further proceedings, when Narayana washed Maha Deva's feet while Devi Lakshmi was pouring Ksheera and Gangodakas from a golden vessel and Narayana dried Shiva's feet with his silk upper garment softly and respectfully gave Devi Gauri's hand in the hand of Shiva. Then Brahma requested Maha Deva to tie up Mangala Sutra around Gauri's neck and as per Veda Mantras requested the couple to perform Jayaadi homas, Saptapadi, Laaja homas, Naak Bali and such other Mangala Karyas. Devas and Rishis recited Vaidika Mantras; some greeted in raised voices 'Hara Hara' and others with slogans of 'Jaya Jaya'. Then Muni Patnis (wives) sang delightful 'Mangala Haaratis'. As Vishnu materialised 'Pancha Bhakshya Bhojya Lehya Choshya Paaneeyaas', all the Guests relished the most satisfying and grand Bhojana along with 'Amraphalaas' and were treated with Taambula-Chandana-Kasturi and a plethora of expensive gifts while the guests were delighted to utter 'Parameshwara arpanamastu'. On this most auspicious occasion, Vishwakarma gifted to Devi and Maha Debva a golden chariot like the one gifted to Maha Deva at the time of Tripura samhara; Indra gifted a Sphatikamani Chhatra. Brahma gifted a 'Navaratna Ranjkita Jataa Kireeta' .On that evening, there was a procession of Kamakshi and Ekaamreshwara when the latter announced to all the Bhaktaas that on every Chaitra Shukla Purnima, that there should be celebrations and 'Kalyanotsava' of Kamakshi and Ekamreshwara and that who the ever performed or atleast visioned the Sacred Function would attain Shasvata Shambhu Loka. Devi Kamakshi was called by that name since she was the Fulfiller of 'Kaamaas' or the desires of one and

Maharshi Markandeya affirmed to King Suratha that a Shambhu naamaka Vipra happened to see and even participate in the kalyana and received 'Sahasra Kanya Kalyaana Phala! Who ever reads or hears the above account of Shri Kamakshi sahita Ekaamra Swami Vaibhaa would achieve Koti Linga Pratishtha Phala and Moksha!

Navamaadhyaaya: Sarva Tirtha Mahima

Hararoma Samudbhuta Sarva Titrha samudbhuta Sarva Tirtha Samanvayaat, Sarva Tirthaarthaahyamam Vandey Kampayaa Puritam sarah/

(I commend the Sarva Tirtha which was a Grand Fusion of Koti Tirthas that materialized from Maha Deva's body hair-roots including Kampaa Jala collected from the Kapaala Paatra of Pralaya Bandhini Durga).

Maharshi Markandeya described the unique significance of the Sarva Tirthanear the Rudra Shaalaa to the Nirrtti Disha of Ekaamreshwara as that Tirtha was a Sangama of the waters from Koti Nadis as emerged from Shiva's body-hair roots. These incuded the flows of Nandi Shaila, Kshhera Nadi, Gopura, Varaaha namaka Paksha Puri, Ambikaanagara, Deva Mula, Chuta Mula, Surya Pushkarini, Chandra Pushkarini, Kshetraprastha, Kundika, Ksheera Nadi called Nishanna, and Samudra which indeed was the final destination of Koti Nadis. Most significantly, this Sarva Tirthaincluded the Kampaa Jala that got collected in the Kapaalathat subdued the most ferocious flow of Ganga despatched by Maha Deva himself as executed by Pralaya Bandhini as referred to in the preceding Chapter; Devi Gauri called her maids Maha Kaali and Durga as she desired to perform Tapas without disturbance caused by the roar of gushing water of Ganga and appreciated as to how Kaalika Devi displayed the Kapaala in her hand and restrained the sound and fury of the high rising flowof Ganga and granted her the Epithet of Pralaya Bandhini.

The back ground of the Kampa Jala was that once when Maha Deva embraced Gauri Devi he found the marks of his wrist ornament on her breasts and he was amused but Gauri got confused and embarrassed; in order to make a diversion Maha Deva pulled out a hair from his 'Jataajuta' and trampled a flow of Ganga under his feet which went underground then; it was that powerful flow that assumed the ferocity and huge roar of sound and went to Devi Gauri as Pralaya Ganga to test her concentration Tapas as commanded by Maha Deva.

When Shiva realised that the 'Sarva Tirtha' contained Kampaa Jala also, he felt somewhat sentimental and instructed Vishvakarma to construct the banks of Sarva Tirtha proper steps and paved surroundings to enable those to take baths. Bala Gauri took her Snaana there and thereafter invited Ruk-Yajur-Saama-Atharva Veda Jnanis and gave away generous daanaas to them of Go-Bhu-Hiranyaas to recite Vedic Acclamations of the Sarva Tirtha to exist till 'Achandrataaraarka' or as long as Surya Chandra Nakshatraas would last on the Sky!She then entered 'Kama Koshtha' (literally the Belly of Desires but meaning of the Treasure Store of Wishes), got a Dharma Shaala constructed, worshipped Maha Tripura Sundari, performed thirty two Dharma Karyas or deeds of Virtue, arranged an 'Akshaya Paatra' or an Ever Lasting Vessel, a Kaama Dhenu or a Desire Fulfilling Cow, a Kalpa Vriksha or a Tree of Boons, 'Chintaamani' or a Jewel for Providing Materials; a Dharma Shaalaa; besides appointing a King to administer all these Items judiciously. Kamakshi thus materialised an elaborate infrastructure of Dharma, worshipped Kacchapeshwara, prostrated before Ekamreshwara and Pradakshinas, reached Sarva Tirtha to perform Pradakshinas and gave the boon to all those who took even a single Sacred Bath in the Tirtha would be granted the Fruit of performing in all the Punya Tirthas elsewhere.

To illustrate the High Sacredness of 'Sarva Tirtha' Snaanas, Maharshi Markandeya conveyed to King Surata about a legend of 'Sama Vedaadhyaayi' Soma Sharmaand a Tapaswi who however committed an indiscretion of sleeping with a youthful low class woman and begot a child. When Soma Sharma once performed the Shraaddha of Pitras, the 'Pindas' offered at the Ceremony turned out to be worms. Soma

was agitated and did atonement of proceeding on Tirtha Yatras; as he reached Rudra Shaala and took bath in the Sarva Tirtha, the Shraaddha Pindas that he offered henceforth were retained with 'Anna Rupa'or of the Form of Cooked Rice. As this miracle was experienced, Soma Sharma decided to stay at the rest of his life and finally achieved 'Shambhu Loka'.

Those who take Sacred Baths in the Sarva Tirtha and Darshana of Rudra Shaala, Ekamra Vriksa, Devi Kamakshi and of Ekamreshwara would be advised to recite the following 'Dwadasha Shloki' for reaping the benefit of Koti Sarva Tirtha Snaanas and Moksha Prapti:

Shrishailasyaagnidigbhaagey yojaneychaiva vimshakey, Kaveri Krishna yormadhey tatra Goari tapovaney/ Kmpaaaa Dashiney Kooley Rudra Shaalaa dharaataley, Ekaamra naayakasshambhu –ssadaa sadaa taraiya yartatey/ Umaalingana samkraanta Kuchakankana mudritam, Linga Ekaamra naadhasya Saikatam samupaasmahey/ Yorchaye Rudraa shaalaayaam Lingamekam prayatnatah, Koti Lingaarchana phalam Shiya Lokam cha Gacchati/ Yo Vasey Rudra shaalaayam Kshanaartham yaa tadardhakam, Muchyatey Sarva Paapebhyah Sakshaabhargo Naraakritih/ Shiva Puja samudbhutam Veda shaakhaabhirujjyalam, Mrikandu tanayaadhaaram Rasaalam tam namaamyaham/ Shrimadekaamra Vrikshasya, Yo Vaseynmula bhutaley, Guna Vriddhyaa Muhurtasya Koti Lingaarchanam Bhavet/ Suprasannam Mahaa Devyaa Niya Kalyaana Sundaram, Mahaa Pralaya Paapaghnam Rasaalesha Maham bhajey/ Chutesaambika yoph Kaamchyaam Shivaa virbhaava Vaasarey, Kalyaanam krvatah Koti Kanyaa daana phalam bhavet/ Koti Lingaprathishthaa –yaam yatphalam sthaapakasya tu, Tatphalam labhatey Marthyasskrutcchutesha sevayaa/ Hara roma samudbhuta Sarva Tirthasamanvayaat, Kampayaa ritam yandey Paatram tatssarya Tirthakam/ Yaatrayaa Sarya Tirtheshu snaanato yatphalam Nrinaam, Sarva Tirthey Sakutsnaanaattatphalam labhatey narah/(Those who read or hear the contents of thisAdhyaaya on Sarva Tirha Snaanas would achieve the fruits of performing 'Sarvatirtha Sarovara Snaana Punya.')

Dashamodhyaaya: Kamakoti Sthala Nirnaya

JagatkaaranaKalaakaaramNaabhisthaanamBhuvahparam, Padapadmasya Kamaakshya Maapeetha mupaasmahey/

(Maharshi Markandeya greeted Shri Kamakshi's Maha Peetha where she rested her feet which was hailed as the Prapancha Kamakalaakaara or the Place of Fulfillmemt of Universal desires and the navel of Bhumi and narrated the further narration to King Suratha).

To the East of Kaanchinagara's Sweta Prabha Vishnu, there was Kshetraangikaa Durga and to her Southern direction was 'Simhachala' and to the laatter's West was 'Gayaadharohana Tirtha'; to complete a Deergha Chaturasra the afore mentioned Sweta Vishnu resided to the North of the Gayaadharohana Tirtha. At the Central Point of these Deergha Chatusasra was the Pancha Shara Sadana. Hence Kanchipuramadhya Pradesha was known as *Kamakoshtha*where recitation of any Mantra or Prayer would have the effect multiplied by a crore! That was the reason why the Kama Koshtha Pradesha came to be popularised as <u>Kamakoti!</u>From Kshetraangi Durga to the Nirruti direction was situated *Shankudhara Ganapati* who was worshipped by Deva Shilpi Vishwakarma and had his Vaastu Shuddhi passed by Ganapati before undertaking the 'Shanku Sthapana' or laying the Foundation Stone and intiated the construction of Kancheepura. From the Shanku to the West was *Kumarakoshtha* where Skanda instructed the Pranava Mantra to Brahma. Ugra Rupa *Maha Durga*, a Graama Devata, was installed to Shanku and Brahma Deva worshipped her. To the North of Shanku was *Andonikaa Durga* who was an Expert in Dhanur Vidya whom Shankara worshipped. Not far from there was *Pancha Sandhika Durga* who accepted 'Bali' or Sacrifices and removed obstacles. Around the Shanku were *Peethaavarti Durga* who

killed Trishiraasura in the past; Durvaa Varna Vishnu whom Lakshmiworshipped and secured Manmatha as the son; Trivikrama Vishnu whom Adi Sesha worshipped to provide him strength to bear the weight Bhu Devi; Madhu Murti Vishnuwho rained Madhu at noon time; Kaalaangu Vishnu whom Shiva prayed and secured progeny; Bhattaarakeshwara Shiva to whom Brahma prayed and analysed Vedas; Phanaadhara Shiva who as a Sarpa assumed blue colour of his hoods by the Dwadasha Surya's rays; Phaneeshawho protected Naagaas from the Sons of Devi Kadru like Garutmanta; Kancheeshwara Shiva whom Brahma, Shaasta or Devasenaani, Kacchapa, Chandika, Kumara Swami, Sanatkumara, and Devas prayed to. From Kancheshwara to the Vaayavya was situated 'Tapo Vesha Dhaarini Kamakshi'; Annapurna who in thepast relieved hunger of the residents of Kaashi during 'Kshaama' and any body prayed her by three Pradakshinas through the Dharma Dwaara would be fulfilled of their wish; Santana Stambha which was circumambulated by Vaivaswata Manu and was blessed with excellent progeny; Pancha Tirtha which was famed as generated from Shiva's Pancha Mukha bestowing Snaanas on Fridays would yield Gadavari Snaana; Gaayaadhirohana Tirtha which enabled King Yayati to attain 'Sasharira Mukti'and its snaana on Thursdays would fetch Sindhu Nadi Snaana; Siddha Tirtha which blessed Sanat Kumara to relieve himself of a Shaapa and its Snaana on Sundays would provide Reva Nadi Snaana; Chakra Tirtha which helped Karta Veeryaarjuna to obtain back his original Form and its Snaana during Purvaphalguni Star would achieve Gandaki Snaana; thus Kamakoshtha possessed one Ganeshwara, one Shanmukha, four Durga swarupas, four Vishnu Forms, Five Rudra Swarupas, and four Devi Tirtha. The Central Region of Kanchi was called Shripura, Kamakoshtha, Kamakoti, Bhadra and Jeevan Mukta.

In the past there was a Brahmana named Jagannadha who was a Rigvedaadhyaayi at Kundini nagara on the banks of Ganga but was a sinner of unpardonable deeds like Gohatya and meat eating. Once a traveller from Kamakoshtha arrived at Kundini and Jagannadha helped the traveller with a little amount and with that money spent a few days at Kundini and returned back to Kamakoshtha. After some time, Jagannadha died and Yamabhatas were taking him away to Yamapuri. But under instructions from Devi Kamakshi, her soldiers brought the Soul of Jagannadha and reached Devi's feet. But Yamadharma arrived to convince Devi that the Brahmana was a great sinner having lived a highly disgusting life. The Devi explained that a Tourist visited Kundini Nagar from Kamakoshtha and Janannadha gave away some money to him with the aid of which the tourist stayed at Kundini leading a very frugal life and returned to Kamakoshtha; meanwhile Jagannadha died and Yamabhatas were taking him away; but on Devi's instructionDeviganaas brought Jagannadha to Shripura which was Devi's abode; whosoever travelled from Shripura, Kamakoshta, or any of Devi's Abodes to outside elsewhere, would be Devi's own persons and in this specific case Devi herself was the traveller to Kundini and Jagannadha donated some amount with which the Tourist lived at Kundini frugally. Hence any traveller from Kanchi Kshektra to any where should be consideredas of 'Kamakshi Swarupaas.'

Ekaadashaadyaaya: Exaltation of Kamakoti Bila

GaatrimanthapaadhaaramNaabhistaanamBhuvahPuram, Purushaartha pradam Shambhor bilaabhramtramaamyaham/

(Markandeya hailed the 'Bilaakaasham' which was the hold of Gayatri Mandapa and the Central Point of Bhumi as her navel and was Purushaarthaas that Shiva provided to humanity).

From Kama Koshtha Siddha Tirtha's Ishaanya there was the Kamakoti Maha Bila (The Great Sacred Cave of Desires) which was the Sukshma Tapasthaanalikened to the Naabhi (navel) of Bhumi, the Loka Janma Sthaana and Parama Shiva's Physique. That also was the Point of Creation of Shripura, Tri Murtis, Dikpalakas, Sarva Lokas and Dharani (Earth) in the Form of a Cow. This Maha Bila was the Cause of Causes, Deva Swarupa and Kama Koti Sangina (Emblem). If any Being desired of anything under the

Sky near the Bila those wishes were fulfilled instantly and the Bilawas thus the famed as the Kamakoti Bilathe Unique Provider of Purusharthaas or the of Dharma-Artha-Kaama-Moksha or the Supreme Human Aspiations or Desires. Kamakshi was stated to have provided 'Kama' to Kameshwara who literally had no Kama since he was Linga heena! Markandeya narrated as tohow Maha Deva became Linga Heena. In the past, Maha Deva assumed the Form of a Youthful and highly attractive Nomad and entered Daruka Vana which was the Residence of Maharshis and their families. The Maha Munis were Vedadhyaayis, Nitya Yagjnaadi Kartas always leading a highly austere and disciplinedlife. But Parama Shiva decided to teach a lesson to them that merely following a methodical life was not enough but they should expose themselves to the influnces of life and then be able to overcome them instead of shunning them outright. But in the process, the womanhood of Daruka Vana was so deeply attracted to the youthful Jangama that the Munis who were angry, confronted him and forced him to drop his male organthus he became 'linga heena'. Henceforth, Linga Puja became Universal. The Munis realised their mistake but in a way Linga Pujaabhisheka came to stay as a means of enabling human beingsto worship a Symbol and attain Moksha.

Meanwhile a Rakshasa named Bandhaka pleased Brahma by means of difficult Tapasya for long time and became invincible by his boons; he not only defeated Devas but even disturbed MahaDeva at Kailasa. Devas had to leave Swarga and reached Gomukha Kshestra; from there they left for Maha Bila and as though from Aditi's Garbha-exited from the Kama Koshta Bila. Mid-way of the Bila, they visioned Kama Koteeshwari Maha Tripura Sundari and requested her to relieve them of their difficulties on account of the deeds of Bandhaka. As they came out of the Bila, they met Shiva and enquired him about the Darukaavana's incident as also reported to him about the reason of leaving Swarga. Then Maha Deva addressed Devas as follows: 'This Bhu Devi is Brahma Putri and in the Swarupa of a Cow bears the brunt of the whole Universe; Gomukha is Bhumi's mouth, Shri Pura is her Shira, Himalaya her throat, Kedaara her Udara or stomach, Varanasi her backbone, Kamalaalaya her bottom, and in the middle of Kanchi is her Kama Koshtha. He stated that he too passed through the Maha Bilwa and as such he was rid of Maharshis' Shaapa of Linga Heenata and regained his original position as he was purified fully with his malehood. As far as the difficult times that Devas were passing through, Shiva stated that birth as a human being that too as a Brahmana was very difficult to achieve and one should avail of the opportunity by performing worthy deeds; the best among such deeds would be the entry and passage of the Maha Bila; since they too passed through the Holy Bila, they should certainly tide over the present crisis caused by the Rakshasa Bandhaka. Then Devas were delighted by what Maha Deva assured and then performed Bila Pradakshinas again and again.

Markandeya gave the example of Brahmana called Balabhadra who was a resident of the banks of River Narmada who had a lovely wife named Vajreshwari. But Balabhadra became a victim of desire for other women and of venereal diseases. He performed charity of cows, gold and Bhumi and spent considerable money to get cured but to no avail. Then another Brahmana took pity on the victim and informed him of the Mahtamya of the Kama Koshtha Bila; he reached the bila, performed hundred Pradakshinas a day and got fully cured of his diseases. On returning to his town, Balabhadra was extremely happy and having enjoyed long and healthy life died when 'Devi dutaas' transported him toDevi Loka. The Maharshi blessed all the readers of this Chapter of Kamakshi Vilasa about the Maha Bila Mahatmya.

Dwadashaadhyaaya: The Magnificence of Maha Tripura Sundari

VishwakaarananetraadhyaamMahaTripuraSundareem, Kaamaashim taamaham bhajey/ Bandhakaasurasamhatrim

(My sincere supplications to Maha Tripura Sundari Kamakshi who has the benign and bright eyes that caused the entire Creation of the Universe and its contents and terminated Bandhakasura effortlessly, stated Maharshi and continued his narration of Kamakshi Vilaasa to King Suratha).

Atha tatra Nripa Sreshtha Kamakoshti dharaataley, Gayatrimandapey tatra Bila peethaasaney Shubhye/ Gayatyonkaara koney saaKamamaakshi vartatey sadaa, Adi Shakti Swayam vyaktaa Sarva Vipasya kaaranam/ Padmaasaney Nishpaapaa saa Kamapeetha Nivaasini, Chaturbhujaa Trinayanaa Mahaa TriputaSundari/ Mula Shaktir Brahma Vidyaa chaadi Lakshmiriti Shrutaa, Atma Shaktir Jagaddhaatri Rajiva sadyashaprabhaa/ Ardhendu Shekharaa Divya Kirita parimanditaa, Paashaankushokshu Kodanda Pancha Baana Lasatkaraa/Tapanodupa taatankaa Meena Kundala Dhaarini,Divya Shringaara Veshaadhyaa Divyaabharana bhushitaa/ Raktaambara dhara Rakta Raajiva Vara maalini, Soubhaagyaabharanopetaa Divya Mangalya dhaarini/Rajarajeshwari Raamaa Mani manjeera raajitaa, Shri Chakra Nagaraadheeshaa Shri Vidyaa Parameshvari/ Shankaraadhitokaaraa Shankaraatma Swarupini, Shaarira Kalaadheeshaa Sarva Tatwa Swarupini/ Praanini Vishya Bhutaashyaa Kaala Chakra Swarupini, Shri Kaanchi Naaraadheeshaa Kaanchitaartha Pradaayani/ Sachaaara RamaaVaani Savya dakshina sevitaa, Kaamakoteeti Vikhyaataa Kaamaakshi Divya Mangalaa/ Sadaa Shiva Murtinaam Gouryaadeenaam cha Kaaranam, Janani Chutalingasya Chuta Beejaartha Rupini/ Shiyaadhikaa Shiyaangasyaa Shiya Murtirisshiyan- kari, Mahaa Kaamesha Mahishi Mahaa Tripura Sundari/ Puraa hitaaa Devaanaam Bandhakaaraasuramardini, Tadaham Sampravakshyaami Puraavritam Charitrakam/ Tasya shravana maatrena Sarva Paapaih pramuchyatey/ (Devi Kamakshi is seated in Padmaasana in the Omkara Kona of Gayatri as Bila Peethaasana on the Gayatri Mantapa in the Kama Koshta. She is Visha Vyapaka; Adi Shakti, Swayam Vyakta Swarupini ot Self Generated; Jagajjanani, Chaturbhuja, Trinayana, Mula Shakti, Brahma Vidya, Adi Lakshmi, Atma Shakti, Jagaddhaatri or the Grip of the Universe, Lustrous like Lotuses, Arthendu Shekara or with half- Moon retained head; adorned with a Celestial Kireeta or Headgear; 'Paashankushekshu Kodanda Pushpa baana bhraajamaana Karaambujaa' or with the bright lotus-like hands carrying Noose- Goad-Sugar cane like bow and Flower arrows; TatankaYugali bhuta tapanodupa mandalaa orwearing ear-rings like Surya and Chandra having cosmic relevance; Divya bhushana bhushita or adorned with celestial ornaments; Divya Shringaara vesha or donning such a dressthat enhances love; wearing blood red and bright clothing; Rakta Raajeeva Maalaalankrita or decorated with the garlands of red lotuses; Sowbhagya Vardhanaabharanopeta or bedecked with such jewellery that augments auspiciousness; Divya Mangala Sutra Dharini or festooned with Mangala Sutra the Symbol Married Life of Prakriti and Purusha; Gunjaana mani manjeera viraajita or possessive of graceful feet softly tied up with tiny jingling bells; Shri Raja Rajeswari; Shri Chakra Nagaraadheeshwari or the Empress of Shri Chakra Nagara, Shri Vidyaa Parameshwari, Shivaadhaarita, Jeevakalaadheesha, Sara Tatwa Swarupini, Praana Rupini, Sarva Bhutaantasthita or the Antaraatma of all Beings; Kaala Chakraatmikaor the Supreme Shakti that revolves the Time Cycle; Shri Kaanchipura Raagjni; Kaankshitartha Pradaayani or the Bestower of the Required Desires of devotees; Sachaamara Ramaa Vaani Savya Dakshina Sevitaaor Server of Chaamara by Lakshmi and Vani on both the Sides; Kamakotinaamapradhita or Popularly celebrated as Kamakoti; Divya Mangala Vigraha; Kaamaakshi or Possessive of Eyes that bestow fulfilment of all righte-minded desires; The Cause of Causes of Sada Shivaadi Murtis and of Devi Gauri; The Cause of Ekaamra Linga's very materialisation, The Swarupa of the 'Beeja' or the Seedof the Sacred Mango Tree; Shiavadhika; Shivaanka viraajita or She who shines on Shiva's bosom; Shiva Murti, Shivankari, Mahaa Kamesha Mahishi, Mahja Tripura Sundari, and Bandhakaasura Samharini the Story of which would be naraated by me instantly said Maharshi Markandeya to the King Surata.)

As instructed by Shiva, all the Devas who took to the Form of Shukaas (Parrots) at Kama Koshta on the Champaka Tree were sincerely praying to Devi Kamakshi as Kanya for several years as the latter was in the Maha Bila. Kamakshi then decided to help Devas who were thrown out of their legitimate Place of

Swarga and at the same time released her subdued rage against Bandhaka. She emerged out from the Maha Bila assuming a Sagunaatmika Tri Shakti who first uttered the word 'KA' and created Brahma from her left Eye, uttered the second word 'AA' from her right Eye and then the third word 'MA' and generated Maha Deva from her Phaala Netra or the third eye on the forehead. She then named the Sishurupa(infant form) Brahma and fed him with 'Srishti Vidyaatmaka' Ksheera; Vishnu with Shiti Vidyaatmika Ksheera and Maha Deva with Laya VidyatmikaKsheera. The infants eventually grew up as youths and wondered what happened about the Universe! Brahma then created 'Charachaaras' or the Moving and Immovable Beings and Vishnu and Shiva continued performing their respective duties. Then the entire Scenario looked like a dream as Devas were in the form of parrots on the Champaka Tree and the re-created Bandhakaasura became visible. The Kanyaka Devi who as Maha Tripura Sundari became furious at the sight of the Asura and assuned a Mammoth Form of 'Ashtaadasha Bhuja' or of Eighteen-Hands with Chakra and other Ayudhas and in the presence of the Tri Murtisand Devas placed one foot of hers on the Asura's heart, another foot on his neck and trampled him while holding his head with two of her hands and smashed him to death in a second, searched his sons and relatives meticulously and killed them all, dragged the Asura's huge body into the Kamakoshtha Bila as an innocent and girlish Bala with a graceful and fully ornamented Swarupa. Devas discarded their Shuka Swarupas and celebrated Devi's victory as they rained flowers from the Skies, Gandharva-Kinnaras sang tuneful melodies, Apsaraas performed attractive and graceful dances and Munis recited Veda Mantras and the highly delighted went in trances as they were under suppresion for countless years of shameful existence. In the midst of this festive atmosphere, the Kanyaka Devi announced that in the Maha Bila itself the huge body of the Asura would be buried and a 'Vijaya Sthambha' (Pillar of Victory) would be installed. Inside the Bila there was a Temple materialised with a Divya Simhasana or a Celestial Throne. The Bila Vasini was then installed in the centre of a 'Navaavarana' or Nine-Enclosured Area as 'Shadaadhara' or supported by six hinges; 'Shatchakra Sancharini'or the Moving Shakti of Six Chakras (Circles); 'Shatdarshana Pratipaadya'or of Six sided Visions; and 'Shada -amnaaya Samaaraadhyaa' or worshippable by Six Amnaayas or 'Krama' or order of Seriatim. The Para Devata was then invited and devotees commenced worshipby reciting Omkaara Veda Mantras with 'Abhisheka' of waters of Ganga and other sacred Tirthas; coconut water; Go Ksheera-Dadhi- Ghrita-Madhu-Shuddhodakaas or of Cow's milk, curd, Ghee, honey and Pure Waters respectively; followed by Pancha Puja with Pushpa-Kumkumaakshata-Dhupa-Deepa-Naivedya of Panchamrita- Bhakshya Bhojyaadi Shad-rasopetaanna-Karpura Taambulas. Then Bali Daanaas with the observance of Silenceand highly concentrated Dhyaana and Japaas should be followed.

Over night when the doors were openedDevi was present as Bimba Rupini Tripuraambika and the entire Area of the Bilwa was occupied as a Chaurveda Vedika, trifurcated the Vedika with Gayatri Mantra of Om Bhuh tatsavitunenyam-Om Bhuvah Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi-Ogum Suvah dhiyo yonah prachodayaat as three Pillared partitions; and prepared Varna TrayaPranava of Aa+Vu+M as the Peetha and thus materialised a Gayatri Mandapa. Then as instructed by Kanyaka Devi herself she was worshipped from mid-night onward to Sun Rise. In the morning of that Shri Mukha Samvatsara-Phalgunma Maasa-Krishna Paksha-Pratipattithi-Shukra vaara-Arunodaya-Purva-phalguni Nakshatra when Surya was in Kumbha Raasi,the Kanyaka Devithen finally manifested herself as Maha Tripura Sundari.

As Devas who worshipped her as Kanyaka Devi and wondered who that new manifestation was and Devi explained that she assumed the Tripura Sundari's Form at the time of terminating the Asura and returned to Kanya Rupa later but now she resumed the new Avatara as Tripura Sundari; she defined her name as 'Kakaara-Akaaraa-Makaara' or Kamakshi again. She assured that from then onward she would discard the Maha Bila and reside at the Gayatri Mandapa for good permanently. Then Vipraas recited Stotras continuously and worships followed without break eversince. Deva Shilpi Vishwa karma gifted her a box named 'Kuntala' as a Souvenir; Brahma presented a pearl lace and golden Chhatra; Vishnu offered a

Nava Ratna Kireeta and Shiva a 'Shri Chakra Pataka'. That Evening Devi was taken in a Memorable Procession.

Devi Kamakshi assured that she would spend as much time in Kanchipura as she would in the Chintaamani Griha at Mani Dweepa and that as Kamakshi would continue in the Shripura at Kanchi. Maha Deva announced that those who would venerate Kamakshi on her 'Avirbhaava Dina' at Kanchi would secure Koti Yagjna Phala.

Shiva again reappeared as Durvasa Maharshi along with Koushika Putra Goutama Maharshi andBharadwaja Putra Kundini Kumara and appointed them as the 'Archakas' and instruted to them about in Nitya Pujaa Vidhana; he declared that in Krita Yuga he would appear as Durvasa; in Treta Yuga as Bhargava; in Dwapara Yuga as Dhoumya and in Kali Yuga as Muka Muni; Maha Deva further stated that in Krita Yuga he himself would script Dwi-Sahasra naamaavali in praise of Kamakshi; in Treata Yuga Panchashataadhika Sahasranaamaas; in Dwapara Yuga Sahasra Shlokas and in Kali Yuga Pancha Shata shlokaas. Then onward Kanchi Kamakshi Pujas had been executed eversince as stated by Maharshi Markandeya to King Surata.

Among the crores of Devotees who visited and worshipped Kamakshi Devi, there was a poor Brahmana, a Krishna Yajurvedi, named Jayadevawho was able to visit Kanchi from a Place on the banks of River Godavari with great difficulty. After his darshana of Kamakshi Devi he returned to his 'Kutira' or a very modest abode which got converted as a big Building with all comforts and luxuries. Any visitor to Kamakshi Temple in Kanchi and worship the Devi most faithfully and bhakti would thus achieve multiplied benefits in several ways and meansthat one could not even imagine! Whoso ever reads or hears the contents of the above Adhyaaya even casually would certainy secure her Darshan soon!

Trayodashaadhyaaya: Eminence of 'Bhutabandha Janardana'

Sthaana trayastam Devesham Trvidhaakaaramachyutam, Prati Lingaagra Samyuktam Bhuta bandhamSamaashraye!

(Markandeaya Maharshi extolled the Bhutabandha Janardana existing on the top of the Trayaakaara Linga Swarupas or of Tri Formations of Shiva Lingas)

As Kanyakaa Devi assumed the mighty Swarupa of Tripura Sundari to kill Bandhakaasura, dragged his body to Kama Koshthi and installed the Victory Dhwaja, She asked Devas to dig up a specific spot and as they did so, Devatas spotted a Daitya called 'Mallaka' and the highly surprised Devas were taken aback; Vishnu then killed the Daitya. But each drop of the spilt blood of the dead body of the Asura created futher Asuras. Maha Deva sought to help Vishnu and pulled outa 'Jata' of his knotted hairand hit it on the ground. Two Bhutas were materialised of whom one was male and another was female. These Bhutas drank up the blood of the Asura's body but as they were used to drink up blood ran after Sri Hari. Vishnu taught a lesson by subduing themand sat heavy on them, but they overpowered Srihari who fell down; this irritated Vishnu and trampled the Bhutas heavily so that the latter apologised and came to senses finally. They requested Vishnu to purify their minds and the merciful Janardana prayed to Maha Deva in the latter's Pancha Mukha Form and Shankara released Ganga fromhis Five Faces as 'Pancha Dhaaraas' which fell on the Kama Koshtha and these flows fell down as Pancha Tirthas. Srihari asked the Bhutas to bathe in the Pancha Tirtha as Maha Deva blessed the Pancha Tirthas. Shiva further stated that whoever took bathin the Agneya side of Pancha Tirtha would be relieved of 'Swarna Steva Paataka' or the sin of stealing Gold; Dakshina 'Dishaa Snaana' would relieve of Surapaa Paana Pataka; Pashima Dishaa Snaana would nullify 'Paradaara Sangama'; Uttara Disha Snaana would destroy Praana Harana

Pataka; and the Tirtha Madhya Snaana would rectify the sinof cooperating any of the earlier Patakaas. Maha Deva then manifested a Tri-Linga Swarupa and Vishnu addressed Devas and Manavaasthat whosoever jumped in the Pancha Tirtha would attain Brahmanatwa even if that person was not so then, that he or she concerned be relieved of Bhuta-Preta-Piscacha-Graha difficulties, that the person be blessed with good progeny and eligibility toosecure Vaikuntha. Thus Devas took snaana in Pancha Tirtha and secured the boons and worshipped Bhuta bandhana Janardana as also the Pancha Mukha (Five-Faced) Maha Deva.

Maharshi Markandeya narrated an incident related to a Vipra called Girindra of Ramapura on the banks of River Krishna. He married five women but was not fortunate to beget a child. He visited Kama Koshtha and along with his wives and bathed in the Pancha Tirtha; there after he deeply meditated Bandha Mochana Janardana who appeared before him and gave him Divya Madhu (Honey). Having consumed it he returned home and was able to obtain hundred sons and attained Vaikuntha after his death. The Maharshi recommended fully that the devotees visiting Kanchipura ought to bathe in Panch Tirthaand experience miracles by the grace of Janardana and Devi Kamakshi. Recitation of the following 'DwadashaShloki'while taking early morning Snaanaas should instantly experience fulfillment of desires:

Swaami Pushkarini Tirtha Prva Sindhuh Pinaakini, Shilaahradaschatur madhyam Yavat Tundeera Mandalam/ Madhyey Tundira Bhu Vritham, Kampaa Vegavati dwayoh, Tamor madhey Kaama Koshtham amaakshi tatra vartatey/ JagatKaamakalaakaaram Naabhisthanam Bhuvah Param, Pada padmasya Kaamaakshyaah Mahaa Peetha mupasmahey/ Kamakotih smrita tasmaat Kaaranaa Deva chinnabhah, Yatra Kaama kruto Dharmo Jantunaa yena kenavaa/ Sakrudwaapi Sudharmaanaam Phalam Phalati Kotishayah, Yojapey Kama Koshthesmin Mantramishtaartha Daivatam/ Kotivarna phaleynaiva Muktilokam sa gacchati, Yo vasey Kamakoshthesmin Kshanaartham vaatatardhakam/ Muchyatey Sarva Paapebhyassaakshiddevi Naraaritih, Gayatri Mamndapaadhaaram Bhu Naabhi Sthaanamutthamam/ Purushaartha pradam Shambhor Bilaabhrantannamaamyaham, Yatkuryaat Kama Koshthasya Bilaabhrasya Pradakshinam/ Pada Sankhyaa kramenaiva Gogarbhajananam Labhet, Vishwa kaarana netraadhyaam Shrimat Tripura Sundareem/ Bandakaasura samhartreem Kamaksheem taamaham bhajey, Paraajanmadiney Kaachyaam Mahaabhyantara margatah/Yorchayettatra Kamaaksheem Kotipujaa phalambhavet, Tatphalotpanna Kaivalyam Sakritkaamaakshi sevayaa/ Tristhaananilayam Devam Trividhaakaaramachyutam, Bhuta bandham ta maashraey!

Chaturashyaadhyaaya: Shiva's defeat, Brahma's blindness, Shri Chakra Puja and beneficiaries

Sarvaangeem Ratnabhushaadhyaam Shukra hastaam Shuchismitaam, Kanchee nivaasinim Vandey Kamasheem Kamitarthadaam/

(Maharshi Markandeya paid hishomage to Suvarna Kamakshi who is tastefully decorated with most invaluableand exquisite jewellery including Golden Parrots in her right hand as she is the Paramount Symbol of Purity and Sanctity settled in Kanchipura always ready to fulfill any and every aspiration of her devotees)

To the East of Pancha Tirtha in the Kama Koshthi Region was manifested Suvarna Kamakshi and Markandeya was excited to provide a brief portrayalof her to King Suratha as follows:

Paraa Phaalaakshi Sambhutaa Kamakshi Swarna Vigrahaa, Dwinetraa Dwi bhujaa Shyaamaa Daksha hasta lasatcchukaa/ Lamba Vaama Karaambhojaa Tribhangi Dakshakunchitaa, Saa Dhanur Vigrahaa Tanvi Sarvaabharana bhushitaa/ Nava Padma Dalaankaara Nayana dwaya shobhitaa, Peetaambara dharaa peetaa Manikundala manditaa/ Varaankitadharaa Gouri Brahmanaa rachitaa krutih, Manonmani

Linga Shaktischuta Lingasya Vallabhaa/ Brahmanaa krita bimbeysow puraa saannidhyamaatanot, Tadahamsdampravakshyaami Puraavrutam charitrakam/ Tasya Shravana maatrena Sarva Paapaih pramuchatey/

(Shri Kamakshi was manifested from Paraa Shakti's forehead as of Golden Form with two hands; she was holding a Parrot in her right hand and was of a long left armand raised right side; she was of Three PosturedSeating with Dhanuraakaara or Bow-like Rupa; she was fully ornamented with such magnetic eyes putttingbright andtender lotus leaves to embarrassment; she is tastefully dressed up in silks; her body colour was a mix of 'Haridra Peeta' or yellow and orange; wearing lustrous ear rings of gems; she kept her hands in the stanceof bestowing boons; she was of the 'Hema Bimbaakara' created by Brahma; was the Unique Enchantress; of Linga Shakti; indeed she was Gauri the Sweet Wife of Ekaamreshwara popular as Kamakshi!)

Manmatha Deva the God of Love arrived at Kama Koshtha and performed very severeand tough Tapsya to Kamakshi Devi for a number of years and as she granted her darshan finally, he prayed to her and requested that his 'Ananga Swarupa' or Non-Physical Form that Maha Deva gave as the only dispensation consequent on his scorching Madana into a heap of ash. Manmadha begged Kamakshi to return his original Swarupa. Devi Kamakshi granted his request and blessed him that his life would be Everlasting and Joyful. Puffed up by Devi's boon, Manmatha reached Maha Deva and poured streams of flowery arrows targetted to him. A highly enraged Shiva threw his Trishula and later the most powerful 'Pashupataastra' but surprisingly Trishula proved ineffective while the 'Astra' was converted as a Flower Garland! Shiva was puzzled and realising that his discomfiture of his was due to Devi Kamakshi's boons to Manmatha, he approached Kamakshi but the latter asked him as to who was he as he seemed to have come near to her out of blind passion!Shiva reasoned with her that she was after all his wife and wondered what had upset her so much that she disliked of him! She replied to Shiva sternly that she was not Gauri as Shiva mistook her and that she was Maha Shakti responsible for the creation of Brahma-Vishnu and Maheshwara. Shiva tried to man-handle her out of his physical lustas generated by Manmatha and also due the disgraceinflicted on him by his arrows! Devi snubbedand repulsed Shiva and asked him to apologise to Manmadha. Later she created crores of Manmathas and instructed them to beat Shiva. He in turn created Koti Rudras and there was a fierce battle between flowery arrows and Trishulas! Madanas had an upper hand and Shiva became helpless. Kamakshi heckled Shiva and asked him to go begging and handed over a begging bowl to him. She then displayed her real Swarupa as Maha Shakti and demanded that he should take protection from her. Maha Deva prostrated before Kamakshi and as per her instruction Manmatha became a Star on the Galaxy and continued Devi Dhyana for ever!

Some time later Brahma visited a few Shiva Temples and found that there was no presence of Shivani there! Virinchi prayed to Kamakshi and the latter granted her dispensation that all the Shiva Temples from thence forth would have the presence of Devi too except Kamakoshta since Shiva was defeated by Manmatha there by her grace and hence this Place would be called 'Shivajit Kshetra. She further stated that this would be an exceptional place where Gauri would not be present in a Shivalaya and that she would do so only when Shiva could defeat Manmatha! In other words Ekamreshwara Linga could enter Kama koshtha only then! Brahma raised a doubt as to how annual celebrations of Gauri-Ekamreshwara Kalyanaas be performed! Then Kamakshi replied that there could be some Ekamba Devalayas and that she would assume Sthaanu Swarupa in such Tepmples; Ekaameshwara Temple was in a case in point! On the day of Kamakshi-Ekamreshwara Kalyana, the Sthaanu Vigraha of Gauri be invoked for due worship and after the celebration of the Kalyanashe should be returned to a 'Dhruvaalaya' as Sthanu Swarupa where no Pujas to Devi be performed beyond two days; it would be a violation of Devi's instruction otherwise!

Hema Kamakshi made her appearance in Shri Mukha Samvatsara KartikaKrishna Dashami coinciding with Lakshmi Vaasaraat Suryodaya of Purva Phalguni Nakshatra. As soon as she manifested herself she was of Bimbakaara, Divya Laavanya, Japaa Maalaankrita, Jataamakuta Dharini, Prasanna Vadana, Chicchakti Rupa, and Tripura Sundaryaakaara. Brahma worshipped her and got an Idol made as a Divya Vigraha in Loha. As she was 'Dhruva Sthita' or SthanuRupa, She was invoked with Anga-Kara and other Nyaasas and was worshipped for six months but Brahama decided to celebrate with reverence her Kalyana Mahotsava with Maha Deva.

Brahma's blindness and Sarasvati offers solution: As Brahma became blind all of a sudden, Devi Sarasvati explained the reason of his blindness; in Kanchipura under the Kama Koshthathere was the Gayatri Mandapa beneath which Shiva built a Kundalini Griha and who ever visited that Mantapa should perform Shri Chakra Puja and who did not perform so and walk across would turn blind! Sarasvati divulged this secret to Brahma as she learnt of it from Shiva. Brahma visited Kama Koshtha and perforned Shri Chakra Puja; he also had a darshan of Hema Kamakshi since only she could pardon the sin of not performing Shri Chakra Puja and trample the hallowed Place!

Kamakshi Naama Panchaka: Maharshi Markandeya enlightened the King Surata that Devi Kamakshi had five names viz. Swarnaningi, Shuka Hasta, Chuta Linga Vallabha and Dharma Devi; and the Dhruvatma (Sthanu Swarupa) had five other titles viz. Tapasvini, Ghana Shyama, Sarva Shaivalaeshwari, Kamakshi and Kalika. Bhagavan Shankarahad the names of Chuta Jyoti, Nirgunatma, Shiva, Kameshwara and Ekaamranadha. He also was known as Yagodbhava, Punya Koti, Maha Deva, Deva Raja and Abheeshta Varada. Kanchi had thus the fame of Three Swarupas viz. Shri Devi, Shiva Rupa and of Vishnu Swarupa. One should meditate the Nirguna-Saguna Swarupa of Shakti bhava Shivaand that was how Lalita Parameshwari was titled 'Shiva Shaktaika Rupini'!

Shiva Shaktaika Puja Vidhana:In view of the Oneness of Shiva and Shakti, one must always perform Shiva Shaktaika Puja for augmenting propitiousness. The Puja be first performed as addressed to Shiva followed by Paraa Shakti Puja; Markandeya emphasised thatwhile performing Puja, Shiva should not be conceived in Gauri Bimba and Gauri should not be prayed to in Shiva Bimba; in fact the Maharshi warned not to confuse the specifics of the Puja for good resultsof Mukti and any mix up might end up in adverse consequences of Naraka! The Bimba Puja should definitely follow this instruction! Generally speaking, there should be awareness of Bimba Bheda, Yantra Bheda, Tantra Bheda and Mantra Bheda! While elaborating of specific 'Bimbas', Markandya clarified that Purnaamsha Devi was manifested in the Tripuraa Bimba, Kalaatma Devi in Gauri Bimba, Dhruveshwari in Utsava Yogya Bimbas, Nirguna Swarupa in Rasaala Vriksha, Saguna Swarupini in Ekaamra Linga and Purusha Rupini in Varada Raja Vigraha. However, the 'Purnaamsha' or Completed Magnificence was stated to be in Kama Koti or Kamaraja Peetha and those who had a darshan of that hallowed Place were blessed indeed!

Shri Chakra Puja: Those who might not be fortunate to visit Kamaraja Peetha might as well perform Shri Chakra Puja. In the Shri Chakra, one should pray to one's Guru on the Tri Kona Purvaagra or the encircled Triangle's right top. At the same Place prayers were to be offered to Parama Guru, Parameshthi Guru, Paratpara Guru, Narayana, Padma Sambhava, Vasishtha, Shakti, Paraashara, Vyaasa, Shuka, Goudapaada, Kouliki and Manavoughama and ponder about Maha Kamehwari Kuta with Shri Vidya or Pancha Dashi Mantra. Later on, one should the Koulika Dharma Vettha ( the Performer of the Puja) must recite Shri Vidya atleast one thousand times. If the 'Chaapaka' or the Person responsible for the Pujawas unable to perform 'Anna Daana' then he or she should seek pardon from Shri Devi. But the most significant aspect of Shri Chakra Puja would be the 'Shri Vidyaa Yajana' or the Japa as prescribed.

In the past, the Shri Vidya Chakra Puja was successfully executed by Devi Lakshmi, Hayagriva, Manu, Dasharatha, Tunda, Kantaara Chola, Pannaga Raja and Shiva:

Beneficiaries of Shri Chakra Puja: At the time of Samudra Mathana, Vishnu who was of a naturally fair complexion turned blue and Lakshmi joked with Vishnu that she would not be fit to be her husband as she was of golden complexion: Vishnu gave a reparteeto her that she was old and cursed her to turn of 'Anjana Neela' complexion. Then Lakshmi did 'Shri Vidyopaasana' and regained her natural colour. Hayagriva Muni was engaged in continuous meditation of Shri Vidya of Devi Kamakshiwhen once a Rakshasa named Padma sat on the Muni and forced him to travel to Pataala Loka as a horse; Devi Kamakshi appeared in Pataala to save the Muni by killing the Asura. Hahagreeva assumed Vishnu Swarupa and tricked Rakshasa Guru Shukraachaarya and took away the 'Akshaya Kumbha of Mrita Sanjeevani' kept with the Acharya for the revival of dead Asuras and performed Abhisheka of the Sanjeevini to Devi Kamakshi. Vaivaswata Manuassumed Manvatwa as bestowed by his father Surya Deva but he had no knowledge what so ever about the fine distinctions of Paapa-Punyas and as advised by Vasishtha Muni and visited Kama Koshtha; Durvasa Maharshni provided the 'Upadesha' or instruction of Shri Vidya Mantra and the Manu did Dhyana and Tapas to Devi Kamakshi for hundred years. Then Kamakshi arrived near Manu in the Form of a Brahmana Woman and performed Abhishka to Manu with the Sacred Waters of Pancha Tirtha as a mark of declaring him as a Chakravarti and imparted the Knowledge of Ideal Administration; till date the 'Dharma Smriti' continues as the Guide of Dharma.King Dasharatha was advised by Vasishtha Muni to visit Kama Koshtha to perform Shri Chakra Puja and there was a Celestial Voice assuring the birth of Epoch making sons of Shri Rama and others. In the days of yore, King Aakaasha joined some followers of Boudha Guru and as directed by the latter stole considerable money of the Kingdom and mis-spent for wrong purposes and due to this sin became childless. He repented and abandoned the Boudha Guruand approached Gorakshanadha Muni who directed him to worship Kamakshi and taught Shri Vidya. He was then blessed with a boy like Vighneshwara as his son. As the King and Queen continued Devi worship daily, one day after the conclusionof the Puja-Homa-Dampati Puja-'Brahmana Samaaradhana', there was a miracle of Suvarna Varsha / Rain of Gold! Although the Brahmanas and Munis at the Bhojanam were unable to explain, the twelve year old son of Akaasha explained the reason: in the meals that were normally served at the daily'Samaaraadhana', there was a golden pebble in the greengram which was also cooked and served from the Bhojan consumed by an elderly 'Sumangali'woman who was Kamakshi herself and hence the Rain of Gold! The King's son ate a portion of the left over remnant of what the Suvasini ate, then he became a 'Sarva Tantra Visharada' or an expert of 'Tantra Gyana'; he was considered as Ganeshwara by those present and was named Tunda and was named the King of Kanchi Kshetra. In the Agneya direction of Kamakshi Temple there was an Idol of King Tunda that called for a Pradakshina lest the Devi Darshana Phala wouldreachtoKingTunda'saccount!King Vikrama Cholawas dethroned by his younger brotherShalya Chola aided by his schemy friend Parjanya. Vikrama Chola and his wife roamed about aimlessly and luckily reached Kama Koshta and organised a flower garden and supplied excellent garlands to Devi Kamakshi daily. Pleased by their service and devotion, Devi blessed them a female child. As the daughter grew of marriageable age, Kamakshi appeared in adream to the Pandya King Uddhaajit and asked him to defeat a battle with Shalya Chola and marry the daughter of the latter's elder brother who presently was supplying flower garlands to her. The Pandya King followed Devi's instructions and with passage of time King Vikrama Chola retired in favour of his son and devoted his time in the service of Kamakshi. Among various deeds of virtue, he developed gardens by extending them into forests thus securing the epithet of Kaantara Chola. While he was working in the forests, he had a serpent bite and he as well as the serpent attained Moksha by the grace of Devi.

#### Phala Shruti

Those who read or hearShri Kamakshi Vilasa is blessed by her grace and grandeur. The renderings about Devi as Tripura Sundari, Kanchipura as Bhuloka Swarga, Hasti Shaila Mahima, Splendour of Varada Raja Swami, Vegavat Nadi Prabhava, Rudra Shaala Mahatmya, Significance of Ekaamra Vriksha, Glories of Ekamreshwara and Bala / Tapas Kamakshi, Sarva Tirtha Mahima, Kamakoti Sthala Nirnaya, Kamakoti Bila, Magnificence of Maha Tripura Sundari, the proceedings of Shiva-Kamakshi Kalyana, Eminence of Bhuta bandha Janardana, Shiva's discomfiture by Manmadha, Brahma's blindness, Shri Chakra Puja Vidhana and illustrations of the Benefeciaries of Shri Chakra Puja notably of Lakshmi-Hayagriva, Vaivaswata Manu, King Dasharatha, King Tundeera and King Kantaara Chola; Hema Kamakshi Seva Phala and other aspects were absorbing and sanctified. The Pathana-Shravana- Dhaarana of Shri Kamakshi Vilasa would take steps forward to the realisation of the Devi and her supremacy. On completion of the experience of the accounts of the Shri Kamakshi, there should be 'Shodashopachaara Puja'of the Devi followed 'Brahmana Satkaara' with Vastra-Bhojana- Dakshinas and Anna Daana. Maharshi Markandeya who scripted and rendered Shri Kamakshi Vilasa to King Suratha blessed the latter who prostrated to the Maharshi and paid his reverences. Markandeya also blessed the readers or listeners of the Maha Kamakshi Vilasawith 'Deerghaayu- Putra Poutraabhivriddhi-Sakala Kaamita Siddhi and Shri Devi Pada Prapti'!

#### ANNEXURE I

# Agastya-HayagrivaSamvada

Anaadyanantamavyaktam Vyaktaanaam adikaaramam, Anandabodhaika Rasam Tanmahasya Upaasmahey/(I meditate that Supreme in my heart and Soul that has no Beginning nor End; neither Perceivable nor Imperceptible but the Cause of Causes and the root of Knowledge and Fulfilment)

# Brahma's commedation of Tripura Sundari

Agastya Muni requested Bhagavan Hayagriva about Kanchi Kamakshi and Bhagavan explained that Maheshwara had two operational eyes viz. Kashipura and Kanchipuraof which Kanchi Kshetrawas a Shiva Saannidya Vaishnava Kshetra. Brahma made relentless Tapasya to Tripura Sundari Devi and she appeared as seated in Padmaasanaalong with Vishnu and Lakshmi. Brahma extolled as follows:

Jaya Devi Jaganmaatarjaya Tripura Sundari, Jaya Shrinatha Sahajey Jaya Sarva Mangaley/ Jaya Jaya JagadambaNitya Rupey Jaya Jaya Santata Loka Soukhyadey, Jaya Jaya Karunaabdhi bhutey Jaya JayaShringaara Naayakey Devi/ Jaya Jaya Nilayaayitaraatma Vidye JayaJaya Yogindra Vandita - anghrey, Jaya Jaya Nija Bhaktasaatkritashrirjaya Jaya Nijanetra jaata Shiva Kaamey/ Jaya Janmasthiti dhwamsapidhaanaanugrahaanrmuhuh, Yaa karoti Swasankalpaatthasmai Devyai Namo Namah/ Varnaashramaanaam Saankarya kaarakaan Durjanaam Swayam, Yaa hanyattha teekshnaa —strai tasyai Devyai namo namah/ Naagamairna cha Vedaischa na ShaastrairnachaYougibhih, Suvedyaayaa Swasanvedyaa tasmai Devaim Namo Namah/Rahasyaamnaaya Vedaantaistatwavidbhur Muneeshvaraih,

Param Brahmeti yaa proktaa tasyai Devyai Namo Namah/ Hridayasthaapi Lokaanaam yenakenaapi drushyatey, Sukshma Vignaana rupaayai Tasyai Devai Namo Namah/ Brahma Vishnuscha RudraschavIshwarascha Sadaa Shivah, Yaddhyaanaika Paraa Nityam tasyai Devyai Namo Namah/ Pancha kaarana krutyendraa yadaagnaameva bibhrati, Saamraajya sampra deeshaayai tasyai Devyai Namo Namah/ Vedaani Shwasitam yasyaa Veekshitam Bhuta Panchakam, Smitam Charaacharam Vishwam tasyai Devyai Namo Namah/ Sahasra sirsha Bhogeendro Dharitreem yhadanujnayaa, Dhattey Sarva janaadhaaraam tasyai Devyai Namo Namah/ Jalayagnasta patyarko Vaato Vaati yadaagnayaa, Jnaana Shakti Swarupaayai tasyai Devyai Namo Namah/ Pancha Vimshati Tatwaani Maayaa Vidyaadi Panchakam, Yanmayam Munayah Praahustasyai Devyai Namo Namah/ Shiva Shaktishwaraaschaiva Shuddha Vidyaa Sadaa Shivah, Yadynmesha Vibhedaassyustasyai Devyai Namo Namah/ Gururmantro Devataacha Manah Praanaascha Panchadhaa, Yaa Viraajati Chidrupaa tasyai Devyai Namo Namah/ Sarvaatmanaamaantaraatma Paramaananda Rupini, Shri Vidyaiti smritaa yaatu tasmai Devyai Namo Namah/ Darshanaanicha Sarvaani yadangaani Vidurbudhaah, Tatthanniyamarupaayai rupaayai tasyai Devyai Namo Namah/ Yaabhaati Sarva Lokeshu Mani Mantroushadhaatmanaa, Tatwopadesh rupaayai tasmai Devyai Namo Namah/ Desha Kaala Padaardhaascha yadyadyastu yatha yathaa, Tadrupena yaa bhaati tasyai Devyai namo Namah/ Sacchidaananda rupaa yaa Kalyaana guna shaalini, Vishvottheernoti Vikhyaataa tasyai Devyai Namo Namah/

( Jaya Jaya Jagajjanani, TripuraSundari, Shri Nadha Sahodari, Sarva Mangala, Nitya Swarupini, Karunaamrita Sindhu, Shringaara Nayaki, Atma Vidyaa, Yogendra vanditaanghrey or she whose physique is worshipped by Yogendraas; provider of prosperity to Bhaktas; creator of Shiva's desires from her owneyes; she who could create, preserve, destroy and re-create by her mere thought; You are Kalika who severely punishes thoseresponsible for tampering the Varnaashrama Dharmaas; You are clearly discernible by the means of Vedas, Shastras, Agamaas and Yogaas; you are realisable only by one's own 'Antaraatma' of those Munis who are experts in Rahasyaamnaas, Upanishads and Tatwas addressyou as Para Brahma; though you are present in each and every human heart, not every one could realise you; you are Sukshma Jnaana Rupini; Brahma-Vishnu-Rudra-Ishwara-Sada Shivas worship you regularly; Saamrajya Sampadeshwari! Panchendriyas and Pancha Krityaasare under your instructions; Devi! Your sighs are Vedas and your looks are Pancha Bhutas; your smile is the Charaachara Srishti; it is with your command that Ananta Deva holds on his thouands of hoods the weight of Bhu Devi; it is with your approval that Agniburns, Surya provides heat, Vayu carries life; Jnaana Shakti Swarupini! Pancha Vimshati or Twenty Five Tatwaas and Mayaavidyaadi Panchakaas are your Forms as confirmed by Maharshis; Shiva-Shakti-Ishwara-Suddha Vidya-Sadaa Shiva are all your variations; Guru- Mantra-Devata-Mental faculty and Praana are all your manifestations; you are the Antaratma of all Beings; you are Symbol of Everlasting Paramaananda or Bliss; indeed you are the Shri Vidya; all kinds of 'Darshanas' or blessings and Yogas are your body parts; You are the Mani Aoushda Swarupa; Tatwopadesha Rupini! The kaleidoscopicdifferences of Desha-Kaala-Padartha or of Place-Time-Materials in the Universe in totality are but your own handi-work; You are Sacchidananda Rupini! Sakala Kalyaana Guna Shaalini!Vishvottarana Vikhyaataa or Famed beyond the capacity of the Universe!)

As Brahma prostrated before Tripura Sundari, she was extremely delighted and asked him for a boon; he requested her to be ever present in Kanchi and she readily agreed. Then he requested Janardana also to reside there for good and Sri Hari too approved. Further Brahma prayed to Devi that Maha Deva too should reside there especially due to his affection for her. Instantly, Parama Shiva manifested himself along with Gauri and theyalso agreed to Brahma's proposal. Then Vishnuannounced Shiva-Gouri Kalyana Mahotsava and invited Indraadi Devaas, Vasavaadi Pitru Devataas, Markandeyaadi Munis, Vasishthaadi Saptarshis, Sanaka sanandanaadi Yogis, Naradaadi Devarshis, Vaama devaadi Maha Jnaanis, Shuikaadi Jeevanmuktaas, Yaksha-Kinnara-Kimpurusha-Gandharva-Siddha- Vidyaadharaas, Pramatha Ganaadhipati Vighna Naayakas, Nava Durgaas, Brahmyaadi Sapta Matrikas, Apsarasas and so on. The

most Memorable Wedding was then celebrated as Devas sounded dundhubhis (Celestial Drums), arranged light showers of flowers,dances and music. Brahmaand Vani, Vishnu and Shri Laksmi, Indra and Indraani, Devas and their spousesand the rest of Invitees made Pradakshinas and Prostrations when there weresky-high reverberations of Victory Calls of 'Jaya Jaya Kamakshi' and 'Jaya Jaya Kameshwara'all over the Universe!

'Shri Kamaakshyaapaada Mastaka Varnana' (Shri Kamakshi's Physical Description)

Pashyatam sarvadevanam tatraivaantaradhiyata, Atha Dhataa Maha Gouryah pratibimba manoharam/Chakaara Divyalohena MahaGourisamaakruti,Tarunaaruna Rajiva soundarya charana dvayam/Kanatkanaka manjira pinjari kruta pithakam,Vidyudullasa Vasanamanognyamanimekhalam/

Ratnakeyura vilasiddhirajita bhujadvayam, Mukta vaidurya manikya nibadhodhara bandhanam/

Vibhrajamanam madhyena valitritayashobhina, Jahnavi saridavartashobhinabhi vibhushitam/

Paatira panka karpur kumkuma alankritastanam, Aamuktamuktaalankara bhasurastanachuchukam/

Vilasena katideshanyastavamkaarambujam, Manikyashakalaabadhamudrikabhiralankrutam/

DakshahastaambujaasaktasnigdhotpalamanoharamAadhymaprapadeenaischadivyakalpakadambakaih/D eeptabhushana ratnamshurajirajitadinmukham,Taptahaataka samklyuptaratnagraiveyashobhitam/Mangalyasutra ratnanshushrenee manjula kandharam,Valeevatmsamaanikyataatankapari

bhushitam/Japavidrumalavanyalalitadharapallavam,Dadimiphalabijaabhadantapanktiviraajitam/Shuchi mandasmitollaasikapola phalkojjvalam,Aoupamyarahitodaaranaasamanimanoharam/Vilasattkila pushpashrivijayodyatanasikam,Ishadunmesha madhura nilotpalavilochanam/Prasunachaapachaapa ShriLalitabhruvilasakam,Ardhendutulitam Purnenduruchirananam/Saandra saurabha sampanna kasturi tilakojvalam,Muktalimalaa vilasadalakaadhyamukhaambujam/Paarijaata prasuna stragvalugudhammilla bandhanam,Anargharatna khachita makutaanchita mastakam/Sarvalavanya vasatim bhavanam vibhramaashriyah/Shivo Vishnuschatatratyaassamastaascha mahajanah,Bimbasaya tasya Devyasch na bhedam jagruhustada/Atha bimbam Maheshani swatantraa

praviveshatat/AgratassarvaDevaanaamaascharyena prapashyataamBimbaakrutyaatmano Bimbey samaagatya sthitaam cha taam/

(Shri Maha Gauri's sacred feet are bright and delicate like red lotuses with her ankles stringed around with golden chains fitted with tiny trinkletsmade of a flash of precious stonesmaking soft soundspartly hiding the glory of the lustrous silk sari that she was dressed in. She was ornamenetd with a charmingly designed 'Odhyana bandhana' (girdle) of gold with Nine Gems enhancing the glitter of the Sari. Her everforgiving hands have Nava Ratna Khachita Keyuraas or armlets. Her vakshasthala was smeared with Karpura- Kumkuma-Akshataas and her graceful left hand carried ruby studded rings of gold; her righthand carried 'snigdhotpala' or fully blossomed lotus; her Mangala Sutra was augmenting the beauty and splendour emitted by the Kiranas/ rays of a graceful mix of neck laces; her Adhara Pallavas (tender lips) wereof soft and crimson redness; hercheeks were dimpled and constantly smiling and benign; her nose excels with distinction wearing a noselet of a single but uniquediamond; her forehead was like half moon but her full face was far beyond the cool brightness of a Full Moon; her Suvarana Kireeta / golden headgear full of a sparkling mix of multi-coloured an dazzling precious Stones unavailable and unseen by

the Eyes of Devatas let alone human beings; She was the Epitome of Grace; the Embodiment of Kindness and the Personification of Auspiciousness).

As the description of Maha Gauri's Physique ended, Vishnu and Maheshwara could not distinguish between her and her Bimba (Hallow) and she got absorbed in it. Shri Hari prostrated before her and requested her that as per the past practice, they would wish to celebrate the Sacred Wedding of Gauri and Maha Deva so that the general public would not be deprived of an opportunity to reach their Fulfilment of desires besides attaining Salvation. There was a Celestial Approval of the Wedding Proposal stating 'Tathaastu'or so be it. The Kalyana was celebrated as described above in the same Annexure I and the Deities settledin their respective positions; while Shri Kama Koshtha was in the center of Shripura, Devi Lakshmi was to its left and Vishnu was to the right. Each year, human beings should celebrate the Kalyanotsava and continue to enjoy prosperity, long life and happiness.

## **ANNEXURE II**

Agastya Maharshi requested Hayagriva Deva to enlighten him about the grandeurs of Shri Lakshmi Kamakshi and Hayagriva replied:

The Top Five viz. Brahma-Vishnu-Rudras- Maheshwara-Sada Shiva answerable to Kamakshi

Mahaa Tripura Sundaryaa Maahaatmyam samupaadishat, Tatprabhaavaanaham vedmi kinchitadvakshey na chaanyathaa/ Rahasya Mantra tadvaksheyshrunu tatvam samaahatah, Na Brahmaan cha Vishnurvaa na Rudrascha Tayopyami/ Mahitaa maayayaa yasyastureeyascha Maheshwarah, Sadaa shivo vaa jaanaati kimuta Prakrutaamaraah/ Sadaa Shivastu Dharmaatmaa Sacchidaananda Vigrahah, Akartyumanyathaa Kartaa Yasyastwanugrahaat/ Sa kadaachitta Devaaham Maanya maano Maheshwarah, Tanmayaa mohito bhutwaa twavashas —shavataatagaat/ Kinchidatra Viseshosti Vaktavyassopi tatkshunu/ Brahmaa deenaam trayaanaam cha Tureeyasteeshwarah Prabhuh/ Chaturnaamapi Sarveshaamaadi Kartaa Sadaa Shivah, Saiva Kaaranameteshaam Srishtisthitilayeshwapi/ Maadrahasyam kathitam tasmaascharatimadbhutam, Punareva prayakshaami Saavadhaanaah shrunu/ Atra sthitaapi Sarveshaam hridayasthaa Ghatod —bhava, Tattatkarmaanurupam saa pradattey dehinaam phalam/ Yatkinchidvartatey Lokey Sarvamasya vicheshtimam, Yatkinchittchantayatey kaschistwacchaanda vididhaatyasou/ Asyaa yevaavataarastu Tripuraadyascha Shaktyayah/

(Brahma-Vishnu-Rudraas as also Maheshwara and further Superior Sada Shiva too did not realise my Magnificence and after all how about Devas! Only the Superior Sada Shiva was free to act or react to do

or undo as he enjoyed Devi's confidence. Maheshwara once felt that he was the Para Deva then he had to to be turned out as a Corpse! However Maheshwara was no doubt senior to Tri Murtis but could not arrogate Superiority beyond that stage. Basically the five of them were answerable to the Deeds of Srishthi-Sthiti-Samhaaraas. But above all was myself being present in the hearts and Souls of every personor Devas or their manifestations. The Top Five were thus answerable to Devi and the rest was my own Vilaasa!

Hayagriva continued his narration to Agastya as follows: At the beginningDevi Kamakshi materialised three eggs; these three created Tri Purushas and Tri Shaktis: The First Egg manifested Gauri and Narayana; then the Second couple were Lakshmi and Brahma and the third in the series of were Vani and Shiva. Then Maha Devi made the arrangement herself and made the combination of Brahma and Vani; Vishnu and Lakshmi and finally Shiva and Parvati. Maha Devi also made three Abodes of Satya Loka to Brahma, Vaikuntha to Vishnu and Shiva to Kailasa and firmed up their duties as well of Creation-Preservation and Destruction.

Parvati's sin, Kamakshi's pardon and Gauri-Shiva's Kalyana:Devi Parvati closed Shiva's threeeyes playfullyonce and the representations of Surya-Chandra-Agnis of the eyes were put offwhen the Universe was drowned in darkness and there was Pralaya. Shiva advised Parvati to atone for her sin by performing severe Tapasya by assuming the Form of 'Baala' keeping Tulasi before her forlong spells of time on the banks of Ganga at Varanasi and later at Kanchipuri near Kampa Nadi.Tripura Sundari Kamakshi was pleasedby her Tapasya and pardoned her sin and infused her Shakti into Parvati. Kamakshi also instructed Shiva as the latter was in Tapasya too to accept Manmatha whom Shiva destroyed in the past with his Third Eye since Manmatha disturbed Shiva's concentration. Initially Shiva resisted Kamakshi's instruction but being overpowered by her Superiority succumbed to her magnificence. Then Kamakshi Devi as Tripura Sundari blessed both Gauri and Shiva to get remarried again.

Brahma's Seniority claim, Bhairava beheads Brahma, atones to Devi Kamakshi and her pardon: Brahma Sabha once when Tri Murtis, Dikpalakas, Devas and Maharshis were present, there was some confusion about the identity of Brahma and Shiva as both had Five Heads. Brahma claimed his senioritybut Narayana stated that after all Brahma was generated from the lotus top that sprouted from his navel and thus was his son. Brahma retaliated that he was the Sristhti Karta and that he created Rudras too. An argument developed resulting in confrontation when a 'Jyoti Stambha' or a huge Pillar of Light appeared. Narayana realised that the Pillar was Maheshwara but the quarrelsome Brahma attempted to reach its top and failed and Narayana sought to slide down to ascertain the foot of the Pillar and failed too. The arrogant Brahma disregarded Maheshwara too and the latter grew angry and out of the rage was materialised Bhairava who snipped one of Brahma's Five heads and there was pandemonium all around. Bhairava tried to get rid of the Kapaala of the detachedhead of Brahma but it got stuck to him as the sin of 'Brahma Hatya'. Bhairava visited several Kshetras from Kashi onward and finally reached Pancha Tirtha at Kanchipura; He found Vasudeva was engrossed in the meditation of Kamakshi seatedsouth of her and Lakshmi was immersed in the Dhyana of Kamakshi as seated to the latter's north. Bhairavarealised that Vishnu and Lakshmi were in the dhyana of Kamakshi and went into a rapturous Yoga Samadhi. Sometime around mid night, Devi Kamashi appeared before Bhairava who pleaded her to be freed from the sin of Brahma Hatya as followed by the Brahma Kapala. She replied that he was indeed of her own

Swaupa, blessed him and asked him to dip in the Pancha Tirtha next morning. Miraculously Bhairava got freed from the Kapala and simultaneously Shiva got rid of the begging bowl being the Brahma Kapala at Varanasi!

Kamakshi blesses King Dasharatha with Excellent Progeny

Maharshi Vasishtha instructed the childlessKing Dasharatha to worship Tri Pura Sundari who manifested at Five Maha Punya Kshetras of Ayodhya, Madhura, Maya, Kashi, Kanchi and Avanti. The King along his three wives worshipped the Devi at Ayodhya for three days and nights. On the third mid-night, as the King was asleepDevi appeared and assured that he would no doubt beget illustrious sons but he had some possible impact on the longevity of the progeny due to blemishes in his previous births; she therefore directed him to visit Kanchipura, take Sacred bath in Pancha Tirtha, secure her Darshan at Kanchi and perform Shri Chakra Puja. She further instructed the King to enterKama Koshtaand the Maha Bila which was worshipped by Tri Mutris and Maharshis; She was present as seated with 'Praangmukha' or facing East as Invisible 'Maha Raagini', that Maha Gouri manifested from Kamakshi's forehead would be seated towards the Southern Side; that Maha Lakshmi would be seated to Kamakshi's left as Bimbaakaara; that her mere view would destroy all sins and flaws and then the King should perform 'Shodasopachaara Puja'as prescribed. The excited King visited Kanchi at oncealong with his queens under the direction of Guru Vasishtha Maharshi, performed the Shri Chakra Worship as instructed by Tripura Sundari, prostrated before her, did Pradakshinas most reverentially, gave away charities liberally, arranged Brahmana Puja with respects and arranged Anna daanas. At the conclusion of the Worship, the King made Devi Stuti as follows:

Paadaagra lamba Paramaabharanaabhirama Manjeera Ratna Ruchi Manjula Paada Padmey, Peetaambarasphuratapeshala Hema Kaanti, Keyura Kankana Parishkruta Baahu Valli/ Pundrekshu chaapa Vilasanmridu vaama paaney, RatnormikaaSuma shaaraahatadaksha hastey/ Vakshoja mandala vivalga Vaksha haarey, Pashaangushaanghadalasad bhuja shobhitaangi/ Vaktashriyaa Vijita shaarada Chandra bimbey,Taataanka ratna karamandita bhaagey/ Mandasmitasphurana shaalini manjunaasey, Netra triya Vijita neela saroja patrey/ Subhrulatey Suvadaney Sulalaata chitrey, Graiveyaka sphurita kambu manojna kanthey/ Ratnaanuvidbhutaneeya Mahaakireetey Sarvaanga sundari Samasta Surendra Vandye/ Kaankshaanurupa varadey Karunaardra chittey, Saamraajya sdampadabhimaanini Chakra naathey/ Yogeendra maanasaSaroja nivaasa hamsi, Simhaasaneshwari Parey Mahi Saannidhehi/

(Devi!You are ornamented with 'Diyaabharanas'emitting splendours of anklet chains adding the illuminations of your soft feet; you are possessive of hands with 'SuvarnaKankanas' on your wrists as your left hand with gem studded finger rings has a sugar cane bow with flower arrows andthe right with 'Paashaankushaas'; you wear silk dresses doubling the radiance of your body shine of gold; your longneck laces made of Nava Ratnastouching 'Vakshojaas'make fun of Chandra bimba; your shapely nose heckles moon shine; enticing eyes are like Neela Sarojas; you are of Su Vadana or of charming face; Su Lalaataor charismatic forehead; Kanthaabharanaas are exquisitely bedecked; and your 'Nava Ratna Kireeta'enriches 'Sarvaanga Soundarya'. Para Devata! Sakala Suraasura Vandaniya or worshippable by Devas and Asuraas; Yoga Maanasa Hamsi! Vanchita Varapradaa! Karunaalayaa! Samraajya Daayini! Shri Chakreshwari! Simhasaneshwari! Tri Pura Sundari!)

As the King prayed to her, Kamakshi Devi blessed him with four sons with Devaamsha. Bhakta Ganaas do get their desires fulfilled as in the case of Dasharatha. Indeed Shri Devi's Mahatmya is unparalleled and inexpressible to Brahma- Vishnu- Maheshwaras!
[ The above Annexures were extracts from the Hayagriva-Agastya Samvada of Kamakshi Mahima as quoted by Markandeya Maharshi to King Surata].
Phala Shruti:
Itite kathitam kinchatkaamaakshyasshheela mujjvalam,
Shrunvataam pathataamchaapi Sarva paapaharam/
(Whosoever reads or hears would most certainly uproot the blemishes and sins and become worthy of the mercy and pardon of Shri Tripura Sundari Devi Kamakshi)
This translation is dedicated to the lotus feet of Maha Swami Shrimad Chandrashekhara Saraswati of Kamakoti Peetha. His Holiness had the magnificent vision of setting up an on-going Shri Lakshmi Kamakshi Nilaya at Chennai.
OM SHRI LAKSHMI KAMAKSHYAI NAMAH

#### ESSENCE OF KURMA PURANA

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### ESSENCE OF KURMA PURANA

Namaskrutwa Jagad Yonim Kurma rupadharinim Harim,

Vakshye Pouraanikeem Divyam Kathaam Paapa Pranaashanim/

Yaam shrutwaa Paapakarmaapi Gaccheta Paramaam gatim,

Na naastikey Kathaam Puraamaamaamimaam bruyaat kadachana /

Shraddhaanaaya Shaantaaya Dhaarmikaaya Dwijaataye,

Imaam Kathaanubruyaat Sakshaannaaraayaneritaam/

(My greetings to Bhagavan Narayana Vishnu who is the root cause of the totality of the Universe assuming the Form of Kurma; the unique Kurma Purana which destroys all the Great Sins of life is a definite means of Mukti. But this Sacred Kurma Purana is certainly not meant for Nastikas or Atheists but is for Believers of Almighty, Dharma and Values of Life, fortitude and devotion).

Vishnu's Avatara as Kurma, Lakshmi as Maya and Revelation of Tatwa Gyaan (Sage Indradyumna's prayer to Vishnu included)

DwipayanaVeda Vyasa Maharshi also called Romaharshana (or he whose body-hairs are imbued with happiness) was inspired by Suta Maha Muni to narrate the happenings of 'Kurma Avatara' of Vishnu to the Sages at Nimisha Forest. As Deva Danavas decided to initiate the act of the Ksheera Samudra Mathana or churning of the Ocean of Milk - on which Narayana was lying normally in yogic slumber- by erecting the Mandara Mountain, Bhagavan Narayana had already assumed the Kurma Rupa or the Form of a gigantic Tortoise. Even by then, Devi Lakshmi the Goddess of Wealth was in position along with Kurma Deva. As Devas and Maharsis like Narada asked Devi Lakshmi to be identified, Narayana replied that she was of his own 'Amsha'or Swarupa:

Iyamsa Pramashaktirmayi Brahma Rupiney,

Maya mama Priyaanantaa yahedam mohitam Jagat/

Anayaiya Jagat Sarvam Sadevaasura Maanusham,

Mohayaami Dwija Sreshtaa grasaami visrujaami cha/

Utpattim Pralayam chaiva Bhutaanaamagatim gatim,

Vijnaayaanveekshya chaatmaanam taranti vipulaalimaam/

Asyaastwamshaanadhishtaaya Shaktimanto bhavan Dwijaah,

Brahmoshaanadayo Devaah Sarva Shaktiriyam mama/

Saishaa Sarva jagatstutih Prakrithistrigunaatmikaa,

Praageva Mattaha Sanjaataa Shrikalpey Padma vaasini/

Chaturbhujah shankha chakra padma hastaa shubhaanvitaa,

Koti Surya Pratikaashaa Mohini Sarva dehinaam/

Naalam Devaa Pitaro Maanavaa Vasuvopicha

Mayaametaam Samutturtam ye chaanye Bhuvi dehinah/

(This Devi Lakshmi is of Vishnu's Swarupa and Parama Shakti Maha Maya who allures the Universe in totality; Her charms are endless and is spread all over with her attractions conjuring one and all and with her assistance what Vishnu creates, destroys and recreates again. Thus Vishnu confirmed that this Maha Shakti was the prime source of energy based on which, Brahma, Shiva and all the Devas which were the ramifications of Maha Maya came to be created by the mix of Three Gunas or features of Satwa-Rajas and Tamas. She thus got originated with four hands possessing Shankha-Chakra-Kamal and Abhaya or Raksha to assure protection to one and all of the Beings in Creation and indeed there was none including Devas, Pitaras, Manavas etc. who could conquer her except by extreme dedication and deep devotion.)

Devi Lakshmi was briefed by Brahma as follows:

Devidamakhilam Vishwam Sadevasura -maanusham,

Mohayitwaamamaadeshaat samsaarey vinipataya/

Jnaanayoga rataan Daantaan Brahmishthaan Brahma vaadinah,

Akrodhanaan Satyaparaan dooratah parivarjaya/

Dhyaayino nirmamaan Shaantaan dharmikaan vedapaaragaan,

Jaapinastaapasaan Vipraan dooratah parivarjaya/

Sartyaparaan dooratah parivarjaya/

Vedavedaanta vijnaana sancchinnaasesha samshayaan,

Mahaayajna paraan Vipraan dooratah parivarjaya/

Ye Jayanti japairhomair Deva Devam Maheswaram,

Swaadhyaayanejjayaa dooraat taan prayatnena varjaya/

Bhakti yoga Samaayuktaaneeswaraarpita maanasaan,

Paanaayaamaadishu rataan dooraat pariharaamalaam/

Pranavaasaktamanaso Rudra japya paraayanaan,

Atharva shirasaso- dhyetrun Dharmajnaana parivarjaya/

(Brahma advised Lakshmi Devi to certainly spread the net of Maya on Devas, Asuras, Manuhsyas and indeed the entire world, but not on those who were always engaged in Jnaana Yoga, Jitendriyata or control of Jnaana-Karmendriyas, Brahma Nishtha or Absorption in Brahmatwa, Brahmavaaditwa or seeking to prove Brahma's existence, krodha shunyata or resistance of anger and Satya paraayanata or Constant pursuit of Truth. Those who are Dhyaanis or Meditators, devoid of desires, ever Peaceful, Dharmik or the Virtuous, Veda Jnaanis, Japa-paraayanaas, and Tapasvis should also be exempt from the Maya. Veda Vedaanta Jnaanis, Yajna paraayanaas or practitioners, Japa-homa-Yajna and Swaadhyaaya Murtis too never be exposed to the Lakshmi Maya. Again, those persons who dedicate themselves to Bhagavan and were deeply attached to Praanaayaama viz.Dharana-Dhyaana and Samaadhi, 'Pranavopaasana', Rudra Mantra Japa and Athrava sirasaadhyeya and Nitya Ishwaraadhayena are too exempt from the playful exposure of Maya).

Having heard about the influence of Devi Lakshmi's Maya, Devas and Munis enquired of Vishnu whether there was any body who might have escaped the impact of Maya in the past, Hrishikesha cited one example of a well-read and illustrious Brahmana called Indradyumna who in his previous birth was a reputed King also named Indradyumna and claimed invincibility over Devas. But meanwhile Vishnu assumed Kurma Avatara and since the Shaktis of Tri Murtis and of Devas got merged into the Avatara, the King sought refuge into the Avatara; then Kurma Deva blessed the King to take to the next birth as a Brahmana and in his current life practised Vratas, Upavaasaas, Homas and worshipped Vishnu. That was the background of Indradyumna as the King and later as Brahmana. Devi Lakshmi encountered the Brahmana and was overcome by his sincerity and dedication and on revealing her identity as Lakshmi touched the Brahmana with affection and assured that one day Bhagavan Vishnu himself would provide Jnaana to him and disappeared. Brahmana Indradyumna meditated to Vishnu for very many years and decades and finally Bhagavan obliged him with his darshan as the latter fell down on his knees and prayed to him.

Indradyumna's Prayer to BhagavanVishnu:

Yajneshaachyuta Govinda Madhavaananta Keshava,

Krishna Vishno Hrishikesha tubhyam Vishwatmaney Namah/

Namostutey Puraanaaya Haraye Vishwa Murtaye,

Sarga Sthiti Vinaashaanaam Hetaveynanta Shaktaye/

Nirgunaaya Namastubhyam Nishkalaaya amalaatmaney,

Purushaaya Namastubhyam Vishwarupaayatey namah/

Namastey Vaasudevaaya Vishnavey Vishwayonaye,

Adi Madhyanta Heenaaya Jnaanagamyaaya tey namah/

Namastey Nirvikaaraaya Nishprapanchaaya tey namah,

Bhedaabheda Viheenaaya Namostwaananda Rupiney/

Namastaaraaya Shaantaaya Namo Apratihataatmaney,

Ananta Murtaye tubhyam amurtaayam Namo namah/

Namastey Paramaarthaaya Maayaatitaaya tey namah,

Namastey Parameshaaya Brahmaney Paramatmaney/

Namostu tey Susukshmaaya Maha Devayatey namah,

Namah Shivaaya Shuddhaaya Namastey Parameshthiney/

Twayaiva Srushthimakhilam twameva Paramaagatih,

Twam Pitaa Sarva Bhutaanaam twam Maataa Purushottama/

Twamaksharam Paramdhaama Chinmaatram Vyoma Nishkalam,

Sarvasyaadhaara –mavyaktamanantam Tamasah Param/

Prapashyanti Paramaatmaanam Jnaana deepena kevalam,

Prapadye Bhavato Rupam tad Vishnoh Paramam Padam/

Evam stuvantam Bhagavan Bhutaatmaa Bhutabhaavanah,

Upaabhyaamatha hastaabhyaam paspasrsha prahasanniva/

(My salutations to you Yagna Swami, Achyuta, Govinda, Maadhava, Ananta, Keshava, Krishna, Vishnu, Hrishikesha, Vishwaatma, Puraana Purusha, Vishwa Murti, Hari! You are the cause of Creation, Continuation and Conclusion of the Universe; You possess Unending Energy, You are the Nirguna Swarupa, Nishkala, Vimalatma or of the Pure Soul; Vishwa Rupa Purusha, Vishwa Yoni, vaasudeva. Vishnu; You have neither Beginning-nor the Inter Stage-nor even the Termination; You are realisable only by Jnaana or Paramount Knowledge; You are Nitrvikara or Devoid of Features; Prapancha or Pancha Bhutas; You possess neither dissimilarities nor constancies; but are the Embodiment of Ananda or Bliss! You are the only Power that could save us from the Deep Oceans of Samsara or the Miseries of Life; You are always Peaceful, Tranquil, Wholesome, Ever-Clean and Eternal; You are beyond Illusions, Paramartha Swarupa or the Supreme Goal; Paramatma or the Ultimate Soul; The Everlasting; The Minutest; Maha Deva-Parameshti and Parabrahma! You are the Highest Scripter of Srishti; the Final Destiny; the Purushottama; the Father and Mother of Bhuta-Praanis in Totality; the Avinaashi /Indestructible; Parama dhama or the Last Refuge Point; the Chikitsa Rupa or the Best Physician; Vyoma or the Akaasha; Nishkala or the Transparent; The Adhara or the Fulcrum; Avyakta or the Unknown; Ananta or The Endless; Nitya Prakasha or the Ever-Resplendent; and Realisable by Yogis only by the Light of Jnaana or the Awareness of Infinity! As Indradyumna extolled Bhagavan Vishnu, the latter was pleased, smiled and touched the Muni and passed on Tatwa Jnaana.) As Indradyuma was in a trance and in a state of bliss, Bhagavan passed on the Fundamentals and Nuances of Tatwa Gyaana.

Highlights of Tatwa Gyan: Bhagawan unfolded the Basic Principles of Tatwa Gyana with an Intro of Ashrama Dharma, Bhakti Saadhana, Saguna Swarupa Bhavana gradually leading to Nirgunatwa, Virat Swarupa, and Brahma Gyana. He stated:

Varnaashramaachaaravataam Pumsaam Devo Maheshwarah,

Jnaanena Bhaktiyogena Pujaniyo na chaanyathaa/

Vigjnaaya tatparam Tatwam Vibhutim Karyakaaranam,

Pravruttim chaapimey Jnaatwaa Mokshaartheeshwaramarchayet/

Sarva Sangaan parityajya Jnaatwaa Maayaamayam Jajat,

Adwaitam bhavayaatmaanam drushyasey Parameshwaram/

Trividhaa Bhaavana Brahmanm prochyamaanaa nibodha mey,

Ekaa madvishayaa tatra dwitiyaa Vkyata samshrayaa,

Anyaacha Bhaavanaa Braahmi Vigjneyaa saa gunaatigaa/

Aasaamanyaamchaatha Bhavanaam Bhavayed Budhah,

Asaktah Samshrayedaadyaamityesha Vaidiki Shrutih/

Tasmaat Sarva prayatnena tannisthastatparaayanah,

Samaaraadhya Vishwesham tato Mokshamavaapyasi/

(Persons engaged in the Varnaashrama and Ashrama Dharmas should follow the Principles of Bhakti and Jnaana and worship Bhagavan and there would indeed be no other means of *Sadhana*. Those desirous of accomplishing Moksha must perform 'Upasana' by appropriately assessing the intricacies of Parama Tatwa, Vibhutis or Alternate Counter-Part Shaktis, Karya-Kaarana or Cause-Causation Forms and then worship the Supreme Ishwara. There are three kinds of Bhavanas or feelings about Paramatma viz. Saguna Swarupa or in full physical Form; the second feeling relates to a Virat Swarupa or of a Giant Form; the Third relates to Brahma Jnaana Vishaya Bhavana or of the Complex and Unidentifiable Type beyond one's comprehension. A devotee might follow any of the above Bhavanas to perform 'Upasana'; a none too capable person who could imagine Bhagavan in a Complex Swarupa might as well worship Him in the Primary Form of Bhagavan and indeed that type of worship was authorised by Vedas. In any case, Indradyumna was advised by Bhagavan that in any of the Forms of Saguna, Nirguna or Paraaguna, one must perform worship with Nishtha or Dedication to accomplish Moksha). Then Bhagavan explained to the Sage that Paratpara Tatwa was an endless personification of Para Brahma:

Paratparam Tatwam Param Brahmaikamavyayam,

Nityaanandam Swayam Jyotiraksharam Tamasah Param/

Ishwaryam tasya yannityam Vibhutiriti geeyatey,

Kaaryam Jagadathaavyaktam Kaaranam Shuddamaksharam/

Aham hi Sarvabhutaanaam- antaryaameeshwarah Parah,

Sargasthityanta kartutwam Pravurtirmama geeyatey/

Etad Vigjnaaya Bhaavena Yathaavadakhilam Dwija,

Tatastwam Karmayogena Shaaswatam Samyagarchaya/

(The Para Tatwa beyond one's Imagination is Para Brahma the Ananda Swarupa or the Embodiment of Bliss; Swaprakasha or the Auto-Illuminated; Avinaashi or Indestructible; Ever Prosperous; Ever Lasting; Karyakaarana Swarupa; Srishthisthitisamhaara Karana; and the Maha Tawta and Vibhuti Swarupa. I am the Antaryami Ishwara. Brahmana! Do therefore seek to visualize me and worship me through Karma Yoga, advised Bhagavan).

That was how, the Sage Indradyumna proceeded to worship the Mata Tatwa and attained Moksha.

Tasmaad Sarva prayatnena Varnaashrama vidhou sthitah,

Samaashriyat yaantimam Bhavam Maayaam Lakshmim Tred budhah/

(This would be the path of observing Varnaashrama Niyamaas as Brahmana Indradyumna did by sincerely dedicating the self to Paramatma that one ought to follow to overcome the Lakshmi Maya!)

Indeed that was the backdrop of Kurma Purana by hearing, reciting and analysing which would bestow long life, fulfillment, 'paapa vimochana' and Mukti:

Dhanyam Yashasyamaanushyam Punyam Mokshapradam Nrunaam,

Puraana shravana Vipraah kathanam cha viseshatah/

Shrutwaa chaadhyaayameyvaikam Sarvapaapaaih pramuchyatey,

Upaakhaanamathaikam vaa Brahmalokey Mahiyatey/

Evolution of Brahmanda (the Golden Egg) and popular features of the Supreme Architect

Prakrtutim Purusham chaiva Pravishyashu Maheshwarah,

Khshobhayaamaasa yogena Parena Parameshwarah/

Pradhaanaat kshobhamaanaaccha tathaa Pumsah Puraatanaat,

Praaduraaseen -mahad beejam Pradhaana Purushatmakam/

Mahatmaanaa Mati Brahma Prabuddhih Khyaatireeshwarah,

Prajnaa Dhrutih Smritih Samvidetasmaaditi tat smrutam/

Vaikaarikasthaijamascha Bhuta -adish chaiva Taamasah,

Trividhoyamahankaaro Mahatah Sambubhuva ha/

Ahamkaarobhimaanascha kartaa Mantaacha sa smrtutah,

Atmaacha Pudgalo jeevo yatah Sarvaah pravruttayah/

Pancha Bhutaanyahamkaaraat tanmaatraani cha janjirey,

Indriyaani tathaa Devaah Sarvam tasyataatmajam Jagat/

(Parameshwara assumed the dual Forms of Purusha and Prakriti and following their interaction appeared a Maha Beeja called Mahatma, Mati, Prabuddha, Khyati, Pragjna, Dhruti, Smruti and Samvit. This Maha Tatwa was the 'Adi Karana' or the Prime Cause of Creation or Three Kinds of Ahamkara (Ego or Self Awareness) viz. Vaikarika, Taijasa, and Taamasa. This Ahamkara took to six kinds of Pravrittis or manifestations viz. Abhimaan, Karta, Manta, Atma, Pudgal and Jeeva. The Ahamkara created Pancha Bhutas of Prithvi-Jala-Teja-Vaayu and Akasha or Earth-Water-Radiance-Air and Sky; the Ahamkara also created Five 'Tanmatras' (Subtle Forms of Matter) of Shabda-Sparsha-Rupa-Rasa-Gandha or Sound-Touch-Vision-Taste and Smell; the corresponding Indriyas or Physical Parts of Ears-Skin-Eyes-Tongue and Nose). The undefinable 'Manas' or Mind is stated to be the first Vikara (Change or Transformation) and therefore Vaikarika Srishti got intiated by Vaikarika Ahamkaara. This Srishti comprised five Karmendriyas of hands, legs, mouth and organs of generation and excretion besides Jnanendriyas of Ears, Nose, Eyes, Tongue and Skin and the Eleventh Indriya is of the Manas or Mind which is 'Ubhayaatmaka' or a common feature. This is the Creation of Bhuta -tanmatraas and Bhutaatma Praja Srishti. Vikara prapta Bhutas produced Shabda Tanmatra which further produced Akasha; the Vaikarika Akasha created Sparsha Tanmatra and created Vaayu; Vaikara prapta Vaayu produced Rupa tanmatra; (from Vayu Teja got created and further to Rupa); after interaction Teja created Rasa tanmatra which in turn produced Jala and its resultant product of rasa; Jala and Gandha led to Sanghaat or Prithvi Tatwa and so on.

The seven 'Mahaatmas' (Top Significances) viz. the Mahat, Ahamkaara and the Pancha Tatwas are interdependent and their combination only could take up Srishti.

Purushaadhishti Tatvaaccha Avykataanugrahenacha,

Mahadaaayo viseshaantaa hyanda mutpaadayantidey/

(There was a common role of Purusha, Maha Tatwa, Pancha Bhutas and others in floating the Brahmanda). The Brahmanda was floating on a huge mass of water and inside the Brahmanda was Kshetrajna Purusha also called Hamsa, Hiranya -garbha, Kapila, Chaandomurti and Sanatana. Within the Brahmanda were Meru, Mountains and Samudras. Also present were Devatas, Asuras, Maanavas, Nakshatras, Vayu, Surya and Chandra. Outside the Brahmanda, there was a wide spread of water ten times larger than the size of the Golden Egg. There also was illumination of ten times more of the water

and ten times further was the volume of Vayu. Far more voluminous than the size of the Vayu was that of Aakasha and far beyond was the Akakasha was thick layer of Ahankara; spread all over Ahamkara was that of Maha Tatwa; indeed the Maha Tatwa was stated to be of the Great Unknown!

Bhagavan Kurma Deva thus explained to Rishis about the genesis of Brahmanada and confirmed that the Maya surrounded the seven layers of Jala, Tejas, Vayu, Aakaasha, Ahamkara, Maha Tatwa and Paramatma. He also described with conviction to the Rishis the meaning of some of the Names that He assumed in different contexts:

Ekopi Sanmahadevastridhaasou samavasthitah,

Sargarakshaa layagunairnirgunopi Niranjanah,

Ekadhaa sa dwidhaachaiva Tridhaacha Bahudaa punah/

Yogeshwarah Shariraani karoti vikaroticha,

Naanaa kruti kriyaa rupa naamavanti Swaleelayaa/

Hitaayachaiva Bhaktaanaam sa eva grasatey punah,

Tridhaa vibhajya chaatmaanam Trikaalye sampravartatey,

Srujatey Grasatey chaiva veekshatey cha viseshatah/

Yasmaat srushtaanugruhnaati grasateycha punah prajaah,

Gunaatmakatwaat Trailokye tasmaadekah sa ucchyatey/

Agrey Hiranya garbhah sa praadurbhutah Sanatanah,

Aditwaadaadi Devaasou Ajaatatwaadajah smrutah/

Paati yasmaan Prajaah Sarvaah Prajaapatiriti smrutah,

Deveshu cha Mahadevo Mahadeva iti smritah/

Brihatvaaccha smruto Brahmaa Paratwaat Parameshwarah,

Vashitwaadapya vashyatwaadishwarah paribhashitah/

Rishih Sarvatragatwena Harih Sarvaharo yatah,

Anupaadyaachha Puurvatwaat Swayambhuriti sa smrutah/

Naraayaanamayano yasmaat tena Naaraayanah smrutah,

Harah samsaaraharanaad vibhutvaad Vishnuruchyatey/

Bhagavaan sarva Vijnaanaadavanaadomiti smrutah,

Sarvajnah Sarva Vigjnaanaat Sarvah Sarvamayoyatah/

Shivah sa nirmalo yasmaad Vibhuh Sarvagato yatah,

Taaranaat Sarva duhkhaanaam Taarakah parigeeyatey/

Bahunaatra kimuktena Sarvam Brahmamayam Jagat,

Aneka bheda bhinnastu kreedayatey Parameshwarah/

(Even as a Unique and Singular Entity, the Nirguna-Niranjana assumed Three Forms since the tasks expected were some what self-contradictory viz. Creation-Preservation and Extermination and three distinct Gunas or Features were required to take up the deeds. Maha Deva was in fact accustomed to assume various Forms-some times as one, or two or three and even as in Ananta Rupas or in Endless Profiles. He was playfully habituated to sport different forms, deeds and names appropriate to exigencies of Srishthi-Sthiti and Samhara; this was so since he performed the tasks on his own or by his agents. As he executed the deeds simultaneously with the predominance of one Guna or another or all of the Gunas together, he came to be called Advaita to the One and Only; at the beginning itself he was the foremost to appear he was named as Adideva; as he was never born he was named Ajanma; as he was deeply involved in the happenings of one and all among the human beings, he was named *Prajapati* and as he was the Supreme of Prajas or the People; as he was the Foremost of the Devas, he was called as *Maha Deva*; he was the 'Parama' or the Ultimate, and was thus named Parameshwara; as he well-known as Sarva Harana at the time of Pralaya of the Universe or at the end of one's Life Journey, he had the name of Hari; as he was Self-Generated or put in differently he got Materialised on his own, he was known as Swayambhu; as he was popular as the Final Refuge Point or Ayana of one and all, he was named Naraayana; it was in another context that he was lying or Ayana on 'Naara' or Water popular as Ksheera Sagara his most popular name was Narayana; as he is Omni Present anywhere in the Universe occupying the Entirety he is called Vishnu; as he is the Omni-Scient of the goings-on all over spread the length and breadth of the Totality he had the Unique Epithet of OM; as he was the Epitome of Visishtha Jnaana or the Distinctive Knowledge of Everything, he was called Sarvgjna; as he was Atma Swarupa he was known as Sarva; Shiva as he was Mala Shunya; Vibhu as he was Sarva Vyapta or All-Pervading and Taraka as he could steer clear of any types of obsctacles. Indeed, is there a need for overemphasis of the obvious by way of explanations about Parameshwara, his innumerable and varied Rupas, leelaas or his playful activities! Suffice to say that the very Existence of the Universe is owed to him!)

Brahmana Dharmas, Ashrama Vidhana and 'Abhinnata' (Indivisibility) of Tri Murtis

Kurma Bhagavan described to Maharshis that after the Sanatana Srishti by Paramatma, Brahma took up the task of Srishti of 'Charaachara Jagat'and created nine Maanasa Putras or Mind-borne Sons viz. Marichi, Bhrigu, Angira, Pulastya, Pulah, Kratu, Daksha, Atri, and Vasishtha. The Four Vedas of Ruk-Yajur-Saama and Atharva constituted the natural appearance of Brahma. At the beginning of Srishti, Trigunas of Satwa-Rajasa and Tamasika were non-existent; there was no Raaga-Dweshas or Desire-Hatred Syndrome and no interplay of 'Arishadvargas' or the Six Basic Enemies of Beings viz. Kama (desire), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Moha (infatuation), Mada (arrogance) and Matsara (jealousy). With the passage of time the concepts of 'Swadharma' and 'Paradharma' accentuated the class-distinction and Brahmana Dharma was defined as:

Yajanam Yaajanam Daanam Brahmanasya pratigraham,

Ahyaapanam cha adhyayanam Shasta Karmaani Dwijotthama/

(The six major duties of Brahmanas were stated to be the Performance of Yajnaas, enabling and encouraging the Yajna Karmas, giving as also receiving 'Daanaas'; Adhyayana or Reciting Scriptures and Adhyaapana or Teaching them). Daana, Adhyayana and Yajna are the common features of Kshatriyas and Vaishyas while Kshatriyas have the duties of Law-Order -Defence as Vaishyas perform Business, Agriculture, Trading and Accounting. The other categories are to specialise in Shilpa, Crafts and such other professions.

As regards Ashrama Dharmaas viz. Garhastya-Vanaprastya-Sanyasa and Brahmacharya, Kurma Bhagavan ordained the following:

Agnayotithishurushaa Yajno Daanam Suraarchanam,

Gruhastasya Samaasena Dharmoyam Munipungavaah/

Homo Mula phalaashitwam Swaadhyaastapa eva cha,

Samvibhaago yathaanyaayam Dharmoyam Vanavaasinam/

Bhaiksaashanam cha Mounitwam Tapo dhyaanamviseshatah,

Samyajnaanam cha vairaagyam Dharmoyam Bhikshukey matah/

Bhikshaachaaryaacha shusrushaa Guroh Swaadhyaaya eva cha,

Sandhyaa karmaagni Kaaryaacha Dharmoyam Brahmachaarinam/

(Grihastya Dharma mainly entails Upasana of Agnis viz. Garhapatya, Aahavaniya, Dakshinaagni; Atithi Seva; Yagna-Daana- Deva Pujas form the core of Brahmana Vidhi. Havana, Kanda mula phala sevana, Swaadhyaaya and Tapas are the Vaana Prastha Dharmaas; Bhiksha bhojana, Mouna Vrata, Tapa, Samyakm Dhyaana or Composite worship of Deities, Samyak Jnaana and Vairagya or other worldliness are Sanyasa Dharmas. Brahmachaari Dharmas include Bhiksha Bhojana, Guru Seva, Swaadhyaaya, Sandhyaa karma and Agni Karyas. While annotating Grihasta Dharma, Kurma Bhagavan clarified that sleeping with one's own wife-sujbect to specified qualifications was to be concerned as Brahmacharya itself:

Rithu kaalaa –bhigaamitwam Swadaareshu na chaanyatah,

Parvarjyam Grihastasya Brahmacharyamudaa hritam/

Also, Kurma Deva proclaimed:

Vedaabhyaasonvaham Shaktyaa Shraaddham chaatithi pujanam,

Grihastasya Paro Dharma Devataabhyarchanam tathaa/

Trayaanaamaashramaanaam tu Grihastho yoniruchtatey,

Anyey tamupajeevanti tasmaancchreyaan Grihaashrami/

(Grihasta Ashrama is considered the seed of the Four Ashramas and the most significant); more so, the 'Purusharthaas' of human beings are Dharma-Artha-Kaama-Mokshaas and hence the importance of this Ashrama.) But the common requirements of all the Ashrams are:

Kashamaa Damo Dayaa Daanamalobhastyaaga Eva cha,

Aarjivam chaanasuya cha Tirthaanusaranam tathaa/

Satyam Santosha Aastikyam Shraddhaa chendriya nigrahah,

Devataabhyarchanam Pujaa Brahmanaanaam Viseshitah/

Ahimsaa priyavaa ditwamapaishunyamakaltataa,

Samaasikamimam Dharmam Chaturvarnerbraveen Manuh/

(Kshama or patience, Daya or compassion, Daada or charity, Alobha or non-greediness, Tyaga or sacrifice, Arjiva /softness of speech and behaviour, Anasuya or lack jealousy / large heartednesss; Tirtha Sevana, Satya or Truthfulness, Santosha or Happiness / contentment; Aastikata or Attachment to Vedas and Scriptures; Shraddha or devotion; Jitendriatwa or overcoming of Physical attractions; Deva Puja, Brahmana Puja, Ahimsa / Non-Violence, Madhura Bhashana or nice manner of conversation and Paapa Rahitya or general attitude of sinlessness). In fact the First Manu named Swayambhu Manu prescribed the above noble traits/ common features of all the Human Beings irrsepective of the Chaturvarnaas. Among Brahmacharis, there again are of two categories viz. Upakurvaan and Naishthika Brahma tatpara; Brahmacharis learn and recite Vedas and then enter into Grihastaashrama are called Upakuyravaans while those who always remained with Guru are called Naishtika Brahmacharis. Again Grihastis are of two kinds viz. Udaaseenas and Saadhakaas; the former Grihastis lead a virtuous life and simultaneously take up family responsibilities too are Sadhakas; while those who leave away the Pitruruna, Devaruna, Rishiruna besides leave family, money and social obligations and remain targetted only at Moksha are Udaseenas. Likewise, Sanyasis are of three categories: Jnaana Sanyasis or those Veda Sanyasis or Bhoutika Sanyasis; Bhoutika Sanyasis in which Bhavana is important, while Veda Sanyasis are of Sankhya or Yoga practitioners; and Karma Sanyasis or the performer of the prescribed karmas or deeds.

Singularity of Tri Murthis: Depending on the emphasis of the Satwa-Rajas-Tamasa Gunas of the Eternal and Unique Paramatma, three Murtis were formed as Brahma-Vishnu and Maheshwara:

Tistrastu Murtayah prokta Brahma Vishnu Maheswaraah,

Rajah Satwa Tamoyogaat Parasya Paramatmanah/

Anyonyayamanuraktaastey hyanonyamupa jeevinah,

Anyonyam pranataashchaiva leelayaa Parameshvaraah/

Braahmi Maaheshwari chaiva tathaivaakshara bhavanaa,

*Tristrastu Bhavana Rudrey vartantey satatam Dwijaah/* 

Pravartatey mayyajastramaadyaa chaakshara bhaavanaa,

Dwitiya Brahmanah proktraa Devasyaakshara bhaavanaa/

Aham chaiva Maha Devo na bhinnou paramaarthatah,

Vibhajya swecchhayaatmaanam sontaraameshwarah sthitah/

Ttrailokya makhilam Srushtim Sadevaasura maanushaam,

Purushaha Paratovyaktaad Brahmatwam samupamagat/

Tasmaad Brahmaa Mahadevo Vishnurvishweshvarah Parah,

Ekaikssyaiva Smritaastitrastanuh Karyavashaat Prabho/

Tasmaat sarva prayatnena Vandyaah Pujyaah prayatnatah,

Yadicchedachiraat sthaanam yattanmokshaakhya mavyayam/

(Paramatma materialised Trimurtis on the basis of Satwa-Rajo-Tamo Gunas for the three basic responsibilities of Srishti-Sthiti-Samhara; the Three Profiles are dependent on each other, transferable to each other, interested and involved with each other in fulfilling their tasks; they also greet each other, exchange and also supplement each other's thoughts and deeds. Indeed they are indivisible. Also, Rudra is interactive with the inherent thoughts of Brahmi, Maheswari and Akshara / Vaishnavi. From his side said Bhagavan Vishnu / Kurma Deva that the thoughts of 'A'kshara were spontaneous and of the second Letter of the word Akshara denoted Brahmi and so on. As far as Vishnu and Maheshwara were concerned there indeed was no duplication whatsoever. They were mutually and freely exchangeable, divisible yet wholly singular, mystifying and confusing and were indeed one and the same. It was the same Swarupa of Bhagavan who was like all the three who were close-knit! Indeed all three Murtis are worthy of worship and thus the need for attaining any one of them is similar to realise them all.

# Brahma Srishti and Pancha Sargas

Even as he thought of Srishti, Brahma created darkness involuntarily and as the variations of the darkness, five 'Avidyas' occurred viz. Tamas, Moha, Maha Moha, Tamishra and Andha. With meditation in favour of Paramatma, Brahma then visioned a Seed-like Formation of a Five-divisioned Entity surrounded by darkness viz. Prakasha or Jnaana, Stambha or Jada, Sagjna vihina or Chetana vihina, Naga or Stationary or Immobile like Mountains and Trees and Mukhya or the Principal, thus providing broad hints of *Mukhya Sarga* to Brahma about the kind of Srishti that he could take up; even while taking the pointers or suggestions, Brahma also thought of another category of Srishti viz. *Tiryagsrota* or of Pashu-Pakshi Srishti. These types of Srishti did not greatly impress Brahma and therefore resorted to *Deva Sarga* in which the features of happiness and contentment predominated. After further meditation, Brahma realised that there should be an Arvaakstrota Srishti of Human Beings with a mix of Rajasa-Tamasa Gunas with

some Satwa Guna as well and thus launched *Manushya Sarga*. This was followed by *Bhuta Sarga* in which the Creations would not possess capacity to acquire but give away. Thus there were Five Sargas viz. Mukhya, Tiryagsrota, Deva, Manusha and Bhutadi. Thus Brahma's Mahat Sarga comprised the categories upto Manusha Sarga; Bhuta Sarga was followed as the Second Sarga while the Third was that of Vaikarika / Aindriyaka Sarga; all these Sargas were considered as Abuddhipurvaka or Unintentional.

Then followed Buddhi Purvaka (Deliberate) Srishti and Brahma begot Manasa Putras viz. Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana, Rijhu, and Sanatkumara all of whom being Yogis, Parama Vairaagis, and Ishwara Bhaktas who did not further the Creative Deeds. Despite continued Tapas, Brahma had to wait long, got frustrated and out of his eye drops mingled with anger were materialised from his frown the Rudra Rupa called Nilalohita and ten additional Swarupas (Bhava, Sharva, Ishana, Pashupati, Bheema, Ugra, Mahadeva, Ekapaada, Ahirbhudani, Hara). Brahma continued Srishiti of Jala, Agni, Antariksha, Aakaasha, Vaayu, Prithvi; Nadi, Samudra, Parvata, Vriksha, Vanaspati as also Time-Units 1 ike Lava, Kashtha, Kalaa, Muhurtha, Dina-Ratra, Paksha, Maasa, Ayana, Varsha and Yugas. He then created Marichi from his eyes; Bhrigu from his hridaya or heart; Angira from his head; Pulastya from his Udana Vayu; Pulaha from hisVyaana Vayu; Kratu from Brahma's Shanta Swabhava; Daksha from his Prana Vayu; Atri from his ears, Vasishtha from his Samaana Vaayu; Dharma from Vyavasaaya; and Sankalpa from his Sankalpa or Proposition.

Brahma created from his Eastern Face the Gayatri Chhanda, Rigveda, Trivrutsama, Rathantara (Saama) and Agnishtoma among Yagnaas; from his Southern face, he produced Yajurveda, Rishabh Chhanda, Trishthap Chhanda, Pancha dasha Stoma, Brihat Saama and Uktha; from his Western Face, Brahma evolved Sama Veda, Jagati Chhanda, Saptadasha Stoma, Vairupa and Atiratra Yagjna; from his Northern face, Brahma materialised twenty one branches of Atharva Veda, Anushthup Chhanda, Aaptoryaama and Vairaja Yagnas. He created Devatas, Rishis, Pitaras and Manushyas; Yaksha, Pishacha, Gandharava, Apsaras, Kinnaras, Rakshasaas, Pakshi-Mriga-Pashu-and Sarpas.

As there was a mixed factor of Dharma and Adharma across the Srishti attempted so far- and more over since the speed of Srishti did not gain momentum- Brahma divided his physique into two Parts: one as Purusha and another as Stree (woman); the latter was named Shata Rupa replete with Jnaana-Vigjnaana and was married to Brahma Putra Swayambhuva Manu. Shata Rupa and Swayambhu gave birth to Priyavrata and Uttanapaada as also two daughters Prasuti and Akriti. Prasuti got married to Daksha Prajapati and Akriti was wedded to Ruchi Prajapati. The latter gave birth to Yagjna and Dakshina while Daksha and Prasuti gave birth to twenty four daughters viz. Shraddha, Lakshmi, Dhruti, Tushti, Pushti, Medha, Kriya, Buddhi, Lajja, Vapu, Shanti, Siddhi and Kirti besides Khyaati, Sati, Sambhuti, Smriti, Preeti, Kshama, Santati, Anasuya, Urga, Swaha and Swadha.

Devi Mahatmya: Sati and Parvati Rupas and Himavan's Stuti to Parvati (Devi Sahasra naama stotra included)

Bhagavan Kurma who described to Munis that Brahma along with his Manasa Putras performed Parama Tapas or deep meditation. All of a sudden, Brahma experienced that Ishana Rudra appeared from his own face and commanded him to divide Rudra as 'Ardhanaareshwara'. Accordingly, he divided Rudra into two halves as Prakriti and Purusha and the Purusha Swarupa was further divided as Ekadasha Rudras; Ekaadashaitey kathitaa Rudraastribhuvaneshwaraah, Kapaalishaadayo Vipraa Deva kaarye niyojitah/Sowmyaasowmyaistathaa Shantaashantaih Streetwam cha sa Prabhuh, Vibheda Bahudhaa Devah Swarupairasitaih sitaih/Taa vai Vibhutayo Vipraa Vishrutaah Shaktayo Bhuvi, Lakshmyaadayo yaabhireeshaa Vishvam Vyapnoti Shaankari/Vibhajya punareeshaani swaatmaanam Shankaraad Vibhoh, Mahadeva niyogena Pitaamahamupasthitaa/Taamaaha Bhagavaan Brahmaa Dakshasya

duhitaa bhava, Saapi tasya niyogena praaduraaseet Prajaapateyh/ (Kapaali, Isha and the other Rudras were appointed in various responsibilities of Tribhuvanas; Mahadeva got materialised into many Swarupas as Sowmya and Roudra (Peaceful and Fiery), Shanta and Ashanta (Placid and Violent) and Sweta and Krishna Rupas (White and Black) of Stree Bhagas or of Feminine Forms. These 'Vibhutis' or counterpart Shaktis as in the Form of Lakshmi for Vishnu were popular already and Shankara Shakti was already called as Ishaani. As instructed by Maha Deva, she approached Brahma and asked him to let her be the daughter of Daksha Prajapati). That was how Daksha was instructed by Brahma to become Dakshayani or Sati Devi and wed Rudra Deva. In course of time, Daksha Prajapati performed a huge Yagna notoriously named as Daksha Yagna to which Maha Deva did not invite Parama Shiva and an uninvited Sati Devi felt humiliated that her Swami was insulted as he was denied his due in the Yagna and self- immolated in the Homa-Kunda. She assumed the reborn Swarupa as Himavati the daughter of Himavan and Maina Devi subsequently.

As Maharshis asked Kurma Deva about the background of Bhagavati called by several names as Ardhanaareeshwari, Sati, Haimavati and so on, Kurma Deva replied:

Saamkhyaanaam paramam shaankhyam Brahmavijnaanamuttamam,

Samsaaraarnavamagnaanaam jantunaameka mochanam/

Yaa sa Maaheshwari Shaktirjnaana rupaati laalasaa,

Vyoma sangjnya Paraa kaashthaa seyam Haimavati mataa/

Shivaa Sarvagataanantaa Gunaateetaa Sunishkalaa,

Ekaaneka vibhaagasthaa Jnaana rupaati laalasaa/

(She is the embodiment of Parama Sankhya Shastra called Tatwa Jnaana or the Brahma Jnaana; she is one definite and unique means of 'Sadhana' or Facility tide over the Samasara and accomplish Mukti. She is the Janaa Swarupa of Maheswara, his Icchaa Rupa or of the Most Desirable Form, Paraakashtha Rupa or the Highest Reachable, the Maheshwari Shakti known as Haimavati, the Sarva Vyapata, Ananta, and Gunaateeta, the Unique Jnaana Rupa and Shiva / Mangala daayani.) She is the possessor of Four Shaktis named Shanti, Vidya, Pratishtha and Nivrutti and thus is appropriately called 'Chaturvyuhaatmaka'. She is the symbol of Jnaana Shakti, Kriya Shakti, and Prana Shakti;

Anandaaksharam Brahma Kevalam Nishkalam param,

Yoginastat prapashyanti Maha Devyaah param padam/

Paratparam tatwam shaaswatam Shivamachyutam,

Ananta Prakrutou leenam Devyaastat paramam padam/

Shubham Niranjanam Shuddham Nirgunam Dwaitavarjitam,

Atmopalabhdhi vishayam Devyaastad Paramam padam/

Tasmaad vimuktimavicchan Parvatih Parameshwarim,

Ashrayet Sarva bhaavaanaatma bhutaam Shivaatmikaam/

(Yogis are always engaged in meditating the Swarupa of Maha Devi who is Anandamaya (full of Happiness), Avinaashi (Indestructible), Brahma Rupa, Adviteeya (Unparalleled) and 'Bhedarahita' (Unique). Devi's supreme existence is beyond existence and is of Tatwa Rupa, Sanatana (Ageless), Shivam or Kalyanakari; Achyutam (Everlasting), Shubham (Propitious), Niranjanam or Epitome of Shiva; Shuddham (Spotless), Dwaitarahitam or Singular; and Atma Jnaana Vishaya. Hence, all those immersed in the efforts of accomplishing Moksha need to mobilise their complete energies unto Himavati Devi).

As Devi Jagadamba appeared before Himavan and confirmed that she would soon take birth as his daughter, the latter requested her to reveal her real identity. She did so and he was frightened and shaken up; he was motionless to start with and gradually recovered his senses to visualise her Swarupa:

Koti Surya prateekasham Tejo bimbam Niraakuklam,

Jwaalaamaalaa Sahasraadhyam Kaalaanala shatopamam/

Damshtraa karaalam Durdhrasham Jataamandala manditam,

Trishula Varahastam cha ghora rupam Bhayanakam/

While Himavan witnessed a Koti Surya Tejo Bimbam, with thousands of strings of flames, protruding damshtras, Jataamandalaas, Trishula hastaas and a frightfully weird face, he was non-plussed but gradually witnessed the Devi as:

Prashantam Sowmya Vadanamanantaascharya samyutam,

Chandraavayavalakshanaam Chandra koti Samaprabham/

(Peaceful, equable, soft and relaxed and as cool and resplendent as koti Chandraas). Looking at both the demeanors that were at once grotesque and at the same time charming and pleasant, Himavan held his breath with panic and reassurance and recited Omkara incessently and grasped into spontaneous commendation with a Sahasra naama as follows:

Devi Bhagavati Sahasranaama:

Shivoma Paramaa Shaktiranantaa Nishkalaamalaa,

Shantaa Maaheswari Nityaa Shaswati Parama-akshara/

Achintyaakevalaanantyaa Shivaatmaa Paramaatmika,

Anaadiravyayaa Shuddaa Devaatmaa Saravagaachalaa/

Ekaaneka vibhaagastha Mayaatita Sunirmala,

Mahaa Maaheswari Satyaa Maha Devi Niranjanaa/ Kaashthaa Sarvaantarasthaa cha Chicchakti Rati laalasaa, Nandaa Sarvaatmikaa Vidyaa Jyorirupaamrutaakshara/ Shaantih Pratishthaa Sarveshaam Nivruttiramrutapradaa, Vyoma Murtiryomalayaa Vyomaadhaaraachyutaamaraa/ Anaadhinidhanaamoghaa Karanaatmaa Kalaakala, Kratuh Prathamajaa naabhiramrutasyaatma samshrayaa/ Praaneshwarapriyaa Maataa Mahaa Mahisha ghaatini, Praaneshwari Praana Rupaa Pradhaana Purusheshwari/ Sarva Shakti Kalaakaaraa Jyotsnaa Dhourmahimaaspadaa, Sarva kaarya niyantricha Sarva Bhuteshwareshwari/ Anaadiravyakta guhaa Mahaanandaa Sanaatani, Akaashaayoniryogasthaa Mahaa Yogeshwareshwari/ Mahamaaya Sudushpura Mulaprakritireeshewari, Samsaara yonih Sakalaa Sarva Shakti samudbhavaa/ Samsaarapaaraa Durvaaraa Durnireekshaa Duraasadaa, Praana Shaktih Praanavidyaa Yogini Paramaakalaa/ Maha Vibhutirdurdharshaa Mula Prakriti Sambhavaa, Anaadyananta vibhavaa Paraarthaa Purushaaranih/ Sargasthintyantakarani Sudurvaachyaa Duratyaya, Shabdayonih Shabdamayi Naadaakhyaa Naada Vigrahaa/ Pradhaana Purushaateeta Pradhaana Purushaatmika, Puraani Chinmayi Pumsaamaadih Purusha Rupini/ Bhutaantaraatmaa Kutasthaa Mahaa Purusha Sanjitaa,

Janma mrityu jaraatitaa Sarva Shakti samanvitaa/

Vyaapini chaanavacchinna Pradhaanaanupraveshini,

Kshetrajna Shaktiravayakta Lakshanaa Malavarjitaa/

Anaadi Maayaa Sambhinna Tritatwaa Prakritirguhaa,

Mahaa Maayaa Samutpanna Taamasi Pourushi Dhruvaa/

Vyaktaavyaktaatmikaa Krishnaa Raktaa Shuklaa Prasutikaa,

Akaaryaa Karya Janani Nityam Prasava Dharmini/

Sarga Pralaya Nirmuktaa Srishtisthith-yanta Dharmini,

Brahmagarbhaa Chaturvimshaa Padmanaabhaachuyaatmika/

Vaidyuti Shashvati Yonirjagnmaateshwara priya,

Sarvaadhaara Mahaarupaa Sarvaishvarya samanvitaa/

Vishwarupaa Mahaa Garbhaa Vishvesecchaanuvartini,

Maheeyasi Brahmayonir mahalakshmi samudbhayaa/

Mahaa Vimaana madhyastaa Mahaa nidraatma hetukaa,

Sarva Saadhaarani Sukshmaahyavidyaa Paaramaarthikaa,

Ananta Rupaanantasthaa Devi Purusha Mohini/

Anekaakaara Samsthaanaa Kaalatraya vivarjitaa,

Brahma janmaa Hareymurtir Brahma Vishnu Shivaatmikaa/

Brahmesha Vishnu Janani Brahmaakhyaa Brahma samshrayaa,

Vyaktaa Prathamajaa Braahmi Mahati Jnaana Rupini/

Vairaagaishwarya Dharmaatmaa Brahma murti hridi sthitaa,

Apaamyonih Swayambhutirmaanasi Tatwasambhavaa/

Ishwaraanicha Sharvaani Shankaraardha Sharirini.

Bhayaani chaiya Rudraani Mahaa Lakshmirathaambikaa/

Maheshwara Samutpannaa Bhakti Mukti Phalapradaa,

Sarveshwari Sarva Vandya Nityam Muditamaanasaa/

Brahmendropendra namitaa Shankarecchaanuvartini,

Ishwaraardhaasanagataa Maheshwara Pativrataa/

Sakrudvibhaavitaa Sarvaa Samudra parisoshini,

Parvati Himavanputri Paramaananda- daayani/

Gunaadhyaa Yogajaa Yogya Jnaana Murtirvikaasini,

Savitri Kamalaa Lakshmih Shriranantorasisthitaa/

Sarojanilayaa Mudraa Yoginidraa Suraardrini,

Sarasvati Sarva Vidyaa Jagajjeshthaa Sumangalaa/

Vaagdevi Varadaa Vaachyaa Keertih Sarvaartha Saadhikaa,

Yogeswari Brahma Vidyaa Maha Vidyaa Sushobhanaa/

Guhyavidyaatmavidyaa cha Dharmavidya -atma bhaavitaa,

Swaaha Vishwambharaa Siddhih Swadhaa Medhaa Dhrutih Shrutih/

Neetih Suneetih Sukrutirmaadhavi Naravaahini,

Ajaa Vibhaavari Sowmyaa Bhogini Bhogadaayani/

Shobhaa Vamshakari Lolaa Maalini Parameshthini,

Trailokya Sundari Ramyaa Sundari Kaamachaarini/

Mahaanubhaavaa Satvasthaa Mahaa Mahisha Mardini,

Padmamaalaa Paapaharaa Vichitraa Mukutaanana/

Kaantaa Chitraambaradharaa Divyaabharana Bhushitaa,

Hamsaakhyaa Vyomanilaya Jagatsrushti Vivardhini/

Niryantraa Yantravaahasthaa Nanidini Bhadra Kaalikaa,

Adityavarnaa Koumari Mayura vara Vaahini/

Vrishaasanagataa Gouri Maha kaali Suraarchita,

Aditirniyataa Roudri Padmagarbhaa Vivaahanaa/

Virupaakshi Lelihaanaa Mahaapuranivaasini,

Mahaaphalanavadyaangi Kaamapuraa Vibhaavari/

Vichitraratna Makutaa Pranaataatirprabhanjani,

Koushiki Karshani Raatris-tridashaartirvinaashini/

Bahurupaa Surupaa cha Virupaa Rupavarjitaa,

Bhaktaarthishamani Bhavyaa Bhava Bhaava Vinaashini/

Nirgunaa Nityavibhavaa Nissraaraa Nirapatrapaa,

Yashaswini Saamagatir bhavaanga Nilayaalayaa/

Dikshaa Vidyaadhari Deeptaa Mahendravinipaatini,

Sarvaatishaayani Vidyaa Sarva Siddhi Pradaayani/

Sarveshwara Priyaa Taarkshyaa SamudraantaraVaasini,

Akalankaa Niraadhaaraa Nityasiddhaa Niraamayaa/

Kamadhenur bruhad garbhaa Dheemati Mohanaashini,

Nissankalpaa Niraatangkaa Vinayaa Vinayapradaa/

Jwaalaamaalaa Sahasraadhyaa Deva Devi Manonmani,

Maha Bhagavati Durgaa Vaasudeva samudbhavaa/

Mahendropendra Bhagini Bhaktigamyaa Paraavaraa,

Jnaanajneyaa Jaraatitaa Vedaanta Vishayaa gatih/

Dakshina Dahanaa Daahyaa Sarvabhuta Namaskritaa,

Yogamaayaa Vibhaavagjnaa Mahaa Maayaa Maheeyasi/

Sandhyaa Sarva Samudrabhutir Brahma Vrikshaashrayaanatih,

Beejaankura Samudbhutir Mahaa Shaktir Mahaa Matih/

Khyaatih Pragjnaachitih Samvit Mahaa Bhogeendra –shaayini,

Vikrutih Shaankaari Shaastri Ganagandharwa sevitaa/

Vaishwaanari Mahaashaalaa Devasenaa Grihapriyaa,

Mahaa Raatrih Shivaanandaa Shachiduhswapna naashani/

Ijyaa Pujyaa Jagaddhaatri Durvigjneyaa Surupini,

Guhaambikaa Gunotpattirmahaa peethaa Marutsutaa/

Havyavaahanaantaraagaadih Havyavaaha Samudbhavaa,

Jagaryonirjaganmaataa Janma Mrityu Jaaraatigaa/

Buddhimaataa Buddhimati Purushaantara vaasini,

Taraswini Samaadhisthaa Trinetraa Divi Samsthitaa/

Sarvendrayamano Maataa Sarva Bhuta Hridisthitaa,

Samsaarataarini Vidyaa Brahmavaadimanolayaa/

Brahmaani Brihati Braahmi Brahma bhutaa Bhavaaranih,

Hiranmayi Mahaa Rraatrih Samsaara Parivartikaa/

Sumaalini Surupaacha Bhaavini Taarini Prabhaa,

Unmeelini Sarvasahaa Sarva Pratyaya Saakshini/

Susoumyaa Chandra Vadanaa Taandavaasakta Maanasaa,

Satwa Shuddhikari Shuddhirmalatraya Vinaashini/

Jagatpriyaa Jaganmurtirs Trimurtiramritaashraya,

Niraashrayaa Niraahaaraa Nirankuravanodbhavaa/

Chandrahastaa Vichitraangistragvini Padmahaarivi,

Paraavara Vidhaanajna Maha Purusha Purvajaa/

Vidyeshwara Priyaa Vidyaa Vidyd- jjihvaa Jitashramaa,

Vidyaamayi Sahasraakshi Sahasra Vadanaatmajaa/

Sahasra Rashmihi Satvasthaa Maheshwara padaashrayaa,

Ksaalini Sanmayi Vyaaptaa Taijasi Padma bhodikaa/

Mahaa Maayaashrayaa Maanyaa Mahadeva Manorama,

Vyoma Lakshmih Simharathaa chekitaanaamita Prabhaa/

Veereshwari Vimaanasthaa Vishokaa Shokanaashini,

Anaahataa Kundalini Nalini Padma Vaasini/

Sadaanandaa Sadaa Keertih Sarva Bhutaashrayasthitaa,

Vaagdevataa Brahmakalaa Kalaateetaa Kalaaranih/

Brahmashri Brahma Hridayaa Brahma Vishnu Shiva Priyaa,

Vyomashaktih Kriyaashaktir Jnaana Shaktih Paraagatih/

Kshobhikaa Bandhikaa Bhedyaa Bhedaabheda Vivarjitaa,

Abhinnaabhinna Samthaanaa Vamshini Vamsha haarini/

Guhyashaktirgunaatitaa Savadaa Sarvatomukhi,

Bhagini Bhagavatpatni Sakalaa Kaalakaarini/

Sarvavit Sarvatobhadraa Guhyaatitaa Guhaaranih,

Prakriyaa Yogamaataa cha Gangaa Vishveshvareshwari/

Kapilaa Kaapilaa Kaantaa Kanakaabhaa Kalaantaraa,

Punyaa Pushkarini Bhoktri Purandara purassaraa/

Poshani Paramaishwarya Bhutaadi bhutahushanaa,

Pancha Brahma Samutpattih Paramaardhaartha Vigrahaa/

Dharmodayaa Bhaanumati Yogigjneyaa Manojava,

Manoharaa Mano Rakshaa Taapasi Veda Rupini/

Vedashaktir Veda Maataa Veda Vidyaa Prakaashini,

Yogeshwa -reshwari Maataa Mahaa Shaktirmanomayi/

Vishwaavasthaa Vinirmurtir Vidyunmaalaa Vihaayasi,

Kinnnari Surabhi Vandyaa Nandini Nandivallabhaa/

Bharati Paramaanandaa Paraapara Vibhedikaa,

Sarvapraharanopetaa Kaamyaa Kaameshwareshwari/

Achintyaachintya Vibhavaa Hrillekhaa Kanakaprabhaa,

Kushmaandi Dhanaratnaadhyaa Sugandaa Gandha daayani/

Trivikrama Padodbhutaa Dhanushpaanih Shivodayaa,

Sudurlabhaa Dhanaadhyakshaa Dhanyaa Pingala Lochanaa/

Shaantih Prabhaavatih Deeptih Pankajaayata Lochana,

Aadyaahridkamalodbhutaa Gavaam Maataa Ranapriyaa/

Satkriyaa Girijaa Shuddhaa Nitya Pushtaa Nirantaraa,

Durgaa Katyaayani Chandi Charchikaa Shanta Vigrahaa/

Hiranya Varnaa Rajani Jagadyantra pravartikaa,

Mandaraadri Nivaasaacha Shaaradaa Swarna Maalini/

Ratnamaalaa Ratnagarbhaa Prithvi Vishwa pramaathini,

Padmaananaa Padmanibha Nitya Tushtaamritodbhava/

Dhunvati duh Prakampyaacha Surya Maataa Drushadvati,

Mahendra Bhagini Maanyaa Varenyaa Varadarpitaa/

Kalyaani Kamalaa Raamaa Pancha Bhutaa Varapradaa,

Vaadyaa Vareshwari Vandyaa Durjayaa Duratikramaa/

Kaalaraatrir Maha Vegaa Virabhadrapriya Hitaa,

Bhadrakaalir Jaganmaataa Bhaktaanaam Bhadradaayini/

Karaala Pingalaakaaraa Naama Bhedaa Mahaamadaa,

Yashashvini Yashodaacha Shadhadhwa parivartikaa/

Shankhini Padmini Sankhyaa Sankhyaa Yoga Pravartika,

Chaitra Samvatsaraarudhaa Jagat Sampuranindrijaa/

Shumbhaarih Khechari Swasthaa Kambugrivaa Kalipriya,

Khagadhwajaa Khagaa Roodha Paraarthyaa Paramalini/

Ishwarya Vartmanilahyaa Viraktaa Garudaasana,

Jayanti Hriduhaa Ramyaa Gahvareshtaa Ganaagranih/

Sankalpa Siddhaa Saamyasthaa Sarva Vijnaadayani,

Kalikalmasha Hantri cha Guhyopa nishaduttamaa/

Nishtha Drushthih Smritirvyaaptih Pushthistushtih Kriyaavati,

Vishwaamareshvarey- shaanaa Bhuktirmuktih Shivaamritaa/

Lohitaa Sarpamaalaacha Bhishani Vanamaalini,

Anantashaya-naanyaa Naranaaraayanodbhaya/

Nrisimhi Daityamathani Shankachakra gadaadharaa,

Sankarshana Samutpattirambikaa paada samshrayaa,

Mahaajjwaalaa Mahaa Murtih Sumurtih Sarva kaama dhruk/

Suprabhaa Sustanaa Gauri Dharma Kaamaartha Mokshadaa/

Bhrumadhya nilayaa Purvaa Puraana Purushaaranih,

Maha Vibhutidaa Madhyaa Saroja nayano samaa/

Ashtaadasha Bhujaanaadyaa Nilotpaladala Prabhaa,

Sarva Shaktyaasanaarudhaa Dharmaadharma Vivarjitaa/

Vairaagya Jnaana Nirataa Niraalokaa Nirindriyaa,

Vichitra Gahanaadhaaraa Shaswatasthaana Vaasini/

Sthaaneshwari Niraanandaa Trishula vara dhaarini.

Asesha Devataa Murtidevataa Varadevataa.

Ganaambikaa Gireh Putri Nishumbha vinipaatini/

Avarnaa Varna ahitaa Nivarnaa Beeja sambhavaa,

Anantavarnaarnanya -stathaa Shankari Shanta Maanasa/

Agotraa Gomati Goptri Guhyarupaa Gunottaraa,

Gouh Geeh Gavyapriyaa Gouni Ganeshwara Namaskrutaa/

Satyamaatraa Satya Sandhaa Trisandhyaa Sandhivarjitaa,

Sarva Vaadaashrayaa Sankhyaa Saankhya Yoga Samudbhavaa/

Asankhyeya prameyaakhyaa Shunyaa Shuddha Kulodbhava,

Bindu naada samutpattih Shambhu vaamaa Shashiprabhaa/

Visangaa Bhedarahitaa Manojnaa Madhusudani,

Mahaa Shrih Samutpattistamah Paarey Pratishthitaa/

Tritatwa maataa Trividhaa Sushuksma padasamshrayaa,

Shantyatitaa Malaatitaa Nirvikaaraa Niraashrayaa/

Shivaakhyaa Chitta Nilayaa Shiva Jnaana Swarupini,

Daitya Daanava Nirmaatri Kaashyapi Kaalkalpikaa/

Shaastrayonih Kriyaamurthischaturvarga Pradarashikaa,

Naaraayani Narodbhutih Kaumudi Linga dhaarini/

Kaamuki Lalithaa Bhaavaa Paraapara Vibhutidaa,

araanta jaata mahimaa Badavaa Vaama Lochanaa/

Subhadraa Devaki Sitaa Veda Vedaanga paaragaa,

Manaswini Manyumaataa Mahaa Manyu Samudbhavaa/

Amrityuramritaa Swaahaa Puruhutaa Purushtutaa,

Ashocchyaa Bhinna Vishyaa Hiranyarajatapriyaa/

Hiranyaa Raajati Haimi Hemaabharana bhushitaa,

Vibhraajamaanaa Durjayaa Jyotishtoma phalapradaa/

Maha Nidraa Samudbhudabhutiranidraa Satya Devataa,

Deerghaa Kakudyuni Hridyaa Shaantidaa Shaantivardhini/

Lakshmyaadi Shaktijanani Shakti Chakra pravartikaa,

Trishakti Janani Janyaa Shadmuparivarjitaa/

Sudhaamaa Karmakarani Yugaananta Dahanaatmikaa,

Samkarshini Jagaddhaatri Kaamayonih Kiritini/

Aindri Trailokya Namitaa Vaishnavi Parameshwarih,

Pradyumna Dayitaa Daantaa Yugma drishtistrilochanaa/

Madotkataa Hamsagatih Prachandaa Chandi Vikramaa,

Vrishaa Veshaa Viyanmaataa Vindhya Parvata Vaashini/

Himavan Meru Nilaya Kailaasa Giri Vaasini,

Chaanura hantru tanayaa Nitigjnaaa Kaama Rupini/

Veda Vidyaa Vratasnaataa Dharma Sheelanilaashanaa,

Vira -bhadra Priyaa Veeraa Mahaa Kaala Samudbhavaa/

Vidyaadhara Priyaa Siddhaa Vidyaadhara Niraakritih,

Adyaayani Haranti cha Paavani Poshani Khilaa/

Maatrukaa Manodbhutaa Vaarijaa Vaahana Priya,

Kareeshini Sudhaavaani Veenaa Vaasana Tatparaa/

Sevitaa Sevika Cinivaali Gurut -mati,

Arundhati Hiranyaakshi Mrigaangaa Maana Daayavi/

Vasudpradaa Vasumati Vasordhaara Vasundharaa,

Dhaaraa dhaara Varaarohaa Varaavara Sahasradaa/

Shriphalaa Shrimati Shreeshaa Shriniyaasaa Shiyapriyaa,

Shridhara Shrikari Kalyaa Shridhaaraardha Sharirini/

Ananta Drushti rakshudraa Dhaatrisha Dhanadapriya,

Nihantri Daityanandhaanaam Simhikaa Simhavaahanaa/

Sushenaa Chandranilayaa Sukeertiscchinna Samshayaa,

Rasagjnaa Rasadaa Raamaa Lelihaanaamrita-strava/

Nityoditaa Swayamjyotirutsukaa Mritajeevani,

Vajradandaa Vajra jihvaa Vaidehi Vajra Vigrahaa/

Mangalyaa Mangalaa Maalaa Malinaa Malahaarini,

Gaandharvi Gaarudi Chaandri Kambalaashwitara Priyaa/

Soudaamini Janaanandaa Bhrukuti Kutilaananaa,

Karnikaarakaraa Kakshyaa Kamsa praanaapahaarini/

Yugandharaa Yugaavartaa Trisandhyaa Harshavardhini,

Pratyakshadevataa Divyaa Divyagandhaa Divaaparaa/

Shakraasanagataa Shaakri Saadwi Naari Shavaashanaa,

Ishtaa Visishtaa Shishtaa Shishtaashishta prapujitaa/

Shatarupaa Shataavartaa Vinataa Surabhih Suraa,

Surendramaataa Sudyumna Sushumnaa Suryasamshitaa/

Samikshya Satpratishtha cha Nivritti Jnaana Paaragaa,

Dharma Shastraartha Kushalaa Dharmajnaa Dharma Vaahana/

Dharmaadhaavinirmaatri Dhaarmikaanaam Shivaprada,

Dharmashaktirdharmamayi Vidharmaa Vishwadharmini/

Dharmaantaraa Dharmnamedhaa Dharmapurvaa Dhanaavahaa,

Dharmopadeshti Dharmaatmaa Dharmagamyaa Dharaadharaa/

Kaapaali Shaakalaa Murtih Kalaa Kalita Vigrahaa,

Sarvashakti Vinirmuktaa Sarva Shaktaashrayaashrayaa/

Sarvaa Sarveshwari Sukshmaa Susukshmaa Jnaanarupini,

Pradhaana Purushesheshaa Mahaa Devaika Sameekshini,

Sadaa Shivaa Viyanmurtir Vishwamurtiramurtikaa/

(Devi Bhagavati! You are Shiva, Uma, Paraa Shakti, Ananta, Nishkala, Amala, Shantaa, Maheswari, Nitya, Shashvati, Paramaakshara, Achintya, Kevala, Anantyaa, Shivatmika, Paramatmika, Anaadi, Avyaya, Shuddha, Devatmika, Sarvaga, Achala, Eka, Vividha Rupa, Mayaatita, Sunirmala, Maha Maheshwari, Satya, Maha Devi, Niranjana, Kaashthaa, Sarva Hridyayastha, Chetanaa Shakti Rupa, Atilaalasa or of Extreme Desire; Nanda, Sarvatmika, Vidya, Jyoti Rupa, Amritaakshara, Shanti, Pratishtha, Nivrutti, Amrita Prada, Vyoma Murti, Vyomalaya, Vyomaadhaara, Achuyta, Amara, Anadi nidhana, Amogha, Kaaranaatmika, Kala, Akala, Kratu, Pradhamaja, Amrita naabhi, Atma Samshraya, Praneshwarapriya, Mataa, Maha Mahisha Ghaatini, Praaneshwari, Praana rupa, Pradhaana Purusheswari, Sarva Shakti Kalaakaara, Jyotsna, Akasha Rupa, Mahimaspada, Sarva Kaarya niyantri, Sarva Bhuteshwari, Anaadi, Avvataguha, Mahananda, Sanatani, Akashayoni, Yogastha, Maha Yogeshwareshwari, Maha Maya, Sudhushpura, Mula Prakriti, Ishwari, Samsaarayoni, Sakala, Sarva Shakti Samudbhava, Samsaara Paaraa, Durvaara, Durnireeksha, Duraasadaa or difficult to Realise; Praana Shakti, Praana Vidya, Yogini, Paramaa, Kalaa, Maha Vibhuti, Durdharsha, Mula Prakriti Sambhaya, Anaadyananta Vibhava, Paraartha, Purusharaini Purusha or Purusha performing Agni-Manthana; Saraga Sthitiryanta kaarini, Sudurvaacchaa, Duratyaya, Shabdayoni, Shabdamayi, Naadaakhyaa, Naada Vigraha, Pradhaana Purushaateeta, Pradhaana Purushatmika, Puraani, Chinmayi, Adi Swarupa Purusha, Purusha Rupini, Bhutaantaraatma, Kutasthaa, Maha Purusha Sanjnita, Janma Mrityu Jaraateeta, Sarva Shakti Samanvita, Vyaapini, Anivaancchinna, Pradhaananu Praveshini, Kshetrajna Shakti, Avyakta Lakshana, Mala Varjita, Anaadi Mayaa sambhinna or Anadi Maya Rupa; Tritatwa, Prakriti, Guha, Maha Mayaa Samutpanna, Taamasi, Pourushi, Dhruva, Vyaktaavyaktaatmika, Krishna, Raktaa, Shukla, Prasutika, Akaarya, Karyajanai, Nityaprasava dharmini, Sargapralaya nirmukta, Srishthisthityanta dharmini, Brahma garbha, Chaturvishaa or the Final of the Twenty Four Tatwaas; Padmanaabha, Achyutaatmika, Vaidyuti, Shaswati, Yoni or Mula Kaarini; Jagan Maata, Ishwarapriya, Sarvaadhaara, Maha Rupa, Sarvaishwarya samanvitaa, Vishwa Rupa, Maha Garbha, Visweshocchaanuvartini, Maheeyasi, Brahma Yoni, Maha Lakshmi Samud -bhava, Maha Vimaana Madhyasta, Maha Nidra, Atmahetuka, Sarva Saadhaarani, Sukshma, Avidya, Paramaarthika, Anantarupa, Anantasthaa, Devi, Purusha Mohini, Anekaaraara samsthaanaa, Kaala traya vivarjita, Brahma Jnaanaa, Hara Murti, Brahma Vishnu Shiyatmika, Brahmoshiyayishnujanani, Brahmaakhya, Brahma samshraya, Vyaktaa, Prathamaja, Braahmi, Mahati, Jnaana rupini, Vairaagyai-shwarya dharmaatmika, Brahma Murti, Hridiyastah, Apamyoni, Swayambhuti, Maanasi, Tatwa sambhava, Ishwarini, Sharvaani, Shankaraarthasharirini, Bhavani, Rudraani, Maha Lakshmi, Ambika, Maheshwara samutpanna, Bhaktimukti phalaprada, Sarveshwari, Sarva yandya, Nityamudita maanasa, Bhahmopendranamita, Shankarecchaanuvartini, Ishwaraardhasanagata, Maheshwara pativrata, Sakrudvibhavita, Sarva, Samudraparisoshini, Parvati, Himavatputri, Paramaananda daayini, Gunaadhyaa, Yogajaa, Yogya, Jnaana Murti, Vikaasini, Savitri, Kamala, Lakshmi, Shree, Vishnuhridaya sthita, Saroja nilaya, Mudra, Yoga Nidra, Asuraardini, Sarasvati, Sarva Vidya, Jagajjeshtha, Sumangala, Vagdevi, Varada, Vaachaya, Kirti, Sarvaartha saadhika, Yogishwari, Brahma Vidya, Maha Vidya, Sushobhana, Guhya Vidya, Atma Vidya, Dharma Vidya, Atmabhavita, Swaha, Shivambhara, Siddhi, Swadhaa, Medha, Dhruti, Shruti, Niti, Suniti, Sukruti, Madhavi, Nara vaahini, Aja, Vibhavari, Sowmya, Bhogini, Bhogadayini, Shobha, Vashamkari, Chanchala, Malini, Parameshthini, Trailokya Sundari, Ramya, Sundari, Kaamachaarini, Mahanubhava, Satwasttha, Maha Mahisha Mardini, Padmamaalaa, Paapahara, Vichitra, Mukutaanana, Kanta, Chitraambaradhara,

Divyaabharana bhushita, Hamsaakhya, Vyomanilaya, Jagatsrishthi vivardhini, Niryantra, Yantra vaahastha, Nandini, Bhadrakalika, Adithya varna, Kaumari, Mayuravaravaahini, Vrishasanagata, Gauri, Mahakaali, Suraarchita, Aditi, Niyata, Roudri, Padmagarbha, Vivaahana, Virupaakshi, Lolihana, Mahapura nivaasini, Mahaphala, Anavadyangi, Kamarupa, Vichitraratnamakuta, Pranataarthi prabhanjani, Koushiki, Karshani, Raatri, Tridashaarti vinaashini, Bahurupa, Surupa, Virupa, Rupavarjita, Bhaktaarthi shamani, Bhavya, Bhavabhaava vinaashini, Nirguna, Nityavibhava, Nissaraa, Nirupatrapa, Yashaswini, Saamagiti, Bhavaanga nilayaalaya, Diksha, Vidydhari, Deepta, Mahendravinipatini, Sarvaatishayani, Vidya, Sarva Siddha pradaayini, Sarveshwara priya, Taarkshya, Samudraantara vaasini, Akalanka, Niraadhaara, Nityasiddhaa, Niraamaya, Kamadhenu, Vrishadgarbha, Dheemati, Mohanaashini, Nissankalpa, Niraatanka, Devadevi, Manonmani, Maha Bhagavati, Durha, Vaasudeva samudbhava, Mahendropendra bhagini, Bhakti gamya, Paraavara, Jnaanajneya, Jaraatita, Vedanta vishya, Gati, Dakshina, Dahana, Daahyaa, Sarva bhuta namaskruta, Yogamaayaa, Vibhaayajna, Maha Maya, Maheeyasi, Sandhyaa, Sarvasamudbhuti, Vrikshaavriksha-shrayaanati, Beejankura samudbhuti, Maha Shakti, Mahamati, Khyaati, Pragjna, Chiti, Samvita, Maha Bhogindrashaayini, Vikruti, Shankari, Shastri, Gana gandharvasevita, Vaishwaanari, Mahaashaala, Devasena, Grihapriya, Maharaatri, Shiyaananda, Shachi, Duhswapna naashini, Ijyaa, Pujya, Jagaddhaatri, Durvijneya, Swarupini, Guhaambika, Gunotpatti, Mahaapetha, Marutsuta, Havya vaahanaantagaadi, Havyavaaha samudbhava, Jagadyoni, Jaganmaata, Janmamritujaraatiga, Buddhimaataa, Buddhimati, Purushaantara vaasini, Taraswini, Samaadhistha, Trinetra, Divisamstita, Sarvendriyamanomaata, Sarva bhuta hridisthita, Samsaara taarini, Vidya, Brahmavaadi manolaya, Brahmaani, Brihati, Braahmi, Brahmabhuta, Bhavaarani, Hiranmayi, Mahaa ratri, Samsaara parivbartika, Sumaalini, Surupa, Bhavini, Taarini, Prabha, Unmeelani, Sarvasaha, Sarvapratyaya saakshini, Susowmya, Chandra vadana, Tandavaasakta maanasa, Satva shuddhikari, Shuddhi, Mala-traya vinashini, Jagatpriya, Trimurti, Amritaashraya, Naraashraya, Niraahaara, Nirarankushanod -bhava, Chandrahasta, Vichitraangi, Stragvini, Padmadhaarini, Paraavaravidhaanajna, Maha Purusha Purvaja, Vidyeshwarapriya, Vidya, Vidyujjihva, Jitashrama, Vidyaamayi, Sahasraakshi, Sahasra vadanaatmaja, Sahasra rashmi, Satvastha, Maheshwara padaashraya, Maanya, Mahadeva Manorama, Vyoma Lakshmi, Simharatha, Chekitaana, Amitaprabha, Veereshwari, Vimaanastha, Vishoka, Shoka naashini, Anaahata, Kundalini, Nalini, Padmavaasini, Sadaanandaa, Sadaakeerti, Sarva bhutaashraya -sthita, Vaagdevata, Brahmakalaa, Kalaatita, Kalaarani, Brahmashri, Brahma hridaya, Brahmavishnu-Shivapriya, Vyomashakti, Kriya Shakti, Jnaana Shakti, Paraagati, Kshobhika, Bandhika, Bhedva, Bhedaabheda vivarjita, Abhinna, Abhinna samsthaana, Vamshini, Vamsha haarini, Guhya Shakti, Gunaatita, Sarvada, Sarvato mukhi, Bhagini, Bhagavatpatni, Sakala, Kaala kaarini, Sarvavit, Sarvatobhadra, Guhyaatita, Guhaarani, Prakriya, Yoga maata, Ganga, Vishveshwareshwari, Kapila, Kaapila, Kanta, Kanakaabha, Kalaantara, Punya, Pushkarini, Bhokti, Purandara purassara, Poshani, Paramaishwarya bhutida, Bhuti bhushana, Panchabrahma samutpatti, Paramaarthaartha vigraha, Dharmodaya, Bhanumati, Yogijneya, Manohara, Manojava, Manoraksha, Taapasi, Veda Rupini, Veda Shakti, Vedamata, Veda vidyaa prakaashini, Yogeshwareshwari, Maata, Maha Shakti, Manomayi, Vishwaavastha, Viyanmurti, Vidyunmaala, Vihaayasi, Kinkari, Surabhi, Vandya, Nandini, Nandi vallabha, Bharati, Paramaananda, Paraapara vibhedika, Sarva praharanotpeta, Kaamya, Kameshwareshwari, Achintya, Achintya vibhava, Hrillekha, Kanakaprabha, Kushmaandi, Dhana ratnaadhya, Sugandha, Gandha dayini, Trivikrama padodbhuta, Dhanushpaani, Shivodaya, Sudurlabha, Dhanaadhyaksha, Dhanya, Pingala lochana, Shanti, Prabhayati, Deepi, Pankajaayata lochana, Aadyaa, Hridkamalodbhuta, Gavaam Maataa, Rana priya, Satkriya, Girija, Shudda, Nitya pushta, Nirantara, Durga, Katyayani, Chandi, Charchika, Shanta vigraha, Hiranyavarna, Rajani, Jagadyantra pravartika, Mandaaradri niyaasa, Sharada, Swarnamalini, Ratnamala, Ratnagarbha, Prithyi, Vishwapramaathini, Padmaanana, Padmanibha, Nitya tushta, Amritodbhava, Dhunvati, Duhprakamya, Surya Mataa, Drushadwati, Mahendra bhagini, Maanya, Varenya, Varadarpita, Kalyani, Kamala, Rama, Panchabhuta, Varaprada, Vaachyaa, Vareshwari, Vandya, Durjaya, Duratikrama, Kaalaraatri, Mahavega, Virabhadra priya, Hitaa, Bhadrakaali, Jaganmaata, Bhakta Kalyana dayini, Karaala, Pingalaakaara, Namabheda,

Amahamada, Yashashwini, Yashoda, Shadhwa pariyartika, Shankini, Padmini, Saankhya, Sankhya yoga parvartika, Chaitra, Samvatsararudha, Jagat sampuranindrija, Shumbhaari, Khechari, Swasthaa, Kambugriya, Kalipriya, Khagadhwaja, Khagaarudha, Paraadharya, Paramalini, Aaishvarya vartma nilaya, Virakta, Garudaasana, Jayanti, Hridguha, Ramya, Gahwareshtha, Ganaagrani, Sankalpasiddha, Saamyasthaa, Sarva Vijaana dayini, Kalikalmasha hantri, Guhyopanishat, Uttama, Nishta, Drishti, Smriti, Vyaapti, Pushti, Tushti, Krayavati, Vishvaamareshwareshaana, Bhukti, Mukti, Shiva, Amrita, Lohita, Sarpamaala, Bhishani, Vanamalini, Anbanta shayana, Asnanya, Naranaaraayanodbhaya, Nrisimhi, Daitya Mathani, Shanka chakragadaadhara, ankarshana sdamutpatti, Ambikaapada samshraya, Maha jwaala, Maha murti, Sumurti, Sarva kaama dhruk, Suprabha, Sustana, Gauri, Dharmakaamaartha mokshadaa, Bhrumadhya nilaya, Purva, Purana purushaarani, Mahavibhutida, Madhyaa, Sarojanayana, Samaa, Ashtaadasha bhuja, Anaadya, Nilotpala dala prabha, Sarva Shaktyaasanaarudha, Dharmaadharma vivarjita, Vairagya jnaana nirata, Niraaloka, Nireendriya, Vichitra gahanaadhaara, Shaswata sthaana vaasini, Staaneshwari, Nirananda, Trishula vara dhaarini, Asesha Devataa Murti, Ddevata, Varadevata, Ganaabika, Giriputri, Nishumbha vinipaatini, Avarna, Varna rahita, Niravaana, Beeja sambhava, Anantayarna, Anantastha, Shankari, Shanta Maanasa, Agotra, Gomati, Goptri, Guhyarupa, Gunottara, Gou, Geeh, Gavyapriya, Gouni, Ganeshwara namaskrutya, Satyamaatra, Satya sandha, Trisandhya, Sandhivarjita, Sarvadaashraya, Sankhya, Sankhyaayoga samudbhava, Asankhyeya, Aprameyaakhya, Shunya, Shudda kulodbhava, Bindunaada samutpatti, Shambhuvaama, Shashiprabha, Visanga, Bheda rahita, Manoja, Madhusudani, Mahashri, Shri samutpatti, Tamah paare pratishthita, Tritatwa maata, Trividha, Susukshma pada samshraya, Shaantaatita, Malaatita, Nirvikara, Niraashraya, Shivaakhya, Chitta nilaya, Shinajnaana Swarupini, Daitya daanava nirmaatri, Kashyapi, Kaalakalpika, Shastrayoni, Kriyamurti, Chaturvarga pradarshika, Narayani, Narodbhuti, Kaumudi, Lingadharini, Kaamuki, Lalitha, Bhava, Paraabhava bhutida, Parantajata Mahima, Badava, Vamalochana, Subhadra, Devaki, Sita, Vedavedaanga paaraga, Manaswini, Manyumaata, Maha Manyu Samudbhava, Amrutya, Amrita,

The above 'Sahasra Naamaas' of Bhagavati rendered by Himavan pleased Devi and she gave him 'Upadesha'and an ever grateful Himavan assumed the role of her father and performed the Immortal Shiva Parvati wedding for 'Loka Kalyaana'. The Phala Shruti of the above Devi Sahasra Naamaas was stated as follows:

Ya imam pathateydhyaayam Devyaa Maahaatma kirtanam,

Shivasya sannidhou Bhaktyaa Shuchitad bhaava bhaavitah/

Sarva paapa vinirmukto Divya yoga samanvitah,

*Ullanghya rahmano Lokam Devyaah Sthaanamayaapnuyaat/* 

Pratyekam chatha Naamnaani Juhuyaat Sananatrayam,

Putanaadikrutairdoshair Graha doshaischa muchyatey/

Sampujya Paarshwatah Shambhum Trinetram Bhakti samyutah,

Labhatey Mahatim Lakshmim Maha Deva Prasaadatah/

Tasmaat Sarva prayatnena Japtavyam hi Dwijaatibhih,

Sarva Paapaaanodaartham Devyaa naam Sahasrakam/

(Whosoever recites always with Cleanliness and Sincerity the above Commendation of Deva Bhagavati in the presence of Maha Deva would be steered clear of his or her sins and irregularities of on-going life and attains Devi Loka even beyond Brahma Loka; such persons would definitely avoid Arishtaas or impact of Evil effects; all the possible drawbacks and obstacles of Grahaas /Planets would be overcome and by the Grace of Shankara, Devi Lakshmi would bestow the devotee ample prosperity and longevity).

Varaha Deva rescues Bhu Devi from Rasatala

At the time of Pralaya or Total Annihilation, there was darkness all around and life was submerged in water when Vishnu rested in Yoga Maya:

Ekaarnavey tadaa Tasmin nashtey Sthaavarajangamey,

Tadaa Samabhavad Brahmaa Sahasraakshah Sahasrapaat/

Sahasra Sirshaa Purusho Rukmavarna stwaateendriyah,

Brahma Naraayanaakhyaastu Sushvaapa salilo tadaa/

Apo Naaraa iti proktaa naamnaa purvamitih Srutih,

Ananam tasya taa yasmaat tena Narayanah smritah/

(As there was nothing else except water everywhere and the whole Creation of Moveables and Immovables got submerged in water, then Paramatma Purusha with thousands of eyes, feet and heads surfaced in golden colour lying on an unending water sheet; indeed he was Narayana as described in Vedas as 'Aap'or 'Naara' or water (Naara+Ayana or resting on water). While being playful with water Narayana assumed the Swarupa of a Varaha or Boar, lifted up Bhumi (Earth) from Rasatala by the sheer might of his 'Damshtras' (protruded teeth/ tusk) and on visioning this unique feat as accomplished by Bhagavan, Siddhas and Brahmarshis commended and Narayana as follows:

Namastey Deva Devaaya Brahmaney Parameshtiney,

Purushaaya Puraanaaya Shaswataaya Jayaaya cha/

Namah Swayambhuvey tubhyam Srashtey Sarvaartha Vediney,

Namo Hiranyagarbhaaya Vedhasey Paramaatmaney/

Namastey Vaasudevaaya Vishnavey Vishwayonaye,

Naraayanaaya Devaaya Devaanaam Hitakaariney/

Namostu tey Chaturvaktra Shaaranga chakraasi dhaariney,

Sarva Bhutaatma Bhutaaya kutasthaaya namonamah/

Namo Veda rahasyaaya namastey Vedayonaye,

Namo buddhaaya Shuddhaaya namastey Jnaana rupiney/

Namostwaananda rupaaya Saakshiney Jagataam Namah,

Anantaayaaprameyaaya Karyaaya Kaaranaayacha/

Namastey Pancha bhutaaya Pancha Bhutaatmaney Namah/

Namostu tey Varaahaaha Namastey Matsya rupiney,

Namo Yogaadhigamyaaya Namah Sankarshanaaya tey/

Namastrimurtaye tubhyam Tridhaamney Divya tejasey,

Namah Siddhaaya pujyaaya Gunatraya vibhaaviney/

Namostwaadityavarnaaya Namastey Padmayonaye,

Namomrutaaya Murtaayaa Maadhavaaya Namo namah/

Twayaiva Srashtamakhilam Ywayyeva Layameshyati,

Paalayaitajjagat sarvam jnaataa twam sharanam gatih/

Ityevam sa Bhagavan Vishnuh Sanakaadyarabhishthitah,

Prasaadamakaro teshaam Varaahavapureeshwarah/

(Salutations to you Deva Deva, Brahma, Parameshthi, Purusha, Purana the most Ancient, Shaswata the Everlasting, Swayambhu or Materialised on His own; Srashta or the Creator; Sarvaartha Vedi or He who knows everything; Hiranyagarbha or the Golden Bellied; and Vedha or Paramatma; You are the Origin for the Creation of the Universe; the Great Comfort Point of Devas; Narayana; Vishnu; the Holder of Sharanga-Chakraa-Sword named Nandaka; Chatirmukha; Atma Rupa; Kutastha or the Seat of Spiritual Eye or the Unchanging Spirit'- litearally meaning standing on the Top; Vedarahasya Swarupa; Veda's Originator; Shuddha-Buddha Swarupa; Jnaana Rupa; Ananda Swarupa; the Unique Witness of the World; Ananta or the Endless; Aprameya or the Incomprehensible; Karya-Karana Rupa or the Act and the Reason for the Act; Pancha Bhuta or the Composite Form of the Five Elements; Mula Prakriti or the Basic Root of Prakriti or Maaya or the Creation; Varaha Deva; Matsya Rupa; Visionable by the Yoga route; Sankarshana; You are the Teja Rupa of Triguna- Tri Murti-Tridhaama or three abodes; Aditya Samaana Varna; Murthaamurta Swarupa or of a Form or Non Form; The Last Shelter Point or Sanctuary and Maadhava! You Create-Protect and Terminate the World. You are indeed the shield and safeguard! ) As Narayana expanded his Body as Kurma, Bhu Devi rested on the Kurma Swarupa and Brahma Srishti commenced all over again.

Narasimha's incarnation, Prahlada's Bhakti and Andhakasura's remorse securing 'Ganatwa'

Of the thirteen wives of Kashyapa who were the daughters of Daksha viz. Aditi, Diti, Danu, Arishta, Surasa, Surabhi, Vinata, Tamra, Krodhavasha, Ira, Kadru, Muni and Dharmaja, Diti gave birth to Hiranya

Kashipu and Hinarnyaksha. Hirnayakashipu became arrogant having secured the boon of invincibility from Brahma and tormented Devas, Maharshis and Brahmanas, even to the extent of declaring himself as mightier than Narayana. Devas approached Vishnu who had already created from his 'Amsha' the 'Narasimha' or the Man-Lion Swarupa and despatched him to the Kingdom of Hiranyakashipu. On learning of this, the Daitya commisioned four of his sons viz. Prahlada, Anihlada, Samhlada and Hlada; the sons charged Narasimha with Brahmastra, Vaishnavastra, Kaumaraastra and Agneyastra but Narasimha caught hold of the feet of all the Putras and through them all in different directions. Hiranyakashipu confronted Narasimha Deva and tried to hit him on the chest even as the latter disappeared on Garuda. Hiranyaksha the younger brother of Hiranyakashipu recited the Pashupata Mantra against Narasimha but Mahadeva would not harm Vasudeva. That was the time when Prahlada realised the Supremacy of Narasimha:

Drushtawaa paraahatam twastram Prahlaado bhaagya gouravaat,

Meyney Sarvaatmakam Devam Vaasudevam sanatanam/

Samtyajya sarva shastraani Satyayuktena chetasaa,

Nanaama Shirasaa Devam yoginaam hridayeshyam/

Stutwaa Naaraayanaih stotraaih Rukyajuh Saaama sambhavaih,

Nivaarya Pitaram Bhraatrun Hirantaaksham tadaa braveet/

Ayam Naaraayanonantah shaswato Bhagavaanajah,

Puraana Purusho Devo Mahayogi Jaganmayah/

Ayam Dhaataa Vidhaataa cha Swayamjjoytirniranjanah,

Pradhaana Purushastwam Mula Prakritiravyayah/

Ishwarah Sarvabhutaanaamanantaryami gunaatigah,

Gacchaadhwamenam sharanam Vishnumavyaktamavyayaa/

Ayam sarvaatmanaa vadhyo Nrisimholpa pararaakramah,

Samaagatosmadbhavanamidaaneem Kaalacheditah/

Vihasya Pitaram Putro Vachah Praaha Mahaamatih,

Maa Nindaswainameeshaanaam Bhutaanaamekamvyayam/

Katham Devo Mahadevah shaswatah Kaalavarjitah,

Kaalena hanyatey Vishnuh Kaalaatma Kaalarupadhruk/

Tatah Suvarna kashipur duratma vidhichoditah,

Nivaaritopi putrena yudodha Harimavyayam/

(As the powerful Narayananstra and Shiva's Paashupataastra proved to be ineffevtive, Prahlada realised that Narasimha was none else other than Vaasudeva Himself and having visioned him as Ruk-Yajur-Saama Swarupa extolled him with Vaishnava Stutis and asked his father, uncle and brothers to stop the battle; he said they should all take shelter from himn and not fight with him as he is Anata, Sanatana, Ajanma, Maha Yogi, Puruna Purusha, Dhata, Vidhata, Swayam jyoti, Niranjana, Purana Purusha, Tatwa, Mula Prakriti, Avyaya, Ishwara, Antaryami and Avyaya Vishnu. Hiranyakashipu shouted that this Narasimh was indeed worth killing as he entered this place as though he was sent by Kaala or Mrityu to my house for being killed. But smilingly, Prahlada tried to convince the Daitya that Vaasudeva was the Singular Entity who himself was Kaala Varjita( deathless) Kaal (Mrityu or death) and Kaalaatma or the Form of Mrityu himself and there was no question of Kaala Deva despatching Narasimha to their Place; but since Hiranyakashipu was fool hardy, the Lion from Narasimha tore the Daitya's guts and intestines from his body and cut them into pieces and sent him to hell; as this happened, the highly enraged Bhagavan killed the Daitya Sons, excepting of Prahlada, who was overcome by the presence of Vaasudeva. As Hiranyaksha became the King, his atrocities were intensified against Devas and Sages and finally imprisoned Bhu Devi and dragged her into Rasaatala. Bhagavan assumed the form of Varaha and having killed him and rescued Bhu Devi returned to Vaikuntha. Prahlada anointed his cousin brother Andhaka as the King and rejected the Asura way of life and was fully immersed in Vishnu's worship. In course of time, Prahlada was by the influence of Maya ignored to perform the Puja of a Brahmana Guest who was annoyed and cursed Prahlada that what all the positive fruits were earned by way of Vishnu Puja by him would be lost; thus Prahlada went back to his erstwhile Asura Gunas and neglected Vishnu puja; in fact he attacked Hari once but got snubbed by him. Having recovered from the ill-effects of the Maya, Prahlada then performed worship with redoubled energy to Vishnu. Meanwhile Andhakasura, an ardent devotee of Mahadeva developed devotion for Parvati.

Once, there was a dreadful and widespread 'Anavrishti'or famine at Daruvana and there was no production of foodgrains for years together; there were many deaths of human beings as also cattle. Munis and others approached Gautami Rishi who provided excellent food to one and all. Those who were unscrupulous and jealous of the Muni created a 'Mayavi' Cow and made the Muni touch the animal which died as he touched it. All the Brahmanas then refused to take the food provided by the Muni in view of the 'Gohatya' or the killing of the Cow and left away from his Ashram. In course of time, the Rishi came to learn of the mischief of some of the playful Brahmanas and cursed them that they would be abandoned out of the purview of Vedas and would die soon and get their rebirths soon and keep on consuming impure food. The repentant Brahmanas prayed to both Mahadeva and Vishnu; in response, Bhagavan Rudra made new Shastras like Kaapaala, Naakula, Vaama, Bhairava, Purva Paschimaa, Pancha Ratra etc. by reciting which human beings would get rid of their sins and leave the recycle themselves into the vortex of quick births and deaths. Shiva for the sake of the Brahmanas appeared on Earth and commenced 'Bhiksha Vritthi' or professional begging by wearing garlands of Kapalaas and smearing ash on the forehead carrying Nandi along as also Kaalabhairava. Vishnu on the other hand assumed the Swarupa of a maid to serve Devi Parvati along with Brahma, Agni, Indra, Yama and so on. Nandi was the gate keeper procecting Maheswari in view of the threat posed by Andhakaasura who was obsessed with the Devi. This was the background when Andhakasura arrived at the Place of Parvati Devi for whom he developed an obsession. As Kalabhairava stopped the Daitya and fought with him, Andhaka multiplied himself into innumerable Forms along with the Strong men of Army like Ghantakarna, Meghanaada, Chandesha, Chandatapana, Vinayaka, Meghavaaha and so on and defeated Nandi and Bhairaweshwara. As Andhaka's army became more and more violent especially since Andhaka was multiplying manifold,

Bhairava and Nandi reached Vaasudeva, and the latter made such an arrangement to exterminate the million Rupas as they emerged and Andhaka ran away from the battle field. Even before Andhaka fled away, some hundred Devis were in position and were singing hymns of victory in praise of Devi Girija and Parama Shiva. The Devis questioned Shiva, Parvati and Vishnu when Shiva explained that he was the Parama Tatwa whom none could visualise possibly; he said:

Aham Naraayano Gauri Jaganmaataa Sanaatani,

Vibhajya Samsthito Devaha Swaatmaanam Bahudheswarah/

Na mey viduh param tatwam Devaadyaa na Maharshayah,

Ekoyam Veda Vishwaatmaa Bhavaani Vishnurevacha/

Aham hi Nishkriyah Shaantah Kevalo Nishparigrahah,

Maameva Keshavam Devamaahur devimathaambikaam/

Esha Dhaataa Vidhaataa cha Kaaranam Kaaryamevacha,

Karthaa Kaarayitaa Vishnurbhuktimukti phalapradah/

Bhoktaa Pumaanaprameyah Samhartaa Kaalarupadhruk,

Srashtaa Paataa Vaasudevo Vishwatmaa Vishwato mukhah/

Kuutastho hyaakasharo Vyaapi Yogi Naarayanah swayam,

Taarakah Purushohyaatmaa Kevalam Paramam padam/

Saishaa Maheshwari Gauri Mama Shakti Niranjanaa,

Shantaa Satyaa Sadaaandaa Param mitih Shrutih/

Asyah Sarvamidam Jaatamatriava layameshyatyi,

Yeshiva Sarva Bhutaama Gateena muktamaa gatih/

Tayaaham sangato Devyaa Kevalo Nishkalahparah,

Pashyaamyaseshamevedam Yastad Veda sa muchyatey/

Tasmaadanaadimadvaitam Vishnumaatmaana meeshwaram,

Ekameeya vijaaneedhwam tato yasyatha nivrutthim/

Maanyantey Vishnumavyakta maatmaanam Shraddayaanvitaah,

Ye bhinnadrushtyapeeshaanaam Pujayanto na mey Priyaah/

Dwishanti ye Jagatsutim Mohitaa Rouravaadishu,

Pachyamaanaa ma muchyatey Kalpakoti shatairapi/

Tasmaadasesha bhutaanaam Rakshako Vishnuravraayah,

Yathaavadih Vijnaaya dheyayah Sarvaapadih Prabhuh/

(I am Ishwara the composite of Narayana, Sanatana Jaganmataa Guauri and the Self divided into innumerable Forms; Neither Maharshis nor Devas are aware of Parama Tatwam; even Vishnu or Devi too are quite unaware; I am the Nishkriya or Action less, Shanta the Peaceful, Kevala or the Singular and the Nishparigrah or the Nir-Dwandya; I am also known as Keshava, Deva and Devi Ambica. This Vishnu himself is Dhata, Vidhata, Kaarana or the Cause; Kaarya or the Action, Kartha the Doer and Kaarayita or the one prompting Action; He is also Bhukti-Mukti Phala Prada; Bhokta; Aprameya; Samharta; Kaala Swarupa; Srishti-Paalana; Vishwatma, Sarvavyapaka, Vaasudeva, Kutastha, Avinaashi, Vyaapi, Yogi, Narayana, Taraka, Purusha, Atma, Kevala and Moksha. This Maheswari Gauri is Shakti, is Niranjana, Shanta, Veda, Satya, Sadaananda; Sarvot -panna and Laya Kaarana; Adwiteeya, Nishkala, and Sampurna; I visualise the Universe through her and comprhent Maha Tatwa from her; those who guess Tatwa from her would attain the Essence of Life. Those who imagine that Shiva alone is Paramatma and ignore / dislike Vishnu are not my Bhaktas and similarly those who worship Vishnu and detest Shiva are sure to be banished to Rouraka Narakas. Indeed thus no prayer is complete disregarding Vishnu or Shiva).

Meanwhile Andhaka was unable to resist his obsession withe Devi Parvati and landed on the Mountain and tried to reach Mahadeva and Devi Parvati. Vaasudeva exclaimed to Mahadeva as to why he was going slowly in exterminating Andhaka, while he was capable of exterminating the Universe in entirety and why that in fact he allowed an opportunity to Andhaka earlier to run away from the battle field! Then Mahadeva lifted his Trishula which got attracted to the Daitya and commenced Tandava Nritya or the Typical Form of his dance. Brahma and Devas then realised that Andhaka's hour of 'Paapa Vimochana' arrived; Munis and Siddhaganas recited Vedas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras sang tuneful songs of eulogy of Mahadeva and Apsaraganaas danced with joy in anticipation. The top portion of the Trishula burnt off all the sins of the Daitya as he was freed from the thick blanket of Maya and he secured 'Mahaa Gyaana'; since he was purified of his evil thoughts and deeds, Andhaka then broke down into spontateous Stuti of Maha Deva:

Namaami Murthnaa Bhagavantamekam Samaahitaa yam Vidureesha Tatwam,

Puraatanam Punyamanantarupam Kaalam Kavim Yogaviyoga-hetum/

Damshtraa karaalam Divi Nrityamaanam HutaashaVaktram Jwalanaarka rupam,

Sahasra paadaakshi Shirobhiyutam Bhavantamekam pranamaami Rudram/

Jayaadi Devaamara pujitaanghryai Vibhaagaheenaamala Tatwarupa

Vayavaadibhedairakhilaatma rupa/

Twaameka -maahuh Purusham Puranamaaditya varnam Tamasah parastaat,

Twam pasyaseedam paripaasya -jastram twamantako Yogi gunaabhijushtah/

Ekontaraatmaa Bahudhaa Nivishto deheshu dehaadih viseshaheenah/

Twamaatma shabdam Paramaatmanatwam Bhavantamaahuh Shivameka keychit/

Twamaksharam Brahma Param Pavitramaanmada rupam Pranavaabhidhaanam,

Twameeshwaro Vedapadeshu Siddhah Swayam Pabhosesha visheshah heennah/

Twamindrarupo Varunaagni rupo Hamsah Praano Mrutyurantosi Yagjnah,

Prajaapatir Bhagavaaneka Rudro Nilagreevah stuyasey Vedavidbhih/

Narayanastwam Jagataamathaadih Pitaamahastwam Prapitaamahascha,

Vedaanta -guhyopi nishatsu geetah Sadaa Shivastvam Parameshwarosi/

Namah parastaat Tamasah Parasmai Paraatmaney Panchapadaantaraaya,

Tri Shaktiteetaaya Niranjanaaya Sahasra Shaktyaasana samsthi -taaya/

Trimurthayenantapadaatma murtey Jagannivaasaaya Jaganmayaya,

Namo Lalaatorpita lochanaaya Namojanaanaam Hridi Samsthitaaya/

Phaneendra haaraaya Namostutubhyam Muneendra siddhaarchita Paada yugma/

Sahasra dharmaasana Samsthitaaya Namah Paraantaaya Bhavodbha -vaaya/

Sahasrachandraarka Vilochanaaya Namostutey Soma Sumadhyamaaya,

Namostutey Deva Hiranyabaaho, Namombikaayaah Pataye Mundaaya/

Namotiguhyaaya Guhaantaraaya Vedaanta Vijnaana sunischitaaya,

Trikaala heenaamala dhaamadhaamney Namo Maheshaaya Namah Shivaaya/

Yevam Stuvantam Bhagavaan Shulaagraadavaropya tam,

Tushtah provaacha hastaabhyaam spushtaaya Parameshwarah/

(I greet that Unique Paramatma-the Puraatana, Punyadaayi, Ananta Kaala Swarupa, Kavi and Samyoga-Viyoga Swarupa- whose Maha Tatwa is sought after by Samadhi-sthita Yogis. I salute that fierce-ful, Agni-faced, Surya-like; thousand footed-thousand faced-thousand headed Adviteeya Rudra. I pay my obeisances to you Maha Deva as Devas worship your feet; you are the Indivisible Tatwa Swarupa; Agni-

Vaayu- Surya Swarupa; Victory to you Purana Purusha; You are beyond Tamas and Maya and the dazzling light; Palana-Samhara Karta; Yogi Samuha Sevita or the One worshipped by Groups of Yogis; the Antaraatma or the Inner Consciousness that is distinct from the Outer Body Frame; You are the Atma Tatwa and the Paramatma Tatwa. Prabho! You are the Embodiment of Joy, the Hallmark of Purity; Omkara Shabda Vaachya; Devoid of all Padarthaas; and You are Indra, Varuna, Agni, Hamsa, Praana, Mrityu; Anta and Yagjna. Those who are conversant of Vedas address you as Nilakantha, Eka Rudra, Prajapati, and Bhagavat Swarupa. You are the Adi or the Beginning, Narayana, Pitamaha and Prapitamaha. Sada Shiva Parameshwara, you are the Secret Meaning of Vedaanta Shastraas and Upanishads. You are beyond Tamo Guna, Parama Paramatma, Pancha Padaanta Swarupa; the Tri Shakti Swarupa of Braahmi, Vaishnavi and Shaakta; Niranjana and Sahasra Shakti Rupa; Tri Murti Swarupa of Brama, Vishnu and Shiva Rupa; Anata Padaatmaka, Atma Murti, Jagannivaasa and Jaganmaya; You wear your eyes on your forehead and Nagaraja maalaas all over your body, while Munis and Siddhas keep your feet-lotuses in their inner vision. My humble salutations to you who is seated on the 'Dharmaishwarya' or the Wealth of Virtue; your eyes are like thousand Suryas and Chandras while your mid-body is Moon-like cool. You are of Hiranya baahu or of glittering golden hands; Ambikapati Munda, My sincere 'Namaskaaraas' to you Guhya, Guhyantara, Vedantarupa, devoid of influences caused by the 'Trikaalaas' and the Supreme Source of Pure Radiance). Parama Shiva was so pleased with Andhakas passionate Stuti that he conferred 'Ganatwa' under Nandi Deva's leadership).

As Andhka fell on her feet and prayed to her: Namaami Devavallabhamanadi madrijaamimaam, Yatah Pradhaanama Purushou nihanti yaakhilam Jagat/ Vibhati ya Shivaasaney Shivena Saamakavyayaa, Hiranyetirnirmaley Namaami taamimaamajam/ Yadanantaraakhilam Jagajjayanti yaani samkshayam, Namaami yatra taamumaa- masesha bhedavarjitaam/ Na jaayateyn na heeyatey na vardhatey cha taamumaam, Namaami yaa gunaatigaa Gireesha putrikaamimaam/ Kshamaswa Devi Shailajey krutam mayaa vimohitah, Suraa-surairarchitam Namaami tey padaambujam/ Ithyam Bhagavati Gauri Bhaktinamrena Parvatee, Samstutaa Daityapatinaa putratvey jagruhendhakam/ (My sincere apologies to Shankara Priya Devi Parvati the Prime Prakriti who along with Purusha creates and terminates the Universe in totality. Forgive my shame as I had evil feelings towards you Devi who is the Symbol of Purity and Auspiciousness seated along with Parama Shiva as you too are Ajanma or Birthless and Avyaya or Endless. Kindly absolve my unpardonable sin for ignorance as she creates and destroys and is beyond Trigunas and is worthy of worship by Deva-Danavas alike! Andhakasura's heartfelt guilt of highest order was pardoned by Devi Parvati and being a fund of mercy forgave him as typical of a Supreme Mother).

## Vaamana Deva's incarnation and Bali Chakravarti's extreme sacrifice

Prahlada's son King Virochana who overpowered Devas and occupied Trilokas came into contact with Brahma Manasa Putra Sanat Kumara and was greatly impressed with his teachings of 'Atma Jnaana' or the Knowledge of the Supreme Soul. He abandoned Kingship and coronated Bali as the Emperor. Bali Chakravartii expanded his Empire further and Devas had futher difficulties as their miseries increased manifold as their hopes of recovering Swarga receded further since Bali Chakravarti's administration was impeccable as per Scriptures: he was a Brahmana Bhakta, highly enlightened and progressive administrator and none could raise a finger against him or his virtues. But, the fact remained that Devas became nomads and completely lost their glory; the very many yagnas conducted by the Chakravarti under the direction of Daitya-Danava Guru Shukracharya were impeccable but the Yagna Phalas were purely for the advantage of Daityas but were denied to Devas. Deva Maata Aditi was highly disturbed as her own sons were roaming from pillar to post neither without a home nor with a power! The highly disillusioned mother then resorted to exreme Tapasya to Narayana seeking that vaasudeva should take to an Avatara to defeat Daitya-Danavas and restore Devas back to their original position of glory. In

response to her Tapasya, Vaasudeva appeared in his full Form with Shankha-Chakra-Gadaa-Sharangas and an ever grateful Aditi prayed to him as follows:

Jayaasesha duhkhoghanaashaika heto Jayaananta mahaatmya yogaabhiyukta,

Jayaanaadi madhaanta vijnaana murtey Jayaasesha kalpaamalaananda rupa/

Namo Vishnavey Kaalarupaaya tubhyam Namo Naarasimhaaya seshaaya tubhyam,

Namah Kaala Rudraaya Samhaara Kartrey Namo Vaasudevaaya tubhyam namastey/

Namo Vishwamaayaa vidhaanaaya tubhyam Namo Yoga gamyaaya Satyaaya tubhyam,

Namo Dharma Vigjnaana nishthaaya tubhyam Namastey Varaahaaya bhuyo Namastey/

Namastey sahasraarka chandraabha murtey Namo Vedavigjnaana Dharmaabhi -gamya,

Namo Devadevadi Devaadideva Prabho Viswayonetha bhuyo Namastey/

Namah Shambhaveuy Satyaishthaaya tubhyam Namo hetavey Vishwarupaaya tubhyam,

Namo yoga peethaantarasthaaya tubhyam Shivaayaika rupaaya bhuyo namastey/

(Victory to you as you are the only destroyer of the root causes of difficulties and setbacks; You are constantly engaged in Yoga; the Vigjnaana Swarupa without a beginning, center and end; Victory to you the Asesha Kalpa without any rest or intermission of activities; the embodiment of spotlessness and bliss; Victory to you Kaala Rupa, Narasimha, Kaala Rudra, Vaasudeva, Mayaavidhaana or the Planner of Illusions; Satya Rupa who is comprehended by Yoga; Jnaana nishtha; Dharma; Varaha Swarupa; Unique Symbol of Magnificence comparable to thousands of Suryas and Chandras; the unparalleled medium of Dharma and Jnaana as proposed and embedded in Vedas; Devadi Deva, Adi Deva, Satya Nishtha, Vishwa Rupa, Kaarana Rupa, Eka Rupa and Yoga peetha Madhya or as situated in the Center of Yoga; my sincere salutations to You!) In response to Aditi's commendation as above, Narayana bestowed his boon to soon take the Incarnation as Vamana Murti.

As this development took place, King Bali noticed fearful premonitions including earth quakes and heavy rains followed by lightnings and thunders, when Bali asked his grand father Prahlada about these untoward signs. Prahlada replied that his apprehension as visioned by him was that Vaasudeva had then entered Devi Aditi's garbha to destroy the Daitya elements in the Universe as they tormented Devas and dislodged them from their rightful thrones and statuses. King Bali softened his stiff stand against Devas as Prahlada explained at length that Vaasudeva was of tamasika feature as Shankara, of Raajasika nature as Brahma and of Satvika nature as Vishnu and better that King Bali took refuge in Narayana. As time passed, Vishnu arrived in his new incarnation as Vaamana Deva: *Chaturbhujam Vishaalaaksham Shrivatsaangitavakshasam, Nilamegha pratikaasham bhraajamaanam Shriyaa -vritam*/ (Vishnu with his four hands, broad eyes, Shrivatsa Mani on his chest, with colour like blue clouds and extremely lustrous made his appearance) as Vaamana Avatara in the Brahmana clan. Then Devatas, Siddha ganaas, Sadhyas, Charanaas, besides Indra and Brahma gathered around and performed Jaata Karmas, and subsequently Upanayana followed by Vedaadhyayana under the tutorship of Bharadwaja Maharshi. As King Bali performed a Maha Yagna, Vaamana Deva accompanied Guru Bharadwaja attended the function with

Krishna Mriga Charma or deer skin and Yagnopaveeta or the Sacred Thread, Palaasa danda, jataa, bhasma etc.that were typical of a Brahmachaari while reciting Vedaas. The Bhikshu then asked charity of a mere three feet of land and in agreement of the 'daanaa', King Bali performed 'Sankalpa' or Vedic Approval and as a formality offered water in the Bhikshu's hands. Then the measurement of three feet commenced formally; King Bali washed Vishnu's feet and declared that he was giving away in charity the three feet of land and symbolically left water on land:

Vichakramey Prithivimesha Aitaamataantariksham Divamaadi devah,

Vyapetaraagam Ditigneshwaram tam Prakartukaamah sharanam prapannam/

Aakramya Lokatraya meesha paadah Praajaapadyaad Brahmalokam jagaama,

Praneymuraaditya sahasrakalpam ye tatra Lokey Nivasantin Siddhhaah/

(Vishnu then sought to measure the three feet by occupying the Earth, Antariksha or the Sky and the Dyuloka; as he occupied the trilokas, the Lord's feet touched the Prajapati loka and the the Brahma loka where the Siddha ganaas and others had the chance of touching the foot of Vishnu Deva; as the Sacred feet pierced through the Kapaala of Brahmanada, Sacred waters of Ganga flowed down on to Akaasha.

Thus:

Gatwaa Mahaantam Prakritim Pradhaanam Brahkaanamekam Purusham Swabeejam/

Atisdhthadeeshasya padam tadavyayam drushtwaa Devaastatrta tatra stutivanti/

Aalokya tam Purusham Vishwakaayam Mahaan Balirbhaktiyogena Vishnum,

Nanaama Naaraayanamekamavyayam swachetasaa yam Pranamanti Devaah/

Twamabrameed Bhagavaanaadikartaa bhutwaa punar Vaamano Vaasudevh/

Mamaiya Daityadhipateyrdhunedam Lokatrayam Bhavataa Bhaavadattam/

(Vishnu's feet reached upto Maha-Pradhana-Prakriti-Swabeeja Swarupa-Purusha-Brahma and got settled there; Devas prayed to that Avyaya at different positions with great devotion and so did the King when Vaamana Deva declared that the Tri Lokas were indeed under his possession).

As Bali extolled Vaamana Deva, the latter instructed the King to enter Pataala Lokas and enjoy life till the end of the Kalpa and finally enter Vishnu Himself. Janardana then restored Swarga back to Indra and Devas as Siddhas, Devatas, Rishis, Kinnara, Brahma, Indra, Rudra, Adityas and Marudganas prayed to Vishnu out of gratitude.

Incarnation of Shri Rama, execution of Ravana and Installation of Rameshwara Linga

Devi Aditi and Kashypa Muni gave birth to Aditya and the latter had four wives viz. Sangjna, Raagjni, Prabha and Chaaya Devi; Sangjna's sons were Manu and Yama and their daughter was Yamuna; Ragjni's son was Raivata and Chhaya's sons were Saavarna and Shani and daughters were Tapati and

Vishta. Manu's eldest son was Ikshwaku and in that illustrious lineage was born Harischandra who was famed for his Truthfulness as he sacrificed his Kingdom, wife and son. It was also in that lineage in which Bhagiratha was born, known for his persistence and fortitude and succeeded to bring down Ganges from Heavens to wash off the impact of Kapila Maharshi's curse to his great-grand fathers. Raghu and Dasaratha too belonged to that Vamsha in which Shri Rama was born as an Incarnation of Vishnu with his brothers named Bharata, Lakshmana and Shatrughna. Devi Sita was the daughter of King Janaka to whom Maha Deva gifted a Shiva Dhanush and the King announced that whosoever could lift and set the Dhanush would be given Devi Sita in wedding. None of the powerful and valiant Kings or others could even lift the Dhanush, let alone set it. But Shri Rama was not only able to set it but even broke it. King Dasaratha planned to make Rama the Yuva Raja or the heir apparent, but the youngest of the three Queens called Kaikeyi thwarted the plan and instead demanded Rama to be banished to spend fourteen years in Vana Vaasa or Forest Life even as her own son Bharat should be the Yuva Raja. The weak King could neither stop Rama to go to forests nor refuse Kaikeyi's wish and in this dilemma succumbed to death; Rama accompanied by Devi Sita and brother Lakshmana proceeded to the forests while a faithful Bharata discarded Kingship and only acted as the Administrator on behalf of Shri Rama during his absence. During the VanaVaasa, Rama destroyed several Rakshasaas with the able assistance of Lakshmana, facilitated Maharshis to perform Yagnas and promoted virtuous deeds by shielding Dharma against Adharma (Virtue versus Vice) and Nyaya against Anyaya (Justice against Injustice). Almost at the end of the stipulated time of Forest Life moving from place to place and protecting Maharshis, Munis and the Virtuous and punishing the Evil, Rama lived in a 'Parnashala' or thatched abode in peace when a Rakshasi called Surpanakha spotted Rama and made amorous proposals to him but being of 'Eka Patni Vrata' or of a Single wife Practice refused her proposals of marriage; since she made desperate and insistent efforts, he instructed Lakshmana to cut off her nose as he was against the Dharma of killing a woman. The Raakshasi approached her brother Ravana the most obnoxious and vicious Demon King of Lanka across the high Sea away from the mainland of Bharata Desha. Ravana decided to score against Shri Rama, more so as Sita Devi was beautiful and charming. He despatched another Demon called Maricha to reach Sita-Rama's Parnashala by assuming the Form of a Golden Deer to tempt Sita while Rama chased the animal and while being killed by him it shouted 'Rama' as though Rama was in trouble; Lakshmana left the Parnashala and Ravana in disguise as a Muni requested Sita for alms to cross the Lakshmana Rekha – a Protective and Circular Line laced with Mantras- which was drawn by Lashmana and as soon as she crossed it, Rayana appeared in his original form with ten heads and twenty hands and kidnapped her and whisked her away to Lanka. On return to the Parna shaala, Rama was distraught and on learning from Jatayu the friend of Dasaratha that Sita was kidnapped by Ravana and took her away to Lanka, befriended Sugreeva and Hanuman, crossed the Sea and killed Ravana and the entire clan of Ravanasura. Apart from Sugreeva and the huge monkey brigade, Hanuman, a matchless Bhakta or devotee of Shri Rama played a momentous role in the Epic of Ramayana: he crossed the High Sea to Lanka; spotted Devi Sita in a Garden of Lanka under imprisonment suffering Ravana's heavy pressure of marrying her and threats of killing her husband Rama; convinced Sita that he was a genuine messenger of Rama; assuaged Sita's misery and boosted her morale by assuring that Rama was arriving; cautioned Ravana with dire consequences since Rama was of Vishnu's Incarnation and would annihilate him and his entire clan; assisted Rama to construct a Rama Setu or a massive bridge across the Sea; saved Lakshmana's life on the battle field as he was hit by Indrajit's arrows by reaching the Himalaya Mountain Range and bringing overnight a huge Mountain with 'Sanjeevani'or life saving herb; took a lead role in killing countless Rakshasaas; carried Rama and Lakshmana on his broad shoulders as their personal chariot; facilitated the destruction of Indrajit, Kumbhakarna and Ravana and finally enabled the coronation of Vibheeshana, the only virtuous brother of Ravanaasura, as the King of Lanka.

In the midst of Setu, Rama and Sita decided to install a Shiva Linga, not only to celebrate the victory of Virtue against Evil, but also to atone the killing of Ravana a Brahmana though a Demon.

Hanuman was comissioned to fetch a genuine Shiva Linga from Varanasi Kshetra but as he could not reach the appointed spot at the auspicious 'Muhurta', Devi Sita prepared a Linga with Seashore sand and the Sand Linga so installed had thus come to stay till date-apart from the Shiva Linga brought by Hanuman though belatedly. Maha Deva appeared in his full Form along with Devi Parvati before Rama and Sita in the presence of the 'Rama Sena', blessed them and assured them all as follows:

Yat tavyaa sthapitam Lingam drakshyanteeha Dwijaatayah,

Mahaapaataka samyuktaaseshaam Paapam vinashyatu/

Anyaani chaiva Paapaani snaatasyatra Mahaadadhou,

Darshanaadeva Lingasya naasham yaanti na samshayaha/

Yaavat sthaasyanti girayo yaavadeshaa cha Medini,

Yaavat Setuscha taavaccha sthaasyaamyatra tirohitah/

Snaanam daanam japah shraaddham bhavishyatya-kshayam krutam,

Smarana Deva Lingasya dinapaapam pranashyati/

('Darshana' or viewing of this Rameshwara Linga that was installed formally by Brahmanas on behalf of Shri Rama an Devi Sita should surely have their great sins destroyed. Taking bath in the Sea and worshipping the Linga would uproot the remaining blemishes and imperfections of a devotee. Maha Deva assured that as long as Mountains were existent and P rithvi was present, Setu would be in position and would be Maha Deva in the Rameshwara Linga. Whatever holy deeds like Snaana-Daana-Japa-Shraddhaas are performed at the Place would have multiplying and lasting effects. Even the 'Smarana' or the very thought of Rameshwara Linga from a distance would abolish the sins of the day!) After the Linga Pratishtha thus, Shri Rama administered Bharata Desha with Ayodhya as his capital for centuries and his Administration was acclaimed as 'Rama Rajya' when his Subjects were happy, contented and without 'Tapatrayaas' or the three kinds of Adhi Bhoutika like physical problems, Adhytaatmika or internal / psychological difficulties and Adhi Daivika or God-made complications like famines, earthquakes or f loods. During his Sovereignty, Shri Rama's governance excelled in Brahmana Puja, Ashwamedha Yagna and 'Dharma Paalana'.

King Jayadhwaja's Vishnu Bhakti and Sapta Rishi's assertion of 'Nishkama Bhakti' to Vishnu

In the context of Chandra Vamsha the glorious personalities were Chandra and Tara (the wife of Deva Guru Brihaspati)- Budha and Ila the daughter of Vaivaswata Manu- Pururava and Apsara Urvashi-Nahusha who performed hundred Yajnas and became a temporary Indra and Pitara Kanya Viraja- Yayati and Devayani the daughter of Shukracharya the Raakshasa Guru as also Sharmishtha the daughter of Raakshasa Vrishaparva- Yadu and Turvasu from Devayani and Puru from Sharmishta-Yadu's son Kroshta, Sahasrajit etc- Sahasrajit's grandson Haihaya whose son was Kartaveeryaarjuna who was killed by Parashurama; it was in this famed lineage of Sahasrabahu (Kartaveeryarjuna) was born Jayadhwaja, who was an unparalleled Vishnu Bhakta. He was of firm conviction that Dharma was the noblest feature, all the Kings on Earth were of the 'Amsha' of Vishnu and that Vishnu was the ablest Administrator:

Rajyam Paalayataavashyam Bhagavan Purushottamah,

Pujaneeyo yato Vishnuh Paalako Jagatoharih/

Saatviki Raajasichaiva Taamasicha Swayambhuvah,

Tristrastu Murtayah Proktaah Srishtisthityanta hetavah/

Satwaatmaa Bhagavaan Vishnuh Samstaapayati Sarvadaa,

Srujed Brahmaa Rajo Murtih Samharet Taamaso Harah/

Tasmaan Mahipateenaam tu Raajyam Paalayataamayam,

Aaraadhyo Bhagavan Vishnuh Keshavah Keshimardanah/

(Those who are Kings and Administrators ought to worship Vishnu, since Vishnu is the most competent as he as a Swayambhu possessed all the Three Gunas of Satvika-Raajasika-Taamasika nature and displays the three features of Srishti-Paalana-Samhaara and that is precisely why a King should worship Vishnu). But other brothers of Jayadhwaja viz. Shura, Shurasena, Ghrishna, and Krishna expressed their views too; they stated that Rudra was the Unique one to bestow Mukti as he was the Samhara Kaaraka responsible for the End. He assumes Tamoguna at the end of Kalpaas and as the Vidyaa /Jnaana Swarupa and Shakti Swarupa, Rudra alone would be worthy of worship, since Creation and Preservation were merely passing phases merely:

Ayam hi Bhagavan Rudrah Sarvam Jagadidam Shivah,

Tamogunam samaashritya Kalpaantey Samharet Prabhuh/

Yaa saa ghorataraa Murtisya Tejomayi Paraa,

Samhareyd Vidyayaa Sarvam Samsaaram Shulabhrit tathaa/

King Jayadhwaja replied:

Tatwena munchatey Jantuh Satvaatmaa hagavan Harih/

(It is only through Satva Guna alone, Maanavas attain Mukti and Bhagavan Vishnu is the Embodiment of Satwa Guna.) The brothers argued:

Tamuchur Bhraaaro Rudrah sevitah Saatvikairjanaih, Mochayet Satwa samyuktah Pujesham tato Haram/

( All the Satvika guna sampannas or those who always possess Satwika Guna do worship Rudra Deva and as an analogy one must worship Maha Deva.) The further argument from Jayadhwaja was that Swadharma or the Duty of a Varnaashrama-in this case of Kings-was of utmost applicability to attain Mukti. The counter argument of the brothers was that their father Kartaveeryarjuna who followed Swadharma wordshipped Rudra. As the arguments were endless and fruitless, all the brothers came to the

conclusion that they should all visit Sapta Rishis to explain as to who should worship –Shiva or Vishnubeing a King! Vasishtha and other Saparishis unanimously stated as follows:

Ya yasyabhimataa Pumsaha saa hi tasyaiva Devataa!

(Who so ever of Devataas is acceptable by a person is the Devata worthy of worship!) Having established this as the broad Principle, the Sapta Rishis provided the following exceptions and their counsel:

Kintu kaarya viseshena Pujitaashcheshtadaa Nrinaam,

Viseshaat Sarvadaa naayam niyamo hyanyathaa Nripaah/

Nripaanaam Daivatam Vishnustathaiva cha Purandarah,

Vipraanaamagniraadityo Brahmaachaiva Pinaakadhryuk/

Devaanaam Daivatam Vishnurdaanavaanaam Trishulabhrit,

Gandharvaanaam tathaa Somo Yakshaanaamapi kathyatey/

Vidyaadharaanaam Vagdevi Sandhyaanaam Bhagavan Ravih,

Rakshasaam Shankaro Rudrah Kinnaraanaam cha Parvati/

Rishinaam Daivatam Brahma Mahadevascha Shulabhrit,

Manunaamsyaadumaa Devi tathaa Vishnuh sa Bhaskarah/

Grihastaanaamcha Sarvey Syurbrahmaa vai Brahmachaarinam,

Vaikhaanasaanaamarkah syad Yatinaam cha Maheswarah/

Bhutaanaam Bhagavaan Rudraha Kushmaandaanmaam Vinaayakah,

Sarvbeshaam Bhagavaan Brahmaa Deva Devah Prajaapatih/

Ityevam Bhagavan Brahmaa swayam Devebhyabhaashata,

Tasmaajjayadwajo nunam Vishnavaaraadhyamarhati/

(Depending on the belief that human beings repose in specific Deva-Devaas and the resultant fruits that they achieve, worship is performed by them as per their wishes and the fulfillment and that might not be a general practice. But in general, Kings worship Vishnu or Indra; Brahmanas worship Agni Deva, Surya, Brahma and Shiva; Devas worship Vishnu while Danavas perform puja to Shiva; Gandharvas and Yakshaas pray to Soma Deva; Human Beings tend to worship Uma Devi, Vishnu and Surya; Grihastas or Family men and women pray to all the Devatas while Brahmacharis worship Brahma; Vaikhaanasaas pray to Surya and Sanyasis tend to deem Maheswara as their destiny; Bhutas pray to Rudra; Ganesha is

worshipped by Kushmandaas but Brahma is prayed by one and all. Sapta Rishis quoted Brahma however that Kings would better worship Vishnu.)

As this kind of discussions were going on, a frightening and cruel Danava named Videha entered the Kingdom of the Five Sons of Kartaveeryaarjuna and created havoc by killing men and women mercilessly. His roars and rumbles produced panic al over and the Five Sons attacked the Demon with all their capacity: Shura released Roudrastra, Surasena with Vaarunastra, Krishna used Prajaapatastra, Ghrishna with Vayavyastra while Jayadhwaja simulteneously released Kaubera-Aindra-Agneyaastra. But the Danava destroyed all the Astras with his Shula. Finally, King Jayadhwaja made a desperate effort to pray to Vishnu:

Vishnum Grasishnum Lokaadimaprameyamanaamayam,

Traataaram Purusham Purvam Shri Patim Peetavaasasam/

(Jayadhwaja's prayer was to Vishnu, Grasishnu or the Supreme Hold, Aprameya (Indestructible), Anamaya (devoid of sorrows), Purva Purusha (The Ageless Being), Shri Pati or the husband of Lakshmi etc). Instantly, Bhagavan Vishnu released Sudarshana Chakra known for its speed and positive action and the mountain-like head of the Asura Videha fell on the ground dead and there was abundant relief to the King brothers and their Subjects in the Kingdom. Jayadhwaja was complimented by his brothers for his timely and sincere prayers to Vishnu who saved the Kingdom from destruction; the bothers then approached Maharshi Vishwamitra to teach them the Puja Vidhana of Vishnu and the latter having taught the Procedure stated:

Yatah Pravruttur bhutaanaam yasmin Sarvamidam Jagat,

Sa Vishnuh Sarva Bhutaatma tamaashritya vimuchyatey/

Swavarnaashraya dharmenam Pujyeyam Purushottamah,

Akaamahata bhavena samaaraadhyo na chaanyataa/

(Since Vishnu is the Soul of all the Beings in the World and as they are governed by him and his kindness, every Being must worship him as required by their Ashrama Dharmaas but not with any ulterior motive). As the Sage clarified that worship to Vishnu was not to seek motives but as an obligation required by Varaashrama Dharma. Jayadhwaja and the brothers all reached home and performed 'nishkaama'puja to Vishnu and Prameshwara alike and subsequently executed a thanks-giving Yagna under the auspices of Vasishtha and Rudrabhaktas besides Maharshis Gautama, Atri and Agastya for Loka Kalyaana or Universal Peace and auspiciousness.

' Krishnaavatara', Krishna's worship to Shiva, Vishnu-Shiva identity and Shiva Linga Mahima (Krishna's warning not to belittle Shiva and Vyasa Stuti of Shiva included)

Maharshi Bhrigu gave a 'Shaap' (Curse) to Madhava Vishnu to take to human birth as Vaasudeva the son of Vasudeva and Devaki by birth at Mathura in imprisonment by King Kamsa and as Krishna the son of Nanda and Yashoda by upbringing; Vishnu was inattentive when the Rishi called on the latter and hence the curse. The embriyo of the seventh son of Devaki's garbha was transferred to that of Rohini's garbha by Vishnu Maya and it was believed that Balarama or Sankarshana was the son of Rohini; simultaneously it was believed that the seventh garbha of Devaki was a miscarriage. The eighth son of Vasudeva and

Devaki, being Vishnu himself, was transferred by his father across the River Yamuna in rain from Mathura to Gokula into the unconscious bed of Yashoda who deliverd a female child viz. Kaushiki Devi; Vasudeva exchanged Vaasudeva to Yashoda and brought Maya to Devaki. As King Kamsa tried to lift the previous children of Devaki-Vasudeva and banged the heads of the babies against the prison walls, he desired to repeat the acts, but Kaushiki Maya flew away to skies and warned Kamsa that Vishnu or his Avatara Krishna was already born safe elsewhere and it was not far that the cruel Kamsa would soon meet his fate in death. Krishna displayed several Leelas or Miracle Acts along with Bala Rama, including the killings of Putana, Shakatasura, Dhenukaasura and other Demons; relieving the curses of Gandharva boys turned into huge trees as Yashoda tied to a huge stone in between them; providing vision of the entire Universe to Yashoda on the excuse of opening his mouth for eating sand and taking her into trance; subduing the poisonous Kaliya Snake in Kalindi lake; lifting Govardhana Mountain to provide shelter to the Gopa Prajas or the Inhabitants of the Area against cyclone and taught a lesson to Indra who demanded worship from the villagers; teasing Gopika maids by smearing butter and curds on their cheeks; enchanting Gopikas with his heavenly music of flute into bliss to the extent of engaging them into 'Raas Leelaas' or group dances; killing Kamsa, Sishupala and several vicious and cruel Kings for establishing peace and social security; transferring the inhabitants of Mathura overnight to Dwaraka Nagari for safety and enjoyment and finally playing an outstanding role as the key figure in the Maha Bharata Battle in uprooting evil forces and protecting the Virtuous climaxing with the projection of his Vishva Swarupa and Gitaa Pravachana with the unique message viz.

Yadaa yadaahi dharmasya glaanir bhavati Bharata,

Adhyuddhaanam Adharmasya Sambhavaami Yugey/

Krishna's worship to Maha Deva: Shri Krishna had Eight Principal Wives viz. Rukmini, Satyabhama, Jambavati, Nagnajiti, Mitravinda, Lakshmana, Kalindi and Maadri, but accepted sixteen thousand maidens released from the prisons of Narakaasura whom he decimated. Rukmini had eight sons viz. Charudeshna, Suchaaru, Chaaruvesha, Yashodhara, Chaarushrava, Charuyasha, Pradyumna and Shankha. Similarly other wives had several sons. But Devi Jambavati longed to get an exemplary Son like Indra and on realising this wish decided to perform Parama Tapasya to Parama Shiva and left for the Ashram of Maharshi Upamanyu on the banks of Ganges. The Maharshi wondered that Shri Krishna himself was an Avatara of Vishnu and as to why did Krishna seek to have a darshan of Mahadeva! Krishna expressed his determination to vision Shiva and Devi Parvati in person and the Maharshi explained the regulations involved in Shiva Tapasya like bhasma dharana, shaven head, Valka dharana or wearing stiff clothes, high concentration and Rudra Japa. The Maharshi cited examples of Vasishta, Krishna Dwipaayana Vyasa, Maha Yogi Yaginyvalka and Bhrigu who succeeded in securing the Darshana of Shiva-Parvati after performing 'Nidaana Rupa Tapasya' or Paraakashtha / Sarvottama Yoga. Following the rules very strictly, Krishna followed the 'Upadesha' or the teachings and instructions of Upamanyu such as Paashupata Yoga, Paashupata Vrata and Paashupata Jnaana and incessantly recited Rudra Mantras with strict adherence of the formal and required form of worship to Mahadeva. After considerable effort, Shri Krishna visioned Maha Deva and Devi Parvati on the Sky as follows:

Kireetinam gadinam chitramaalam Pinaakinam Shulinam Devadevam,

Shaardula charmaambara samvrutaangam Devyaa Mahaadevamasou dadarsha/

Paraswadhaasakta karam Trinetram Nrisimha charmaavrita sarva gaatram,

Samudgirantam Pranavam brihantam Sahasra Surya pratimam dadarsha/

Prabhum Puraanam Purusham Purastaat Sanaatanam Yoginameeshitaaram,

Anorineeyamsamananta Shaktim Praaneswaram Shambhumasou dadarsha/

Na yasya Devaa na Pitaamahopi nendro na chaagnir -varuno na Mrityuh,

Prabhaavamadyaapi Vadanti Rudram Tamaadi Devam Puruto dadarsha/

Tadaanvapashyad Girishasya Vaame Swaatmaanmavyakta manantarupam,

Stuvantameesham Bahubhirvachobhihi Shankhaasichakraarpita hastamaadyam/

Kritaanjalim Dakshinatah Suresham Hamsaadhirudham Purusham dadarsha,

Stuvantameeshasya Param Prabhaavam Pitaamaham Lokagurum Divistham/

Ganeswaraanarka sahasra kalpaan Nandeeswaraadeenamita Prabhaavaan,

Triloka bhartruh Puratonwapashtat Kumaaramagni pratimam sashaakham/

Marichamatrim Pulaham Pulastham Prachertasam Dakshamathaapi Kanvam,

Paraasharam tatparato Vasishtham Swayambhuvah chaapi Manum dadarsha/

(Shri Krishna visioned Parama Shiva wearing Mukuta/ Headgear,Gadaa / mace, Trishula, Pinaaka Dhanush / Pinaaka bow and Chitra-Vichitra/ multi-coloured garlands; he was attired with Simha Charma or Lion Skin; reciting Pranava; likened to thousands of Suryaas; and Trilochana or of Three Eyes. Krishna also viewed before him that Purana Purusha, Sanaatana, Yogeswara, the Tiniest like atom, with Endless Shakti /Energy, viz. Shambhu. Krishna visioned that Parama Shiva who could not be comprehened by Devataas, Pitamaha Brahma, Indra, Agni, Varuna and Yama till date. Krishna saw Maha Deva along with Vishnu along with Shankha-Asi or Sword and Chakra on his left side in position even as the latter was known as Atma Swarupa-Avyakta- Ananta and Adi Deva and the latter was engaged in continuous commendation of Maha Deva! To Shankara's eastern side was seated Brahma glorifying Parama Shiva, while facing the latter were Ganeshwara, Nandeswara and Kartikeya. Behind Shiva were the famed ones like Marichi, Atri, Pulaha, Pulastya, Pracheta, Daksha, Kanva, Parashara, Vasishtha and Swayambhu Manu). Thus Krishna had a full 'darshan' Shiva accompanied by Parvati, Shri Krishna applauded him as follows:

Namostu tey Shashwata Sarvayoney Brahmaadhipam,

Twaamrushayo vadanti,

Tapascha Satwam cha Rajastamascha Twaameva Sarvam pravadanti Santah/

Twam Brahmaa Hariratha Vishwayoniragnih Samhartaa Dinakara mamdalaadhivaasah,

Praanastwam Hutavaha Vaasavaadi bhedastwaamekam sharanamupaimi Devameesham/

Saamkhyaastwaam Vigunamathaahureka rupam Yogastwaam satatamupaasatey hrudistham,

Vedaastwaamabhidadhateeh Rudramagnim twaamekam sharanamu- paimi Devameesham/

Twatpaadey kusumamathaapi patramekam Dattvaasou bhavati Vimukta Vishwa bandhah,

Sarvaagham pranudati Siddhayogijushtam Smrutwaa tey padayugalam bhavatprasaadaat/

(My salutations to You Shaaswata! Sarva Mula Kaarana or the Root Cause of the Totality; Rishis affirm that you are the Master of Brahma; they assert that you are the Spring of the Three Gunas of Satwa-Rajasa-Tamasas; indeed you are the one residing in all the Lokas of Brahma, Vishnu, Vishwayoni, Agni, Samharta and also in Surya Mandala; You are the varied Forms of Praana, Hutavaha or Agni, Indra and all other Devaas; I have arrived into the shelter of Maha Deva; Saankhya Shastra Vedis extol you as the Singular and Gunaateeta Entity beyond Gunas and Maha Yogis are in constant search for you and perform 'Upasana'; Vedas commend you as Rudra and Agni. Mahadeva! I seek indulgence and support! Human Beings place a flower or even a Bilwa Patra on your feet and you oblige them to get rid of the Shackles of Samsara! When Siddhaas and Yogis think of your sanctified feet sincerely, you are merciful to smash the burden of their sins!)

Yasyaseshavibhaaga- heenamamalam hridyantaraavasthitam

Tatwam Jyotiranantamekamachalam Satyam Param Sarvagam,

Sthaanam praahuranaadi madhyanidhanam yasmaadidam jaayatey

Nityam twaahu –mupaimi Satyavibhavam Vishweswaram tam Shivam/

Om Namo Nilakanthaaya Trinetraaya cha ramhasey,

Maha Devaaya tey nityameeshaanaaya Namo namah/

Namah Pinaakiney tubhyam namo Mundaaya Dandiney,

Namastey Vajrahastaaya Digvastraaya Kapardiney/

Namo Bhairava naadaay Kaalarupaaya damshtriney,

Naaga Yagnopaveetaaya Namastey Vahniretasey/

Namostutey Gireeshaaya Swaahaakaaraaya tey namah,

Namo Muktaattahaasaaya Bheemaaya cha namo namah/

Namastey Kaamanaashaaya namah Kaalapramaathiney,

Namo Bhairava Veshaayaa Haraaya cha Nishanginey/

Namostutey Traimbakaaya Namastey Kritthivaasasey,

Namombikaadhi pataye Pashunaam Pataye namah/

(I seek shelter unto the truthfully glorified Vishweshwara Shiva, whom Tatwajnas worship as he is Indivisible, Transparent, Existent in one's interiors of heart, Luminous, Infinite, Unique, Stable, Truthful, All-Pervasive displayer of Beginning-Central-Terminating points of Life. My sincere salutations to you Pranava Swarupa, Nilakantha, Trilochana, Shakti Rupa, Maha Deva, Ishaana, Pinaaka dhanush dhaari, Munda-Danda Dhaarana, Vajra hasta dhaarana, Digvastra, Kapardini or Jataadhaari with Matted Locks; Bhairava naada, Kaala Swarupa; Naagayajnopaveeta dhari (He who wears Serpents as the Holy Thread); Agni samaana veerya nidhana (He whose semen is like Fire); Gireesha; Swaahaakaara or of the Swarupa of Offerings to Agni in Homas; Mukta -atthahaasa or He whose maddening voice reverberates; Bheema rupa; Kaamanaasha or the Destroyer of Lust; Kaala Pramathiney or He is capable of churning Mrityu Devata; Bhairava Vesha; Hara; Nishanginey or he who carries sword and bow- arrows; Triabikaaya or Three-Eyed; Kruttivaasa or Wearer of Elephant Skin; Ambikaadhipataye or the husband of Devi Ambika; Pashupati or the Supreme Chief of Beings).

Namastey Vyomarupaaya Vyomaadhipataye namah,

Nara naari shareeraaya Saankhya Yoga Pravartivey/

Namo Deva Naathaaya Devaanugatalinginey,

Kumaara guravey tubhyam Devadevaaya tey namah/

Namo Yagnaadhipataye Namastey Brahmachaariney,

Mrigavyaadhaaya mahetey Brahmaadhipataye namah/

Namo Hamsaaya Vishwaaya Mohanaaya namo namah,

Yoginey Yoga gamyaaya Yogamayaaya tey namah/

Namastey Praana Paalaaya Ghantaanaada priyaaya cha,

Kapaaliney namastubhyam jyotishaam pataye namah/

Namo namo namastubhyam bhuya eva namo namah,

Mahyam sarvaatmanaa Kaamaan prayachha Parameshwara/

(Namastey Akaasharupa! Akaashaadhipati! Artha Naareeshwara, Practitioner of Saankhya Yoga, Devanaatha, Shiva Linga that is worshipped by Devas always; the Guru of Kumara Skanda; Devadeva! My greetings to you Yagnaadhipati! Brahmachariney; Maha Mriga Vyaadha or hunter; Mahatey; Brahmaadhipataye; Hamsa Swarupa; Vishwa Mohana! You are the Yogi; Yoga gamya; Yoga Maya; Praana Paalaka; Ghanta naada priya or He who likes the sound of bells; Kapaalini; Jyotisha or Nakshatra Pati; Sarva Kaama Pradaata, Parameshwara; my repeated salutations to you again and again!)

Shri Krishna eulogised Parameswara and fell on the feet of Shiva-Parvatis. As a gladdened Parvati was enjoying Krishna's visit, Parama Shiva embraced Krishna and said: Krishna! You are indeed the bestower

of wishes to one and all yourself! Krishna smiled and said that they knew indeed whatever he approached them for; but the boon that he sought was to bless him to secure a son as renowned as Maha Deva himself! As both Shiva and Parvati granted the wish, Shri Krishna visitited Kailasha for enjoyment and rerturned to Dwaraka. On his rerturn, Maharshi Markandeya arrived at Dwaraka and together they did the 'Pratishtha'(installation) of a Shiva Linga and formal worship of the Shiva Linga. Consequent to Shiva Darshana, Krishna was blessed with the birth of Saambu from Devi Jambavati.

Krishna-Shiva's Identity: Maharshi Markandeya wondered as to why Krishna who himself was worshipworthy and granted boons to his devotees, Krishna replied smilingly:

Bhavataa kathitam sarvam tathyameva na samshayaha,

Tathaapi Devameeshaanaam Pujayaami Sanaatanam/

Na mey vipraasti kartavyam naanavaaptam kathanchana,

Pujayaami tathaapeesham jaanannetat Param Shivam/

Na vai pashyanti tam Devam Maayayaa mohitaa janaah,

Tatoham swaatmano mulam jaapayanj pujayaami tam/

Na cha Lingaarchanaat Punyam Lokesmin bheetinaashanam,

Tathaa Linge hitaaaishaam lokaanaam Pujayecchivam/

Yoham tallingamityaahur Vedavaada vido janaah,

Tatohamaatma meeshaanam Puja- yaamyaatmanaiva tu/

Tasyaiva Paramaa Murtistanmayoham na samshayah,

Naavayorvidyatey bhedo Vedeyshvevam vinischayah/

Yesha Devo Mahaadevah sadaa samsaara bheerubhih,

Dhyeyaha Pujascha Vandyascha Jneyo Lingey Maheshwarah/

(Markandeya! Whatever you said is in order and the Truth is that I am worship-worthy by others; but still I worship Ishaana; there is nothing that I cannot achieve a thing, nor is unavailable to me; yet I am aware that I perform Puja to Parama Shiva. Those who are unable to overcome Maya or Illusion could never achieve Shiva Darshana; but I do realise that my foundation is Shiva and hence I always worship Him. There is no better Punya Phala nor fearlessness than what the Sacred Task of Lingaarchana would confer and for accomplishing propitiousness human beings must resort to Shiva Puja, Shri Krishna affirms. Those who realise and experience Vedic Siddhaantaas (Principles) do recognise that Shiva Linga is my own Swarupa and that is precisely why I perform my own worship of the Atma Swarupa of Ishana, says Krishna. He further confirms: I am Shankara's Parama Murti and I am Shankara myself without doubt.

Vedas have emphasised that there is no difference whatsoever and Krishna and Shiva are just the same. This is the reason why that one should instal Shiva Linga all over!)

Shiva Linga Mahatmya: Maharshi Markandeya heard the account of Shri Krishna as above signify-ing the Identity of Krishna / Vishnu and of Shiva and sought to comprehend the significance of the Shiva-Linga. Then Shri Krishna explained that at the time of Pralaya or Total Devastation, the Universe was totally submerged in 'Ekarnava' or a single sheet of Samudra Jala / Ocean Water and he as Narayana was lying floated in the midst of the Water with Shankha-Chakra-Gada and other Armaments along with thousands of heads, eyes, feet and hands. Meanwhile, he saw a Chaturmukha (Four-Headed) Brahma reciting the Chatur Vedas of Rig-Yajur-Saama-Atharva who shone like thousand Suns with Golden Colour and approached Vishnu stating that he was the Swayambhu or Self- Generated Brahma the Creator and questioned Vishnu as to who was he! Vishnu replied that he was Supreme Creator-Preserver-Destroyer of the Universe each time there was a Pralaya repeated. As there was some seemingly overlap of functions, Brahma argued and sought to establish his seniority over Vishnu. A huge, lustrous and fiery Linga emerged on its own while mutual arguments were on and the Linga seemed to have neither an end nor beginning. They consented that Brahma should travel up the Linga to ascertain its height and Vishnu should seek the bottom but finally meet at the same place after finding the height and depth. For thousands of years passed by but they could not succeed in the task and having returned to the same place prayed to the Linga Swarupa as follows:

Anaadi malasamsaara roga vaidyaaya Shambhavey,

Namah Shivaayha Shaantaaya Brahmaney Linga Muturtaye/

Pralayaarnava Samsthaaya Pralayodbhuti hetavey,

Namah Shivaaya Shaantaaya Brahmaney Linga Murthaye/

Jwaalaamaalaavritaangaaya Jwalanastambha rupiney,

Namah Shivaaya Shaattaaya Brahmanmey Linga Murtaye/

Aadi madhyaanta heenaaya Swabhaavaamala deeptaye,

Nama Shivaaya Shaantaaya Brahmaney Linga Murtaye/

Mahaadevaaya Mahatey Jyotishenanta tejasey,

Namah Shivaaya Shaantaaya Brahmaney Linga Murtaye/

Nirvikaaraaya Satyaaya Nityaayhaamala tejasey,

Namah Shivaaya Shaantaaya Brahmaney Linga Murtaye/

Vedaanta saara rupaaya Kaalarupaaya Dheematey,

Namah Shivaaya Shaantaaya Brahmaney Linga Murtaye/

(You are indeed free from various vikaaras or imbalances and stressful conditions, we salute you Shambhu, Shiva, Shanta and Linga Murti Parabrahma! You are the cause of Pralaya and the totality of water that submerged the Universe; we salute to you Shambu, Shiva, Shanta and Linga Murti Para Brahma! You are of the Physique engulfed with huge garlands of flames as an Unknown Entity in the form of a Pillar; we salute you Shambhu, Shiva, Shanta and Linga Murti Para Brahma! You are featureless, radiant and transparent without beginning-centre-end; we salute you Shambhu, Shiva, Shanta and Linga Murti Para Brahma! You are Maha Deva, Mahaan, Jyoti Swarupa and Ananta Tejaswi; we salute to you Shambhu, Shiva, Shanta and Linga Murti Para Brahma! You are the Pradhana Purusha, Eshwara, Vyoma / Sky Swarupa, Vedha / Brahma; we salute you Shambhu, Shiva, Shanta and Linga Murti Para Brahma! You are Nirvikaara, Satya, Nitya, Vimala Tejo Rupa; we salute you Shambhu, Shiva, Shanta and Linga Murti Parabrahma! You are the Vedanta Saara or the Essence of Vedanta, Kaala Rupa and Dheeman; we salute you Shambhu, Shiva, Shanta and Linga Murti Para Brahma!) As Vishnu and Brahma extolled the Parabrahma as above, Maha Yogi Parameshwara appeared before them with thousand crores of Faces and with unparalleled illumination and heat likened to crores of Suryaas; he has thousands of hands, feet, Trinetras signifying Surya-Chandra-Agni, carrying Pinaka Dhanush and Trishula; wearing Charmaabara and Sarpa Yagnopaveeta; his voice was like thunderous clouds and addressed Vishnu and Brahma as follows:

Yuvaam prasutau gaatrebhyo mama Purvam Sanaatanou,

Ayam meyDakshiney Paarshvey Brahmaa Loka Pitaamahah,

Vaama Parshvey cha mey Vishnuh Paalako Hridaye Harah/

(Maha Deva stated that in the Past, Brahma was born from my right side and Vishnu emerged from the left and Hara was situated in my heart). Maha Deva further stated:

Pralahyasthitisargaanaam Kartaa twam Dharanipatey,

Vatsa Vatsa Harey Vishvam Paalayaitaccharaacharam/

Tridhaa Bhinnousmyaham Vishno Brahmavishnu Haraakhyayaa,

Sarga rakshaa Laya gunairnirgunopi Niranjanah/

(Dharanipati Vatsa Hari! You will be in over-all charge of Srishti-aalana-Pralaya and specifilally for Vishwa Paalana. I shall be the Nirguna Niranjana and at the same time would be divided into Three Rupas as Brahma-Vishnu-Hara). This was how Shri Krishna gave the Origin of Shiva Linga which came to be worshipped all over. Having stated the above, Shri Krishna cautioned all the Narayana Bhaktaas saying:

Paraat parataram yaanti Naraayana paraayanaah,

Na tey tatra gamishyanti ye dwishanti Maheswaram/

Dhyaanam homam Tapastaptam Jnaanam Yajnaadiko vidhih,

Teshaam Vinasyanti Kshipram ye nindanti Pinaakinam/

Yo maam samaashrayetrityamekaantam bhava- maashritah,

Vinindya Devameeshaanam sa yaanti narakaayutam/

Tasmaat saa Parihartavyaa nindaa Pashupatou Dwijaah,

Karmanaa Manasaa Vaachaa tadbhakteyshwapi yatnatah/

(Surely Narayana bhaktaas should be able to attain excellent Places of Mukti, but who ever think of Maheshwara with dislike would never ever reach any where! Those who keep hatred against and find fault with Shiva would be instantly be negated of their endeavours for Vishnu and their dhyaana, homa, Tapas and Yagnaadi Karyaas would be wasted in futility. What is worse, those who possess negative feelings for Mahadeva should be punished for thousand years of Naraka experiences. My warning to you Dwijaas therefore, Pashupati bhakti must always be retained by way of Karmanaa-Manasaa-Vaachaa means or by way of deeds-thoughts and speech in favour of Maha Deva!)

Veda Vyasa Stuti to Maha Deva: While describing the rampant evils during Kali Yuga when human beings underwent multiple changes in terms of Varna Sankarana, dwindling standards of Dharma and predominance of Vices, Veda Vyasa advised Arjuna to spread the message of resorting to the singular and sincere Shiva Puja to fulfill their desires and destroy their innumerable sins in their lives:

Evam Vidho Kali Yugey doshaanaamekashodhanam,

Mahadeva Namaskaaro Dhyaanam Daanamiti Shrutih/

Tasmaadaneeshwaraananyaan tyaktwaa Devam Maheswaram,

Samaashrayed Virupaaksham yadeecchet Paramam Padam/

Naarchayanteeha ye Rudram Shivam Tridashaavanditam,

Teshaam daanam Tapo Yajno Vridhaa Jeevitameyvacha/

(To demolish the blemishes and turpitudes of Kali Yuga, human beings have a singular solution to salute, meditate and perform worship and charities in the name of Maha Deva as affirmed in Vedas; hence, those determined to attain 'Parama Pada' would worship Maha Deva only and maximise the effect of the virtuous deeds like Daana-Tapa-and Yajnas). In this context, Veda Vyasa Maharshi recited the following Commendation to Parama Shiva:

Namo Rudraaya Mahatey Deva Devaaya Shuliney,

Traimbikaaya Trinetraaya Yoginaam Guravey Namah/

Namostu Vaamadevaaya Mahaadevaaya Vedhasey,

Shambhavey Sthaanavey nityam Shivaaya Parameshthiney,

Namah Somaaya Rudraaya Mahaagraasaaya Hetavey/

Prapadeyham Virupaaksham Sharanyam Brahmachaarinam,

Mahaa Devam Mahaayogameeshaanam chaambikaa –patim/

Yoginaam Yogadaataaram Yogamaayaa samaavritam,

Yoginaam Gurumaachaaryam Yogigamyam Pinaakinam/

Samsaara taaranam Rudram Brahmaanam Brahmanodhipam,

Shaaswatam Sarvagam Shaantam Brahmanyam Braahmanapriyam/

Kapardinam Kaala Murti- mamrutim Parameshwaram,

Eha Murtim Mahaa Murtim Vedavedyam Divaspatim/

Neela kantham Vishwamurtim Vyaapinam Vishwaretasam,

Kaalaagnim Kaala dahanam Kaamadam Kaama naashanam/

Namsye Gireesham Devam Chandraavayava bhushanamn,

Vilohitam Lelmaanama –adityam Paramshthinam,

*Ugram Pashupatam Bheemam Bhaskaram Tamasah param/* 

(My 'namaskaraas' to Trishuladhaari Rudra! You are Traimbaka, Trilochana, and Yoga Guru; You are Mahadeva, Vedhaa, Vaama Deva, Shambhu, Sthaanu, Parameshti and Shiva! My salutations to you Soma, Rudra, Mahagraasa or he who absorbed the whole 'Prapancha' into himself at the time of Pralaya and Kaarana Rupa or the Form of the Root Cause. I seek shelter from Virupaaksha worthy of refuge; Bramachari; Maha Yoga Swarupa, Ishaana and Ambikaapati. I seek asylum from Yoga Pradaana or the Maha Yogi who provides Yoga, the Yoga Guru, Yoga Gamya or the Destination to Yogis; I seek sanctuary from Samsaara Taarana or the Breaker of Worldly Shackles; You are Rudra, Brahma, Brahmaadhipati, Shaswata, Sarva Vyapi, Shanta, Brahmana Rakshaka, Brahmana Priya, Jataadhaari, Kala Murti, Amurti or Formless; Eka Murti, Maha Murti, Veda Vedya, Dyuloka Swami, Nila Kantha, Vishwa Murti, Sarva Vyapi, Vishwa reta or the one whose virility created the Universe; Kaalaagni Rupa, Kaala dahana or who put Kaala to flames; Kaama Prada, Kaama Naashaka, Chandra bhushana, Raktavarna, Graasa, Aditya, Ugra, Pashupati, Bheema, Bhaskara, Paresha and Parameshti!).

Having extolled Maha Deva thus, Veda Vyasa taught the formal Shiva worship to Arjuna of Pandavaas. Arjuna practised the worship with great sincerity and became invincible in the context of the Great Battle of Maha Bharatha. As he continued his devotion thus, Maha Deva put Arjuna to test by assuming the Swarupa of a hunter of a Boar; when the arrows of Arjuna and Maha Deva in disguise hit the boar simultaneously, Arjuna entered into an argument with the Hunter in disuguise followed by real fight with Maheswara and after testing Arjuna's capability revealed himself and blessed Arjuna with Pashupataastra Vidya. As he was fortified himself with Passupada Vidya, Arjuna fought with great confidence and became a renowned hero of Maha Bharata Battle, with the unique support of Shri Krishna and the blessings of Maha Deva.

Varanasi Mahatmya: Krittivaasa, Kapardesha, Omkaaresha, Madhyesha & Vishweshwara

Suta Maha Muni quoted Veda Vyasa's reported conversation between Devi Parvati and Maheswara about the significance of Varanasi or Avimukta Kshetra, where Maha Deva was stated to have assumed Kaala Swarupa and intiated Samsara Samhara or the Universal Destruction at the time of Maha Pralaya. Parama Shiva affirmed that this was his most beloved Kshetra and the devotees worshipping there with Ganga Snaana, Daana, Japa, Yajna, Tapas, Karma, Dhyana, Adhyayana of Scriptures and Jnaanaarjana or Earning of Jnaana would have multiplier effects; those who enter the Kshetra would have their thousands of past and current sins destroyed while by chance they die at the Place-be they Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, others, women, Mlecchaas, or any other species like animals, repliles, birds and even Krimi/ Keetaas- would instantly assume Shiva Swarupas and attain Kailasa:

Naavimukey Mritaha kaschinnarakam kilimbishi,

Ishwaraanugraheetahi Sarvey yaanti Paramam Gatim/

Moksham sudurlabham matvaa Samsaaram chaati bheeshanam,

Ashmanaa charanou hatwaa Vaaranaasyaam vasennarah/

(Those extreme and confirmed sinners who die at Varanasi would certainly not visit Narakaas and by the grace of Ishwara would secure 'Parama Gati'. That should be the reason that human beings might even break their feet with stones but still prefer reside at Varanasi). Those who suffer hurdles and difficulties but still prefer to stay at Varanasi would indeed never regret as they were sure of permanent bliss instead of shirking passing troubles. Indeed there are countless Sacred Tirthaas in Bharata Desha such as Prayaga, Naimishaaranya, Shrishaila, Kedara, Bhadrakarna, Gaya, Pushkara, Kurukshetra, Rudrakoti, Narmada, Amraatakeshwara, Shaaligraama, Kubjaagra, Prabhasa, Vijayeshaana, Gokarna and Bhadrakarna and so on and their Mahima too was of consequence, but those bhaktas who attain the Punya by dying at Varanasi were stated to be of unparalleled impact. Bathing in Ganga which was called 'Tripatha Gaamini' or the Holy River that travelled in Triloklas of Swarga-Bhumi-Pataalaas has unique signficance as it washes of the blemishes of thousands of births. The presence of Ganga, the superiority of Maha Deva's residence there and the combined effect of Shraaddha, Daana, Tapa, Japa and Vrata woud indeed make the stay of Bhaktas the most important event ever and also the easiest in terms of effort. This Kshetra is called Avimukta as it should be never left away nor deserted; it provides Brahma Gyaan and those who die there are provided the 'Upadesha' or Instruction of Tataka Brahma by Maha Deva Himself!

Yat tat parataram Tatwamaviktamiti shrutam,

Ekena Janmanaa Devi! Vaaranaasyaam tadaapnuyaat/

(That Paraatara Tatwa as instructed to the persons on death bed is called 'Avimukta' and that Upadesha might indeed be possible in a single life itself!)

Varanasi Kshetra is basically in between the two Rivers called 'Varuna' and 'Asi'. The Kshetra is famed for Five Sacred Lingas viz. Krittivaaseshwara, Madhyameshwara, Vishweshwara, Omkaareshwara and Kapardeshwara. Veda Vyaasa showed the Five Lingas to his disciples and explained to them of their significance:

Krittivaasa Linga was signified as a Daitya who assumed the Form of an Elephant used to kill Brahmana devotees in meditation of Shiva and the latter killed the elephant and sported the wearing of the elephant skin and hence the name of Krittivaaseshwara. The Mahtmya of Kapardeeshwara Linga or Shiva of Matted Locks was explained by Vyaasa to his students: Once a Tiger chased a deer-kid and killed it in the presence of Kapardeshwara Linga and most surprisingly the killed deer-kid was received by a Shiva-like Purusha and Gandharvas sang melodies and rained flowers on it!

Vyasa said that those who performed Kapardeswara Lingaarchana after taking bath in a Pishacha Sarovara would be blessed by Maha Deva at once and narrated the legend of a Learned and Virtuous Brahmana named Shankhukarna who was always engaged in Shiva Linga Puja with high earnestness. One day, he saw a Piscacha swooning with hunger and thirst approached him crying as it was unable to withstand its pitiable condition. Shankhukarna asked the Piscacha about his background and the latter revealed that he too was a Brahmana but he never performed any worship nor Atithi (Guest) Puja and not even a small good turn excepting looking after himself and his family. Only once he came across a Shiva Linga, touched it and greeted it with sincerity and almost at the same time died suddenly; the 'Yama dutaas'arrived but converted him as a Piscacha and eversince then was wandering with extreme hunger and thirst! Shankhukarna heard the story and appreciated that atleast once the Piscacha before his death visioned touched and greeted a Shiva Linga as he died and became a Piscacha! That occurrence was significant enough and asked to take bath in a Pond near the Kapardeshwara Linga; as the Pischa took bath as advised by sincerely praying to Mahadeva and instantly the Piscacha fell and a Celestial Form emerged and flew up in a 'Vimana'as Gandharvas and Apsaras welcomed him into it! Shankukarna witnessed the happening about the Piscacha and could not resist the recitation of a long Prayer to Kapardi which began and ended as follows:

Kapardinam twaam Paratah Parastaad Goptaaramekam Purusham Puraanam,

Vrajaami Yogeshwara meeshitaaramaadityamagnim Kapilaadhirudham/

Vrajaami nityam sharanam Guhesham Sthaanum prapadye Girisham Puraarim,

Shivam Prapadye Haramindumoulim Pinaakinam twaam sharanam vrajaami/

(I seek 'sharanam'or sanctuaryto you Paratara, Paraatpara, Adwiteeya, Sarva Rakshaka, Purana Purusha, Yogeshwara, Niyamaka, Aditya, Agni Swarupa, Vrishabha Vaahana!- I crave for the protection of Shaanu Swarupa, Guhesha or Buddhi Incarnate, Gireesha, Chandramouli Hara, Shiva, Pinaakidhara!). As Shankukarna's Stuti ended, he fell down unconscious and Kapardi Swami appeared before him and absorbed in his fold!

Omkareshwara Linga Mahima was explained by Veda Vyasa to his sishyas that even by pronouncing its name, massive sins get crunched. Maha Vidwaans who comprehended the purport of Jnaana realised that Pashupati was an embodiment of 'Panchaartha'viz. Ateeta Shanti or Supreme Bliss, Shanti or Harmony and Amity, High degree of Vidya or Knowledge, Pratishtha or Utmost Reputation and Nivruitti or Detachment or Path of Liberation; all these Five Essentials were derivated from Omkara Swarupa as the composite Form of the Panchayatana Rupa of Maha Deva; a devotee who had the comprehension of the Omkara Swarupa at the Time of his / her termination would enter into that Territory of Effulgence and through it would get absorbed into Parameshwara. That indeed was the most powerful worship possible to Omkareshwara, stated Veda Vyasa. Devarshis, Brahmarshis and Maha Siddhaas do realise the scope, depth and intensity of worshipping Omkareshwara as a part of 'Nyasa' or Unification of the Self and the Supreme!

Veda Vyasa and his pupils visited Madhyameshwara Linga on the banks of River Mandakini an extension of Ganga and some of the very keen devotees of Madhyamesha enquired about Veda Vyaasa and the latter's followers introduced their Guru as Krishna Dwaipaayana Vyaasa of the 'Amsha' of Narayana himself and the regular devotees of the Linga extended their courtesies to Vyasa. It was learnt that in the past Shri Krishna performed Paashupata Vrata to this very Linga and stayed there for a year by shaving his head, applying ash and wearing Rudraksha Malaas and finally had Shambhu's darshan and secured boons. Even one time worship to Madhyeshwara in one's lifetime after taking bath in Mandakini, daana, tapas, shraaddha and Pindadaana to Pitras would annul life time sins of even Brahmahatya nature, said Vyasa. He affirmed that Mandakini snaana and worship to Madhyameshwara would yield ten times bigger fruits than that of Kurukshetra at the time of Solar Eclipse.

While referring to Varanashi Kshetra Mahima, Veda Vyasa enlightened his followers about several Punya Tirthas attached to the banks of Ganga such as Vishwarupa Tirtha, Taala Tirtha, Akaasha Tirtha, Gauri Tirtha, Prajapatya Tirtha, Swarga Dwaara, Jambukeshwara, Jnaana Tirtha, Yama Titha, Agni Tirtha and so on and finally reached Brahma Tirtha. It is believed that once Brahma brought a Linga and went to have his bath and meanwhile Vishnu installed it and told Brahma that he had greater faith in Rudra Deva than Brahma but however the Linga would be known to have been installed at Brahma Tirtha. Having further visited quite a few other Tirthas, Vyasa finally had his bath along with his sishyas and performed Vishweshwara Linga Puja; he settled down at Varanasi for some time and asked his sishyas to settle down at their will. Mahatma Vyasa then stayed there by performing Rudraabhishekaas thrice a day while taking food from his 'bhiksha' or charity. One day, he could not secure the bhiksha and a furious Vyasa threatened that he would curse to the inhabitants of Varanasi to create 'Vighnas' or obstacles and Devi Parvati appeared and requested Vyasa not to curse but take food from herself instead. Having given the bhiksha, Devi asked Vyasa not to stay in Varanasi further since he was short tempered; Vyasa apologised and requested her to let him visit the Place only on Chaturthis and Ashtamis and Devi agreed accordingly.

Suta Maha Muni gave Phala Shruti of about the Mahatmya of Varanasi as follows: as follows:

Yah pathedavimuktasya Mahatmyam Shrunuyaadapi,

Shravayeda vaa Dwijaan Shaantaan sopi yaati paraam gatim/

Shraaddevaa Dauvikey Kaarye Raatraavahani vaa Dwijaah,

Nadeenaam chaiva Teereshu Devataanataneshu cha/

Snaatwaa Samaahita manaa damhamaatsraya varjitah,

Japedisham Namaskrutya sa yaati Paramaam Gatim/

(Whoever would read, hear or narrate about the Avimuta or Vaaranasi Kshetra would definitely secure Maha Punya; if a person took bath and engaged in performing 'shraaddhaas', Deva Karyaas, either in the day or night, on the banks of Ganga or in Mandirs, freed from 'dambha'or self-pride or Matsara or narrow-mindedness, and meditate Maha Deva, would indeed secure 'Parama Gati').

Triveni Sangama (Prayaga) Mahatmya

On the conclusion of Maha Bharata Battle at Kurukhsherta, Yuddishtara was crowned as the King, but a huge feeling of remorse haunted him as he was responsible for the killings of close relatives like

grandfather-figures, Gurus, uncles, his own elder brother, first cousins and their sons apart from countless soldiers. He then expressed his wish to atone for the killings and requested Mahatma Markandeya to suggest the best way out perform 'Prayaschitta' or formal expiation as per Vedic course. Markandeya readily suggested Prayaga Tirtha Darshana for the purpose of penance and reparation. He stated that the Kshetra was protected against Evils by some sixty thousand Bows and Arrows in favour of Ganga and by Sabita Deva riding seven horses protecting River Yamuna while Devi Saraswati was flowing as 'Antarvaahini' or under ground-current at this famed Triveni Sanagamam or the Confluence of the Three Rivers of Ganga-Yamuna-Saraswati. Markandeya also affirmed that Indra Deva along with Devas stayed at the Prayaga Kshetra and Vishnu himself protected the Prayaga Mandali. Further, Maha Deva himself secured Parayaga and the 'Vata Vrikhsa' or the Banyan Tree on its River-Banks. Indeed, a person who might have committed even a minute sin was not eligible to Moksha but let alone him or her committing high proportion of sins could be qualified for Salvation instantly:

Prayaagam smaranaamasya Sarvamaayaati Sankshamam,

Darshanaat tasya Tirthasya naama samkirtinaadapi,

Mrittikaa labhanaad vaapi Narah Paapaat Pramuchyatey/

(Prayaga Smarana or the very thought of Prayaga would suffice to unleash sins; Prayaga Darshana, Naama Samkirtana, or even a touch of the dust of Prayaga would destroy serious sins. There are Five Kundaas in the Confluence of Prayaga and each one of them were excellent points of Purification. If by mischance, a human being were to suffer diseases, taken to the 'Triveni Sangama' and died there, then transportation of Sun-Radiant Like Vimanas to Parama Pada. Markandeya stated further that Pitru oriented or even Self-oriented deeds must be accompanied by charities in the intermediate place of Ganga and Yamuna and such charities would have multiplier effect. Charity of a Kapila Cow with golden or silver covered horns and with clothing all over its body would have the Punya of accomplishing Rudra loka for thousand years! Markandeya warned those reaching Prayaga by a Vrishabha as they would be liable to reach Narakas. But auspicious deeds like weddings in the intermediate region of Ganga and Yamuna Sangam would avoid Narakas and assure joy for long long time. A person performing Snaana and severe / difficult Vrataas at the Sangam would reap the benefit of Ashwamedha and Rajasuya Yagnaas. Along with the banks of Yamuna and Ganga are countless Tirthaas, each of which had a description to provide; for instance, Yamuna's southern side two Maha Nagas called Kambal and Ashwatara who were Parama Bhaktas of Maha Deva stayed and sacred snaanaas at that Tirtha would wash off Maha Paapas. On Ganga's eastern side there was a famed Sarva Saamudra Gahvara or Cave and those who could stay there for three days and nights observing Brahmacharya and mental control would secure Ashvamedha Yagna Punya. Another Tirtha named 'Hamsaprapatana' near Pratishthanapura and the belief was that Apsara Urvashi landed there by her Hamsa and bathing there would fetch Yagna Phala. Then there was a very Sacred Koti Tirtha where if a person died then he or she would spend Swarga Loka for a crore of years. Siddha Kshetra on Ganaga banks near Prayaga is reputed as the one which provided salvation to human beings on Earth, to those in Pataala Lokas and also to Devas in Higher Lokas, thus the Tirtha was reputed as Tripathaga. Maharshi Markandeya emphasised Sangama Snaana in Magha Month for three days as that would secure passage to Higher Lokas. Another revelation was that those who could perform 'Karishagni Seva' or Tapasya within a circle of flames of dried cow-dung at the Sangama Place would preserve his or her 'Sarvaangaas' in tact without any kind of illnesses through out their lives with physical fitness! Yet another Tirtha on the nothern side of River Yamuna called 'Runa Vimochana' or freedom from indedtedness.

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## ISHVARA GITA

Delineation of Atma Tatwa Swarupa (Guhya Jnaana)

Suta Maha Muni quoted Veda Vyasa to the Rishis at Naimisha Forest that 'Brahmavaadis' or those who cogitated about 'Brahma Gyana' or the Knowledge of Brahma like Sanat Kumara, Sanaka, Sanandana, Angira, Bhrigu, Kanaada, Kapila, Vaama Deva, Shukra and Vasishtha prayed to Narayana Maharshi at Badarikaashrama and the latter appeared along with Nara Maharshi. The Brahmavaadis requested Narayana Maharshi to answer certain queries which had not been replied satisfactorily in their comprehension such as to what was the 'raison d'tre' or the cause of Creation; which was the Shakti that scripted, sustained and decimated it; what precisely that Atma or Soul meant and what indeed was the 'Paramartha' or the Final Goal all about! On hearing this, Maharshi Narayana discarded the Form of a Tapaswi and assumed the distinct Swarupa of Vishnu with Four Hands and Ornamentation of Shankha-Chakra-Gadaa-Saaranga besides Srivatsa accompanied by Devi Lakshmi. Simultaneously, Maha Deva too appeared at the behest of Vishnu as both of them were seated comfortably and when Vaasudeva posed the same questions that the Maharshis gave, Maheswara provided replies while cautioning confidentialty of the explanations:

Atmaa yah Kevalah Swasthaha Shaantah Sukshmah Sanaatanah,

Asti Sarvaantaraha Saakshaa- cchinmaatrastamasah Parah/

Sontaryaami sa Purushaha sa Praanah sa Maheswaraha,

Sa Kaalogni-stadavyaktam sa Ye Vedamiti Shrutih/

Asmaad Vijaayatey Vishwamaschaiva pravileeyatey,

Sa maayi Maayaya baddhah karoti Vividhaastanuh/

(Vedas affirmed that 'Atma' or The Soul which was Unique or Singular, Vigorous, Wholesome, Tranquil, Tiny, Ancient, Intrinsic and beyond Tamo Guna was the Purusha, the Praana or Life and Maheshwara himself as also Agni, Kaala and the Unknown! This Samasara or the Universe was created by Parameshwara who also absorbed it into him; the Maha Maya which surrounded lesser layers of Maya created various Beings; indeed, the Pure Atma was not subject to changes nor features; it neither allowed transformation nor was prone to motivation).

Na chaapyam samsarati na cha Samsaarayet Prabhuh,

Naayam Prithi na Salilam na Tejah Pavano Nabhah/

Na Praano na Mano –Vyaktam Na shabdah sparsha yevacha,

Na Rupa rasaghandhaascha naaham Kartaa na Vaagapi/

Na Paani paadow no paayurna chopastham Dwijottamaah,

Na Kartaacha na Bhoktaa vaa nacha Prakritin Purushou,

Na Maayaa naiva cha Praanashchaitanyam Paramaarthathah/

(The Supreme Atma was neither Earth, nor Water, Tejas / Radiance, Wind nor Sky. It was neither Life, nor Mind, nor the Unknown, nor Shabda /Sound-Rasa/ Taste-Gandha /Smell; it was not the feeling of the Self nor of the Voice. One coud not identify the Soul as hands, feet, nor the Marmaavayaas; neither the Kartaa the Performer nor Bhokta- the one who experienced the performance; The Atma was not Prakriti and Purusha; not the Maya /Illusion and Life; in fact the Universe and Paramatma are clearly separated entities!

Yathaa Prakaasha tamasoh sambandho nopapadyatey,

Tadvaikyam na sambanthah Prapancha Paramaatmanoh/

Chaayaa tapou yathaa lokey Paraspara vilakshanou,

Tadah tasya Bhaven muktirjanmaantara shatairapi/

Pashyanti Mumanayo yuktaah swaatmaanam Paramaardhatah,

Vikaara heenam Nirduhkha maanaanda -atmaanavyayam/

Aham Kartaa Sukhi Duhkhi Krusha Sthuleti yaa matih,

Saa chaahankaara krutwaadaatmanya ropyatey Janaih/

( Just as darkness and light were clearly distinctive, Samsara and Paramatma had no relevance of each other. Purusha and Prapancha too were quite different like sunshine and shadow. If Atma were unclean, diseased and full of malices by nature, then it could never have been purified even after thousands of lives and Yogis or Sages could never have visioned a spotless, blissful, indestructible and eternal Soul otherwise!) Paramatma therefore emphasised thus:

Aham Kartaa Sukhi Duhkhi Krushah Sthuleti yaa matih,

Saa chaahankaara kartutwaa daatma -atmanyaa ropyatey janaih/

Vadanti Veda Vidwaamsaha saakshinaam Prakruteyh Param,

Bhoktaara -maksharam Shuddham Sarvatra Samavasthitam/

Tasmaadajnaana mulo hi Samsaarah Sarva dehinaam,

Ajnaanaadyanyathaa Jnaanam taccha Prakriti sangatam/

( Human Beings tend to attribute their feelings as per their own mind-set and Ahamkaara/self- pride as though they were the Kartas or the responsible persons for their happiness, unhappiness, thinness or stoutness and so on; accordingly they reflect their emotions and sentiments to their inner consciousness

and Atma (Soul). But those who were enlightened and learned with the knowledge of Vedas and Scriptures would indeed realise that there was a force beyond them and their nature and that indeed was the Eternal and All-Pervasive Para Tatwa; ignorance of that Reality which was far different from the illusion was the High Divider.)

Nityoditah Swayam Jyotih Sarvagah Purushah Parah,

Ahamkaaravivekena Kartaahamiti manyatey/

Pashyanti Rishayovyaktam Nityam Sadasaad –makam,

Pradhaanam Prakritim buddhwaa kaaranam Brahma vaadinah/

Tenaayam samgatohyatmaa Kutasthopi Niranjanah,

Swaatmaanamaksharam Brahma naavabudhyet Tatwath/

Anaatmanyaatma vijnaanam tasmaad duhkham tathetaram,

Raagadweshaadayo doshaah Sarvey bhraanti nibandha –naah/

Karmanyasya bhaved dosah Punyaapunyamiti stitih,

Tadhshaa Deva Sarveshaam Sarva Deva samudbhavah/ (Due to one's own ego and ignorance, human beings tended to confuse themselves as Parama Purusha -the Self-Illuminated one- and declared that whatever was achieved or not was due to their own effort or lack of it. Brahmavaadi Rishis would clearly distinguish the Supreme, the Prakriti, and the Cause as also the Truth and Fallacy and thus seek 'Saakshaatkaara' or Ready Realisation. The dormant, invisible and unfelt Truth would indeed co-exist with the illusions of life vis-à-vis the Eternal which got camouflaged! In the 'Anaatma' Tatwa or of the Non-Soul, even Atma Vijnana too woud get polluted due to 'bhranti' or illusions as likings and dislikings were produced leading to Depravities or Moralities. This was the reason why Paapa-Punyaas got generated and different kinds of human beings came into existence.)

Nityah Sarvatragohyaatmaa Kutastho Dosha Varhitah,

Eka sa bhidyatey Shaktyaa Maayaya na swabhavatah/

Tasmaadadvaitamevaahur Munayah Paramaartaah,

Bhedo Vykaswabhaavena saa cha Maayaatmasamshrayaa/

Yathaa hi dhumasamparkaannaakaasho maliney bhavet,

Antahkaarana jairbhaavairaatmaa tadatra lipyatey/

Yathaa swaprabhayaa bhaati Kevalah Spatikomalah,

Upaadhiheeno Vimalaastathaivaatmaa Prakaashatey/

Jnaana swarupameyvaahur jagatetad Vichakshanaah,

Artha swarupamevaajnaah pashyantanye kudrushtayah/

(That was also the reason why the Unique Partamatma was displayed in variegated types of Beings due to Maya Shakti or the Power of Illusion. Munis therefore believed firmly that Atma by itself was 'Advaita' or Singular but due to interaction with Maya looked as several entities, just as hot sunshine would pollute the Sky and hence the Purity of Atma was affected).

Yadaa Sarvani Bhutaani Swaatmanyevabhi pashyati,

Sarva Bhuteshu chaatmaanaam Brahmaa sampadyatey tadaa/

Yadaa Sarvaani Bhutaani samaadhistho na pashyati,

Ekibhutah parenaasou tyadaa bhavanti kevalah/

Yadaa Sarvey pramuchyatey Kaamaa yesya hrudi sthitaah,

Tadaasaavamrutibhutah kshemam gacchati Panditah/

Yadaa Bhuta prudhakbhaavamekastha manupashyati,

Tata eva cha vistaaram Brahmaa sampadyatey tadaa/

Yadaa pashyati chaatmaanam kevalam Paramaarthatah,

Mayaa maatram Jagat krutstnam tadaa Bhavai Nivrutah/

(When Yogis could view all the Beings as existed in their own selves, that would become the achievement of Brahma Bhava. When Yogis reached a Samadhi Position or an Elevated Status of Enlightenment perceiving that all Beings in the World were just the same then they would have reached Atma Darshana or the Vision of the Soul and Brahma Bhava or the feeling of Oneness. Yogis woud then have no further desires and reach a stage of Fulfillment; then they feel equality of all Beings and sincerely reach a sensation of Oneness or Brahma Prapti. When Yogis vision 'Paramaartha' and the Uniqueness of the Supreme then Maya or Illusion would have been destroyed and the entire Universe would look as a Single Entity.)

Yadaa Janma jaraa duhkhavyaadheenaa meka bheshajam,

Kevalam Brahma Vijnaanam Jaayatosow tadaa Shivah/

Yathaa Nadee nadaa lokey Saarenaikataam yayuh,

Tadaatmaakharenaasou nishkalenai -kataam vrajet/

(When Yogis realise that birth, old-age, misery and disease would happen due to 'Karma' or previous actions and of the awareness of that Brahma Gyan, then Shiva Rupa would have been realised. Just as

Rivers and Rivulets would reach the Ocean finally, the individual 'Jeevatmaas' would get submerged into Paramatma.)

Tasmad Vigjnanamevaasti na Prapancho na Samsrutih,

Agjnaanenaavrutam Loko Vigjnaanam tena muhyati/

Tad jnaanam Nirmalam Sukshmam Nirvikalpam yadavyayam,

Agjnaana mitarat Sarvam Vgjnaanamiti mey matam/

Etad vah Paramam Sankhyam bhaashitam Jnaana –muttamam,

Sarva Vedaanta saaram hi yogatastraikachittataa/

Yogaat sanjyayatey Jnaanam Jnaanaad yogah pravartatey,

Yogi Jnaanaabhi yuktasya naavaapyam Vidyatey kwachit/

Yadeva Yogino yaanti Saankhyaistadadhigamyatey,

Evam Saankhyam cha yoga cha pashyati sa tatwavit/

(Hence, Vigjnaanaa was ever-existent and not Samsara; Vigjnaana / Knowledge was surrounded by Agjnaana/ignorance. In other words, what ever was Nirmala, Sukshma and Avyaya was Jnaana and the rest was worthy of discarding. Sankhya Yoga was that Jnaana only and was the Essence of Vedas. That was what worth concentrating about.)

Having explained the above, Parameswara told the Brahmavadi Maharshis further as follows:

Esha Atmaahamavyakto Maayaavi Parameshwarah,

Keertitah Sarva Vedeshu Sarvaatmaa Sarvato -mukhah/

Sarva Kaamah Sarva rasah Sarvagandhojaraamarah,

Sarvatah paanipaadohamantaryaami Sanaatanah/

Apaani paado javano graheetaa hridi samsthitah,

Achakshurapi pasyaami tathaa karnah shrunomyaham/

Vedaaham Sarvamevedam na maam janaati kaschana,

Praahumarhaantam Purusham maamekam Tatwa darshanah/

Pashyanti Rishayo hetumaatopanah Sukshma darshanah,

Nirgunaamala rupasya attaddaishwaryamuttamam/

Yatra Devaa vijaananti mohiyaa mama Maayayaa,

Vakshye samaahitaa yuyam Shrunudhwam Brahma vaadinah/

Naaham prashastaa Sarvasya Maayaatitah swabhavatah,

Preranaami yathaapeedam kaaranam Sooraye Viduh/

Yasmey guhyatamam deham sarvagam Tatwadarshanah,

Pravishtaa mama Saayujyam labhantey Yoginovyayam/

Teshaam hi vashamaapannaa Maayaa mey Vishwarupini,

Labhantey Paramaam Shuddhim Nirvaanam tey mayaa saha/

Na teshaam punaraavrittih Kalpakoti shatairapi,

Prasaadaan –mama Yogeendraa etad Vedaanushaasanam/

Naaputra sishya yogibhyo daatavyam Brahma -vaadibhih,

Maduktametad Vigjnaanam Samkhyayoga samaashrayam/

(I am Antaryami, Avyakta, Maayavi, Parameshwara, Sarva Veda Swarupa, Sarvatma, Sarva Kaama, Sarva Rasa, Sarva Gandha, Ajara, Amara, Sanaatana and full bodied with hands and feet, although I can move without hands and feet. I am fully aware of the ins-and-outs of the Prapancha but none knows about me. Some call me Adviteeya and some 'hetuvaadaas' claim that they are aware of the Cause of their existence, but for sure even Devas are not aware of my Reality as they are all steeply immersed in Maya. Now, listen to me carefully: Even being fully independent of and distinct from Maya, I provoke Maya to create situations due to reasons of such situations and accordingly Maya generates the specific situations. My all-pervasive 'deha' or Physique [which certainly not the outcome of Pancha Buthas or Gunas or Tatwas which were my branded products] is perhaps partly visioned by Tatva darshis and Maha Yogis and some selected few are even absorbed into me which is called Sayujya! Such handpicked ones would not have 'Punarjanma' for even crores of Kalpas; indeed that would be my Directive and Discretion. The Atma Tatwa or 'the Saankhya Yoga Samanvita Vijnaana' that I am now indicating in a hazy form may be taught to Brahma Vaadis to their sons, dicsiples or trusted Yogis only and to none else!)

Shiva Bhakti, Shiva Shakti, Shiva Tatwa and Shiva Tandava

Parama Shiva asserted:

Naaham Tapobhirvividhairna Daanena na cheyjyayaa,

Shakyo hi Purushair jaaturmutey Bhaktiamanuttamaam/

( I am always realisable by Bhakti or Pure Devotion and not necessarily by Tapasya, Daana or Charity and Yagnaas!)

Na madbhaktaa vinashyanti madbhaktaa veeta kalmashaah,

Aadaavetat pratigjaanam na mey bhaktah pranashyati/

Patram Pushpam Phalam toyam madaaraadhana kaaranaat,

Yo mey dadaati niyatah sa meyBhaktah Priyomatah/

(My Bhaktaas would never be destroyed nor harmed but would be washed off their sins as I took a vow that my Bhaktas are protected. Bhaktas are merely required to perform my Puja with utmost sincerity and offer leaves, flowers, fruits and even water as I would be pleased).

Shiva Shakti:

Aham hi Jagataa maadou Brahmanaam Parameshthinam,

Vidhaaya dattavaan Vedaanasehaanaatmanih srutaan/

Ahamevahi Sarveshaam yoginaam Gururavyayah,

Dhaarmika –naam cha goptaahey nihantaa Vedavidwishaam/

Aham vai Sarva samsaaraan mochako yoginaamiha,

Samsaara hetureyvaaham sarva Samsaara Varjitah/

(I had in the beginning created Brahma and gave him Vedas as the Guidelines; I am also the Yoga Guru and provided protection to the Virtuous Persons and punished those who negated the values enunciated in Vedas; and I am the liberator of Yogis, the Cause of Samsara and yet also displeased with Samsaara.)

Ahamevahi Samhartaa Srashtaaham Paripaalakah,

Maayaavi Maamikaa Shaktirmayaa Loka Vimohini/

Mamaiva cha Paraa Shaktiryaa saa Vidyoti geeyatey,

Naashayaami tayaa Maayaam yoginaam hridi samsthitah/

Aham hi Sarva Shaktinaam Pravartak nivartakah,

Adhaara bhutah sarvaasaam nidhaanamamrutasya cha/

Ekaa sarvaantaraa Shaikih karoti vividham Jagat,

Aasthaaya Brahmano rupam manmayee madadhishtitaa/

Anyaa cha Shaktirvipulaa Samsthaapayati mey Jagat,

Bhutwaa Naaraayanonanto Jagannaadho Jaganmayah/

Triteeyaa Mahati Shaktirnihanti sakalam Jagat,

Taamasi mey samaakhyaataa Kaalaakhyaa Rudra Rupini/

(I am the 'Maayavi' or the Great Magician and my Shakti is Maya who is the Top Temptress of the World. Parashakti is my product and is known as Vidya; I stay in the hearts of Yogis and counter the Maya; All types of Shakti emerge from me and also submerge into me!) Shiva stated further: I am the 'Adhaara' or the Huge Hold of the Prime Shakti; One facet of that Shakti is Brahma the Srashta; my secondary Shakti is identified as Jagannadha Narayana.; the Third Ramification is Taamasi Shakti viz. Rudra-Kaala Shakti, which terminates the Creation).

Dhyanena maam prapashyanti kechirjinanena chaaparey,

Aparey bhakti yogena chaaparey/

Sarveshaameva bhaktaamaamishtah Priyataro mama,

Yohi jnaanena maam nitya maadhaaraahyayati nyaayathaa/

Anye chaye trayo Bhaktaa madaaraadhana kaankshinah,

Teypi maam praapunanteva naavartantey cha vai punah/

(Some persons seek my Darshan through Dhyaana or meditation, some by Jnaana, but those by Bhakti are most dear to me and they would have no re-birth).

Shiva Tatwa:

Mayaa tatamidam krutsnam Pradhaana Purushaatmakam,

Mayyeva Samsthitam Vishwam mayaa sampreryatey Jagat /

Naaham prerayitaa Vipraah Paramam Yogamaashritah,

Prerayaami Jagatkrutsnametadyo Veda somrutah/

Pashyaamaseshamey Vedam Vartamaanam Swabhaavatah,

KarotiKaalo Bhagavaan Mahayogeshwarah swayam/

Yogah samprochyatey yogi Maayaa Shaastreshu Sooribhih,

Yogeshwaro sou Bhagavan MahadevoMahaan Prabhuh/

Mahatwam Sarva tatwaanaam Paratwaan Parameshthinah.

Prochyatey Bhagavan Brahmaa Mahaan Brahma –mayomalah/

Yo maamevam Vijaanaati Mahayogeswareswaram,

So Vikalpena Yogena yujjatey naatra samshayah/

Soham prerayitaa Devah Paramaananda maashritah,

Nrityaami Yogi satatam yastad Veda sa Vedavit/

Iti guhyatamam Jnaanam Sarva Vedeshu nisthitam,

Prasanna chetasy deyam Dharmakaayaahitaagnaye/

(My Purusha Swarupa is spread all over and the Samasara in totality is prompted by it. Yet I am always engrossed in Yoga and as such am not the Prompter either; indeed this is the key secret and those who realise this know every thing. As far as I am concerned, I do note the evolutions of the lives of the Beings and keep analysing the changes no doubt; but whatever actions need to be taken are performed Bhagavan Kaala himself. Vidwans of Shastras use the nomeclature of Maya and attribute it to the Maha Yogeshwara himself; Paramatma is far above and distinct Tatwas yet at the same time significance of Tatwas is hidden in Bhagavan! Those Maha Yogeshwaras visualise that Bhagavan is perhaps in Nirvikalpa Samaadhi and even the prompting of actions are not done my him! This indeed appears to be the Guhya Jnaana unsolved and appears to have been hidden still in the unknown depths of Vedas! Perhaps the solution is left in the tranquil imagination of Dharmic and Ever engaged Agnihotris!

Shiva Tandava (The Cosmic Dance of Maha Deva): Veda Vyas described Shiva Tandava on the clear skies along with Vishnu when Maharshis visioned as a feast to their eyes and to the full contentment of their life-time. Those Maharshis who imagine Shiva's sacred feet in their imagination and get freed from their fears arising from their ignorance had the fill of their ambition; indeed they had actually seen and heard most memorable action with reverberating sounds across the skies! They visioned Parama Rudra with thousand resplendent heads, hands and feet with matted hair, half moon on his head, tiger skin as his clothing, huge hands swaying Trishula, Danda held in palms, Three Eyes of Surya, Chandra and Agni representing Three Vedas, Three Gunas, Tri Lokas; his physique encompassing the Brahmanda; producing 'Agni Jwaalaas' from each thumping of his dancing feet and with an awesome and frightening body profile! The Brahmavaadis had actually seen with their inner eyes while Maha Deva was being worshipped by Brahma, Indra and Devatas besides Yogis and Maha Munis with their heads down, feet prostrated and hands folded kept on their heads; they all witnessed glimpses of Narayana also taking part in the Cosmic Dance. Sanat Kumara, Sanaka, Bhrigu, Sanatana, Sanandana, Rudra, Angira, Vamadeva, Shukra, Atri, Kapila and Marichi had all witnessed too the Celestial Scene and thanked themselves with exclamations of 'Dhanya' or applauses of rare and fortunate blessings! As the Tandava was in progress, there were echos of Omkara and Veda Mantras and the enraptured Maharshis resorted to Stuti as follows:

Twamekameesham Purusham Puranam Praneshwaram Rudramananta yogam,

Namaama Sarvey Hridi Samnivightam Prachetasam Brahmamayam Pavitram/

Ttwaam Pashyanti Munayo Brahmayonim Daantaah Shaantaa Vimalam Rukmavarnam, Dhyaatwaatmasthamachalam swye Sharitey Kavim Parebhyah Paramam tatparamcha/ Twattah prasutaa Jagatah Prasutih Sarvaatmabhustwam Paramaanubhutah, Anoraneeyaan Mahato Maheeyaam swatmeva Sarvam pravadanti Santah/ Hiranyagarbho Jagadantaraatmaa twattodhijaatah Purushah Puraanah, Sanjaayhamano bhavataa visishto yadhaavidhaanam sakalam sasarja/ Twatto Vedaah sakalaah samprasutaa-stwayyevaantey samsthitim tey labhantey, Pashyaamastwam jagato hetubhutam nrityantam swey hridaye samnivishtam/ Twayyai Vedaah bhraamyatey Brahma chakram Maayaavi twam Jagataamekanaathah, Namaamastwaam sharanam sampraannaa Yogaatmaanam chipytanti Divanrittyam/ Pashyamastwaam Paramaakaasha madhye nrittyatam tey Mahimaanam smaraamah, Savaatmaanam bahudhaa samnivishtam Brahmaanandamanu bhuyaanbhuya/ Omkaarastey vaachako Mukti beejam twamaksharam Prakrutai gudha rupam, Tatwaam Satyam pravadanteeh Santah Swayamprabham bhavato yatprakaasham/ Stuantitwaam Satatam Sarva Vedaa Namanti twaamrishayah ksheena doshaah, Shaantaatmaanah Satyasandhaa Varishtam vishantitwaam yatayo Brahma nishthaah/ Eko Vedo Bahu shaakho hyanantastwaameyvaikam bodhayatyeka rupam, Vedyam twaam sharanam ye prapaanaasteshaam Shaantih Shaswati netareshaam/ Bhavaaneeshonaadi – maamstejoraashir Brahmaa Vishwam Parameshthi Varishthah, Swaatmaanada manubhuyaadhishete Swayam Jyotirachalo nitya muktah/ Eko Rudraswam karisheeha Vishwam twam paalayasyakhilam Vishwarupah, Twaamevaantey nilayam vindateedam Namaamaswaam sharanam samprapannah/ Twaamekamaahuh Kavimeka Rudram praanam brihantam Harimagnimeesham, Indram mrityu -manilam chenitaanam Dhaataaramaadityamanekarupam/

Twamaksharam Paramam Veditavyam twamasya Vishwasya param nidhaanam,

Twamavyayah Shaswata dharma goptaa Sanaatanastwam Purushotthamosi/

Twaamekamaahuh Purusham Puraanamaadityavarnam Tamasah parastaat,

Chinmaatram avyaktam achintyarupam Swam Brahma shunyam Pratakritim Nirgunamcha/

Yadantaraa Sarvamidam vibhaati yadavyayam nirmalamekarupam,

Kimapyachintyam tawa rupametatam tadantaraa yatpratibhaati Tatwam/

Yogeshwaram Rudramanata Shaktim paraayanam Brahmatanum pavitram,

Nanaama Sarvey Sharanaarthinastaam praseeda bhutaabhipatey Mahesha/

Twadpaadapadma smaranaadasesha samsaara beejam vilayam prayaati,

Mano niyamyapranidhaaya Kaayam Prasaadayaamo vayamekameesham/

Namo Bhavaayastu Bhadbhavaaya Kaalaaya Sarvaaya Kapardine tey

Namognaye Deva nama Shivaaa!

(We pray to Ishwara, Purana Purusha, Praneshwara, Ananta Yoga Rupa, Hridaya Nivishtha or present in heart, Pracheta or responsible in-charge; and Brahma Maya; you are the Controller of Senses, Shanta, Achala, Nirmala, Swarna Swarupa, Para and Tatpara. You are the Creator of Samsara, Atma Swarupa and 'Anu' rupa or of the Form of an Atom; Paramatma! Indeed you are the Minutest and the Grossest; Brahma the Hiranya garbha and the Srashta of the Universe is engrossed in prayers to you; indeed, you are the 'Vedotpanna' or Creator of Vedas besides being the Preserver and the Destroyer. We can witness your Cosmic Dance in the center of the Sky; you are the Jagat Kaarana; the Regulator of Brahma Chakra; Mayavi; the Unique Swami of the Jagat; we are able to enjoy glimpses of your profile and are thrilled at the feast to our eyes. Paramatma! Your Omkara Vachaka is the seed of Mukti and is secretly absorbed in Prakriti; Sages call you as Satya Swarupa and Swayam Prakaasha; all the Vedas and Scriptures never tired of your magnificence; Rishi ganaas are always engaged in commending you while Yatis with Brahma nishtha try to enter into the glow of your profile! The several branches of Vedas and Scriptures stress repeatedly about the Infinity and Singularity of Your Swarupa or the Uniqueness of your Mahatmya as also the extreme plurality of your manifestations; but they fail to realise you and as such seek their unqualified protection and security. That feeling itself provides great peace of mind and contentment. Ishwara! You are the Anaadi or without a beginning; the Fund of Illumination; Brahma; Vishwarupa; Parameshthi; and Varishtha. Maharshis do experience pointers and hints of your glorious splendour and perform hard endeavour to enter near your orbit. We seek refuge into you Rudra the Srashta- Sharanya and Samhaara. You are commended as Adviteeya, Kavi, Eka Rudra, Praana, Brihat, Hara, Agni, Esheara, Indra, rityu, Anila, Chekitana, Dhata, Aditya, and Aneka rupa. You are Aninaashi or Perpetual; Parmaashraya or the Greatest Sanctuary; You are Avyaya, Shaswata, Dharma Raksha, Sanatana, Purushottama; Vishnu and Chaturmukha Brahma; Vishwa Naabhi, Prakriti, Pratishtha, Sarweswara and Parameshwara! You are addressed as Purana Purusha, Aditya Varna, Tamogunatita, Chinmatra, Avykta, Achintya Rupa, Aakaasha, Brahma, Shunya, Prakriti and Nirguna. It is due to you

Mahadeva that the Universe gets illuminated and all the Tatwas are displayed. Our humble salutations to you Parama Yogeshwara, Brahma Murti, Ananta Shakti Rudra, Ashraya Swarupa, Bhutaadhipati, Mahesha! Even a thought about you would uproot the seed of Karma and the cycle of Janma- Mrityu. The two regulatory deeds of controlling Mind and Thought as also physical restrictions would indeed take one to step fast to Maheshwara. Our greetings to you Bhava, Bhavodbhava, Kaala, Sarva, Jatadhari, Agni Rupan Shiva, and Shiva the most Auspicious!!) As the Maharshis eulogised to Shiva, the latter displayed his Viraat Swarupa along with the Full Form of Four Arms with Shankha- Chakra-Gada-Saranga and his typical and alluring smile!

Unfolding of Ishwara 'Vibhutis' (faculties) and concepts of Pashu-Paasha-Pashupati

Parameshwara addressed Maharshis and explained about his own Vibhutis as follows:

Paraat Parataram Brahma shasvatam nishkalam dhruvam,

Nityaanandam Nirvikalpam taddhaama Paramam mama/

(My Supreme Destination is far beyond 'Paraatpara', Brahma, Everlasting, Spotless, Steady, Blissful and Nirvikalpa / State of Oblivion): He is the Swayambhu Brahma among Brahmajnaanis; Avyaya Deva Hari among Mayavis; Parvati among yoginis; Vishnu among Dwadasa Adityaas; Paavaka among Ashta Vasus; Shankara among Ekaadasha Rudras; Garuda among birds; Iravata among elephants; Parashurama among 'Shastradhaaris' or weapon holders; Vasishtha among Rishis; Prahlada among 'Sura dweshis' or the Detestors of Devas; Vyaasa among Munis; Vinayaka among Shiva Ganaas; Veerabhadra among the Valiant; Sumeru among Mountains; Chandrama among Nakshatraas; Vajraayudha among diamonds; Satyanarayana among Vratas; Anantadeva among serpents; Kartikeya among 'Senaanis' or Chiefs of Soldiers; Grihastaashrama among the Ashramas; Maheshwara among Ishwaraas; Maha Kalpa among Kalpaas; Satya Yuga among Yugas; Kubera among Yakshaas; Veeraka among Ganeshwaraas; Daksha among Prajaapatis; Nirruti among Rakshasaas; Vayu Deva among the Balavaans and Pushkara among Dwipaas. Shiva furter states: I am a lion among animals; Dhanush among Yantraas; Sama Veda among Vedas; Shata Rudreeya among Yajurmantras; Savitri among the Japa Mantras; 'Pranava' among the confidential Mantras; Purusha Sukta among the Veda Suktas; am the Jyeshtha Saama among Saama Mantras; Swayambhu Manu among those who know the meanings of all Vedas; Brahmaavarta among various Deshas; Amimukta among Kshetras; Atma Vidya among the Vidyas; Ishrara Jnaana among 'Jnanas'; 'Aakaasha'among Pancha Bhutas; and Mritvu/ Yama among Satwaas

Parama Shiva then annotated the words of Pashu-Pasha-Pashupati as follows:

Vidyaanaamaatmavidyaaham Jnaanaamaishwaram param,

Bhutaanaamasmyaham Vyoma Satvaanaam Mrutyurevacha/

Paasshaanaa masmyaham Maayaa Kaalah Kalayataamaham,

Gateenaam Muktirevaaham Pareshaam Parameshwarah/

Atmaanah Pashavah Proktaah Sarvey Samsaarvartinah,

Teshaam Patiraham Devah smrutah : Pashpatirbudhaih/

Maayaa paashena badhnaami Pasunetaan swaleelayaa,

Maameva mochakam praahuh Pashnaam Vedavaadinah/

Maayaa paashena badhnaanaam mochakonyo na Vidyatey,

Maamrutey Paramaatmaanam Bhutaadhipatimavyayam/

( I am Parameshwara who is the Maya among Paashaas or the hard rope strings, Kaala or the Mrityu among the destroyers and among the Pathways am the destination of Mukti; You should realise that the Most Lustrous and the Mightiest 'Satwa Padaartha' or the Virtuous Entity is myself and am the highest powerful provocator of actions among all of the Pashus or Jeevaas / Beings in the Univese is myself; as the Beings in Srishti are Pashus, I am indeed the Pashupati. I tie up the Pashus with Paashaas for fun; Vedagnaas seek to help release the Pashus from the 'Samsaara Paashaas' and are called the facilitating 'Mochakaas' or Helping Liberators as I tie them all with the strong strings from their birth to death. Let it be made clear that there could be none else that might liberate from these Paashaas excepting Paamatma the Eternal.

The twenty four Tatwaas, Maya, Karma and Tri- Gunas all put together hold the Jeevas or Pashus as 'Paaashas' are enforced by Pashupati. The Tatwas are Manas or Mind, Buddhi or thought, Ahamkara or Ego, Prithvi, Jala, Vaayu and Akasaha; Ear, Skin, Eyes, Tongue, Nose, the two Marmendriyas, hands, feet, voice, shabda, sparsha, Rupa, Rasa, and Gandha which are all a part of Prakriti and the rest are all Vikaras or aberrations. There are two kinds of Paashaas viz. Dharma and Adharma besides the Karma bandhana; Avidya, Asmitaa or Ego, Raaga, Dwesha, Abhinivesha or attachment –these Five are constant Paashaas called Taatvika bandhanas. Maya is stated to be the root of these bandhanas. Mula Prakriti, Pradhaana, Purusha, Mahat, Ahamkaaran are all manifestations of Sanatana Deva; he is the one creating bandhanas; he is the Paasha-Pashu-and in the final analysis, he is the Pashupati!

Rudiments of Yoga Practice, Yoga Mahima and re-emphasis on the Oneness of Shiva-Narayana

Parameshwara himself describes to the Maharshis about the significance of Yoga in the quest of the Truth; just as Surya Deva is readily viewed on the Sky so could be the vision of Paramatma. Yogarupi Agni demolishes the store of sins and facilitates the attainment of such Jnaana that leads to Mukti.

Yogaat sanjaayatey Jnaanam Jnaanaad Yogah pravartatey,

Yoga jnaanaabhi yuktasya praseedati Maheshwarah/

(From Yoga is achieved Jnaana and Jnaanaa transforms Yoga to the further pursuit to Maheswara). Yoga practice might as well be performed once or twice or even thrice a day. Yoga could be in two forms: Abhaava Yoga or Maha Yoga; the former type aims at Nirvikalpa Swarupa or 'Atma Sakshaatkara' (Vision of the Inner Soul) while Maha Yoga targets Parameswara (Super Soul).

The Ashtanga Yoga Sadhana has the following Eight-Steps viz. Yama-Niyama-Aasana-Praanayaama-Pratyaahara- Dharana-Dhyaana-Samaadhi. Briefly stated, Yama is meant by Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya (non-stealing), Brahmacharya or celibacy and Aparigraha (non-possession) and Yama purifies the heart and mind. Ahimsa is denoted by creating no problem at all by way of Mind, Conversation or Deed. Similarly, Satya or Truth should be such that it should not hurt any body and Asteya, Bramacharya and Aparigraha too should be such that one's inner-conscience is clear in an objective manner. Niyama refers to Tapa,

Swaadhyaaya, Santosha, Shoucha and Ishwara Puja. Tapa is meditation cum Upavaasas or fasting and observance of Vratas like Kruccha Chandrayana. Swadhyaaya or self-practice of recitation of Vedaanta Shastras, Shata Rudreeya and Pranava etc. providing Satwika-Vriddhi; Swaadhyaaya is of three types viz. Vaachika or Oral that could be heard by self and others, Upaamshu or which could be heard by the self and Manasika or what is recited mentally. Santosha means contentment and inner happiness or of noncomplaining nature. Shoucha includes Baahyaantara-Shuchi or physical and mental cleanliness and Ishwara Puja denotes Stuti by way of Manas or Mind, Vaani or recitation and Karma or deed perfoming Puja of Shodasopachaaras or the Sixteen kinds of Services like Dhyaana- Avaahana-Pushpa-Gandha-Naivedyas. Aasana is the prescribed way of comfortable Seating. Padmaasana is considered to be the best and that means keeping both feet lifted and placed on the opposite thighs. Pranaayama denotes regulation of the Prana or the Life-Air of a Being (actually Aayama means nirodhana or stoppage). Recitation of Pranava Mantra viz. AUM by twelve times is called Dwadasha Matra; alternatively recitation of Gavtri Mantra viz. Om-Bhu-Bhuvah-Swah-Mahah-Janah-Tapah-Satyam three times is Tri Gayatri. Pranayama is denoted by Dwadasha Pranava or Tri Gayatri. A complete Pranayama consists of three operations viz. Rechaka or exhalation, Puraka is inhalation and retaining the air is kumbhaka. Pratyahara involves managing the senses and going beyond them by conquering them instead of avoiding and suppressing them (taking cognizance of them but ignoring or sifting them) and that is a perfect starting point of commencing the stage of Dharana or practice of concentration; in fact the last three aspects of Ashtanga or the Eight-Limbed Yoga viz. Dharana, Dhyaana and Samadhi are the most crucial ones. Dharana is the skill of controlling the senses, rejecting the unimportant mental features and pushing the Self inward on the way of Dhyaana. Imagining an 'Ashtadala Kamala or an 'Eight-leafed Lotus, one must concentrate on the Hiranmaya Kosha (Sheath) in which the Vishudda Parama Jyoti exists and nothing else would matter:

Yetad guhyatamam dhyaamam dhyaanantaramathocchatey,

Chintayitwaa tu Purvoktam Hritaye Padmamuttamam/

Atmaanamatha kartaaram tatraanala samatvisham,

Madhye vahnishikhaakaaram Purusham Panchavimshikam/

Chintayet Paramaatmaanam tanmadhye Gaganam Param,

Omkaara bodhitam tatwam shaswatam Shivamachyutam/

(Indeed this is a guarded meditation: by envisaging a famed Lotus inside one's own heart which should be prayed to as there is a splendrous Agni-like Profile with twenty five Tatwas enclosing Paramatma who is Unknown, absorbing Prakriti, filled with Omkara, Niranjana, Nitya, Maheswara). Maha Deva himself suggests the Pashupati Yoga Yoga which is the Essence of Vedas and is accessible to those who firmly believe in Brahmacharya, Ahimsa, Kshama or fortitude, Shoucha, Tapa, Dama, Santosha, Satya and Asthikata or Unswerved Faith in the Supreme as these are the pre -requisites of the Pashupata Vrata.[Refer to Essence of Linga Purana as translated and edited by the same Author for the details of the Vrata.]

Parama Shiva says:

Veeta raaga bhaya krodhaa manmayaa maamupaashritaah,

Bahavenena yogena putaa madbhaavamaagataah/

Ye yathaa maam praadyantey taamstayaiva bhajaamyahjam,

Jnaana yogena maam tasmaad yajeta Parameshwaram/

Athavaa Bjhakti yogena Vairaagyena parena tu,

Chetasaa bodha yuktena pujayenmaamsadaa shuchih/

(Those who shun desire, fear and anger do approach me by performing the Pashupati Vrata and had all been blessed; they could adopt the medium of Jnaana Yoga or Bhakti Yoga but I relieve them of Samsara Bandhanas for good). He further affirms:

Adveshata Sarva bhutaanaam maitrah Karuna yevacha,

Nirmomaa nirahankaaro yo madbhaktah sa mey Priyah/

Santhushtah Satatam Yogi yatatatmaa drudha nischayah,

Mayyarpitamano buddhiryo madhaktah sa mey priyah/

Yasmaannuddejito loko Lokaannujjeto cha yah,

Harshaamarsha bhayodvegairmukto yah sa hi mey priyah/

Anapekshah Shuchirdaksha udaaseeno gatvyathah,

Sarvaarambha parityaagi Bhaktimaan yah sda mey priyah/

(Those Bhaktaas who treat every Being without malice, hatred, and self-pride; but with friendliness, kindness and affection are dear to me; those who are contented, self-controlled, strong willed, everengaged in Yoga and totally dedicated to me are dear to me; those who neither get excited nor prone to exciting others, but are fearless, placid and composed are dear to me; those who never crave for worldly desires, but are ready to sacrifice, are impartial, are ready to face challenges of the right kind and are not non-starters due to hesitation are indeed near and dear to me.) Having given his preferences, Maha Deva underscores that his bhaktas should perform Shiva-Linga Puja always and any where that is clean and pro-active, but with extreme devotion and dedication- be it in water, inside Agni, addressed to Surya or Sky and even in one's own heart! What is of signifiance is that any Puja to Shiva performed in faith, concentration and total bhakti and that shall be rewarded without doubt.

Re-emphasis on the Oneness of Shiva-Narayana: In the context of the above, Maha Deva emphasised again as in earlier pages about the identity of himself and Vishnu Deva; this was necessary since a seperate 'Ishwara Gita'in the current Kurma Purana sought to clarify that its contents were in no way contradictory; even in the description of Shiva Tandava described above, Vishnu too was stated to have joined the Celestial Dance! Maha Deva thus confirmed as follows:

Ayam Narayano yohameeshwaro naatra samshayah,

Naantaram ye prapashyanti teshaam Devamidam param/

Mamaushaa Paramaa Murtirnaaraayana samaahvayaa,

Sarva Bhutaatmabhutasthaa Shantaa chaakshara sangjnitaa/

Ye twanyathaa prapashyanti lokey bheda drusho janaah,

Na tey maam samprapashyanti jayentey cha punah punah/

Yetwimam Vishnu – mavyaktam maam vaa Devam Maheswaram,

Ekibhavena pashyanti na teshaam punarudbhavah/

Tasmaadanaadi nidhanam Vishnumaatmaanamayayam,

Maameva samprapashayadhvam Puja-yadhvam tathaiva hi/

Yenyathaa maam prapashyanti matvemam Devataantaram,

ye yantin Narakaan ghoraan naaham teshu vyavasthitah/

Murkham vaa Panditam vaapi Brahmanamvaa madaasrayam,

Mochayaami shvapaakam vaa Naaraayana nindakam/

Tasmaadesha Maha Yogi Mad Bhaktaih Purushottamah,

Archaneeyo Namaskaarye Matpreeti jananaaya hi/

(That Narayana is Ishwara that is me undoubtedly. There is indeed no difference between us and he too is to be worshipped. Narayana is 'Shaanti-Akshara' imprinted in every body's heart. Some imagine otherwise that we are figured other wise and they continue to get into the cycle of birth and death and could never ever attain Mukti. Those who visualise me and Narayana as just the same would have no rebirth. As such, Vishnu has no beginning or end as in my case, meaning thereby we are both the same. Those who confuse Vishnu as another Deva would for sure reach Narakas. Those who are my bhaktaas being either Murkhaas or Stupids, Panditas or Learned Vidvans or even untouchables should indeed have the possibility of Mukti, provided they do not dislike or distrust him. Hence my bhaktaas ought to perform puja to Vishnu with all humilty and belief.) Then both Vishnu and Shiva disappeared simultaneously, stated Vyasa Muni.

Veda Vyasa thus concluded ISHWARA GITA with the Phala Shruti that whosoever reads, or hears or anylises the contents of this important Part of Kurma Purana would be freed from sins and attain Brahma loka.

Shraaddha Prakarana: Profile, Significance, Procedure and Do's & Don'ts

Vyasa Maha Muni narrated the details of Shraadhha Karma as follows: As Amavasya of a Month arrives at the noon time, Brahmanas are required to perform 'Pindaan-vaahaaryaka' with sincerity and devotion. This Deed may be done only by those eligible to light up Agnihotra (not by widowers) and is

performed after Pitru Yajna and this is a Nitya Shraaddha on every Amavasya. Excepting on Chaturdashi in Krishna Paksha, these Shraaddaas could be done on any days, especially on the three Ashtamis of Pusha, Maagha and Phalgunas; also during the Rainy Season when Crops reach home as Trayodhashi preferably coinciding with Makha Nakshatra. On Chandra and Surya Grahana Timings or on the days of death of relatives too Naimittika Shraaddha is to be done failing which, visits to Naraka Lokas are expected to be certain. Shraaddhhas during the Uttaraayana and Dakshinaayana timings as also Vishu Kaala are also certain to provide 'Ananta Phala' or Ever lasting Punya. Samkraanti and 'Janma Dina' shraaddhas are also stated to be highly fruitful.

Kaamya Shraaddhaas are helpful in any Nakshatras; Kritthika Nakshatra bestows Swarga Prapti; Rohini Shraaddha is to provide Santana Prapti; Mrigashira yields Brahma Teja prapti; Ardra nakshatra for Roudra Karma Siddhi or Shourya Siddhi; Punarvasu : Bhumi; Pushya : Lakshmi Prapti; Aslesha Shraaddha for fulfillment of desires; Magha for Soubhaagya; Uttara Phalguni for wealth; Purva Phalguni for destruction of sins; Hasta Nakshatra Shradda for Jaati Sreshthata or Superiority in the Jaati; Chitra for Putra Prapti; Swati :Vyapaara Siddhi; Vishakha : Suvarna Prapti; Anuraha for Bahu Mitrata or for Great Friendships; Jyeshtha for Rajya Prapti; Moola for Krishi; Purvaashadha for Samudra Yatra; Uttashadya for Kamya Siddhi; Sravana for Bahu Sreshthata; Dhanishta for Sarva Kaamna; Satabhisha for Parama Bala; Purva bhadra for Dhaatu Prapti or precious metals like gold and Silver; Uttaabhadra for Shubha Griha or construction; Revati Nakshatra Shraddha for Bahu-Dhenu prapti; Ashwini for Ashwa Prapti and Bharani Nakshatra Shraaddha for long life.

Dina Phalas of Shraadhas are: Sunday-Arogya; Monday: Sowbhagya; Tuesdays; Vijaya or Victory; Wednesday: Kaamna Siddhi; Thursday: Abhishta Vidya Siddhi; Friday Shraaddha: Wealth and Saturday: Ayu Prapti.

Tithi-wise Shraaddha Phalaas are: Pratipada: Putra Prapti; Dwitiya: Kanya; Tritiya: Vandijana or Persons with Praises: Chaturthi: Kshudra Pashu or low class animal; Panchami: Sundara Putra; Shashthi: Gambling success; Saptami: Krishi; Ashtami: Business Success; Navami: Sukha; Dashami: Pashu Laabha; Ekaadashi: Silver material and Putra with Brahmavarchas; Dwadashi: Gold and Silver; Trayodhashi: Superiority of Jaati; Chaturdashi Shraaddha is Varjita or to be avoided; Purnima or Amavasya: Fulfillment of desires.

One should perform Abhudaya Shraaddhaas at the beginning of a Kaarya-Praarambha or at the commencement of a Deed, at the birth of a son or Festival Days. Manu Deva prescribed five kinds of Shraaddhaas viz. Nithya Shraaddha, Kaamya Shraaddha, Ekodishtaadi Naimitthika Shraaddha, Vriddhi Shraaddha, and Paarvana Shraadha; additionally there could be Yatraa Samaya Shraaddhas. Brahma prescribed Shuddi Shaaddha and Daivika Shraaddha and the latter relieves of fear. Shraaddhaas are never to be performed in the evenings and nights as a rule. How ever as exceptions, Shraaddhas may be performed during the Eclipse Timings of Surya and Chandra.

Shraaddhas performed in Ganga, Prayaga and Amarakantaka Kshetras are of such superior quality that Pitaras sing hymns saying:

Yeshtavyaa bahavah putraah Sheelavanto gunaanvitaah,

Teshaam tu samavetaanaam Yadyekopi Gayaam Vrajet/

Gayaam praapyaanushangena yadi Shaaddham samaacharet,

### Taaritaah Pitarastena sa yaati Paramaam Gatim/

(Pitaras sing hymns saying that one should be blessed with many sons since atleast some of them might reach Gaya and perform Shraaddha so that the Pitaras attain 'Uttama Gati' High Class Journeys and the Karthaas could secure Paramagati.) Varaha Parvata where Hari and Ganga reside, as also Maha Kshetras like Vaaranasi, Ganga Dwaar (Hari Dwaar), Prabhasa, Bilvaka Tirtha, Nila Parvata, Kurukshetra, Kubjaagra Tirtha, Bhrugu tunga, Mahalaya, Kedara Parvata, Phalgu Tirtha, Naimisharanya, Saraswati River, Pushkara, Narmada, Bhadrakarnika, Vetravati, Vipaasha, Krushaavarta, Shrishaila, Godavari, and such other Sacred Places, Pitru Shraadhas and Pujas would be of great significance. Pitaras are highly satisfied with materials like Vrihi, Yavas, Maasha, Moolaas, Phalaas, Wheat, Tilaas, and such other food materials as al so fruits like mangoes, Draaksha / grapes, pomegranate, Bhumi Kushmanda, etc besides honey and sugar with fruits. But, food materials like buffalo milk, Kaala shaakam or pippili, Masoor dal, Raajamaasha, brinjal, pinda mula etc. should be avoided.

Eligibility of Brahmanas for Shraddhaas: Brahmanas who are 'Veda Paraayanas' or Experts in Vedas being eligible for Havya-Kavya-Daana-Tirthas should therefore perform Pitru Tarpanas and Pindaanvaahaaryaka Shraaddhhas on Amavasyas. Their eligibility qualifications are as follows: They should be Somapayis, Rajoguna rahitaas, Dharma vidas, Shanta Chitttas, Vrata Parayanaas, 'Niyama baddhaas', Panchaagni Sevakaas, Adhyayana Nirataas, Agnihotra paaraayanaas, Nyaaya Vetthaas; Vedaanga Jnaataas (Viz. Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Chhanda and Jyotisha Disciplines), Rishika or Rishi Putra, Yagjna karta, Samskaara Shudda like Naama Karama and Sandhyo- paasaka; Dana Karta, Chandraayana Vrata Karta; Satyavaadi, Purana Jnaana Sahita; Guru-Deva-Agni Pujaasakta; Jnaana Parayana; Brahma Jnaani; and so on. The best such Brahmanas could be the most ideal in the Shraadha Karyas. Matahaha, Pitamaha, Matula, Swashura, Jamaata, Guru and such intimate relatives are also eligible. But friends are not to take part in the Pankti Bhojana. Employees of Officials, Veda Vikrayas, Gram Purohitas, Patitas and their progeny, Naastikas, Napumsakas, Kaapaalikas, Madya Sevakaas, husbands of widows, Mitra drohis, those who sacrifice parents,wife and children; Santaana heenas, Rogis, and such other disqualified Brahmanas are not to be engaged in the Shraaddha Karmas.

Shraddhaas should not be performed in the houses of others and if not possible in one's own, may be organised in common places like Punya Tirthas, Forests, Deva Mandiras, Choultries and such other 'Saarvajanika' or common places where there is no owenership of an individual where black Tilaas are freely spread over to ensure that no evil spirits could enter and the Shraaddha Bhumi gets purified. Then, there must be facility for cooking various 'Annas'/ food, besides bhojya, bhakshya, peya and other kinds of food material.

Shraaddha Vidhi: As the mid- day arrives, the Karta and the participating Brahmanas should take their baths to ensure physical purity and inward cleanliness before the commencement of the Sacred Deed. The designated Brahmanas are to be seated over three Kushas looking 'Purvaabhi mukha'. The Karta should then sprinkle 'Tilodaka' and offer the seat to the Pitru Brahmana with the Sankalpa Mantra viz. *Aasadhwam* etc. Vaishvadeva (Agni Deva) sambandhi Brahmanas-two of them-would be Purvaabhimukha and Pitru sambandhi Brahmanas-three of them- would be 'Uttaraabhimukha'; keeping in view the factors of Desha-Kaala-kaaranas and of availability, even one Brahmana each might suffice for the representatives of Pitrus and Devas. All the Pitru Karyaas must be followed after Vaishvadeva Karmas. 'Shraadhhiya Anna' or the Cooked Rice meant for Shraaddha, without salt but with ghee is served to Agni. The formal 'Prathama' or the first Naivedya must be done (in house) at Deva Mandira. Pitru Brahmanas may be offered ornaments if any, besides garlands, Yagjna Sutras,dhupa, Vastra, Gandha etc. Thereafter Deva Brahmana/s should be seated Uttaabhimukha and *Vishvey deevaasa* etc Rucha be recited to invoke (Aavahana) Devas; they would take two Pavitra Kushas and recite the Mantra

viz. sham no Devi, pour water into the Paatra or vessel and recite again the Mantra viz. Yavooseetim placing Yavas with water into the Vessel; then along with the Mantra viz. Yaa divyaa etc. the Karta should leave the Arghya Patra jala into the hands of the Deva Brahmana. The next step is that the Karta would perform 'Apasayva' of the Yajnopaveeta facing 'Dakshinaamukha' and invoke Pitras with the Rucha viz. Ushantastwaa etc. Then recite the Mantra Sham no Devi etc and pour water with Tilas reciting the Mantra Tilomsi etc. As done earlier in case of Deva Brahmanas, Arghya or water be poured into the hands of the Pitru Brahmanas; then the Anna with ghee is taken in hand, after making 'Savyam'or from left shoulder to right of Yagmopavita and keeping kusha on hand, make the offering to Agni reciting: Agnow karishye! Then the response would be Kurushwaa. Always, Pitru Kaarya should be done in Apasavya and Deva karyaas are to be in Savya. The Karta should keep the right Jaanu (Knee) on the ground for all Deva karyas and vice versa recite the Mantra Somaaya vai Pitrumatey swadhaanamah and perform havan to Agni saying Agnaye Kavyavaahanaaya Swadhaa/ Then keep towards the Southen side Three Pindas or Rice balls of equal size-representing three generations of the deceased (viz the father, grand father and great grand father) on a cow-dung cleaned 'Bhuvedi' (Platform) over Kushas spread and arranged with right palms turned to left as the spare morsels be sprinkled and dressed all around the Pindas. Then the Karta should perform 'Aachamana' of three spoons full of water, slowly breathe and greet the Pitaras placed in vertical order. The Pindaas be worshipped with Dhupa-Deepa-Naivedya and the rest of the Prashad is consumed by Brahmanas. The wife of the Karta desirous of securing good sons should consume the middle pinda. Then the Karta should clean his hands with water, perform Achamana and serve the food to family members, relatives and friends. On the night when shraaddhai is performed, the Karta should observe celibacy and any departure from the rule would attract Maha Rourava naraka to the husband and wife concerned. Shraddha Kartha as well as those Brahmanas involved in the Shraddha should be placid, peaceful and pure-minded and to the extent possible observe 'Swaadhyaaya'; they should also observe one meal that day; the Karta is required not to travle that day. Those who perform Shraaddhaa without Agni Karya, who are definitely required to travel or are unwell or would have to perform 'Aama Shraddha' only giving away uncooked rice and other material to a Brahmana and the recipient should recite Agnoukarana Mantra while accepting the material and 'dakshina'. Those who perform the Shraaddha as prescribed are blessed by Pitras who not only lessen the impact of sins committed by the Karta but bring in auspicious tidings to him and his family.

There after the Karta should pray the Pitras as follows:

Daataaram nobhiyardhantaam Vedaah santatireyacha.

Shraddaacha no maa vyagmad bahudeyam cha nostwati/

( May our Vamsha be full of persons who give large daanaas ( donations) and who possess Veda Jnaana; may our progeny be increased in good srtength; may not the persons in my clan lessen our devotion to Brahmanas, Pitaras and Devas as also our great interest in Shastras and Scriptures!

Tirtha Mahima: Gaya, Pushkara, Sarasvata, Kaalanjara and many other Tirthas

Romaharshana (Veda Vyasa) addressing the Sages at Naimisha Forest provided brief descriptions of several Tirthas and a few of them are mentioned here-below:

Gaya:

Gayaa Tirtham param guhyam Pitrunaam chaativallabham,

*Krutwaa pinda pradaanam tu na bhuyovjaayatey narah/* 

Sakrud Gayaabhigamanam krutwaa pidam dadaati yah,

Taaritam tarastena yaasyanti Paramaa Gatim/

(Gaya Kshetra is one of the most beloved Tirthaas of Pitru Devataas and human beings who offer Pindas to Pitras have no rebirth. Even if once the sacred deed of 'Pinda Pradana' is executed at Gaya, Pitraas would be freed from Narakaas and are forwarded to Parama Gati.). At Gaya the most hallowed signs of Rudra Deva's feet are imprinted on a Stone and offering Pindaas there would most certainly bless the Karta and redeem the Pitraas. Even while a person is in a position to visit Gaya and perform the Pinda Pradana, he is lazy or careless and the Pitras would feel disgruntled and dissatisfied. The Pitraas would avow:

Yadi syaat paatakopetah swaadharmarati varjitah,

Gayaam yaasyati yah kaschit sosmaan santaarayishyati/

(Even if a person in my Vamshaa were highly sinful for any reason and did not observe 'Swadharama' but had visited Gayan Tirth and gave away Pinda Pradana, he would still be liberated!).

Prabhasa: is a Holy Place where Bhgavan Shri Krishna and Yadava Chiefs spent the last months of their lives there. Worship at that Kshetra by way of Snaana, Tapa, Shraaddha and Brahmana Puja would have lasting benefits including Uttama Loka Prapti. Traiyambaka Tirtha is worshipped by Devas and 'Rudraaraadhana'at the Jyotir Linga there would bestow Jyotishtoma Yajna phala; 'Aaraadhana' of Kapardi and 'Suvarnaaksha' Maha Deva would yield Gaanapatya Pada prapti. Someshwara Linga Tirtha and puja there grants Sarva Vyadhi Nivaarana or relief from all kinds of diseases. Vijaya Tirtha housing Vijaya Maheshwara Linga is known for a Six-month long day-time Upavaasa ending with Evening worship would grant Parama Gati. Ekaamra Kshetra is famed for Shankara in the banks of Maha Nadi especially during Eclipse Timings; Snaanaas and worship would secure devotees the Ganapatya Phala and Kingship in their instant lives. Viraja Nadi Snaana assures of Brahma Loka; Purushottama Kshetra puja of Narayana grants of Vishnu Loka Prapti; Gokarneshwara Lingaabhisheka with milk and bilwa secures Shiva Sayujya.

Pushkara Tirtha: The unique Tirtha of Brahma is widely renowned in the World as Pushkara whose mere thought is enough to secure a wipe-out of sins and ensure an access to Brahma Loka. It is believed that besides human beings, Deva-Gandharva-Yaksha-Naaga-Raakshasa-Siddhas were constantly engaged in the worship of Parameshthi Brahma Deva and when one worshipped at the Tirtha. Indra darshan too is available at the Tirtha besides fulfillment of wishes and also of Brahma Loka Prapti.

Saptasaaraswata Tirtha is a well known Place of Shiva worship that is stated to fetch Ashwamedha Yagna Phala. The belief was that one Muni named Manganaka who was an unparalleled Shiva Bhakta excelled in the constant Japa of the Panchaakshari Mantra of *Om Namah Shivaaya* for several years and started performing Shiva Tandava with ecstacy. Shankara once approached the Muni and asked for the reason of his excessive joy and an over confident Muni replied that his happiness was due to his devotion of Shiva and the effect of constant Panchaakshari Japa. Shiva decided that the Muni became arrogant and decided to show down the Muni; he surpassed the Muni's Tandava and revealed himself with thousand heads, eyes and feet with fire all round and fearful. The Muni got frightened and intensified his Rudraadhaaya Japa and prostrated before Maha Deva. The latter then cooled down and having embraced the Muni

rewarded him with his vision of Tripurasamhaara Maheshwara along with Devi Parvati. Maha Deva then warded off the Muni's terror and explained about himself to the Muni:

Aham Sahasra nayanah Sarvaatmaa Sarvao mukhah,

Daahakah Sarva paapaanaam Kaalah Kaalaaro Harah/

Mayaiva preryatey krutsnam Cheanaachetanaatmakam,

Sontaryaami sa Purusho hyaaham vai Purushottamah/

Tasya saa Paramaa Maayaa Prakritistrigunmaatmikaa,

Prochatey Munibhih Shaktirjagardyonih Sanaatani/

Sa yesha Maayayaa Vishwam Vyaamohayati Vishwavit,

Naraayanah Paro Vyakto Maayaarupa iti Shrutih/

Yevamekajjagat Sarvam Sarvadaa Sthaaapa-yamyaham,

Yojayaami PrakrityaahamPurusham Pancha vimshikam/

(I am the thousand faced and thousand eyed Sarvaatma who demolishes sins of my devotees; I am Kaala as also the Creator of Kaala; it is through me that the Chetana (Conscious and fully aware) or Achetana or unaware Jagat gets materialised. I am the Antaryami or the Hidden Purushottama whose Prakriti Rupa of Three Gunas is called Maya the captivator and whom Munis realise as Sanatatana Shakti which is the the root cause of the Universe. I am the Sarvajna Purusha who through the Maya Shakti mesmerises and whom Shritis acclaim as the Narayana, Para and Avyakta. This is how I establish the World and act as a catalyst of Prakriti in creating the Maha Tatwa which in turn was the product of the Twenty Five Tatvas.)-

Evametaani Tatwaani Pradhaana Purusheswaraah,

Vishnu Brahmaacha Bhagavaan Rudrah Kaala iti Shrutihi/

Trayamedanaadyantam Brahmanyeva Vyavasthitam,

Tadaatmakam Tadavyaktam Tadaksharamiti Shrutih/

Atmaanandaparam Tatwam Chinmaatram Paramam Padam,

Aakaasham Nishkalam Brahma tasmaayanna Vidyatey/

(This is how all these Tatwaas are of Pradhaana Purusheswara. Shrutis confirmed that the three Entities of Vishnu, Brahma and Kaala Rudra are manifested out of the same Parama Purusha who was Avyakta /Unknown, Akshara Imperishable, Atmaananda Swarupa, Parama Tatwa, Chinmaya, Parama pada Rupa, Aakaasha Rupa and Nishkala (Spotless) Brahma and none else. In fact, there is none and nothing else

beyond!). Manganaka Muni heard every word of Maha Deva, who blessed the Muni to secure Shiva Loka.

Kalanjara Tirtha: A King named Shweta at Kalanjara was a passionate devotee of Rudra Deva and having formally installed a Linga with high dedication worshipped for several years. On one auspicious day Maha Deva granted his appearance but as a scary and dancing Figure with a Trishula in his powerful hands with garlands of human skulls and serpents; the Rajarshi got startled and holding the Shiva Linga tight recited 'Shata Rudriya' loudly with disbelief and shock. Shiva consoled the King and transformed himself into a peaceful Swarupa along with Devi Parvati as the King prayed to him still in a trance:

Namo Bhavaaya hetavey Haraaya Visdhwa sambhavey,

Namah Shivaaya dheematey namopavarga daayine/

Namo namo namostutey Mahaa Vibhutaye namah,

Vibhaagarupiney namo Naraadhipaaya/

Namostutey Ganeshwara prapanna duhkha naashana,

Anaadi nithya bhutaye Varaaha shringa dhaariney/

Namo Vrishabhadhwajaaya tey Kapaala maaliney namah,

Namo Mahaa nataaya tey namo Vrishabhadhwajaya tey/

(Salutations to Bhava the Cause and Creation of the World; Hara; the bestower of Moksha; Maha Vibhuti Swarupa or of Manifestations and Faculties of Shiva; the Destroyer of Sorrows of those dedicated to him; You are the one without beginning and termination and indivisible too; You are the Shringa or horn of the Varaharupa (with which Bhu Devi was rescued from Rasaatala); You are the wearer of skulls as garlands and Vrishabha Vahana). As the Prayer was over, Maha Deva granted 'Ganapatya' or the Status of the Chief of 'Ganaas'. Such was the background of Kalanjara Tirtha, where 'Shiva -Araadhana' was stated to be of immence consequence.

Other Sacred Tirthaas: Mahaalaya is a Secret Tirtha where a 'Shilaatala Charana' or the Sacred Feet of Maha Shiva got materialised as a proof and warning to Nastiks or Non-Believers and is continued as a Maha Tirtha where ash-smeared bodied Bhaktas engaged in recitations of 'Maha Nyasa' are visible to date. Kedara Kshetra continues to attract global attention, despite natural deterrents of snow and other difficulities of access on high- altitude where Vrishaketu Maha Deva Linga is venerated with singular devotion after taking bath in the Kshetra, besides performing Shraaddhas, Daanaas and other 'Karmas' with great sense of endurance and fulfillment. Godavari and Kaveri River Banks are dotted with Kshetras where Pitru Tarpanas and Shraddhas are performed on all occasions like Eclipses and 'Parva Dinas' of localised popularity besides being the Halllowed Places of 'Nimajjanaas' or formal immersions of human ashes adfter deaths. Brahma Tirtha enjoys international fame for Pitru Karyas like Shraddhas and Brahma Puja, where Sacred River Saraswati literally goes under ground and provides glimpses at intermittent places like Prayaga Sangama before merging into the Ocean; the much famed Vyasa Tirtha in a mountain cave exists as per belief from where Vyasa Muni scripted Maha Bharata while noted by Ganeshwara himself from a nearby cave by telepathy. Maanasa Sarovara snaana is stated to result in 'Indra's Arthaasana' or of half of Indra's half throne. This is a popular Mountain of extraordinary vegetation and

natural surroundings of medicinal properties and there is a strong belief that bathing in the Pushkarini near by would wash off 'Brahma Hatya Maha Pataka' or the heinous sin of killing a Brahmana; the Puranic belief was that Indra who killed Vritrasura a Brahmana suffered the chase of Brahma Hatya 'Paapa' Devi who could not locate Indra hiding in the stem of a lotus flower inside the Sarovara and that was how the disappearance of Indra led the temporary crowning of King Nahusha as Indra as the former performed ninty nine Ashwamedhas; the qualifier to become Indra was to perform hundred such Yagnas. On reaching Badarikaashrama, human beings would have got rid of sins typical of Kali Yuga. This is the hallowed Kshetra where Nara-Narayana Mahashris stayed and performed great Tapasyas. Also, Badari had been the spot that Mahadeva as particularly fond of. Also, Badari is the Place where Pitru Pujas are immensly valuable as the process of redemption to Pitras is stated to be quick and effective.

Shiva Linga 'Patana' at Deva Daaru Vana, Brahma's reproof to Munis and their remorse

Brahma extols Shiva Mahima, Muni Stuti and Shiva's discourse on Karma & Jnaana Yogas)

In the days yore, thousands of Munis were engaged in their Tapasya along with their wives and families observing an orderly routine of Vedic duties and performing Yagnas frequently. Into this routine, Maha Deva landed as an attractive and healthy youth along with Vishnu as Maya Devi of enticing body features and matchless beauty. Apparently, both of the Maha Devas viz. Shiva and Vishnu desired to teach the Maharshis about the 'Pravrutthi Marga' (Karma Yoga of Grihastis) as against the 'Nivrutti Marga' (Sanyasa Yoga). There was a commotion in the Society as the womenfolk got mesmerised with the body features of Shiva as a romantic male and the sons of Munis went berserk with Vishnu as a dazzling female. The presence of the couple was highly disturbing especially as they were displaying romance in public and were even dancing in provocative postures. Some of the elderly Maharshis encountered the male youth and asked him about his antecedents and the latter replied smilingly that they desired to perform Tapasya; the Rishis asked the male youth to do so without his wife but Shiva replied that neither his wife desired to possess another male nor he would leave her any way. Asked as to who was he, Shiva replied that he was a Siddha and had been residing earlier in the 'Brahma Maya Mandala'! As Shiva in the form of a Male Youth gave such careless replies, the Munis surrounded him despising the youth's semi-nakedness and assaulted him physically with blows and punches and said:

Dushtaa charanti Girisham nagnam vikruta lakshanam,

Prochuretad Bhavaallingamutpaatayatu Durmatey/

(When the semi-nude Girisha faced the Munis, the latter shouted on them and said: Durmatey! You better drop off your Linga, the Symbol of man-hood)! Shiva replied that if they so insisted likewise, he would do so and having done so, Shiva disappeared and so did Vishnu in the feminine form. While this happened, there was sudden darkness all around, severe earthquakes were experienced, Planets were out of their positions and oceans were highly disturbed.

Maharshis prayed to Brahma Deva at this occurrence and a highly nervous and distressed Brahma replied:

Ha kashtam bhavataamadya jaatam Sarvaarthanaashanam,

Dhigbalam dhik tapascharyaa mithyaiva bhavataamiha/

Sampraapya Punyasamskaaraannadheenam Paramam nidhim,

Upekshitam vridhaachaarairbhavadbhiriha mohitaih/

Kaamkshatey Yogino nityam yatnanto yatayo nidhim,

Yameva tam samaasaadya haabhavadbhirupekshitam/

(Ha! What a huge misfortune had befallen; fie on your stupidity and senselessness! What ever Tapasya had been done all these years and decades had come to nought! Alas! Whatever physical and mental sacrifices that were made and almost reached fruition had been ruined and got wasted! Alas indeed, the great Nidhi / Fund that Maha Yogis and Yatis craved for their life times was no doubt achieved but slipped through fingers irretrievably!)

Brahma further expressed his dismay and sorrow at this most unfotunate incident to the Maharshis and described Parama Shiva's magnificence as follows: At the time of Pralayas or the Great Universal Exterminations repeatedly occuring for thousands of Yugas in the Timeless Past, Bhagavan Shankara assumes Kaala Swarupa and annihilates Devas, Rishis, Pitaras and all Physical Beings in Creation. He then resumes Stishti after each such Pralaya. Since there is no difference between him and Vishnu, some times he transforms himself as he pleases into Vishnu Swarupa with Chakra, Vajra and Shri Vatsa symbol; during Krita yuga Shiva assumes Yogi Swarupa; in Treta Yuga he adopts Yagna Swarupa; in Dwapara Yoga he assumes Kaaala Rupa and in Kali Yuga as Dhumaketu. Rudra has manifested as Three Murtis encompassing the entire Universe. It was stated that the Prime Form of Tamoguna is Agni, Brahma signifies Rajo guna and Vishnu represents Satwa guna. Shiva's another Swarupa is stated to be Digambara (Nude), Shaswata and Shivatmika and is known as Para Brahma; his one-half of physical Form is his wife as Artha Nariswara; indeed he is Paramatma Narayana who creates and absorbs every thing into him. He indeed is the Supreme Enchanter and the Final Destiny!

Sahasra Purushah Sahasraakshah Sahasrapaat,

Eka Shringo Mahatmaanaa Puraanashtaksharo Harih/

Chaturvedaschaturmurtir- trigunaha Parah,

Ekamurtirameyaatmaa Narayana iti Shrutih/

(Maha Purusha Shri Hari , the Ashtaakshara Murti of Om Namo Narayanaaya, who possesses thousands of heads, eyes and feet had the distinction of pulling up the Universe with one 'shringa' / horn; the Shritis underscore that Narayana is of the Manifestations of Chatur Vedas, Chatur Murtis, Tri Murtis and Tri Gunaas and yet is really of a Single Form!)

Narayana who is the Prime Form of Water is the decider of the Karma Phala of every Being. All the virtuous practitioners of Dharma look to him as an Example and through various Stutis and Mantras seek solace from him in their strife for Salvation. That Paramatma who creates and ends up the Samsara is neither born nor terminated nor even grown. In the Swarupa of Brahma, He sows the seed; as Vishnu he preserves and as Shiva uproots. Thus Paramatma assumes different Swarupas depending on their end-objectives!

Having said this, Brahma instructed the Maharshis to instal Lingas along the Pratimas of Devi and Putras and worship vigourously with the help of relevant Mantras. The installation of Lingas has to be accomplished with utmost reverence along the recitations of Vedas and Shata Rudriyas and the next generations too should be sensitized to worship the Shiva Linga with increased vigour and faith. After Brahma explained on the above lines and disappeared, the Maharshis felt ashamed of their thoughtless

action and resolved to propagate universal awareness of Linga Pratishtha and regular Shiva Linga Puja. Then they prostrated before Bhagavan Shiva in their own hearts, minds and inner visions and most repentantly made the following Stuti:

Namo Devaadi Devaaya Mahadevaaya tey namah,

Traiyambakaaya Namastubhyam Trishula vara dhaariney/

Namo Digvaasasey tubhyam Vikrutaaya Pinaakiney,

Sarva Pranata dehaaya Swayam Pranataatmaney/

Antakaanta krutey tubhyam Sarva Samhaaranaayacha,

Namostu Nrittya sheelaaya Namo Bhairava Rupiney/

Naranaari shariraaya yoginaam Guravey namah,

Namo Daantaaya Shaantaaya Tyaapasaaya Haraaya cha/

Vibhishanaaya Rudraaya Namastey Krittivaasasey,

Namastey Lolihaanaaya Shitikanthaaya tey namah/

Aghoraghora rupaaya Vaamadevaaya vai namah,

Namah Kanakamaalaaya Devyaah Priyakaraaya cha/

Ganga saliladhaaraaya Shambavey Parameshtiney,

Namo Yogaadhipataye Brahmaadhipataey Namah/

Praanaaya cha Namastubhyam namo Bhasmaanga raaginy,

Namastey Ghana vaahaaya damshtriney Vahniretasey/

Brahmanaas cha Shiro hatrey namastey Kaala rupiney,

Aaaganti tey na jaaneemo ganti naiva cha naiva cha,

Vishweshwara Maha Deva yosi sosi namostutey/

Namah Pramathanaayaaya Daatrey cha Meedhushtamaaya tey,

Namah Kanaka Lingaaya Vaari Lingaaya tey namah/

Namo Vahnyarkya Lingaaya Jnaana Lingaaya tey namah,

Namo bhujanga haaraaya Karnikaara priyaaya cha,

Kirtiney Kundaliney Kaal Kaalaaya tey namah/

Vaama deva Maheshaana Devadeva Trilochana,

Kshamyataam yatkrutam mohaat tatwameva sharanam hi nah/

Charitaani vichitraani gruhaani gahanaanicha,

Brahma deenaam cha Sarveshaam Durvijayosi Shankara/

Ajnaanaad yadi vaa Jnaanaad yatkinchit kurutey Narah,

Tatsarvam Bhagavaaneva kurutey Yogamaayayaa/

(Our sincere salutations to you Devaadi Deva, Maha Deva, Trishula dhaari, Traimbaka, Digambara, Vikruta Rupa, Pinaakini; You are the refuge to one and all while you do not require anybody's shelter or support; if Yama is the destroyer, you are capable of destroying Yama, if need be; You are the Greatest Dancer and is Bhairava; You are of Nara-Naari Swarupa or Ardha Naarishwara and the Yoga Guru; our greetings to you the Daanta, Shaanta and Taapasa Swarupa; Rudra! You are the Most Ferocious one, wearing Animal Skins; Lolihaana (Serpent: an epithet for Shiva); Sthitikantha (white throated); Aghora; Ghora Rupa or of Grotesque Form; Vaama Deva; garlanded by Kanaka pushpas; Devi Priya Karta; Gangaadhara; Pramatha naatha; Shambhu; Yogadhipati; Brahmaadhipati; Of Ash leden Limbs; Praana Rupa; Megha Vahana or The One carried by Clouds; Damshtri! Vahni Reta or Fire-Spermed; Brahma Shira Harana or He who snipped one of Brahma's heads; Kaala Rupa; Gamanaagama Jnaana nirata or he who knows about the Entry and Exit of all Beings; Vishweswara! Maha Deva! We salute you in the same Swarupa as You were when you disappeared; You are Pramadha Nadha! Sampada daata or the Bestower of Prosperity; Kapaala dhaari! Meedhushta Linga! Kanaka Linga! Vaari Linga! Agni Linga! Surya Linga! Jnaana Linga! Sarpamaalaa Dhara! Karnikaara Pushpa Maalaa Dhara! Kireeta-Kundala Dhara! Kaala Kaala! Vaama Deva! Trilochana! Maheshaana! Devaadhi Deva! You have hypnotized us and we are ashamed of what we did to you; do very kindly pardon us for our inexcusable and disgraceful action but we are all in your protection! You defy description as you are deep, secretive and complex. Maha Deva! Brahma and others could simply not comprehend you! Whatever Human beings act is only the product of what Maya does and indeed Maya's actions are the product of your own choice!)

As Munis made the above submission to Maha Deva, the latter granted to them his appearance; there after select Maharshis like Bhrigu, Angira, Vasishtha, Vishwamitra, Goutama, Atri and so on made a request to Maha Deva as to how one should worship him; should it be by the means of Karma Yoga or Jnaana Yoga! In fact Maha Deva entered Deva Daru Vana like a semi-lunatic as an attractive youth along with Vishnu in Stree Swarupa only to clarify on this very subject of worship: should it be by the Pravrutti Marga or Nivrutti Marga?

Shiva's discourse on Karma and Jnaana Yogas: Mahadeva replied to the above queries on the same lines of what he revealed to Brahmadeva too: To attain Mukti, human beings have two options of Sankhya Yoga; one is Karma Yoga another is Jnaana Yoga; Karma Yoga alone would not secure Moksha and it has to be supplemented with Jnaan Yoga:

Na kevalena Yogena drushyatey Purushah Parah,

Jnaanam tu kevalam samyagapavarga phala Pradam/

Bhavantah kevalam yogam sdamaashritya vimuktayey,

Vihaaya Saamkhyam Vimalamakur-vanta parishramam/

Etasmaat kaaranaat Vipraa Nrunaam kevaladharminaam,

Aaagatohamimam desham jnaapayan Moha sambhavam

/(Merely Karmayoga shall not reach one to Mukti; Jnaana nishtha or the discipline of Jnaana too is essential. You persons are merely following karma sadhana without jnaana and that was the reason why I had to descend down in disguise to correct you!). You should all try to learn, understand and visualise the Jnaana route to Mukti. Atma (Inner Soul) is pure, unadulterated with inhibitions, transparent and permanent. That is the Brahma bhava; Yatis who practise the vision of Vishwa Swarupa become aware of that Jnaana and distinguish wood for the forest! Karma yoga or the relentless practice of virtuous deeds is no doubt useful and essential upto a point but knowing of Paramatma and of his qualities of Omni Presence, Omni-Science, Omni Potence, of His Infinity and Permanance needs to be understood clearly and then continuous meditation be resorted to).

Jnaana yogarataah Shaantaamameva sharanam gataah,

ye hi maam bhasmanirataa dhyaayanti satatam hridi/

Madbhakti Paramaa Nityam yatayah ksheenakalmashaah,

Naashayaamyachiraat teshaam ghoram Samsaara saagaram/

Those who truly understand the futility of Samsara in their hearts would smear Bhasma on their face and body as a sign of Vairagya, seek my protection recognising my Supremacy and engage in my Dhyana constantly). My Bhaktas must practise equanimity of sorrows and joys; from temporary failures and successes besides worldly distractions and joys. Then they should practise Brahmacharya, accord least importance to dress and related attributes of physical looks, false prestiges and vanity; enforce physical-mental control and think of nothing else than me.

Mahadeva stated that in the past, he prescribed Paashupata Vrata:

Yesha Paashupato Yogah sevaneeyo Mumukshubhih,

Bhasmacchannairhi satatam nishkaamairiti vishrutih/

Veetaraaga bhayakrodhaa manmaaa maamupaashritaah,

Bahavonena yogena putaa madbhaava –maagataah/

(Those 'Mumukshus' who aim at Moksha have no desires and are always in the practice of Pashupata Yoga with Bhasma and Nishkaama as their hall-marks. They are fully rid of desire, fear and anger and surrender themselves into my sanctuary).

Bhagavan further asserted:

Veda murtiraham Vipraa naanya Shaastraardhavedibhih,

Jnaayatey matswarupam tu muktwaa Vedam Sanaatanam/

Sthaapayadhwamidam Maargam Pujayadhwam Maheshwaram,

Achiraadaishwaram Jnaanamut- pashyati na samshayah/

Mayi Bhaktischa Vipulaa Bhavataamastu Sattamaah,

Dhyaatamaatrohi Saamnidhyam daasyayaami Munisattamaah/

(Brahmanaas! I am the Veda Murti. Persons like you who ignored Sanaatana Vedas and sought to adopt novel interpretations of Shastras could indeed never realise me; You must now on revise your ways of thinking and observe Ishwara Puja which should provide you the Sanatana Jnaana of Ishwara without doubt. May you all be granted with enormous devotion to me; as you ponder about me and meditate to me, you should be able to come near to me!)

As Maha Deva preached the above and disappeared, the Maharshis commenced worship with full vigour and in the process and passage of time, they broadened their vision and raised certain relevant and germane queries in the quest of further knowledge:

Kimasya Jagato Mulamaatmaa chaasmaka -meva hi,

Kopi syaat Sarva bhaavaanaam hetureeshwara eva cha/

(What is the root cause of this Universe! The reply would be: The Atma is the genesis of the Universe!; What is the causation or inter-connection between Atma and the Material in the Universe! The reply would be: Maha Deva is the Creator of all 'Bhaavaas' or Material.)

To annotate these pertinent queries, Devi Parvati appeared and the Maharshis who visioned her with thousands of 'Tejojwaalaas' or innumerable strings of extra- ordinary flames as the Maharshis came to realise that Maheshwari was the Mula Shakti- the 'Paramasya Beejam' or the Supreme Seed- which was the Causation! They commended Parvati as the Maha Maya Shakti and saluted her:

Iyam hi saa Jajato yonirekaa Sarvaatmikaa Sarvaniyaamikaa cha,

Maaheshwari Shaktiranaadi Siddhaa Vyomaabhidhaanaa Divi Raajateeva/

Asyaam Mahat Parameshthi Parastaanmaheshwarah Shiva Ekotha Rudrah,

Chakaara Vishwam Para Shakti nishthaam Maayaamathaaruhya sa Deva Devah/

Eko Devah Sarva Bhuteshu Goodho Maayee Rudrah Sakalo nishkalascha,

Sa yeva Devi na cha Tadvibhinnametatjjyaatwaa hyamrutatvam vrajanti/

(This Maheshwari Shakti is indeed the core source of the Samsara and its Supreme Enforcer and Regulator; Devadi Deva Parameshthi the Unique and Adviteeya depends on his own manifestation as Maya does ably assist in the Creation and deeds of the Universe).

Kurma Purana Phala Shruti and Kurma Deva Stuti by Maharshis

Etat Puranam Paramam Bhashitam Kurmarupinaa,

Sakshaat Devaadi Devena Vishnunaa Vishwa yoninaa/

Yah pathet satatam Martyo niyamena samaahitah,

Sarva paapa vinirmukto Brahma lokey mahiyatey/

(Kurma Purana is stated to have been recited by the Kurma Rupa dhari Adideva Vishnu himself. Those who read the Purana with concentration and sincerity would have their Paapaas demolished and attain Brahma Loka.)

If one could formally write down the Purana and gift it to a Vedajna Brahmana during the Vaishakha Month that commendable deed would secure prosperity in the current life and enjoyment of Swarga Sukhaas therafter; in the subsequent life, he would be reborn with Brahma Vidya. Even reading one chapter of the Purana and assimilate its purport, the Reader would secure Parama Punya.

Persons who aspire for Moksha, especially those who desire to assimiltate the latent and intensive meaning of Vedas must read, hear, cogitate and digest the contents of this Purana. Gifting of this Purana to a learned and mature Pandita would add on to the fund of Punya as it would open new vistas of further learning to the receiver as also to the donor.

In short, this Purana opens up fresh frontiers of Learning, especially to visualise Bhagavan Narayana who is stated to be 'Avyaktam Shaswatam Vishnum -anatamajamavyayam' or Unknown, Everlasting, Omni Present, Endless, Unborn and Indestructible.

### Stuti of Kurma Deva by Maharshis

Namastey Kurmarupaaya Vishnavey Paramatmaney, Narayanaya Vishwaaya Vaasudevaaya tey namah/

Namo namastey Krishnaaya Govindaaya Namo namah, Maadhavaaya Namastubhyam namo Yajneshwaraaya cha/

Sahasra shirasey tubhyam sahasraakshaaya tey namah, Namah Sahasra Hastaaya Sahasra Charanaayacha/

Om Namo Jnaanarupaaya Paramaastaswa rupiney, Anandaaya Namastubhyam Mayatitaaya tey namah/

Namo gudha shariraaya Nirgunaaya Namostutey, Purushaaya Puraanaya Satthaamaatra swarupiney/

Namah Sankhyaaya Yogaaya Kevalaaya Namostutey, Dharmajnaadhigamyaaya Nishkalaaya Namo namah/

Namostu Vyoma tatwaaya Maha Yogeshwaraaya cha, Paraavaaranaam Prabhavey Veda Vedyaaya tey Namah/

Namo Buddhaaya Shuddhaaya Namo Yuktaaya Hetavey, Namo Namo Namastubhyam Maayiney Vedhasey Namah/

Namostutey Varaahaaya Narasimhaaya tey Namah, Vaamanaaya Namastubhyam Hrishikeshaaya tey Namah/

Namostu Kaala Rudraaya Kaalarupaaya tey Namah, Swargaapavaraga daatrey cha Namo Pratihataatmaney/

Namo Yogaadhi gamyaaya Yoginey Yogadaayiney, Devaanaam Pataye tubhyam Devaarti shamanaaya tey/

Bhagavamstat prasaadena Sarva Samsaara naashanam, Asmaabhi –vanditam Jnaanam Yajjatwa amritamashnitey/

Shrutaastu vividhaa Dharmaa Vamshaa Manvanta –raani cha, Sargascha Pratisargascha Brahmaandasyaasya vistarah/

Twam hi Sarva Jagatsaakshi Vishvo Naaraayana parah, Traatumarhasyanantaatmamstwameva Sharanam gatih/

(Our salutations to Kurmarupa Vishnu, Vishwarupa, Narayana, Vaasudeva, Krishna, Govinda, Maadhava, Yagneshwara! You possess thousands of heads, eyes, hands and feet. You are the Pranava Swarupa, Jnaana Rupa, Ananda Rupa Paramatma! You are of Undisclosed Physique, Nirguna and Mayaateeta or Beyond Falsity! You are Purana Purusha, Sattamaatra (Shakti) Swarupa, Sankhya Yoga Rupa, Advitiya or Unique, and Nishkala. Narayana! You are attainable only by Dharma and Jnaana; Vyoma (Sky) Tatwa Swarupa; Maha Yogeshwara; Creator of 'Paraapara' Material; Veda Vedya; Shudda / Jnaana Swarupa and Embodiment of Purity; Nirakara Swarupa or of Shapeless Form; Buddha or Jnaana Swarupa; Yoga Yukta; Hetu Rupa or the Cause of the Universe; Mayavi or Maya Niyantraka or the Regulator of Illusions; and Vedha or 'Prapancha Srashta'. Our sincere 'Pranaams' to you Vishnu Bhagavan! You had assumed incarnations like Varaha Rupa, Narasimha, and Vamaa Rupa! You are Hrishikesha or Indriyeshwara; Kaala Rudra, Kaala Rupa; and 'Swargaapavarga Pradaata' or the Decider of Heaven or otherwise to various Beings. Bhagavan, You are 'Apratihataatma' or the Everlasting and Imperishable Soul; Yogaadi gamya or the Goal of Yoga; Maha Yogi and Yoga daataa; Deva Swami and Deva Kashta Shamana or the Reliever of Difficulties faced by Devas. Our prostrations to you Bhagavan! It is through your grace that one secures Mukti from Samsara. It is through your elegance that one obtains Jnaana with which to learn Amritatwa. Kurma Deva! Through you from this Kurma Purana that we have learnt innumerable facts about Dharma, Sarga, Prati Sarga, Brahmanada, and so on. Indeed you are the Permanent Evidence of the Universes that came or in position and yet to emerge; We seek protection from You Vishwarupa, Parama Narayana and Anantaatma!)

### **ESSENCE OF LINGA PURANA**

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Connotation of Omkara and Analysis of Shiva's Body Parts (Vishnu's Prayers to Maha Deva included)

Preface to 'Lingarchana', Pancha Yagna and Lingarchana Vidhi

Origin of Shiva Linga and Mahima of Atithya, Pativratya, Bhakti and Bhasma

Apara Stuti to Maha Deva included and Triambika Mantra explained)

Maharshi Dadhichi proves superiority of Shiva Shakti to King Kshupa

Birth of Nandeswara and Linga Puja

Shiva's Samishthi Rupa (An integrated Portrait of Maha Deva)

'Shiva Sankalpamastu': Parashara's 'Rudraarchana' and glory to his Vamsha

Mahadeva exterminates Tripurasuraas

Pashupata Yoga, Vividha Murti Pratishtha, Shivalayaas & Lingarchana Vidhi

Paapa Vimochana Vidhi, Uma Maheswara Vrata and other Vrataas - (Pashupaasha Vimochana Mantra) i

'Panchaakshara JapaMahatmya' and 'Dhyaana Yagna'

Arishta and Mrityu Suchanaas and precautions like Japas and Tirtha Yatras

Shiva Leelaas: Andhaka pardoned, Bhu Devi rescued, Prahlada saved and Jalandhara killed (Nrisimha Stotra included)

Vishnu Krita Shiva Sahasra Naamaavali

Sati's immolation at Daksha Yagna, Shiva-Parvati Kalyana & 'Vighneshotpatti'

Shiva Tandava (The Cosmic Dance)

Bala Muni Upamanyu attains 'Ganapatya' as denied milk led to Shiva Bhakti

Shivaakshara Mantras, Pashus, their Self Control and Realisation of Pashupati

Shiva's Vibhutis (counter-parts), Vishwa Rupa, Ashta Rupas & Shiva Tatwa

(Shiva's self-description included)

Shiva Mandala Puja- -Dhyana --Guru 'Mukhyata' -Diksha Vidhi- - Mandala Puja as prescribed

Shiva Linga Pratishtha and Mahatmya

Varied Swarupas of Gayatri created by Maha Deva

Phala Shruti

Annexure of Shiva Sahasra Naamaas

### ESSENCE OF LINGA PURANA

Om Shri Ganeshaya Namah, Om Namah Shivaaya Namah,

Namo Rudraaya Brahmaney Paramatmaney,

Pradhaana Purushaaya Sarga Sthityantakaariney/

Akaaramakaaram Sthulam Sukshmam Paraatparam,

Omkaara rupa mrugvaktram Saama Jihvaa samanvitam/

Yajurveda mahaagreevamatharma hridayam Vibhum,

Pradhaana Purushaateetam Pralayotpatti varjitam/

Tamasaa Kaala Rudrasyam Rajasaa Kanakaangijam,

Satvena Sarvagam Vishnum Nirgunatvey Maheswaram/

(Suta Maha Muni prayed to Brahma-Vishnu- Shiva and after greeting Veda Vyasa addressed a huge gathering of Rishis initiated the description of Linga Purana by stating that Omkara comprising 'A'kaara, 'U' and 'M'kaara denotes 'Shtula' or Gross, 'Sukshma' (Miniscule) and 'Paraatpara' or the Supreme Forms. The Omkara Swarupa has Rig Veda as its Face, SamaVeda as its tongue, Yajur Veda as its neck and Atharva Veda as its heart. The Pradhana Purusha or the Prime Being is made of 'Taamasika' Feature representing Bhagavan Rudra, 'Rajasika' Feature standing Brahma, 'Satwa Guna' denoting Vishnu and 'Nirguna' as Parameshwara.)

## 'Linga' and 'Alinga Rupaas' and Primary Creation

Invisible Shiva called 'Alinga' is the root of the visible 'Linga' or 'Prakruti'/Shaivi /Maya or the Universe. Thus the visible Linga (Prakriti) is Shiva Swarupa itself. The synthesis of the Alinga and Linga is known as the 'Aoutthama' Linga, which is devoid of 'Gunas' or characteristics. The Alinga Paramatma is Infinite, Constant and All-Pervasive as also the Unique Trimurti Rupa performing the three deeds of Srishti- Sthiti-Samhara in the manifestations of Brahma-Vishnu and Shiva as the Beeja (Seed) Swarupa. Prakriti or yoni is created by as many as twenty-six inputs viz. Maha Tatwa (Supreme Manifestation), Ahamkara (the Great Consciousness) comprising the Tri Gunaas or Tamo-Rajaasa-Satwa Gunas or features; The Tamasa Ahamkara creates Tanmatras or Subtle Forms of Matter viz. the foremost Tanmatra of Shabda (Sound) leading to Akaasha (Sky); Akaasha creating the Sparsha (Touch) Tanmatra; the Sparsha creating Vayu (Air), the Vayu creating the Rupa (Form) Tanmatra; Rupa Tanmatra creating Tejas or Radiance (Agni); Agni creating Rasa (Taste) Tanmatra; Rasa creating Jala or Water; Water creating Gandha (Smell) Tanmatra; and Gandha creating Prithvi / Earth; thus there is a perfect link between Pancha Tanmatras and Pancha Bhutas. Now the Saatwika Ahamkara created Pancha Jnaneindriyas, Pancha Karmandriyas and Manasa or Mind; the Pancha Jnanendriyas are Twak (Skin for Touch), Chakshu (Eyes of Vision), Nasika (Nose for Smell), Jihva (Tongue for Taste) and Shrotra (Ears for Hearing); the Pancha Karmendriyas are Vaak (Speech), Payu (anus), Upastha (Marmendriya), Hasta

(Hands) and Paada (Feet). As the twenty six inputs of Mahatawa-Ahamkara-Tri Guna- Pancha Tanmatras-Pancha Bhuta- Pancha Jnaanendriya-Pancha Karmdendriya and Manas were ready and in Position, there manifested Brahmanda the Golden Egg with Brahma seated inside along with Vishnu and Shiva who too floated over the Maha Jala (as distinguished from Water as a component of Pancha Bhutas) of a volume of ten times more than that of the Golden Egg; of MahaVaayu ten times more than that of the volume of Maha Jala and of Mahaakaasha or the Greater Sky of ten times further of the volume of Maha Vayu. Interestingly, there are several such Brahmandaas in the Maha Srishti!

In the beginning, Brahma made unintentional and casual Creations called Tamas, Moha, Maha Moha, Tamisra and Andha; indeed he was dissatisfied with these and after Tapasya and concentration, created Sanaka-Sanandana-Sanat Kumara Brothers, followed by Marichi, Angirasa, Pulastya, Pulaha, Rithu, Atri and Vasistha who were like Brahma himself from his Yoga Vidya as they were all endowed with Brahama Vidya and were Brahma Vaadis. Then emerged nine Prajapatis and one Ayonija named Shatarupa; the latter and from her husband Swayambhu were born Priayamvada and Uttanapada; Akruti, Prasuti and Devahuti were also born to Swayambhu. Prasuti married Daksha Prajapati and from their union were born Shraddha, Dhruti, Tushti, Medha, Kriya, Bindu, Lajja, Vapu, Siddhi, Kirti, Khyati, Sambhuti, Smriti, Preeti, Kshama, Sannati, Anasuya, Urja, Swaha, Swadha, and Arani. From Shraddha to Kirti above were wedded to Dharma; Khyati was married to Bhrigu, Arani to Bhargaya, Sambhuti to Marichi, Kshama to Pulaha, Sannithi to Ritu, Aanasuya to Atri, Urja to Vasishtha, Smriti to Angira, Preeti to Pulastya, Swaha to Vaishwanara and Swadha to Pitru Devatas. As his Manasa Putri Sati was handed over to Daksha Prajapati to bring her up, Brahma told Daksha to treat her as his own daughter and cautioned that she was to be basically treated as the Mother of the Universe, besides being the Mother of Daksha as well as his own too! Daksha revered Sati well and got her married to Rudra himself. Even earlier in the past at the time of Prathama Sarga itself, Rudra asked Brahma to convert his body into to two parts, viz. as Shiva as Artha Naareswara; now Daksha Prajapati only formalised the Union of Shiva and Sati and stated that all total womanhood of the Universe was of the 'Amsha' or of similarity to Sati Devi: besides Ekadasha Rudras too were of the Amsha of Shiva-Sati Union.

Further to an outline of the Primary Creation of Brahma, Suta Maha Muni described the details of the progeny of the Maharshis and their wives above mentioned; mention-worthy were: Devi Lakshmi born to the couple of Bhrigu and Khyati; Kardama Muni to Pulaha and Kshama; Balakhilya Muni to Kratu and Sanmati; Sini, Vaali, Kuhu, Raaka, Anumati the daughters to Angira and Smriti; Pavamana, Pavaka, and Shuchi were born to Agni and Swaha Devi; Maina Devi and her sons Mainaka and Krouncha were born to Swadha and Pitras etc.

Of special significance was of the instance of Shiva and Sati Devi the daughter of Daksha; as Sati Devi was provoked by the indifference and irreverence displayed by her father, she self-immolated out of the affront caused to Shiva by her father only to return as Devi Parvati in the subsequent manifestation; it was in that context that Brahma extolled Shiva as follows:

Namostuvo Maha Devaatrinetraa Nila Lohitaah Sarvajnaah

Sarvagaa Dirghaa Hrasvaa Vaamanakaah Shubhah/

Hiranya keshaaya dushtaaghnaa Nityaa, Nirmalaah,

Nirdwandya Veetaraagascha Vishwaatmamaano Bhavaatmajaah/

(My salutations to you Maha Deva, Trinetra, Nilalohita! You are Sarvajna or All Knowing, Sarva Gati or Multi-directional Passenger, Dirgha or Very Tall, Hraswa or Short, Vaamana or Pigmy-like, Shubha or Propitious, Hiranyakesha or of Golden Locks, Dushtaghna or the Destroyer of Evil, Nitya or Everlasting, Nirmala or Translucent, Unique or of Non-Duality, Devoid of Desires, The Soul of the Universe, and the Supreme Soul of Thoughts)! Brahma then performed a Pradakshina (Circumambulation) and requested Maha Deva to allow him the creation of Beings without old age and death. Bhagavan said that it would never be possible to do so and that every Being would have to under go through the evolution of Life any way and as per one's own 'Karma' or deeds and would have to experience the retributions of Narakas or enjoy the fruits of Upper Lokas. So replying to Brahma, Parama Shiva became a 'Sthanu' or Motionless; he could assume any form that he would wish and being merciful and propitious by nature facilitates human beings to perform good deeds, more so because they are fearful of Evil and Sin. Those who take refuge in Shankara are assured of breaking the shackles of Maya as He indeed is the Master of the Universe, the Eternal Paramatma; indeed He is Kaala Rudra as the Symbol of Tamo Guna, Brahma as the Representation of Rajo Guna, Vishnu as the Icon of Satwa Guna and Maheswara as Nirguna or Featureless. A person could worship any of the Forms of Bhagavan as Brahma, or Vishnu or Shiva as the Supreme Maheswara and escape the onslaught of Sins and the resultant Hells, improve the Stock of Punya or the Fruits of Good Deeds, and accomplish the Higher Lokas.

# Ashtanga Yoga-the Significant Means of Shiva Tatwa

To control the activities or goings on in the mind is Yoga. The Ashtanga or Eight-Limbed Yoga comprises of Yama- Niyama- Aasana- Pranaayama- Pratyahara-Dharana-Dhyana-Samadhi. Yama is denoted by good behaviour comprising Ahimsa (Non-Violence), Satya (Truth), Asteya (stealing), Brahmacharya (avoidance of sex) and Aparigraha or Excessive acquisition. Basic Niyamas is in fact an extension of Yama: To refrain from hurting or torturing co-Beings physically or mentally is Ahimsa; to convey whatever is seen, heard, and believed is Satya unless it does not hurt any body is known as Satya; to desist stealing of other's property by deed, thought or otherwise is called Asteya; to negate from relationship with another female or in respect of a female wih another male, excepting the wedded woman or man as the case may be and this should be observed by vision, thought or deed is called Brahmacharya or celibacy; and to abstain from excessive acquisition of materials far and above one's needs in the short run of time is stated to be Aparigraha. Besides the above General Principles, Niyamas also involve the specific deeds viz. Shoucha or Physical Cleanliness, Yagna-Tapa or meditation, Daana or charity, Swadhyaya or Memorising or Reciting the Scriptures, Indriya Nigraha or Control of Physical Limbs, Vratas like Chandrayana as also or to perform formal worship directed to specific Devatas and purposes,, Upavaasa or Fasting, Snaana or Formal Bathing besides Tirtha Seva and 'Aniccha' or General Disinterestedness and abstinence; these are the Ten Niyamas. The next component of the Ashtanga Yoga denotes as Aasana which not only includes the right posture of formal seating like of Padmasana followed by 'Bahyatantara Shuchi' or external and internal cleanliness, Shiva Puja starting from Brahmanas, Agni, Varuna with other Devas climaxing with Parama Shiva. Included in the Aaasana are Japa, Swadhyaya, and Tapas etc; Japa should be of Panchakshari viz. Om Namassivaya Mantra and Swadhyaya is of Omkara and of Vedas and other Scriptures. Japa and Swadhyaaya are of three kinds: Vaachaka, Maanasika and Upaamsaka (Oral, mind-borne and Upaamshak or as guided by Guru). The next step is Pranayama or to practise interruptions of Prana or life-air or merely stated as the breathing processes of 'Manda' or mild, 'Madhyama' or medium and 'Uttamaa' or the best of variations; these interruptions comprise twelve units each of 'Uchhvaasa' or inhaling and 'Nishvasa' or exaling in the mild category, while these two holdings of breath would be for twenty four units in either case in respect of medium category and thirty units in either case in the best category. 'Yogaabhyaas' or the practice of Yoga besides providing happiness and peace of mind would cure several physical weaknesses to rectify respiratory and digestive imbalances, bring about shine of body and mind, cleanse up blood and its circulation and

sharpness of thinking. Yoga unifies and balances of the ten kinds of 'Vaayus' or Airs in the human system viz. Praana-Apaana-Samaana- Udaana-Vyaana-Naaga-Kurma-Kukara-Devadutta and Dhananjaya. The air that enables vital functions of the human body, respiration and general activity is Praana; the air that is generated by the food intake down in the digestive process is Apana; the air that controls the involuntary movements of the body, circulation of blood, and flow of sweat from glands to skin and creating diseases is Vyaana; the air that controls the bubbling in the 'marmaavaya' or the secret part is Udaana; the Equalising air balancing the body parts and stimulating digestive fluid is called Samaana; Udgaar (dakaar) is the wind called Naga; the wind enabling 'Unmeelana' or of the opening of eyes is Kurma; Kakara Vayu creates hunger, Devadatta created yawning and Dhananjaya Vayu creates highpitch sounds and also remains with the body for a while even after death. Thus four kinds of Siddhis viz. Shanti, Prashanti, Deepti and Prasada are achieved by the Yoga. Pranaayama also achieves the generation of Tatwas viz. Vivaswara, Mahaan, Mana, Brahma, Smriti, Khyati, Ishwar, Mati and Buddhi. Pratyahara demolishes sins; Dharana facilitates the holding up of the crucial state of balance; Dhyana or meditation of Ishwara bestows the devastation of poisons like Vishayas or worldly matters; Samadhi leads to Prajna or Self-Consciousness. Thus Yoga aided by 'Asana' leads to the dynamic circle of Praanayama-Pratyahara-Dharana-Dhyana culminating in Samadhi.

The above was the outline of Yogaabhyaasa and now to the practice of it: one should not practise Yoga in the surroundings of Fire, water, dried leaves, animals, burial places, of great sound or disturbances, worm-infested places, uncongenial and inauspicious places, places occupied by evil-minded persons and so on; but in quiet caves, Shiva Kshetras, lonely forests or gardens without distractions. Yogaabhyaas should be intiated by greeting one's Guru and then to Shiva, Devi, Ganesha and others and by resorting to Padma or any other Aaasana; he should fix his eyes at a particular Target, expand his chest, raise his head, not touch his teeth of one line with another, keep looking at the tip of his nose and not look at sides; and by aligning his Three Gunas, concentrate on Parama Shiva in Dhyana on Omkara, dipa sikha or top of an oil-lamp. The Yogi must visualize a white lotus encased in a Trikona or a Triangle and set in the images of Agni, Soma and Surya and then perform meditation of Rudra on the forehead by picturising Shiva in two, or four, or six, or ten or twelve or sixteen leaves; the dhyana should be targetted to the golden and fire-like, twelve Aditya-samaana, lustrous Nilalohita Shiva. Maheswara should be retained in the hridaya or heart, Sadashiva in the naabhi or navel, and Chandrachuda in the 'Llalaata' or forehead and the prayer should be as follows:

Nirmalam Nishkalam Brahmaa Sushantim Jnaana Rupinam,

Alakshanamanirdeshya Manoralpataram Shubham/

Niraalambamatarkai cha Vinashotpatti varjitam,

Kaivalyam chaiva Nirvaanam Nishreyasamanuttamam

Amritamchaaksharam Brahmam hyapunar –bhavamadbhutam/

Mahaanandam Paramaanandam Yogaanandamanaamaam,

Heyopaadeyarahitam Shukshaatsukmataram Shivam/

Swayam Vedyamavedyam taacchivam Janamayam Param/

Ateendriyamanaabhaasam Parama tatwa Paratparam,

Sarvopaadhi Nirmuktam Jnaanagamyam Vicharatah/

Adwayam Tamasaschaiva parastaat samsthitam param

(Nirmala, Nishkala, Brahma, Shanta, Jnaanarupa, Lakshana Rahita, Shubha, Niralamba, Atarkya or Unquestionable, Naashotpatti rahita or who is bereft of birth and termination, Kaivalya, Nirvana, Nishreya or devoid of hold, Amrita, Akshara, Moksha, Adbhuta, Mahananda, Paramaananda, Yogaananda, Heyopaaya rahita, Sukshmaati Sukshma, Parama Jnaana Swarupa, Ateendriya, Anaabhaasa, Paratpara, Sarvopaadhi nirmukta, Jnaanayogya, Unique as he has no duality). Thus Ishwara be prayed in the Naabhi Sthaana, in the middle of the Body Shiva of Shuddha Jnaana be concentrated and in the Uttama Marga by the means of Puraka-Rechaka-Kumbhaka or Inhalation-Exhalation and Retention of breathing respectively called Pranayama.

A practitioner of Yoga is invariably faced with several kinds of difficulties like Alasya, Vyadhi Peeda, Pramaada, Samshaya chitta or Chanchalata, Ashraddha in the path of Darshana, Bhranti, Duhkha durmanastatha and Arogya Vishaya. Alasya is due to the heavy weight of Body and the resultant lack of preparedness. Vyaadhi peeda is caused by dhatu- vishamata or ill-health and disability. Pramada is due to fear of Abhyasa or Practice; Samshaya or a feeling of apprehension and negativity of approach; Ashraddha or sheer carelessness and laziness; Bhranti is due to a feeling of Yoga's ineffectiveness; Duhkha durmanstha or misplaced fatalism that human beings are any way subject to 'Tapatrayaas' (or of Adhi bhoutika, Adytatmika and Adhi daivika reasons or due to body-mind or God made calamities) and a general mind-set of yoga or no yoga human beings are any way subject to the ups and downs of life! Arogya Vishaya is yet another limitation to Yoga Practice due to a general belief of retaining health from other ways and means of medicines.

A successful Yoga Practitioner is endowed with 'Dasha Siddhis'viz. Pratibha, Shravana, Vaarta, Darshana, Aaswaada and Vedana. Jnaana Pratibha is the Siddhi of knowing about a Vastu or Vyavahar or of a thing of past, present or of future; this Siddhi would infuence or impress others. Shravana Siddhi enables a Yogi to hear or understand any kind of sound or conversation or a happening irrespective of distance or time. Vaartaa Siddhi facilitates the experience of Pancha Tanmatraas of sabda-sparsha-ruparasa and gandhas. Darshana Siddhi is the ability to perceive or vision of any thing irrespective of time and distance limitations. Aaswaada Siddhi enables tasting any substance and Vedana Siddhi is the power of sparsha to experience the shape, form or a feature of a person or thing.

In fact a Maha Yogi is stated to possess sixty four kinds of Paisachika, Parthiva, Raakshasa, Yaaksha, Gaandharva, Aindra, Vyomatmika, Praajaapatya, Brahmaadi Siddhis but he should discard all such powers in the quest of Shivatwa. Such Siddhis range from assuming any type of Swarupa of fatness, slimnes, childhood, youth, old age, man, woman, any specie of a bird-animal-reptile, mountain, water body and so on; ability to lift mountains, drink up an ocean, flying on sky, passing through a needle's eye and endless such miracles. [The normal Siddhis are Anima (miniaturising), Mahima (Maximising), Prakamya (Visioning and Hearing), Isatwa (Rulership), Vasitwa (Self Control), Kama Vasitwa (ability to fulfill desires), Doora Shravana and Doora Darshana or distant vision and hearing, Parakaya Pravesha or ability to enter other's bodies; 'Devaanaam Saha kreedanam' or playing with Devas, Yatha Sankalpa Samsiddhi or instant fulfillment of desires,Triloka Jnaana or knowledge of the happenings of Three Lokas; Control of heat and cold, Paraajaya or invincibility and so on.] Depending on the intensity of the success of the Yoga practice and the powers attained by way of controlling the Jnanendriyas and Tatwas, a Yogi could perform impossibilities but frittering the Siddhis so gained would negate the capacity to accomplish Shivatwa.

The Unfolding of Shiva Tatwa and 'Pancha Mukha'- the Five Faced

Once Devi Parvati enquired of Mahadeva as to how to achieve Shivatwa and the latter said smilingly that Brahma too asked a similar query: in reply, Brahma visioned Parama Shiva in various Forms:

Yathaa twayaadya vai pushto drushtam Brahmaatmakam twaham,

Swetey Swetena varnena drushtwaa Kalpetu maam Shubhey/

Sadyojaatam tathaa raktey Vaamam Pitaamahah,

Peetey Tatpurusham Peetamayamaghorey Krishnameeshwaram/

Ishaanam Vishwarupaakhyo Vishwarupam tadaavamahaam/

(In Sweta Maha Kalpa, Shiva appears as of Sweta Varna or of Crystal Clear White Form called Sadyojaatam; in Rakta Kalpa, He is in Rakta Varna or of blood red colour; in yellow colour as Tatpurusha or as Aghora in dark colour and in Ishana Kalpa he saw Mahadeva as Vishwarupa. Brahma got rather confused then prayed to him as to in which form he should be worshipped:

Vaama Tatpurushaaghora Sadyojaata Maheswara;

Drushto mayaa twam Gayatrayaa Deva Deva Maheswaram,

Kena Vashyo Maha Deva dhyeyaha kutra Ghrunaanithey

drushyah pujayastathaa Devyaa Vkaktumarhasi Shankara!

(Vaama Deva! Tatpurusha, Aghora, Sadyojaata, Maheswara! You show me up along with Gayatri; kindly do indicate to me a way of my worship to you, meditate to you and pleae you!) Then Bhagavan affirmed:

Avomcha Shraddhayaiveti vashyo Vaarijasambhava!

Dhyeyo Lingey twayaa drushtey Vishnunaa payasaam nidhow,

Pujyayah Panchaasya rupena Pavitraih Panchaabhi Dwijaaih/

Bhava Bhaktaadya drushtoham twayaangna Jagadguro,

Sopi Maamaaha bhaavartham duttam tasmai mayaa pura/

Bhavam Bhaavena Deveshi drushtwaamnaam twadeeshwaram,

Tasmaad Shraddhayaa vashyo drushyah Sheshta Gireyh Sutey,

Pujyo Lingena Samdehah Sarvadaa Shraddhayaa Dwijaih,

Shraddhaa Dharmah Parah Sukshmah Shraddhaa Jnaanam hutam tapah,

Shraddhaa Swargascha Mokshascha drushyoham shraddhayaa sadaa/

(Kamalodbhava Brahma! I am worthy of being conquered by a devotee's Shraddha or Sincerity and his/her meditation by all the Five Names as mentioned above; Vishnu who is on Ksheera Sagara too worshipped me by the Five Names (of Shiva). Brahma then replied that he also felt the same and worshipped Shiva likewise; Deva Parvati too thought in a similar manner as Shraddhaa would be the only way by which Shiva could be realised as that was the Parama Dharma, Sukshma Jnaana, homa, Tapas and the only means of Moksha, Swarga and so on.)

The Congregation of Munis then queried Suta Maha Muni to kindly explain the significance of each of the Five Names of Maha Deva and the latter replied that in the twenty ninth or Sweta Lohita Kalpa, Brahma was immersed in deep Tapasya facing *West* and from his tuft a Swarupa emerged suddenly with white complexion and as that Resplendent Form appeared unexpectedly and swiftly, Brahma named him Sadyojaata. Even as Brahma greeted the new Form of Shiva saying

Sadyojaatam prapadyaami Sadyo jaataayavai Namo Namah,

Bhavey Bhavenaati bhaveswaam bhavo bhaveybhyaanamah,

there materialised four disciples of Sadyojata viz. Sunanda, Nandana, Vishva Nanda and Upa Nanda who would always be in His presence. The Sishyas prayed to Sadyojata as: Vandeham Salam Kalankarahitam Staanormukham Paschimam.

In the Thirtieth Kalpa named Rakta Kalpa, Brahma meditated Bhagavan Shiva looking *northward* wearing Rakta Vastra and Rakta Varna and there appeared Vaama Deva who was of red colour and red ornaments; Brahma then saluted the Vaama Deva Form of Mahadeva as follows:

Vaama Devaaya namo Jyeshthaaya namah Jyeshthaayanamo Rudraaya namah Kaalaaya namah Kalavikaranaya namo balavikaranaya namo balaaya namo balaaya namo balaaya namo balaaya namo balaaya namo balaaya namo manonmanaaya namah /

The disciples around Him were Viraja, Vibaahu, Vishoka and Vishwa Bhavana and these were of Rakta Varna, Rakta Vastra and Raktaabharana as their foreheads were smeared with rakta chandana, rakta bhasma, rakta lepana and rakta sindura. Innumerable Maharshis performed Tapasya to Vaama Deva and attained Shivatwa. Their prayers to Vaama Deva was: Vandey Purna Sashanka mandala nibham vaktram Harasyottaram!

In the next Kalpa numbered thirtyone called Peeta Kalpa, Brahma did Tapasya to Parama Shiva in the direction of *East* by assuming Peeta (Yellow) Varna and Peeta Vastra and there emerged Tatpurusha (Brahma) of everything in Peeta colour donning Peeta Vastra-Aabhushana-Peeta Yagnopaveeta and Peeta Kireeta or Headgear. Brahma prayed to Tatpurusha stating *Tat Purushaaya vidmahey Maha Devaaya dhimahi tanno Rudrah prachodayaat*; along with the latter appeared a Sacred Cow Swarupa; that was of Devi Maheswareem:

Gaam Vishwarupaam drushey Maheswaramukha -acchytaam,

Chatush –padaam Chaturvaktraam Chaturhastaam Chatuhstaneem/

Chaturnetraam Chatuhshringeem Chaturdamshtraam Chatur mukheem,

Dwaantrih sadgunasamyuktaa meeshwareem Sarato-mukhaam/

(A Vishwarupa-Achyuta Maheswari with four feet, four mouths, four hands, four breasts, four eyes, four horns, four damshtras, four faces and of Sadgunas or Auspicious Traits). As Devi Gayatri appeared, Brahma performed 'parikrama' to the four-legged Sacred Cow called Gayatri and Maha Deva extolled her as Gayatri, Rudrani, Vaidiki and Vidya! Brahma assured that whosoever performed Japa and puja to her would please them with Shiva Tatwa and Shiva agreed to bestow on them DivyaYoga, Jnaana, Aishwarya and Vairagya. Besides Gayatri, there appeared several disciples who were also the close confidants of Gayatri, and who worshipped Parameshwara through Brahma Deva and they too assumed Peeta Varna-Peeta Vastra-Peeta Tilaka and every thing in Yellow colour.

In Praghrutta Kalpa of Black Varna after thousand of Deva years, Brahma prayed to Shankara towards *South* as he decided to create yet another Amsha of the latter, and consequently was materialised Aghora who was black in colour, all his body parts in black, wearing black Vastra, black 'Janevu' or Holy Thread, black headgear, black beads around his neck and was ornamented black too. Brahma prostrated before Aghora Rupa and prayed to him as follows:

Aghorebhyo taghorebhyo ghoratarebhyah,

Sarvebhyaassarva sarvebhyo namastey astu Rudra rupeybhyah

for thousand years and Maha Deva was gratified with the Tapasya and blessed that whosoever performed the Aghora Mantra one lakh times would be purified of the most severe sins including: *Brahma Hatya Suraapaanam Suvarna steyamevacha* or killing of Brahmana, consuming liquor, swindling gold etc. Aghora Deva's sons were Krishna, Krishna Sikha, Krishna Mukha, Krishna Kanthadhaari and their prayer to Aghoresha is: Vandey Dakshinameeswarasya kutila bhrubhanga Roudram Mukham. The erring Brahmanas who committed Maha Patakaas are required to perform (after one lakh Aghora Mantra) seven Agni Homas with Ghee, Sugarcane, Tila or sesame seed orv atleast by ghee. After the required Havans, the Kartaas are to perform Snaanaas again by reciting the Aghora Mantra through out the night by sprinkling 'Pancha Gavya' (Mix of Five Products of Cow viz. Milk, Curd, Dung, Urine, Ghee) and also consuming it for physical purification. By so performing, the erring humans especially Brahmanas would be observing 'Prayaschitta' or atonement of serious sins of even big magnitude including Bhruna Hatya, Brahma Hatya, Go hatya, Matru/Pitru Hatya, Bala Hatya, Stree Hatya, Mitru-Guru-Bhraatrum Hatya etc. At the beginning of Vishwa Kalpa, Brahma Deva initiated Srishti and Devi Saraswati was materialised first and Brahma greeted her saying:

Vishwamaalambaradhara Vishwa Yagopavartini

Vishwvoshneepaa Vishwagandhaa Vishwamaataa Mahoshtika/

There after, Brahma created Ishana who was of Shuddha sphatika sankaasam or like Transclucent Prism and Saravaabharana bhushitam or decorated by all kinds of ornaments whom Brahma commended as follows:

Vavandey Devameeshaanam Sarveysam Sarvagum Prabhum,

Omeeshaana Namastestu Maha Deva namostutey/

Namostu Sarva Vidyaanaa -meeshana Parameshwara,

Namostu Sarva bhutaanaameeshaana Vrishavaahana/

Brahmanodhipatey tubhyam Brahmaney Brahma rupiney,

Namo Brahmaadhipataye Shivam mestu Sadaa Shiva/

Omkaara murtey Devesha Sadyojaata namonamah/

Prapadye twaam prapannosmi Sadyojaataaya vai namah/

Abhavecha Bhavey tubhyam tathaa naati bhavey namah,

Bhavodbhava Bhaveshaana maam bhajaswa Mahaadyutey/

Vaamadeva Namas -tubhyam Jeyshthaaya Varadaayacha,

Namo Rudraaya Kaalaaya Kalanaaya namo namah/

Namo Vikaranaayaiva Kaalavarnaaya vahniney,

Balaaya Balinaam Nityam sadaa Vikaranaayatey/

Bala Pramathanaayaiva Baliney Brahmarupiney,

Sarva Bhutashwareshaaya Bhutaanaam damanaayacha/

Manonmanaaya Devaaya Namastubhyam Mahaadyutey,

Vaama Devaaya Vaamaaya Namastubhyam Mahaatmaney/

Jyeshthaayachaiva Shreshthaaya Rudraaya varadaayacha,

Kaalahantrey Namastubhyam Namastubhyam Mahaatmaney/

Iti stavena Devesham nanaama Vrishabhadhwajam,

Yah Pathet Sakru deveha Brahmaloka -mavaapnuyat/

( My salutations to you Ishana, Mahadeva, Sarwa Vidyaa Swaami, Sarva Parameshwara, Vrishabha Vahaana, Brahmadhipati, Brahma Swarupa, Omkara Murti, Devasha, Sadyojaata; the Abhava or the One who has not occurred, yet the Bhava or the One who has occurred and is a Great Occurrence; Ishana, Maha Shobha, Vama Deva, Jyeshtha, Varada or the Bestower of Boons, Rudra, Kaala, Kaalaa's Kaala, Vikaranaya, Kaala Varnaaya, Balaaya, Bala Manthanaaya, Brahma Swarupa, Sarva Bhuta Swami, Bhuta damanaaya, Manmatha damanaaya, Sreshthaaya, Rudraya, Kaalahantrey! Who ever recites the above Stuti

would qualify for Indra and Brahma lokas!) As Shiva was pleased with Brahma's eulogy, Dervi Sarasvati also got materialised along with Pancha Mukha Rudras; she too who was Chatur Mukhi-Chatur Baahu-Chatur Pada and Chatur-Netri was Viswarupa as she was born in that Kalpa who too had as Brahma Gunas like Yoga, Samkhya, Tapa, Vidya, Vidhi Kriya, Dama, Satya, Daya, Ahimsa, Sammati, Kshama, Dhyana, Dheya, Shanti, Mati, Dhruti, Kanti, Neeti, Medha, Lajja, Tushti, Pushti, Kriya and so on; she was also Gauri Maya, Vidya, Hemavati, Pradhana Prakriti, Ajanma, Lohita, Shukla-Krishna, Vishwa Janani, Gayatri and Go Swarupa! Such was the significance of Devi Saraswati, stated Maha Deva.

Connotation of Omkaara and analysis of Alphabets related to Shiv's Body Parts (Vishnu's Prayers to Maha Deva included and Tri Murti seniority analysed)

Maharshi Lomarshana, the disciple of Veda Vyasa, while addressing the Sages at Naimisha Forest described that at the Maha Pralaya or the termination of the Universe after the Maha Yuga, the Supreme Bhagavan created Vishnu with the aid of Satwa Guna who was floating on Maha Jala or the Unending Water Sheet and from his navel appeared a lotus with Brahma as materialised with Rajo Guna seated thereon; the latter questioned Vishnu about his antecedents and consequent on mutual arguments about their Supremacy there was a fight; at that very time there appeared a Colossal Agni Linga emitting enormous radiance and heat which neither had a beginning nor end. Brahma took the Swarupa of a gigantic 'Hamsa' or Swan and flew up with great speed of its own as also of enormous wind power to ascertain the top of the Maha Linga while Vishnu assumed the Swarupa of a black 'Varaha' of ten yojanas of height and hundred yojanas of width and slided down the Maha Linga to ascertain its bottom. As neither the Hamasa Rupa Brahma who flew up and up for thousand years nor the Varaha Rupa Narayana who slided down as much time could discover the bottom or the top and returned to the starting point by another thousand years; both of them reached there totally fatigued. Then there was a reverberating Sound of AUM:

Tadaa sama bhavattatra naadou vai Shabda lakshanah,

Omomiti Surasreshtthaah Samyuktah plutalakshanah/

Kimidam twiti samchitya mayaa tishthanmahaaswanam,

Lingasya Dakshiney bhaagey tadaapashyat Sanaatanam/

Adya varnamakaaram chouttareytath,

Makaaramadhya taschaiva naadaantam tasyachomiti/

Suryamandalavadrustwaa varnamaadyam tu Dakshiney,

Uttarey Paavaka prakhya mukaaram Purusharshabhah/

Sheetaamshu Mandalaprakhyam Makaaram madhyamam tathaa,

Tasyopari tadaapashyat- kshudra sphatikavat Prabhum/

Tureeyaatimamrutam Nishkalam Nirupaplavam,

Nirdwandam Kevalam Shunyam Bhaahyaantara varjitam/

Sa baahyaabhyantaram chaiva Sabaahya abhyantarasthitam,

Adi madhyantarahita maanandasyaapi kaaranam/

Maatraastistwardha maatram naadaakhyam Brahmasangnitam,

Rukyajurssaama Vedaa vai Maatraa rupena Maadhavah/

Vedashabde -bhya yevesham Vishwaatmaanamachintayat,

Tadaabhavadrushirveda Rusheh saaratam shubham/

Teynaiva Rishinaa Vishnurjnaatawaan Parameswaram/

( As the sound of AUM emerged from the right side of the Maha Linga, there appeared Sanatana Bhagavan; from Him, the sound of 'A kaara' came, followed by 'U Kaara' and 'Ma kaara' and the sound in between was the 'Naada Swarupa'; the extraordinary radiance of Surya came from the Northern direction as the pious form of U kara or of Pavaka; Makara was of Chandra Mandala and above it was the Suddha Sphatika Rupa or Pure Crystal Form representing Maha Deva in Tureeya Awastha or the Prime and Pristine Form. This Form was Unique, devoid of Duality, of Sunya or Nothingness; of Purity and Immunity and of no beginning-middle- termiation. Indeed that was the Spring of Ananda or Sheer Joy as also the synthesis of Tri Vedas represented by Tri Murtis and the sure way leading to Maha Deva!)

Maharshis who knew Vedas and the Omkara Swarupa of Maha Deva analysed the Alphabets in Sanskrit and explained as follows: 'A' kaara' constituted His broad forehead; 'E' kaara was the left Eye; 'U'kaara his Southern Ear; 'Aa' kaara his left ear; 'Ru' kara his right Kapola; 'Ruukaara' the left kapola; 'lu lu'is the partition of his nasal divisions; 'ea'- kaaras his big lips; 'oau' kaara his teeth; the consonants 'Ka-khaga- gha-jnaa' constituted his five right hands while the consonants 'cha-ccha- ja-jja-na' were his left five hands; other two sets of consonants viz. 'ta-tha-da-dha-na' and 'pa-pha-ba-bha-ma' were his right and left five feet respectively; Shiva's 'udara' or belly represented 'paa' kaara; 'pha' kara his right side of his body; 'Va' kara his left side; the letter 'Vaa' and 'bha' kaaras represented his shoulders; the letter 'Ma' kaara his 'Uridaya' or heart; 'Ya- ra-la-va-sa-sha' represented Shiva's body-dhatus; 'ha' kara represented His Atma and 'Kha' kaara denoted Shiva's anger.

As Vishnu visioned Maha Deva along with Devi Uma he extolled Parama Shiva as follows:

Omkaara prabhavam mantram Kalaa panchaka samyutam,

Shuddha sphatika sankaasham Shubhaashtatrimshadaksharam/

Medhaakaramadudbhuyaha Sarva dharmaartha saadhakam,

Gayatri prabhavam Mantram haritam vashyakaarakam/

Chaturvimshati varnaadhyam Chatuhkalamanuttamam,

AtharvamasitamMantram Kalaashtaka samaayutam/

Abhichaarika Mantyartham Triyaamstrishubhaaksharam,

Yajurveda samaayuktam panchatrimshacchubhaaksharam/

Kalaashtaka samaayuktam Sushvetam Shantikam tathaa,

Trayodasha kalaa yuktam Baalaadyaih saha lohitam/

Saamodbhavam Jagastyadyam vriddhi samhaara kaaranam,

Varnaah shadadhikaah Shashtirasya Mantravarasya tu/

Pancha Mantraastathaa labdhvyaa jajaapa Bhagavaan Harih,

Atha drushtwaa kalaavanamrugyajuhssama rupina/

Ishaanmameesha mukutam Purushaasyam Puraatanam,

Aghoradhrudayam twadyam Vaama guhyam Sadaasivam/

Sadyah paadam Mahadevam Mahaabhogendra bhushanam,

Vishwatah paada vadanam Vishwatokshikaram Shivam/

Brahmanodhipatim Sarga Sthita Samhaara kaaranam,

Tushtaava punarishtaabhirvakbhir varadameeshwaram/

(Shiva is the symbol of Omkara Mantra; he wears a transparent Sphatika Maala; three sixty eight lettered Deva; Maha Buddhi yukta; Sarva Dharmaartha Sadhaka, Gayatri Mantra Prabhu; Atharva Veda Swarupa; Regulator of Twenty Varnas; Abhicharika mantra Swarupa; Controller of Thirty three Letters; Sweta, Shanta, the Swarupa of Thirteen Kalas, Maha Sarpa bhushana, Srishti-Sthiti-Samharaka, Three Veda swarupa; Purana Purusha, Ishaana, Aghora Mantra Hridaya!) Having thought of Maha Deva on the above lines, Vishnu performed meditation of Shiva for good time with the aid of the 'Pancha Akshara Mantra' viz.Om Namaashivaaya. Maha Deva was extremely delighted at the thoughts of Vishnu as also of the Japa of the Panchaakshari of *Om Namassivaaya* and materialised himself before Vishnu. The much gratified Parameswara appeared before Vishnu and the latter commended Maha Deva as follows:

Ekaaksharaaya Rudraaya Akaaraatma rupiney,

Vukaaraadi Devaaya Vidyaadehaaya vai namah/

Triteeraaya Makaaraaya Shivaaya Paramaatmaney,

Suryaagni Soma varnaaya Yajamaanaaya vai Namah/

Agnaye Rudra rupaaya Rudraanaam pataye namah,

Shivaaya Shaiva mantraaya Sadyojaataaya vedhasey/

Vaamaaya Vaama devaaya Varadaamrutaaya tey,

Aghotaati ghoraaya Sadyojaataaya ramhasey/

Ishaanaaya Smashaanaaya Ativegaaya Veginey,

Namostu Shruti paadaaya Urdhwalingaaya Linginey/

Hemalingaaya Hemaaya Vaari Lingaaya chaambhasey,

Shivaaya Shiva Lingaaya Vyaapiney Vyoma vyaapiney/

Vaayavey Vaayu vegaaya Namastey Vaayuvyaapiney,

Tejasey Tejasaam Bhartrey namasteyjo vyaapiney/

Jalaaya Jala bhutaaya Namastey Jalavyaapiney,

Prithivyai chantarikshaaya Prithivivyapiney Namah/

Shabda sparsha swarupaaya rasagandhaaya gandhiney,

Ganaadhipataey tubhyam guhyaadguhyatamaaya tey/

Anantaaya Virupaaya Anantaanaamayaya cha,

Shaswataaya Varishthaaya vaari garbhaaya Yoginey/

Samsthitaa- yaabhasmjaam,

Madhey Avayormadhya varchasey goptey hatrey

sadaa katrey Nidhanaay –esewaraayacha/

Achetanaaya Virupaaya Anantaa naamayaayacha,

Shaswataaya Varishthaaya Vaarigarbhaaya Yoginey/

Achetanaaya Chintyaaya chetanaasa haariney,

Arupaaya Surupaaya Anangaanga haariney/

Bhasma digdha shariraaya Bhanu Somaagni hetavey,

Swetaaya Swetavarnaaya tuhinaadricharanaayacha/ Suswetaaya Suvaktraaya Namah Swetashikhaaya cha/ Swetaasyaaya Mahaasyaya Namastey Sweta lohita/ Sutaaraaya Visishtaaya Namo Dundhubhiney Hara, Shatarupa Virupaaya Namah Ketumatey sadaa/ Ruddhi shoka vishokaaya Pinaakaaya apardiney, Vipaashaaya Supaashaaya Namastey Paashanaashiney/ Suhotraaya Havishyaya Subrahmanyaaya Suriney, Sumukhaaya Suvaktraaya durdamaaya damaaya cha/ Kankaaya Kanka rupaaya Kankinikruta pannaga, Sanakaaya Namastubhyam Sanaatana Sanandana/ Sanatkumara Saarangamaaranaaya Mahatmaney, Lokaakshiney Tridhaamaaya Namo Virajasey sadaa/ Shankha paalaaya Shankhaaya Rajasey Tamasey namah, sarasvataaya Meghjaay Meghavaahana tey Namah/ Suvaahaaya Vivaahaaya Vivaada varadaayacha, Namah Shivaaya Rudraaya Pradhaanaaya Namo Namah/ Trigunaaya Namastubhyam Chaturvyuhaatmaney Namah, Samsaaraaya Namastubhyam Samsaara hetavey/ Mokshaaya Moksharupaaya Moksha Katrey Namo Namah, Atmaney Rishaye tubhyam Swaaminey Vishnavey Namah/ Namo Bhagavatey tubhyam Naaaanaam pataye Namah, Omkaaraaya Namastubhyam Sarvgnaaya Namo Namah/ Sarvaaya cha Namastubhyam Namo Naraayanaayacha,

Namo Hiranya garbhaaya Adi Devaaya tey namah/ Namostwajaaya Pataey Prajaanaam Vyuha hetavey, Mahadevaaya Devaanaameeshwaraaya Namo namah/ Sharvaaya cha Namastubhyam Satyaaya Shamanaayacha, Brahmaney chaiva Bhutaanaam Sarvjnaaya Namo Namah/ Mahatmaney Namastubhyam Prajnaarupaaya vai Namah, Chitaey Chiti Rupaaya Smriti rupaaya vai Namah/ Jnaanaaya Jnaana gamyaaya namastey samvidey sadaa, Shikhiraaya namastubhyam Nilakanthaaya vai Namah/ Artha Naareeshwaraaya Avyataaya Namonamah, Ekaadasha vibhedaaya Staanavey tey Namah sadaa/ Namah Somaaya Suryaaya Bhavaaya Bhava haariney, Yashaskaraaya Devaaya Shankaraayeshwaraayacha/ Namombikaadhi -pataey Umaayaah pataey Namah, Hiranya baahavey tubhyam Namastey Hema retasey/ Neela keshaaya Vitthaaya Shitikanthaaya vai namah, Kapardiney Namastubhyam Naagaanga abharanaaya cha/ Vrishaarudhaaya Sarvasya hatrey katrey Namonamah, Veera Raamaati Raamaaya Ramanaathaayatey Vibho/ Namo Raajaadhi Raajaayan Rajnaamadhigataayatey, Namah Paalaadhipataye Paalaahaankrutatey namah/ Namahkeyura bhushhaaya gopatey tey namonamkah, Namah Shrikanthanaathaaya Namo likuchapaanaye/ Bhuvaneshaaya Devaaya Vedashastra namostutey,

Saarangaaya Namastubhyam Rajahamsaaya tey namah/

Kanakaangada haaraaya Namah Sarpopavartiney,

Sarpa kundala maalaaya kati sutreekrutaahiney/

Vedagarbhaaya garbhaaya Vishwagarbhaaya tey Shiva!

( My salutations to you Ekakshara Rupa, Rudra, Akaara Swarupa, Adi Deva, the Symbol of Vidya, Makara Swarupa, Shiya Swarupa, Surya-Agni-Chandra Varna; Yajamana Swarupa, Agni Swarupa, Rudra Rupa, Rudra Swami, Shiva, Shiva Mantra, Vaama Deva, Vaama, the Bestower of Amritwa, Aghora, Atyanta Ghora, Ishaana, Smashaana Rupa, Ati Vega Shaali, Shruti Paada, Urthwa Linga, Hema Linga, Swarna Swarupa, Shiva Linga, Aakasha Vyaapi, Vayu Samaana Vega, Tejaswai, Samsara Bharana; Jala Swarupa, Jala Bhuta, Jala Samana Vyapaka, You are Prithvi, Antarikshha, Sparsha-Rasa-Gandha Rupa, Guhya, Guhyaati Guhya, Ganaadhipati, Ananta, Vishwa Rupa, Varishtha, Garbha Jala, Parama Yogi, Aswarupa, Kamadeva harana, Bhasma lipta Sharira, Agni-Chandra-Kaarana Rupa; Sweta Varna, Himaati Sweta Swarupa, Sundara Mukha, Sweta Sikha, Sweta Lohita, Ruddhi-Shoka-Vishoka Swarupa; Pinaaki, Kapardi, Bipaasha, Paapa Naashana, Suhotra, Hayishya, Subrahmanya, Sura, Durdamana, Kankaaya, Kankarupa, Sanaka sanaatana, Sanandana, Sanat Kumara, the Eyes of Samsaara, Shankha paala, Shankha, Rajo Guna, Tamo Guna, Saarasvata, Megha, Megha Vahana, Atman, Moksha, Moksha Swarupa, Rishi, Vishnu Swami, Bhagayan, Swami, Omkara Swarupa, Saryaina, Sarya, Narayana, Hiranyagarbha, Adi Deva, Maha Deva, Ishana, Ishwara, Sharva, Satya, Sarvajna, he who is worthy of providing Jnaana to Jnaana itself! Shekhara, Nilakantha, Artha Naareshwara, Avyakta, Sthanu, Soma, Surya, Bhava, Yasha, Yashapradata, Deva, Shankara, Ambika Pati, Umapati, Nilakesha, Vittha or Cash, Sarpa bhushana Sharira, Nandeswara, Karta or the Creator, Bharta or the Preserver, Ramanatha, Rajaadhiraaja, Paalanakara Swami, Keyuraabharana, Shrikantha (Vishnu) Natha, Trishula Dhaari, Bhuvaneshwara, Deva, Saranga, Raja Hamsa, Sarpahaari, Sarpakundala maalaa dhara, Sarpa Yagnopaveeta dhari, Baahu Dharana Sarpa Sutra, Veda Garbha, Samsara garbha dhaari, Parama Shiva! As Vishnu commended Maha Deva, Brahma addressed all the Devas stating that who so ever recited the above Stuti by Vishnu in favour of Parama Shiva or had it recited by a Veda Vidwan would attain Brahma Loka.)

As Maha Deva was pleased with the Stuti by Vishnu, the latter requested to resolve the dispute between him and Brahma about their supremacy as also about the Beginning and End of the Mammoth Shiva Linga; Vishnu also described about the extensive efforts made by him and Brahma by assuming the Forms of Varaha and Hamsa respectively for over thousand years but to no avail! Mahadeva replied that he was far superior and far beyond to Brahma-Vishnu-Ishwara as He was Parameshwara who had no beginning or middle or end. He further said that in the ensuing Padma Kalpa He would appoint Vishnu as the Over all Chief of the Universe as its Creator, Preserver and Terminator but would like to give the responsibility of Creation to Brahma and of terminating to Shiva who too would appear at the beginning of the Padma Kalpain the offing. By so saying, Maha Deva disappeared and for all practical purposes, Parameshwara appointed Tri Murtis for their respective responsibilities. As predicted by Parameshwara, Shiva appeared in the Padma Kalpa and Vishnu took over the over-all responsibility plus Universal Upkeep, while Brahma took up the duty of Creation and Shiva the responsibility of extermination. Thus the overall responsibility rested with Vishnu who also specifically took over the charge of Preservation additionally while Brahma was responsible for Creation and Shiva for Termination; this was the Ordinance of Parameshwara. So saying Parameshwara disappeared and having heard the decree of Parameshwara, Vishnu cajoled and brought around Brahma by affectionately treating him. Vishnu then asked Brahma to welcome and to pray to Shiva of the Tri Murtis but as Brahma had reservations; the

latter said that if Vishnu were the Yoni and Brahma was the Beeja, then what role did Shiva had in addition! Vishnu then replied: Don't you underestimate the magnificence of Shiva!

Asmaan Mahattaram Bhutam Guhyama –nnyatra Vidyatey,

Mahatah Paramam Dhaama Shivamadhyaatminaam Param/

Dwividhamchaiva maatmaanam pravibhajya vyaksthitah,

Nishkalatra yoga vyaktah Sakalascha Maheswarah/

Yasya Mayaavidhijnasya Agamyagahanasyacha,

Puraa - prathamamlingodbhavam beejam twaadisargikam/

Mama yonow samaayutam tadbeejam kaalaparyayat,

Hiranmayakupaarey yonyaamandamajaayata/

Shataani dasavarshaanaamangmapsu pratishthitam,

Antey Varsha sahasrasya Vaayunaa tadhvidha krutam/

Kapaalamekam dyourjajney kapaalamaparam kshitih,

Ulbam tasya mahotsedho yosou Kanaka Parvatah/

Tatascha pratisandhyaatmaa Deva Devo Varah Prabhuh,

Hiranya garbho Bhagavanstwabhijajney Chaturmukhaha/

(There is no better Entity than Parama Shiva and there is no matter superior than His. The Parama Maha Tatwa is Shiva and the embodiment of Atma Jnaana which again is Paramdhama. He is divided into two parts: one as the Nishkala-Avyakta-Adyanta Rahita and another is Sakala and Saguna Swarupa responsible for yielding Hiranya Brahmanda which floated in Maha Samudra for thousand years and with the interaction of Vayu got broken to two pieces, the Upper Half being the Upper Lokas and the Lower Half as Prithvi with Hiranya Garbha Chaturmkukha inside.) Vishnu further described that Parameswara created Sunya Akaasha, Nakshatras, Surya, Chandra, Agni, Pancha Bhutas, Trigunas, Pranava, and so on. Such is the Glory of Shiva who is Veda Stuti Yogya! Thus Vishnu explained the Parama Tatwa of Mahesha, Brahma was astonished, humbled and overcome by involuntary emotions of devotion and joined Vishnu Deva in a his Commendation addressed to Maha Deva.

Namastubhyam Bhagavatey Suvrataananta tejasey/

Namah Kshetraadhi patey Beejiney Shuliney Namah,

Sumendrayaachaarya mendraaya Dandiney Ruksharetasey/

Namo Jyeshthaaya Sreshthaaya Purvaaya Pramathaayacha, Namo Maanyaaya Pujyaaya Sadyojaataaya vai Namah/ Gahwaraaya Ghateshaaya Vyomacheeraambaraaya cha, Namastey Hyasmadaadeenaam Bhutaanaam Prabhavey Namah/ Vedaanaam Prabhavey chaiva Smruteenaam Prabhavey Namah, Namo Dhruva nibaddhaanaamrusheenaam Prabhavey Namah/ Prabhavey Karmadaanaanaam dravyaanaam prabhavey namah, Namo yogasya prabhavey Saamkhyasya prabhavey namah/ Rukshaanaam prabhavey tubhyam grahaanaamprabhavey namah, Vaidyutaashaani meghaanaam garjita prabhavey namah/ Mahodadheenaam prabhavey Dwipaanaam prabhavey namah, Adreenaam prabhavey chaiva Varshaanaam Prabhavey namah/ Namo Nadeenaam prabhavey Nadaanaam prabhavey namah, Mahoushadheenaam prabhavey Vrukshaanaamprabhavey namah/ Dharma Vrikshaaya Dharmaaya sthitinaam prabhavey namah, Prabhavecha Paraadhasya parasya prabhavey namah/ Namo rasaanaamprabhavey stanaanaam prabhavey namah, Kshanaanaam prabhavey chaiva Lavaanaam prabhavey namah/ Ahoraatraardha maasaanaam Maasaanaam prabhavey namah, Rutunaam prabhavey tubhyam samkhyaayaah prabhavey namah/ Prabhavey paraardhasya Paraartha prabhavey namah, Namah Puraana prabhavey sargaanaam prabhavey namah/ Manyantaraanaam prabhavey Yogasya prabhavey namah, Chaturvidhasya sargasya prabhaveynanta chakshusey/

Kalpodaya nibandhaanaam Vaataanaam prabhavey namah, Namo Vishwasya prabhavey Brahmaadhipataye namah/ Vidyaanaam prabhavey chaiva Vidyaadhipataye namah, Namo Vrataadhi pataye Vrataanaam prabhavey namah/ Mantraanaam prabhavey tubhyam Mantraadhi pataye namah, Pitrunaam pataye chaiva Pashunaam pataye namah/ Vagvrushaaa namastubhyam Puraana Vrishabhaaya cha, Namah pashunaampataye Govrushendra dhwajaaya cha/ Prajaa -pateenaam pataye Siddhinaam Purushey namah, Daityadaanava sandhaanaam rakshasaam pataye namah/ Gandhravaanaam cha pataye Yakshaanaam pataye namah, Garudoraga sarpaanaam pakshinaampataye namah/ Sarva guhya Pishachaanaam Guhyaadhipataye namah, Gokarnaayacha goptrey cha Shankhu karnaaya vai namah/ Varaahaaya prameyaaya Ruksha virajaaya cha, Namo Suraanaam pataye Ganaanaampataye namah/ Ambhasaam pataye chaiva Ojasaam pataye namaha, Namostu Lakshmi pataye Shripaaya Kshiti paayacha/ Balaabala samuhaaya Akshobhyakshobanaayacha, Deepta shringaika shringaaya Vrishabhaaya kakuthiney/ Namah Sthairyaaya Vapushey tejasaanuvrataayacha, Ateetaaya bhavishyaaya Vartamaanaaya vai namah/ Suvarchase cha Veeryaaya Shuraaya hyajitaaya cha, Varadaaya Varenyaaya Purushaaya Mahaatmaney/

Namo Bhutaaya Bhavyaaya Mahatey prabhavaayacha, Janaaa cha namastubhyam tapasey Varadaayacha/ Anavey Mahatey chaiva Namah Sarvagataayacha, Namo Bandhaaya Mokshaaya Swargaaya Narakaayacha/ Namo Bhavaaya Devaaya Ijjyaaya Yaajakaayacha, Pratyudeernaaya Deepataaya Tatwaayaatigunaayacha/ Namah Paashaaya Shastraaya Namastwaabharanaayacha, Hutaaya Upahutaaya Prahutapraashitaaya cha/ Namostwashtaaya Purtaayua Agnishtoma dwijaayacha, Sadasyaaya Namas chaiva Dakshinaavabhruyaayacha/ Ahimsaayaa pralo –bhaaya Pashu mantroushadhaaya cha, Namah Pushtipradaanaaya Susheelaaya Susheeliney/ Ateetyaaya Bhavishyaaya Vartamaanaayatey namah, Suvarchasecha Veeryaaya Shuraaya hyjitaayacha/ Varadaaya Varenyaaya Purushaaya Mahaatmaney, Namo Bhutaaya Bhavyuaaya Mahatey chaabhayaayacha/ Jaraasiddha Namastubhyamayasey Varadaayacha, Adharey Mahatey chaiva Namah Sastu pataayacha/ Namahschandriya patraanaam lelihaanaaya stragviney, Vishwaaya Vishwarupaaya Vishwatahj shirasey namah/ Sarvatah paani paadaaya Rudraayaa pratimaayacha, Namo Havyaaya Kavyaaya Havya vaahaaya vai namah/ Namah Siddhaaya Medhyaaya Ishtaayejyaa paraayacha, Suveeraaya Sughoraaya Akshobhya kshobhanaayacha/

Suprajaaya Sumedhaaya Deeptaaya Bhaskaraayacha,

Namo Buddhaaya Shuddhhaaya Vistrutaaya mataayacha/

Namah Sthulaaya Sukshmaaya Drushyaa –drushya Sarvashah,

Varshatey jwalatey chaiva Vaayavey shishiraaya cha/

Namastey akra keshaaya Uruh Vakshahshikhaaya cha/

Namo Namah Suvarnaaya Tapaneeya nibhaayacha/

Virupaakshaaya Lingaaya Pingalaaya Mahoujasey,

Vrishtighnaaya Namas chaiva Namah Sowmyekshanaaya cha/

Namo Dhumraaya Swetaaya Krishnaaya Lohitaayacha,

Pishitaaya pishangaaya peetaaya cha Nishanginey/

Namstey Sarva Seshaaya Nirvimsheshaaya vai Namah,

Namah Eejyaaya Pujyaaya Upajeevyaayanamah/

Namah Kshemyaaya Vriddhaaya Vatsalaaya namo namah,

Namo Bhutaaya Satyaaya Satyaasatyaaya vai namah/

Namo vai Padma varnaaya Mrityughnaaya cha Mrityavey,

Namo Gauraaya Shyaamaaya Kadravey Lohitaayacha/

Mahaasandhyaabhra varnaaya Chaaru deeptaaya deekshiney,

Namah Kamala hastaaya digvaasaaya Kapardiney/

Apramaanaaya Sarvaaya Avyayaayamaraaya cha,

Namo Rupaaya Gandhaaya Shashvataayaakshataayacha/

Purastaad Brahmatey chaiva Vibhraantaaya krutaaya cha,

Duragmaaya Meheshaaya Krodhaaya Kapilaaya cha/

Tatkryaatarkya shareeraaya baliney ramhasaayacha,

Sikatyaaya Pravaahyaaya shitaaya prasru chaayacha/

Sumedhasey kulaalaaya Namastey shashi khandiney,

Chitraaya Chitra veshaaya Chitra varnaaya medhasey/

Chekitaanaaya tushtaaya Namastey nihitaaya cha,

Namah Kshaantaaya Daantaaya Vajrasimhananaayacha/

Rakshoghnaaya Vishaghnaaya Shitikanthordhwa manyavey,

Lolihaaya krutaantaaya tigmaayudha dharaayacha/

Pramodaaya Sammodaaya yati vedyaaya teynamah,

Anaamayaaya Sarvaaya Maha kaalaaya vai namah/

Pranavapranaveshaaya Bhaganetraantakaayacha,

Mriga Vyaadhaaya Dakshaaya Daksha yagnaantakaayacha/

Sarva Bhutaatmabhutaaya Sarvey shaantishayaaya cha,

Puraghnaaya Sushastraaya dhanvinetha parashvadhey/

Pusha danta vinaashaaya Bhaga netraantatakaayacha,

Kaamadaaya Varishthaaya Kaamaanga dahanaayacha/

Rangey Karaala Vakitraaya Nagendra vadanaaya cha,

Daityaanaamanta keshaaya Daityaankrada karaayacha/

Himaghmnaaya cha teekshnaaya ardracharma dharaayacha,

Smashaana rati nityaaya namostulmukadhaariney/

Namastey praana paalaaya Munjamaalaadharaaya cha/

*Graheena shokairvividhair bhutaih parivritaayacha/* 

Naranaari shariraaya Devyaah Priya karaaya cha,

Jatiney Mundiney chaiva Vyala Yajnopaveetiney/

Namostu Nrityasheelaaya Upanritya priyaayacha,

ManyaveyGeeta sheelaaya Munibhirgaayatey namah/

Katankataaya tigmaaya Agnipriyaaya Priyaya cha,

Vibhishanaaya Bhishmaaya Bhaga Pramathanaaya cha/

Siddhasanghaanu geetaaya Mahaabhaagaaya vai Namah,

Namo Muktaattahaasaaya Kshveditaasphotitaaya cha/

Nardatey kurdatey chaiva Namah Prasuditaatmaney,

Namo Mridaaya shvasatey Dhaavateydhisthitey Namah/

Dyaayatey Jrumbhatey chaiva rudatey dravateynamah,

Valgatey keedatey chava lambodara shaririney/

Namokrutyaaya krutyaaya Mundaaya keekataaya cha,

Nama Unmattha dehaaya kinkinikaaya vai namah/

Namo Vikruta veshaaya kruraayamarshinaayacha,

Aprameyaaya goptrey cha deeptaayaa nirgunaayacha/

Vaama priyaya Vaamaaya Chudaamani dharaayacha,

Namastokaaya tanavey gunairapra- mitaaya cha/

Namo Gunyaaya Guhyaaya Agamyagamanaayacha,

Loka dhaatri twiyam Bhumih Paadou Sajjana sevitou/

Sarveshaam Siddha yogaanaamadhishtaanam tavodaram,

Madhyantariksham vistreenam Taaraagana vibhushitam/

Swaateh patha ivaabhaati Shrimaan haarastavorasi,

Dishou Dashabhujaastubhyam Keyuraangada bhushitaah/

Visteernaparinaahascha Nilaanjanachayopamah,

Kanthastey Shobhatey Shriman Hema sutra vibhushitah/

Damshtaakaraalam Dhurdharshamanoupamyam mukham tathaa,

Padma maalaa krutoshneesham Shiro dyouh shobhatedhikam/

Deeptih Surye Vapushchandre sthairyam Shailanileybalam,

Aoushnamagnou tathaa shaityamapsu shabdombarey tathaa/

Aksharaantara nishpandaadrunaaneytaan vidurbudhaah,

Japo japyo Maha Devo Maha Yogo Maheswarah/

Pureshaayo Guhaavaasi khecharo rajaneecharah,

Taponidhirguha gurur -nadano Nanda vardhanah/

Haya seersho payodhaataa Vidhaataa Bhurabhavanah,

Bodyavyo bodhitaa Netaa Dhurdharsho Dushprakampanah/

Bruhadhratho Bheemakarma Bruhadkirti Dhananjayah,

Ghantaapriyo Dhwaji Chhatri Pinaakini Dhwajanipatih/

Kavachi pattishi khadgi dhanurhastah Paramashvadhi,

Aghasmaronaghah Shuro Devarajotrimardanah/

Twam prasadya puraasmaabhirdwishanto nihataa yudhi,

Agnih Sadaarnavaabhastwam pibannaapi na truyasey/

Omkaarah Prasannatmaa kaamadah kaamagah priyah,

Brahmachaarichagaadhascha Brahmanyah sishta pujitah/

Shivonobhava sarvatra yosi sosi Namostutey/

(Hey Ananta Teja, Suvrata, Bhagavan, Kshetraadhi patey, Beeja Swarupa, Shuli, Jyeshtha, Shreshtha, Manya, Pujya, Sadyojaata, Gahara, Ghatesha, Sarva Praana Swami! My salutations to you to the Prabhu of Vedas and Smritis and all the inputs like money and material required for spiritual deeds. You are the Master of Yoga and Sankhya which are the significant means of Salvation, besides being the instruments like Maharshis and Grahas. You are the Lord as also of the Swarupa of the endless beings of Srishti like Rivers, Trees, the great Aoushadhis or medicines; you are the Dharma, its very existence, and its various manifestations; You are the 'Paraartha' or the Spiritual Quest; the Para which is unaffected by Pancha Indriayas; the Rasaas; the Ratnaas; the 'Ahoratraas' or the days and nights; the Pakshaas or the Fortnights, the Masaas or the Months, the Rithus or the Seasons like Spring and Autumn; You are the Most Ancient Prabhu performing the task of Sarga or Creatin; You are the Yoga Prabhu, Manvantara Prabhu, Vishwa Prabhu, Brahmadhipati, Bhagavan! You are the Master of Vidya or Knowledge; the Master of the Masters of Vidya; Vratadaayika Swami; Mantra Prabhu; the Master of Pitreeshwaras; the Pashupati; Vrishendra dhwaja; the Master of Prajaapatis; the Supreme of Gandharva-Yaksha-Daitya-Danavas; the Swami of Garuda, Sarpa, Pakshis and various other species; you are also the Head of

Vaaraaha, Pischacha, Guhya, Gokarna, Gotra, Shankuka Karna; Ruksha, Viraja, Suraganaa etc. Prabho! You are Swami of Jala / Water; the Swami of 'Ojas'; (Power Essence or Semen present in males and females); the Lord of Lakshmi Devi; the Bhupati or the King; You are the 'Bala' or Physical Strength as also the 'Abala' or of Weakness; The Topmost Mount of the highest Mountain of Supreme Illumination; You are the 'Ateeta' or Beyond Approach; You are the 'Vartamana' or of the Present Tense or of the Ongoing Time Frame; You are also the Bhavishya or of the Happenings Ahead in the Future; You are the Suraveera or the Embodiment of Strength and Courage; Varada or the Bestower of Boons; the Sreshtha Purusha or the Most Illustrious and the Best Purusha or Prime Male; You are also the 'Bhuta' or a Being but as the Unique and the Most Notable among the Creations of the Beings; the Word 'Mahat' or Magnificence would indeed signify yourself. You are as miniscule as an atom and as Colossal that is unparalelled! You are the symbol of Bandhana-Moksha or of Freedom from Shackles; You are the Swarga and Naraka Swarupa signifying Salvation or Bliss and Punishment and Retribution! You are the 'Hutaagni' or the Fire of 'Homas'/ Sacred Agni Karyaas and also the Upahuta or the Deputy who assists in performing of the Sacred Deed. Vishwa, Vishwa Rupa, Vishwata, I bow my head to you Rudra! You are the 'Havya' (Havana), 'Kavya' (Sacrifice in favour of Pitras) and Hutavaaha (Agni); You are Siddha, Madhya, Ishta, Suveera, Sughora, Krodha or Anger and Krodhi or who is angry; You are Buddhi, Shuddha, Sthula / Gross, Sukshma (Tiny); Drushya or the Visionable; Adrushya or Unseeable or Imperceptible; Sarvesha! You are Virupaaksha, Parama Linga, Pingala, Vrishti or Abundant; Dhuman, Sweta, Pujya, Upajeevya, Saviroha, Kshemya, Vruddha, Vatsala, Padma Varna, Kamala dhaari, Kapardi, Mahesha, Kapila, Tarkya (Arguable) and Atarkya; Chitra, Chitra vesha, Chitra Varna; Nilakantha, Anaama or Nameless and Ardra Charma Dhari or Dressed in Wet-Skin. Parameswara! You roam about and even reside in Smashaanaas or burial grounds! You are the Preserver of Praana or Life; You wear garlands of Skulls! You are 'Ardhanaareswara' or Demi Male and Demi Female; You sport a serpents as a Yagnopaveetas or as Holy Threads around and down his neck on the back and front of his upperbody! You even were a repulsive physique and disgusting profile; You Pameswara area an epitome of Great Radiance; You are ever resplendent; yet as a Nirguna or devoid of Characteristics; You are 'Vaama' and Vaamapriya; You wear Chudaamani or Crest Jewel; You carry gold chain as Brahma Sutra around the neck and a Lotus circling his head; your body shines with the unusual illumination of Surya and Chandra; You are Haya sirsha or of a head like horse; You are Vidhaata, Bhuta Bhavana; Ghanta Priya or fond of Bells, of Dhwajas or Flags and of Chhatras or Umbrellas. You are Pinakini or the Holder of Bow and Arrow called Pinaka; Kavacha or 8Shield; and Khadga. Mahadeva! You are a Brahmachari, Brahmana, Sishta, Pujya, Krodhi, Prasanna, Sarva Karma rata or engaged in any type of deed; You do share the Divya Bhogaas yet completely bereft of desires; You indeed are of Asankhya Tatwaas or coultless features; Parama Siva! My Salutations again and again.)

Suta Maha Muni informed the Congregation of Munis at Nimisha Forest that whoso ever recites the above Stuti every day, or atleast during Shraaddhaas or Yajnas or Avabhruta Snaanaas after the Yajna would qualify for the performance of several Ashwamedha Yagnas and Shiva Loka Prapti.

Preface to 'Lingaarchana', 'Pancha Yagna' and 'Lingaarchana Vidhana' (Trayambika Mantra explained)

As Rishis asked Lomaharshana Maharshi as to the Procedure of Lingaarchana or Worship the Shiva Linga, the Maharshi stated that once Devi Parvati also enquired of the same and Shiva Himself revealed the Procedure: To start with a devotee of Shiva should purify himself by a 'Shuddha Snaana' or a formal bathing and three kinds of Snaana were mentioned viz. Varuna Snaana, Bhasma Snaana and Mantra Snaana. Casual or normal Snaana was insignificant and would have no impact whatso ever; the devotee has to first concentrate and keep Shiva in the 'dhyaana'/sincere and targetted focus and then resort to prayer to Suryan Deva, utilise materials like Mrittika, cowdung, tila, pushpa, bhasma and kusha and

apply 'Mrittika' (Earth) or along with water and recite the Mantra: *Udgataasi vartaahena* and clean up the body parts; while applying gobar or cow dung, the Mantra to be recited would be *Gandhaa - dwaaraam dhuraadharshaam nitya pushtaam kareeshineem* and so on. Then clean up the body by downing it in the water body a few times and then change the unclean Vastra to a dry and clean Vastra, recite prayers to Surya-Chandra-Agni and Varuna. With pre-collected water in a shankha or conchshell or atleast in a bowl of Kushaa, then perform three 'Aachamanas' or sips of spoonful of water while reciting the Mantra:

Apavitrah pavitrovaa sarvaavasthaangatopiva,

Yassmaret Pundareekaahsham sa bahyaantaraassuchih/

This would be followed by the Aghamarshana Mantras viz.

Rutamcha Satyam abheedaat tapasodhyajaayata

tato raatrasya jaayataa tat Samudro Arnavaha/

(Even before meditation, the self-illuminated Para Brahma created Truth that dispelled darkness and further on the Oceans); Thereafter perform 'Punaraachamana' with the water from the shankha or the bowl made of kusha grass as the case that may be.

This would be followed by initiating 'Manasika or 'Pratyaksha' Abhisheka of Linga with the Invocation of Trayambika Mantra and its explanation

Om Trayambakam yajaamahe sugandhim pushtivardhanam,

Urvaarukameva bandhanaat Mrutyormuksheeya Maamrutat/

(OM, Tryambakaam or Three Eyes or Three Ambaas of Lakshmi-Gouri-Sarasvati; Yajaamahe or we sing your glory; Sugandhim or of fragrance of knowledge- strength-presence or of knowing-seeing-and feeling of His deeds; Pushtivardhanam or may the Creator promote our well-being; Urvaarookam or deadly diseases or Adhibhoutika-Adhiyatmika-Adhi daivika; eva: types; bandhanaan or overpowered; Mrutyor-meeksheeya or do deliver us from death; Maamrutaat: kindly bestow to us the rejuvenating Amritam or Nectar). The Mantra of *Rudrena Pavanaanena twaritaakhyena Mantravit* etc. is recited while initiating the Abhisheka and performing Dhyana or meditation of Pancha Mukha Shiva; thus the Snaana-Aachamana-Dhyaana is performed, before taking up Sandhyopasana, Gayatri Japa, and Pancha Yagnaas. The Pancha Yagnas comprise Deva Yagna, Manushya Yagna, Bhuta Yagna, Pitru Yagna and Brahma Yagna; Devas are pleased by Agni Homas; Manushyas are pleased by Bhojana-Dakshinaas to worthy Brahmanas; Bhutaas are pleased by Sacrifice of 'Bali Vaishvadeva- Anna', Pitru Devas are pleased by Shraadhhas and Tarpanaas, and Brahma Yajna is performed by way of 'Swaadhyaaya' or Recitation of Vedas and Scriptures. Thus Homas are an integral part of Rudraabhisheka.

Maharshi Lomavarshana now described the actual Procedure of Rudraabhisheka as follows: The Brahmana desirous of the Abhisheka should then perform Pranaayama after aligning his physical Limbs with Pranava Swarupa of Pancha Mukha Maha Deva. He should clean up the area and decorate the surroundings of Shiva Linga with Gandha and Chandana, sprinkle water on the Prokshya-Arghya-Paadya and Achamaneeya Patraas or the vessels with which to perform the Lingaabhisheka; apply chandana around the Paadya Patra as Pranava Mantra is recited; fill up with the 'Churna' or the powder mix of

Karpura (Camphor), Jaati Kankola, Tamala etc.; sprinkle the mix of Kushaagra' or the top of Kusha grass, rice grains, and pour the mixture of water and Bhasma or Sacred Ash -the left over of previous Agni Homas- in the Prokshani Patra utilised for scattering water; keep reciting Rudra Gayatri viz.

Om Tatpurushaya Vidhmahe Maha Devavaaya dhimahi tanno Rudra prachodayaat/

also the Panchaakshari Mantra viz. *Om Namassivaaya*/ and perform Anga Nyasa and Karanyasa ie alignment of the Mantras and the Body Parts as also the Mantras and hand fingers aong with the water from the Prokshana or water-sprinkling vessel. While Nandi Deva is seated in the vicinity of the Shiva Linga, the Karta of the Abhishekam would concentrate on Parama Shiva with his Physical Splendour akin to Agni Deva; the Tri Netra, the 'Aabharana Bhushita' or the Well- Ornamented One and the Sowmya Rupa.

The Karta would propitiate Shiva, besides Ganesha, Skanda and Devi Parvati with fragrant flowers and set these Devatas in different directions around the Shiva Linga. The devotee would arrange a Padma Pushpa before the Linga and visualise each of the 'dalaas' of the Lotus as representative of various Siddhis; the Purva dala or of Purva Disha or the Eastern Side would represent Anima Siddhi, the Dakshina dala as Laghima Siddhi, the Paschima dala as Mahima Siddhi, the Uttara dala embodying the Prapti Siddhi, the Nirruti dala as Praakaamya Siddhi, the Vayavya dala as Ishatwa Siddhi and Agneya dala as Vashitwa Siddhi.[Refer to last Paragraph of the Chapter on Ashtaanga Yoga afore-mentioned]. The Padma Pushpa's stem is stated to be the Soma Deva; the middle portion of the stem is stated to embody the Surya Deva while the lowest portion would represent Pavaka Deva. Then Shiva be seated at the Center firmly; He would be seated as Sadyojata Shiva with the Mantra of Vaamaa Deva; Rudra Gayatri is seated with Aghora Mantra; and Ishana is seated by reciting

Ishaanassarva Vidyaanaam Ishwarassarva Bhutaanaam

Brahmaadipatih Brahmanoddhi Patih Brahma Shivomey astu Sadaa Shivom/

Then the devotee should worship Shiva Linga with Paadya-Arghya-Achamanaas; perform Snaana with Gandha-Chandana; implement formal Snaana with Pancha-Gavya or of Cow's Five Bye Products; carry out Abhishka with Ghee, Honey, Sugar, Pavitra Jala along Pranava Naada. There after, clean up the residues of the Abhisheka material on the Linga with a clean cloth and decorate the Linga with flower garlands comprising fresh flowers like Jaati, Champaka, Kapura, Kannera, Chameli, and Kadamba. The Abhisheka Karta would further execute nyaasa or alignments with his body parts and the accompanying Sadyojaataadi Mantra Recitations; he should execute Abhishka with the water from Golden or Silver or Copper vessels with a variety of 'Patraas' or Leaves of Kamala, Palasha etc.and of Pushpaas. Group recitations of Namaka-Chamaka Rudras and Mahayaasaas would literally electrify the atmosphere of Devotion.

Intonations of various other Mantras and Hymns like Pavamaana, Vaamakena, Nila Rupa, Shri Sukta, Purusha Sukta, Ratri Sukta, Hotaara, Atharva, Shanti Sukta, Aruna, Vaaruna, Veda Vrata, Bruhadrachandra, Virupaaksha, Skanda, Shata Rudra Shiva, Pancha Brahma Sukta would indeed transport the Vaktaan( Reciters) and the Shrotaas (Listeners) to the heights of Kailasa and demolish the sins of all concerned! After the Abhishekas, the Karta should perform 'Punaraachamana', repeat the worship with Gandha-Pushpa-Dhupa-Deepa-Naiverdyas as also decorate the Shiva Linga with Mukuta-Chhatra-Bhushana-Tamboola-Stotra-Japa-Pradakshina and 'Atmaarpana Yukta Saashtaanga' or Complete Surrender.

Origin of Shiva Linga and Significance of Aatithya, Paativratya, Bhakti and Bhasma Stuti' of Maha Deva by Saptarshis included)

( 'Apara

In the secluded and thick Forests of Daruvana, select Munis including Sapta Rishis and Maha Yogis were engaged in deep Tapasya along with their wives and children. As the Munis were busy with their meditation and Yagna Karmas, the wives who were all Maha Pativratas were serving them in their spiritual activities and family chores. Maha Deva appeared in Daruvana to test the depth of the Rishis and their Tapasya. He assumed the form of a semi-lunatic but of an astonishingly handsome and shapely physique; as a 'Digambara' or naked, he was laughing loudly some times and behaving erratically always. Soon he became the talk of Daruvana especially the feminine gender. Even the renowned Pativratas of leading Maharshis, let alone the unmarried Kanyas and elderly women, spontaneously professed attraction and infatuation for the Stranger. Parama Shiva in disguise who terminated Kama Devata into ashes with his anger by his third eye had kindled passion among the Rishi Patnis including of the Sapta Rishis! Some of the enterprising women entered his 'Parnashala', declared love for him and enquired of his antecedents. He smiled but would not reply. The Maharshis reacted sharply against the Stranger as he was ruining their family lives; they all confronted him one day and gave him a 'Shaap' that since he provoked his wives with his nudity, his Linga should be dropped down to the ground. Parma Shiva retaliated that since no fault of his the Maharshis gave the 'shaap', he would not give a return curse but his Linga would get fixed there as also multiply into innumerable forms to burn off the areas of their presence; further they (Sapta Rishis) would be hanging on the Sky along with Nakshatras for ever! Having heard this the Sapta Rishis were shaken up as the forest was gradually getting burnt off and the fire was spreading far and wide. They approached Brahma at once and the latter confirmed to the Rishis that the 'Atithi' or the Guest was none other than Maha Deva Himself and that they were most unfortunate in not realising the actuality. In fact Brahma reprimanded the Rishis as they did not observe one of the fundamental Precepts of Dharma viz. that a Grihasti or a Family Man ought to treat Guests as Devatas (Athithi Devo Bhava)! Brahma narrated to the Maharshis about the legend of a Brahmana Sudarshana who instructed his wife to worship a Guest as Shiva Himself, whether he was ugly, ignorant or demanding. Dharma Deva himself arrived as an Atithi at the Brahmana's house and being a true Pativrata, the Brahmani took enormous care to treat the Guest in disguise as per her husband's instruction and worshipped the Atithi well. As she offered 'Naivedya' to the Guest, Dharma Raja demanded the Pativrata's body as an offering and as per her husband's instruction again, she readily agreed to fulfil the desire of the Atithi. Just then Sudarshana arrived at the threshold of the house and called for his wife; the Atithi replied to Sudarshana that he was about to sleep with the wife of the Brahmana and the latter replied that he would indeed be happy to happy that his wife was ready to offer herself to the Guest! Dharma Raja was taken aback by the Brahmana's positive reply and appeared before the Brahmana and his wife in his Real Form; he said that even by his remote thought he never had the desire for the Brahman's wife but was only testing them. Dharma Raja further stated:

Mayaa chishaa na Sandehaha Shraddhaam Jnaatumihaagatah,

Jito vai yastvayaa Mrityur Dharmayairnaikena Suvraha!

(I have come here only to test your Shraddhaa / dedication; by this occurrence, you have proved that you conquered Dharma Raja!) Having narrated this incident, Brahma addressed the Sapta Rishis that the latter were most unfortunate that Maha Deva himself was their valued Guest and they not only neglected the Guest but insulted him by giving him a Shaap! Actually, there was no fault of Maha Deva in disguise but instead of respecting the Atithi, they gave him a Shaap! The Maharshis then performed penance and in response to their Tapasya, Maha Deva appeared but said that only Devi Parvati could stop the spread of the Fire in the Forest. Devi Parvati when approached by the Maharshis agreed to stop the havoc of Fire

keeping in with the safety of the Lokas. That indeed was the Origin of Shiva Linga, as the Maharshis besides Deva-Danava-Gandharva-Daitya-Rakshasa-Yaksha-Naaga-Kinnara and all other manifestions in Srishti especially the Manavas commenced Shiva Linga worship to fulfill their own desires in 'Iham' (Current Life) and 'Param' (the Life thereafter)!

As the Memorable Happenings at Darukavana were described about the Origin of Shiva- Linga pursant to the test of Maharshis by Maha Deva and the significance of Atithi Puja, Suta Maha Muni quoted Mahatma Shailda's (Nandeswara's) narration of how Sweta Muni attained Mrityunjayatwa. The Muni was stickler of 'Rudraadhyayana'and an unparalleled Shiva Bhakta engaged in continuous recitation of Rudraashtakam:

Om namastey Rudra manyava utota ivave namah Baahubhyaamuta tey namah/

Om ya tey Rudra Shivaa tanuraghoraa paapakashinee,

Tayaatanastwaashanta mayaa Giri shaanta abhichakasheeh/

etc. The Muni was also in the habit of reciting:

Trayambakam yajaamahey Sugandhim Pushti vardhanam,

*Uravaaruka miva bandhanan mrutyormukshiya maamrutaat/* 

Notwithstanding the continuous and hearty Salutations, the Time of Deliverance was up to Sweta Muni and Kaala Dharma Raja appeared while the Muni intensified the prayers to Shiva. Kaala Deva asserted that none whosoever might try to escape death proved to be failures despite the backing of Tri Murtis and the singular and unequivocal embrace of death was something inevitable. Sweta Muni kept on arguing that he had his unequivocal support of Mahadeva whithout whose instructions even a blade of grass woud not be destroyed and in his own case he had total faith on Shiva who had always been responding to his prayers of indefatigable faith and trust in Him. Kaala laughed away, heckled the Shiva Linga saying that it was a mere Stone and would not respond the misplaced prayers by the Sweta Muni and extended his 'Yama Pasha' or the noose of the death's rope to the Muni while a Tri Mukha Swarupa of Parama Shiva along with Ambaa-Ganapati-Nandi faced Kaala Deva right in the latter's face and Kaala got confused, sprang back and was exterminated! The Brahmana too was puzzled at the instant appearance of Maha Deva and was blessed to get absorbed in the Shiva Linga.

As the Rishis at Darukaavana were taken aback at the swift happenings that the highly dedicated Sweta Muni faced in response to the challenge of Kaala Deva, they approached Mahatma Shailada (Nandi) as to which means of worship could enable the kind of Response that the Shiva Linga bestowed to Sweta Muni with which he argued and came out with flying colours against Kaala Deva himself and even killed him! Would it be the means of Daana, or Yagna, or Tapa, or Vrata or Yoga! Brahma replied: In Satya Yuga, the means of Shiva Tatwa in Satya Yuga was of Yoga, in Treta Yuga it was through yagnas, and in Dwapara Yuga, the means were trough 'Kaalaagni'; but in Kaliyuga the Sure route was Bhakti alone.

Na daanena Munishrashtha stapasyaa cha na Vidyayaa,

Yajneyr homairvratair vratair Vedair yogair shastrairnirodhanaih/

#### Prasaadenaiva sa Bhaktih Shivo Parama kaariney!

(It is neither daanas, nor Tapasya, nor Vidyaa, nor Yajnas and Homas, and not Vratas-Vedas-Yoga and Shastras; but only Bhakti that Sweta Muni which he had in abundance .) Thus the Brahmanas and Rishis underlined the single factor of Bhakti which bestowed to a human being the power of victory against Mrityu! Given such Bhakti, a Bhakta could choose any form and shape of Shiva Lingas as for instance the Suvarnamaya, Rajatamaya, Sphatikamaya, Taamra Mayaa, Shilamaya, Chaturmayi, Trikonamayi, Vartulaakaara and so on, each with appopriate Kalashaas. What is significant however is that the Sthapana or Setting up ought to be with 'Beeja Mantras' and daily Abhishekas and worship for the best results. Dhyana-Avaahana-Aasana-Padya-Arghya-AchamaneeyaPanchaamrita Snaana-Shuddhodaka Snaana-Vastra-Yagnopavita-Gandha-Pushpa-Dhupa-Deepa-Naivedya-Taambula-Pradakshina-Kshama-Namaskara etc should be a daily course of worship. Those Bhaktas who would perform such unfailing worship along with their families are blessed with fulfilment, peace of mind, and Shiva Prapti.

Munis at Darukavana made the following Stuti seeking pardon for the mindless and harsh action in giving 'Shaap' to Mahadeva resulting in the dropping of Shiva Linga:

Ajnaanaaddeva Devesha yadasmaabhi- ranushtitam,

Karmanaa Manasaa Vaachaa tat Sarvam kshantumarhasi/

Vishweswara Maha Deva yosi sosi Namostutey,

Stuvantitwaam Mahatmaney Deva Devam Maheswaram/

Namo Bhavaaya Bhavyaaya Bhaavanaayod -bhavaayacha,

Ananta Bala Viryaaya Bhutaanaam Patayenamah/

Samhatrecha Pishangaaya Avyayaaya Vyayaayacha,

Gangaasalila dhaaraaya Adhaaraaya Gunatmaney/

Triayambikaaya Trinetraaya Trishulavara dhaariney,

Kandarpaaya Hutaashaaya Namostu Paramatmaney/

Shankaraaya Vrishaamakaaya Ganaanaam pataye Namah,

Dandahastaaya Kaalaaya Paasha hastaaya vai namah/

Veda Mantra pradhaanaaya Shata jihvaaya vai namah,

Bhuta Bhavyam Bhavishyam cha Sthaaavaram jangamam cha yat/

Tava dehaasamutpannam Deva Sarvaidam Jagat,

Paasi imsicha bhadrantey praseeda bagavamstatah/

Ajnaanaadyadi Vijnaanaadyaadyanti kinchit kurutey Narah,

Tatsarvam Bhagavaaneva kurutey Yogamaayayaa/

(Devesha! Kindly excuse our blunders perpetrated out of ignorance by way of our thought, speech and deed. Little did we know of your background which even Brahma and others could comprehend. Our sincere salutations to you Bhava Rupa, Bhavya Rupa, Bhavanodbhava, Ananta Bala, Veerya, Bhutapati, Sarva Samahara, Avyaya, Vyaya, Gangaadhari, Adharara, Gunaatmika, Triabaka, Tri Netra, Trishula dhaari, Manmatha samhaara, Agni Swarupa, Paramatma, Shankara, Vrishaarudha, Ganapati, Danda hasta, Kaala,Paasha Hasta and Veda Mantra Pradhana! You are Hundred Tongued, the Symbol of the Present, Past and Future; the Form of all Movable and Immovable Beings in the Universe, the Creator of the World from your Physique! Do kindly pardon our thoughtlessness and impudence as we were guided by the play of Yogamaya!)

Pleased and convinced by the remorseful prayers of the Maharshis, Maha Deva granted 'Divya drishti' or Celestial Vision to them so that they could guess the silhouettes or outlines of the Magnificence of what Maha Deva was all about and with the aid of this Vision, the Maharshis got into raptures and broke down in spontaneous Apara Stuti as follows:

Namo Digvaasasey Nityam Krutaantaaya Trishuliney,

Vikataaya Karaalaaya Karaala vadanaayacha/

Arupaaya Surupaaya Vishwarupaaya tey namah,

Katankataaya Rudraaya Swaahaakaaraaya vai namah/

Sarvapranata dehaaya swayam cha Pranataatmaney,

Nityam Nilashikhandaaya Shrikanthaaya Namonamah/

Nilakanthaaya Dehaaya Chitaabhasmaanga dhaariney,

Twam Brahmaa Sarva Devaanaam Rudraanaam Nilalohitah/

Atmaacha Sarva Bhutaanaam Saankhyaih Purusha ucchatey,

Parvataanaam Mahamerur- Nakshatraanaam cha Chandramaam/

Rusheenaamcha Vasishthatwam Devaanam Vaasavas- tathaa,

Omkaara Sarva Devaanaam Sreshtham Saamacha Saamasu/

Aaranyaanaam Pashunaamcha Simhatwam Parameswarah,

Graamyaanaamrushabhas chaapi Bhagavaanloka Pujitah/

Sarvathaa vartamaanopi yoyo Bhaavo Bhavishyati,

Twaameva thatr prashamo Brahmanaa tathitam tathaa/

Kaamah krodhasccha lobhascha vishaado Mada yeva cha,

yatadicchaamahe bodhum praseeda Parameswara/

Mahaasamharaney praaoptey twadaa Deva krutaatmanaa,

Karm lalaatey Samvidhya Vahni rupaaditastavyaa/

Tenaagriney tadaa Lokaa Archirbhih sarvato vruttaah,

Tasmaadagni samaahyotey bahavo vikruta -agnayah/

Kaamah Krodhascha Lobhascha Moho dambha upadravah,

Yaani chaanyaani bhutaani sthavaraani charaanicha/

Antah gantum na shaktaah sma Devadeva Namostutey/

(Our sincere obeisances to You Digambara, Nitya, Kruaanta, Shulapaani, Vikata, Karaala, Bhayamukha, Prabhu; You are Arupa yet Sundara Rupa, Vishwarupa, Rudra and Swaahaakaara; Your Physique is respectfully prayed to by one and all and you are the Soul of Sarva Praanis; the Nitya, Nilakantha, Nila Shikhinda, Sarvaanga Bhasma Rupa and Nilalohita; you are applauded as the Embodiment of Shankya Shastra; You are the Meru among the Mountains, Chandra among the Stars; Vasishtha among the Maharshis, Indra Deva among the Devatas; Omkaara among Vedas; Lion among the Animals and bull among native animals. Bhagavan! do indicate to us the various Forms as at Present and indicated by Brahma. Our venerations to you Mahadeva! As you are devoid of the 'Shatvargas' or the Six Enemies of humanity viz. Kama-Krodha- Lobha-Moha-Mada and Matsaraas or Lust-Anger-Greed-Attachment-Pride and Envy, besides Vishada or Grief. Parama Shiva! At the time of the Pralaya or the Great Destruction, you are of Agni Swarupa and as Agni assumes flagrant form converts the whole world into 'Bhasma' or ashes and with that Bhasma, You and your Linga Swarupa are worshipped the World over. Also may the Agni Swarupa of that Shivatwa devastates the Univerese including the Sttaavara-Jagamaas; and to that Supreme 'Kaalaagni' Swarupa that we all pray and pay homage to. Maheswara, do protect us from that Kaalaagni. We will indeed obey and comply with your instructions. We are regretful that among crores of humanity, we failed to recognise due to our ignorance and lack of wisdom!)

Maha Deva no doubt was satisfied with the Paraa Stuti but admonished the Maharshis not to be flippant in their assessment of 'Yatis' or Yogis in which ever form or Rupa they might be. He said that the entire Srishti happened to be of Stree Linga or Pumlinga and one should not rush to misinterpretations or wrong conclusions about any person as the Maharshis did in His case! A Brahmavadi might be a naked person, or ash-smeared or even as a child! His nakedness should not be misinterpreted to attract women! He might have smeared 'Bhasma' to destroy his sins; a Brahmavadi might be a 'Nitya Dhyaana Parayana' or engrossed in meditation and might be least-communicative; this should not be misunderstood as a sign of lunacy or arrogance; a Parama Yogi might be laughing away in a boisterous manner if he is enjoying 'Paramaananda' or bliss; he might be overjoyed as he could be engrossed in Parma Tatwa by way of Manasika Puja or Maha Dhyana and making Maha Mudras; then none should mistake him for his Vaachaka-Manasika-Shaariraka meditation. This was how Shiva guided never to mistake Maya for Satya or Illusions for realities.

Significance of Bhasma: Bhagavan Shiva further analysed the significance of Bhasma which was product of Agni Karyaas like daily homas and Yagnas; the burning of 'Sthavara Jangamaas' by Fire would result in Ash:

Bhasmattadvihitam Sarvam Pavitramidamuttamam,

Bhasmaanaa Veeryamaasyaaya Bhutaani parishanchati/

Agnikaaryam cha yah krutwaa karishyati triyaayusham,

Bhasmanaa mama veeryena muchyatey Sarva kilbishey/

Bhaasatey –tyeva yadbhasma shubham bhaavayatey cha yat,

Bhakshanaat Sarva ;paapaanaam bhasmeyti parikeertitam/

Ushmapaah Pitaro Jneyaa Devaa vai Somasambhavaah,

Agnishomaatmakam Sarvam Jagarsthaavara jangamam/

Ahamagnirmahaa tejaah Somaschaishaa Mahaambikaa,

Ahamagnischa Somascha Praktrutyaa Purushah Swayam/

Tasmaadbhasmam Mahaa Bhaagaa madveeryamiti chochyatey,

Swarveeryam vapushaa chaiva dhaarameeti vai sthitaya/

Tadaaprabhruti lokeshu rakshaarthamashubheshyucha/

Bhasmaanaa kriyatey raksha sutikaanaam gruheshucha/

Bhasmasnaana vishuddhaatmaa Jita Krodho Jitendriyah,

Matsameepam Samaagamya na bhuyo vinivartatey/

Vratam Pashupata yogam kapilam chaiva nirmitam,

Purvam Pashupatim hyetannirmitam tadanuttamam/

(Uttama Bhasma is produced by the scorching of the wood of trees and other materials of Nature. Shiva stated that by way of Bhasma, he carried his virility to human beings. Bhasma generated by Agni Karyaas while reciting the Mantras like 'Triyaamshu' is basically is the bye-product of Shiva's 'veerya' and demolishes all kinds of Sins. This 'bhasita' or the radiant product emerges from Shiva's Body and is responsible for the Bhakshana of Mahaa Paapaas and hence it is called Bhasma. Mahadeva futher explained that the word 'Ushmapa' or hot and burnt material is 'Pitreeshwar' or the material consumed by the Lord of Pitraas, while Devataas consume Amrita or Soma Rasa; Agni is of Soma Swarupa; Shiva is Agni and Soma rupi is Devi Ambika; Shiva is Purusha and Ambika is Prakruti. This is the reason why

Bhasma is called Shiva's veerya as his Veerya is generated from Shiva's body. Thus Bhasma destroys Evil and Inauspiciousness / 'Ashubha' anywhere especially in households; any person taking a bath and applies Bhasma is stated to be eligible for performing the Sacred Paashupata Vrata Kapila Yoga and is assured of Bandha vimochana or the shackles of Samsara to Shiva Loka. If a person resorts to Bhasma Snaana and performs Shiva Dhyaana, then thousands of 'Akaryas' or misdeeds get destroyed like Agni burns off immoralities and turpitude. Application of Bhasma after Snaana and Shiva Dhyaana three times a day would fetch 'Gaanapatya'; if that person performs Shiva Worship at Smashaana or burial grounds along with the observance of the above deeds viz. Pavitra Snaana-Bhasmaalankarana-Shiva Dhyana and worship thrice daily would secure Ashta Siddhis of Anima-Garima, Vasitya etc. Performance of Kamika Vrata and Pashupata Vrata before Shiva Linga without the impact of Shadvagraas, Rajo-Tamogunaas and perfect equanimity besides the prerequisites of Snaana-Bhasma-Dhyana- Puja-Naivedyas etc. would qualify Kalpaanta Rudra Prapti. Maha Deva further stated that He had originally scripted Srishti without Lajja (Shame), Moha (Attachment), Bhaya (Fear) and such aberrations. Even now all Beings including Devas, Munis and human beings are born naked since no person could become Jitendriya, since features like Kshama (Forgiveness), Dhairya (Courage), Ahimsa or Non-Violence, Vairagya or Other-Worldliness constitute the most superior Vastras. Thus any mocking, criticism, protests and curses against Mahatmas and Siddhhas caused by Ahamkara (Ego) and Ignorance would tantamount to 'Maha Paapaas' attracting the wrath of Maha Deva even against Saptarshis who were cursed back by him, while their curses against Shiva proved to be boons to the Universe since Shiva Lingas were manifested for promoting Bhakti in the Trilokas as sure means of Shiva Prapti.

## Muni Dadhichi proves superiority of Shiva Shakti to King Kshupa

Brahma's son King Kshupa and Maha Muni Dadhichi the son of Maharshi Chyavana were good friends but got entangled in an argument whether Kshatriyas were superior to Brahmanas. The King argued that the 'Ashtadikpalakaas' or the Rulers viz. Agni, Indra, Varuna, Vaayu, Nirruti, Kubera and Yama and Soma and Kingship had the last 'say' in goverenance. Dadhichi was enraged and did the indiscretion of hitting the King on his head by his left fist; the King retaliated and hit Dadhichi by his 'Vajra'and Dadhichi fell down badly hurt and was almost dead; the dying Muni remembered Maharshi Sukracharya the Danava Guru who appeared and entered Dadhichi's body and administerd Sanjeevani Vidya; the Guru utilised the Vidya which was bestowed to him by Maha Deva by pleasing him for thousand years of rigorous of Tapasya. Then, Sukracharya commended Dadhichi to fully surrender to Maha Deva and engage himself with relentelss Tapasya to conquer Mrityu; he preached the unique Sanjivini Vidya to Dadhichi and highlighted the significance of the Maha Mantra as follows:

Triabmakam yajemahey Trilokya Pitaram Prabhum,

Trimandalasya pitaram Trigunaysya Maheswaram/

Tritatwasya Trivahnescha Tridhaabhutasya Sarvatah,

Tridevasya Mahadevam sugandhim pustivardhanam/

Sarva bhuteshu Sarvatra Triguney Prakrutou tathaa,

Indrayeshu Tathaanyashu Deveshu cha Ganeshucha/

Pushpeshu Gandhavat sukshmah Sugandhih Parameshwarah,

Pushtischa Prakrutir yasmaat purushasya Dwijottama/

Satyenaanena Muksheeyaanmrityu paashaadbhava swayam/

(I pray to Triambaka who is the Swami of Trilokas; the Three Tatwaas, Three Agnis, Three Bhutas and Three Vedas are enriched by Maha Deva's Sugandhi and Pushti or fragrance and vigour; the essence of fragrance among flowers is Maha Deva Himself and the unique Shakti or Power too is of Maha Deva. The growth and significance of the Tatwas as displayed among Munis, Devas, Indra, Brahma and Vishnu are also originated from Maha Deva; the extraordinary radiance and high heat of Three Kinds of Agnis too is created by Maha Deva; the Pushti and Sugandha enjoyed by Sarva Bhutas or Beings, Trigunaas, Devis in the Rupas of Prakriti emerge from Maha Deva only. It is through 'Satya' or its broad sense of Virtue alone that the various 'bandhanas' or fetters could be terminated and Moksha is achieved).

Then Guru Shukracharya imparted the Sanjeevani Maha Mantra to Dadhichi Maha Muni; the latter performed Japa and Homa, drank the 'Abhimantrita Jala' or the Sacred water that absorbed the Mantra day and night and was engaged in 'Shivaaraadhana' or Worship to Shiva for long; in course of time, Dadhichi secured a backbone far harder in several multiples than the Vajra with which King Khsupa nearly killed Dadhichi; in fact his backbone turned so invincible that at a later date, Indra appealed to the Muni at the instance of Vishnu to sacrifice it by way of a yogic self-termination so that the backbone was materialised as the famed 'Vajrayudha' of Indra in the context of Vritrasura's killing and the Maha Muni acquiesced for the great cause of 'Loka Kalyana' or for Universal Benefit and gave away voluntarily. As Dadhici accomplished indestructibility of his bones thanks to his exemplary devotion to Parama Shiva, the Muni retaliated King Kshupa and hit him hard when the latter remembered Vishnu and prayed to him very sincerely:

Mahadeva Jagannadha Pitamaha Jagadguro,

Praseeda Devadevesha praseeda Parameswara/

Praseedatwam Jagannaatha shranyam sharanam tatah,

Vaikuntham Shourey Sarvajna Vaasudeva Mahaa bhujah/

Sankarshana Mahaa Bhaaga Pradyumna Purushottama

Aniruddha Mahaa Vishno Sadaa Vishno Namostutey!

As Bhagavan appeared before the King who was a life -long Bhakta of his, the King narrated the entire background as to how he was insulted and humbled and requested Vishnu that Dadhichi the invincible due to his devotion to Shiva had turned arrogant and hence must be taught a lesson. Vishnu assumed the form of a Brahmana and sought a boon from Dadhichi, the Shiva Bhakta. As Dadhichi had the powers of recognition, he recognised Vishnu and a smiling Vishnu complimented the Muni and stated that since the Muni was a Shiva Bhakta he should be afraid of nothing including Vishnu. As Dadhichi asserted so and even belittlled Vishnu; Vishnu grew angry with the brazen and bold behaviour of the Muni, and got ready to fight; as Vishnu readied to instruct his Sudashana Chakra, Dadhichi joked that Shiva gifted the Chakra and thus would not hurt a Shiva Bhakta and similarly Brahmastra would not work anyway. Vishnu got furious and tried various other Astra-Shastras but Dadhichi used Kusha grass tops and the Vishnu's Astras proved ineffective. As a final resort Vishnu spread his Maya and created crores of his own Swarupas, crores of Devas and of Munis. Dadhichi shouted on Vishnu, 'Lord! Please do not utilise your

old tricks of Vishnu Maya on me but instead look at me as Parama Shiva in whose body you could vision every body including yourself and the entire 'Brahmanda'. As Dadhichi said so, Devatas got frightened and flew away and Vishnu became still and motionless! Dadhichi then cursed Devas for their deeds against him and forewarned them that at the time of Daksha Yagna in the future, Rudra Deva would teach a lesson to all including Vishnu! As the Maharshi said this and returned to his 'Ashram', everybody including Brahma and Devas, let alone the King Kshupa followed him and paid respects to him and that Place came to be famed as <u>Sthaaneshwara</u> there after.

Those who achieve this Kshetra would indeed attain Shiva Saayujya. Those who hear or recite the happenings between King Kshupa and Muni Dadhichi and the magnificence of Maha Deva would never have fear of death and attain Brahmaloka after a contented and successful life!

### Birth of Nandeswara and his puja

Suta Maha Muni narrated the birth- account of Nandeswara to the Rishis at Naimisha Forest. Maharshi Shilada approached Indra Deva to bless him to a highly renowned and virtuous son who would be 'Ayonijam' and 'Mrityuheenam' or unborn to a woman and deathless. Indra Deva expressed his inability and said:

Na durlabho Mrityuheenastwa Putro hyayonijah,

Mayaa cha Vishnunaa chaiva Brahmanaa cha Mahatmanaa/

(It is not possible for Brahma or Vishnu to grant a son who would be unborn to a woman and would not die). Maharshi Shilada then performed severe Tapasya for thousands of years and his body got degenerated to such an extent that it became a skeleton full of worms. Finally, Maha Deva granted his vision and Shilada's wish:

Tawa Putro bhavishyaami Nandi naamnaa twayonijah,

Pitaa bhavisyaasi mama Pitrurvey Jagataam Muney/

(I shall grant you a son with the name of Nandi and he would be my son and would be popular like wise). Then Nandi was born at Yagna Bhumi with the features of Maha Deva himself with Trinetras, Chaturbhjas and as Jataa mukuta and Vajra-Sarpa dhaari when Devatas rained fragrant flowers, Apsaraas danced and Gandharvaas sang tuneful hymns in praise of Shiva and Nandi. Vasus, Rudras and Indra prayed respectfully and Devis like Lakshmi, Jyeshtha, Diti, Aditi, Nanda, Shachi, Bhadra and others rendered 'Stutis' to Nandi. Shailada Muni commended Maha Deva as well as Nandeswara and expressed his total satisfaction and gratitude. As Nandeswara was taken into the 'Parnashala' or thached home of Shailada, Nandi assumed a human Rupa instead of Deva Swarupa. Shailada Muni was overjoyed, performed the child's Jaata Karma and other Vedic Tasks and on the son's attaining seven years performed his Yagnopaveeta dharana and 'Upaasana' of Gayatri and tendered him to the Ashram of Maharshi Mitraavaruna. The Guru taught Veda Vidya, Shastras and other Scriptures, besides Dhanur Vidya, Ayur Veda and MantraVidyas, Chatushashti Kaalas, Ashrama Dharmas and so on. Mitravaruna was very proud of the student and so was Muni Shilada; the Guru then blurted at that time of Nandi 's exit from Ashram that doubteless Bala Nandi displayed extra-ordinary brilliance as a fulfedged Scholar and accomplishment but was shortlived! Shilada fainted at this disclosure for long and after regaining normalcy took to extreme Tapasya again to Maha Deva; even as Shilada was engaged in Tapasya, Shiva appreared, fondled Nandi, assured him not to get disturbed from what was stated by his Guru. He said that actually he sent messengers that Nandi's life was almost over since his human birth would anyway be of Tapatrayas and hence he was terminating the Manava Janma to bestow Everlasting Life; by so saying, Maha Deva touched Nandi so that his physical body would fall down with his Jataa Mukuta etc and secure a permanent Rudra Rupa. The Place where the human form of Nandi's 'Jatajuta' fell on Earth was materialised into a Sacred River called Jatodaka and Nandi's new Form was of a 'Vrishabha'; Parama Shiva himself performed 'Abhisheka' on the new Form of Nandi and that Place came to be called Vrishadhwani, Jambunada or Panchanada and Vishwakarma gifted a Golden Mukuta or Headgear and Kundalaas or Ear Rings. Thereafter Nandeswara familiarised with his mother Devi Girija and also the Ganaas, whom he was empowered as their Chief. Devi Parvati endeared the son who prostrated before her with veneration. Maha Deva declared to the Tri Lokas that Nandeswara was the son of Shiva and Parvati. Devas headed by Indra, Brahma, Vishnu, Dikpalakas, Maharshis, besides Yaksha-Gandharva-Muni and Yogi ganaas were all invited to a huge event where Nandeswara's unique name was fame were known all over, where ever Maha Deva was known and indeed Maha Deva was acclaimed as the Supreme Lord of the Universe. Parama Shiva granted a boon to Nandeswara that He would be in the 'Sannithi' (Presence) of Shiva always and any kind of worship to himself would be incomplete without any Service to Nandi! Even great sins of the magnitude of Brahma hatya could be nullified by Shiva Puja but at first, Nandeswara should be propitiated without fail; Aadow kuryaanamaskaaram tadantey Shivataam Vrajet/

Shiva's Samishthi Swarupa (An Integrated Portrait of Maha Deva)

Bhurbhubhuvah swarmahaschaiva Janah Saakshaattapastathaa,

Satyalokascha Pataalam Narakaarnavakotayah/

Taarakaagraha Somaarko Dhruvah Saptarshyastathaa,

Vaimaanikaastathaaney cha tishthantasya prasaadatah/

Anena Nirmitaastwevam tadaatmaano Dwijarshabhaah,

Samishthirupah Sarvaatmaa Samshitah Savadaa Shivah/

Sarvaatmaanam Mahaatmaanam Mahaa Devam Maheswaram.

Na vijaananti Samoodhaa Maayayaa tasya mohitaah/

Tasya Devasya Rudrasya Shariram vai Jagatrayam,

Tasmaat pranaamya tam Vakshey Jagataam nirnayam Shubham/

(The totality of Bhur, Bhuva, Swaha, Maha, Jana, Tapa, Satya, Paataala, Naraka, Arnavaas / Seas, Nakshatras, Nava Grahas, Chandra- Surya lokas, Dhruva, Sapta Rishi Lokaas and so on is all integrated in the Composite Form of Sada Shiva). This basic truth is not comprehended by ignorant persons and display of Maya or Illusion; indeed the Sarvaatma, Mahatma, Maha Deva and Maheswara is far from being discerned and legible to the common ignoramus let alone Maharshis. Let there be awareness that Paramatma alone would be able to decide about the status of the Universe! Also, let it be known that Shiva denotes the Sapta Pataalas of Atala-Vitala-Sutala-Talaatala-Mahatala-Rasaatala and Patalas; Countless Narakas; the Sapta Dwipas of Jambu, Pluksha, Shaalmali, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaaka and

Pushkara; the Sapta Samudras of Kshara, Ikshu, Sura, Ghrita, Dadhi, Ksheera and Swada; the Fourteen Manusviz. Swayambhu, Swarochisha, Uttama, Chakshusa, Tamasa, Raivata, Vaivaswata, Swarani, and Daksha-Brahma-Rudra-Dharma Savarnis); Dasa Dishas; Kaalamaana (Concept of Time); Arishadvargas of Kama-Krodha-Lobha-Mohaa-Mada and Matsaraas; Ekadasa Rudras (Ajaikapaada, Abhirbudhnya, Virupaaksha, Raivata, Hara, Bahurupa, Triambika, Saavitra, Jayanta, Pinaki, and Aparajita); Dwadasha Adityas viz. Indra, Dhata, Bhava, Twashta, Mitra, Aryama, Vivaswan, Savita, Pusha, Amshuman and Vishnu; Chatur Vedas, Ashtaadasha Puranas, Shat-Vedangas viz Siksha including Sangeeta and Nyaya; Vyakarana, Kalpa Grandha, Nirukta, Chandas Shastra, Jyotisha including Jataka Skandha; Sapta Rishis (Marichi, Atri, Angirasa, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, and Vasishtha); Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanaatana and Sanat Kumara brothers; Prajapatis; Narada; Chatusshasthi Kalas, Sapta Parvatas viz. Sumeru, Kailasa, Malaya, Himalaya, Udyachala, Agastyachala, Suvela and Gandhamaadana; Ananta Shesha at the root of Meru; the Eight Lokapaalakaas viz. Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirruti,, Varuna, Vayu and Ishana; Chaturvarnas, Chaturaashramaas, Yagnas and Yagaas, Agni Homas like Shodasi, Ukta, Purushi, Agnishtoma, Aptoryama, Atiratra, Vajapeya and Goshava; and Devas, Daityas, Danavas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Nagas, Yajshas and Rakshasaas, Apsaraas; and so on, Parama Shiya's Samishthi Swarupa also outshines the best of Creations like Surya among Nava Grahas / the Nine Planets; Chandra as the Lord of Nakshatras / Stars and of Auoshadhis; Varuna as the best of Jalaas or Waters; Kubera as the Best of 'Dhanas' or Wealths; Vishnu as the Swami of the 'Dwadasa Adityaas'; Paavaka as the best of Vasu ganaas; Daksha as the most significant Prajapatis; Indra as the King of Devaas; King Prahlada as the Chief of Daitya-Danavas; Nirruti as the Head of Rakshasaas; Rudra as the Pati of Pashus; Nandi as the Commander of Shiva Ganaas; Veerabhadra as the Ruler of Veera Purushas; Chamunda as the Best of Matrikas; Nilalohita as the Principal of Rudras; Ganesha as the Controller of Vighnaas or obstructions and disablements; Uma Devi as the Prime Shakti of Women; Sarasvati as the Queen of Vanis; Parvati as the Chief of Himalaya and other Mountains; Ganga as the Paramount of Rivers; Pipul or Bo Tree (Ficus Reloijosa) the best of Trees; Vidyadhara as the King of Gandharvas and Chitraradha as the Head of Kinnaras; Khseera Sagara as the Leader of Samudras of Seas; Vaasuki as the King of Nagas; Takshaka as the Head of Sarpas; Garuda as the Master of Pakshis or Vihangaas Sky Birds; Ucchaaishrava as the Leader of Horses; Lion as the Leader of Amimals; Vrishabha as the best of the Species of Cows; Guha Swami as the Commander-in-Chief of Deva Sena; and so on.

#### 'Shiva Samkalpamastu' : Maharshi Parashara's Rudrarchana and glory to his Vamsha

Vasishtha Muni and his spouse Arundhati had a son named Shakti. As the Muni was engaged in a Yagna Kaarya by King Kalmashaapada, a Rakshasa named Rudhira killed and ate up Shakti and his brothers, apparently instigated by Vishwamitra Muni. At this heart-rending news, Vasihtha and Arundhati were so much grieved that they decided to jump down from a mountain top. Their daughter-in-law who was shattered too begged of Vasishha and Arundhati not to do so as she was in advanced stage of pregnancy and would be helpless. There was an 'Akasha Vani' saying that a Child of Vishnu's Amsha would be born and the Muni and family should observe restraint; the Voice further stated that the new born would become an illustrious devotee of Rudra. Meanwhile, the daughter-in-law requested the in-laws to take care of her body as very soon the child would be born; Arundhati took the daughter in law to their Ashram and a voice of a Hymn emerged from her stomach, while Vishnu from the sky confirmed to Vasishtha that indeed he would emerge then just as Aditi gave birth to Vishnu. In course of time, Shakti's wife gave birth to Parashara the grandson of the happy coulple of Vasishtha. She the became 'Adryushya Devi' or Invisible woman. The new-born Parashara enquired his mother as to where was his father and brothers; she replied that a Rakshasa killed them. It was then Parashara resolved that since the entire Universe belonged to Rudra, he would like to make a firm resolve or Shiva Sankalpa that he would most certainly please Rudra and show his dead father and brothers. Immediately, Parashara materialised a

Mrittka Linga and started worshipping the Shiva Linga by way of Shiva Sukta, and Traimbika Sukta; he recited Shiva Sankalpa with unique sincerity:

Yenedam bhutam Bhuvanam Bhavishyat parigriheetamamrutena sarvam,

Yena Yajnastraayatey bSapra hotaanmanassiva Sanlalpamastu/

Yena karmaani pracharanti Dheeraa yato Vaachaa Manasaa chaaruyanti,

Yat sammitam Manassancharanti Praaninastanmey Manassiva sankalpamastu/----

Paraatparatama Brahma tatparaat parato Harih,

Yaparaat parato dheesamtanmey Manassivasankalpamastu/

and so on. Devi Parvati was so impressed that she prevailed on Shiva to grant a darshan as also his wish. As Bhavani, Maha Deva and Nandi gave their appearances, Parashara was in raptures with overjoyed tears trickling his cheeks and the vision of his dead father and brothers was glimpsed by Vasishtha, Arundhati, his mother and by himself; his father Shakti said that whatever 'Shrutis' were expected by a son to the parents and the total Vamsha was fulfilled even Parasara of Vishnu Amsha was hardly born and hoped that his next generation too would bring long reputation as illustrious progeny. Having blessed Parashara, his father left for Pitruloka along with his elder brothers.

#### Maha Deva exterminates 'Tri-Purasuras'

As Skanda Deva killed Tarakasura, the three sons of the latter viz. Vydyunmaali, Kamalaaksha and Tarakaksha were united and performed relentless Tapasya to Brahma seeking invincibility. As Brahma clarified that none among the Beings were immortal, they scaled down their wishes to the following: they would build three flying 'Puraas' or Cities which could move about freely in the World and individually none of the Nagaris could ever be destroyed but only in a group simultaneously. Indeed this was a peculiar boon that was asked by the Danava brothers, but Brahma agreed all the same. The famed Daitya Builder Mayasura created three Nagaris, viz. a Golden one in Swarga Loka for Tarakaksha, a Silver Nagari for Kamalaksha in Antariksha and a Loha Nagari in Bhuloka for Vidyunmala; all secured fortresses which were impregnable even by Devas and other celestial Beings, let alone others like Manavas. The Nagaris were luxurious with all the comforts of Swarga with Kalpataru Gardens in place and Pancha Bhutas of Earth-Water-Illumination-Air and Sky under control; Gandharvas and Kinnaras were at service with sonorous music and song while Apsaras were made to dance at command. The Tripurasuras harassed Devaganas and threw them out of Swarga and their respective abodes. They approached Bhagavan Vishnu who created innumerable Shaktis but the army of the Asuras destroyed the Shaktis; Vishnu realised that not only the Tarakaaksha and brothers but all the follower Daityas had the unique feature of Maheswara Linga worship as per prescribed procedure and thus became difficult to control by the Vishnu Senas. Vishnu then created a Mayaawi Purusha who quietly entered the Tripuras and having impressed the Daityas with his knowedge of Shastras and Siddhis misled them successfully to neglect 'Shroutra Smartas' and Shiv Linga Puja. They also left the Varnashtam Dharmas, belittled women which caused Lakshmi to gradually desert them and relapsed to Adharma. That was the opportune time for Vishnu to approach Maha Deva and prayed to him:

Maheswaraaya Devaaya Namastey Paramatmaney,

Naraayanaaya Sharvaaya Brahmaney Brahmarupiney/ Shaswataayahyanantaaya Avyaktaaya cha tey Namah/ Then Devas also joined Vishnu's prayers and said: Namah Sarvaatmaney tubhyam Shankaraayaatrihaariney, Rudraaya Nila Rudraaya Kadrudraaya prachetasy/ Gatirnah Sarvadasmaabhirvandyo Devaari mardanah twamaadistwa mananta - schaakshayah Prabhuh/ Prakiritih Purushaha Saakshaatsrashtaa Hartaa Jagadguro, Traataa Netaa Jaatyasmindwijaanaam Dwija Vatsala/ Varado Vaangmayo Vaachyo Vaachya Vaachikavarjitah/ Yajyo muktyardhameeshaano Yogibhiryogavibhramaih/ Tadrutpundarika sushire yoginaam samsthitah sadaa, Vadanti Surayah samtam param Brahmaswarupinam/ Bhavantam tatwamityaayarsteyjo taashim Paratparam, Paramaatmaa namityaahurisma- jjagati tadvibho/ Drushtam hrutam sthitam Sarvey jaayamaanam Jagadguro, Anoralpataram prahurmahatopi Mahattharam/ Sarvatah Paanipaadam twaam Sarvatokshishiromukham, Sarvatah Shrutimallokey Sarvamaavrutya tishthasi/ Maha Devamanirdeshyam Sarvajnam twamanaamayam, Vishwarupam Virupaaksham Sada Shivamanaamayam/ Koti Bhaskara samkaasham Kotiseetaamshu sinnibham Kotikalaagnisankaasham Shadvimsha kamanee -shwaram/ Pravartakah Jagatyasmin Prakruteh prapitaamaham,

Vadanti Varadam Devam Sarvaavaasam Swayambhuvam/

Shtutayah Shrutisaaram twaam Shrutisaara vidojanaah/

Adrushtamasmaabhiraneka murtey vinaa krutam yadbhavataatha lokey,

Twameva Daityaan-sura bhutasanghaan Devaan Kinnaraan sthaavara jangamaascha/

Paahi naanyaa gatih Shambho Vinihatyaasurottamaan,

Mayayaa mohitaah Sarvey bhavatah Parameswara/

Yathaa tangaa lahari samuhaa yudhyantichaanyonyamapaam nidhowacha,

Jalaashrayaa Deva jadikrutaascha Suraasuraastadwadajasya sarvam/

Sutavuvaacha: Ya yidam praataru-tthhaaya shuchirbhutwaa japennarah,

shrunuyaadwaa stavam punyam sarvakaamava -apnuyaat/

( Namastey Maheswara, Deva, Paramatma, Naraayana, Sharva Brahma and Brahmarupa, Shaswata, Ananta, Avyakta! Our salutations Sarvatma, Shankara, Artihara, Rudra, Nila Rudra, Sarva Vandya, Prakriti, Purusha, Srashtaa or Creator, Harta or destroyer, Jagad Guru, Traata, Neta, Brahmana Vatsala, Varada, Vangmaya, Vaachiya, Vaachikavarjita, Ishaana, Yogi, Yoga vibhrama, Pundarika, always surrounded by Yogis, Brahma Swarupa, Bhavanta, itya Teja, Paratpara, Paramatma, Jadguru who visions, hears, resides all over in the Universe; Sarva Paani-Paadam, Sarvatokshishiromukha, Maha Devaamanirdesha, Sarvatjna, Vishwarupa, Virupaaksha, Sada Shiva, Koti Bhaskara Sankaasha, Koti Sheenshu Sannibha, Koti Kalaa sankaasha, Fulfiller of Twenty Six Great Desires, Sarva Vaasa, Swayambhuva, Pravartaka, Jagat Swami, Prakriti's Pataamaha, Vadanti, Varada, Sarva Vaasa, Swayambhu, Shruti Saara, Adrushta, Ekaaraneyka Murti, Sukshmaati Sukshma; You are the Sarva Swarupa representing Daityas-Devas-Bhuta-Kinnara-Sthaavara-Jangamaas. Shambho! We have no other place of refuge excepting you; the Universe is engulfed with Maya or Delusion; just as the huge waves of an Ocean gush to the shore and meekly get destroyed by striking it, Jalaashraya Deva; You are the Sarvam or the Infinite and the Eternal Truth! Suta Muni said: Any person on rising early morning and securing cleanliness from within and without recites the above Stotra by Vishnu and Devas to Parameswara would gain excellent results of Punya and fulfillment).

As Devas and Vishnu visioned 'Trishulapaani Shankar' relaxing with Devi Parvati and Mahatma Nandi, they saw that 'Bhuta bhavishya Swami'whose eyes were red like 'Agni kundas' and physique was shimmering with thousand Suns with a pleasant countenance ornamented with a Bala Purna Chandra. Having pleased Parama Shiva thus, Devas explained the gravity and seriousness of the crisis created by the Tripura Daityas who not only unseated and tormented Devas and Celestial Entities but were also sending shock-waves all over the Universe, humiliating Sages, frightening women and children, making mass-scale carnage and blood bath of humanity and uprooting Dharma and age-old Values and Principles. Parameshwara infused confidence into the demoralised Devas and asked them to construct an exceptional chariot with unique specifications: Prithvi as the Ratha / Chariot, Meru and Mandara Mountains as axles,

Surya and Chandra as Chakras made of gold and silver respectively, the Four Vedas of Ruk-Yajur-Sama and Atharva acted as the horses; Shukra, Brihaspati, Budha, Mangal, and Shanaischara seated on the Ratha ready to charge; the famous serpents viz. Takshaka, Karkotaka, Dhanajaya and Padmadwaya acted as the strings which were tied to the horses; most poisonous snakes like Surasa, Devashuni, Sarama, Kadru, Vinata, Shuchi, Trusha, and Bubhuksha were used as arrows; Mrutyu, Brahmahatya, Gohatya, Balahatya and Prajaabhaya were loaded on the Chariot so that they get activised as maces; Omkara and Vashatkara were the symbols on the Ratha; Sinivali, Kuhu, Raaka and Anumati - the 'Adhishtana'/ in charge Deities of Chaturdashi, Amavasya, Suddha Purnima, Pratipadika Purnima respectively were used as auxiliary strings to the horses; the dhanush made of six 'ritus'/ seasons which is safeguarded by Devi Ambika herself never to be broken; the specific arrow with which to kill the Tripurasura was strengthened by Vishnu, Soma and Agni and its head propelled by Agni and Chandra by its rear and Vishnu Maya smeared all over; and the extreme poison of Nagaraja Vasuki was loaded to ensure stability and speed of the arrow; Vayu was made in charge of the high velocity of the Chariot and finally Brahma was the Charioteer and Sesha Naag was made in charge of the personal security of Brahma as also of the Chariot. Yama Raja with his buffalo, Kubera on his serpent, Indra on Iravata, Ganeswara by his Mushika Vahana, Karikeya on his Peacock, Nandeshwara with his Shula running behind and sides of the Ratha were in full preparedness. Maharshis Bhrigu, Bharadwaja, Vasishtha, Goutama, Kratu, Pulastya, Pulaha, Marichi, Atri, Angira, Parashara, and Agastya were there too at the kick-start of the Battle to recite Veda Vachanas and Shiv Stutis. The Pramatha ganas were ready to charge as the army against the opponents- all swarmed around the Rath. Meanwhile, Sage Narada reached the Tripuras and tried his best to mend his ways, give back Indrapuri to Devas and avoid the worst ever battle in which the indestructible Tripuras would be destroyed along with the Three Demons as Maha Deva himself was approaching these Places with full preparation. Instead of talking peace, the Demons alerted their vast armies, and prepared for turning their defensive positions to that of an offence. On the instruction of Shankara Deva, Indra took his enormous army and attacked Tripura. As the Deva Sena made a highly offensive assault in full force, what with the revenge and frustration experienced by them for long as they were out of power as also owing to the excellent backing of Maheswara, they seized the best part of Tripuras. While quite a few Danavas sought to escape for their lives through the exit gates of Tripuras, Pramatha ganas calculated that the enemies would try to sneek out at those points and buchered thousands of Danavas. The remaining Danavas inside the Trinagaris were utterly confused by contradictoy shouts that Taraka died or Shiva was defeated. In that melee, a srong contingent of Danavas quickly regrouped their men and material to make offensive attacks under the leadership of Vidunmali and Maya. Ganeswara divided Tripuras in three regions as Nandeswara was attacking Vudyunmali, while he was in position against Maya. Meanwhile, Vidyunmali threw a 'Parigha' on Nandi who was hurt and the enraged three 'Parshadaganas' named Ghantaakarna, Shankukarna and Mahakaal retaliated; they assumed the Forms of Ganeswara and assailed Vidyunmali by making the roars of lions. Even while the Parswaganas were about to leap on Vidyunmali, the hurt Nandikeswara hurled a Rudra Shakti on the demon who fell down like a mountain. There was utter silence among Danavas who were stunned and retreated. But, the highly cunning and crafty Mayasura chased the Ganas of Ganeshwara to divert attention of his own men from the fallen Vidyunmali to the Ganesha ganas. Mayasura created rains of Agni, crocodiles, snakes, huge mountains, lions, tigers, trees, black deers, eight-legged 'Sharabhas'/ a species of oversized deer, torrential rain and powerful sand storms. As Taraka came into the battle field, Devas too appeared in full force, including Yamaraja, Varuna, Bhaskara, Kartikeya heading a Deva Sena of a Crore, with Indra, Shanaishchara, Chandra, and Rudras. The 'Maayavi' Mayaasura created several Wells full of herbal juices for envigoration and Danavas were in high spirits as their body strength increased manifold. But Keshava took the form of 'Vrishabha' and drank up the juice along with Devas and dried up the wells and Devas occupied the Tripuras finally. Mayasura and other Daityas were forced to hide in the Sea. That was the decisive moment when there was an all-out battle on the seashores. Shankara divided the 'Tridevamaya' arrow into three parts and released it at the Pushya Yoga time when Tripuras were destroyed in one go. Devas

then went ecsatic and the huge shouts of Victory to Maha Deva resounded across the Sky from where Gandharvas and Kinnaras sang hymns of praises, Apsaras danced and Maharshis recited Vedas and Shiva Stotras. Brahma praised Parama Shiva in a chorus as follows:

Praseeda Deva Devesha Praseeda Parameshwara,

Praseeda Jagataam Naatha praseedaanandadaavyaya/

Panchaasya Rudra Rudraaya Panchaasatkoti Murtaye,

Atmatrayopavishtaaya Vidyaa tatwaaya tey namah/

Shivaaya Shiva tatwaayaa Aghoraaya Namonamah,

Aghotaashtaka tatwaaya Dwadashaatmasva rupiney/

Vidyutkoti prateekaasha mashtakaamsha sushobhinam,

Rupamaanasthyaaya Lokesmin samsthitaaya Shivaatmaney/

Agnivarnaaya Roudraaya Ambikaardha shareeriney,

Dhavala Shyaama raktaanaam Mukti daayaamaraayacha/

Jyeshthaaya Rudra rupaaya Somaaya varadfaayacha,

Trilokaaya Tridevaaya Vashatkaaraaya vai namah/

Madhye gagana rupaaya Gaganasthaaya tey namah,

Ashta kshetraashta rupaaya Ashta tatwaaya tey namah/

Chaturdhicha Chaturdhaacha Chaturdhaa samsthitaaya cha,

Panchaghaa panchagaachaiva Panchamantra shaririney/

Chatusshashthi prakaaraaya Akaaraaya namo namah

Dwaantri shatattawa rupaaya Ukaaraaya namonamah/

Shodashaatma swarupaaa Makaaraaya namonamah,

Ashtadhaatma swarupaaya Ardha maatraatmaney namah/

Omkaaraaya namastubhyam chaturthaa samsthitaaya cha,

Gaganeshaaya Devaaya Swar-geshaaya namonamah/ Saptalokaaya Paataala narkeshaaya vai namah, rupaaya Paraatparataraaya cha/ Ashtakshetra Sahasra shirasey tubhyam sahasraaya cha tey namah/ Sahasra paada yuktaaya Sharvaaya Parameshtiney/ Navaatma tatwa rupaaya Navaashtaatmaatma shaktaye, Punarashta prakaashaaya tathaashaashta murtaye/ Chathusshashtadyaatma tatwaaya Punarashti vidhaayacha, Gunaashtakavrutaayaiva Guniney Nirgunaaya tey/ Mulasthaaya Namastubhyam Shaaswastaanavaasiney, Naabhi mandala samsthaaya hridi nisswana kaariney/ Kandharecha sthitaayaiva Taalu ranghna sthitaayacha, Bhrumadhey samshitaayaiva naada madhye sthitayacha/ Chandra bimba sthitaayaiva Shivaaya Shiva rupiney, Vahni Somaarka rupaaya Shattrimshacchakti rupiney/ Tithaa Samvrutya Lokaanvai pasupa bhujagaatmaney, Triprakaaram sthitaayaiva tretaagni mayarupiney/ Sadaa Shivaaya Shaantaaa Maheshaaya Pinaakiney, Sarvjnaaya Sharnyaaya Sadyojaataaya vai namah/ Aghoraaya Namastubhyam Vaasudevaaya teynamah, Tatpurushaaya Namostu Ishaanaaya namonamah/ Namastrinshat prakaashaaya Shaantaateetaaya vai namah, Ananteshaaya Sukshmaaya Uttamaaya Namostutey/

Ekaakshaaya namastubhyameka Rudraaya tey namah,

Namastrimurtraye tubhyam Shri- Kanthaaya shikhandiney/

Anantaasana samsthaaya Anantaayantakaariney,

Vimalaaya Vishaalaaya Vimalaangaaya tey namah/

Vimalaalaya samsthaaya Vimalaayartaartha rupiney,

Yogapeethantarasthaya Yoginey Yogadaayiney/

Yoginaamhridi samsthaaya sadaa nivakarashukavat,

Pratyaahaaraaya tey nityam Pratyaahaara rataayacha/

Pratyaahaara rataanaam cha pratisthaanasthitaayacha,

Dhyaanaaya Dhyaana rupaaya dhyaanagamyaaya tey namah/

Dhyeyaaya dhyeyagamyaaya Dhyeya dheyadhaanaaya tey namah,

Dhyeyenaamapi Dhyaayaay Namo Dhyeyatamaayatey/

Namonamah Sravavidey Shivaaya Rudraaya Sharvaaya Bhavaaya tubhyam,

Sthulaaya Sukshmaaya Susukshmasukshma sukshmaaya

Sukshmaaya Sukshmaartha videy Vidhaatrey!

Adyantashunyaaya cha Samsthitaaya tathaa twasunyaayacha Linginecha,

Alinginey Lingamayaaya tubhyam Lingaaya Vedaadimayam Sakshaat/

(Be compassionate and benevolent Parameshwara, Jagannatha, Ananda Swarupa, Avyaya, Panchamukha Rudra! You are of Panchaashat koti /Five hundred crore Forms and 'Atmatraya'; Vidyaa Tatwa, Shiva, Shiva Tatwa, Aghora, Ashtaka Tatwa, Dwadashaatma Swarupa, Vidyutkoti Swarupa, Shivaatma, Agni Kaarana, Roudra, Ambikaartha Sharira /Artha Naareeswara; Dhavala-Shyaama Rakta yuta; Muktidaana, Amara, Jyeshtha, Rudra Rupa, Soma, Varada, Triloakaaya, Tridevaaya, Vashatkaara, Gagana rupa, Ashta Kshetra, Ashta rupa, Ashta Tatwa; Chaturdha, Chaturdstha Samsthita, Panchadha, Pancha Mantra Swarupa; of Chathus -shasthi or Sixty Four Forms; Akaara; Dwantrishat Tatwa Rupa Ukaara; Shodashaatma Swarupa Makaara; Artha Maatra Swarupa, Omkaaraaya; Gaganeshaaya, Devaaya, Swargeshaaya; Sapta lokaay; Paataala Narakeshaaya; Ashta Kshetraaashta Swarupa; Paraatpara; Sahasra Sirasa, Sahasraaya, Sahasraya, Sahasra paada yukta, Sharva, Parameshthi, Navatma Tatwa Swarupa, Navaatshtaatmaatma Shaktaye, Punarakshta Prakaasha, Ashtaashta Murtaye, Chatusshashtaasta Murtaye; Ganaashtavritaaya, Guna, Nirgunaaya; Mulasthaaya, Shaswata sthaana vaasiney, Naabhi mandala samsthaaya; Hridi nisswana kaariney, Bhrumadhyaey; Naadamadhyaye, Chandra bimba sthitaa, Shiva, Shiva Swarupiney, Vahni Somaarka Rupa, Shadtrimshacchakti rupiney, Tretaagnimaya rupiney, Sadaa

Shiva, Shaanta, Mahesha, Pinaakiney, Sarvjnaaya Sharnya, Sadyojaataaya, Aghora, Vaamadeva, Tatpurusha and Ishaana! Salutations to you Maha Deva, you are Trishatprakaasha, Shaantaateeta, Anantesha, Sukshmaaya, Uttama, Eka Rudra, Tri Murti, Shri Kantha, Shikhandi, Anantaasana, Anantaantha kaara, Vimala, Vishala, Vimalaanga, Vimalaasansthaana, Vimalaarthaartha Rupa, Yoga peethaantastha, Yogi, Yoga dayani, Yogahrudi samsthaaya, Nivaakashuka, Pratyaahaara, Pratyaahaara ratha, Dhaaranaaya, Dhaaranaamita ratha, Dhaaranaabhyaasa yukta, Puratsaa samthita, Dhyana-Dhyana Rupa-Dhyaanagamya-Dhyeya-Dhyaya gamya- Dhyeyadhyaana and Dhyeyatama; Shivaya, Rudraaya, Sharvaaya, Bhavaaya, Sthulaaya Sukshmaaya, Su Sukshma-Asukshma- Sukshmaaradhavidhi; Maha Deva! you have neither beginning nor end and basically you are 'Shunya'as you are Nothingness but of the Totality of Everything! You are indeed the Linga yet the 'Alinga', the Lingamaya, Lingaaya and Sakshaat Vedaadimaya!) Brahma further stated that Maha Deva had indeed possessed the capability not only to destroy the 

Tripuras after all, but the Trilokas at the Time of Pralaya or the Great Extermination and that it was His Maya and Play that he gave a long to the Daityas as per their destinies!

As Brahma prayed to Maha Shiva as above, the latter was visibly happy and having smiled at Devi Parvati, blessed Brahma, Vishnu and all the Devatas as Indra and Devas were re-instated instantly to their respective positions.

Those who read or hear the account of 'Tripuraasura Samhara' with physical and internal cleanliness would be blessed:

Paapaisha muchatey jantuh shrutvaadhaayamimam shubham,

Shatravo naashamaayaanti sangraamey vijayibhavet/

Sarva rogairna baadhyet Aapadona sphrushanti tam,

Dhanamaayuryasho Vidyaam prabhaavamatulam labhet/

(Such readers are freed from sins, diseases and problems and would secure dhana, longevity, Vidya, fame, Prabhava or brightness and all round fulfillment.)

# Pashupata Yoga, Vividha Lingas, Murti Pratishtha, Shivalayaas and Archana Vidhi

In the wake of Tripuraasura Samhaara, Brahma exhorted Devas to emphasize the Mahima of Shiva Puja as the Asuras who were in the past were invincible as they were totally engaged in the Puja but eventually neglected it due to Maya and got degenerated gradually. He said that all the Beings in Srishti like Deva-Danava- Daitya-Rakshasa-Yaksha- Gandharva-Kinnara-Vidyaadhara-Piscacha-Siddhaas- Yogis and Maanavas should perform worship to Maha Deva with purity of body, mind and heart to reap multiple fruits from fulfilment in life to Shivaloka prapti. As all the Beings in Creation are called 'Pashus' or of animal instinct, Maha Deva is acclaimed as Pashupati and hence all Buddhimaans should discard the 'Pashutwa'and practise Pashupata Yoga or Pashupata Vrata: after securing 'Baahyaantara Shuchi', the Bhakta / Worshipper should perform Pranayama along with the recitals of Omkara; cease the deeds of physical limbs, control the activities of Karmendriyas, gain gradual 'nyasa'or coordination of Jnaanendriyas, keep that state of body and mind for longer durations as signified by the word of 'Dharana', realise the action-reaction syndrome of 'Tatwaas' and seek the goal of Moksha; in this manner Pashupata yoga is accomplished; Brahma stated that by so performing the Shiva Linga Puja, Agni Havans which convert desires into Ashes, and aligning the Self with the Supreme, he conquered the 'Saamsaarika Duhkhaas' and enjoy the Powers of Control and Fulfillment in the Three Lokaas. Those

who regularly follow the 'Linga Puja' on these lines are stated to have secured Paashupata Yoga as indeed they are blessed. The duration of Pashupati Vrata is stated to span twelve years, twelve months and twelve days when a person observing it would achieve 'Pashu Bandha Vimochana' or relief from Pashutwa or of animal intinct and attain Devatwa or of the features of Devas.

As instructed by Brahma, Vishwakarma, the Builder of Devas materialised Naana Vidha Shiya Lingas: Vishnu worshipped a Linga made of Indra nila; Indra worshipped a Padmaraaga- maya Linga; Vishrawa Putra worshipped a Golden Linga; Vishwa Devataas did puja to a Silver Linga; Ashtaavasusprayed to a Kantikamaya Ling; Vaya Deva to a brass Linga; Ahvini Kumaraas prayed to a Parthiva (Earthen) Linga; Varuna Deva worshipped a Sphatika Linga; Dwaadasha Adityaas prayed to a copper Linga; Soma a Mouktika (Pearl) Linga; Ananta and other Nagaas worshipped a Prabalamaya or harsh wind Linga; Daityas made puja to an Iron Linga; Guhyakaas made puja to a Trilohika Linga; Chamunda prayed to a Baalumaya/ perfume Linga; Nirruti Deva worshipped a wooden Linga; Yama Deva used a Marakata (Emerald) Linga for his puja to Shiva; Ekaadasa Rudras prayed to Bhasma Linga; Devi Lakshmi worshipped a Bilwa Linga while Kartikeya implored a Gomaya Linga; Munis are in the habit of Kushaagra Lingas; the Chatur Vedas performed pujas to Dadhimaya (Curd made) Linga and Piscachaas are used to pray to Seesa (Lead made) Linga. In this way Shiva Lingas made of various materials are utilised by species of all in Creation. Depending on the availability of Dravya (money), it is said that there were six varieties of Shiva Lingas in vogue in the past and these had forty four categories viz. Shailaja Lingas of four types, Ratnaja of seven kinds, Dhatuja Lingas were of eight variations, Daaruja Lingas of sixteen types; the seventh kind was of Mritthikamaya (Earthen) of two classification; and the eighth variety is of seven categories of Kshanika (temporary) nature. Among all these Ratnamaya Lingas are Lakshmiprada; Shailaja Lingas bestow Sarvasiddhis; Dhatuja Lingas are stated to provide Dhana; Daaruja Lingas yield Bhoga or material happiness and Mritthika Linga provide Sarva Siddhis. Among the above types, it is stated that Shailaja Lingaas are the best while Dhatuja Lingas are of medium kind; the recommendation however was that the Lingaas made of Shailaja, Ratnamaya, Dhatumaya, Mrunmaya and Kshanika Lingas are in the vogue normally. All the most significant Devotees like Brahma, Indra, Agni, Yama, Kubera, Varuna, Siddha, Vidyaadhara, Naaga, Yakshas normally invoke Mahadeva to attain Bhu-Bhuva-Swah-Jana-Tapa and Satya Lokas. But those who seek 'Paramaartha' or Moksha among the Siddhas and Yogis believe that Shiva was of Pranava Swarupa, some other imagine Him as Vignaana Swarupa, others ponder him as Shabdaadi Vishaya Tatwa Gyana Rupa and so on. However, another way of perceiving Shiva is that his Mastaka is of Swarga, his navel as Akaasha, Surya Chandra and Agnis as his Trinetras, Samudra as his Vastra, Pataala as his feet, Devataas as his hands, Nakshatras as his Bhushanaas, Linga as Purusha, Prakriti as his Devi, Vayu as his breathing, and Smriti-Shrutis are his thorough-fare and speed.

Murti Pratishtha: Devi Parvati and Kartikeya had once set up a Shiva Linga and mankind reaped benefits till date. After Pralaya, they set up the Linga atop Meru Mountain, and all the Devas were able to enjoy the resultant fruits by being playful all over the Worlds of Omkara, Kaumara, Ishaana, Vaishnava, Brahma and of Prajapatis. Manavas are able to accomplish 'Shiva Sayujya' by the 'Pratishtha' or establishment of Shiva Murtisand performing most sincere Dhyana of Maha Deva who has Eka Paada or One Foot, four hands, Trinetra / Three Eyes, Shula, Vishnu on his left, Brahma on his right and Devi Prakriti on his lap. It was also stated that His Buddhi created Buddhi to all the Beings from Brahma downward to humanity and other Species; His Ahankaara created Ahankaara to all concerened; His Indriyas created Indra, Foot corners created Prithvi, Guhya created Jala, Naabhi created Agni, His heart created Sun, His throat created Moon, His 'Bhrumadhya' or the Center of brows generated Atma / Soul to one and all and His Mastaka created Swarga. Those who perform Pratishtha and Puja of Maha Deva seated on Vrishabha and Chandra as His Ornament are certain to achieve Shiva Loka travelling by Vimana; those who make Pratishtha of Shiva along with Ambika and Nandi would be transported to

Shiva Loka by a brightVimaana similar to Surya Deva even as Apsaras entertain on way by their nritya or dances. If the Pratishtha of Shiva Murti as Vrishabha dwaja is achieved along with Devi Parvati besides Indra, Vishnu, and Prime Devas, the resultant fruits would total up performing all kinds of Yagnas, Tapas, Daanaas, and Tirtha Yatraas besides securing Shiva Loka till Maha Pralaya! Shiva Sthaapana as in His Nude Form as a Four- Armed, Sweta /White Coloured, Sarpahaari, Trinetra, Black haired and Kapaladhari Murti would assure Shiva Sayujya. Shiva Pratishtha in the Form of Dhumra Varna, Chaturbhuja, red eyed, Chandrabhushana, Vyaghra charma dhaari, Kapala Dhaari, Ganga dhaari, Parvatiyukta vaamaanga, Vinayaka-Skanda yukta, Surya Chandra Sahita along with Brahmani, Kaumari, Maaheshwari, Indraani, Chaamundika, Veerabhadra and others and to worship Rudra with 'Phut' resound as also to Vighna Nayaka and to the accompanying Deities would indeed assure Shiva Sayujya! Pratishtha of a Chaturbhuja, Artha-Nariswara, Varada, Abhaya hasta and Shula Padma dhaara would yield Animaadi Siddhis in the present life and Shivaloka subsequently. If one were to attempt performing the Pratishta of Parama Shiva as a Chitaabhasma dhaari, Baagambaradhara or wearer of Tiger skin, Shiro maalaa dhara and Upaveeta dhara, the Bhaktas are blessed with fearlessness and Victory always. Those who recite the Mantra of Om Namo Nila Kanthaaya even once very sincerely would have their sins demolished and continuous recitation with formal puja of Gandha-Pushpa-Karpura-Naivedyas are definitely destined to Shiva Sayujya.

Indeed construction of Shivaalayaas with stones or tiles, mrittika or gold, wood or mortar would be of enormous Punya; it is the Shraddha and earnestness with which the construction is accomplished. Those who do so are earmarked a distinct place in Shiva Loka and as and when they alight the Vimana after their mortal life, Apsaras welcome them and so do Devas as they secure the status of 'Gaanapatya'. Those who undertake reconstruction, repair, renovation or part works of dilapidated, ramshackled or almost unusable Temples too have a significant contribution as their role of reviving Rudra Bhakti gets recognition and sense of fulfilment in 'Iham' and lasting Salvation in 'Param' or Shiva Loka. Those who could neither afford money, nor wherewith all to renovate or let alone construct afresh Siva Temples also have important roles to undertake whatever services possible they could in the Temples; some persons help manage the Temples with or without returns; some contibute oil for lamps, milk etc. for Abhishka, some take up painting and decoration free of cost, and such other minor or major tasks as per one's own ability and sacrifice by even cleaning the Temples floors, washing the utensils and innumerable other services. As one gets naturally curious as to how one should take up responsibilities in providing Services, Maha Deva Himself guides such sincere Bhaktas to undertake suitable deeds and enable them to assume roles however big or small they may be.

It is stated that if a person died within an easily walkable distance of a Shiva Temple, he or she would receive 'Punya' of performing Chandrayana Vrataas again and again. If a person died at any of the Punya Kshetras like Varanasi, Prayaga, Kedara, Kurukshetra, Prabhasa, Pushkara, Amareshwara and so on, that person would be qualified for Shiva Loka Prapti. Mere 'darshana' of such Sacred Tirthas is of considerable value, but 'sparshana' or touch and fondling of a Shiva Linga is hundred times better; Abhisheka of Shiva Lingas with water is hundred times better; Abhisheka with milk is thousand times better; far better is the Abhisheka with curds; with Madhu or honey it is regarded as better still and even better would be the Abhisheka by ghee. Like wise, Snaana or bathing from a well, or a Sarovara, a river by taking the Panchaakshatri Mantra viz. 'Om Namah Shivaaya' would nullify a 'Brahmahatya dosha' or one of the Maha Patakaas or the Five Great Sins. Pratahkaala Darshana of Shiva Linga provides 'Uttama Gati' or Celestial Travel while the Evening Darshan bestows Yajna Phala.

Shivaarchana Vidhi: As the Munis at Nimisha Forest requested Suta Maharshi to briefly describe the Vidhaana of Shiva's 'Archana' or worship, especially by ordinary persons with limited knowledge and comprehension, since even those who performed Tapasya for thousand years by Maha Munis and Maha

Siddhas failed to glimpse Shiva Tatwa, let alone Shiva! Indeed Suta Muni emphasised this fundamental issue since Shiva Darshana would not be possible without Shraddha, Bhakti and conviction. Those who perform worship without the preceding virtues might perhaps end up in a futile exercise and their worship might attract even negative results! If a person resorts to Shiva Puja for Public Show with contradictions in mind and negativism/ disbelief in thoughts, then that Person without Bhakti and Puja is an offender and might perhaps end up as a Piscacha; if such a person persists doing Puja again and again without even a semblance of trust and faith-let alone Bhakti or devotion- then he could convert himself as a Raakshasa. Such a faithless person who does not observe minimal traits in the context of eating and drinking while resorting to Puja might as well be born as a Yaksha or worse. Now on to the Archana Vidhi: Gayatri Mantra is the Main Gate by which Maha Deva Puja gets easier; after performing Gayatri, Shiva Linga should be installed and purified with sacred waters; a Bhakta should then resort to treat the Linga with Padya, Aachamana, Abhisheka with water first, then with milk, ghee and curd; this would be followed by 'Panarabhisheka' or repeat Snaana to the Linga; Kasturi and Kesar are to be applied to the Linga; Vastram and Yajnoopaveetam should be offered; variety of flowers and bilwa (wood apple) leaves aplenty be decorated all over the Sacred Linga and around and then perform Puja with Kamal/Lotus, Kannera pushpa, Vakula flowers, Champaka flowers, and so on. Dhupam and Deepa Darshana would be followed before Naivedya. By way of Naivedya / Bhog, cooked rice be offred in various tastes and condiments, as also Bhaksyha-Bhojya-Lehya-Choshya and Paaneeyaas. After Tambula (betel leaves and scented powders), Pradakshina and Dakshina to Brahmanas engaged in the Puja Vidhi would be followed and as a finale, Punah Prarthana and Recital of 'Mantra Pushpa' or the Vedic Hymn viz. Yopaam Pushpam Vedaa etc. Maheswara should be pleased and gratified with such worship comprising 'Shodasopachaaraas' or Sixteen Services viz. Dhyaana-Aavaahana-Aasana- Paadya- Arghya-Achamaneeya- Snaana-Vastra- Yagopaveeta-Gandha- Pushpa-Dhupa-Deepa-Naivedya-Taambula / Dakshina, Pradakshina-Saashtaanga. Incidentally, Deepaaraadhna is an essential comoponent of the Shivaaraadhana: Deepa Vrikshaas, Deepa Maalaas and Deepas made of brass, copper, silver and gold constitute an integral part of worship especially during Kartika Month; Formal Pujas all through the month are the highlights when Shiva Temples are full of happenings with Maha Nyaasaas, Rudraas, Rudra Gayatris, Abhishekaas, Upavaasaas or Fastings and austerities. Besides Shiva, Devi Parvati, Ganesha-Kartikeya and Nandi, pujas are also performed to Gayatri and Vishnu and Panchaakshari Mantra and Pranava -naada are recited with ecstactic devotion and dedication.

# <u>Pashupaasha Vimochana, Uma Maheswara and other Shiva Vratas</u> (Pashupaasha Vimochana Mantra included)

Sanatkumara Muni described the details of Pashupaasha Vrata to Maharshi Shailadi and Nandi Deva explained it briefly; Brahma and Vishnu accomplished the Vrata foremost and was followed by Indra and Devas and subsequently by Danava-Daitya-Siddha and others. This Vrata was stated to have absorbed the essence of the six Vedangas for the worship of Dwadasha Lingaas as visualised for each month of the year viz. during Chaitra Month as made of Gold, Vaisakha of Vajra or Diamond, Jyeshtha of Marakata mani, Ashadha month made of Mukta / Pearl, Shravana made of Nila Mani, Bhadrapada made of Padmaraga; Ashviyuja made of Gomedha, Kartika made of Pravala, Margashira made of Vidurya, Pushya made of Pushyaraaga, Maagha the Lingas to be made of Suryakanta mani, and Phalguna the Shiva Linga to be made of Sphatika. In all the months, the puja must be performed by lotus either in the actual form preferably or by way of gold or silver or copper or any other forms. Puja by Bilva Patra (Shri Patra) again in actual form or of replikas would be a 'must'. Devi Lakshmi is stated to reside in bel patras, while Neel Kamal is the resident of Ambika, Shanmukha stays in Utpala Pushpa and Maha Deva is fond of Padma. Dhupa or smoke made of 'Guggula' and Deepa are integral parts of the Puja as they are the demolishers of all kinds of sins. Chandana is again an essential component of the worship as it is a healer of Sarva Rogaas or diseases. The Pushpas for use in the Puja should also include Sweta Aaaka Pushpa represented

by Brahma, Kinnera Pushpa is a promoter of Medha or mental brilliance, Karaveera pushpa which Ganaadhyksha is fond of, Narayana resides in Vaka Pushpa and Devi Ganga is the adoration of Sarva Sugandhi Pushpaas. As for Naivedya, 'Shuddhhaanna' would satisfy Maha Deva; in fact, 'Anna Daana' is one significant charity to the needy that Shiva is always desirous of on any day, especially on Puranamasi. Those who are observing the Pashu paasha vimochana Vrata must follow the features of Satya (Truthfulness), Ahimsa (NonViolence), Shoucha (Cleanliness), Daya (Mercy), Shanti (Peacefulness), Santosha (Happiness / Contentment), and Daana (Charity). At the end of each year (since the duration of the Vrata is of twelve years plus), there must be a Godaana and Vrishabha Daana to Veda Pandita Brahmanas. The observance of this Vrata would indeed bestow Devatwa, Ganaadhya-kshata, and Shivatwa in stages. In the process, Vidyarthis would secure Vidya, Kamaarthis of fulfillment and Yashobhilashis of fame and immense renown.

Pashupaasha Vrata Vyapohana Stotra: Vyasa Deva recited the Vyopahana Stotra as he learnt it that was narrated by Nandi Deva to Kartikeva:

Namah Shivaaya Shuddaaya Nirmalaaya Yashaswiney/

Drushtaantakaaya Sarvaaya Bhavaaya Paramaatmaney,

Pancha Vaktro Dasha bhujo hyakshapanchadashairyutah/

Shuddha sphatika sankaasham Sarva -abharana bhushitah/

Sarvajnah Sarvagah Shantah Sarvopari samsthitah/

Padmaasanasthah Someshah Paapamaashu Vyapohatu,

Ishaanah Purushaschaiva Aghorah Sadya yevacha/

Vaama Devascha Bhagavaan Paapamaashu Vyapohatu,

Anantah Sarva Vidyeshah Sarvajnah Sarvadah Prabhuh/

Shivadhyaanaika sampannah sa mey Paapam Vyapohatu,

Sukshmaha Suraasureshaano Vishvesho Gana Pujitah/

Shivadhyaanaaika sdampannah sa mey Paapam vyapohatu,

Shivottamo Mahaa Pujyah Shiva dhyaana paraayanah/

Sarvagah Sarvadah Shantah sa mey Paapamvyapohatu,

Ekaaksho Bhagavaanishah Shivaarchana paraayanah/

Shiva dhyaanaika sampannah sa paapam Vyapohatu,

Trimurthih Bhagavaaneeshah Shiva Bhakti Prabhodhakah/

Shivadhyaanaika sampannah sa mey paapam vyapohatu,

Shrikanthah Shripatih Shrimaanjnishwa dhyaana ratah sadaa/

Shivarchanaratah saakshaat sa mey Paapa vyapohatu,

Shikhandi Bhagavaanyashaantah Shava bhasmaanulepanah/

Shivaarchanaratah Shrimaan sa mey paapam vyapohatu/

(My salutations Maha Shiva!You are Shuddha, Nirmala, Yashaswi, Kaala drushyaney, Sharva, Bhava, Paramatma, possessor of Five Faces and Fifteen Eyes; Sphatikamani samaana, Sumpurnaabharana bhushita or fully ornamented; Sarvajna, Shanta, Sarvoparisthita, Padmaasana and Somesha; Ishaana, Purusha, Aghora, Vaama Deva, kindly demolish our sins; You are Ananta, Sarva Vidyeshwara, Sarvajna, Fulfiller of all desires; Dhyana nishtha Shiva, Sukshma, Suraasurekshara, Vishvesha, Dhyana sampanna: please demolish our sins. Shivottama, Maha Pujya, Dhyana Parayana, and Sarvajna please keep me off from sins. Ekaaksha, Isha, Shivarchana parayana, Dhyan Sampanna keep me away from my derelictions and liberate me; Tri Murthis,Shiva Bhakta Pramodika,Shiva Dhyaana Sampanna, destroy my Maha Paapaas). Those who recite the above would be freed from the worst sins possible that they had committed like Go hatya, Brahmana hatya, Matru-Pitru hatya, Sharanaagata hatya etc. and would attain Rudra Loka. In the instant life, the reciters of the Stotra would secure Artha-Kaama-Vidya-Arogya and Tripti or Fulfillment.

Shiva Vratas: In both the Shukla and Krishna Pakshas of a month, day time worship of Shiva Linga is of great significance on Ashtamis and Chaturdashis and observance of day long fasts; this procedure for a year would fetch sampurna yajna phala. Kheera dhaaraVrata on Prathamas and Panchamis of every month would yield Ashwamedha Yagna. Daily worship of Shiva for a full year by way of Shuchi, Satya bhashana, day long fast and very limited Ahaara in the nights, daily havan, Brahmacharya, Prithvi shayana and such other measures of Idriya nigrahana would assure Parama Gati.

Monthwise Shiva Vratas were also prescribed by Nandi Deva to Skanda as follows: Pushva Purnami: Shiva Pujaabhisheka with Ghrita, Ksheera, Dadhi etc followed by Brahmana bhojana and Godaana, Ratri bhojana; Phala: Brahmaloka Prapti. Maagha Chaturdhasis: Shiva Pujaabhisheka, Raatri Bhojana of limited Ghritaanna, Brahmana Bhojana and daana of horse; Phala: Yamaloka kreeda or playful activities. Phalguna Ashtami Chaturdashis: Sivaabhisheka, Day long fasting and only milk/ghee in the nights, Bhojanas to two Brahmanas and Tamra varna Go-daana; Phala: Chandraloka. Chaitra Purnima: Shiva Pujaabhisheka, Raatri bhojana of rice and ghee, Brahmana Bhojana and daana of two white cows; Vaishakha Purnami: Shiva Pujaabhisheka with Panchagavyas, Ratri bhojana, Brahmana Bhojana and Go-Daana; Phala: Ashwamedha Yagna. Jeyshtha Purnima: Shiva Pujaabhisheka, Ratri Bhojana, Brahmana Seva and Dhumravarna Godaana; Phala: Vaayu loka prapti. Ashadha Purnima: Shiva Pujabhisheka, Ratri bhojana, Brahmana Seva, Gaura varna Godaana; Phala: Varuna Loka. Shravana Purnima: Shiva Pujaabhisheka, Ratri Bhojana, Vrushabha daana; Phala: Vayu loka. Bhadrapada Purnima: Havana, Abhishka and Puja; Veda Parayana, Brahmana puja, Vrishabha dwaya daana Phala: Yaksha loka Rajastwa. Ashviyuja Purnima: Shiva Pujaabhisheka, day long fast, Brahmana Bhojana and Nila Varna Vishabha daana. Phala: Ishana loka prapti. Kartika Month: The entire month is of signifinance and daily Shivaarchana-Abhisheka with Sacred water, Milk, Coconut water, Curd, Ghee, Chandana, and Bhasma with Maha Nyasa Purvaka, Maha Rudra Purvaka Snaanaas to Shiva Linga, Day long fasting and Alpaahara in the nights, complete abstinence, Bhu Shayana and various sacrifices should be in place; all kinds of Daanaas on anyday or as many days are encouraged in the Month and similarly Pandita Seva of

any kind would be fruitful in the Month. Emphasis is stressed on Anna Daanaas during the month. Phala: Surya Loka Prapti. *Margasirsha Month* is considered an an extension of the previous month when again austerities would spill over from the previous month; Upavaasaas, Shiva worship by way of Abhishekas, Brahmana Sevas, Anna and other kinds of daanaas especially to Daridras, would be of significance and the Phala would be of Chandra loka prapti.

Uma Maheswara Vrata: Shiva himself described the significance of the Uma Maheswara Vrata as narrated by Suta Muni. The best days for the worship of the Uma Maheswara are stated to be Purnima, Amavasya, Ashtami and Chaturdashi. After a year long worship on these days, Uma Maheswara Pratimas made of gold or silver or according to one's capacity could be installed in a Temple, by carrying these by a chariot with Veda Mantras amid fanfare and provide bhojanas to Brahmanas and Annadanas to the visitors. The Mahima of the Pratimas thus installed would be enormous; for example, a Kanya or a widow who observed the Vrata for a year and instal the Vigrahas formally would have miraculous results in the on-going life and Shiva Loka Sayujya by the grace of Devi Uma. Now, month-wise daanaas and pratishthas by devotees are given below: In Margaseersha month, daanaa of a sturdy bull to a Brahmana would please Shiva and Uma; in Pousha month, the Vrata requires Trishula Daana; during Maagha Maasa, Ratha daana would need to be performed; in Phalguna month, the requirement is to install Shiva-Maheswari Pratimas made of gold or silver or copper to qualify the attainment of Shiva Sayujya. In Chaitra Month, the Devotee has to do the Pratishtha of Shiva-Bhavani and Nandi Vigrahas in copper; in the month of Vaishakha, the Vrata has to be performed by the daana of Kailasha Mountain in the name of Shiva and Parvati and indeed the phala of the worship during the month would bestow Kailasha Parvata prapti. In the Jyeshtha month, formal installation of Shiva Linga and Bhavani, while in the month of Ashadha a brick built house has to be given away in charity to a Brahamachari with expertise in Vedas and Vedangas and the donor would be destined to accomplish Goloka. In the Shravana month, a huge heap of tilaas and vastras along with Brahmana Bhojana and Anna daana would qualify for Goloka too; In the month of Bhadrapada, a parvata like supply of rice is to be given in charity to attain Bhavani's presence; in Ashvayuja charity of a Parvata like Anna /cooked rice along with gold to a learned Brahmana and with his approval organise Anna Daana to the poor; during Kartika month, Swarna Pratimas of Shiva and Parvati are to be instaalled in a temple, besides Brahmana bhojanaas. Additionally the Bhaktas observing the Uma-Maheshwara Vrata need to follow one meal a day, Bhumi shayana and celibacy, besides daily dfaily worship to Maha Deva and Uma Devi.

#### 'Panchaakshara Japa Mahatmya'and 'Dhyana Yajna'

As Devi Parvati desired to comprehend the meaning of the Panchaakshra Mantra of *Om Namasshivaaya*, Parama Shiva explained the back ground: when the Universe became extinct at the Time of Pralaya, only he was present as Narayana who floated on the Great Water Surface as the Unique and Supreme Being. As he was thus lying on water, there sprouted a Lotus from his navel and on top of the stem emerged Brahma who desired to initiate 'Srishti' (Creation). He created ten 'Manasa Putras' or Mind-Born Sons, but prayed to the Supreme Being ie. Maha Deva to empower him with Shakti to take up the exciting task of formal Creation. Then the latter provided 'Upadesha' (instruction) to Brahma and in turn Brahma gave the Upadesha to his sons who did sincere Tapasya by the recitation of the Panchakshari for thousands of years, consuming only air and nothing else. Shiva was pleased with the meditaton and keeping in view the 'Loka Kalyaana' or Universal Welfare explained the purport of the Mantra, its Rishi, Devata, Shakti, Nyasa, Viniyoga and its Sampurna Swarupa or its Full Form:

Omityekaashram Mantram sthitah sarvagatah Shivah,

*Mantrey shadaksha –rey sukshmey panchaakshara tavuh Shivah/* 

Vaachya vaachaka bhaavena sthitah saakshaat- swabhaavatah,

Vaachya Shivah prameyaatwaan Mantrastadvaachakah smritah/

Vaachya Vaachaka bhavenamanaadih samsthitastayo,

Vedi Shivaagamey vaapi yatra yatra Shadaksharah/

Guhyaadguhyataram saakshaanmoksha Jnaanamanuttamam,

Asya Mantrasya vakshyaami Rishicchandodhi Daivatam/

Beejam Shaktih Swaram varnam sthaanam chaivaaksharam prati,

Vamadevo naama Rishih Panktiscchanda udaatdhrutah/

Devataa Shiva yevaaham Mantrasyaasya varaananey,

Nakaaraadeeni beejaani Panchabhutaatmakaanicha/

Atmaanam Pranavam viddhi Sarvavyaapinamavyayam,

Shaktistwameva Deveshu Sarva Deva Namaskrutey/

Twadeeyam Pranavam kinchin –madeeyam Pranavam tathaa,

Twadeeyam Devi Mamtraanaam Shakti bhutam na shamshayah/

Akaarokaaramakaaraamadeeyo Pranavey sthitaah,

Ukaaramcha Makaaramcha Akaaramcha kramenavai/

Twadeeyam Pranavam Viddhi Trimaatram Pluta- muttamam,

makaarasya ssarodaatta Rishi Brahmaa sitam Vapuh/

Chhando Devi Gayatri Para -maatmaadhi Devataa,

Udaattah Prathamastudwacchaturyascha dwiteeyakah/

Panchamah Swaritaschaiva Madhyamo nishadhah smrutah,

Nakaarah peeta varnascha sthaanam urva mukham smrutam /

Indriyodhi Devatam Gayatri Goutamey Rishih,

Makaarah Krishna varnosya sthaanam vai Dakshinaamukham/

Chhandonushtup Rishischaatri Rudro Daivata-muchyatey,

Shikaaro dhumra varnasya sthaanam vai Paschimam Mukham/

Vishvaamitra Rishistrishthup cchando Vishnustwa Devaam,

Vakaaro Hema varnasya sthaanam chaivottaram Mukham/

Brahmaadhi Devatam cchando Brihati chaangiraa Rishih,

Yakaaro raktavarnascha Sthaana murdhvem Mukham Viraat/

Cchando Rishirbharadwaajah Skando Daivatamuchyatey,

Nyaasamasya pravkshaami sarva siddhikaram Shubham /

(This Unique Single Akshara Mantra OM is firmly embedded in Shiva; this Mantra of six letters viz. Om Namah Shivaaya is actually considered as of Five Aksharas; from the view-point of 'Vaachya' and 'Vaachaka', Shiva is the Vaachya or the Target or He who is sought after and Vaachaka is the means to achieve the Vachya, viz. the Mantra; wherever the Mantra is recited there is Shiva; in fact the Mantra is the Essence of Vedas; the Vidwans who recite the Panchakshari as continuous Japa are sure to attain Moksha. This Parama Vidya is indeed of Shiva's heart. The Rishi, Chhanda /Prosody, Devata, Beejam and Shakti of the Panchaakshari Mantra is as follows: Vama Deva is the Rishi, Pankti is the Cchanda, Shiva Himself is the Devata, Nakaaraadi Pancha beejas are Pancha Bhutaas; Pranava swara Om is Shiva's Supreme Soul and also the Shakti. Each letter of the Mantra is distinguished wih the Rishi-Chhanda-Deva-Shakti-Beeja combination). Then as prescribed, the Anga Nyasa and Karanyasas should be performed before taking over the Mantra Japa. The person who is practising the Panchaakshara Mantra has to perform 'Pranaam' or sincere salutation to his Guru with 'Shraddha' by way of Maanasika-Vaachaka or Uccharana-Karma vidhaana or with purity of mind, humility of voice and perfection of deed and then take over the possession of the Mantra from the Guru at a Place of cleanliness, at an ideal time when Grahas, Nakshatras and Yogaas are well-placed. The Japa has to be performed with eqanimity of mind, full control of Indriyas-both Karmendriyas and Jnaanendriyas and of extreme concentration fixed at the targetted Shiva Maha Tatwa. It is stated that 'Upaashyu Japa' or slowly rendered Japa is hundred times superior and effective that Japa Yajna; when any Japa or repetetive recitation of a Mantra is performed, then that Japa is called 'Vaachaka' or vocal in kind; the Upanshu Japa has slight lipmovement; but Japa of the best is called 'Maanasika' when only mind and thought are at work. Indeed any of the above types of Panchaakshari Japa done with unflinching concentration by aligning Parama Shiva and the Self would definitely yield Siddhis. But mere japa of the Panchakshari wthout securing the balance of mind and target are of no avail. Without 'Sadaachaara' or of Self Regulaton and Good Observance of Morality and Virtue, any amount of Japa would be fruitless:

Yasmaadaachaara heenasya Saadhanam nishphalam bhavet,

Aachaaram Paramo Dharma Aachaarah Paramo Tapah/

Aachaaram Paramo Vidyaa Aachaarah Paramaa Gatih,

Sadaachaaravataam Pumsaam Sarvatraabhayam bhavet/

Aachaara heenaanaam Sarvatraiva bhayam bhavet,

Aachaara heenah Purusho Lokey bhavati ninditah/

(Without Aachara and good conduct, any kind of Sadhana or Endeavour is neither possible nor fruitful since Aachara is the prerequisite of any virtious deed; Aachara is the Parama Dharma, the Parama Tapas, Parama Vidya and Parama Gati or way of Life. Persons of Aachara have access to every thing that is right where as those without Aachara are either afraid, misguided or suspected). In the same context, Maha Deva emphasised to Devi Parvati the utmost significance of performing 'Trikaala Sandhyopaasana'and recital of Gayatri Mantra daily. Sandhya Vandana ought not to be discarded at any cost or provocation of the 'Shadvargas' of Kaama-Krodha-Lobha- Moha- Mada-Matsaras. A Brahmana loses his Brahmanatwa as soon as he ceases to observe this 'Daily Niyama' or Regulation mandatory to a Brahmana. Parama Shiva further underlined the basic principles of Virtue viz. Truthfulness:

Yatsatyam Brahma ityaahurasatyam Brahma dushanam,

Anrutam Parusham Shathyam Paishunyam Paapa hetukam/

Paradaaraanparadravyam Parahimsaam cha sarvadaa,

Kkachicchaapi na kurvati Vaachaa cha Manasaa tathaa/

(Refrain from 'Asatyam' or speaking lies: Truth is Brahma and Asatya is as bad as ridiculing Brahma himself; haughtiness, wickedness, slandering are all germinators of depravities and derelictions. Para Daaraa, Para dravya, Para himsa and such other immoralities are not even thought of, let alone done. Shiva was emphatic about the observance of Varnaashrama Vidhana. Brahmanas should never take food without taking bath, nor performing Japa, Agni Karya, and such deeds; they should follow a strict regimen in the context of food consumption as Shiva is always considered as a Bhokta of Naiveydya - anna or the food offered to him by Bhaktaas. Drinking water by one's mouth, while standing, by the left hand and handed over by others. Never walk alon on lonely places, never meditate to Devas by showing the back such as Surya and Chandra Devas, nor even to Pratimas of Gods. As Agni is pure and Sacred, never cross it, jump over or spit. Similarly, never misuse Rivers, Sarovaras and other water bodies as they too are among the Pancha Bhutas. Never touch animals like serpents, dogs, donkeys, camels, birds and so on. Most importanly, one should esteem his or her Guru as equal to Tri Murtis and that is why the hymn:

Guruh Brahma Gurur Vishnu Gurur Devo Maheswaraha,

Guruh Saakshaat Parahbrahma tasmai Shri Guraveynamah/

The anger or even marginal displeasure of Guru would advesely affect the Sishya's morale, reputation, thinking capacity and recurrent difficulties of life including ill-health, poverty and untimely death! It should be against such controlled and virtuous life that the concentrated practice of Panchaakshari Mantra would yield maximum results.

Sabeeja samputam Mantram Shata Laksham Jepeycchruchih,

Matsaayujya mavaapnoti Bhaktimaan Kimatah Param/

That was what Maha Deva assured Devi Parvati.

Dhyana Yagna: As Parama Shiva was resting in a cave of Kailasha Mountain with Girija Devi, a few renowned Maharshis entered and commended him for his feat of gulping Kalakuta Visha when Maha Deva corrected them that the Samasara Visha was to be considered worse than the Kalakuta and should be avoided at all costs; the best way of avoidance is to disbelieve what ever was seen, heard and imagined and that was what the Nivrutthi Marga was all about. In the Samsara, there are various Jeevaas of Udbhija-Swedaja-Andaja and Jaraajaya nature (Sprouted from Earth, born out of sweat, born out of eggs and born out of yoni) and they are all subject to desires which spread out far and wide like wild fire and end up each and every material into Bhasma. Like the diseases of the nature of Raaga and Dwesha (Liking or disliking) the canker spreads a huge tree and finally gets uprooted. The big tree called Punya gets fallen and even Devas were not free from the falls or periodic dethronements but for the intervention of Maha Shaktis! Deva, Danava, Nripa and Manavaas are all subject to the distresses and torments of life. Vidya and Para Vidya or Vignaan and Atma Jnaan (Knowledge and the Spitituality) are no doubt the way out to conquer Samsara; Apara Vidya or Akhshara Gyan comprises Vedas and Vedantaas like Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakarana and so on and are of Shabda Swarupa. Doubtless, these means of Paraa and Aparaa Vidyas are useful to a great extent but Bhagavan would be the ultimate to free from the worldly bondages. These are indeed the steps forward from Samsara to Salvation or from Ajnaana to Jnaana to Paramatma. In other words, Agnaana arising out of Arishadvargas of Kama-Krodha etc would get dissolved by Gyana of the above kinds like Fire and from the melting pot, one could qualify to realise Shiva without whose instructions, Surya would not get woken up, Vayu would not proceed further and Chandra would not shine on the Sky, Agni would not produce heat and light, Bhumi would not hold the Samsara and so on. Now to overcome the Samsarika Visha or the Poison of Life, there are no other ways of Gyaan and Dhyaan.

Samsaara vishatatpaanaam Jnaanadhyaanaamruteyna vai,

Pratikaara samaakhyaato naanyathaa Dwijasattamaah/

Jnaanam Dharmodbhavam Saakshaat jnaanaa-dwiraagya sambhavah,

Vairaagyaatparamam jnaanam Paramaartha prakaashakam/

Jnaana Vairagya yuktasya Yoga Siddhirdwijottama,

Yoga Siddhya vimuktih Syaatsatva nishthasya naanyathaa/

Tamovidyaapadacchinnam yatpadamavyayam,

Sarva Shaktim Samaasthaaya Shivamabhyarchaey dwijaa/

Yah Satvanistho madbhakto madaschana Paraayanah,

Sarvato Dharma nishthascha Sadotsaahi Samayutah/

Sarva dwanda saho dheerah Sarva bhutahitey ratah,

Rujuswabhaavah satatam swastha chitto mruduh sada/

Amaani Buddhimaan- cchantastyaktaspardho Dwijottama,

Sadaa Mumukshurdharmajnah swaatmalakshana lakshanah/

Runatraya vinirmuktah purva jnmani Punya bhaak,

Jaaa yukto Dwijo bhutwaa Shraddayaa cha Guroh krammat/

Anyathaa vaapi sushrushaam krutwaa krutrima vajkitah,

Swargaloka manupraapya bhuktwaa bhogaananukramaat/

(The poison of Life bursting into flames and burning off Manavaas would never cease excepting by the recourse of Jnaana and Dhyana; those who could withstand the extremes of life as also possess soft attitude, equaminity, gentleness, maturity of outlook, peacefulness, previous birth's carry forward of virtue, and are devoid of jealousy, anger, avarice, passion, arrogance shoul attain Swargaloka. Sacrifice, determination and progressive attitude would be the singular way-out of withstanding the poisons of Samsara!)

'Arishta-Mrityu Suchanaas' and precautions like Japa and Maha Kshetra Darshana

Suta Maha Muni indicated certain premonitions of untoward tidings and of death when human beings ought to intensify virtuous deeds as the last breathing might arrive. The visions of Arundhati, Dhruva and the Celestial routes would mean that a person concerned might not last more than a year. Vision of Surya without rays and Agni with rays might indicate an eleven month end ahead; Mutra and Pureesha as gold and silver indicates that the end might approach within ten months; seeing a Golden Tree, or visit of a Gandharva Nagari or visions of Preta-Piscachas might allow a further life of nine months more; dream of a very huge monster or a skeletal figure could forewarn an eight month ahead; image of dust storm or muddy rain could indicate the end within seven months; a dream of a crow, or a kite or dove or any other meat-eating bird on a person's head might presume death within six months; Straight lined crows flying on the sky could indicate death within the next four five months; thunders on a cloudless and clear sky or rainbow seen in a water body or a distorted image of one's own self that the end might be within a couple of months; death is stated to be destined within a month when the person concerned would vision the self without head; an experience of the smell of a dead body or of unbearably rotten food could imagine that death might be withi some twenty five days; monkey dance while riding a chariot towards South might sign-post already; a black robed woman leading a person towards South, vision of a headless body, a naked Sanyasi dancing, red face and yellow cheeks are signs of death.

As the premonitions of one's end is foreseen either directly or through dreams, then a wise person would immediately sit facing north before a lamp and peacefully concentrate on Parama Shiva and continue to be engaged in Dhyana by way of eyes of an idol or picture of Maha Deva,, ears by hearing hymns in praise of Him, smell Gandha and fragrance of flowers, mind and thought targetted to Him and Soul united with Him, and the whole body filled up with Omkara comprising three 'Maatraas' or Parts; the first Maatra is stated to be 'Vidyuti' or the Electric, the Second Maatra is 'Taamasi' and the final Maatra is Nirguna. 'Pranava' or Omkaara is like the Dhanush or a bow, Atma is described as the Arrowand Paramatma is the target. The person concerned is to perform the Sadhana or the Holy Endeavour with steady mind and soul. In the word of OM there are Tri Maatraas of Akaara, Ukaara and Makaaraas, Tri Lokas, Tri Vedas, Tri Agnis, Tri Gunas and Tri Murtis. Akaara represents Bhu loka, Ukara of Bhuvar loka and Makaara the Swarloka with Vyanjana in between. Omkara is Triloka maya; its head is Trivishtap,

Prathama Maatra is hraswa or short, Dwiteeya Maatra is is Deergha or long and the ThirdMaatra is called 'Pluta'. Those who practise Pranava is stated to enjoy the fruit of Ashwamedha Yagna. This would endow the Shakti and Power of Jitendriya, Pavitra and of Super Soul. This indeed is the Essence of 'Paashupata Yoga' by means of which the awareness of Jnaana, Brahmana, Ruk-Yajur-Saama Vedas and of Upanishads is automatically highlighted and 'Shaswata Pada' is secured. A highly committed and dedicated Namaskara to Shiva is like the ripe fruit on a tree swept by speedy wind power would fall on one's own lap!

Indeed an intelligent person need not wait till premonitions of death are conveyed to perform the effective means of Virtue. Maharshis underlined the enormous advantage of <u>Kshetra Darshana</u>. Mahadeva himself narrated to Devi Parvati of a few Shiva Lingas in some places of repute:

Vaaraanasi manupraapya Darshayaamaasa Shankarah,

Avimukteshwaram Lingam Vaasam tatra chakaara saha/

Vaaraanassi Kurukshetra Shri Parvata Mahaalaey,

Tungeshvarey cha Kedaarey tatashaaney yoyatirbhavet/--

Naimishecha Kurukshetrey Gangaadwaarey cha Pushkarey—

Prayaagey vaa bhavenmoksha iha vaa matparigrahaat---

Jaigeeshvaya guhaa sreshthaa Yoginaam sthaanamishyatey

Kaivalyamnparamam yaati Devaanaamapi durlabham---

Vyaghreswara iti Khyato nityamannahamaashitah,

*Na punargatim yaati drushtenam Vyaghrameeswaram/----*

Shaileswara miti khyatam drushyataa miha chaadaraat

drushtetanmanujo Devi na Durgatimato vrajet---

Sangameshwaramityevam khyaatam Jagatinmdryushyataam—--

Madhyameshwaramityevam khyaatam Sarva Suraasurai---

Puraa Jambukarupena Jagati khyatam Suraasuranamaskrutyam—

Drumachandeswaram naama Bhadreswaramanuttamam,

Shtaaneswaram tathaikaagatam Kaleshwaramajeswaram—

Amaresham Mahaakaayam Jyotisham Bhasmagaatrakam

yaani chaanyaani Punyaani sthaanaani mama Bhutaley—

Rameswaram cha paramam Vishnunaa yadpratishthitam,

Dakshina dwaara paarswey tu Kundaleswara meeswaram/

Purwadwaara sameepastham Triputaanthakamuttamam,

Vivruddham Girinaasaartham Devadeva namaskrutam---

Shringaatakeshwaram naama Shri Devyaa tu pratishthitam,

Mallikaarjunakam chaiva mama Vaasamidam Shubham—

Koteswram Mahaa tirtham Rudrakoti Ganaih Puraa,

Sevitam Devi Pashyaadya Sarvasmaadadhikam Shubham—

Gomandaleshwaram chaiva Nandaadyaih Supratishthitam,

Devaih Sarvestu Shakraadyaih sthaapitaani Varaananey---

Chandikeshwarakam Devi Chandikeshaa twamaatmajaa,

Chandikaa nirmitam Sthaanamambikaa Tirthamuttamam/

(The above is a brief mention of Tirthas including Varanasi / Avamukteshwara, Kurukshetra, Shri Parvata, Tungeshwara, Kedaara, Naimisha, Gangadwara, PushkaraPryaga, Jaageshwara, Vyaaghreshwara, Shaileshwara, Sangameshwara, Madhyeshwara, Jambukeshwara, Bhadreswara, Sthaaneshwara, Kaleswara, Amareshwara, Rameshwara, Kundaleshwara, Koteshwara, Tripuraantakeshwara, Shringatakeshwara / Mallikarjuna; Gomandaleshwara etc.)'

Shiva Leelaas: Andhaka pardoned, Bhudevi saved, Prahlada rescued and Jalandhara killed (Nrisimha Stuti included)

Andhaka was the son of Daitya Hiranyaaksha of Varaaha Avataara fame of Vishnu Deva; the latter killed the Daitya as he sought to pull down Bhu Devi to Rasatala. In his own right, Andhaka was highly ill-famed having secured the boon of invincibility from Brahma, overthrew Indra and Devas from Swarga and made them shelterless besides tormenting Sages and the Virtuous. Devas, Brahma an Vishnu had all aproached Maha Deva as the atrocites of Andhaka became unbearable. Shiva was present at the battle field and asked Devas to fight but Andhaka became too powerful to Indra and Devas. Playfully, Maha Deva lifted up the Daitya and dangled and suspended him by the Trishula exposing him to the heat and high temperature of Surya Deva on the Sky. The Daitya realised the Supremacy of Maha Deva and commenced his Prayers. Shiva was pleased as Andhaka said: Bhagavan Deva Devesha! Bhaktaarthihara Shankara Twayi Bhaktihvpraseedesha yadi Deyo Varaschamey/ The Daitya was blessed by Maha Deva to secure the unique position of 'Ganaadhipatya'.

Quite contrary to the occurrence of Andhaka, his father Hiranyaaksha or the Golden-Eyed Demon who also was the brother of the equally notorious Daitya named Hiranyakashipu attempted to forcibly drag and pull down Bhu Devi to Rasatala and Bhagavan Vishnu assumed the Incarnation of Matsya Deva and retrieved the Bhu Devata back to her original position by the might of his 'damshtras' and saved the entire Bhu Loka. But the revalation was as follows:

Varaharupamanagham chachaala cha Dharaa punah,

Tasya damshtraa- kraantaam Deva devasya dheematah/

Yadrucchayaa Bhavah Pashyan jagaama Jagadehs -warah,

Damshtraa jagraaha drushtwaa taam bhushanaartyha mathaan manaha/

Dadhaara cha Mahadevam kurchitey vai Mahorasi/

Devaascha tushtavah sendraa Devadevasya Vaibhavam/

Dharaa Pratishthitaa hyovam Deva Devena Leelayaa/

Bhutaanaam samplavey chaapi Vishnoschaiv Kalebaram/

Brahmanascha tathaanyeshaam Devaanaamapi Leelaya Vibhuranga vibhogena

bhushito na yadi Prabhuh/ Katham Vimukti Vipraanaam tasmaaddhamshtri Maheswarah/

( Varaha Rupa Vishnu retrieved Bhu Devi thanks to the enormous might of the 'Damshtra' of Varaha Deva, but the Damshtra of Varaha itself was the all-powerful Maha Deva while Vishnu was Vishnu's body; that was how Vishnu was able to rescue as supportd by the damshtra of Maha Deva).

Suta Maha Muni then referred to the Episode of Hiranyaasha's brother Hiranyakashipu and of Prahlada. The latter was a confirmed Vishnu Bhakta and was always recited the Mantra of Om Namo Narayanaya. But Hiranyakashipu was an arch enemy of Vishnu and pursuant to his deep tapsya, Brahma granted the boon that none shoud be able to secure victory against him by Devas, Maanavas, Yaksha-Rakshasa-Gandharvaas and Kinnaroraga or any other species of Srishti. As the whole world was harassed by the Daitya, Prahlada became the Prime target as he was the Bhakta of Narayana. The Daitya King made all out efforts to deviate Prahlada from the Narayana fold; he utilised Saama-Daana-Bheda-Danda ways of diversion from Vaasudeva by way of persuation, offering valuable gifts including fulfillment of Earthly desires, creating differences of mind against Vishnu and finally took recourse to physical tortures ranging from snake bites, throwing from Mountain tops, exposure to wild animals and so on. Indeed the miraculous escapes of saving Prahlada were the handi-work of Narayana but the creation of a distinctive species of Nrisimha who was neither human nor of animal as per the prescription of Brahma's boon to the Daitya, was materialised full of Tamasika Guna of cruelty, revenge and extraordinary strength typical of Rudra the Samhaara kaari the epitome of violence and ruthlesseness if need be and a natural and Supreme Annihilator as opposed to Vishnu's Raajasika Guna of Preservation, flexibility of outlook and peace. No wonder Nrisimha who appeared as the Destroyer was Maha Deva Himself thus proving the Identity of Shiva and Vishnu once again in the context of Hirnya kashipu and Prahlada. As Maha Deva assumed the

unique Narasimha Rupa and demolished the Demon, Brahmaadi Devas and Gana Gandharva Siddhaapsaraas extolled him to cool him down from the mood of rage and wrath as follows:

Namastey Kalakaalaaya Namastey Rudra manyavey,

Namah Shivaaya Rudraaya Shankaraaya Shivaayatey/

Ugrosi Sarva Bhutaanaam niyamtaamsi Shivosi nah,

Nanah Shivaaya Sharvaaya Shanakaayarti haariney/

Mayaskaraaya Vishwaaya Vishnavey Brahmaney namah,

Antakaaya Namastubhya mumaayaah patayenamah/

Hiranya baahavey Saakshaadhiranya pataye namah,

Sharvaaya Sarva Rupaaya Purushaaya Namo namah/

Sadasdbhakti heenaaya Mahata Kaaranaaya tey,

Nityaaya Vishwa rupaaya Jaayamaanaaya tey Namah/

Jaataaya bahudhaa lokey prabhutaaya namo namah,

Rudraaya Nila Rudraaya Kadrudraaya prachetasey/

Kaalaaya Kaalaupaaya namah Kaalaanga haariney,

Meedhushtamaaya Devaaya Shitikanthaaya tey namah/

Mahiyasey namastubhyam Hantrey Devaarinaam sadaa,

Taaraaya cha Sutaaraaya Taaranaaya namo namah/

Harikeshaaya Devaaya Shambhavey Paramatmaney,

Devaanaam Shambhavey tubhyam Bhutaanaam Shambhavey namah/

Shambhavey Haimavatyaascha manyavey Rudra rupiney,

Kapardiney namastubhyam Kaalakanthaaya tey namah/

Kapadiney namastubhyam Kaalakanthaaya tey namah,

Nama Ugra Trishulaaya Ugraaya cha Namo namah/

Bhimaaya Bhima rupaaya Bhimakarmarataaya tey,

Agnmeyvadhaaya vai Bhutwaa Namo Durey vadhaayacha/

Dhanbviney Shuliney tubhyam Gadiney Haliney namah,

Chakriney Vaarminey nityam Dautyaanaam Karma bhediney/

Sadyaaya Sadya rupaaya Sadyojaataaya tey namah,

Vaamaaya Vaama rupaaya Vaama netraaya tey namah/

Aghora rupaaya Vikataaya vikata shareeraaya tey namah,

Purusha rupaauya Purushaka tatpuru - shaaya vai namah/

Purushaarthapradaanaaya pataye Parameshthiney,

Ishaanaaya Namamastubhymeeshvaraaya Namo Namah/

Brahmaney Brahmmarupaaya namah Saakshaacchivaaya tey,

Sarva Vishnurnrisimhasya rupamasthaaya Vishwakrut/

Hiranyakashipum hatwaa kararjairnakhai swayam,

Daityendreyrbahubhih saardham hitaartham Jagataam Prabhuh/

SaimhimSamaananyaayonim baadhatey nikhilam jagat,

Yatkrutya,atra Devesha tatkurushva bhavaaniha/

Ugresi Sarva dushtaanaam niyamtaasi Shivbisinah,

Kaalakutaadi vapushaa traahi nah sharanaagataan/

Shukram tu vruttam Vishvesha kreedaa vai kevalam vayam,

Tatonmesha nimeshaabhyaamaskaamam pralayodayou/

Unmeelayetthvayi Brahmanvinaashosti na tey

Shiva Samptatasmo vayam Deva Harinaamita tejasaa/

Sarvbaloka hitaayainam tatwam samhartu micchasi/

Evam stutastadaa Devairajagaama sa yathaakramam,

yah patheyechrunuyaadwaaipi samstavam shaarvamutthamam/

#### Rudralokamanupraapya Rudrena saha modiney/

(As Brahma, Devatas and others extolled Nrisimha Deva as above, the latter cooled down and reestablished Dharma and Virtue on Earth since Hiranya kashipu dared to dethrone Indra and Devas, threatened Maharshis to worship him and not Narayana / Mahadeva, completely upset the balance of Universe by breaking the established the age-old Laws of Nature, tormented Brahmanaas to perform Yagnas in his name and the co-Daityas and as the tip of the ice-burg haraassed his own son Prahlada a confirmed Narayana Bhakta even to the extent of murdering him but for the intervention of Vishnu).

Yet another Shiva Leela was in the context of the slaying Daitya Jaalandhra, who was born of water and the resident of water from where his strength got re-doubled from time to time and kept the totality of the Universe under his feet and defeated in a series of battles the Devas and Indra and even Brahma and Vishnu! As there was a furore and scare created among all the Beings and since the Daitya displayed arrogance, immorality, and a huge sense of invincibility, Narayana accompanied by Brahma, Indra and the whole lot of Celestial Beings approached as a last resort. On facing Maha Deva, Jaalandhara bragged a lot that he kept Devas like Surya, Chandra, Varuna, Vayu, Yama, Agni etc. as headed by Indra under his feet, that he ignored the enormous Mahima of Brahma Deva and that lately even the mighty Vishnu was humbled in straight battles. Maha Deva merely smiled and was amused at his ego, self-pride, unbridled insolence and audacity. He pressed his toes to form ever increasing sheets of water and challenged the Daitya to extricate himself from the ever-gushing water if he could! Then Bhavan opened his Third Eye a he was called Bhaga Netra of the Aksouhinis of his mammoth army got instantly got burnt into ashes. His chariot too got burnt off and as he became desperate the Daitya lifted his shoulders to lift his powerful Chakra but Shiva released his Trishula and the daitya's body was slashed into two halves. As the Daitya was killed there emerged mammoth streams of his blood which right upto Maha Rourava Naraka where he was destined to reach for retribution.

As this unique devastation of Jaalandhara happened, Devas showered flowers from Indra loka, Gandharvas a Kinnaras sang reverberating songs in praise of Parama Shiva, Apsaras who had been in bondage under the Daitya for very many years went berserk with dances and Saptarshis recited Scriptures of Victory with enormous relief and gratitude to the ever merciful Parameshwara.

### 'Vishnu kruta Shiva Sahasra Naamaavali'

Suta Maha Muni narrated that having installed a Maha Shiva Linga on the top of Himalayas Vishnu Bhagavan worshipped with each Kamala flower and samitha in Agni along with the recital of each name of Shiva Shasra naamaas as follows:

1)Bhavah Shivo Haro Rudrah Purushah Padmalochanah, 2) Arthitavyayah Sadaachaarah Sarva Shamhumeeshwarah, Ishwarah Sthaanireeshaanah Sahasraakshah Sahasrapaat/3)Vareeyaan Varado Vandyah Shankarah Parameshwarah, Gangaadharah Shuladharah Paraathaika prayojanah/4) Sarvajnah Sarva Devaadi Giridhanwaa Jataadharah, Chandrapeedaschandramoulir vidwaan Vishwaamareshewarah/5) Vedaantasaara sandohah Kapaali Nilalohitah, Dhyaanaadhaaro paricchedyo Gauri Bhartaa Ganeswarah/6)Ashtamurtirvishwamurtirstrivargah Sarvasaadhanah, Jnaanagamyo Drudhah Prajno Deva Devastrilochanah/7) Vaama Devo Mahaa Devah Paanduh Paridhrudho Dhrudah, Vishwa rupo Virupaaksho Vaageeshah Shuchintarah/8) Sarvapranaya samvaadi Vrushaanko Vrisha vaahanah, Ishah Pinaaki Khatvaangi Chitra veshadchirantanah/9) Tamoharo Mahaa Yogi Goptaa Brahnaangatdhujjati, Kaalakaalah Krutthivaasaah Subhagah Pranavaatmakah/10) Unmattha veshaschakshushyo Durvaasah Smara shaasanah, Dhrudhaa-yudhah Skanda Guru Parameshthi Paraayanah/11) Anaadi madhya nidhano Girisho Giribandhanah, Kuberabandhuh Shri Kantho Loka

Varnottamottahah/ 12) Saamaanya Devah Kodandi Nilakanthah Parashwadhi, Visaalaksho Mriga Vyaadhah Sureshah Suryataapanah/ 13) Dharmakarmaakshamah Kshetram Bhagavaan Bhaganetrabhit, Ugrah Pashupatistaatha -kaksharya priya bhaktah Priyam vadah/ 14) Daataa Dayaakaro Dakshah Kapardi Kaama shaasanah, Smashaanaanilayah Sukshmah Smashaanastho Maheswarah/15) Lokakarta Bhutapatir mahaakartaa Mahowshadhi, Uttaro Gopatirgopta Jnaanagamya Puraatanah/ 16) Neetih Suneetih Shuddaatmaa Soma Somaratah sukhi, Somapomritapah Somo Mahaaneetir mahaa –matih/ 17) A jaata shatruraalokah Sambhavo Havyavaahanah, Loka kaaro Vedakaarah Sutrakaarah Sanaatana/ 18) Maharshih Kapilaachaaryo Vishvadeeptistrilochanah/ Pinaaka Paani Bhurdevah Swastidah Swastikrudstadaa/ 19) Tridhaamaa Soubhagah Sharvah Sarvajnah Sarv gocharah, Brahma dhrug Vishwasrukswargah Kanikaarah Priyah Kavih/ 20) Shaakho Vishaakho Goshaakhah Shivo naikah kratuh samah, Gangaaplavodako Bhaavah Sakala sthaapitarsthirah/21) Vijitaatmaa Vidheyyatmaa Bhuta vaahana saarathih, Saguno Ganakaaryascha Sukeertis -chhinna samshaha/ 22) Kaama devah Kaamapaalo Bhasmodvilita vigrah, Bhasma priyo Bhasma shaahi Kaami kantah kritaagamah/ 23) Samaayukto Nivruttaatmaa Dharma Yuktah Sadaa Shivah, Chaturmukhaschatur baahudduraavaaso duraasadah/24) Durgamo Durlabho Durgah Sarvaayudha Vishaaradah, Adhyaatmayoga nilayah Sutantustantu vardhanah/ 25) Shubhaango Loka saarango Jagatishomritaashanah, Bhamashuddhi karo Meru Raajoswi Shuddha Vigrahah/ 26) Hiranya retaastara nirnirmamaree chirmahilaalayah, Mahaahlado Mahaagarbhah Siddhivrindaara vantitah/27) Vyaaghra charma dharo Vyaali Mahaabhuto Mahaa Nidhih, Amritaangomrita vapuh Panchayagnah Prabhanjanah/ 28) Pancham Vimshiti Tatwajnah Paarijaatah Paraavarah, Shulabha Suvratah Shuro Vangmayaika nidhirnidhih/ 29) Varnaashrama Gurur varni Shatrujitcchatru taapanah, Ahramah kshapana Khaamo Jnaanavaana chalaachalah/ 30) Pramaana BhutoDurjayah Suparno Vaayu Vaaanah, Dhanurdharo Dhanurvedo Guna raashir gunaakarah/31) Anantadrushti –raanando dando Damayitaa Damah, Abhiyaado Mahaachaaryo VishvakarmaaVishaaradah/ 32)Veeta raago Vinitaatma Tapaswi BhutaBhaavanah, Unmatta veshah Pracchhanno Jita Kaamo Jita priyah/33) Kalyaana Prakritih Kalpah Sarvaloka Prajaapatih, Tapaswin Taarako dheemaa Pradhaana Prabhuravyayah/ 34) Lokapaalontarhitaatmaa Kalpaadih Kamalekshanah, Veda Shaastraartha Tatwajno Niyamo Niyamaashrayah/ 35) Chandrah Suryah Shanih Keturviraamo Vidrumacchavih, Bhakti gamyah Param rahma Mriga baanaarpanonaghah/ 36) Adri Raajaalaha Kaantah aramaatmaa Jagadguruh, Sarvakarmaachalastwashtaa Mangalyo Mangaavritah/ 37) Mahatapaa Dirghatapaah Sthvavishtah Sthaviro Dhruvah, Aho Samvatsaro Vyaaptih Pramaanam Parama tapah/38) Samvatsarakaro Mantraha Pratyayah sarva Darshanah, Ahah Sarveshwarah snigdho Mahaa retaa Mahaa balah/39) Yogi Yogyo Mahaaretaah Siddhah Sarvaadiragnidah, Vasurvasumanaah Satyah Sarva paapaharo Harah/40) Amritah Shaswatah Shaanto Baana hastah prataapavaan, Kamandaludharo Dhanvi Vedaango Vedavin Munih/41) Bhraajishnur bhojanam bhoktaa Loka Netaa Duraadharah, Ateendrayo Mahaa Maayah Sarvaa Vaasashchatushpathah/ 42) Kaala Yogi Mahaa Naado Mahotsaaho Maha Balalah/ Mahaabuddhr mahaa viryo Bhutachaari Purandharah/ 43) Niscaacharah Pretachaari Mahaashaktir Mahaa -dytutih, Anirdeshyvapur Shrimaan Sarvahaaryamito gatih/44) Bahushruto Bahu Mayo Niyantaatma Bhavodbhavah, Aoujastejo Dhyutikaro Nartakah Sarva Kaamakah/ 45) Nrityapriyo Nrityanritriyah Pakaashaatma Prataapavaan, Bhuddhasshataaksharo Mantrah Samaanah Saarasam pluvah/46) Yugaadi krudyugaavartho Gambhiro Vrisha vaahanah, Ishto Vishishtah Shishteshthah Sharabha Sharabho dhanuh/ 47) Apaam Nidhirashishtaanam Vijayo Nija Kaalavit, Pratishthatah Praagmajno Hiranyakavacho Harih/48) Virochanah Suragano Vidyesho Vibhudha ashrayah, Balarupo Balonmaathi vivarto gahano Guruh/49) Karanam Kaaranam Kartaa Sarva Bandha vimochanah, Vishwatthamo Veetabhayo Vishwa bhartaa Nishaakarah/ 50) Vyavasaayo Vyavastthaanah Sthaanado Jagadaadijah, Dundhubho Lalito Vishvo Bhavatmaatmani Samstitah/51) Veereshwaro Veerabhadro Veerahaa Veerabhrudviraat, Veera Chudaamair- vetta Tivranaado Nadeedharah/ 52) Agnaadhaarastrishuli cha sipivishtah Shivaalayah, Vaalakhilyo Mahaachaapastigmaanshuhrnithi ravyayah/ 53) Abhiraamaha Susharanah Subrahmanyah Sudhaapatih, Maghavaan koushiko Gomaan Vishraamah Sarva shaasanah/54) Lalaataaksho Vishwa Dehaha Saarah Samsaara chakra bhrut,

Amogha dandi Madhyastho Hiranyo Brahmavarchasi/55) Paramaarthah Paramayah Shambaro Vyaghrakonalah, Ruchirvara ruchir vidyo Vaachaspatiraharpatih/ 56) Ravirvirochanah Skandhah Shaastaa Vaivasvato janah, Yuktirunnata kirtischa Shaanta raagah Paraajayah/ 57) Kailasapati Kaamaarih Savitaa Ravilochanah, Vidvattamo Veeta bhayo Vishwahartaa nivaaritah/ 58) Nityo niyata kalyaanah Punya shravana keertanah, Durashravaa Vishwasaho Dhyeyo Dusswapna naashanah/ 59) Uttarako Drushkrutihaa Dhurdharsho Duhsaho bhyayah, Anaadirbhurbhuvo Lakshmih Kiriti tripadasha adhipah/60) Vishwagoptaa Vishva Bhartaa Sudheero Ruchiraangadah, Janano Jana Janmaadih Preetimaanniti maannayah/61) Visishta Kaashyapo Bhaanurbheemo Bheema paraakramah, Pranavah Saptadhaachaaro Mahaakaayo Mahaa Dhanuh/ 62) Janmaadhipo Mahaa Devah Sakalaagama paaragah, Tatwaatthatwa Vivekaatmaa Vibhushanurbhuti bhushanah/63) Rishir Brahmanavivijjishnur janma mrityu jaraatigah, Yajno yajna paritryajjwaa Yajnaantomogha vikramah/ 64) Mahendro Durbharah Seni Yajgnaango Yagjnavaahanaha, Pancha Brahma Samutpatti Vishvesho Vimalodayah/ 65) Atmayoniraadyanto Shatvimshatsapr loka dhruk, Gayatri Valllabhayah Praamshurvishwa yaasah Prabhaakarah/ 66) Shishurgiritatah Saamraat Sushenaha Surashatruhaa, Amoghorishta -mathano Mukundo Vigatajjvarah/67) Swayamjyotiranujyotirachanchalah, Pingalah Kapilashmashruh Shaastra netra strayitanuh/68) Jnaanaskandho Maha Jnaani Niruptirupaplavah, Bhago Viviswaanaadityo Yogaachaaryo Brihaspatih/69) Udaara Kirtirudyogi Sadyogi Sadasanmayah, Nakshatra maali Rakeshah Swaadhishtaanah Shadaashrayah/70) Pavitra paanih Paapaarirmanipuro Manogatih/Hrutpundareeka maaseenah Shuklah Shaanto Vrishaakapih/71)Vishnurgrahapatih Krishnah Samarthonartha naashanah, Adharmashatru rakshasya Puruhutah Purushtutah/72) Brahma Garbho Brihadgarbho Dharma Dhenurdhanaagamah, Jagaddhitaishi sugatah Kumaarah Kushalaagamah/73) Hiranya Varno Jyotishmaatraana bhuta dharo dhwanih, Arogo Nayamaadyaksho Vishwaamitro Dwijottamah/ 74) Brihajjotih Sudhaamaacha Maha Jyoti ranuttamah, Mataamaho cha Maatarishwaa Nabhaswaan naaga haaradhruk/ 75) Pulasyah Pulaho-gastyo Jaatu Jaatu Karma Paraasharah, Nivaarana Dharmajno Virincho Vishta Shavaah/76) Atma bhura nirudhhotri Jnaana Murtir Mahaa Yashaah, Loka Chudaamanit -veerah Chanda Satya paraakramah/77) Vyalakalpo Mahaakalpo Mahaa Vrikshah Kalaadharah, Alankarishnutatwachalo Rochishnurvikramotthamah/78) Aashushabda- patir vegi Pluvanah Shikhi saarathih, Asamtushtotithih Shakrah Pramaathi Paapanaashanah/79) Vasushravaah Kavya Vaahaha Pratapto Vishwa bhojanah, Jaryo Jaraadhi shamano Lohitascha Tanupapaat/80) Prushadashvo Nabhoyonih Supratikastamistriha, Nidaaghastapano Meghah Pakshah Para Puyranjayah/ 81) Mukhaanilah Sunishpannah Surabhih Shishiraamakah, Vasanto Maadhayo Greeshmo Nabhasyo beeja vaahanah/82) Angiraamuniraatreyo Vimalo Vishwa vaahanah, Paavanah Pururjicchakrastrividyo Nara vaahanah/83) Mano Buddhir -ahankaarah Kshetrajnah Kshetra Paalakah, Tejonidhir jnaananidhirvipaako Vighna kaarakah/ 84) Adharonuttaro jneyo jyeshtho Nisshreya saalayah, Shailo Nagastanurdoho Daanavaari rindama/85) Chaarudhirjanakaschaaru vishalyo Loka shalya krit, Chaturvedaschatur bhaavas -chaturaschatura priyah/86) Aamnaayotha Samaanayastirtha Deva Shiyaalayah, Bahurupo Maharupah Sarvarupaascharaacharah/ 87) Nyaayaniryaahako Nyaayo Nyaayagamyo Niranjanah, Sahasra mutrhaa Devendrah Sarva Shastrta prabhanjanah/ 88) Mundo Virupo Vikrutom Dandi Daanto Gunottamah, Pingalaakshoya Haryaksho Neelagreevo Niraamayah/89) Sahasra Baahuha Sarveshah Sharanyah Sarva Loka bhrit, Padmaasanah Paramiyotih Paraavarparamam phalah/90) Padmagarbho Mahagarbho Vishwagarbho Vichakshanah, Paraavarajno beejeshaya Sumukhah Sumahaaswanah/91) Devaasura Gurur devo Devasura Namaskritah Devaasura Mahaa maatro Devaasura Mahaashrayah/92) Devaadi Devo Devashi Devaasura Varapradah, Devaasureswaro Divyo Devaasura Maheswarah/93) Sarva Vedamayo -chintyo Devatatmaatma sambhavah, Eedyaayo-neeshah Suravyaaghro Deva Simho Divakarah/94) Vibhuraagra Varah Sreshthah Sarava Devottamottamah, Shiva Jnaana niratah Shriman Shikhi Shri Parvaa Priyah/95) Jayastambho Vishisthambho Nara Simha nipatanah, Brahmachaari Lokachaari Dharmachari Dhanaa-dhipatah/96) Nandi Nandeyshwaro Nagno Nagna-Vrata dharah Shuchih, Linghaadhyashah Suraadhaksho Yugaadhyaksho Yugavaha/97) Swavashah Suvashaha, Swargah Swarah Swara-mayaswanah/

Beejaadhyaksho Beejakartaa Dhanakruddhanavardhanah / 98) Dambho dambho Mahadambhah Sarva Bhutameheswarah, Smashaana nilayasthishyah Setura pratimaakrutih/99) Lokottara sphutaalokastrayambiko Naga bhushanah, Andhakaarirmukhadweshi Vishnu kandhara paatanah/ 100) Veetadosho kshaya guno Dakshaarih Pushadantadhyat, Dhurjatih Khandaparashuh Sakalo Nishkalo ghanah/101) Aadhaarah Sakalaadhaarah Panduraabho Mundo natah, Purnah Puriyata Punyah Sukumaarah Sulochanah/102) Saama geyah Priyankarah Punya keertiranaamayah, Manojavastirthakaro Jatilo Jeeviteshwarah/ 103) Jeevitaanta karo Nityo Vasuretaa Vasupriyah, Sadgatih Satkrutih Saktah Kaalakanthaha Kalaadharah/ 104) Maani Maanyo Mahaakaalah Sadgatih Satyaparaayanah, Chandra sanjjevanah Shaastaa Lokagudho -maraadhipah/105) Loka bandhurloka naathah Kritajnah Kruti bhushanah, Anapyaaksharah Kaantah Sarva Shaastra bhrutaam varah/ 106) Tejomayo Dyutidharo Lokamaayograniranuh/ Shuchismitah prasannatmaa Durjayo Duratikramah/ 107) Jyotirmayo Niraakaaro Jagannatho Jaleshwarah, Tumbi Veeni Maakaayo Vishokah Shoka naashanah/ 108) Trilokaatmaa Trilokeshah Shuddhah Shuddhi Rathaakshajah, Avyakta lakshano Vyakto Vyaktaavyakto vishaampatih/ 109) Varasheelo Varatulo Maano Maana dhano mayah, Brahma Vishnuh Prajaapaalo Hamso Hamsa geetiryamah/110) Vedhaa Dhaata Vidhaataa cha Attaa Hartaa Chaturmukhah, Kaislaasa Shikhiraavaasi Sarvaaybaasi Sataam Gatih/ 111) Hiranyagarbho Harinah Purushah Purvajah Pitaa, Bhutalayo Bhutapatir bhuto Bhuvaneshwarah/ 112) Samyogi Yogavidbrahmaa Brahmanyo Braahman priyah, Deva Priyo Deva naatho Devajno Deva chintakah/ 113) Vishamaakshah Kalaadhyaksho Vrishaanko Vrisha Vardhanah, Nirmado Nirahamkaaro Nirmoho Nirupadravah/114) Darpahaa Darpito Draptah Sarvartu Parivartakah, Sapta Jimhavah Sahasraarchih Snidhah Prakrti dakshinah/115) Bhuta bhavya Bhavannathah Prabhavo Bhraanti naashanah, Arthonartho Mahakoshah Parakaaryaika paditah/ 116) Nishkantakah Kritaanando Nirvyaajo Vyaja mardanah, Satwavaan Saatvikah Satya keetimsthambha kritaagamah/ 117) Akampito Guna graahi naikaatmaa naika karma krit, Supreetah Sumukhaha Sukshmah Sukaro Dakshinonalah/118) Skandah Skandha dharo Duryah Prakatah Preetivardhanah, Aparaajitah Sarvasaho Vidagdhah Sarva Vaahanah/ 119) Adhrutah Swadhrutah Saadhyah Purti Murti Yashodharah, Varaahashringa dhrugyaayur balayaaneka naayakah/ 120) Shruti prakaashaha Shritimaaneka Bandhuraneka dhruk, Shri Vallabha Shivaarambhah Shaanti bhadrah Samanjasah/ 121) Bhushyo Bhutakrud bhutir- bhushano Bhutavaahanah, Akaayo Bhakta kaayasthah Kaala jnaani Kalaayapuh/122) Satya vrata Maha Tyagi Nishtha Shanti Parayanah, Paraartha Vrittir Varado Viviktah Shruti -saagarah/123) Anirvanno Gunagrahi Kalankaankah Kalamkahaa, Swabhava Rudro Madhyasthah Shatrughno Madhya naashakah/ 124) Shikhandi Kavachi Shuli Chandi Mundi cha Kundali, Mekhali Kavachi Khadgi Maayi Samsaara saarathih/ 125) Amrityuh Sarvadhruk Simhastejo raashir Mahaa Manih, Asankhyoprameyatma Veeryavaan Kaaryakovidah/ 126) Vedyo Vedarthavidgopta Sarvaachaaro Muneeswarah, Avyktamo Duraadharsha Madhurah Priyadarshanah/ 127) Suresham Sharanam Sarvah Shabda Brahma Sataangatih, Kaala -bhakshaha Kalamkaarih Kankanikruta vaasukih/ 128) Maheshwaso Mahibharta Nishkalamko vrishankhalah, Dyumanistaranirdhanyah Shiddidah Shiddhisaadhanah/ 129) Nivrittah Samvratah Shilpo Vyudhorasko Maha Bhujah, Ekajyotirniraatanko Naro Narayana Priyah/130) Nirlepo Nishprapanchaatmaa Nirvyagro Vyagra naashanah, Stavyastava priyah stotaa Vyasamurtiranaakulah/131) Nirvadyapadopaayo Vidyaaraashiravikramah, Prashanta buddhi -rakshudrah Kshudrahaa Nitya Sundarah/132) Dhairgraya dhuryo Dhaatrishah Shaaklayah Sharvari patih, Paramaartha Guru drishtir Gururaashrita vatsalah/ 133) Raso Ramajnah Sarvajnaha Sarva Satvaalambanah –Suta Vuvacha: Evam Naamnaam Sahasrena tushtaav Viishabhaddwajam/ [Also refer to Shiva Sahasranaamas in the Essence of Shiva Purana and Essence of Brahma Purana in the Series of Essence of Puranas along with meanings in English]

As Bhagavan Vishnu prayed to Maha Deva by worshipping him with each lotus flower by reciting the name of Shiva as above, Maha Deva desired to test Vishnu who wondered how one lotus fell short of the count; but since one more Shiva Naama was still due in the Puja, Vishnu cut off his own eye and

completed the Puja! Shiva appeared and emerged from Agni in the form of Sahsara Suryas when Devas ran away out of fear and Bhumi was in tremors! Then Maha Deva who was pleased with the puja gave back Vishnu's eye to him since when Vishnu was called HARI or the stolen and also as PADMAKSHA or of lotus eye. Shiva also gifted Sudarshana Chakra to Vishnu as it was unused and remained with him unutilised as Shiva used a Shiva Dhanush to kill Tripurasuras. Shiva further forecast to Vishnu that soon there would be a Daksha Yagna and that Devi Sati being Shiva's Arthanareeswari would immolate herself in Agni out of frustration against her father and after the destruction of the Yagna, she would return as Devi Parvati as Shiva's wife and in the conduct of the future happenings Vishnu should play a proactive role in the times ahead! Whoever reads, recites and remembers the afore-given Shiva Sahasramamaas would reap the fruit of performing Aswamedha Yagnaas and Shiva Loka prapti.

### Sati's immolation at Daksha Yagna, Shiva Parvati Kalyana and 'Vighneshotpatti'

Daksha Prajapati's jealousy for Maha Deva climaxed with Daksha Yagna to which Maha Deva was uninvited despite Sage Dadhichi's intervention. Daksha's daughter Sati Devi and wife of Maha Deva insisted on attending the Yagna even while Maha Deva objected initially but reluctantly agreed with Pramatha Ganas ecsorting her. As Daksha disliked her attedance at the Yagna and openly criticised Maha Deva, she neither stayed back at the Yagna nor felt proper returning to Shiva and had thus self-immolated in the Fire-pit. An enraged Maha Deva got furious and having created Virabhadra ordered the latter to destroy Daksha Yagna. As Daksha was beheaded by Virabhadra, Parama Shiva condoned Daksha and revived him. After the departure of Sati Devi, Maha Deva was forlorn, roamed aimlessy in forests to perfom Tapasya; meanwhile two significant developments came to light that Tarakasura secured boons of invincibility from Brahna and Diatyas made havoc all over Trilokaas. Devi Gauri coming of age was allowed to assist Maha Deva in his daily Tapasya and Indra and Devas had the know-how that only Skanda the second son of Shiva-Parvati could demolish Tarakasura. In their anxiety to expedite the process of Shiva-Parvati wedding, Indra requested Kama Deva to release the arrows of passion on Shiva as Parvati was in Shiva's silent worship; Parama Shiva was annoyed at the mischievous provocation of Kama Deva and destroyed him by his Trinetra or the Third Eye. Rati Devi felt that her husband Kama Deva became a victim of the cross-fire, although for Loka Kalyana. The merciful Shiva no doubt gave the boon of the couple to become husband and wife again in their next births as Pradyumna the son of Krishna and Rukmini and Rati as Devi Maya. Shiva continued his Tapasya and so did Parvati by reciting Om Namo Shivaaya Namah Mantra as taught to her by Sage Narada. Meanwhile Vishnu, Brahma and Devas prevailed Maha Deva to wed Devi Parvati. Shiva tested Parvati about her seriousness and guised as a semi-nude and mad vagabond critisised Shiva and a furious Parvati threw him out when he revealed his identity. Finally Saptarishis were asked to mediate the auspicious wedding of Parvati the daughter of Himavaan and Maina. The wedding of Purusha and Maya were thus consummated finally.

That was the opportune time when Indra and Devas accompanied by Brahma approached Maha Deva when Dharma and Nyaaya (Virtue and Justice) were at the lowest ebb and the evils perpetrated by Daitya-Danava-Rakshasas were abysmal. There were no barriers (Vighnas) to immorality and wickedness and the malevolent forces on Earth had a free play enabled by extremities of Tamasika and Rajasika Gunas. Rishis felt that besides obstructing such rampant free play of Evil, there should also indeed be a Facilitator of Good Deeds viz. Avighna as opposed to Vighna. For instance the well-meaning persons should not face obstacles in their Yagnas, Daanas, Vratas, Kshetra Darshanas and such virtuous deeds and 'Mangala Karyas' or of Auspicious Tasks:

Avighnam Yagna daanaadyaih samabhyarchya Maheswaram,

Brahmaanam cha Harim Vipraa labheypsitavaraa yatah/

Tatosmaakam Surah sreshthaa sadaa vijaya sambhavah,

Teshaam tatastu Vighnaarthamavighnaaya Divoukasaam/

Putraartham chaiva Naareenaam Naraanaam karma Siddhaye,

Vighnesham Shankaram srashtam Ganapam stotumararhata/

(Thus Devas requested that a Personification viz. Vighnesha be created who would give impediments to the Evil-doers and Facilities to Seekers of Good Deeds like women folk to grant good sons, humans to be blessed with Karya Siddhi or Fulfilment of Good Deeds). In this context, Devas appealed to Maha Deva as follows:

Namah Sarvatmaney tubhyam Sarvajnaaya Pinakiney/ Anaghaaya Virinchaaya Devyaah Karyaardha daayinye, Akaaya yartha kaayaaya Hareyh kaayaapahariney/ Kaayaantastha amritaadhaara mandalaavasthitaaya tey, Kritaadibhedakaalaaya Kaala vegaaya tey namah/ Kaalaagni Rudra Rupaaya Dharmaadyashta padaayacha, Kaali vishuddha Dehaaya Kaalikaa Karanaaya tey/ Kaala Kanthaaya Mukhyaaya Vaahanaaya Varaaya tey, Ambikaa pataye tubhyam Hiranya pataye namah/ Hiranya retasey chaiya Namah Sharyaaya Shuliney, Kapaala danda paashaasi charmaankusha dharaaya cha/Pataye Haima vatyaascha Hema shuklaaya tey namah, Peeta- shuklaaya rakshaartham Suraanaam Krishnavartmaney/ Panchamaaya Mahaapancha yagninaam phaladaayacha, Panchasya phani haraaya Panchaaksharamayaaya tey/ Panchadhaa Pancha Kaivalya Deavairarchita Murtaye, Panchaaksharadyasho tubhyam Paraatparataraaya tey/ Shodashaswara Vajraanga vaktraayaakshara rupeney, Kaadipanchaka hastaaya chaadihastaaya tey namah/ Daadipaadaaya Rudraaya taadi paadaaya tey namah, Paadi Mahendraaya Yadyanga dhaatu saptaka dhaariney/ Shaantaatma rupiney Saakshaatkshandata krodhiney namah. Laya rephalallaangaya nirangaaya cha tey namaha/ Sarveshaameva Bhutaanaam hrudi nihsswana kaariney, Bhruvomratey sadaa sadbhidrushtaayanta bhavaney/ Bhanu somaagni netraaya Paramaatma swarupiney, Gunatrayopiristhaaya Tirtha paadaaya tey namah/Tirtha tatwaaya saaraaya tasmaadapi paraaya tey, Rukyajursaama vedaaya Omkaaraaya namonamah/ Omkaarey Trividham rupamaasthaayoparivaasiney, Peetaaya Krishna Varnaaya Raktaayaanthyata tejasey/ Sthaana panchaka samsthaaya panchadaanda bahih kramaat, Brahmaney Vishnavey tubhyam Kumaaraaya namonamah/ Ambaayaah Parameshaaya Sarvoparichaarayatey, Mula Shukshma swarupaaya sthula sukshmaaya tey namah/ Sarva samkalpa shunyaaya Sarvasmaadrakshitaaya tey, Adimadhyaantara shunyaaya chitsamsthaaya Namonamah/ Yamaagni vaayu Rudraambu Soma Shakra nishcaacaraih, Digmukheydigmukhey nityamsagunaih pujitaaya tey/ Sarveshu sarvadaa Sarva maargey Sampujitaayatey, Rudraaya RudraNilaaya Kadrudraaya prachetasy, Maheshwaraaya dhiraay Namah Sakshaatcchiyaaya tey/Athah shrunu Bhagayan stayacchalena kathitamajendra -mukhaih Suraasureshyaih, Makha Madana Yamaagni Daksha Yagnakshapana vichitra vichoshthinta Kshamasva/ Suta Vuvaacha: Yah patheh stavam bhkatyaa Shakraagni Pramukhaih Suraih keertitamshaavayod Vidwaan sa yaati Paramaam Gatim/

(Sarva Samaatma, Anagha or Beyond Sins, Virinchi / Brahma Swarupa, Deva Karya Siddhi kara or who concludes the tasks of Devas successfully, Kaala Rupa, Agni Rupa, Rudra Rupa, Kalakantha, Ambika Pati, Swarna Swarupa or of Golden Formed; Trishuladhaari, Kapaala, Danda-Paasha-Khadga-Ankusha dhara; Pancha Mukha, Sarpa haara, Panchaakshra Swarupa! You wear the two Panchaksharas or of Five Syllables viz. 'Ka'and 'Cha'as your arms, 'Ta' and 'Ta' as your feet, 'Pa' as your Linga; Surya, Agni and Chandra are your Eyes; Ruk-Yajur- Sama Vedas are of your Form, Omkara is your Form too as the composite of A-U-M viz. of Yellow-White-Blood Red Profiles; you are also of the Swarupas of Brahma-Vishnu- and Kumara; you again are of the Formula of Sukshma and Sthula or of Miniature and Gross;

devoid of Beginning- Middle-End; always worshipped by Yama-Agni-Vayu-Varuna-Rudra-Jala- Soma-Indra and Devatas as all so Nisacharas or the Ones active through out the night; indeed, you are Maheswara and Sakshaat or in Rreality Parama Shiva Himself! Whoso ever would read, recite, recount and relate the above Rudra Stuti would definetely aspire for Parama Gati!)

As Devas made the above Stuti, Pinakapaani was extremely delighted and assured that he would neither allow any obstruction to Deva Karyas to be caused by any Daitya-Danava and such other mischievous forces nor encourage the success of any evil against virtue. Then Shiva Himself assumed the Golrious Form of Ganeshwara Swarupa of an Elephant Head or Gajaanana and of a Trishula Dhari and there were reverberations of Victory sounds and rains of scented flowers from the Skies and all Lokas above and from all over the Yogis, Siddhaas and Sages welcoming the Lord of Vighnas and Avighnas as per his descretions and the strength of one's own deeds. As the Bala Ganapati prostrated before his parents Shiva and Parvati, the latter posted kisses on the son's head and prescribed the do's and don'ts such as to create hidrances in the execution of Yagnas without dakshinas, destroy Serial Daityas and protect Brahma Vaadi Dwijas and Siddhas; as also to those who perform Vedaadhyana, Adhyaapana and Vkyakhyaana improperly; at the same time Ganesha shoul reward those who perform worship daily, bestow prosperity to the virtuous and protect the youth and elderly. By so doing Vighna Nayaka would be the most sought after in Tri Lokas, told Ganesha by the parents. Shiva emphasised to Ganesha that any Puja to him, Vishnu or Brahma or other Devatas or Devis must be preceded by worhip to Ganesha first not only to assure success of the main Puja but also supplement the fulfillment of the desires for which the main puja was performed. The Prathama Puja to Ganesha should be also done with Dhyana-Avahana-Pushpa-Gandha-Dhupa-Deepa-Naivedyas just as the Main Devata of the Puja was to be performed. This is relevant to all Varnas of Brahmana-Kshatriya-Vaishya and others too. Thus any worship, or Vrata, or Sacred and Religious Deed like Yagnas, Daanaas, Vivaahas, Upanayanas, Vidyaarambhas, house constructions, or for that matter any and every task seeking propitiousness should start with Ganesha Puja in Hindu Dharma with the invocation to Vighneswara thus: 'Shuklaambara dharam Vishnum Shashi Varnam Chaturbhujam Prasanna Vadanam Dhyaayet Sarva Vighnopashaantaye'!

## 'Shiva Taandava' (The Cosmic Dance of Shiva)

Mahaasura Daruka created havoc in the Universe and chased Devas from place to place like fire chased flies; the boon that he secured was that none among the Purushas or Males could destroy him nor Stree-Shakti per se too . Brahma and Vishnu accompanied by Devas in their Feminine Forms proved futile and they all approached Maha Deva for a possible solution to handle the crisis. Shiva smiled to Devi Parvatithe Adi Purusha and Prakriti in visual Forms- and asked Parvati to transfer an Amsha of Siva's masculine Swarupa into her. Apparently, there was no visible transformation in the mutual entities of Shiva and Parvati as there was a veil of Maya all around and both Siva and Parvati were as quiet and unperturbed as ever. But Parvati entered Shiva's third eye full of extra- ordinary poison and having taken the required measure of it assumed a Rupa of a frightfully dark complexion. The Kaumari Shiva of feminine form got emerged in the process, throwing huge globes of fiery flames that could as well destroy the Totality! Danavas who accompanied Daruka had a mere glimpse of Kaumari Shiva and went helter-skelter as her mere smile thundered and thousands of them perished. The Kaumari Shakti sported a fiery third eye, with poison in her throat and a huge Trishula in the hands. Indeed it was a matter of time that Daruka fell down unconscious and got terminated out of sheer fright. The most hated and vicious Asura was thus put to rest for ever. But Kaumari's anger was unabated and her looks got spread in different directions like wild fire destroying what ever came on way. With view to controlling her wrath, Bhagavan Shiva took the form of a Toddler whom she fondled and the breast milk that she gave the child sucked off her rage. From her temper and indigntation, she recovered a little and fell off into a stage of stupor. Having assumed his normal Form from that of a boy, Shiva performed a Tandava or a Cosmic Dance to ensure that Devi

would recover from exhaustion and fatigue and get back to normalcy. From that unusual Tandava were materialised Ashta Kshetra- palakas who too got into the rhythm of Shiva Tandava. As she recovered from the frenzy a little, she also accompanied Shiva in his Tandava, which reverberated the Globe. Brahma, Indra and Devas hailed Maha Deva for his kindness in killing Daruka Daitya and brought back to balance in the Universe and relieved Devas from the atrocities of Daruka Daanava.

### Bala Muni Upamanyu attains Ganapatya due to denial of Milk leading to Shiva Bhakti

As he was denied of the taste of real milk in place of wheat flour and hot water, Upamanyu the boy felt humiliated from his uncle's house that the latter's son was always blessed with real milk. Upamanyu's mother cried at their misfortune as her child returned home after milk was denied and justified that neither he nor his parents performed Maha Deva's worship in their earlier births; she said:

Tatini Ratna Purnaastey Swarga Patala gocharaah,

Bhagya heenaa na pashyanti Bhakti heenaascha ye Shivey/

Rajyam Swargam cha Moksham cha Bhojanam Ksheera sambhavam,

Na labhatey pryaaneshaamno tushyati sadaa Bhavah/

Bhava prasaadajam sarvam naanya Devaprasaadajam,

Anya Deveshu nirataa Duhkaartaa Vibhramamticha/

Ksheeram tatrakutesmaakam Maha Devo na pujitah,

Purva Janmaani Yaddattam Shivamuddhishya vai Suta/

(My son! There is a great River full of jewels flowing from Swarga to Paatala, but is not visible to the unfortunate who is devoid of Shiva Bhakti; Kingship, Swarga, Moksha and Ksheera Bhojana besides all valuables in life could all be available, provided one performed Maha Deva Puja in the previous births). Upamanu asked his mother not to lose heart and by the Grace of Shiva, he would indeed make oceans of Milk flow by resolving to undertake the severest possible worship to Maha Deva; by so saying with indomitable detremination the Bal Muni intiated the toughest Tapasya by merely consuming air and nothing else. The intensity of his Tapasya was such that the trees in the forest were getting burnt and Devas were rattled and baffled. Indra approached Vishnu to let the Bala Muni conclude his Tapasya and having realised the goal of the Tapasya, Vishnu prayed to Mahadeva and informed that Upamanyu was performing unsual meditation for the sake of milk! Shiva appeared before the Bala Muni in the disguise of Indra and desired to grant streams of milk but the former decided not to stop the Tapasya till Maha Deva himself responded. The disguised Indra argued that Mahadeva was a myth as he was a Nirguna and since he was granting the boon of milk the boy should better accept the boon. Bala Muni was offended by the remarks and by remembering the words of his mother that Shiva should be pleased and none else, rejected Indra's offer and even took exception to Indra's remarks against Maha Deva. The latter finally granted his appearance along with Devi Parvati and gave away the boons of not only milk, food and material comforts to his entire Vamsha but also 'Ganatwa' or membership of Shiva Ganas as a recognition of his stupendous Tapasya.

### 'Shivaakshara' Mantras, 'Pashus', their Self-control and Realisation of Pashupati

Suta Maha Muni referred to the 'Ashtottara Mantra' of Vishnu viz. *Om Namo Naraayanaaya* which when recited yileded great consequences especially when the Mantra was pracised with full vigour and by Manasa-Vaacha-Karmana means or by way of mind, vocal and deed; in other words, while in every action while thinking, saying any thing, taking any action or doing some thing. Then the Dwadadsha Mantra *Om Namah Vaasudevaaya* of Vishnu was referred to. Further Suta Muni stated that the Shiva Shadaakshara Mantra of *Om Namah Shivaaya* and of the Shiva Ashtottara Mantra of *Om Namastey Shankaraaya* were stated to be of high consequence:

Mantrah Shadaaksharo Vipraah Sarva Vedaartha samchayah,

Yaschyom namah Shivaayeti Mantrah Sarvaartha saadhakah/

Tathaa Shiva Taraayeti Divyah Panchaaksharah Shubhah,

Mayaskaraaya che twam Namastey Shankaraayacha/

Saptaaksharoyam Rudrasya Pradhaana Purushasya vai,

Brahmaacha Bhagavaan Vishnuh Sarvey Devaah Sa Vaasavaah/

Mantrey ratair Dwija sreshthaa Munayaschi yajanti tam,

Shankaram Deva Devesham Mayaskaramajodbhavam/

Shivam cha Shankaram Rudram Deva Devamumaapatim,

Praahurnamah Shivayeti namastey Shankaraaya cha/

Mayaskaraaya Rudraaya tathaa Shiva taraayacha,

Japtwaa muccheta Vai Vipro Brahma hatyaabibhi kshanaat/

(Om Namassivaaya Mantra is Sarvaartha Saadhaka or the Great falilitator; The Shiva taraayeti Panchakshra is highly propitious and so are the Mantras viz.Mayaskaraaya and Shankaraya; Rudra as the Pradhana Purusha is always prayed by Brahma, Vishnu and Indra. The Mantras are all so effective that they could destroy the impact of even Brahmahatya sin instantly.)

In Treta Yuga, there was a Brahmana called Dhunduma who was corrupt with vices and married a woman of good background but gave birth to a son on Amavasya. Sage Mitra Varuna had no hesitation in declaring that the son was worse than his father. But Vasishta Muni gave a ray of hope that in course of time Dhundhuma might have better days. The Brahmana performed Jataka karma and other formalities and hoped that time might be the healer to reform his son. But unfortunately the son married in adharmic way and one night got home drunk and killed his wife. The wife's parents and brothers killed the son and the rest of his family. Out of disgust Dhundhuma took to roads and entered an Ashram of a Sage in a forest, where the Sage was performing Pashupata Vrata and learnt the Panchakshara Mantra; for the rest of the Brahman's year and odd life, he performed the Vrata and Japa and died. On his death, Yama Dharma

Raja who knew of the Brahmana's-life events fully, but hesitated and weighed the last one year's life as against the rest of his whole life and called for a Pushpaka Vimana to despatch him to Shiva Loka; he also took a lenient view of all others of his family.

Definition of Pashutwa and Pashus: Maharshi Shilada explained to Sanatkumara that all the Beings from Brahma to grass blade were subject to Pashutwa as Bhagawan Vishnu tied up the Beings with various facets of Pashutwa which were all the countless forms of Maya and Pashupati Shankara as the supreme chief alone could grant them relief individually or totally at the time of Pralaya. Only Jnaana Yoga could free the 'Pashus' as otherwise Avidya would continue to ruin them till the destination point of Vimochana or the Final Relief. Shankara alone is the Destiny and the Twenty Four types of Tatwas are the manifestations of Maya or the shackles. The Tatwas are: the Ten Indriyas or Limbs; four latent Subtle Forms of Manas-Buddhi- Chitta and Ahamkaara; Pancha Bhutas of Earth-Water-Light/heat, Air and Sky; and Pancha Tanmatras of Shabda-Sprasha-Rupa-Rasa-Gandhas. As the bandhas are thus tightly tied up around the Pashu or the Jeeva, strong hold of Bhakti could wither away the attachments and 'Upasana' or meditation is the key to open up the tight box! Bhajan is another name of Bhakti which comprises of Manas-Vaani-Karya or Mind-Voice-Deed. Bhakti or devotion is thus the smasher of sins as displayed in Three Essential Forms viz. Manasa Bhajana or Introspection; Vaachaka Bhajana or Vocal-Based; and Kayaka Bhajana like Pranayama and such other physical controls. Thus, Pashus are arrested by Pancha Kleshas or Five Hurdles viz. Avidya (Ignorance), Asmita (Egotism), Raaga (Desire), Dwesha (Dislike) and Abhinivesha (Obsession). Bhagavan has little relvance for 'Paapa-Punyas' and is away from 'Chetanaachetana Prapancha' or the Universal Limits of Living or Non-Living Beings; although he has spread out, he unaffected by its goings-on; the Unique Link however is Omkara or the Pranava Vaachaka. Once one masters Pranava, all the Siddhis are automatically available. Little wonder, Shambhu is available through the tiny tissues of the Body and its control besides the Antahkarana which is a nucleus of Paramatma. In other words, Self-Regulation and Inner-Consciousness attuned to the Supreme Force called Paramatma is Pashupata Vrata all about!

Shiva's Vibhutis (Counter parts), Vishwa Rupa, Ashta Rupas and Shiva Tatwa (Shiva's self-description included)

Describing Shiva and Parvati as each other's Vibhutis, Maha Nandi conveyed to Sanat Kumara that if Purusha were Siva, Parvati was Prakriti /Maya; Shiva was day and Gauri was night; Sapta Tanthu was Maha Deva as Rudrani was Dakshinaayani; Shankara was Aakasha and Prithvi Shankara Priya; Bhagavan Rudra was Samudra and the Coast was Durga; Shulaayudha was Vriksha or Tree while Shula Paani Priya was Latha (Creeper);

Brahma Haropi Savitri Shankaraatha Swarupiney,

Vishno Maheshwari Lakshmir Bhavaani Parameswari;

Vajra Paanir Maha Devah Shachi Shailendra Kanyaka;

Jaata Vedaah Swayam Rudrah Swaha Sharvaartha kaayani;

Varuno Bhagavan Rudro Gauri Sarvaarthadaayani;

Balendu Shekharo Vaayuh Shiva Shiva Manorama;

Chandraa Shekharaschandro Rohini Rudra Vallabha

.( Brahma and Savitri; Vishnu and Lakshmi; Indra and Shachi Devi; Agni and Swaha Devi; Varuna and Vaaruni; Vayu and Manorama; Chandra and Rohini). Further Nandi Deva described as follows: If Shiva and Parvati were Man and Woman, then the respective positions of others would be: Surya and Kanta; Shanmukha and Deva Sena; Manu and Shata Rupa; Daksha and Prasuti; Bhrigu and Khyati; Maricha and Sambhuti; Ruchi and Kavi; Pulastya and Preeti; Pulaha and Daya; Kratu and Sannathi; Atri and Anasuya etc. In short, all the Pullinga Vaachaka Purushas (Males) were Shiva Swarupas and all Strilinga Prakritis were their feminine counterparts. All 'Padardhaas'or materials are of Gauri Rupa like Shraavya (or capacity to hear) is Gauri and Shrota or the one who listens is Maheswara; Drushya or the Scene is Gauri and Drashta is Shiva; Srishti is Devi and Srashta is Ishwara; Rasa is Parvati and Rasayita is Maheswara; Jneya or Worthy of Knowing and Jnaata or he who knows is Shankara; Kshetra is Uma and Kshetrajna is Parama Shiva and finally the Peethaakriti is Sarveshwari and Linga Swarupa is Sarveshwara. Thus it is essential that while worshipping Maha Deva, or for that matter any Deva Swarupa, persons engaged in the worship should also be equally involved in the Pujas concerned!

Shiva's Vishwa Rupa: Sanat Kumara enquired of Nandikeswara of Shiva's Vishwa Swarupa and the reply was:

Vishwa Rupasya Devasya Sarojabhava Sambhava/

Bhuraapognimar udyoma Bhaskaro Dikshitah Shashi,

Bhavasya Murthayah proktaah Shivasya Parameshthinah/

(Shiva's Vishwa Swarupa constitutes Bhumi, Varuna, Agni, Vaayu, Aakasha, Bhaskara, Yajamana (Yajna Swarupa) and Chandra; these are the Ashta Murtis of Maha Deva). Worshipping Agni and Surya are the Prime Splendours of Maha Deva and these constitute the Prominent Parts of Parama Shiva. Surva has Twelve 'Kalaas' or aspects; the first Kala signifies Amrita or Sanjeevani which Devas mainly tend to worship. The second Kala of Surya is Chandra and signifies 'Aoushadhi Vriddhi' or the development of Herbal Medicines enabled by Hima Varsha or dewdrop rains. Shukla Kala of Bhaskara promotes Dharma or Virtue and is also the main energy responsible for crops of Foodgrains, Vegetables, Flowers and Fruits. The other Kalaas of Surya provide life-lines to various Deities, Planets / Grahaas; for instance Surya by the name and Rupa of Diwakara comforts Shiva; Harikesha Kirana (Ray) of Sun provides succour to Nakshatraas spread far and wide across the firmament; a Kirana called Vishwakarma preserves Budha; a Surya Kirana named Vishwavyacha protects Shukra Deva; the Samyad Vasu ray of Bhaskara protects Mangala Deva; Arvaavasu ray of Surya feeds Brihaspati; Surat Karana named Surya Kirana preserves Shanaischara; Surya Kirana called Sushumna preserves Chandra. Another Component of Shiva's Vishwa Swarupa relates to Chandra, who in turn comprises Shodasha Kalaas or Sixteen Features which are all Amitamayis or Life-Providers. Among these Chandra Kalaas, the most significant Feature relates to Soma Murti which provides succour to all the Praanis or Beings. Comfort to Devas and Pitru Devas is provided by Sudha Kirana of Chandra, while Bhavani Swarupa of Soma protects Jala and Aoushadhis. Yajamana Swarupa of Shiva is always engaged in carrying Havyas or Offerings in Homas to Devas and Kavyas to Pitruganas; this Yajamana Murti administers the Universe by way of Buddhi or Intellect and is spread all over in Jala Swarupa among water-bodies, Rivers, Samudras. Vayu in the Pancha Swarupas of Praana-Apaana-Udaana-Vyaana and Samaana is another manifestation of Maha Deva as an integral component of the Vishwa Rupa. Shambhu's Vishwambhara / Bhumi Murti and Akaasha Swarupa are the well-established Entities of Shiva's Ashta Murtis. Thus among all the 'Charaachara' Beings, all the Ashta Murti Swarupas of Shiva exist firmly.

Ashta Rupas of Shiva: Nandi Deva continued to describe the Eight Forms of Maha Deva to Sanat Kumara: Sharva is one Form of Shiva spread all over the Universe whose wife is stated as Vikeshi and their son is Mangala. Veda Vaadis or Experts in Vedas named him as Bhava, with Uma as his wife and Shukra as their son. Agni Swarupa Shiva is called Pashupati, whose wife is known as Swaha and their son is Shanmukha. Pavana (Vayu) Swarupa Mahadeva is called Ishana whose wife is known as Shiva and their son is Manojava or Hanuman. Rudra is the name of Shiva whose Swarupa is of Surya Deva and Suvarchala is the name of his wife and Shanaischara is their son. Soma Swarupa Bhagavan is called Maha Deva, with Rohini as his wife and Budha as their son. Yajamana Swarupa of Shiva is Ugra Deva and his wife is called Diksha and their son is Santana. Bhagavan Shiva's eighth Form is known as Parthiva, signifying the hardened and cruel feature of Shiva as his wife is Prithvi and their progeny is of humanity. Tatwajnas or those who know of Tatwas believe that Passhupati is the life-provider of all Dehaadharis or Beings with Physiques; Ishana is the provider of Shobha or Charm; Bhima is that Form of Shiva who bestows Teja or radiance to various parts of Body like Eyes, Skin etc. while Chandra Swarupa of Shiva who rules the mind of the Beings is called Rudra and Yajamana Swarupa governing Buddhi or intellect of the Beings is designated as Maha Deva.

Shiva Tatwa: Maha Muni Shailadi explained Shiva Tatwa as of contradictions: Maha Deva is Sat and Asat or the Truth or Make Belief; Vyakta and Avyakta or The Discernible and The Unknown; Kshara and Akshara or The Pralaya and The Indestructible; Shanta and Ugra or The Ever Peaceful Bliss and The Most Indignant; Samashti and Vyashti or the Group or the Society and Individual / Unique; Kshetra and Kshetra Swarupa or the Being -full of the Twenty Four Tatwas mentioned in the previous pages-and the Supreme Being; Vidya and Avidya or The Jnaana / Knowledge and the Ignorance or Fallacy and Para and Apara or the Distinguished and That Beyond Distinction. Maha Deva is Prajna-Tejas and Vishwa; The Three Avasthaas or States of Mind viz. Sushupti-Swapna and Jagriti and in fact the Fourth Awastha cvalled Tureeya or The Beyond; The Srishti-Sthiti and Samhaara; The Karta the Doer-Kriya or the Doing or Action and Kaarana or the Cause of Action; The Pramata or well thought out-Pramaana or testimony or proof-Prameya or Source of Knowledge and Pramiti or Knowledge itself. Shaildi mentioned in brief that Shiva was of endless Forms but the Basic Form is Himself just as the Mrittika was just the same but innumerable forms of pots were materialised therefrom alone!

Shiva's self explanation: Maha Muni Shailaadi informed Sanat Kumara that as Devas headed by Indra got perplexed about Shiva's identity, Maha Deva himself gave a Self Introduction as follows:

Abraveed Bhagavan Rudro hyahamekah Puratanah/

Aasam Prathama yevaaham vartaami cha Surottamaah/

Bhavishyaami cha Lokesminmatto Naanyah krurtaschana,

Vyatiriktam na mattosti naanyantkinchit Surotthamaah/

Nityonanthyohamana -gho Brahmaaham Brahmaspatih,

Dishascha vidishyaschaaham Praktischa pumaanaham/

Trishthub jagat anushthupcha Chhandoham Tanmayah Shivah,

Satyoham Sarvagah Shaantas –tretaagni Gauravah Gurh/

Gowraham gahvaraschaaham Nityam Gahana gocharah,

Jyeshthoham Sarva Tatwaanaam Varishthohamapaam Patih/

Aapoham Bhagavaaneeshas-tejoham Vedirapyaham,

Rigvedoham Yajurvedah Saamavedohamaatma bhuh/

Atharvanoham Mantroham tathaa chaangirasaam varah,

Itihaasa Puraanaani Kalpoham Kalpanaapyaham/

Aksharam cha Ksharam chaaham Kshaantih Shaantiraham Kshamaa,

Guhyoham Sarva Vedeshu Varenyohamajopyaham/

Jyotischaaham Tamaschaaham Brahma Vishnu Maheswarah,

Buddhischaamashamkaarastanmaatraa –neendriyaanicha/

Evam Sarvam cha Maameva Veda Surasattamah.

Sa yeva Sarvavitsarvey Sarvaatmaa Parameshwarah/

Gaam Gobhir Brahmanaan sarvaan Brahmanyena haveemshi cha,

Ayushayustathaa Satyam Satyena Surasattama/

Dharmam Dharmena Sarvaamscha tarpayaami swatejasaa,

Ityedou Bhagavaanyuktwaa tyatraivaantaradheeyata/

Naapashyanta tato Devam Rudram Paramakaaranam,

Ta Devaah Paramatmanam Rudram dhyaayanti Shankaram/

(Iam the Purana Purusha of the Present and future; I am the Nitya or the Everlasting and also the Transient; the Brahmadhipati; I am manifested in all Dishas and Vidishas; I am the Prakriti and the Purusha; I am present in all forms of Chhanda like Trishthub, Anushthub and Jagriti; I am the Tanmaya or Ecstatic Shiva; I am the Symbol of Truth and Peace; I am hidden in all the Vedas, Itihaasaas and Puranas; I am the Kalpa; the Akshara or the Everlasting and at the same time the Kshara or Transient; I am the Emblem of Kshama or endurance; I am the Jyoti Swarupa or the Embodiment of Illumination as well as of Andhakara or darkness; I am Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara; I am the Buddhi, the Ahamkara, the Tanmatra Rupa. I am every thing! Those who know about me do know every thing as Sarvajnas. I satisfy all Brahmanas; I satisfy the Truth from Truth, Dharma from Dharma and so on. As Maha Deva stated thus, Devas, along with Indra, Brahama and Vishnu raised their hands in awe and devotion.)

Mandala Puja: Dhyana, Guru Mukhyata, Diksha, Tatwa Shuddhi and Puja Vidhi

Shailadi Maha Muni detailed the method of Mandala Puja to Shiva as situated in the Surya Mandala to Sanka Kumara and this was narrated to Devas by Maha Deva himself. As per the Varnaashrama Vidhi, Mandala Puja could be performed by Brahmanas and Kshatriyas but not by Vaishyas and others. Women are also need not be engaged in the Mandala Puja. The Mandala Puja should be initiated by 'Bahyaantara Shuchi' or Physical cleanliness and purity from within. A person engaged in the Mandala Puja should first initiate the worship with Shiva Dhyana, concentrating on Surya Deva:

### Shiva Dhyana:

Ashta baahum Chaturvaktram Dwaadashaaksham Maha Bhujam,

Artha neereeshwaram Devam Jataamukuta dhaarinam/

Sarvaabharana samyuktam Raktamaalyaanulepanam,

Raktaambara dhram Srishthisthiti Samhaara kaarakam/

Nasya Purvamukham peetam prasannam Purushatmakam,

Aghoram Dakshinam vaktram Nilaanjanachayopamam/

Damshtra Karaalamanyugram Jwaalaamaalaa- masaavritam,

Rakta smashrum Jataayuktam chottarey Vidrumaprabham/

Prasannam Vaama Devaasyam Varadam Vishwarupinam,

Paschmam vadanam tasya Goksheera dhavalam Shubham/

Muktaaphalamayair haaraairbhushitam Tilakojjwalam,

Sadyojaata mukham Divyam Bhaskarasya smaraarinah/

Adityamagrato pashyan Purvavacchaturaaanam,

Bhakaram purato Devam Chaturvaktram ca Purvavat,

Ravimuttaratopashyan Puravacchatiraananam/

Vistaaram Mandaley Purvey Uttaraam Dakshiney sthitaam,

Bodhanim Paschimey bhaagey Mandalasya Prajaapateh/

Adhyaayanim Koubaryaakameka Vaktraam Chaturbhujaam,

Sarvaabharana sampannah Shaktayah Sarv sammitaah/

Brahmaanam dakshiney bhaagey Vishnum vaamey Janaaddanam,

Rukyajursaama maargena Murtitrayam Shivam/

Ishaamam Varadam Devameeshaanam Parameshwaram,

Brahmaasanastham Varadam Dharma Jnaanaasanopari/

Vairaagyaiswarya samyuktey Prabhutey Vimaley tathaa/

Saaram Sarveshwaram Devamaaraadhyam Paramam sukham/

Sita pankaja maddhyastham Deeptaadyairabhi samvrutam,

Deeptaam Deepa shikhaakaaraam Sukshmaam Vidyutprabhaam Shubhaam/

Jayaamagnishim Swaakaaraam Prabhaam Kanaka saprabhaam,

Vibhutim Vidruma prakhyaam Vimalaam Padsmasannibhaam/

Amoghaam Karnikaakaaraam Vidyutam Vishwa varnineem,

Chaturvaktraam Chaturvarnaam Deveem vai Sarvatomukheem/

Somamangaarakam Devam Budham Buddhivataam varam,

Brihaspatim Brihadbuddhim Bhargavam Tejasaam nidhim/

Mandam Manda gatim chaiva Sammataatasya tey sadaa,

Suryah Shivo Jagannaathaahy Somah Saakshaadumaa swayam/

Pancha Bhutaani seshaani tanmayam cha Charaacharam,

Drushtaiva Munayah Sarvey Devadeavamumaapatim/

Krutaanjavi putaah Sarvey Munayo Devataastathaa,

Astu vanvaagbhirishtaaribhir varadam Nilalohtam/

(Shiva Swarupa is described as possessing eight hands, four faces, twelve eyes; was Arthanaareshwara; wearing Jatajuta headgear, fully adorned, had rakta-mala; with chandana applied, wearing Blood red clothes; and famed as the Symbol of Srishti- Sthiti and Samhara. He is also described as facing Eastern Side in yellow colour; Southern side in blue colour as Aghora frightening with 'Karaala damshtra', 'Jwaala maala' or necklaces of flames and with dreadful moustaches and beard; He faces Northern side with a peaceful and radiant face; western side in milk-white complexion and of his fifth face called Sadyojata with Sun-like magnificence; in fact the Sadyojata Mukha is the most prominent. The accompanying Shaktis are Vistara in the Eastern side, Uttara in the Southern side, Bodha in the western side and Adhyaatani on the Northern side. Shiva faces Brahma in the Southern side, and on his left side he visions Janardana and Munis look at three of his sides the Ruk-Yajur-Sama Vedas. Shiva's Form is

viewed by Soma, Mangala, Budha, Brihaspati, Shukra and Shani. All these Devatas eulogise Shiva as well as Brahma and Vishnu. But the most vociferous among all these Stotras were rendered by Sapta Rishis as follows: Om Namah Shivaya Rudraaya Kadrudraaya prachetasey, Meedhushthaaya Sarvaaya Shipivishthaaya ramhasey/). The Rishis greeted Maha Deva as Shiva-Rudra-Meedyushtanga; the dynamic Shakti, Bhakara, Bhanu, Ravi, Divakara, Uma, Prabha, Pragna, Sandhya,Savitri, Vistaara, Bodhini; we commend that Paramatma who is always worshipped by Devas seeking youin Surya Mandala; you possess Sindura Varna and is elegantly ornamented by gold and jevellery; You are the Cause of Brahma and Narayana; You enjoy rides in Sun-Chariots and you possess and enjoy the ownerships of seven types of Ganas; Balakilya Ganas pray to you as per the changing Ritus or Seasons; Sages always praise you while performing havans on Agni with various kinds of offerings including tila; the Rishis prostrated further to Shiva and said: Namah Shivaaya Devaaya Ishwaraaya Kapardiney, Rudraaya Vishnavey tubhyam Brahmaney Surya murtaye! Suta Muni wound up the Shiva Stuti and confirmed as follows:

Yah Shivam Mandaley Devam sampujyaavam samaahita,

Pratarmaddhyaanney Pathet Satvaramanutthamam,

Ityam Shivena saayujyam labhatey naatra samshahyah/

Significance of Guru in the Mandala Puja: Having broadly known about the placements of Devas in the Chaturasra Mandala Puja of Maha Deva, the importance of Guru can not be over emphasised. In the olden days, the Term Guru signified a Shivaacharya who not only performed a number of Mandala Pujas himself but was also an adept in teaching the methodology and practice to others interested. A person seeking to perform Mandala Puja should thus locate an appropriate Guru with knowledge of Shruti-Smritis, who would be devoid of 'lobha' (greed), Ahamkara or ego and 'chapalata' or immaturity of mind, who could inculcate and sustain interest and patience of the Karta and who could guide and teach the Puja Vidhana without being overbearing. At the same time, the expectations of a Karta are perhaps more as his duties and responsibilities are more intensive. The Performer has to follow a stringent regimen of purity, abstinence, deep devotion and other-worldliness. He has to be basically tuned against Asatya, Ahimsa, Asteya, Ahamkara, and Arishad Vargas. He has to follow the Kuladharma of a Brahmana (or as applicable to a good Kshatriya) by observing Sandhyavandanas, Agni Karyas, fastings, sleeping on floor during the Puja days, Daanaas, Vratas and Tirtha Yatras and so on. In fact the major player in the Mandala Puja is the Karta while the Guru has an equal responsibility of the Kriya.

Diksha Vidhi: Suta Maha Muni then described to Sanat Kumara about the selection of the Mandala, placements of Deities and the general arrangements:

Pariksha Bhumim Vidhivad gandhavarna rasaadibhih,

Alankritya Vitaanaadgaurishwaraavaahana kshamaam/

(Test the soil area where the Mandala Puja is contemplated by way of its colour, smell and general acceptability, clean it up, put up a squarish Mandala, decorate it, instal Maha Deva in the Karnika of a petal of the Lotus and *Avahya karnikaayaam tu Shivam Paramakaaranam, Archyayetsarva yatnena yathaa vibhavavistaram*/ (perform Avahana / invocation and Puja). Later on make the placements on each of the petal-corners with the Siddha Shaktis:

Vaamaa jyeshthaayacha Roudri cha Kaali Vikaranee tathaa,

Balavikarani chaiya Bala Pramathani kramaat/

The Karta then has to do the 'nyaasa' or depositing the Siddhis like Vaama Deva, Jyeshtha, Roudri, Kaali, Vikarni, Maha Maya and so on. Deposit (Vinyasa) of Pranavaasya Shiva on the Eastren Lotus petal; Aghora akin to Neela Parvata on the Southern side; Vaama Deva like the Java Pushpa on the Northern side and Sadyojata Bhagavan who is white like Shudda Sphatika Mani and like Cow Milk should be placed in Agneya Vidisha. The 'nyasa' or alignment of the Deity with the Physical Part of the Karta is to be done as follows: Sadyojata-Hridayaaya namah; Nairuti-Shikhaaya namah; Vayavya-Kavachaaya namah and Agni-Shikha Saadrush Sarnaangyangyani namah. Then nyasa is performed to Sada Shiva, Rudra, Vishnu and Brahma; Dhyana to Shiva:

Shivaaya Rudra rupaaya Shantyatitaaya Shambhavey,

Shaantaaya Shantadyaityaaya Namaschandramasey tathaa/

Vedyaaya Vidyaadhaaraaya Vahnavey Vahni varchasey,

Kaalaaya cha pratishthaayai Tarakaayanta kaayacha

Nivrutthyai Dhana devaaya dhaarayai dharanaayacha/

Mantrairetair mahaabhuta Vigraham cha Sadaashivam/

Ishaana mukutam Devam Purushaasyam Puraatanam,

Aghora hridayam hrushtam twashtam Vaamaguhyam Maheswaram/

Sadya Murtim smaraddevam Sadasadvyakti kaaranam kaaramm,

Pancha Vaktram dashabhujamashta trimshat Kalaalayam/

Sadyamashta prakaarena prabhidya cha kalaamayam,

Vaamam trayodashaar -vidhour vibhidya vitatam Prabhum/

Aghoramashtaadhaa krutwaa Kaala rupena Samsthitam,

Purusham cha chaturdhaavai vibhajyacha Kalaamayam/

Ishaanam Panchadhaa krutwa Panchamurtyaa vyavasthitam,

Hamsa Hamseti mantrena Shiva bhaktyaa samanvitam/

Omkaaram, aatramomkaara makaaram Sama rupinam,

AA-YEE-VUU-YE tatha Ambaanu- kramenaatma Rupinam/

Pradhaana sahitam Devam Pralayotpatti Varjitam,

Anoraneeyaamsa –majam Mahatopi Mahattamam/

Urthwaretasameeshaanam Virupaaksham umaapatim,

Sahasrashirasam Devam Sahasraaksham Sanaatanam/

Sahasrasta charanam naadaantam naadavigraham,

Sadyojaata sadyashaakaaram Chandra rekhaakriti Prabhum/

Vidyudvalaya samkaasham Vidyudkoti samaprabham,

Shyaamam raktam Kalaakaaram Shaktitrayakrutaasanam/

Sadaashivam Smaraddevam Tatwatraya samanvitam,

Vidyaamurtimayam Devam pujayeccha yathaa kramaat/

(Bhagavan Shiva is Rudra Rupa, Shanti Rupa, Vidya Sarupa, Vidhyaa dhaarana Swarupa, Agni samaana Teja, Tarakasura vinaashakara, Ishana Deva, Maheswara,Sadya Murti, Sthula Sukshma karana, Pancha Mukha, Dasha Bhuja dhaari; possessor of thirty eight Kalaas; Ambika Swarupa through the Letters Aa, E,Vu Ye and the tiniest and the most colossal. He is also the Possessor of thousand heads, thousand feet, thousand hands, as also the Chandra rekhadhara; he is of the Form of Crores of vidyut rekhaas or lightnings; he is of brown-red Form; the Possessor of Three Shaktis and Three Tatwaas: may I meditate to Him!). After Dhyana as above, Naivedya be served to Maha Deva, of which half is offered as Homa in Agni. The Karta should then consume Pancha Gavya made of Cow's milk, curd, urine, ghee and dung in equal proportions; he should apply homa bhasma while reciting Vama Deva Mantra and perform Japa of Rudra Gayatri viz. *Om taturushaaya vidhmahey Maha Devaaya Dheemahei, Tanno Rudrah Prachodayaat*/ After the Japa, Pancha Kalashaas (Vessels) dressed with two new vastraas (Clothes) with 'Sutras' or cotton strings around them be given away to Pancha Brahmanas for sthapana or installation and by them cooked rice and ghee be offered to Agni as homa. Some Brahmanas be made to sit on 'darbhas' / kusha grass towards the Southern side of the Mandala for performing hundred and eight 'Ahutis' or offerings to Agni by reciting Aghora Mantra:

Aghorebhyo thatraghorebhyo ghora ghoratarebhyaha,

Sarvebhya-ssarva Sarvebhyo namastey astu Rudra rupebhyah/

These Brahmanas are required to observe 'Upavaasa' or fasting wearing new vastraas and headgears with closed eyes after three parikramas of the Mandala by reciting Rudraadhyaaya or Pranava. These Brahmanas are also required to perform Pushpa Puja to Maha Deva with Mantras and after the conducted Pradakshina are required to enter the Mandala in such a manner that the see the Mandala after oening their eyes. They are made to be seated on Kushaasana and after purifying themselves with Achamana then take up Pratishtha or installation of Dakshina Murti Shiva by executing Anga Nyasa and Havan. The Havan has to be done 108 times along with the recitation of Ishaana Mantra viz.

Ishaanam Sarva Vidyaanaam Ishwarassarva bhutaanaam Brahmaadhipatih Brahmanodhipatih Brahmaa Shivomey astu Sadaa Shivom/

After the havan, the Karta should fill up Tirtha Jala in vessels made of gold, silver or copper and sprinkle as a gesture of purification; the Guru should administer an oath in favour of Shiva and take up Diksha. The Oath at the Diksha Ceremony would be comprehensive and rigorous requiring that the Kartas including the designated Brahmanas should observe fast till Trikaala Pujas, Archanas including Havans, as per the number of Kalaas out of the Shodasha Kalaas as possible and rest of the prescribed 'Vidhis' or the do's and don'ts. The Diksha states:

Varam Paanaparityaagashcchedanam shirasopivaa,

Na twanabhyarchya Bhumjeeyaadbhagavantyam Sadaa Shivam!

(Even 'Praana parityaaga' would be preferred if the prescribed Archana to Sadaa Shiva is not executed)!

Shiva Mandala Puja as prescribed: Shailada Maha Muni quoted to Sanatkumara of what Maha Deva Himself conveyed to Nandi Deva about the formal Archana to him:

Shiva snaanam puraa krutwaa Tatva Shiddhim cha purvakrit,

Pushpa hastam pravishyaaya Pujaa sthaanam samaahitah/

Praanaayaa mantrayam krutwaa aahanaa plaavaanaani cha,

Gandhaadi vaasitaaro Maha Mudraam prainyaset/

(Known as Shiva hasta, the Karthas are to clasp their hands with Chandana and Pushpas and perform Kara Nyasa by concentrating on Maha Deva and purify their Atma Shuddhi or inner conscience, then attempt Pancha Bhuta Shuddi of Prithivya-aapas- tejo- vaayur-aakaashas followed by 'Saakshaatkaara' or the Vision of Shiva's Pancha Vaktras of Five Faces as follows:

Pancha Vaktram Dasha Bhujam Sarvaabharana bhushitam,

Prati Vaktram Trinetram cha, Shashaanka kruta Shekharam/

Baddha Padmaasanaseenam Shuddha sphatika sannibham,

*Urthwam Vaktram sitam dhyaayetpurvam kumkuma sannibham/* 

Neelaabham Dakshinam Vaktramatiraktam Tatottharam.

Goksheera dhavalam Divyam Paschimaam Parameshthinah/

Shulam Parashu khandam cha Vajram Shaktim cha Dakshiney,

Vaamey Paraamakusham Ghantaam Naagam naaraachamuttamam/

Varadaabhaya hastam vaa sesham Purvavaa Deva tu,

Sarvaabharana samyutam chitraambhara dharam Shivam/

Brahmaanaga vigraham Devam Sarva Devotthamottamam,

Pujayatetsarvabhaavena Brahmaangrair brahmanahpatim/

(The above is the description of the Five Faces of Shiva).

Uktaani Pancha Brahmaani Shivaangaani shrunvamey,

Shakti bhutaanicha tathaa Hrudayaadeeni Suvrata/

Om Ishaanah Sarva Vidyaanaam Hridayaaya Shakti beejaaya namah,

Om Ishwarah Sarva Bhutaanaamamrutaaya shirasey namah/

Om Brahmaadhi pataye Kaalaagni Rupaaya Shikhaayai namah,

Om Brahmanodhi pataye Kaala chanda maarutaaya Kavachaaya namah/

Om Brahmaney Bramhanaaya Jnaana Murtaye Netraaya namah,

Om Shivaaya Sadaa Shivaaya Paashupataastraaya Apratihataaya Phat Phat/

Om Sadyojaataaya bhavey bhavey naati bhavey bhavasyamaam bhavodbhavaaya Shiva Mutrtaye namah, Om Hamsa shikhaaya Vidyaa dehaaya Atmaswarupaaya Paraaparaaya Shivaaya Shivatamaaya namah/

(The above is the description of Maha Deva's Hridaya, Shiras, Shikha, Kavachaas, Netraas, Pashupataastra, and the totality of Shiva.)

Tatwa Shuddhi: Then the Navaakshara Mantra is recited:

Om Bhuh Om Bhuvah Om Swaha OmMahah Om Janah Om Tapah Om Satyam Om Rutam Om Brahma.

The Mula Mantra is recited:

Om Bhurbhuvaha Swah Tatsaviturvarenyam Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi Dhiyoyonah Prachodayat/

Surya Deva is invoked as

Namah Suryaaya Khakolkaaya namah.

Subsequently, Invocations to Devas are recited:

Om Bhuvah Brahmaney Hridayaaya namah;

Om Bhuvah Vishnavey Shirasey namah;

*Om Swah Rudraaya Shikhaayai namah;* 

Om Bhurbhuvah swah Jwaalaamaalinyai Devaya namah;

Om Mahah Maheshwaraya Kavachaaya namah;

Om Janah Shivaaya netrey bhyo namah;

Om Tapastaapanaaya Astraaya namah/

With the relevant Mantras, Tatwa Shuddi, Atma Shuddhi, Brahma Nyasa to Pancha Mukha are all attempted. By reciting Rudra Gayatri, all the Puja materials are purified including Dravya Shuddhi, and of Gandha-Pushpa-Patra-Jala-Ksheera-Narikela-Phala-Dhupa-Deepa-Vastras . Shiva Murtha should not be left free and all kinds of Puja Dravyas are aranged on the Shiva Mastaka at least by Bhasma in the process of Puja and thereafter lest there should be hindrances of achieving Dharma-Artha-Kama-Mokshas; nor there should be Durbhiksas, Akaalaas, Bhukampanas, battles against enemies and diseases. After Shiva Linga Snaana, clean up the Linga with fresh Vastra; and offer Shodasopachaaraas of Gandha-Pushpa-Deepa-Dhupa-Naivedya-and Alankara with Chandana and Bhasma by reciting the relevant Mantras. Mula Mantra Japa is an essential component and one tenth of the Japa has to be by way of Havan. Brahmanga Japa, Atma Nivedana Stutis, Guru Puja, Vedaadhyaayana, vividha daanaas, and final Ganesha Puja would be the integral part of the Puja. Performance of Puja on the above lines to Shiva Linga for a year would bestow Shiva Sayujya and before the termination of life assure Arogya, Sampatti, Keerti, Putra-Poutras, and Samasta Kaamana Phala.

Shiva Linga Pratishta Vidhi and Mahatmya

Maha Muni Suta enlightened the congregation of Munis at Naimishaaranya about the Shiva Linga Pratishta Vidhaana as follows: In order to fulfil the aspirations of Dharma-Artha-Kaama-Moksha Siddhi, Linga Pratishtha be performed as had been done by Vishnu, Brahma, Indra downwards.

Krutyeva Lingam Vidhaana Bhuvi Lingeshu yatnatah,

Lingamekatamam shailam Brahma Vishnu Shivaatmakam/

Hemaratnamayam vaapi Raajatam Taamrajam tu vaa,

Savedikam Susutram chasamyagvistruta mastakam/

Vishodhya sthaapayedbhaktya Savedikamanuttamam,

Linga Devi Uma Devi Lingam Saakshaanmaheswarah /

Tayoh sapujanaa Deva Devascha Pujitou,

Pratishthayaa cha Devesho Devyaa saardham prtishthitah/

Muley Brahmaa vasati Bhagavan Madhya bhaagey cha

Vishnuh Sarveshaanah Pashupati rajo Rudramurthirvarenyah,

Tasmaalingam Gurutatataram Pujatsthaapayedhaa

yasmaad pujyo Ganapatirasau Deva Mukhyaih samastaih/

Gandhaih snugdhupa deepaih snapanahuta balistotrra

mantropahaaraih nityam yebhyarchayaanti tridasha vastunam Linga murtey Mahesham/

Tasmaat Bhaktopchaarena Staapayet Parameshwaram,

Pujayeccha visheshena Lingam Sarvaartha siddhayai/

( Normally, Shivatmika Lingaas are installed in stone although these are also set in gold, silver, copper etc and the installation of the Linga has to be executed along with Vedi or the Platform as also the Sutra. The Vedi of the Shiva Linga is Uma Devi herself and the Linga is Maheswara himself; thus the Linga ought to be installed along with the Vedi. The Shiva Linga's bottom is signified as Brahma and the middle part is signified as Vishnu and the top portion is Maheswara himself. This is why the high significance of the Rudra Swarupa Pashupati. By installing the Linga thus, regular pujaas should be performed most sincerely along with Gandha, Dhupa, Deepa, Snaana, Havana, Bali, Stotra, Mantra and Upahaara. Nitya Puja is a must and this would ensure freedom from 'Punarjanma' or rebirth, Shiva Loka Prapti and worship-worthiness of Deva-Gandharva-Siddha and Shiva ganaas.) After covering the Linga with 'Kusha' and 'Vastra', the Linga Pratishtha has to be consummated with perfection. 'Abhisheka' by sacred waters pre-deposited in 'Kalashaas' / Vessels by reciting Rudra Mantras has to be performed, followed by Chandana / Bhasma Lepana- Dhupa-Deepa- Naivedya and other 'Upachaaraas' are to be offered for five days, or three days or at least one day and night along with Vedaadhyayanaas, as also Nritya-Vaadana- Taala-Veena and Stutis should be rendered with enthusiasm and devotion. On the Vedi, the Karta has to arrange 'Nava Kundaas' or nine Kundas or Five Kundaas or at least one, turn the head to the East and perform 'nyaasa', recite Shiva Gayatri viz. *Tatpurushaaya vidmahey Maha Devaaya dhimahi* tanno Rudrah prachodayaat/ Or Pancha Vaktraayaaya Vidmahey Sahasraakshaaya Mahadeyaaya Dhimahi Tanno Rudrah Prachodayaat or atleast by Pranavanaada of AUM and continue the process of Pratishtha. Brahma Jijnaana Mantrena Brahma bhaagam prabhostathaa, Vishnu Gayatriya bhaagam Vaishnavam twattha vinyaset/Sutrey tatwatrayopetey pranavena pravinyaset, Sarvam Namah Shivaayeti Namo Hamsah Shivaaya cha/ (The Brahma Jijnaasa Mantra should be recited to sanctify the Brahma Bhaaga of the Shiva Linga while Vishnu Gayatri viz, Om Namo Narayanaaya Vidmahi Vaasudevaaya dhimahi, Tanno Vishnuh prachodayaat/ should be recited to sanctify the Vishnu Bhaga of the Shiva Linga; the demarcating Sutras or the Holy Threads should be arranged by reciting the Pranava Mantra; Om Namo Hamsa Shivaaya cha is recited (or Rudraadhyaaya is) while nyasa is performed to Shiva/ On all the four sides, kalashaas be arranged. In the middle Kumbha (Pot) Shive be installed; in the Southern direction Devi be installed; in between the Shiva and Devi kumbhas the idol of Skanda be installed; in the Skandha Kumbha Brahma be installed too and in the Shiva kumbha Hari be installed. From the Shiva Kumbha, nyasa be performed to 'Brahmangaas' comprising Shiva, Maheshwara, Rudra, Vishnu and Brahma.Gold, silver and Ratnas be deposited in all the Kumbhas each of which should be decorated by new Vastras. By reciting Gayatri Mantra, abhishekas be performed to Shiva Linga from the Sacred water of the Shiva Kumbhas. Dakshinaas be given generously; danaas of clothes, food grain fields, houses, cows, jewellery and cash. Havans, Balidaanaas, and Abhishekas be observed for nine or seven or three days or at least for one full day be performed in the 'Utsava' or the Festival. This Sacred Task of Linga Pratishtha would have lasting benefits to the Kartas, and all the personnel involved with Aayuraarogya Ishwarya Kirti in 'Iham' or the ongoing life and Shivaloka prapti in 'Param'. '

### Varied Swarupas of Gayatri

The various Swarupas of Gayatri as created by Maha Deva and the related Mantras are:: Tatpurushaaya vidmahey Vaagshuddhaaya Dhimahi tannah Shivah Prachodayaat Ganaambikaayai vidmahey Karma saadhyaih cha dhimahi, Tanno Gauri Prachodayaat/ Tatpurushaaya vidmahey Maha Devaaya Dhimahi, Tanno Rudrah prachodayaat/ Tatpurushaaya vidmahey Vakratundaaya Dhimahi, Tanno Dantih prachodayaat/ Maha Senaaya vidmahey Vaagvishuddhaaya dhimahi, Tannah Skandah prachodayaat/ Tikshna shringaaya vidmahey Veda paadaaya dhimahi, Tanno Vrishah prachodayaat/ Harivaktraaya vidmahey Rudravaktraaya dhimahi, Tanno Nandee prachodayaat/ Naraayanaaya vidmahey Vaasudevaaya dhimahi, Tanno Vishnuh prachodayaat/ Mahaambikaayai vidmahey karma siddhaaih dhimahi, Tanno Lakshmi prachodayaat/ Samruddhaayai vidmahey Vishnunaikena dhimahi, Tanno Dharaa prachodayaay/ Vainateyaaya vidmahey Suvarna pakshaaya dhimahi, Tanno Garudah prachodayaat/ Padmodbhavaaya vidmahey Veda Vaktraaya dhimahi, Tannah Srashta prachodayaat/ Shivaasya jaayai vidmahey Deva rupaayai dhimahi, Tanno Vaachaa prachodayaat/ Devaraajaaya vidmahey vajrahastaaya dhimahi, Tannah Shakrahy prachodayaat/ Rudra netraaya vidmahey Shaktihastaaya dhimahi, Tanno Vahnih prachodayaat/ Vaivaswataaya vidmahey Dandahastaaya dhimahi, Tanno Yamah prachodayaat/ Nishaacharaaya vidmahey Khadga hastaaya dhimahi, Tanno Nirrutih prachodayaat/ Shuddhahastaaya vidmahey Paasha hastaaya dhimahi, Tanno Varunah prachodayaat/ Sarva Praanaaya vidmaheyYashti hastaaya dhimahi,Tanno Vaayuh prachodayaat/ Yaksheswaraaya vidmahey Gadaa hastaaya dhimahi, Tanno Yakshah prachodayaat/ Sarveshwaraaya vidmahey Shula hastaaya dhimahi, Tanno Rudrah prachodayaat/ Katyaayanaaya vidmahey Kanya kumaaryai dhimahi, Tanno Durgaa prachodayaat/

Yevam Prabhidya Gayatrim Tattaddevaanu rupatah, Pujayet staapayetteshaamaasana

pranavam smritam/ Athavaa Vishnumatulam suktena Purushena vaa, Vishnum chaiva Maha Vishnum sadaa Vishnumanukramaat sthaapayeyddeva Gayatraya parikalpya vidhaanatah/

(In case Vishnu or Vsihu's Amsha Devas are to be installed then such idols be erected by reciting the Mantra viz. Om namo Naraayanaaya namah; or alternatively with the recitation of

Om Namo Vaasudavaaya namah Sankarshanaaya cha

Pradyumnaaya Pradhaanaaya Aniduddhaaya vai namah/)

Phala Shruti/

(Bhagavan Brahma affirmed that whoever reads or hears or gets it read from beginning till the end would attain Parama Gati; the fruits of performing Tapas, Yagna, Daana and Vedaadhyana would indeed be available by this Sacred Linga Purana; it should bestow Akshaya Vidya, Keerti and Vamsha Vriddhi.

Shiva Sahasra Naamaavali (Annexure)

Om Sthirah Staanuh Prabhurbhaanuh ParayaromVarado Varah/

Sarvatmaa Sarva Vikhyaatah Sarvah Sarvakaro bhavah,

Jati Dandi Shikhandi cha Sarvagah Sarva Bhavanah/

Harischa Harinaakshascha Sarva Bhuta harah Smrutah,

Pravrutthischa Nivruttischa Shantaatmaa Shaswato Dhruvah/

Shmashaana vaasi Bhagavankhacharo gocharordanah,

Abhivaadyo Maha Karmaa Tapasvi Bhuta dhaaranah/

Unmatthaeshah prachhinnah Sarva lokah Prajapatih,

Maharupo Maha Kaayah Sarva Rupoh Mahaayashaah/

Mahatmaa Sarva bhutascha Virupo Vaamano Narah,

Lokapaalontarhitaatmaa prasaadobhayado Vibhuh/

Pavitrascha Mahaams -chaiva niyato niyataashrayah,

Swayambhuh Sarva karmaacha Aadiraadikaro nidhih/

Sahasraaksho Visaalaakshah Somo Nakshatra saadhakah,

Chandrah Suryah Shanih Ketuh graho Grahapatirmatah/ Rajaa Rajyodayah Kartaa Mriga baanaarpanoghanah, Maha Tapaa davirtapaa Adrushyo Dhana Saadhakah/ Samvatrah kruto Mantrah Praanaayaamah Param Tapah, Yogi Yogo Mahaabeejo Mahaaretaa Maha Balah/ Suvarna retaah Sarvajnah Subeejo Vrisha Vahanh, Dasha baahustwa nimisho Nila Kantha Umaapatih/ VishwarupahSwayam sreshtho Bala Veero Balaagranih, Gana kartaa Ganapatir digvaasaah kaamy yevacha/ Mantra vipat Paramo Mantrah Sarva bhava karo harah, Kamandala dharo Dhanvi Baana hastah Kapaalavaan/ Shari Shataghni Khadgi cha pattishihaayudhi Mahan, Ajascha Mriga Rupascha Tejastejaskaro Vidhih/ Ushnishi cha suvakrascha Udgano vinastatha, Dirghacha Harikeshascha Suteerthah Krishna yevacha/ Shrugaala rupam Sarvaartho Mundah Sarva Shubhankarah, Simha shardula swarupascha gandhamkaari Kapardipi/ Urthwaretorva lingicha Urthwa shaali nabhastalah, Trijati cheera vaasaas cha Rudrah Senapatirvibhuh/ Ahoraatramcha naktam cha tigmanyuh Suvarchasah, Gajahaa Daityahaa Kaalo Loka dhaataa Gunaakarah/ Simha shardula rupaanaamardra charmeembara dharah, Kalayogi Mahaanaadah Sarvavaschatushpathah/ Nishaacharah pretachaari Sarva Darshi Maheswarah,

Bahu bhuto bahu dhanah Sarvasaaromriteshwarah/

Nitya priyo Nitya nrityo nartanah Sarva saadhakah,

Sarvaarmuko Mahaabahur Mahaghoro Mahatapaah/

Mahashiro Mahapaasho Nityo Giricharo matah,

Sahasra hasto Vijayo Vyavasaayohyaninditah/

Amarshano Marshanaatmaa Yanjahaa Kaama naashanah,

Dakshahaa parichaari cha prahaso Madhya mastathaa/

Tejopahaari Balavaanviditobhydito bahuh,

Gambhira ghosho Gambiro Gambhira bala vaahanah,

Nyagrotharupo Nyagrotho Vishva karmaacha Vishwa bhuk/

Teekshnopaayascha Haryaswah SahaayahKarma kaalavit,

Vishnuh Prasaadito yagnah Samudro badavaamukhah/

Hutaashana sahaayascha Prashaantaatmaa Hutaashanah,

Ugra tejaa Mahaa Tejaa Jayo Vijaya kaalavit/

Jyotishaamayanam siddhih Sandhirvigraha yevacha,

Khadgi Shankhi jati jwaali khacharo dyucharo Bali/

Vaishnavi Panavi Kaalah Kaala kanthah katam katah/

Nakshatra vigraho bhaavo nibhavah swatomukhh/

Vimochanastu sharano Hiranya kavachobhavah, Mekhyala -

akruti rupascha Jalaacharaha stutastathaa/

Veenicha panavi taali naali kalikutastatha,

Sarva turyaaninaadi cha Sarva vyaapya parigrahah/

Vyala rupi bilaavaasi gruhaavaasi tarangavit,

Vrikshah Shri maala karmaa cha Sarva bandha vimochanah/

Bandhanastu Surendraanaam yudhi Shatru vinaashanah,

Sakhaa pravaaso durvaapah sarva shadhu nishevitah/

Praskandopya vibhaavascha tulyo yagna vibhaagavit,

Sarva vaasah Sarva chaari Durvaasaa Vaasavomatah/

Haimo Hemakaro yagnah Sarva dhaari Dharottamah,

Aakaasho nirvirupascha vivaasaa Uragah khagah/

Bhikshuscha Bhikshu rupi cha Roudra rupah Surupavaan,

Vasuretaah Suvarchasvi VasuvegoMaha bakah/

Mano Vego nischaacharah Sarvaloka shubha pradah,

Sarvaavaasi trayi vaasi Upadeshakaro dharah/

Muniratma Munirlokaha sabhaagyascha Devascha Vaama Devascha Vaamanah/

Siddhi yogaapahaari cha Siddhah Sarvaartha saadhakah,

Akshunnah Kshunna rupascha Vrishano Mruduravyayah/

Maha Seno Vishaakhascha Shashthi bhogo gavaam patih,

Chakra hastaastu Vishthambhi Mulastambhana yevacha/

Ruthur Rutukarastaalo Madhur madhukaro varah,

Vaanaspatyo Vaajasano nityamaashraya pujitah/

Brahmachaari Loka chaari Sarva chaari suchaaravit,

Ishaana Ishwarah Kaalo nischaachari-hyanekadruk/

Nimitthastho nimittham cha Nandirnandikaro Harah,

Nandeswarah Sunandi cha Nandano Vishamardanah/

Bhagahaari niyantaa cha Kaalo Loka Pitaamahah,

Chaturmukho Maha Lingaschaaru Lingastathaiva cha/

Lingaadhyakshah Suraadhyaksha Kaalaadhyaksho yugaavahah,

Beejaadhyaksho yugaavahah,

Beejaadhyaksho Beeja kartaa Adhyaatmaanugato Balah/

ItihaasaschaKalpaschaDamano Jagadeswarah,

Dambho Dambhakaro Daataa Vamsho Vamshakarah Kalih/

Loka Kartaa Pashupatir Maha Kartaa hyadhokshajah,

Aksharam Paramam Brahma balavaancchukra eva cha/

Nityohyaneeshah Shuddhaatmaa Shuddho maano Gatirhavih,

Praasaatastu Balo Darpo Darpino Havya Indrajit/

Veda kaarah Sutra kaaro Viddhjaamscha Paramardanah,

Maha megha nivaasi cha Maha ghoro Vashee karah/

Agnijwaalo Mahajwaalah Pari dhumaavruto Ravih,

Dhishanah Shankaro Nityo Varchaswi Dhumra lochanah/

Nilatathaanga luptashcha Shobhano Naravigrahah,

Swasti Swasti swabhaavas cha Bhogi Bhoga karo laghuh/

Utsangascha Mahaangascha Mahaa Garbhah Prataapavaan,

Krishna Varnah Suvarnascha Indryaha Sarva Vaarnikah/

Mahaapaado Maha hasto Maha Kaayo Mahaashayah,

Maha murdhaa Maha maatro Maha Mitro Nagaalayah/

Maha Skandho Mahaa karno Mahoshthascha Mahaahanuh,

Mahaanaaso Mahaakantho Mahaagreevah Smashaanavaan/

Mahabalo Mahaatejaa hyantaraatmaa Mrigaalayah,

Lambitoshthascha Nishthascha Maha Maayah Payonidhih/

Mahaa Daanto Mahaa Damshtro Mahaa jihvo Mahaa Mukhah,

Mahaa Nakho Mahaa romaa Mahaa Kosho Mahaa Jatah/

Asapatnah prasaadascha pratyayo Geeta saadhakah, Prasvedano swahenascha Aadikascha Maha Munih/ Vrishako Vrishaketuscha Analo Vayuvahanah, Mandali Meru vaasascha Deva vaahana eva cha/ Atharva seershah Saamaasya Ruksahasrorjitekeshanah, Yajuh Paada bhujo Guhyaha Prakaashaujaastayaivacha/ Amovaarya prasaadascha Antarbhaavyah Sudarshanah, Upahaarah Priyah Sarvah Kanakah Kaanchana sthitah/ Naabhirnandikaro harmyah Pushkarah Sthapatih sthitah, Sarva Shaastro Dhanaschaadyo Yagno Yajwaa Samaahitah/ Nago Neelah Kavih Kaalo Makarah Kaala pujitah, Sagano Ganakaarascha Bhuta bhaavana saarathih/ Bhasma shaayi Bhasma goptaa Bhasma bhuta tanurgunah, Aagamascha Vilopascha Mahatmaa Sarva pujitah/ Shuklah Stree rupa sampannah Shuchirbhuta nishevitah, Aashramathah Kapotastho Vishvakarmaa Patir Viraat/ Vishaala shaakhastaamroshtho hyum UjaalahSunischitah, Kapilkah Kalashah Shtula Aayudhaschaiva Romashah/ Gandhravo hyaditistaaksharyo hyavijneyah Sushaaradah/ Parshva – dhaayodho Devo hyartha kaari Subaandhavah/ Tumbu Veeno Mahaa kopa Urthwa retaa Jaleshayah, Ugro Vamsha karo Vamsho Vamsha vaadi hyaninditah/ Sarvaanga rupi Mayavi Suhrudohyaanilobalah, Bandhano Bandha Kartaa cha Subandhana Vimochanah/

Raakshasaghnotha Kaamaarir Mahaa dumshtro Mahaayudhah,

Lambito Lambitoshthascha Lambahasto Varapradah/

Baahustwa ninditah Sarvah Shankarothaapyakopanah,

Amaresho Mahaa Dheero Vishwa Devah Suraarihaa/

Ahirbudhnyo nikrutischa chekitaano halee tathaa,

Ajaikapaccha Kaapaali sham Kumaro Maha Girih/

Dhanvantarir Dhumaketuh Suryo Vaishravanastathaa,

Dhaataa Vishnuscha Shakrascha Mitratwashtaa dharo Dhruvah/

Prabhaasah Parvato Vaayuryamaa Savitaa Ravih,

Dhrutischaiva Vidhaata cha Mandhaata Bhutabhavanah/

Neerasteerthascha bheemaschaSarva Karmaa Gunodyuhah,

Padmagarbho Mahaa garbhaschandra vaktro Nabhonaghah/

Balavaanschopa shaantascha Puraanah Punya kruttamah,

Krura kartaa Kruravaasi Tanuraatmaa Mahoushadhah/

Sarvaashayah Sarvachaari Praaneshah Praaninaampatih/

Deva Devah Sukhotsiktah Sadasatsarva ratnavit/

Kailaasastho Guhaavaasi Himvadgiri samshrayah,

Kulahaari Kulaakartaa Bahuvitto Bahuprajah/

Praanesho Bandhaki Vriksho Nakulaschaadrikastathaa,

Hraswagreevo Mahaajanuralomlascha Mahoushadhih/

Siddhantakmaari Siddhaarthascchando Vyaakaranodbhavah,

Simha naadah Simhadrashtaha Simhaasyah Simhavaahanah/

Prabhaavaatmaa Jagatkaalah Kaalah Kampi Tarustanuh,

Saarango Bhuta Chakraankah Ketumaali Subodhakah/

Bhutaalay Bhutaatiraho- raatro Malobhalah,

Vasubhrut Sarva Bhutaatmaa Nischalah Suvidhurbhudhah/

Asuhrutsarva Bhutaanam Nischakaschala vidbhudah,

Amoghah Samyamo Drushto Bhojanah Praana dhaaranah/

Dhrutimaanmatimaanstryakshah sukrutastu yudhaam patih,

Gopaalo Gopati graamo Gocharma vasano harah/

Hiranya baashuscha tathaa Guhaa vaasah praveshanah,

Mahaamanaa Mahjaakaamo Chitta Kaamo Jitendriyah/

Gangaadharascha Suraapascha Taapa karma rato hitah,

Mahaa Bhuto Bhutavrato hyaapsaro Gana Sevitah/

Mahaaketur dharaadhaata naikataanaratah swarah,

Avedaniya Aavedyah Sarvagascha Sukhaavahah/

Taaranascharano Dhaataa Paridhaa Pari Pujitaha,

Samyogo Vardhano Vruddho Ganikoya Ganaadhipah/

Nityo Dhaataa Sahaayascha Devasurapatih,

Yuktascha Yukta baahuscha Sudevopi Suparvanah,

AashaadhaschaSushaadhascha Skandhado Harito Harah,

Vapuraavarta maanaanyo Vapuh Sreshtho Mahaa Vapuh/

Shiro Vimarshanah Sarva Lakshya Lakshana Bhushitah,

Akshayo Ratha geetascha Sdarva Bhogi Mahjaabalah/

Saamnaayotha Mahaamnaayas Tirtha Devo Maha Yashaah,

Nirjeevo Jeevano Mantrah Subhago Bahu Karkashaha/

Ratnabhutotha Ratnaango Mahaarnava Niopaatavit,

Mulam Vishaalo hyamrutam Vyaktaavyaktastaponidhih/

Aarohanodhirohascha Shiladhaari Maha Tapaah,

Mahaa Kantho Maha Yogi Yugo Yugakaro Harih/

Yugarupo Maharupo Vahyano Gahano Nagah,

Nyaayo Nirvaapanopaadah Pandito hyachalopamah/

Bahumaalo Mahaa Maalah Shipivishthah Sulochanah,

Santaano Bahulo Baahuh sakalah Sarvapaavanah/

Karasthali Kapaalicha Urthwa samhanano yuaa,

Yatra TantraSuvikhyaato Lokah Sarvaashrayo Mriduh/

Mundo Virupo Vikruto Dandi Kundi Vikurvanah,

Vaaryakshah Kakubho Vajree Deepta Tejaah Sahasrapaat/

Sahasra murthaa Devendrah Dsarva Deva mayo Guruh,

Sdahasra baahuh Sarvaangah Sharanyah Sarva Loka krut/

Pavitram Trimathur Mantrah Kanishthah Krishna Pilgalah,

Brahma danda vinirmaataa Shataghnah Shata paasha dhruk/

Kalaa Kaashthaa Lavo Maatraa Muhurtohah Khapaa Khsanah,

Vishwa kshetra prado beejam Lingamaadyastu Nirmukhah/

Sadasadvyaktamavyaktam Pitaa Maataa Pitaamahah,

Swarga dwaaram Moksha dwaaram PrajaadwaaramnTrivishthapah/

Nirvaanam Hridayaschaiva Brahma lokah Paraa gatih,

Devaasura vinirmaataa Devaasura paraayanah/

Devaasura Gururdevo Devaasura Namaskrutah,

Devaasura Mahaa Maatro Devaasura Ganaashrayah/

Devaasura ganaadhyaksho Devaasura gana granih,

Devaadhi Devo Devashi Devaasura Varapradah/

Devaasureshwaro Vishnur devaasura Maheshwarah.

Sarva Devamayochintyo Devaatmaa Swayambhavah/

Udagatastrikamo Vaidyo Varadovarajovarah,

Ijyo Hasti thaa Vyaaghro Deva Simho Maharshabhah/

Vibudhaagrya Surah Sheshthah Sarva Devastathottamah,

Samyuktah Shobhano Vaktaa Aashaanaam Prabhavoyvayah/

Guruhn Kaanto Nijah Sargah Pavitrah Sarva vaahanah,

Shringi Shringa Priyo Babhru rajaraajo niraamayah/

Abiraamah Susharano Niraamah Sarva saadhanah,

Lalaataaksho Vishwa Devo Harino Brahma varchasah/

Sthaavaranaam Patischaiva Nmiyatondriya vartanah,

Siddhaardhah Sarva Bhutaathom—achintyah Satyaha Shuchivratah/

Vrataadhipah Param Brahma muktaanaam Paramaa gatih,

Vimukto Muktakeshascha Shrimaamcchivardano Jagat/

Yathyaa pradhaanam Bhagavaaniti Bhaktya Stutomayaa,

Bhaktimevam Purusktritya mayaa Yajnaparirrvibhuh/

Tatojanujnaam praapyevam stuto Bhaktimataam gatih,

Tasmaallabdhwaa stavam Shambornrupa strailokya visrutah,

Ashvamedha Sahasram cha Phalampraapya Mahaa Yashaah,

Ganaadhipatyam Sampraaptastandinastejasaa Prabho!

Yah Patheycchrunuyaadaapi shraavayed braahmaanaanipa,

Ahwamedha Sahasrasya phalam praapnoti vai Dwijaah/

Brahmaghnascha Suraapascha steyeecha Guru talpagah,

Sharanaagata ghaati cha Mitra Vishwaasa ghaatakah/

Samvatsaram kramaajjaptwaa Trisandhyam Shankaraashramey/
Devamisthaa Tri Sandhyam cha Sara Paapai pramuchyatey/
[Brahma Putra Tandi who rendered Shiva Sahasranaama attained Ganapatya Status and he also enabled his disciple King Tridhanva of Manu clan to perform thousand Ashwamedha Yagnas and the latter too secured Ganapatya Status.]

Maatruha Pitruha chaiva Veerahaa Bhrunahaa tathaa,

#### ESSENCE OF MARKANDEYA PURANA

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#### **Essence of Markandeya Purana**

Om Ganeshaya namah, Om Namo Bhagavatey Vasudevaya Yad yogibhir bhava bhayaarthi vinasha yogya maasadya vanditamativa vivikthachittaih / Tadvah punatu Haripada saroja yugmaavih bhavatkram vilanghita bhur bhuvah suvah. (Let the lotus feet of Narayana purify those who deserve to overcome fear and distress of their lives and those Yogis and Sanyasins who are immersed in the devotion of the Lord whose manifestation occupies all the three worlds of Bhu Loka, Bhuvar Loka and Suvar Loka as a 'Vamana' or a Pigmy).

### Markandeya refers Sage Jaimini's doubts to Holy Birds

Once Sage Jaimini, the disciple of Veda Vyasa, asked Markandeya about the significance of the great Epic Maha Bharatha, which related to the four kinds of 'Purusharthas' (human aspirations) viz. Dharma (Virtue), Artha (Wealth), Kama (desire) and Moksha (Salvation) as inter-linked, whereas these concepts appeared distinct otherwise. He enquired as to why the Supreme Force that created, preserved and also destroyed the Universe, took to a human form as Vasudeva; why did Devi Draupadi become the co-wife of Five of Pandavas; why did the illustrious Balarama atone the sin of 'Brahmahatya' (killing of a Brahmana) during his pilgrimage; and under which peculiar circumstances did the sons of Draupadi die! To these doubts of Sage Jaimini, Markandeya replied that he was busy with his Rituals and as such the Sage might better contact Four Sacred Birds, viz. Pingaksha, Subodha, Suputra and Sumukha, the sons of Brahmana Drona, who were experts in Vedas and Scriptures; these birds residing in a cave on Vindhya moutains would be able to clear all the possible doubts related to Mahabharata. Sage Jaimini wondered whether the birds were capable of clearing the doubts and asked Markandeya for confirmation whether he heard the reply properly.

### Muni Durvasa's curse to Apsara leads to the birth of Holy Birds

In confirmation, Markandeya narrated a strange incident that happpened in the past involving Indra, Narada and celestial damsels at Nandanavana in Heavens. Indra wished to know as to how best Narada would like to be entertained; would it be either by the sweet songs of Gandharvas or by the dances of the heavenly Apsaras. Narada wished for a dance recital by a particular Apsara since he said that she was superior to others. This led to a controversy among the damsels and a competition followed. Narada said that who ever could attract Durvasa Muni who was meditating on a nearby hill would be the winner. One of the Apsaras called Vapu resorted to loud singing and dance which disturbed Durvasa Muni; he cursed the Apsara to become a bird for sixteen years in a row of births, that she should not give birth to a baby and that after the period of the curse should die by a weapon before getting her original form.

Markandeya continued to narrate a related Story that there were two brothers in the lineage of the avian King Garuda, called Kank and Kandhar. Kank visited Kailasa Mountain and found a demon Vidyudrup enjoying privacy with his wife Madanika. The demon objected to the presence of the bird and killed it. This infuriated the brother Kandhar and killed the demon in turn. Madanika desired that Kandhar should become his wife; she could change her form as a bird since she was an Apsara herself being the daughter

of Menaka. Bird Madanika was born as Vapu in her next birth due to the curse of Durvasa. Kandhar named her as Taarkshi who was married to Drona, the son of a Brahmana named Mandapal. She was pregnant at the time of the Great Battle of Mahabharata and accidentally flew when Arjuna and an opponent King of Kauravas called Bhagdath were engaged in fighting. Bhagdath's arrow tore Taarkshi's adomen and four eggs fell on the ground; at the same time, a big bell of Bhagdath's elephant too fell and proteced the eggs. After the Battle was over, a Sage Shami visited the battle field along with his disciples and noticed the big bell; when lifted came out four chicks without wings. The Sage was taken aback and exclaimed to the disciples that apparently these chicks were not ordinary ones, got them carried to his hermitage and fostered them. The Birds grew big enough in the hermitage under the care of the Muni and learnt Vedas and various Scriptures which the Muni taught to the students. One day, the Muni and others were surprised when the birds suddenly conversed as human beings; they said that they learnt what all was taught to the students, that they would consider him as their Guru and sought a direction to proceed further in their lives ahead. The Guru was surprised and wondered as to how the birds could learn, talk with clarity and think far better than ordinary humans! The Birds replied that they were the sons of a Muni named Vipulaswan and their names were Sukrish and Tumbaru. When their father was engaged in performing one Yagna, Indra appeared in disguise as an old bird and asked for human flesh as its food. The Muni desired the sons to oblige but they refused and the father cursed them to become as Birds. Just as the Muni was about to sacrifice himself, Indra appeared and conveyed that he was testing them all. The sons sought pardon but it was too late for the Muni to withdraw the curse, although he softened it that even as birds the sons would acquire knowledge of Vedas and Scriptures as also clarity of speech as the best of humans could. Guru Shami gave permission to the Birds to migrate to Vindhyas and propagate Dharma.

### Jaimini's doubts on 'Mahabharata' clarified by the Holy Birds

Sage Jaimini's first doubt was that while Paramatma happened to be the Cause of Causes and the root of Creation, Preservation and Destruction, why He took a human form as an ordinary person subject to birth, death and such other qualities in Maha Bharata as well as in other incarnations! The Birds replied as follows: Namaskruthya Sureshaya Vishnavey Prabhavishnavey, Purushaayaprameyaaya Shasvathaavyayay cha/ Chaturvyuhaatmaney Thasmai Trigunaayaagunaaya cha, Varishtha garishtaaya Varenyaamrithaya cha/ Yasmaadanutaram naasti yasmaannasti bruhattaram, yena vishvamidam Vyaptamajena Jagadaadina/ aavirbhavathirobhaava drushtaadrushta vilakshanam Vadanthi Yashpashtamidam tathaivaanthey cha samstitham/ (Our salutations to Suresha, Vishnu, Prabhavishnu, the All-pervading, the Most Potent, the Supreme Soul, the Eternal and Endless, the 'Chaturvyuhaatmaka', the Unimaginable, the Triguna with three features of Satva, Rajas and Tamas, as also the Nirguna or devoid of Features; the Senior Most, the Choicest, the Indestructible, the Concept of the Tiniest and the Collossal, the Creator and Destroyer, the Seen and Unseen, the Totality yet the Finality). The Birds stated further that the Foremost Form of the Supreme is 'Naara' or Water and 'Ayan' or the Abode- thus 'Narayan' was of 'Vyaktaavyakta' Form or the Definable in a Murthi Form legible only to Yogis and yet Undefinable with no Form or Shape. The Second Form is of the Dweller of Patala Loka viz. the Sesha or 'Sankarshana' who bears on His Head the entire Prithvi or the Earth and is essentially of 'Tamasic' Feature. The Third Form is of 'Satvic' Nature represented by Lord 'Pradyumna' who is the Originator and Creator of the Universe. The Fourth 'Swarup' is of Lord 'Anirudha' of Rajasic Guna who sustains the Universe and administers Dharma (Virtue) and ensures that the Evil in the World is destroyed; the Birds thus explained to the Sage Jaimini in reference to his query: Yada Yadahi dharmasya Glanirbhavati

Jaiminey, Abhuthhaanamadharmasya thadaatmaanam Srujasthyasow/Bhutva pura Varaahena thundenaapo nirasyacha, Ekaya damshtrotkhataa Nalineeva Vasumdhara/ Krutva Nrisimha rupancha Hiranyakashipu hatah, Viprachitthi Mukhaswaanye danava vinipaatitah/ Vamanadeem stathivaananyanna samkhyaatu- mihotsah, Avataraamscha tasyeha Maathuraha Sampratamtwayam/ (Hey Jaiminey! As and when Dharma is distressed and Adharma is encouraged, Paramatma takes a Form and creates the Self as an Incarnation; the Supreme Self assumed the Form of a Varaha (Boar) rescued Prithvi from sinking depths of water by its single tusk as though a lotus is gently plucked and retained in her original position; the same Vishnu assumed the Form of Nrisimha (Man-Lion) and exterminated the Demon Hiranyakasipu; He killed Viprachitti and other Danavas in a similar fashion; He also took the Incarnation of Vamanadeva and such other Forms as and when the needs demanded; in the instant case during the time of 'Mahabharata', the Lord took the Form of Shri Krishna; indeed Pradyumana Murthi creates Himself in whatever Form that He deems fit either as a human being or in any other Incarnation.

#### Why did Draupadi marry all the five Pandava brothers?

Apprehending the severe penance of Trishira, the son of powerful Brahmana Twashta, Indra suspected danger of his own position and thus killed Trishira. Twashta went into a rage and plucked a strand of hair from his head and offered it in the homa kunda (Fire Pit) by his mantrik power and created the mighty Vritrasura whose mission was to kill Indra, who had already lost his sheen since he committed a Brahmana. Indra deputed the Sapta Rishis to strike a deal with Vritra so that he would not put Indra to immediate danger; but Vritra was killed unawares by Indra. These actions angered the community of Rakshasas resulting in continuous warfare against Devas and Prithvi felt great burden of the atrocities by the demons. Prithvi appealed to Indra and the Deities who in turn took the forms of Pandavas: Yadindradeham cha Tejasthanmumocha Swayam Vrishah, Kunthyamjaatho Mahatejaastatho Raja Yudhishtarah/ Balam mumocha Pavanastatho Bhimo vyajaayat, Shakraveeryardhatas chaiva jajney Paarthom Dhananjayah/ Utpanno Yamalou Maadriyam Shaka Rupou Mahadyuti, Panchadhaa Bhagavannityamavateernah Shatukratuh/Tasyotpanna Mahabhaaga Patni KrishnaHutaashanat, Shakrasyaikasya sa Patni Krishna naanyascha kasyachit/ Yogeeswaraah shareeraani Kuryati bahulaanyapi, Panchaanaameka Patnitwamityetatkathitham tava/ (Dharmaraja himself from the body of Indra deposited his virility into Kunti from which was created Yudhishtara. The Deity of Wind viz. Pavan deposited Indra's radiance into Kunti as a result of which Bhima was born. Indra gave away half of his 'Shakti' to Kunti and Dhananjaya was thus born. Indra's virility was transferred through the two Ashwani Kumars to Devi Maadri and was born the pair of Nakul and Sahadeva. Indra's 'Amshas' (alternatives) were manifested among all the five Pandava brothers clearly. Moreover, Indra's wife Shachi Devi as Yagnaseni was created from 'Agni' and hence Draupadi was Indra's own better half. Yogeswar Purush Indra could divide his own radiance into as many parts as per his volition. Hence, it was amply justified that Draupadi was indeed the common wife of the five Pandavas as asserted by the Holy Birds to Sage Jaimini in response to the Sage's doubt.

Why did Balarama atone for the sin of 'Brahmahatya' during his pilgrimage?

Balarama, the elder brother of Shri Krishna, remained neutral during the Great Battle of Mahabharata between Pandavas and Kauravas. Instead, he along with his wife Revathi proceeded on pilgrimage for twelve years. In the course of the travel, he took 'toddy', a kind of intoxicant drink, and entered a charming garden called 'Raivat' full of fruits, flowers and chirping birds along with his beloved wife and the entire atmosphere was quite alluring. They spotted a hermitage where several Brahmanas gathered to hear Sage Suta's preachings; the Brahmanas stood up and greeted the Balarama couple excepting the Sage Suta.Balarama felt slighted and killed the Sage in his intoxication but eventually realised his folly after recovering his normacly thus becoming a victim of the sin of 'Brahmahatya'. The assembly of Brahmanas was dispersed in disgust at the tragedy. For twelve years, Balarama observed fast during the pilgrimage and atoned for the sin at the Holy Spot of Puloma Saraswati to pay further penance.

#### Why were the defenceless sons of Draupadi killed in sleep?

In his reply, the Holy Birds narrated the strange happenings of a famous Ruler of the Yore. The most virtuous and ideal King Harischandra was an outstanding Ruler of the Satya Yuga when Dharma, Truth and Honesty were at the peak; he treated his subjects as his own children who in turn reciprocated his fatherly love totally. During his time, none feared of illness, untimely death and unfulfilled desires of life; even Deities being fully convinced of his high qualities and merit cooperated in ensuring that his Kingdom was peaceful and unparalelled. Once, King Harischandra went to a nearby forest for hunting, when he heard loud shrieks of women saying 'help us, help us'. The King wondered that in his Kingdom, there were such pitiful screams and hence shouted back to say that he

was approaching the direction from where the crying squeals emerged. Actually, the shouts were the illusions created by the Vighnaraja Vinayaka. Harischandra knew that Sage Viswamitra was performing severe penance in that very forest. With a view to test the King, the Lord of Hindrances Gajaanana entered Harischandra's body that was in search of the illusory shrieking women and faced Viswamitra whose penance was disturbed. The Sage grew angry at the King but the illusion created by Vighnaraja in the King's body made the latter argue with the Sage in harsh words. After realising his folly, soon after Vighnaraja exited his body, the King apologised to the Sage profusely and offered all kinds of help for a Yagna that the Sage was to perform soon. The Sage told the King that presuming whatever assistance that the King would provide for the Yagna, he would also have to offer 'dakshina' (Fees) to the Sage. Harischandra thus entered into the Sage's trap; Viswamitra said: Rajanpratigruheethoyam yastey datthah, Prayaccha Prathamam thavathdakshinaam Rajasuyakeem (Raja! Let us presume that whatever you would have liked to give me, might have been given away to me, but how about the Dakshina to me for performing the Rajasuya Yagna?). Harischandra replied: Brahmam-Staamapi dasyami dakshinaam bavathohyamam, vriyatam Dwijashardula yastaveshtah Pratigruham/ (Hey Brahman! I shall nodoubt provide dakshina too as you desire). The reply from Viswamitra was indeed unsavoury as he said: Sasaagaram dharaametam Sabhubhrudgramapathanaam Rajyamchasakalam Veera rathaaswagajamsakalam Koshtaagaaramcha koshamcha yacchhanyadwidyatey tava/ binaa bharya cha putram chashariramcha tavaanagha/ Dharmam cha Sarva Dharmanjna yoganthamunigacchati, bahunaava kimuktena sarvametatpradeeyataam (Hey Vira! These entire Seas, Bhumi, Townships, villages, mountains, chariots, horses, elephants etc.; Koshtaagaar (Interior Courts, Treasury and all the rest would belong to me, excepting your wife, son and your-self as they would belong to you as per Dharma Sastras; why all this, you have to give me each and everything else!) Vishwamitra then asked Harischandra to confirm as to who was the King; if so the latter should immediately leave the place devoid of ornaments,

Royal Insignia and even the dress that he and his wife Shaibya and son Rohitasya wore and be better dressed by tree barks and leaves! While they were getting ready to leave the Place, Viswamitra stopped them and asked Harischandra about the dakshina that he had to give to the Sage for performing the Rajasuya Yagna; the former King replied that since he had nothing else with him, he would have to wait to pay the dakshina; Viswamitra asked for the time frame to pay the dakshina and insisted that till then, he and his wife and child would be his slaves and even resorted to maltreated him, his wife and son. It was at this miserable moment that the Five Lokapalas (Deities of the Five Directions) were annoyed and expressed their resentment to the Sage, but the latter gave a curse to them that they would be born as human beings; the Lokapalas were frightened and entreated Viswamitra to withdraw his curse. The Sage then softened the curse that they would not get entangled with their worldly affairs, that they would remain as bachelors and aviod 'Samsara' and that they would get killed without much prolongation of life. It was at that curse of Viswamitra that Draupadi's five sons were born and murdered by Aswatthama, the son of Dronacharya; thus explained the Holy Birds to the Sage Jaimini in reply to his query in the context of Maha Bharata.

## King Harischandra, an exceptional example of Dharma (Virtue) and Satya (Truth)

Sage Jaimini expressed gratitude to the Holy Birds who provided excellent clarifications to his queries in a lucid and convincing manner, but became curious as to know further the sequence of Events that climaxed King Harischandra's further destiny. As Viswamitra ordered Harischandra to leave his Kingdom, the latter reached Varanasi, the Sacred Place of Parama Siva. Viswamitra reached there too and reminded about the dues of Dakshina since a month passed meanwhile. Harischandra's wife offered that she could be sold off to pay for the Dakshina. The King fainted at her proposal and she fainted too. But since the Sage gave an ultimatum to pay off at least a part payment by that evening, the couple decided that she was sold in an open market place as a slave of any taker. A Brahmana came forward to buy her and some amount was paid to Viswamitra, but the young son Rohit did not leave his mother and she begged the Brahmana, who already started insulting and even beating her in the presence of her husband and the Public, finally agreed to allow the son to stay along with her in his home. A few days later, Viswamitra appeared in the form of 'Kaal' (Mrityu/ the Deity of Death) and demanded that atleast another instalment of the payment due to him at once; Harischandra had no other option to sell himself to a Chandala, even while reminiscing his past stature and the absence of his virtuous wife and the dear son. The Chandala gave him the duty of holding a stick to burn off dead bodies and be loval to the Master and carry out his meanest errands The Great Harischandra finally got rid of Viswamitra even if he had to perform the most wretched and heinous duties; he lost his identity and carried on with past memories which also faded away with the passage of time and led a mechanical and handful existence. One fateful day, a woman arrived at the burial ground with a dead body of her son, stated to have been dead as a result of a snake bite. The crying woman recognised the person with his stick with which he was used to burn off dead bodies for years now, and even as he had a dishvelled and ugly hair and beard, with depressed cheeks and hollow eyes. The former Queen Shaibya, the wife of King Harischandra was herself half clad and hardly identifiable, with her dead son on her lap; she had tired eyes after incessant cries and was looking completely exhausted and hysteric. A man called Harischandra- a non-entity-vaguely felt he saw her somewhere! At last, he recognised her and their dead son and hugged her and the son's body, arranged the dead son on a huge pyre and was about to consign to flames. His wife decided to immolate herself but Harischandra felt that he was not free even to do so without his Master's permission. Finally he decided to join his wife's immolation even if he were to go to hell and the couple performed their last

prayers to Almighty. Just at that nick of time several Deities headed by Dharma made their appearance; they included Sadhyaganas, Vishvadeva, Marutganas, Lokapalas, Nagamani, Siddhaganas, Gandharvas, Rudraganas, the two Ashvani Kumaras, Sage Viswamitra and Lord Indra too. The dead Rohit was revived and presented himself in a Prince's attire Harischandra and his wife were blessed and were invited to reach Heaven but the King hesitated as he did not secure his Master's permission; Dharmaraja declared that he himself was the Chandala and approved of the Royal Couple to fly by the Pushpak Vimana to Swarga. Lord Indra stated that all the Deities were extremely happy with the Values of Dharma, Sacrifice, Dedication and Truthfulness that were amply demonstrated \_by the King, his wife and their son and as such the three were fully entitled to Swarga. Indra sprinkled 'Apamrutyu vinaashaka Amrit'/ the Ambrosia that negated death on the Pyre where the dead body of Rahul was kept and the various Deities showered fresh fragrant flowers and Indra personally invited the Threesome to Swarga; .but Harischandra hesitated and said that the Citizens of Ayodhya were highly anguished at our misfortune and hence the King and family alone could not depart to Swaraga committing betrayal; the sins of Brahmahatya, Guruhatya, Gohatya, Streehatya are as deplorable as Bhaktahatya; therefore Bhagavan Indra! Kindly return to Swarga, since the pleasure of visiting that Place would not accord as much happiness of our reaching Swarga as our staying in this 'Bhu Naraka' along with our Bhaktas! Thus our resolve is to stay back with our own well-wishers ony. Lord Indra was taken aback by the decision of Harischandra and did concur with his proposal as an unusual and exceptional occurrence! Sage Sukracharya commended the example of Harischandra and stated as follows: Harischandrasamo Raja na bhuto na Bhavishyati! The Daityacharya Sukra also confirmed that those who heard or read Raja Harischandra's Story of sacrifices and dedication, with devotion and sincerity would achieve the fruits of digesting the gist of Vedas, Puranas and Mantras; those who read or hear the same at Pushkar, Prayag, Sindhusagar, Devalayas (Temples), Kasi and Kurukshetra; or performing Japas /Meditation during Eclipse Periods. Further, 'Daan' (charity) of foodgrains, clothes, gold, cows etc.to those who read and explain the details of the Story would fulfill their desires like begetting ideal progeny, securing idyllic life-partner, prosperity and good health.

### Rivalry of Vasishtha and Viswamitra and their mutual curses to become birds

After emerging from his penance under water for twelve long years, the Guru of the King Harischandra, Sage Vasishtha, came to learn that Viswamitra tormented the King and his family to such unendurable limits as taking away their Kingdom, freedom of existence, and near extinction of their lives. It was due the enduring capacity of the King that even Deities like Indra, Dharma and Dikpalakaas complemented him and his family as felt by Vaishtha. Quite incensed by the deplorable acts of Viswamithra, he gave a Curse saying: Tasmadduraatma Brahmadvida yajvinaamavatopakah macchhapahato moodhaha sa bakatvamavaapsyati (Due to this reason, that evil-minded stupid who is a hater of Brahmanas and who seeks to spoil Yagnas being performed by them be cursed to become a stork!). But Viswamitra came to know of the curse and gave a return curse to Vasishtha to say: Twamaadi bhavasvet (You become a Partridge!). By virtue of their mutual curses, both the Sages turned out to be birds and kept on quarrelling with each other screeching and shrieking and becoming a nuisance in the surroundings. Lord Brahma himself, as accompannied by Deities sought to bring about truce to the fighting Baka (Stork) and Aaadi (Partridge) but to no effect. Finally, Lord Brahma over-ruled the mutual curses of the Sages and restored their original forms. Vasishtha and Viswamitra felt ashamed of them; Brahma explaned to Vasishtha that the extreme actions taken by Sage Viswamitra against Harischandra and family were only to put them to test but not out of spite or jealousy; even Dharma Raja was an actor in the drama that was initiated by

Maha Ganapati Himself! Harischandra and family as also the great illustrious Well-wisher Subjects of Ayodhya were amply rewarded at the end thus explained Lord Brahma.

#### Evolution and Values of Human Life from birth to death and mystery thereafter?

About the Evolution of human life from birth to death and the mystery thereafter Sage Jaimini requested the Holy Birds to delineate the process of Human Creation, its development in the womb by forbearing the difficulties inside it, its entry into the World, its Growth, its consciousness and Death, the Mystery that shrouded the Existence of Post-Life and of the cycle of rebirth that was normally believed in! Normally, the various kinds of food consumed ought to get digested in the belly's 'Jatharaagni'or the Digestive Fire; but how was it that an egg is formed instead of being digested away and grew as a foetus! How was it that after entry into the world the child after gradually gaining consciousness commenced performing various actions of good and bad nature through- out one's life!

These were the secret mysteries of human life that the Sage desired the Holy Birds to reveal. In reply, the Birds narrated the Story of Sumati, the son of a Brahmana called Mahamati, who grew up gradually and attained boyhood worthy of entering the phase of 'Vidyardhi dasa' or of Studentship. As the boy who did not appear smart enough to his father, the latter advised him that Sumati should take tutelage of a Guru, learn Vedas, become worldly-wise, gain experience in life, earn his own lively hood, get married, beget children, enjoy family life, then retire to 'Vanaprastha' Ashram to attain 'Brahma Gyan' and so on. Sumati smiled and replied to his father that whatever was being advised to him was already experienced during several of his previous births including the past experiences of some thousand years, that he learnt many Shastras like even Shilpa Shastra, that he had witnessed innumerable joys and sorrows of existences, had many parents, wives, children and relationships; that he underwent the tortures of births and deaths along with various diseases, was born as Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Shudras; as animals, birds, and insignificant flies; as Kings, Servants, and poverty-sricken low class humans; as women and men; as kind and merciful beings and also as cruel, mean and timid; and so on! The Father asked the son as to how he had the knowledge of all the previous 'Janmas 'with such long, peculiar and chequered past, and Sumati replied that he had the gift of a 'Jatismara' or he who has the extraordinary power of past memories of a series of lives ranging from a Superior Sage and Yogi to a non-descript species of Lord's Creation! In the previous birth, Sumati was a Brahmana who practised the difficult art of 'Atma Vidya' or aligning the self with Paramatma with great ernestness and was blessed by unusual memory power; that capacity coupled with 'Abhyas' (constant application), 'Satsamyog' (Union with Truth), 'Vichar' (Introspection), and 'Vidhi Shodhan' (Dedication to Dutifulness) gave him the Title of 'Acharya'. Even after death, the memory power was carried forward and made him a 'Jatismara' in retrospective effect and hence he knew the recollection of all his previous births! None could achieve the power of Jatismara in the normal way and having attained it, he would endeavour for Salvation. It was in this background, that Mahamati sought clarifications from his son Sumati on many doubts that were bothering him for long. Brief status of human beings at the time of death, after life and rebirth Sumati described the condition of one's physique at the time of death: Utkraanti kaalada-raabhya yatha naanyo vadishyati, Ushmaa prakupatih kaayo teevra vayusameeritah/ Bhinnaarti marma sthanaani deepyamaano nirindhanah, udaano nama pavanastatasya-urthvai pravartatey/ Bhuktaaanaamambu bhakshyaanamadho gati nirodhakrut, tatho Yenaambu naanaani krutaanna rasaatathaa, dattaah sa tasya aahvaadamaapadi prati-padyate/ Annaani yena dattaani shraddhaaputena chetasa, sopi triptimavaapnoti vinaapyannena vai tadaa/ yenaanrutaani preeti bhedah krutonacha, Aastikah shraddaa- nascha sa sukham Mrutyumrucchati/

(At the time of death, the position of human body would be such that 'Pitta' or bile becomes frothy and even without heat creates severe wind that breaks the functioning of the secret places of the body; a wind present in the body named 'Udaan' and creates obsruction to the movement of water / life force into the body parts thus resulting in death. Those who donate water / food liberally; or those who are truthful and God-fearing; or who do not get victimised by the vices of the world are only saved of the severe crisis at that critical time and pass away peacefully.) Those who respect Brahmanas and worship Devas, who speak without jealousy but softly and without hurting others, those who are modest and egoless; and those who could restrain desire, anger and hatred but follow Dharma (virtue) are blessed with 'Sukha Mrityu'. Further, those who give away kaashtha (wood) as 'Daan' (Charity) would not feel too cold at the time of death and provide 'Chandan'do not suffer from extreme heat. Contrarily, those who do not take care of the hungry or thirsty, who teach or train in wrong ways of life; that provide false evidences or curse Vedas and the Virtuous, would face Yama dootas right in their faces but their desperate shouts and cries are never heard! The 'Prani' (dying person) tends to roll the eye balls, the speech gets incoherent, sense of recognition gets blurred, and breathing goes unusually fast up and down, and finally leaves the mortal world. The Yamadootas bundle up the 'Jeevi' (the mini body) with heavy ropes towards the southern direction and drag 'it' forcibly over thorns, iron nails, sharp stones, fiery paths, scorching sands and boiling oil fields as horrifying sounds are heard and frightful visuals and images are witnessed all along the route. On the twelfth day, the Prani tends to secure some relief from the 'Tila Tarpan' (water with Tila seeds) and 'Pindas' made of cooked Rice / wheat flour as provided the 'Karta' (Performer) of the obsequies. Thereafter the Prani approaches the most appalling 'Yamapuri, where gets a glimpse of the dark coloured, most scaring, blood red eyed, and highly authoritive Yama Dharmaraja whose decisions are equitable, unbiased and irrevocable, taking account the detailed account of the pluses and minuses of the deeds of the Prani as recorded by the most accurate and unfailing Supreme Computer. Those Pranis who are 'Midyhavadis' (Protagonist of Falsity) and 'Midhya Saakshis' (Evidences of Falsity) or Killers of cows, Brahmanas, Parents, Well-wishers, Women, Close Ascociates; those who usurp land, commit rape, and such other serious offences are consigned to 'Raurava Naraka' which is two thousand yojanas far and wide 'Agni Kunda' (Fire Pit), where the entire treatment is by way of

roasting, burning, scorching and frying. After getting the due punishment, in Raurava or in any other Naraka., the Prani is reborn taking into the stock of Sin still retained as 'Sanchita' or carry forward and the kind of species as destined for the rebirth in any form ranging from a tree, waterbody, worm, bird, fly, animal, or a human being; among the human beings too, rebirth would take place as per the destiny decided by Lord Yamadharma Raja; the rebirth could be in any 'Varna' as a Brahmana, or a Kshatriya, or Vyasya or a Shudra; as a man or woman; in a rich, medium or poor financial standing; with mental capability or as a flop etc. There could t be infinite permutations or combinations of rebirth as per the decision of Dharmaraja grossly called as destiny.

### **Recyling of Further Human Life**

'Jatismara' Sumati described to his father Mahamati about the origin and evolution of human life: Nishekam Manava Sreenaam beejam proktam rajasyatha, vimukta maatro narakaastvargadwaapi prapadyathe/Tenaabhi bhuutamtatsthairyayaati beejadwayam Pitah, Kalalatvam budbudatvam thatah peshitvamevacha/ peshyaastathaa yatha beejaandakuraadi samudhbavah, angaanaam cha thathotpatthih panchanaamanu bhaagashah/ (At the time menses, a woman converts male sperm into her womb and both the seeds settle down while two eggs out of the circled liquid are created as'Ankurs' which gradually divide to take shapes as fingers, eyes, nose, face, ears etc.; further sub-divide as nails etc.and then grow skin, body hairs and head hair. In other words, just as a coconut is grown, a baby grows along with the

'garbhakosha'inside the abdomen and turns upside down with the baby's head turned down too. The baby's growth process would be completed within the nine month period before the delivery commecing the process of linking both the eggs. The growth process enabled by the food intake of the woman and its essence; Naadi chaapyayani naama naabhyaam tasyanibhadyathe, Streenaam Tathantrasushirye saa nibadyopajaayathey/ kramaanti bhuktapeetaani Streenaam Garbhodarey yatha, thairaapyaayati deho sow janthuvriddhimupaiti vai (A 'naadi' named 'Aapyaayani' in the feminine 'naabhi' carries the intake of food and drink and enables the growth of the foetus by satisfying it). The Praani resolves that after its entry into the world, it would never ever go through this torment of 'Garbha nivas' surrounded by blood, excreta and feces, but indeed that dreadful existence inside the abdomen is erased from its memory as soon as the baby enters the world with an unbearable nothingness which gradually enlivens with the touch of wind all around. Then 'Maya' or illusion covers up the Praani who has had sub-conscious feelings and sensitivities. The baby gradually gets used to the new life thus slowly but steadily entering the life's cycle of joys and sorrows till death overcomes the life again!

## Brief classification of Hells and their Experiences

Jatismara Sumati gave an account of various hells, causes of entry into these places and experiences there. As Rourava 'Naraka' was already referred to earlier, Sumati mentioned that Maha Rourava, entry into which was normal to those who followed patently ignoble ways of life, who consumed the nonconsumables, 'Mitra drohis' or Cheaters of Friends, unfaithful to Masters; who exploited wives of others, neglected their own wives, destroyed public gardens and water bodies etc. Yamadootas would consign such sinners to 'Agni golas' or Fire Globes with sizzling copper floors which would burn off their bare bodies tied in shackles and thrown in for long duration of time; they are also subjected to the piercings and bites of crows, owls, vultures and scorpions when they cry hoarse saying Maata, Pitaa and Deva in sheer helplessness. Nearby Maha Rourava is situated the Tamas Naraka which is pitch dark and icy cold; killers of cows, young boys and girls are despatched to this Place where forceful blasts of frosty winds penetrate into the body parts benumbing them and dropping limbs like hands, legs and fingers. As all the sinners of this Hell lose their limbs due to numbness they lick blood and eat the dropped the body parts due to thirst and hunger. Behind the Tamas naraka is the Naraka named Nikruntan, where sinners who illtreat and kill Gurus are an exclusive hell, where a potter-wheel revolves and cuts the body parts from head to foot of those sinners tied up around a wheel named 'Apratishtha' used for creating hurdles in performing the tasks of

Brahmanas; in fact sinners of this offence when committed in an extreme manner are taken to Chakrasankar Naraka, where a revolving wheel pierces the body skin to spill out blood and pull out eye sockets. Nearby this Naraka is situated the Asipatra naraka full of coniferous trees with needle like leaves, perforating body parts causing unbearable pain; ferocious hunting hounds chase the 'Pranis' from one tree to another by persecuting them in the runs; this specific hell specialises in the experience of injustices against 'Brahmacharies' or Students. Those who blame Dharma Shastras (Scriptures), Tirthas (Holy Rivers and Pilgrimage Places) and Women of Virtue are dispatched to Taptakumbh where the sinners are boiled oil in huge metal containers. Those who commit suicide or sacrifice others without justified reason are assigned to Lohakumbh Naraka whose brain, flesh, muscles and bones are torn apart and fried in huge vessels of boiling oil.

## Fruits of 'Paap' (Sin) and 'Punya' (Rewards of Virtue / Goodness)

Human beings experience the results of Good and Bad Deeds like sinners becoming 'Daridras' (poverty stricken) and vice versa. The dutiful, the faithful and charity minded would turn out to be happy, contented and opulent. 'As you sow, so you reap'. Rebirths take place as per the 'Karmas'; for instance, Brahmanas who accept charity from fallen persons become donkeys; who enable Yagnas to be performed by such fallen persons are re-born as mosquitoes; those who offend and shout at parents become asses or 'myina' birds; those men and women who insult a brother's wife become pigeons and those who harass her becomes a tortoise; a person who usurps the property of others is reborn as a worm; the persons who are jealous of others for whatever reason are reborn as demons; 'Viswasaghathis' or persons who are nontrust worthy are reborn as fishes; those who steal food grains, pulses, mustard, til (sesame) etc. become long-mouthed rat; those who sleep with other's wife turn out to be a wolf, and any person with illicit relationship with other women becomes a a dog, owl, kite, crow, cukkoo or a serpent. A generally oversexy person is born as a pig, while those who create difficulties in Yagnas, weddings or charities become flies. Those who scold or insult father-figures, elder brothers and senior persons are reborn as 'krouncha' birds. When Shudras and Brahmanas marry each other, they become insects in their rebirth and their progeny turn out to be flies, swines, or chandalas. The ungrateful and thankless are reborn as scorpions or kites or flies as per the degree of ingratitude; food stealers in their following birth become cats and thieves of grains, especially of main grains viz. rice and wheat, become mice; those who steal salt become water fowls, curd to flys, oil to oil, steel and metals to crows, glass to Haarit Pakshi, silver lifters become doves; gold thefts end up as worms; silk as chakoki birds; wool and cotton stealers become krauncha bird; 'Vastra' stealer a rabbit; he who harasses cattle becomes a trans-gender; flower-stealer becomes a 'daridra'; land thief is transferred to Rourava and takes various forms as grass, gulma, creeper, cat, tree and so on. This is how that till twenty-one births in Rourava Naraka the sinners keep changing their forms as Krumi, Keeta, Patang, Jalachar, Pakshi, Mriga and Chandala. Also, they get involved in different diseases based on face, eyes, ears, heart, liver, hands, legs and genitals. Those who embezzle gold, misuse Vidya, misappropriate the money of Guru, or transfer the wife of somebody to another person are all the misqualifications warranting them to become a 'Napumsaka' or an impotent. A person performing 'homa' without 'Agni' would suffer from indigestion; those who indulge in fault-finding with others, ingratitude, immoral curiosity about others' affairs, immodesty, shamelessnes, lust with other women, cheating the money of others, impurity, blaming and belittling Gods, deceipt and swindling in 'Deva Karyas' (holy tasks), resorting to violence or abetting violent deeds, and involvement of such other prohibited tasks are all qualified to visit Narakas. Kindness, noble association, noble activities aimed at the 'Paraloka', Truthfulness, espousing the right causes of mankind; worship to Guru, Devas, Rishis and

Siddharshis; Sadhu Sangam (Company of Sadhus), Practice of Good Actions, Mitrata or Friendship and constant 'Namasmarana' (recitation) of Bhagavan are all acts of magnificence worth emulation! Having given an account of the results of Sins as also the adverse effects by way of retribution, the Jatismara Son Sumati asked his faher to convert concentrate on holy tasks in the subsequent period of life by swicthing over from 'Grihasth Ashram' to 'Vanaprash Ashram' and earn as much 'Punya' (rewards) as possible and intensify the process of alignment of the Self with 'Paramatma' or the Stage of 'Nidwanda' (Non-Duality) or Unity and of 'Nishparigraha' or the negation of want or favour. This State of Bliss is possible only through Yoga and control of the Five Elements like Water, Fire, Air etc.

# Eligibility to achieve Salvation-Examples of Kaushiki and Anasuya as 'Pativratas'

Son Sumati explained to his father about the causation of the State of Bliss viz. Yoga which conquers 'Bhautika Padaardhaas' (physical material) /worldly shackles) so that there would be no involvement of the cycle of births and deaths. In this context, he cited the example of Dattatreya Deva. There was a Brahmana named Kaushika who was a leper by virtue of his fate but he had Kaushiki as the 'Pativrata' devoted to her husband. She would perform all physical services to the husband of cleaning, washing and all other ablutions to this extent of removing body rejects and the blood oozing from his wounds. The disabled husband was short tempered and nagging but she considered him as her Deva and worshipped him, fulfilling each and every desire of his. Once he longed for an attractive prostitute in bed as he saw her in the morning and insisted for her by the night. The wife searched for her all over with a view to beg her to sleep with him despite his contageous disease; she would try to locate her some how, offer her lot of money and also try to convince her in the name of mercy! The wife carried the husband on her shoulders at the night time but unfortunately due to darkness, she tripped on the road side and his legs hit a Sage Mandya in deep meditation. The angry Sage gave a curse that whosoever disturbed his meditation would die before the Sun rise by the next morning. Having heard the curse of the Sage, the 'Pativrata' made the return 'Pratigya' (challenging vow) that Sun would not appear on the Sky and the night would never be terminated. All the Devas were frightened at the Challenge of the Pativrata and wondered what would happen to the entire Universe in the absence of Swadhyaaya, Vashatkaara, Swadha and Swaahaa viz. Sun God, as a result of this unfortunate development! In the absence of days and nights, there would not be months and Seasons, no 'Ayanaas' (Uttarayana and Dakshinaayana), no count of Years, and no concept of 'Kaala Gyana' or of Time. If there were no Sun Rise, there would not be 'Snaanaas' nor daily Rituals, no Yagnas, no offerings to Devas through Agni (Fire), no crops to generate food due to drought and thus Universal Balance would be shaken up. Devas prayed to Brahma who advised them to approach the 'Maha Pativrata' Devi Anasuya, the wife of Sage Atri and daughter of Kardama Muni. Anasuva advised Kaushiki about the enormous loss to the World as a result of her Pratigna. Women have the unique task of performing service to husbands while men have other duties like Rituals and that she was proud of Kaushiki as a Pativrata. Even Gods descended to request her and that itself was a proof of her achievement. But the most essential task at that hour would be to facilitate Sun to rise and hence should withdraw her Pratigya. Finally Anasuya declared: Yatha Bhatru Samamna anyamaham pashyami Devatam, thena satyaena viproyam punarjeevatvanamah. (If I had never known any Deity as important as my husband, then the Brahmana Kaushik would be reborn afresh devoid of any disease!). Thanks to Anasuya's intervention, the crisis was averted and the Devas blessed her that Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara would be born with Rajasika Guna as Soma (Moon), Vishnu as Dattatreya with Satvika Guna and Siva as Durvasa with Tamasika Guna.

### Avadhuta Dattatreya as an Avatar of distinction

Considered as 'Dutta' or awarded by Trimurtis and born to Sage'Atreya' and Sati Anasuya, Dattatreya is a combined 'Avatar' (Incarnation). He was a mystic Saint Par Excellence called 'Avadhuta' or of the eccentric type. The word 'Ava' denotes 'bad materials' and 'dhuta' denotes 'washed away' thus meaning that he washed away all bad things. Such a Person is stated to be of Pure consciousness in human form. [Depicted as a Three headed Avatar, representing the Three Gods of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva; the Three

'Gunas' of Rajasik, Satvik and Tamasik nature; Three Stages of Concsiousness viz. waking, dreaming and dreamless Sleep; and the Thee Time Capsules of Past, Present and Future, Dattatreya is picturised as seated in meditation along with his Shakti, under a 'Udumbara' Tree of fulfillment of desires on a Rock- a Gyana Peetha, along with Four Dogs denoting the Four Vedas.He was considered as the Guru of 'Ashtanga Yoga' or the Eight-folded Yoga comprising Yama (Truthfulness and Morality), Niyama (Cleanliness and discipline), Asana (Right Posture), Pranayama (Control of Life Force), Pratyahara

(Withdrawal of Senses from Wordly objects and desires), Dharana (Concentration), Dhyana (Meditation) and Samadhi (Alignment of Super Consciousness with Almighty). The main Principles of 'Dattatreyafollowing' are Self-Reailisation and of God, Inter-relation of God-Man and Creation, Overcoming Ego by Yoga and Renonuciation, and Gyana or Enlightenment and the inavitability of a Guru.] Even from the childhood, Dattatreya was full of 'Vairagya' (Renunciation), but his followers and admirers were several. He always desired to have privacy, introspection and aloofness and shunned adulation, popularity and proximity. That was why he avoided company and preferred staying indoors. With a view to escape from the attention of Muni Kumars, he meditated on the banks of a Sarovar incognito in disguise for innumerable years. He was inside water practising 'Ahstanga Yoga' (Eight Limbed Yoga) and finally emerged with a facade of a being a drunkard, a debauch and a degraded person devoid of morals and social values. He displayed nudity with a youthful and coquettish woman, in obscene poses, while drinking and loose-mannered fashion. Despite these efforts of being corrupt, care-less and licentious, the followers of Dattatreya did not get deterred but made great efforts to get closer to him. As King Kartaveeryarjuna, the thousand armed tyrant who was a great devotee of Dattatreya was killed by Parasurama as the latter's father the great Sage Jamadagni's death was avenged, the Ministers and Royal Family members sought to install the Prince Arjun as the King, but he refused as Kingship would lead to violence, lack of mental peace and death. There upon, Sage Garg advised the reluctant Prince to visit Sahyadri Mountain where Mahatma Dattatreya stayed as he was the incarnation of Bhagavan Vishnu and the illustrious son of Sage Atri and Sadhvi Anasuya an outstanding Maha Pativrata. Sage Garg told Prince Arjun that Indra was badly defeated in a battle with 'Daityas' (Demons) and consulted Deva Guru Brihaspati who replied that Indra should immediately worship and seek an audience with Dattatreya. Indra approached the latter but he said that he was not in a fit condition as he was drunk in the amorous and unclean company of a woman. Being aware of the misleading statement of Dattatreya, Indra replied that just as the powerful and auspicious Sun rays did not become impure by touching either a chandala or a Brahmana, the holy union of Lakshmi and Vishnu could never ever be construed as unclean and unholy! Mahatma Dattatreya smiled since He was only testing Indra's sincerity. He then asked to challenge the most leading Daityas to a Battle in His presence at His Place; the Daityas assembled (into a trap) and asked to show up in the presence of Maha Lakshmi. The Daityas were mesmerised Devi Lakshmi's form and face and even forgetting that they were challenged to a fight, became extremely passionate and when she hinted that she would like to leave to her abode, pushed aside her servants and lifted the 'palki'on their heads. Dattatreya once again smiled and told Indra and Devas that for sure the Daityas would be defeated now as they kept Lakshmi on their head indicating that she would leave them all now. He explained:

Nrunaam paadasthita Lakshminilayam samprapachhyati, sakthnoscha samsthita vastram ratnam naanaavidham vasuh/ Ratnam naana-vidham vasuh/ kalatrada krodhasthapatya Manorathanpuurayati purushaanaam hrudisthithaa/ Lakshmirlakshmivataam sreshthaa kantastha kantha bhushanam, Abheeshta bandhu daaraischa tatha slesham pravaasibhih/Mrushtaannam Vaakya laavanya majnaamavitathaam tatha, Mukhastithaa kavitvam cha yacchhatyu-dadhi sambhavaa/ sirotata samtyajati tathonyam yaatichashrayam, seyam shirogata daityanaparisthitajaati saampratam/

(Devi Lakshmi when falls on the feet of human beings blesses them with happy homes, falls on either of the thighs bestows clothes and jewellery, on secret place blesses with life-partners, on the lap gives children, on the heart fulfills all the desires, on the neck gives ornaments on the necks, beloved distant relations and good company of women; if Lakshmi falls on the face of human beings she approves attraction and brightness of the visage, accomplishments and a literary outlook. But if Lakshmi falls on one's head, then she is ready to leave the person concerned.) Thus, Dattatreya advised Devas to take up arms and attack since his vision would further weaken the Demons; also, when the Demons have committed the sin of becoming highly passionate over another person's wife, their strength would get diluted. Devas attack over the Demons was readily successful and Indra regained his Throne in Swarga Loka. Sage Garg advised Prince Arjun, the son of Kartaveeryarjuna to pray to Dattatreya who gave the Prince considerable confidence and courage to face the institution of Kingship boldly.

### Dhruva-Kuvalaashva and Ashvatara - Examples of Devotion, Duty and Determination

Jyatismara Sumati narrated to his father the illustration of a King Shatrujit who pleased Indra at one Yagna and blessed him with a son named Ritudwaja who grew into an ideal Prince with valour, intelligence and capability. He used to play with a few Brahmana and Vaishya boys, apart from the Princes of other Kingdoms too. All of them very were fond of him. Among the boys two sons of Nagaraj King of Rasatala Ashvatara called Tarun and Priyadarshan used to join the Prince in disguise for play. In course of time the Prince and the Naga Boys became such thick friends that they used to play, bathe, sleep, eat and derive immense pleasure together; in short they admired him and considered him as a model human being. The Naga King Ashvathar realised that his sons were daily visiting Bhuloka and returning by the night but was convinced that they were on right track, imbibing all noble things of life and simultaneously learning from of their ideal friend Ritudwhaja. The Naga boys told their father that the Prince was inspired by the Story of Dhruva, son of a King Uttanapada of yore. The King had two wives Suniti and Suruchi and Dhruva and Uttama were the sons of the respective Queens. The King was highly fond of the younger Queen and once Uttama sought to climb the lap of the King, Dhruva too attempted to do the same, but Suruchi scolded Dhruva and said harshly that he did not deserve to attempt same as Uttama, for which Dhruva would have to perform 'Tapas' (Penance) to Lord Narayana for long. The young heart of Dhruva was badly offended and approached his mother Suniti who felt sorry for her son and confirmed that indeed sincere 'Tapas' was the singular solution and nothing else! Dhruva resolved to do so and desired to proceed to the forests. On way Sage Narada met the angry and anguished Dhruva who narrated the incident about the nasty treatment meted out to him by his step mother and strangely enough of his father's indifference and his mother's helplessness. The Sage cautioned Dhruva that great ascetics, Yogis and Sages found the path of Penance and Sacrifice was impossible to follow for a mere lad like him and he might follow other means to achieve his objective but Dhruva was decisive and resolute which impressed Narada and directed Dhruva to go to Madhuvana, be of clean physique and heart, control his limbs and senses and meditate Narayana by the Mantra 'Om Namo Narayanaya' till the Lord would appear before him. He strengthened his control of senses day by day, month by month and year after year and as he narrowed the outer awareness and widened the inner revelation he absorbed more and more of Narayana as an Omni Present Vision. He fell into trances which grew further and for longer durations and discovered that clearer Images were visible and audible. The Lord finally stood before him and

he did not even know how to praise Him, when He fondled the boy's cheeks, his Hymns of Praise and deep meaning of his thoughts got generated as the Divinity manifested its Unending, All Pervasive, and Supreme Energy got spread far and wide his mental Horizon. Lord Vishnu blessed Dhruva saying that he would carve out a Place on the Sky which would be the Central Gravity of various Celestial Bodies viz. Dhruva Loka and that Dhruva would be the Chief of that Loka; meanwhile, the Lord said that he would be a benevolent and valiant King after his father's retirement and rule his Kingdom for sixty three thousand years in good health and thereafter would reach his Loka with considerable fanfare. Thus the Lord did not provide Dhruva the blessing of immediate Salvation, as Dhruva had to prove his worth to his Parents, his step mother Suruchi and his cousin brother and the World. Unfortunately, his cousin was killed in a forest by Yakshas and the heroic Dhruva resisted the magical illusions created by the Yakshas and defeated them all and the Chief of Kubera had to seek pardon from Dhruva as Kubera knew well that Lord Vishnu Himself bestowed unprecedented boons to Dhruva!

Resuming the Story of King Shatrujit, his son Ritudwaja, King Ashvathara of Nagaloka and the sons; the Jatismara Sumati told his father that a learned Brahmana named Galava brought a sturdy horse to King Shatrujit and complained that some Daityas kept on tormenting me and my Tapasya in my Ashram by taking various forms of wild animals and destroying objects in my Ashram, especially material of worship; when a sigh of annoyance was heaved by the Brahmana, there got dropped from above a robust horse and a voice from the sky said that the latter was capable of going around the entire 'Kuvalaya' including Prithvi, the lower Regions like Patala, the Sky, mountains, Oceans etc. but only the son of Shatrujit named Ritudwaja could mount and control not only the horse but also save Galva from the trouble of Daityas and kill them. King Shatrujit gave permission to his son to ride the horse to the Ashram of Galva Muni. The Daitya who had been troubling the Sage and disciples in the Ashram appeared in the form of a hog and the Prince Ritudwaja renamed as Kuvalayaswa leapt on the Holy horse and ran after it. He wounded the Daitya with his powerful arrows and the latter tried to run away but Kuvalayaswa chased the Daitya till both of them reached the cliff of a mountain where a huge chasm was faced and both the Daitya and the Prince fell down in a steep abyss in darkness and lost sight of the hog form of the Daitya in disguise. When he landed safe, he found big Palaces, wide roads and an attractivley designed City and Kuvalayaswa realised that he was in Patala loka. As he roamed around, he found a woman entering a nice building and asked her as to where be him and who was she! She did not reply but he followed her as they entered a large, impressive Hall tastefully decorated; he found an outstandingly attractive young lady in a bed and the Prince was spellbound to see her, but she too was taken aback and swooned thinking that the Stranger might be a Demi-God, or a Gandharva or a Naga or a Daitya in disguise, but surely might not be a Prince of Bhu-Loka possibly. The woman whom the Prince followed started to converse saying that her companion was named Madalasa- the daughter of a Gandharva King whom a Daitya forcibly carried to Patala from a garden in Gandharva loka, that he had been pressurising the lady to marry, that the Daitya had been playfully tormenting a Sage named Galva in various ways at his Ashram on Bhuloka, that there was a prophesy saying a Prince riding a horse would kill the Daitya and make a feat of travelling across the entire World, that her companion Madalasa would be rescued by the Prince and be married to him, that her name was Kundala whose husband was killed by the same Daitya and that she too was brought by him as a prisoner. As Kundala's narration was over, the Princess recovered from her shock and the Prince revealed that his name was Kuvalayaswa, the son of King Shatrujit, the Prince under reference! Madalasa and the Prince were married in the style of Gandharvas and rode back to Galava's Ashram, took the Sage's blessings for killing the Daitya and marrying Madalasa and returned to the King with Madalasa; doubtless the King was extremely happy at the achievements of the Prince and celebrated the wedding formally, amidst great joy and solemnity. After the couple spent time together with happiness, King Shatrujit instructed Kuvalayaswa to proceed on a 'Pradakshina' (circumambulation) of the Universe as envisaged by the Celestial voice which was heard by Sage Galava. While the Prince was performing the Pradakshina and engaged in the task of eliminating Danavas, the brother of the Daitya who was killed at

the Ashram of Sage Galava, named Kalaketu laid a trap to the Prince who was now on the Pradaksina and approached the latter disguised as a Sage and sought the help of protecting a 'Jala-Yagna' to Varuna Deva from Daityas and requested the Prince to give away a necklace made of Gold for the purpose of the Sacrifice. The Prince agreed to protect the Yagna and gave away the Golden chain too. As Kalaketu drowned in the waters of the River Yamuna for performing the false Varuna Yagna by keeping the Prince as a guard, the trickster Danava went to the Court of King Shatrujit and lied that the Prince was killed while protecting the Varuna Yagna. This news of the Prince's death created chaos in the Kingdom; the King fainted and on recovery paid glorious tributes to the mighty Prince, the entire Kigdom mourned the untimely termination of a highly celebrated, most valiant and illustrious Kuvalayaswa. The tragedy was followed by yet another calamity viz. the demise of Princess Madalasa as a result of the distress of the Prince's disaster. Kaleketu had thus avenged the killing of his brother Daitya. Soon enough, the Prince returned to the Capital City; his Subjects and moreso the King were overjoyed. But the blow of Madalasa's demise overpowered the Prince who had virtually turned him out as a lunatic. He performed the last rites of his beloved and resolved that he would never wed again in life! The Naga boys who were great friends of Kuvalayaswa narrated the tragic developments in the latter's life to their father King Ashvatara and lamented that they were not able to provide any solace to their grand companion, nor reciprocate the friendliness, affection and consideration that he showered on them so earnestly and profusely, that they were fit to be insensible and ungrateful. Naga King Ashvatara told his sons that human beings would not even make an effort despite their desire because the tasks were somewhat difficult. But a determined mind coupled with sincere effort could achieve miracles. He thus conveyed his resolve to perform meditation on Himalayas at Plukshavataran Tirtha to Devi Saraswati by fasting and Rituals; he prayed her to say: "You are the 'Swarup' or Form of 'Satya' (Reality) and 'Asatya' (Illusion) bestowing worldly happiness as also Salvation alike. You are the 'Akshar' (Eternal / Knowledge) since the entire 'Alphabets' or the Basic Letters of Language are embodied in you in a miniscule outline".

Aksharam Paramam Brahma Jagatschaitatsharaatmikam, Daarunyavasthito vahirbhaumascha Paramaanavaha/ Tatha tvayisthitam Brahma Jagaschaidamaseshatah, Omkaaraakshara Samsthaanam yatthey Devi Sthiraasthiram/ Tatra Mantratriam Sarvamasti Yaddeva Naasticha, Trayo Lokaastrayo Devastrividyam Paavakatrayam/ Treeni Jyotomshi Vargaascha trayo Dharmaadayastatha, Trayo Gunaastrayah Shabdaastrayo Doshaas-Tathashramah/ Trayah Kaalaastathavasthah Pitarorahanirshaadayah, Yetanmatra trayam Devi tat Ruupam Sarasvati/

[All the Alphabets are personified within You; the transient Universe as also the Everlasting Parabrahma alike are within You; both the Sky and Fire are present within You just as in Fire wood; the totalality of real and imaginary material of the World exists in You; The Word OM is also set in You and is embedded as firmly and permanent as You are! You are the personification of Three Lokas, Three Vedas, Tree Vidyas, Three Agnis, Tree Jyotis, Three Vargas, Three Gunas like Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic nature; Three Shabdas (Sounds), Three Ashramas (Brahmacharya, Garhastya and Vanaprastha), Three Kaalas (Morning, Evening and Night), Three Avasthas (Balya or Childhood, Samasarika or Adulthood, and Vardhakya or Old age) and Three 'Matras' or Parents, Day / Night and all the rest of Material.] King Ashvatara further prayed to Devi Sarasvati saying that he neither had the power nor imagination to praise her and requested her to grant him the boons of unique knowledge and proficiency in music, its Grammar, usage and application as also expertise in Sounds, Swaras, Notes, Tones, Tunes, Rhymes and

Rhythms. As Sarasvati was pleased to bless him, the Naga King then felt that the next step would be comparatively easier to approach Maha Deva as He should be pleased with Sapta Swaras and the endless applications of 'Vadyas' or musical instruments that he was blessed by Sarasvati especially during 'Siva Thandava Tri-Sandhyas' (Dances of Morning, afternoon and Evenings by Lord Siva). Indeed, as expected, Maha Deva was extremely delighted at the musical proficiency displayed by Ashvatara who sought the boon of giving him a daughter like Madalasa the young wife of Kuvalayaswa just before she died. As Maha Deva granted the boon, the Naga King and moreso the Naga boys were pleasantly shocked. They resumed their friendship with the Prince who had earlier taken a vow not to marry again and prevailed on him to visit their Palace in Nagaloka for a change since the Prince was still not recovered the grief of the untimely demise. During Kuvalayeswa's visit to Nagaloka, he felt he had an illusory vision of Madalasa at the Palace of Ashvatara and requested to possibly repeat it once again for he was missing her badly. The Naga boys confirmed that the illusion was real and gave the entire sequence of the events that preceded the unbelievable efforts made by their father! Prince Kuvalayaswa was speechless, profusely thanked and prostrated to the Naga King who had since become his father-in-law. Both the families of King Shatrujit and King Ashvatara had a happy union.

### Duties of a Model King as prescribed by Queen Madalasa

After a lapse of time the Kuvalayaswa and Madalasa couple was blessed with three sons who were named Vikrant, Subahu and Shatrumardan which were typical Kshatriya names befitting Kingship. However as they were blessed with a fourth son, Madalasa requested her husband to name the boy as Alark and decided to bring him up as an 'Atma Gyani' (Knowledge of the Soul). As the boy grew up, his mother blessed him to unfold his personality as of a Rajarshi with ideal virtues. A model King should be able to conquer 'Arishdvargas', the Six Traditional Enemies viz. Kama (Desire), Krodha (Anger), Lobha (Avarice), Moha (Infatuation), Mada (Arrogance) and Matsarya (Jealousy) and overcome the Illusions of the unreal and ephemeral world. He should be able to control the 'Panchendriyas'-the mind, tongue, nose and ears and eyes. He should endeavour to acquire fame and good will; be afraid of criticism of others and be objective; do firm up good relations among relatives in 'Balya dasa'/ childhood, obey the instructions of parents in Kaumara Dasha or the Stage of the Youth, secure faith from wife during grihastha period as an House holder and enter into Vanaprasthya or forests life in Old age; and on assuming Kingship, Alark should obtain goodwill and happiness among associates, protect Sadhus (the Virtuous) and Brahmanas, organise Yagnas and other propitious tasks, destroy the enemy elements and ensure an ideal position in Para Lokas.

Prince Alark sought further explanation from his mother as to how to balance Effective Administration with the Objective of Attainment of Salvation. His mother said that the foremost responsibility would be ensure the welfare and contentment of the 'Praja' (Public) and in the process should go all out to destroy the forces inimical to the Public; while so doing the Six ways of dialogue would include: 'Sandhi' (Treaty), 'Vigraha' (War), 'Yana' (marching against Enemy), 'Asana' (detachment), 'Samarasya' (Seeking protection of a more powerful Agency) and 'Dwaidhivibhava' (Dual policy). As regards balancing the Effective Administration and Destruction of the Evil vis-à-vis the Control of Indrias and the 'Arishtvargas', the interrelationship of the Two is indeed clear: 'Yudhishthar' was unable to 'Kama' and played the game of Chess and lost the Kingdom, Self, Wife and Brothers; it was 'Krodha' that Anuhlad's father met with his end; it was due to 'Lobha' that Ila was destroyed; it was due to 'Mada' that the King Vena faced destruction to Bhu Devi's curse that there would be no crops in his Kingdom due to famine and some of Brahmanas pulled out evil out of his thighs; it was 'Moha' of Puranjaya, Grandson of Ikshvaaku and son of Sadada who out of the Vamsa's pride, agreed to take the form of a bull so that Indra

sat on his hump and killed Asuras but got killed by the Demons in the battle; and the 'Matsara' of Abhiman, son of Anushka, which led to his end. Thus explained Madalasa to Prince Alark patiently hearing to his mother in the context of Good Administration resulting from Self-Control of 'Indriyas'. She also illustrated the examples of a crow known for its alertness, a cuckoo for its cleverness, a deer for its watchfulness in not getting caught, a serpent with the capability of killing even a mighty creature with a drop of poison, a peacock gifted of spreading its wings denoted as wealth and Kingdom, a swan able to filter good and bad qualities and a hen with the characteristics of waking up early and saving womenfolk by vigilant sounds. An ideal King should be cool like Moon, radiant and scorching like Sun and eveready to blaze and spread out like Fire. The Kingdom must be administered in a highly virtuous manner on the same lines as Indra, Surya, Yamaraja, Chandra and Vayu, ie.like Indra satisfies the people in the Universe by bestowing optimal rains for four months a year, a King should satisfy the Subjects with charities of money etc. for four months; like Surya absorbs water for eight months a year, the King should collect taxes in a manner that the Citizens are least hurt; like Yama takes away people from the World any body without distinction or exceptions, the King should treat the Subjects without favour on equal footing; like Chandra makes every one happy and peaceful, the King too ought to make everybody likewise; and like Vayudeva provides the vital breathing and wind, the King too must perform likewise. Dhramatma Raja should thus excellent governance, relief and contentment in a manner that the Varnashrama Dharma is followed by letter and spirit.

### Varnashrama Dharma with emphasis on Brahmanas

Devi Madasala described to her son Alarka the broad Principles of Varnashrama Dharma. 'Daan' (Charity), 'Adhyayan' (Learning) and Yagna (Ritualistic Sacrifices and Agni Homams) constitute the three major duties of Brahmanas; the derivative duties are to facilitate Yagnas to be organised by other's Yagnas implying the acceptance of Danaas, 'Adhyapan' (Teaching) and farming for his family. In addition to Daan, Adhyayan and Yagna, the Kshatriya community has to ensure the security of the Society internally and from outside forces/enemies, assume the responsibility for its Peace, Finances and Administration. The Vaishya Community has the duties of trade, commerce, agriculture and Cattle nurture in addition to Daan, Adhyanan and Yagnas. Shudras have responsibility of assisting the tasks of the other communities afore mentioned, especially Service to Soldiers, cattle care and retailing.

As Brahmanas are concerned, they might be free from the restrictions in a comparative manner till their 'Upanayana Samskaras' or the Ritual wearing the Yanopaveet (the HolyThread) in respect of 'Ahaar' and 'Vyavahar' (Food and other General Matters). Thereafter however, restrictions become operative through the day and night. A Brahmachari moves to his Guru's residence and follows a disciplined routine like 'Swadhyaya' (Study the self), 'Agni Susrusha', 'Snaana', 'Bhikshatana' (Soliciting food grains by moving around), assisting Guru in the tasks assigned, learning from him, and after achieving the stage of Perfection, for seeking the permission of the Guru entering 'Grihastashram' through Vedic Wedding, earning by one's own earning capacity and fortune, look after wife and children, parents, other dependents, destitutes, animals, birds etc; perform daily rituals of Pancha YagnasViz. Deva Yagna (Worship of 'Ishta Devata' or Deity of choice); Brahma Yagna (Study of Vedas, Scriptures and religious books to enhance Divine Knowledge); Pitra Yagna (Contemplating of the Teachings of Fore-fathers, Family Gurus, Sages and well-wishers to preserve family traditions); Bhuta Yagna (Extending help and sympathy to the needy, including animals and other species); and Nara Yagna (respect to elders, ladies, and co-human beings to maintain social and cultural ties). The Grihastis (House Holders) must also give

away charities according to one's ability and aptitude. He should also satisfy Athithis (Guests), relatives and servants, again as per maximum possibility. In fact Athithi Yagna is an important off-shoot of Nara Yagna, as turning away Atithis who turn up unannounced need to be fully cared for, since their curses take away a good stock of the 'Punya' and more over the sins of Atithis are passed on to the hosts! Thus after the daily Yagnas are executed earnestly, the Grihastis redeem their debts and augment the stock of their virtues. Thereafter the Grihasti (House-holder) gets old and retires from active life and would enter Vanaprastha Ashram by ensuring upkeep of health and worship to Almighty, as a stepping stone to the next Ashram of Sanyasa (Renunciation).

Devi Madalasa continued further as follows: The general expectation of Devas, Pitras, Brahmanas and various others is that Grihastas would perform Rituals, provide Anna (food) and fulfill other needs. In fact, Grihasti is normally looked upon as the unique provider and fulcrum of all pious acts of life, especially in the context of Vedas and the Dharma in the form of 'Dhenu' (Cow) embodying the Rig Veda as her stomach, Yajur Veda as her middle portion, Sama Veda as her Face, Ishtapurti (Fullfiller of Desires) as her neck, her horns as Sadhu Sukta; Shanti and Health her body-sides, and milk-yielding 'Stanas' (breast-nipples) represent Swahaakar (Deva Ganas), Swadhakaar (Pitruganas), Vashatkaar (Rishiganas) and Hantakaar (Manushyaganas). Thus Grihastis (especially Brahmanas) should worship sincerely the Suraganas, Pitruganas, and Muniganas. They have to offer 'Jala tarpanas' and Pujas to Devas, 'Agni Tarpana' and 'Bali' (offering of cooked rice with Akshatas) to Brahma. 'Bali daan' (Sacrifice) is offered to Dhanvantari at the East but showing North of 'Homakunda', Indra in the direction of East, Yama and Varuna to the West, and Chandra towards North. Vaiswa Deva Bali is also to be performed in the morning and evening in favour of helpless animals, birds and other species like ants and flies.

# Some significant Do's and Don'ts as human responsibilty

The general expectaion is that Grihastas wake up at the 'Brahma Muhurta'-that is, well before the Sunrise with a resolve to follow the commands of Four 'Purusharthas' viz, Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha and with a pure mind sit up facing East with Prayers for the success of the day. After performing the ablutions and 'Snaan', the 'Purva Sandhya Vandana' should be performed even when Stars appear on the Sky and in the same manner, 'Sayam Sandhya Vandana' is performed when Sun still appears on the Sky. Daily Homas also should be performed pursuant to the 'Sandhya Vandanam'. Care must be taken not to view the Sun Globe (Sayampratastatha Homam kurvati Niyamaatmavaan, Naayaastamaye Bimbamudeekshet vivaswathah) at the Sunrise and Sunset timings, Tasks like hair combing, looking at mirror, cleaning the teeth, and Deva Tarpan before the afternoon, while urinating and defecating ought to be avoided at Tirthas, Kshetras, road side fields as also Goshalas (Cowsheds). Scenes of nudity of women especially those during menses ought not to be witnessed, warranting 'Prayaschitta' or formal (ritualistic) purification. Acts like defecation, copulation and release of hair, ash (Bhasma) and such material must never be done in water bodies. Complaining of food not of one's choice otherwise edible must be refrained, especially in a haughty and offensive tone. Furningly hot and highly salted food should be avoided. After 'achamana' at the formal conclusion of food, nibbling further is to be avoided, conversation must not be carried-on nor 'Veda Adhyaya' is performed. Once having risen after food, touching of Cows, Brahmanas, Agni, and one's own head be shunned and viewing Sun, Moon, and Stars be avoided. Performing Puja and Bhojan wearing a single cloth is not advisable. Even bathing and sleeping with a single cloth is to be avioded. Never wear the clothes, footwear, ornaments, Yagnopaveet, kamandalu and garlands already worn or used by others. Never resort to oil massage and copulation on Chaturdasi, Ashtami, Amavasya / Pournami and on festival days. Never spread thighs and feet nor keep foot over another foot while sitting. Never provoke/aggravate persons who are fools, argumentative,

insane, unhappy, angry, ugly, crooked and deformed, by hurting their sensibilities or Self-pride. Do not sleep keeping head to North and West. Do not take a bath during night excepting during eclipse timings. Avoid sleep, study, meals and copulation during Sandhyas or mornings and evenings. Perform Pujas to Devas during 'Purvaahna' or before noon, 'Madhyamaahna' to Pitras and Godmen / religious persons in the evenings. Any married male must observe restraint during his female partner's menses time for four days. Those who are not interested in begetting daughters are advised to wait till the sixth night after menses (Strijanma pariharaartha Panchamimapi varjyayet, tathah shashthyam vrajedaantram Sreshthaa yugmaasu putrak). If one mates during 'Purvaahna', 'Adharmi' (Evil minded) son is born; at 'Sayamkaal' (evening) a 'napumsak' (non-virile) son is born. Irresponsibly blaming Gurus, Pativratas, Yagnasheel, and the Virtuous persons even in light-vein manner would attract heavy sins. Wearing unworthy dress, uttering non- propitious words, and behaving in unbecoming manner are to be avoided at any cost. The company of spendthrifts, misers, enemies, the belligerent, blame-worthy, suspicious, non-religious and unreliable persons must be given up at once. But, six categories of Persons viz. 'Sahrudaya' (Goodhearted), 'Dikshit' (Dedicated), 'Bhupati' (King), 'Snaatak' (Guru), 'Svasura' (father-in-law), and Ritviks (Homa kartas) are worthy of 'Arghyapradaan', 'Puja' and 'Pradakshina'; richly deserving award of 'Madhuparkas' (clothes) for commending them would mean respecting one's own self! A Place is not worthwhile staying if there is no provision of at least four Materials viz. a willing provider of loans, a kind and effective 'Vaidya' (Physician), a Srotriva' (Purohit) and a River of running water suppy.

### Queen Madalasa confers Kingship to Alarka

Besides Raja Dharma, Varnashrama Dharma and Grihasta Dharma, Devi Madasala taught to her son Alarka about the details of 'Nithya Naimittika Shraddha Dharma', 'Paarvana Shraddha Dharma', and 'Prashasthaapratishtha' Dharmas in the context of Shraaddhaas; Sadaachaara Varnana, Varjyaavarjya concepts etc. and thus made him an erudite scholar as a model King, an ideal Kshatriya and a warrior. The parents got him married and blessed him to prove himself as a perfect Grihasta too. Since Ritudhwaja retired to 'Vaanaprastha' already, she too desired to join him in the forests and decided to make Alarka the King by ignoring her other elder sons, as their worth was by far the less compared to the unusual training and receptive capacity of Alarka. Queen Madalasa therefore presented a golden ring and blessed him to become an illustrated King and told him that there would be difficult circumstances to be faced in the discharge of his duties but due to the knowledge that he acquired so far would indeed stand him in good stead. However, should there be extraordinary and most complicated crises to be faced, then he might open the ring and read the minutely written letters of advice and follow the same. King Alarka then reigned for several years as a King of Virtue and fame, without favour or fear and his eldest brother, Subahu who went to forests already, came to know that his younger brother was proving well he became proud of him. But soon enough Subahu got jealous and became a victim of his associate Kasiraj whose machinations and divisive politics gradually thinned down the financial and other strengths of King Alarka who had indeed reached a really critical position in his administration. That was the time when Alarka remembered his mother's advice to open the minute letters scripted inside the ring that she gave him. As he opened the script, the advice of his mother was very clear: Sangah sarvaatmanaa thyajyah sa chetyaktum na shakyathey (If you are not capable, then exit the Society!). The Inscription further said: If you are not able to leave the Society, then you should join the Sadhus (righteous men), since the company of Sadhus alone would prove to be your medicine.

### King Alarka approaches Dattatreya for solace

King Alarka approached Mahatma Dattatreya as a 'Sharanardhi' (refuge) and prayed to him to guide him and wipe out his distress. Dattatreya replied that the King was indeed truthful as he made a confession that he was suffering from anguish. He then asked Alarka to carry out an introspection as to who was he? What kind of grief did he suffer from? King Alarka tried to figure out the inter-relationship of the Soul and the three kinds of basic problems of humanity viz. Adhi-Bhoutika, Adhyatmika and Adhi Daivika, ie the troubles related to physical, internal and God-made categories. He reasoned that he was not a component of 'Panchabhutas'-Prithivi (Earth), 'Aapas' (Water), 'Tejas'

(Fire), 'Vayu' (Wind) and 'Aakash' (Sky), but has the sensibilities related to these Entities. Even if he were not the 'Sharir' (Physique), he however had the independent feelings that led to the complexes of Inferiority or Superior feelings. Indeed, it would be essential to discard those kinds of feelings by an enlightened Gyani. After all, when a person is aware that essentially a human body is not eternal, then why should there be the feelings of happiness or otherwise; especially when there was a realisation that these feelings were made by the mind but not the inner soul which was free from such illusive fears. Alarka thus analysed the current situation arising out of the state of his mind, since he was not the body, nor the mind, and not even his superficial consciousness. Thus analysed, the King Alarka convinced himself that there was no harm done if his elder brother Subahu desired to take over Kingship, then there was no need for resisting the idea! Also, desire and attachment propelled by ego and prestige are the root causes of happiness or grief. Mahatma Dattatreya stated: *Ahami tyam kurotpanno mameti skandhavaanmahaan, Gruhakshetroccha shakhaascha putradaaraadi pallavah*/

Dhanadhanya maha patro naikakaala pravardhitah, Punyaapunyaagra pushpascha Sukha duhkha maaphalah ('Ahamkaar' or sense of self is the seed which produces a huge tree of 'Agyaan' or Ignorance; 'Mamatva' or selfishness is the trunk of the tree; Gruha (Abode) and Kshetra (Farm lands) are the high and large branches; wife and children are the tender leaves; 'dhana dhanya' or money and foodgrains viz. wealth are the enormous leaves; 'Punyaapunya' (Fruits of noble deeds or sins) constitute the major flowers and 'Sukha Duhkkas' or delight and misery are the end results.) How could those human beings, who are tired of 'Samsar' (Life and Family matters) and seek shelter under the 'Agyan' Tree which is rooted in the lack of correct knowledge or awareness, ever consider to attain Salvaton? Only those noble persons who possess a sharp axe named 'Vidya' (Knowledge) could pull down the mammoth tree of ignorance and egocentricity with the active help of the heavy rocks of 'Satsanga'!

# Yogadhyaya (Study of Yoga), Yoga Siddhi (Achievement) and Yogicharya (Practice)

King Alarka expressed his gratitude to Mahatma Dattatreya that he gave him the solace in clearing his conscience about the eventually of stepping down from his throne in favour of his brother Subahu. But his doubt in his mind continued to waver and was not able to detach from natural strings. He desired to learn the art of disconnecting human psyche from Paramatma, so that there would not be a recurrence of 'Punarjanma' (Rebirth). Dattatreya replied: *Yogecha shaktividusham yena shreyah param bhavet*, *Muktiryogaatatha yogah samyakjnaa mahipathey /Sangaddoshod bhavah duhkha mamatwasakta chetasamam/* (Yogis are able to distinguish 'Gyan' from 'Agyan' and that is called 'Mukti'; manifestation of Parabrahma takes place despite the natural features of the illusory world. From Yoga emerges 'Moksha', 'Samyak Gyan' (detailed analysis) comes from Yoga, 'Duhkha' (Sorrow) springs from Gyan;

'Mamata' (Sense of Belonging) comes from 'Duhkha'. Further, Selflessness demolishes 'Mamata' and results in 'Viragya'; this is the state suitable for Yoga or configuration of the Self with the Super Force. Yoga comprises 'Pranaayaam' which eliminates slip-ups or mistakes; 'Dharana' enables reduction of sins or at any rate, not adding to them; 'Pratyahaara' resists material desires and 'Dhyaana' not only burns up the wavering thoughts and blemishes but retains the alignment with the Supreme. The foremost step thus is to practise Pranaayaam which actually denotes wind-control or the regulation of both 'Prana Vayu' (inhaling of breath) at the entry points of nose and 'Apana Vayu' (exhaling of breath) at the exit point. Pranaayaam is in three forms, viz. Laghu (of twelve matras or units), Madhyam (double of the matras or of twenty matras), and 'Uttareeya' (further double of matras or of forty eight). Each 'matra' or the unit comprises of one 'Nimesh' and 'Unmesha' (inhale and exhale) together. By the first Pranaayaam, one should get sweat; the second should experience shivers; and the third Pranaayaam should be able to knock down sorrows and imperfections. Just as a trainer tames wild animals like elephants or lions and bring them under full control, a Yogi would be able to take full control of the animals; an elephant would obey the commands of the 'Mahout' and a lion would be trained to kill deers but not the Ring Master. Then there are four kinds of Pranaayaams, viz. Dhwasti, Praapti, Samvit and Prasad, 'Dhwasti' is the stage when the sinful deeds of known or unknown nature of the Yoga practitioner are washed out and blemishes of the 'chitta' or the mind are cleaned up; in the second stage of 'Prapti', the Yogis experience that stage when they are indeed accessible to 'Ihika' and 'Amushmika' (worldly and extra-terrestrial) desires but volantarily resist them; 'Samvita' is that superior stage of Yoga when exceptional Yogis enjoy an elevated status possessing that kind of 'Gyaan Shakti' with celestial vision and capacity like those of Sun, Moon and Stars and possessing the awareness of each and every thing in the Universe like the knowledge of 'Ateetha' (beyond one's imagination), 'Anaagata' (not possible to visualise but can be identified), 'Tirohita' (unmanifested) and 'Dooragrastha' (distantly available) entities; and finally the 'Prasad' type of Pranayaama when the most hallowed Yogis possess the chitta (mind), Pancha Vaayu ( Prana, Apaana, Samaana, Udaana and Samaana Vayus), Indriyas (Eyes, Ears, Nose, Tongue and Skin).

After describing Pranaayam as an integral component of Yoga, Dattatreya explained about 'Asanas' (Seating Postures) among which the important ones are Padmaasana, Ardhaasana and Swastikaasana. While squatted with both the flat feet crossed on both the thighs, the Yoga Practitioner should focus on the tip of the nose; perform Pranaayama by controlling the breath or the life force; practise 'Pratyahara' or the process of abstraction by withdrawing the sense organs from worldly objects; then move on to the next stage of 'Dhaarana' by focussing the entire concentration on a single object; further on, get into the mode of 'Dhyana' by way of meditation or the most intense contemplation of the object and finally merge the total consciousness with Paramatma by way of 'Samadhi' or Liberation. This way, the Yogi's deficiencies are overcome, a state of peaceful contentment is arrived at and the vision of Parabrahma is attained. As he intakes air through the nostrils, first it touches the naval, next the heart, the chest, the neck, the mouth, the tip of the nose, the eyes, the 'bhru', and the upper portion of the forehead. When Yoga is practised with pure heart and soul, the upkeep of the Body is automatically ensured and long standing disorders are rectified and health is completely toned up, for Physical fitness is the gateway to the accomplishment of the Four 'Purusharthas' of Dharma, Kama, Artha and Moksha.

Once 'Atma Darshan' (Vision of the Soul) is possible, the Yogi is able to fulfill all kinds of unfulfilled wishes that might have been missed in his erstwhile life, say, Stree, Daan, Vidya, Maya, Dhana, Swarga, Amaratva, Devendrathva, Yagna phal, Agnipravesh, Upavas phal, Shraddha phal etc. However, there could be 'Vighnas' (obstacles) to the Yogis in bestowing full advantage of the fruits of Yoga, but, there are five means of Upa Sarga Yogas Viz. Pratibha, Shravan, Daiva, Bhrama and Avartha which would be able to overcome the impediments. The Yogi's 'Pratibha' (Radiance) like that of a 'Daiva' (Deity) made

popular by 'Shravan' (hearing) in the eight directions but is misunderstood by 'Bhrama' (misinterpretation) and hence the Yogi should protect himself by shrouding a white blanket viz. 'Guru Gyan' and highlight Parabrahma's singular thought; the Yogi ought to imagine the 'Sukshma' (the minutest) form of 'Panchabhutas' viz. Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Sky, assume (do 'Dharana' or hold) these forms one after another, experience their features, and discard the forms and features of the Five Elements gradually. This process of rejection of the end-products of the Five Elements and their the multiple shapes, features, Gunas and characteristics; in other words, the taste of the Earthly products of food, fruits, and drinks; coolness, crops and bathing comfort of Water; the very many possibilities of cooking food, performing Yagnas, illumination, and so on by Fire; and similarly of Air and Sky. The possibilities of Creation, family life, and endless such ramifications of comfort and relief are all a part of the the effects of 'Panchabhutas' and their alternate forms. Therefore, the Yogi needs to control Panchabhutas and the never-ending varieties of their offshoots; instead of being controlled by the desires and that is what the Vasitva Shakti all about. Yogis would then be able to assume various powers like Anima, Laghima, Prapti, Prakamya, Ishitva, Vasithva etc. But, true Yogis never satisfy themselves with the powers of 'Vasitva' and terminate their endeavour to pursue the path of Realisation of Brahma, since they are aware that the 'Visithva' Power is only a tool but certainly not the end by itself. As such, they continue the 'Yogacharya' (practice of the 'Yoga Marg') in the normal course if life, by observing the regulations of Varnashrama ranging from the 'Atithya' (honouring the guests, Shraddha, Yagna, Tirtha Yatra, charities, 'Asteya' (non-stealing), 'Brahmacharya' (celibacy), 'Tyaga' (Sacrifice), 'Alobha' (liberal attitude) and 'Ahimsa'; also 'Akrodha' (calmness and composure), 'Guru susrusha' (devotion and service to Guru), 'Shoucha' (Cleanliness), 'Ahara laghuta' (minimal food) and 'Nithya Vedadhyan' (constant Study of Vedas); 'Inaanaajnaana vichakshana' (capacity to distinguish knowledge and ignorance), loneliness/ aloofness; 'jitendriyata' (self-control) and 'Nitya Dhyana' (Constant Meditation) of 'Omkara' which comprises of the Three Words viz. 'A' kara representing Brahma of Satvika Guna; 'U' representing Rajo Guna of Vishnu; and 'Makara of Tajo Guna representing Siva. While thus engaged in the recitation of Pranava Mantra and its 'Mananam' (Understanding of its far reaching implications), the Yogi finally breaks away from the shackles of 'Samsara' yet retaining the 'Jyatismrututa phala' or the awareness of previous births as a follow up by Siddhis and Yogitva.

[Yoga Siddhis The Nine Principal Yoga Siddhis are: 'Parakaya Pravesha' (One's Soul entering into the body of another being and reviving even a dead body); 'Haadi Vidya' (The Knowledge of overcoming hunger and thirst); 'Kaadi Vidya' (The knowledge of enduring all Seasons like Summer, Winter and Rain and the Power of immunity from the severities of heat, cold and rain); 'Vayu Gamana Siddhi '(The capacity to fly fast and far); 'Madalasa Vidya' (The art of increasing or decreasing one's physical size as per one's wish); 'Kanakadhara Siddhi' (Knowledge of acquiring unlimited wealth); 'Prakya Sadhana' (The ability to direct a disciple to give birth to a child); and 'Surya Vigyan' (the potential of converting any substance to any other substance by applying Sun Rays). There is another version of 'Ashta Siddhis' as per the Purana of Maha Bhagavata, viz. 'Anima' (Conversion to an infinitesimal size); 'Mahima' (Expanding to an infinitely large size); 'Garima' (Turn any substance as an infinitely heavy object); 'Laghima' (Convert a substance as almost weightless); 'Prapti' (secure unrestricted access to any Place); 'Prakamya' (Accomplish whatever is desired); Isitva (Attainment of absolute Sovereignty) and 'Vasitva' (Capacity to vanquish any body or anything). Maha Bhagavata Purana also referred to Ten Subsidiary Siddhis viz. 'Anurmimattvam' (Not bothered by hunger, thirst etc.); 'Doora Shravanam' (Hearing from far); Doora Darshanam (Ability to see from far); 'Mano Java' (moving one's body where thought goes or teleportation); 'Kaamarupam' (Assuming any type of body including animals, birds, flies etc.); 'Parakaaya pravesham' (entering other's body); Swacchanda Maranam (voluntary death (Voluntary death ); 'Devanaam saha krida anudarshanam' (Co-Play and Vision with Devas); 'Yatha Samkalpa Samsiddhi' (Achievement of one's own desires as per thoughts) and 'Aagnaa apratihathi gati' (Commands being obeyed). The Epic of Maha Bhagavata further gave Five more Siddhis viz. 'Trikaala Jnaanatvam' (The Knowledge of the Past, Present and the Future); 'Advandam' (Forbearance of heat, cold and rain); 'Parachittadi abhijnaata' (Knowing other's mind); 'Agni arka ambu visha adinaam pratisthubhah '(Countering the power of Fire, Sun, Poison etc.); and 'Aparaajaya' (Invincible).]

## 'Airshtas' (premonitions) of death

Those persons who cannot identify Stars on the Sky of Dhruva, Shukra, Soma and Arundhati may face death within a year; who find Sun dim within eleven months; who find in their dreams the images of body rejects mixed with gold/silver would die within ten months; who witness Piscachas, Pretas, and Golden Trees would die within nine months; persons who are fat but become thin, and again fat, would die within eight months; those who witness a scene of getting their feet stuck in mud and after coming out of the slush with impressions of not being able to notice the above portion of the feet would die within seven months; a dream showing a picture of a Kite, dove, owl or a crow- all with blue colour- sitting on one's head would die within six months; those who see a row of crows and witness one's own body full of dirt due to the flight of the crows would die within four months; if a person witnesses a rainbow and lightning on the southern Sky in a cloudless night would die within a couple of months; a person whose body experiences the bad odours of a dead body or who cannot see his own reflection in ghee, oil, mirror and water would be dead within a month; if a person dreams that he has no head would die within a fortnight; those whose body and heart dry up soon after taking bath or feel thirsty immediately after taking large quantity of water would not last for more than ten days; if a person's breathing is uneven or he dreams that he is travelling in a boat full of monkeys and is singing or when a powerful monk is passing while laughing loud, then death is round the corner. Dreams of hair, fire, ash, serpents or dried up river; crooked nose, long ears, weeping left eye, a metallic face, black tongue, riding camels and donkeys bound to Southern direction, blinded eyes and deaf ears, upward eyesight, etc. are portends of early death.

## King Alarka transformed as a Yogi by Mahatma Dattatreya

King Alarka opined that thanks to his brother Subahu and his associate Kasiraj, the tension created by them in his mind paved the way to approach Mahatma Dattatreya; indeed he had secured supreme guidance and relief from the Mahatma as he transformed his entire thinking process so as to convert a King as a Yogi. Alarka's entire outlook has been changed to confer Kingship to Subahu and his supporter Kasiraj who were sworn enemies at one time now converted as admirers since their threats and the resultant mental tension had evaporated. Kasiraj replied that it was not an ideal situation because Subahu was a Kshatriya and his feature must have been that of a Kshatriya to fight but that was not to be. But, Subahu realised too the futilty of desire, wealth and fame and preferred adopting the Yogi route for accomplishing 'Moksha'. Yogi Alarka returned to his Kingdom and made his elder son to take over the Kingship. Thus the entire generation retired to 'Vanaprastha'. Yogi Alarka attained Salvation subsequently, said Jatismara Sumati to his father. The Holy Birds thus narrated the entire legend to Sage Jaimini, replying the question about the Evolution of Human Life. The fruits of reading the above would tantamount to performing hundred Asvametha Yagnas; *Yatsamsarabhramana utthamam*,

*Alrakaatreyasamvadam shubhantamuchyatenarah* (Hearing the auspicious dialogue between Alarka and Dattatreya as narrated above demolishes all the sins and provides great security to those who read / hear it).

#### Creation of the Universe and its Destruction

Sage Markandeya referred Muni Jaimini to the Holy Birds to reply queries regarding Maha Bharata; the Holy Birds clarified the doubts about Mahabharata as also narrated to dialogues between Jyatismara Sumati and his father and Bhagavan Dattatrreya with King Alarka. Now, a Group of Munis put a volly of questions to Sage Markandeya concerning the Creation of Universe and its Destruction; the Origin of Devas, Rishis and Pitruganas; the Origin of Manvantaras; Celestial Families; the Under-World and so on. The Sage replied that as Avyakta (Unknown) Brahma appeared with four heads reciting Four Vedas and other Scriptures and his 'Manasa Putras' or Mind Born Progeny were generated, viz. Bhrigu, Parasara, Pulasthya, Pulaha, Kratu, Angirasa, Marichi, Daksha, Atri and Vasishtha, besides Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanat Kumara etc. Among these, Bhrigu handed over 'Purana-Grandha' to Chyavan Muni. Daksha too gave one and the Purana which was available to Sage Markandeya was what was being followed for the enlightenment of the Rishis at that time:

Praanipatya Jagadyonim ajamavyayashramam, Charaacharasya Jagato Dhataaram Paramam Padam/ Brahmaanaadi Purushamuktyakti sthiti samyamey, Yatkaarana manowpamyam yatra Sarvam pratitishthitam/ Tasmai Hiranyagarbhaaya Lokatantraaya dhimatey/ Pranamya Samyagvakshyaami Bhutayargamanuttamam/ Mahaadyam Viseshaantam Sayairupyamsalakshanam/ Pramaanaih Panchabhirgamyam strotobhih shadbhirinvitam/ Purushadhishthitam Nityamaminthyamiva cha sthitam/ Tatchhuyataam Mahabhaaga Paramena samaadhi na/ Pradhanam kaaranaam Yatthadivyaiktasyam Maharshayah/ Yadaahum Prakrithim Sookshmaam Nityaam Sada sadaatmikaam Dhruvamakshayyamajarameyam naanyasamsrayam /Gandharupasaiheenam shabdasparshavivarjitam, Anadhyantam Jagadyonim Trigunaprabhavaapyayam/ Asaampratamavijneyam Brahmaagrey samavartat/ Pralayasnaanu theynedam vyapthamaaseeda seshatah, Gunasaamyaaktatastasmaat kshetrajnaadhi – shthaathanmuney (He who is the root-cause of the Universe, is the unborn, enduring, the singular refuge of the moving and non-moving entities alike and the Creator is the Paramapada Swarup; He is the 'Adi Purush' or the Foremost Being who causes 'Srishthi, Sthiti, Pralaya' (Creation, Preservation and Destruction), is unparalelled and Ever-existent. Having greeted this 'Hiranyagarbha' or the 'Golden Bellied' Supreme Energy with great veneration, the fantastic creation of the World is sought to be described, especially of those five kinds of Physical Features, Creation and characteristic attributes.

This 'Bhuta Srishti' (Creation of the World) being originated from 'Maha Purusha' is in a way permanent yet occurs in temporary and repetitive stages. Maharshis describe Bhuta Srishti as an incomprehensible and minutest manifestation of 'Prakriti', which is Endless, indestructible, and devoid of sensory features like Gandha (Smell), Rupa (Form), Rasa

(Taste), Shabda (Sound) and Sparsha (Touch); it has no beginning nor end, is the producing point, the source of Three Gunas of Satvika, Rajasika and Tamasika nature, is the Vidyamaan (Embodiment of Knowledge) and is 'Avigneya' (Incomprehensible). Before the 'Pralaya' (the Great Destruction), He is the 'Sarvaya Vyapi' or the Omni-Present. Sage Markandeya explained to Jaimini Muni further as follows: In the task of 'Srishti' (Creation), Lord Brahma visualised 'Pradhan Tatva' (Main Nature) which

camouflages 'Maha Tatva' (The Great Nature) just as a seed is hidden by the skin of a vegetable. This Maha Tatva, with the assistance of 'Trigunas' produces 'Ahamkar' (sense of the Self). Ahamkar has three kinds viz. Vaikarik, Tejas and Tamas. Just as Maha Tatva camouflages Pradhan Tatva, Vaikarika Tatva hides away Ahamkara. The interaction of Ahamkar and Pradhan Tatva produces 'Shabda (Sound) Tanmatra'. The Sound feature produces 'Akash' (Sky) as Sky possesses the same tendency of sound. Now, the Shabda Tanmatra hiding Akash interacts with Tamas Ahamkar and produces 'Sparsha (Touch) Tanmatra'. Then the Sparsha Tanmatra interacts with Vaikarika Tatva of Ahamkar and creates 'Vayu' (Wind). The interaction of the Sky's Shabda Matra, Skin's Sparsha Matra and that of Vayu Matra creates Rupa Matra whose further interaction with Tejas Tanmatra creates 'Jyoti'. The cyclic effect thus creates Rasa Matra leading to the formation of 'Jala' (water) and 'Gandha Matra' leading to the formation of 'Prithvi' (Earth), following the interface of the respective Tanmatras. Further on, the chain reactions of Tanmatras, Matras and Gunas manifest innumerable creations. Panchendriyas of Ears, Skin, Eyes, Tongue and Nose and Pancha Karmendrias of respective actions, besides the controlling mind were created. By the union of 'Maha Purusha' and His own alternate form, 'Prakruti', a Golden Egg was produced in the huge sheet of water and grew up gradually. This Egg is massive as it contains the 'Kshetrajna' who made the Fore-most Appearance as the Originator of 'Bhuta ganas' including 'Pancha Bhutas' (Five Elements).

Utpannah sa Jagadyoniguno rajo gunam, Bhunjanpravartetye sange Brahmatvam Samupaasritah/Brahmatvey sa prajaa srishta tatha satvaatirekavaan, Vishnutvameya Dharmena kututhey paripaalanam/ Tattamogunodriktho Rudratvey cha khilam jagat, Upasamdrupthya vai shethey Trailokyam Trigunogunah/ Yatha praagvyaapakah Kshetri paalako laavakastatha, tathaasa Sangjaamaprothi Brahma Vishnu Haraatmikam/ Brahmatvey Srujatey Lokaanyudbhatvey samharastyapi, Vishnutvey chaapyudaaseenastitrovasthah Swayambhuvah / Rajo Brahma Tamo Rudro Vishnum Satvam Jagatpatih, yeta eva triyo Devaa yeta yeva thrayo gunah/ (The merger of Purusha and Prakriti assumed Rajo Guna and created Brahma who in turn created Human Beings, while Vishnu assumed Satvika Guna to preserve the entire Universe and Rudra assumed Tamasika Guna to destroy the Universe. In this manner, the 'Swayambhu' or the Self-born, being 'Nirguna' or devoid of 'Gunas', executes the three kinds of tasks at the same time by assuming the features as and when exigencies occur, without leaving each other even for a 'Kshana' (three blinks).

## Time measurement, Life span of Brahma and his various Creations

The Life-span of Lord Brahma was determined at hundred Divine years and the calculation of each year was conceived as follows beginning from the minimum measure of Time upwards: three nimeshas or blinks make one 'Kshana'; fifteen 'nimeshas' make one 'kashtha'; thirty kashthas make one 'kala'; thirty kalas make one 'Muhurta'; thirty Muhurtas make one day-night; thirty day-nights make one 'Paksha'; two Pakshas make one 'maasa'; six maasas make one 'Ayana'; two Ayanas make one 'Varsha' or a Year. The Ayanas in a Year are 'Dakshina Aayana' and 'Uttara Ayana'. Each human Year comprising three sixty five day-nights (Ahorathras) accounts for a 'Divya Ahoratra' (Divine day-night) and on this count, each Uttarayan is a Divine Day and Dakshinayan is a Divine night. One Divya Day-night thus is a full day-night year for human beings. As per Divya calculations, the total count of Four Yugas is twelve thousand years, the Satya Yuga comprising four thousand years, Treta Yuga three thousand Divya Years, Dwapara Yuga two thousand years and Kaliyuga of one Divya thousand years; the rest of two thousand years of the twelve thousand Divine Years is accounted for additional four hundred of Divine years of 'Sandhya' and an equivalent period additionaly for 'Sandhyamsha' for Satya Yuga; three hundred years each for these

periods in respect of Treta Yuga; two hundred years each of Dwapar Yuga and one hundred years each of Kali Yuga. In Lord Brahma's life span of hundred Divya Years, each day comprises fourteen Manyantaras and each Manyantara consists of one thousand 'Kalpas'. At each change of Manyantara, there is a fresh stock of Indras, Devas, and Sapta Rishis etc. There are seventy one Cycles of Four Yugas in each Manvantar. Viewed from the view point of human years, one Manvantara has three crore sixty six lakh two thousand years; by Divine Years, one Manvantara has one lakh fifty two thousand years. If this Period is multiplied four times, it would then equate Brahma's one day, that is, one million nineteen lakh twenty seven thousand Divya years; or, four twenty nine crores forty lakh (429, 40, 00,000) human years! After each day-night of Brahma, there occurs a 'Naimittika' Pralaya. The residents of Bhulok, Bhuvarloka and Swarloka then get shifted to Maharloka and the residents of Maharloka would get tranfferred to Janloka and Tribhuvanas or allthe Three Bhuvanas become 'Ekarnava' or replete with water and Brahma goes to sleep overnight. On the following day, Brahma starts Creation afresh; this is how every year of three hundred sixty days, Brahma's each year, there would be a Maha Pralaya. As of now, Brahma's age is past fifty years or one 'Parartha' plus; that is how one reckons that the 'Dwitheeya' Parartha is on going in the Kali Yuga's 'Prathama Paada', in Varaha kalpa which followed the Padma kalpa. At the end of the latter Kalpa, when Brahma recovered from sleep, he found the entire surroundings were full of water and he realised: Aapo Naaraa Iti prokta aapovai Narasunavah, thasu shetey sa yasmamcha thena Narayanah/ (the word 'Jala' denotes 'Naara' and thus Lord Vishnu sleeps over it and thus He is known as Narayana); thus Brahma felt that Lord Vishnu must be engaged in lifting Earth from the deep waters of 'Patala' by assuming the Avatar of Varaha and this scene was witnessed by the residents of Janaloka Maharshis. When Prithvi was steadying in water like a ship, the Brahma commenced Srishti with Mountains, followed by 'Sapta Dweepas' and kept on meditating further as in the earlier Kalpa viz. Padma Kalpa. He materialised 'Five Avidyas' viz. Tamomaya, Tamah, Moha, Mahamoha, Tamisra and Andhakamishra. As the 'Prathama Sarga' of Srishti (the first Stage of Creation) was essentially of Mountains, Brahma meditated further but the Second Sarga to was not satisfactory as that had the feature of Ahamkari Srishti of 'Agyan' which was the resultant of Tamo Guna and was primarily of animals. Once again Brahma meditated with Satvik Guna and the outcome was the creation of the Deva sarga as He was highly satisfied in the Third Sarga. In the Fourth sarga, Brahma created Human Beings as a result of the Rajo Guna and the resultant dominance of 'Duhkha' (unhappiness). The Fifth Sarga is known as 'Anugraha' (Blessing) featuring Viparyaya Siddhi (Fulfilment) and Shanti (Peace). The Sixth Sarga deals with the creation of those who know the past and present; these are the 'Bhutas' and 'Bhutadhikas'; the latter are those who have the features of inspiring and getting inspired, who great interest in various matters and have narrow mind and thinking. In a different context, the First Sarga comprises of Brahma's Srishti, the Second Sarga relates to Brahmamsa Srishti or of Bhuta Sarga; the Third Sarga is Indriyak/Vaikarik Srishti which is of Prakrtika Sarga; the Fourth Sarga or the Chief Sarga is essentially of 'Sthavara ganas'; the Fifth Sarga is of 'Tiryakyoni' or of lower animals; the Sixth Sarga is of Devas; the Seventh Sarga is of 'Maanush' (Human beings); the Eighth Sarga is of Satvika and Taamasika features and finally the Ninth Sarga is of Praakrut and Vikaari Srishti, which is the root of the World.

In the process of Lord Brahma's Creation of Devas, Asuras, Pitras and Human Beings, Tamasika Guna prevailed most and he rubbed his thighs and created Danavas. He assumed another Physical form whose predominance was of Satvika guna and created Devas. With another Body along with the same Satvika Guna, he created Pitras. Subsequently, he took over yet another Physical form full of Rajasika Guna and produced Human Beings. He devoted the day time for the creation of Devas, the nights for the production of Asuras, Sandhya (the day- break time) for Pitras and the Jyotsna Sandhya for the creation of human beings. While creating Asuras during the night, Brahma was tired, felt hungry and with the mix of

Tamasika and Rajasika Gunas in that darkness created a species and attempted to eat the species with moustaches and beards which shouted desperately saying 'Rakshaami' (Please do not eat us!) and thus were born 'Yakshas.' As Brahma's hair from his head started dropping, he grew angry and created serpents; when he grew further angry the result was the creation of 'Pashitaashana' or Consumers of Meat known as 'Pisachaas'. In the early morning hours of the day, Brahma thought of 'Gou' (Cow) and thus were born 'Gandharvas'. Further, the Eight-fold Devas were created .Thereafter, the Srishti of 'Pasu Pakshi' (animals and birds) was generated from Brahma's body; from his stomach and sides emerged cows, from both of his feet were generated horses, elephants, donkeys, hares and deer; camels and asses besides innumerable animals, birds and medicinal plants from his body hairs. Brahma's creations were classified as 'Graameena Srishti' (Rural based) like buffalo, goat, cow, horse, donkey etc. and 'Aaranya Srishti' like monkeys, birds, water-based, Snakes, and wild animals. From his first face, Brahma created Yagna Gayatri, Tri Ruk, Tri-vrut, Saama Rathantar and Agni-shtom; from his Dakshina mukha or Southern faced were produced Yajuh, Thrishthubhchhanda, Panch Dasa shtoma, Brihat Saam; from his Western face were produced Saama Jagaticchanda, Vairupa and Atiraatra.; from his Northern face emerged twenty one Attharva Vedas, Aptoryaam, Anushthup chhanda, and Vairaaja. Lord Brahma performed already the creation of illumination, diamonds, clouds, Indra Dhanush (Rainbow) and birds even before the of Kalpa. Thus whichever 'Praani' with life is to be born with scheduled tasks in its lifetime is in position. These Praanis now born with their actions in their earlier lives with violence, nonviolence, roughness or smoothness, cruelty or kindness, Dharma or Adharma, Satya or Asathya would receive back the opposite treatment in their life ahead.

Lord Brahma meditated further when his Manasa Putras viz. Bhrugu, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Angira, Marichi, Daksha, Atri and Vasishtha were materialised; he created then the Krodhaatmak (Irate) Rudra, followed by 'Samkalpa' (mental desire) and Dharma (Virtue). Brahma also created Swayambhu Manu and his wife Shatarupa; the latter gave birth to girls Akruti and Prasuti; Akruti was wedded to Prajapati Ruchi and Prasuti was married to Daksha Prajapati. Akruti and Ruchi gave birth to a son Yagna and a daughter Dakshina. Prasuti and Daksha gave birth to twenty four daughters; these were as follows: Shraddha, Lakshmi, Drhiti, Tushti, Pushti, Medha, Kriya, Buddhi, Lajja, Vapu, Shanti, Siddhi and Kirti were wedded to Dharma; the remaining eleven were Khyati, Sati, Sambhuti, Smriti, Preeti, Kshama, Sannati, Anasuya, Urja, Swaha and Swadha were respectively married to Bhrigu, Mahadeva, Marichi, Angira, Pulastyha, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasishtha, Atri, Vahni and Pitrugana. Out of these, Dharma's progeny were as follows: Shraddha to Kama, Shri to Darpa, Dhriti to Niyam, Santosh to Tushti, Lobha to Pushti, Medha to Shruta, Kriya to Danda, Buddhi to Bodha, Lajja to Vinay, Vapu to Vyavasayak, Shanti to Kshema, Siddhi to Sukha, and Kirti to Yasha. Shraddha's son Kama (desire) gave birth to Harsha (happiness) and the latter's son Adharma (Evil) was married to Himsa (Violence) and Anrut (Untruth) was born to Adharma and Himsa. In this family lineage emerged Nikruti, Naraka, Bhaya (Fear), Maya (Illusion), Vedana (Distress), Vyadhi (Disease), Jara (Old Age), Shoka (Anguish), Trishna (Thirst), Krodh (Anger), Mrityu (Death), Alakshmi (Scarcity) and one of the latter's sons was named *Dussaha* (Intolerant).

Dussaha the intolerant and his notorious sons, daughters and grandchildren

This Dussaha, who lives in each and every household, is always angry, hungry, down-headed, meanminded, and talks like a crow; he has a frightening face and crooked look. Brahma advised Dussaha to reform himself and control his temper and tongue, but Dussaha replied that he was unable to satisfy himself and was not able to check his thirst and gluttony; he prayed to Brahma to give him the boon of contentment and strength. Brahma gave certain tips to follow: 'Patent weaknesses of human beings like passion, antagonism, greediness, arrogance, obsession and distrust are Dussaha's strength; abscesses / blisters where flies or worms swarm around constitute his food; those stinking storage bins with filthy left overs of rotten food or private places of human residues are his dwelling places; houses where prostitution and gambling take place, and all kinds of sins are performed or encouraged are Dusshaha's rest homes; contrarily where Vratas, Yagnas, Worships, Veda parayana and Prayers take place ought to be avioded by Dussaha since such hallowed areas should never be entered or even passed by! In short, the target areas where Dussaha should visit often or even stay for long are where all kinds of filth or filthy minds hatch evil deeds, but Dussaha's glimpses or passings by to Places of virtue, tolerance, charities, invocations of Deities are a sheer waste of time and energy for him! Those houses where Chandan, Veena, or such other musical instruments are played, Mirrors are decorated, honey, milk and curds are aplenty are all Abodes of Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, Dussaha should never go any where around. Dussaha married Nirmayishtha, the daughter of Lord Yama and their progeny were eight sons-Dantaakrisht, Tathokti, Parivart, Angadhruk, Shakuni, Gandaantarati, Garbhaha and Sasyah and eight daughters-Niyojika, Virodhini, Swayamharakaari, Shraamani, Rutuharika, Smritahara, Bejahara and Vidveshini. The entire progeny of the Dussaha couple looked extremely frightening to the whole world. The manner in which the progeny of Dussaha could be pacified is stated as follows: The first son of Dussaha, Dantaakrisht, creates teething trouble to children and the way to subside the pain is to spread white 'Sarason' (mustard) seeds on the bed, give medicinal bath to the child, sing hymns of a Scripture, put a bone of a camel or a Gainda or let the child wear a silk dress to provide relief. The second son Tathokthi (literally meaning 'be there only' or be at the position of 'Status Quo') provides a path of stunted growth of human life; the remedy to convert a dull person to develop and activise the personality and vision is to extol Lord Brahma the Creator or the Family Deity on a daily basis by singing His hymns, perform worship and resort to acts of virtue. The third son Parivartak is in the bad habit of 'narmagarbha bhashana' (saying something and meaning something else) and the preventive / safeguard cure against such conversations is to spread white mustard around the self and/ or recite Rakshoghna Mantras. The fourth son Angadhruk provokes with exaggerated/ sensational Versions or provocation of words or actions (literally meaning shaking limbs/ body parts) to amuse the listeners and the remedy is to beat the victim's body with kusha grass and recite Shanti Mantras. The fifth son Shakuni assumes the form of a crow, or a dog or an owl and indicates to a human being about the forthcoming Shubhaashubha suchana or an indication of good or bad omens and the remedy is to act upon the indication at once. The sixth son is Gandaantatrati who was born at the half a muhurat of Gandaantara or the fag-end of the termination of the Touch and Go of the Delivery time. The birth of a child at the critical juncture would indeed call for a 'Shanti' function, viz. Moola Nakshatra Shanti, Deva Stuti or Eulogy, Blessings of Brahmanas and bathing of Go-mutra or Urine of Cow besides white mustard seeds, worship of the Birth Star and the Ruling Planet at the time of the Delivery. The Seventh child was named 'Garbhah' who was fear-provoking and destructive; he *tries to nip the embryo* of early pregnancy. To ward off this risk, the parents have to recite the 'Deva Kavachas' like Durga Kavacha with piety and purity of hearts and wear appropriate precious stone rings and neck-laces. The eighth son of Dussaha has a malicious tendency of *Dhanya Nashta* (spoiling crops of foodgrains); the remedy is to keep old footwear or a 'Drishti Figure' / a scare crow in the paddy fields, 'Chandala pravesha' or making a Chandala's entry in the fields, 'Apasavya gaman' or circling the farm area in reverse direction. Besides, giving away 'Bali' (Sacrifice; say of a goat) and recital of 'Somaambu' Mantra would safeguard the crops.

Dusshaha's first daughter Niyojika seeks to involve human beings to resort to *Parastree gaman and* Paradravyaaharan (excites relationship with other's wives and stealing other's money); the safeguarding 'Shanti' procedure against her temptations is to resort to 'Punya Grandha Paath' or recite the contents of Holy Scriptures, refrain from krodha (anger) and kama (desire), abstain from criticising others and conversing with contempt and carelessness which leads to argument, loss of mental balance and finally the tendencies of money and desire of women. The second daughter Virodhini seeks to break good relations with near and dear; she creates rifts and even breaks cordial relations with one's wife / husband, parents, children, family members, friends, co-workers, and the public in general too. The procedure of bringing about peace, mutual confidence and understanding is to perform 'Bali Karya' (Sacrifice), and practise patience, puja and perseverance. The third daughter Kharihaan is bhojana vinaashini or spoils all the edible material like Anna (Foodgrains), Milk and milk products and all other edible products including fruits, oils, other cooking materials even to the extent of drying up the udders of milk-yielding cattle and breasts of mothers; she even prevents those from eating and encourages stealing. She also prevents from the organisation from propitious and auspicious deeds to take place in a righteous family. She is also the stealer of Pushparaga Coloured Cotton Sutra (neck lace) and thus is known as Svayamharini. The procedure of bringing about Peace at the various houses is to perform Agni homams and the sacred ash of the homas is to spray the bhasma in the vessels of milk and other sources of milk as also the storage places of various food materials. The fourth daughter of Dussaha named Shraamani creates unrest and excites to execute evil deeds. The remedy to overcome her wicked deeds is to spread out white Mustard seeds at the sitting and resting places of persons and recite 'Bhumi Sukta' praying Devi Bhumi. The fifth daughter Ritumati troubles womenfolk during the menses period and to overcome this difficulty Brahmanas must be approached to recite 'Shanti Mantras' after taking early morning 'Snaans' at Tirthas, Mandirs, Holy River 'Sangamas' (joining places); organise Pujas at Temples and of course ask Vaidyas to treat the affected persons. The sixth daughter Smritiharika prevails on human beings to lapse their memories and the remedy is to shift the affected persons to visit a picturesque Place of charm and tranquility. The seventh daughter Bijapahaarini ruins the union of husbands and wives, with special reference to young couple; the remedy is to perform 'Graha Shanti' and Brahmana Puja and charities. The last eighth daughter of Dussaha named Dveshini instigates hatred among men and women and remedy is to perform the Mitravinda Yagna by offering honey, milk and curd-tila mix in the Agnihotra so that mutual revulsion of men and women is softened.

Similarly, Dussaha's grand children numbered thirty eight: Dantakrishta had two girls viz. Vijalpa or Niraadara Midhya and Kalaha or quarrelsome; the second son Tathoktika had a son called Kaalajimha who gives considerable difficulty to the son of that woman whose tongue is affected by Kaalajimha. Parivrat had two sons, Virup and Vikrut who trouble pregnant women since they would have problems of delivery unless they avoid trees, mountain valleys, river /sea beds, and within four walls of residences. Angadhrik had a son named Pishun who enters the bone marrows of Agyan (ignorant) persons and gradually eats the same. Shakuni had five children viz. Syen, Kaak, Kapoth, Grudhra and Uluk and the following entities rule over the respective children viz. Mrityu, Kaal, Yama, Vyadhi, and Naikruti. In order to ensure 'Atmaraksha' or Safety of the Self, 'Shanti karyas' or Tasks for Propitiation or reducing adverse effects must be performed. Gandaprantarati had six sons who reside in the womb of women known as Chatvaaryahani (First four days), Trayodasam, Ekadasham, Shraaddhadin, Dinaanta, and Parvadin (these are the days of Union of man and woman). Garbhahanthu had two Issues viz. Vighna (a boy) who eats into pregnancies and Mohini (who torments pregnant women in the forms of snake, frog, scorpion or tortoise). Sasyahantak had a son called Kshudra, whose impact is felt if suitable days are not observed at the commencement of the farming of the paddy fields. In respect of all the

grandchildren of Dussaha by his sons, remedies to escape the ill-effects that the grand children give away have been all prescribed.

The adverse effects of Dusshaha's grand children by his daughters too were clear. The first daughter Nijojika had four girls viz. Prachodika who enters human psyche in the garb of virtues but resulting in patent vices, viz. Adharma under the cover of Dharma, Akama in the cover of Kama, Anartha in the clothing of Artha and Amoksha in the pretext of Moksha. The second daughter Virodhini had three sons viz. Chodak, Graahak and Tamah Pracchhaadak; Chodak enters human residences to encourage the spread of evil and Tamah Pracchhadak occupies the mental thinking by way of extreme anger covered by darkness. The third daughter Swayamhaari had three sons, viz. Sarvaahari, Arthaahaari and Viryaahaari who enter the houses of those human beings who have no respect for Dharma (Virtue) and its practice. Shraamani begot a son named Kakajangha who enters the houses of those who sing, dance or converse and those who resort to bed with women in the Sandhya timings; such houses that are soft targets of Kakajangha would never have mental peace. During the rithukaal (menses period), Harini begot three daughters viz. Kuchahara, Vyanjanaharika and Jaatahaarini. A girl whose wedding is scheduled on a specific day but takes place an another date shrinks her chest and is known as Kuchahara; a girl who is wedded without performing puja to her mother is known as Vyanjanaharika; and Jaataharini is she who steals a child from the 'prasuta griha' (birth place) and keeps another baby in exchange is called Jaataharini; the son so born was Prachanda. Smritiharini the sixth daughter of Dussaha arranges the birth of chandala 'putras' (sons) who were born to persons in a vesya's house and they forgot all about the birth of the chandalas. Another daughter of Dussaha, Bijaapahaarini assumes the task of stealing the semen of man and begot two daughters Vatarupa and Arupa; the former has the tendency to pass on venereal diseases to the illegal suitors and the latter passes on debility. Finally, the eighth daughter of Dussaha viz. Vidveshini begot two sons viz. Chapal and Papachari who have the influence on human beings who are prone to cheap and wily attractions and addicts to sinful activities. Indeed, there are cures and remedies both physiological and spiritual- that do exist. All the same, the inimitable (though vicious) role that Dussaha has in the daily behaviour pattern of the entire humanity is unquestioned!

#### Creation of Rudra, his wives and descendants of Manasa Putras

As Lord Brahma created the Manasa Putras, there was a blue coloured boy lying on his lap crying softly and asked Brahma to give him a name; Brahma gave him the name of **Rudra** and asked the child not to cry further; but the boy cried seven times more and hence Brahma gave him further seven names viz. along with the names of his wives and places of stay as follows: **Bhava**, **Sharva**, **Ishaana**, **Pashupati**, **Bhima**, **Ugra and Maha Deva**. The names of Rudra's wives are Suvarchala, Uma, Vikeshi, Swadha, Swaha, Dik, Diksha, and Rohini. The 'sthaanas' or Places of Stay of Rudra are Surya, Jal, Prithvi, Agni, Vayu, Akash, Dikshit, Brahmana and Soma. Besides, Rudra's another name sake Surya has eight sons viz. Shaneswar, Shukra, Lohitanga, Manojava, Shanda, Sarga, Santan and Bhudha. Rudra also has Sati as his wife but due her anger with her father, Daksha Prajapati, she ended her mortal life but Bhagavan Bhava wedded Devi Parvati, the daughter of King Himavan.

Manasa Putra Sage Bhrigu and his wife Khyati gave birth to two sons, Dhaata and Vidhaata. Mountain King Meru's daughters, Ayaati and Niyati were wedded to Dhaata and Vidhata. Ayaati gave birth to a boy named Praan and another boy of Niyati to Mrikandu. Sage Markandeya was born to Manaswini and Mrikandu and the Sage gave the name of his son as Vedashira. Angirasa Muni married Smriti and their daughters were Sinivali, Kuhu, Raka and Anumati. Sage Atri and the illustrious Anasuya gave birth to Soma, Durvasa and Dattatreya. Pulastya Muni and Preeti gave birth to Dutta and Dambholi. Prajapati Puhal and his wife begot three sons viz. Kardama, Arvira and Sahishnu. Ritu and wife Sannati got sixty thousand Balakhilyaganas. Urjva and Vasishtha gave birth to seven sons named Raja, Gaatra, Urdhvabaahu, Sabala, Anagha, Sutapa, and Shukra who are all known as Sapta Rishis. Agni was the eldest son of Brahma and his wife Swaha gave birth to mighty three sons viz. Paavak, Pavamaan, and Suchi who were the constant drinkers of water and they had forty sons; Agni's grand sons numbering forty nine included **four Pitras** viz. Agnishvaakta, Barhishad, Anagni and Saagni. From these Pitras, there were two daughters named Vaidharini and Mena who were great Brahma -vaadinis and Yoginis.

## Outlines of Manyantaras, 'Prithyi' (Earth) and of 'Sapta' (Seven) Dwipas

In one Manvantara, there are thirty crore sixty six lakh twenty thousand human years. The first Manvantara was of **Swayambhu**, followed by Swarochisha, Uttama, Tamasa, Chakshusha, and the current one is of Vivaswata. Swayambhu had ten sons and among the decsendants was the illustrious Priyavrata who ruled Sapta Dwipas and in turn, who was responsible for meauring and dividing the 'Sapta Dwipas' named seven of ten sons(as three others opted out) vix. Agnirgha to Jambu Dwipa, Meghadhiti to Pluksh Dwipa, Vapushyaman to Shasmali Dwipa, Jyotishman to Kusha Dwipa, Rithuman to Krouncha Dwipa, Avyaya to Shaaka Dwipa and Saavan to Pundarikaa Dwipa. Jambu Dwipa's Prajapati Agnirgha had nine sons viz. Naabhi, Kimpurusha, Hari, Ilavrita, Ramya, Hiranya, Kuru, Bhadra and Ketumala. The Region beyond Himalayas was given to Kimpurusha whose residents were all happy, devoid of fear of death or disease; Naabhi's son Rishabh whose son was Bharat and thus the Region under his rule was Bharata. Sumati was the name of Bharata's son but the former retired to forest life and gave the Kingdom to the descendants of Priyavrata.

The entire Bhuvana loka (Earth) is stated to occupy an area of fifty crore Yojanas (Approx. 15 km one Yojana), comprising Jambu Dwipa, Pluksha Dwipa, Shalmali Dwipa, Kusha Dwipa, Krouncha Dwipa, Shaaka Dwipa, and Pushkara Dwipa, each approximately double the size of the previous Dwipas and surrounded by Oceans of Lavana (Salt), Ikshu (Sugarcane juice), Sura (Amrit), Sarpi / Ghrita (Ghee / Classified Butter), Dadhi ((curd), Dugdha (Milk) and Jala (Water). **Jambu Dwipa** has an area of one lakh Yojanas by way of area, length and roundness, containing the mountains of Himavaan, Hemakut, Trishabh, Meru, Nila, Shweta, and Shringi. While these mountain ranges are governed by the Dikpalakas like Indra, the middle region sparkles with the prominent presence of Brahma with the four directions being blessed by Mandara, Gandhamaadan, Vipul and Suparshva Mountains on top of which are situated by the famous Trees of Kadamba, Jambu, Aswatthha and Vata respectively. On the Eastern side are the Jathar and Devakutha Mountains, which are mutually spread out as far as Nila and Nishadh, on the Meru's western side are Nishadh and Paariyaatra, Southern side are Nila and Nishadh and on the

Southern side are Kailash and Himalayas. It is this Jambu Dwipa sanctified with Great Mountains, Oceans, Rivers, Sarovars, Holy Trees and fantastic range of Natural Magnificence that is known as Punya Bhumi of which Bharata is popular as Karma Bhumi, which is the springboat of Swarga, Apavarga that is the opposite, Manushyata (humanness), Naraka (Hell) and innumerable possibilities of rebirth from flies to Devas, where Karma or Action- be it Virtuous or Vicious- secures the opposite reaction.

Holy River Ganga originated from Maha Vishnu's sacred feet at Dhruva Loka, passing through Chandra Mandal which was the 'Adhara' or the hold of water of the Universe. The River Water was sactified by the hot and radiant Sunrays, fell on the Sumeru Mountain top and divided as four forceful flows and got distributed on Mandara and other Mountains. Gradually, the surging currents of Ganga occupied several Regions, breaking Mountain boulders and travelling towards 'Chaitraratha Vana' known as Sita. It was that Sita Ganga which fell on Gandhamadana Parvat as Alaknanda and gladdened the nearby Devatas at Nandanavana, from there reached Manasarovar and fell on Himalayas where in response to the prayers of King Bhagiratha, Shambhu Deva performing 'Tapas atop Mahadri, withstood the force of the flood to fall on his head and released just a stream from His Jatajut (knotted hair). As Ganga fell on the Earth, it got divided as seven flows, three of which travelled southwards as Mahanadi and merged with the Ocean, one stream followed King Bhagiratha's chariot to sanctify the ashes of his ancestors and three more parts fell on the western foothills of Meru called 'Vipul paad' at Suchakshu Sub Mountain; one part moved on to Ketumala Varsha and finally into the Southern Sea, another part on Rishabhadika Mountain travelling northen side and yet another part as Bhadrasoma River as also as Mahanadi on Shankhakuta Mountain from where via Vrishabhadri to Kurukshetra. Thus the Holy Ganga got spread across the entire length and breadth of 'Aryavarta' and even far beyond.

# Bharata Varsha, its Mountains, Rivers and Territories

Mahatma Markandeya explained further to Dwijottama Koushtik the features of Bharata Varsha as follows: Bharata Varsha comprised nine parts viz. Indra Dwip, Ksheruman, Tamravarna, Soumya, Gabhastimaan, Naga Dwipa, Gandharva, Vaaruna and Bharat. The ninth segment Bharat is surrounded be Oceans, its Eastern side by Kiratas, Western side by Yavanaganas and in the middle region are the Chaturvarna or four classes of Brahmana, Kshatria, Vysya and Shudras, performing their respective Varna Dharmas or the prescribed duties like Yagnas by Brahmanas, Kshatriyas of Administration and Defence, business and trading by Vyasyas and Shudras of Service and become eligible for attaining Swarga, or Moksha or reap the fruits of sins or virtues. There are Seven 'Kulaachalas' or Mother Mountains viz. Mahendra, Malaya, Sahya, Shaktiman, Kaksha, Vindhya, and Paariyatra and thousands of 'Upa Parvatas' like Kolaahal, Mandara, Dardura, Vaataswana, Vaidhyuta, Mainaaka, Swaras, Thungaprastha, Naagagiri, Rochana, Paandura, Pushpa, Durjjayant, Raivatak, Arbuda, Trashyamuka, Gomanta, Kutashaila, Krutasmara, Sriparvata, and Chakoraparvat, which are all very high, wide and broad. These massive Mountains and surroundings are the inhabitants of Mlecchhas or Aryans, utilising the various rivers adjacent for drinking, farming and other purposes like Ganga, Saraswati, Sindhu, Chandrabhaga, Yamuna, Shatadru, Vitasta, Iravati, Kuhu, Gomati, Bahuda, Dhutapapa, Drushadvati, Vipaasha, Devika, Ramkshu, Gandaki and Kaushiki; these are all from the Himalayas and around. Those rivers from Pariyatra Mountains include Vedasmriti, Vedavati, Vena, Vritraghni, Saanandana, Sadanira, Mahi, Para, Charmanyavati, Nupi, Vidisha, Kshipra, and Avanti. Mahanad sona and Narmada originated

from Surataadri. Mandakini and Darshani Nadi are from Chitrakuta Parvat.Godavari, Bhimaratha, Krishna, Venya, Tungabhadra and Kaveri emerged from Vidhyachala. From Malay Mountain came Kritamala, Tamraparni, Pushpaja, and Utpalaavati. Additionally, there are innumerable well known and not so well known rivers dotting all over Bharata Varsha. As regards the territories in Bharata Varsha, the Northern part comprised Kamboja, Darada, Barbara, Angaloukika (Harshavardhana), Cheena, Tushara, Tamasa, Hamsamarga, Kashmira, Shulika, Kuhaka, Urna, Darwa etc. On the Eastern side, the territories included Angaraka, Mudraka, Antargiri, Bahirgiri, Plavanga, Mala, Damala, Vartika, Uttarabrahma, Pravijaya, Bhargava, Geyamallaka, Pragjotisha, Madra, Videha, Tamraliptaka, Malla, Magadha, Gomeda and so on. In the South of Bharata Varsha, the territories included Pandya, Kerala, Chola, Kruntya, Kumara, Vanavasaka, Maharashtra, Maahishika, Karnataka, Kalinga, Aabhira, Vaishikya, Atayva, Pulinda, Vindhya, Maaleya, Vaidarbha, Dandaka, Pourika, Moulika, Ashmak, Bhogavardhana, Naishika, Kuntala, Andhra, Udbhida, Vanadaraka, etc. On the North East, Taxila, Koshala, Tripura, Vidisha, etc. on the West, Saurashtra, Anantya, Arbuda etc. and on the South East, Utkala, Uktamarna, Dasharna, Bhojya, Kishkindhaka, Tumburu, Tumbula and Naishidha.

Markandeya explained to Dwijavar Kaushtik that Bharat Varsha was a 'Bijaswarupa' or the form of various seeds which had Brahmatva, Indrastva, Devatva and Manushyatva or of the features of Brahma, Indra, Devas and Human Beings respectively. Among the various worlds, Bharat Varsha happened to be of the 'Kurmarupa' (Tortoise Avatara) of Bhagavan Vishnu comprising the various Territories spread out in various directions mentioned as above. Also, Bharata Varsha is a Karma Bhumi as Human Beings are capable of achieving anything some of which are perhaps not in the reach of even Devas or Danavas! This is so since humans could conquer innumerable hurdles, even without the infrastructural support that Devas and Danavas are blessed with; human beings excel themselves by the dint of their hard work coupled with inherent originality and diligence. *Api Maanushyamaapasyamo Devatvaathprachutaah Kshitou, Manushyah kuruthe that yatra sakyam Suraasuraih* (If one falls from Devatva down to Earth in this Bharata Varsha, whatever human beings could achieve, would be far beyond the realm of possibility to Devas or Danavas)

#### Pravarakhya and Varudhini - Swarochi and Manorama- Swarochisha Manu

Having given the gist of the Foremost Manu Swayambhu, his illustrious descendant Privavrata who ruled Sapta Dwipas, especially Jambu Dwipa of which Bharata Varsha was an important component, Markandeya narrated the memorable sequence of events leading to the birth of Swarochisha Manu. A learned Brahmana youth called Paravarakhya lived in a township named Arunaspada on the banks of River Varuna who observed Rituals regularly and worshipped 'Atithis' or guests, especially those who were learned too. Once, a 'Siddha' who had enormous knowledge of Mantras and Tantras and an expert of medicinal herbs and plants arrived at Pravara's place; in fact, Pravara always had a longing to visit far off places and evinced keen interest in the experiences of the Siddha; he requested the Siddha to afford an opportunity to visit Himalayas somehow. Siddha gave him a tree root and said that the 'lepana' or the essence of the exotic root would enable Pravara to visit far off places of his volition. He said that if Pravara desired to visit Himalayas he could close his eyes and straight away he would be there! As Pravara did so, he was transferred to Himalayas instantly and was lost in witnessing the unparalelled vision of the ice mountains, the abundant glory of the natural gardens, the enchanting beauty of Nature's

gifts like the mountain peaks, the fantastic valley views, the gushing streams of waterbodies and deep waterfalls, the rich variety of flowers and luscious fruits and so on. As he was wandering with blissful abandon, he discovered that the coat of the essence from the miracle root disappeared on his feet vanished and realised that he travelled a lot and far for long time. As the afternoon was almost nearing the evening, he was concerned as to how could he return home since the essence of the miracle root was dried and disappeared from his feet. He was rather concerned that he lost his way in the Himalayas. Fortunately for him, he found a beautiful damsel on his way and asked her as to why was she moving around all alone in this lonely place and could she please direct him to a place known as Arunapuram. Coquettishly, she replied that she was Varudhini the daughter of Menaka the Apsara; but was this a habit of young men to start conversation with lonely girls? Pravarakhya replied in the defensive that she was mistaken and genuinely he desired to know as to how he could go back home and that out of sheer temptation he accepted the offer of a Sidhhi who provided a miracle-root essence to transfer him to distant places instantly and the essence that he applied got vanished and thus lost his way. Varudhini said that it was not necessary to prolong the conversation and that she fell in love with him passionately at the moment that she saw him and would be delighted to get him in her embrace straightaway. Pravara replied that he was a traditional and married Brahmana youth with a vow to possess only one wife, performing regular 'Agni Karmas' and 'Vratas' (Sacred Rituals) and he had to somehow return back home by the evening as the Evening Rituals would be affected and more over his wife and children as also aged parents would be awaiting his return with great concern. So saying, Pravara prayed to Agni Deva and the latter appeared in the form of a Brahmana and by lifting Pravara on his shoulders took Pravara safe instantly to his home. Meanwhile a Gandharva youth, who rejected several offers to Varudhini for several years now assumed the form of Maya Pravarakhya and showed up while Varudhini said in desperation that if Pravara would not change his mind, she would as well end up her life! Maya Pravarakhya replied that 'Srutis' (Vedas) affirmed on the one hand that a woman in distress ought to be rescued at any cost and on the other hand they also averred that there should not be a break in the regular Rituals; however, he had decided that he should save a woman in misery and hence decided to accept her offer, but on one condition that she should not open her eyes during their union and she readily agreed to the condition. The couple enjoyed happiness for some time together, but aftersome time Varudhini discovered the reality about the Maya Pravarakhya and gave the Gandharva a curse to be born as a miserable human being. Meanwhile, Varudhini got pregnant, gave birth to a son called Swarochi with radiant features and mental faculty and trained him as a Brahmana boy who enentually got turned out to be a handsome and disciplined youth in Brahmana dharmas. Swarochi was moving around in a forest aimlessly once, when a desperate voice of a woman was heard in great anguish. As she came nearby to Swarochi she was frightened since a demon was followng her; she conveyed that some 'Astras' (mantrik arrows) were known to her from his dead father and would be useful in destroying the Danava following her. With the help of the Astras, Swarochi killed the Danava, from whom emerged a figure who was actually the father of the crying woman, called Manorama. Manorama and her friends Vibhavari and Kalavati wandered in a forest once and unfortunately offended a Sage performing 'Tapas'; the Sage cursed Manorama's friends to become as Lepers and that she would become a woman on Earth. When all the girls requested the Sage, he agreed that a brave male would kill a Danava with the help of Astras of her father and that brave man would also marry her and her companions too. The person who emerged from the Danava killed by Swarochi was the father of Manorama. Eventually Swarochi and Manorama were married happily. But, she was not fully satisfied as her companions, Vibhavari and Kalavati still remained as lepers. As Swarochi collected specified 'Auoshadhis' (plant roots) and cured Vibhavari's leprosy, she conveyed her gratitude and told her that she too was a Ganharva Virgin like her companion Manorama and that she would teach him the language of animals if he could consent to marry her also. Swarochi agreed and wedded her. Kalavati said that she also could please wed her, as her father, who was a Sage, married an Apsara called Punjakasthali, died of a thunderbolt and that as she herself decided to commit suicide after learning her background, Devi Parvati appeared and prevented her self-immolation saying that a person named Swarochi would

save and marry her; by way of gratitude she taught Swarochi the Padmini Vidya that Devi Parvati taught her. Swarochi thus secured three Celestial Damsels as his wives, learnt Mantrik powers from Manorama which helped to kill a Davava, the art of animal language from Vibhavari, the Padmini Vidya from Kalavati and the blessings of Devi Parvati too. Having enjoyed life with happiness for six hundred years, Swarochi became a proud father of Vajaya from Manorama, Merunandana from Vibhavari and Prabhasa from Kalavati. With the help of the 'Padmini Vidya' which he learnt from Kalavati, Swarochi made his sons the Kings of their own Territories. He went on a hunting spree once and found a female deer being chased by a boar; the King decided to kill the boar but the deer requested him to kill her instead. The King declined to kill the deer as she was defenceless, but she entreated him for mercy killing as she could not secure a virtuous husband in life; when the King asked her to divulge whom would she desired to marry, she replied coyly that she yearned for the King! Swarochi said that it was not possible to do so, then she asked him to embrace her once and he would then see the miracle because the 'Vanadevata' or the Deity of the Forest requested it to do so. The King embraced the deer and the deer got pregnant and instatnly delivered the memorable Swarochisha Manu, - the second in the Series, when celestial drums were sounded, a heavy fall of scented flowers rained, Gandharvas sang mellifluously and played musical extravaganzas and 'Apsaras' danced with ecstacy.

# Swan couple inspire Swarochi's renunciation and implications of Padma Vidya

As Swarochi was enjoying an outing in a garden with his three wives, he heard the conversation of a Swan Couple as he had the facility of knowing the language of animals and birds. The male swan said that indeed they enjoyed their conjugal life to the brim but could there be an end to this! The female swan said that after all human beings craved for this pleasure only as they would perform Yagnas, Vratas and Charities only to sustain and enhance the pleasures of life and why should one talk of abandoning such life! The male swan said that those who yearn for 'Iham' (worldly life) were not qualified to suggest 'Param' and those who were excessively possessive of the temporary and unreal life styles would have to regret in self-deceipt eventually as they get deep into the slush like a heavy elephant. He cited the example of Swarochi who had never tired of three lovely wives and looked perhaps for more! Swarochi was non-plussed at the conversation of the swans and decided at once to relinquish family life out of a sense of shame that even birds were critisising his unenviable example, let alone co-human beings! Thereafter he left for the penultimate 'Kulaashrama' of 'Vanaprastha' of abstinence at once and finally reached salvation; Lord Brahma then ordered for the next and third Manu as **Swarochiska**.

Muni Kroushtiki asked Markandeya about the significance of **Padmini Vidya** which Devi Parvati taught to Kalavati who in turn taught to Swarochi. The 'Adhishtana Devata' (Ruling Deity) of Padmini Vidya is Goddess Lakshmi who regulates Eight Kinds of 'Nidhis' (Sources) viz. Padma (or a Lotus which is of Satvika nature), Maha Padma (The Great Lotus, also of Satvika nathure), Makara (A Crocodile signifying a Tamasika source of Wealth), 'Kacchhap' (Tortoise signifying Wealth of Land, Mines and such other established sources), 'Mukund' (Source of Rajasika nature of Wealth), 'Nandaka' (Yet another Rajasika source of Wealth), 'Neela' (Literally meaning a Blue Sapphire indicating a Source of Tamasika nature indicating contentment and Happiness) and 'Shankha' (literally meaning a Conch-shell indicating that Original Source Rajasika nature that is never parted with): *Padmini naama ya Vidya Lakshmistaya - asrayaascha Devata, Tadhaadhaarascha nidhiyastanmey nigadatah shrunu/ Yatra Padma Mahaa* 

Padmou tatha makara kacchapou, Mukundo Nandakaschaiva Neelah shankhoshtamo nidhih/ Among the eight sources of Wealth, the 'Nidhi' titled Padma enriches wealth by the successive generations; this source of Wealth multiplies by way of business deals in the form of vessels and ornaments made of Gold, silver etc. enabling the performance of Propitious Acts like Yagnas, Charities, Construction of Temples; this source is essentially of 'Satvika Guna'. The Nidhi called Maha Padma which is also of Satvika Guna deals with exchange or further acquisitions of high-value jewellery and precious stones like diamonds for performing sizeably big tasks of Maha Yagnas and such other huge magnitudes; in this case the source of wealth involves very substantial investments or expenses for seven or more generations. Another source of wealth is of Tamasika nature called Makara which is utilised for enabling tasks like wars, maintenance of defence forces etc. but that kind of source might last for a generation or so. The source of wealth denoting Kacchapa is basically land-based, used for investments or expenses for 'Dharma Karyas'. Mukunda is another source of wealth which is used for the Promotion of Fine Arts or such other acts of personality development involving Rajo guna for leading happy and satisfying lives. Essentially meant for meeting expenses towards 'Athithya' (taking care of guests), social functions or personal obligations, another source of wealth is long standing for seven generations or so called Nandaka involving Rajo guna again. The seventh source of wealth is called Neela of Tamasika / Satvika nature again in which buying or selling is involved of items like Dhanya (Farm Produce), Vastra (clothing), or saleable material involving transactions lasting for a medium run of generations, say for two or three. The Eighth source of wealth known as Shankha is mostly for individual utilisation but not even for his family even and hence is basically for tamasika end-use.

# Accounts of further Manus- Uttama, Tamasa, Daivata, Chakshusa, and Vaivasvatha

Mahatma Markandeya narrated further to Sage Kroushtiki about the birth of the third Manu named Uttama. The grandson of the first Manu Swayambhu named Uttanapaada was blessed with a son named Uttam who became the King after his father passed away. In a weak moment when the new King was in the company of a dancing girl became angry with his wife Bahula and asked his 'dwarapalaka' to abadon her in a forest; he regretted later but could not find her subsequently. After the lapse of time, one Brahmana called Susharma approached the King with a complaint that his wife was kidnapped and she should be recovered by the King. The King sent his men in and outside his Kingdom but there was no trace. Finally, he approached a 'Trikaalagnya' (who knows the Past, Present and Future) who by the power of his 'Divya dhrishti' (Celestial Vision) found out that she was under the custody of a 'Rakshasa'. The King succeeded in locating the Rakshasa and controlled him and restored the Brahmana woman to Susharma. The Sage also informed that the Queen Bahula was under duress of a Nagaraja named Salapotaka in Patala who tried to force her to marry him but the queen did not relent. The Nararaja then asked Bahula to look after the Naga princess who was dumb and deaf and since then the queen was serving the Naga daughter. The King with the help of the Rakshasa reached Patala to bring back the queen once again and sought pardon from her for his erstwhile foolish act of abandoning her. The queen no boubt pardoned him but desired that the dumb Naga girl be somehow got cured. The King asked the grateful Susharma and the latter did the 'Sarasvata Sukta Parayana' (recitation of the Prayers to Goddess Sarasvati, the Goddess of Learning and Speech Power). The Naga girl regained her speech; the Brahmana retrieved his wife, the King gained the queen. A Muni named Karna blessed the King Uttama, who no doubt did the indiscretion of abandoning his wife Bahula but regretted sincerely, provided constant and effective help to Susharma, to his own queen, and to the Naga daughter. The Muni gave a boon to the

King to secure a son, who would also bear his father's name and that he would be the Third Manu **Uttama** controlling the entire world!

There was a King named Surashtra who had hundred wives but without a single issue. The King prayed to Sun God to extend his life-term, but all his wives died. He was tired of life and took to severe 'Tapas' (meditation) by standing single legged in top summer under scorching Sun amid 'Panchagnis' or Five Fire Pits; in rainy season withstanding torrential water from the Skies and in acute winter time under cold water bodies. During heavy rains once, he got carried away in a flood by holding the tail of a female deer and was washed away ashore. He expressed interest in making love to her, but the deer talked in a woman's voice and said that she was already pregnant and was actually the first wife that very King; in her childhood, she ran after a deer couple ready for mating and the male deer said she would curse her and when asked as to how she could talk in human voice, she replied that he was the son of a Muni in his earlier life and mated a she deer and was thus reborn as a 'Jatismara' with the knowledge of earlier life. The Muni Kumar turned as deer then got ready to curse the Princess unless the latter was ready to mate with him. The Princess refused and the deer cursed her to become a she deer in two successive births. In the second birth of the she deer, originally the first wife of the King Surashtra, delivered a boy and the deer died after delivery. The King brought up the boy as Lola, called with the pet name of **Tamasa** who became the fourth Manu and ruled over the whole world.

Sage Rutavaak did not get any child for long time and finally a son was born in the fourth 'Paada' (phase) of Revati 'Nakshatra' (Star) who turned out to be a wicked person and brought name. The Sage approached Maha Muni Garga to consult as to what might be the remedy and since that was due to the evil effect of the fourth phase of Revati, nothing could be done. By the virtue of his power of 'Tapas', Sage Rutvaak cursed the fourth phase of the Star which fell on the top of the Kumuda Mountain subsequently known as Raivataka Mountain. That part of the Star turned out as a 'Sarorava' (a water body), out of which emerged a baby girl whom a Sage called Pramucha brought up as Revati. The Muni requested Agni Deva for a suitable husband and it was settled that a boy named Durdama would be wedded to the girl. Revati insisted that her wedding be performed in her birth star only and since the fourth phase of the Revati Star was no longer existent, the Sage had to revive the same and the offspring of Revati and Durdama was named **Raivata**, who became the fifth Manu.

A King by name Anamishra and his wife Giribhadra begot a boy who laughed away when the mother was fondling the boy. As to what was reason for his loud life, the boy replied that there was a cat looking rather grim at the child. The mother got frightened and ran away from the Scene. At that time, a 'Rakshasi' arrived and quietly replaced the child with that of another child of a Brahmana couple and ate away the Brahmana child. After som time, the boy named Vikranta was asked to take the blessing of his mother at the time of his Upanayana (Holy-thread) function, Vikranta questioned whether he should greet the real mother or the duplicate one. He said that his real mother was Giribhdra and sought permission to go away for performing 'Tapas'. Lord Brahma was pleased and sought for a boon from the boy who asked for 'Atma Shuddhi'. Then Brahma appointed Vikranta as the next and the sixth Manu and named him as **Chakshusa** as the sixth Manu, since he was born before his eye-sight.

Vishwakarma's daughter Devi Sanjna was the wife of Surya Deva and their son is the seventh and the present Manu called Vaiwasvata, since he is the son of Viwaswan. As Surya Deva is too powerful, Devi Sanjna could not withstand the extreme radiance and heat of his form and was unable to fully open her eyes and Surya got annoyed and scolded that she would give birth to 'Praja samyama paranaya' or the Deity of Yama, who keeps the control and regulation of human beings in a fearsome manner. Sanjna was still afraid of Surya and glanced at him with wobbly and unsteady eyes; Surya cursed her that she would give birth to River Yamuna whose course too highly uneven. Devi Sanjna was unable to hold the wrath of her husband any further and shifted to her father's house. There she created a 'Chhaya Sanjana '(Shadow of hers) and briefed her to pretend as the original Sanjana. The Chhaya Sanjan assured the Original that till such time that Surya Deva did not touch her hair nor discover the fact otherwise, there might not be any problem. Surya Deva once confronted Chhaya Sanjna as to where be Sanjna; she said that she was Sanjna alright! Surya called Sanjna's father and Viswakarma conveyed that after her return from his house, she must have returned to Surya Deva only! Then Surya Deva in his celestial vision found that the real Sanjna was meditating for Surya Deva in the form of a mare in Bhu Loka. Then Surya Deva was pleased to note that Sanjna was indeed fond of him, but was unable to bear his heat and sparkle. Then Vishvakarma as also Devas prayed to Surya Deva as follows: Namasthey Rukswarupaaya Samarupaaya namah, Yajusswarupa rupaaya Saamnaam dhamayatuy namah/ Jnaanaika dhama bhutaya nirdhuta tamasenamah, Shuddha Jyotisswarupaya vishuddhay amalatmaney/ Chakriney shankhine dhaamney Padmine namah, Varishtthaya Varenyaya Paramasmai Paramaatmaney/ Namokhila Jagadvyaapiswarupaatma murtaye/ Sarva kaarana bhutaaya nishthaai Jnanachetasaam, Namah Surya swarupaaya Prakaashaatma swarupiney/ Bhaskaraya namastubh tatha Dinakrutey namaha, Sharvari hetaye chaiva, Sandhya jyotsnaakrutenamah/ kriyate twatkaraih sparshayaajjwaladeenaam pavitrata, Homadaanaadiko dharmonopakaaraaya jaayatey/Taavadyaavanna samyogi jagadedattvadamshubhih, Ruchastey sakalaahyota Yajumshyetaanichaanyatah/Sakalaani cha Saamaani nipataanti twadgatah, Trayamyastvam Jagannatha twameva cha Yajuryamah/Yatah Saamamachaschaiva tatho NathaTrayeemayah, Twameva Brahmano rupam Param cha Paramevacha/Murtha murthastatha sookshmaha shthoolarupastatha shithah,Nimeshakaashtadimayah Kaalarupah Kshayaatmakah/ Praseeda swechhaya rupam stejahshaminam kuru. (You are of Rukswarupa or of the Form of Rig Veda, Sama Veda Swarupa, Yajur Veda Swarupa, You are the main fulcrum of Gyana, Destroyer of Darkness, the Pure Form of Illumination, Vishuddha Paramatma (Embodiment of the Cleanest Soul); My Greetings to You, who holds the Shankha, Chakra, Saaranga and Padma (Conchshell, Discus, Lotus and musical Saranga); You are the Eldest, the Best, the Super Soul, the All-Pervading, the Nishtha (Epitome of Purity), the Great Reason of Reasons, Surya, Prabhakar, Bhaskara, Dinakara; You are the Night, the Sandhya or the Dusk, or the Jyotsna (Twilight); You are the Embodiment of the Great Illumination); You are the Universe and the Awakenness; You are the unique source of world-wide luminosity for all the animate and inanimate species; the mere touch of Your rays make the day, the twilight and the darkness; they enliven the Murthis, Scriptures, Vedas, the Tinieset and the most Gigantic etc.) Further to the request of Devas and of Viswakarma, Surya Deva discarded the endless radiance; from out of the 'Rukmaya Tejas' of Surya was created Prithvi, Yajurmaya Tejas was created Akash and from Samamaya Tejas was created Swarga; Twashta took away fifty percent of Surya's original Energy out of which were generated Maha Deva's Trishul, Lord Vishnu's Chakra, 'Daruna Shakti' or the Annihilating Power of Vasuganas and Vayu as also of Kubera's 'Palki, 'Astras' of Yakshas and Vidyadharas. Vishwakarma too took away fifteenth part. After absorbing the original power, finally Surva was left with sixteenth form of the original Energy! (Reading or hearing the above Surya Stotra not only brings about excellent Peace of Mind but also good health). Later on Surya Deva assumed the Form of a Horse and appeared at Uttara Kuru Varsha where Devi Sanjna was meditating in the form of a mare. Thinking that the horse was a Stranger, the mare sought to secure her back and faced the horse and in the process their noses got entangled and two sons named 'Naasatya' and 'Dastra' were born; thereafter a horse-riding son with Charma (Shield), Varma

(Kavacha), Khadga (Sword) and Arrows with courage and strength named Revanta was born. Sanjna Devi was pleased that her Tapas in lessening the extraordinary illumination and heat of Surya Deva was fructified and returned back together. The next issue who was the eldest son of Sanjna was named **Viwasvata Manu**. Besides Yama and Yamuna, Surya Deva also begot the twin Ashvani Kumars from her. As Surya owned Sanjna-Chhaya Devi too, the next son was born as **Saavarni Manu**. Shaneswara was born to Surya Deva from Chhaya Devi and so did River Tapati.

During the Vaivaswa Manvantara, Markandeya confirmed that there are eight Devatas viz. Aditya, Vasu, Rudra, Saadhya, Viswva, Marut, Bhrigu, and Angira. Among these, Aditya, Vasu, and Rudragana were the progeny of Kashyap; Sadhya, Vasugana and Viswagana were the children of Dharma; Bhrigugana Devata were the sons of Bhrigu and Angiragana were the sons of Angira; this 'Sarga' (Classification) is known as Maricha Sarga. In this Manvantara too, Urjasvi Indra is the 'Yagnabhagabhuk' or the Consumer of Parts of Yagna; he was, is and shall be the Yagnabhagabhuk. Indra also is the Sahasraaksha, Vajradhari, and Purandara, Maghva, Vrisha Shringadhari, Gajagaami, Shatayagnakaari and Bhutaparaabhavakari as always. In this Manvantara, the Sapta Rishis are Atri, Vasishtha, Kashyapa, Goutama, Bharadvaj, Kushikanandana, and Vishwamitra. Vaivaswata Manu's sons are Ikshvaaku, Naabhaga, Dhrishta, Sharyati, Naarishyant, Naabhaaga, Dishta, Karush, and Prushghra. (Contents of this Vaivaswata Manvantara narration- either read or heard-would instantly destroy sins and enhance the account of Punyabhoga). **Future Manus** include Saavarni the eighth; Daksha Saawarni the son of Daksha the ninth; Brahma Saavarni, the son of Brahma, the tenth; Dharma Saavarni the eleventh Manu, the son of Dharma; and Rudra Saavarni, the son of Rudra, the twelfth Manu. The thirteenth Manu would be Rouchya and Bhauthya the fourteenth.

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# **DEVI MAHATMYA**

Maha Maya enables Vishnu to kill the Demon Brothers Madhu and Kaitabha

In the Manvantara of Saavarni would be the Sapta Rishis viz. Ram, Vyas, Gaalava, Deeptimaan, Kripa, Rishyashringa, and Droni. Sutapa, Amitabh, and Mukhya would be the three Devaganas and each of these there would be twenty Ganas, of whom Tapastapah, Shakra, Dyuti, Jyoti, Prabhakar, Prabhas, Dayita, Dharma, Teja, Rashmi and Vakrut would be included. Dama, Danta, Ritha, Soma and Vintha would be included in the third Devaganas. Saarvani's progeny include Viraja, Ariveera, Nirmoha, Satyavaak, Kuruti, and Vishnu and would all be Kings in the Manvantara.

During the second Manu's regime of Swarochisha, there was a King named **Suratha**, who was an extremely virtuous person looking after his Subjects with affection and attachment, but his vicious Ministers usurped the Kingdom and Suratha took refuge in the hermitage of Megha Muni. The King felt extremely distressed that the Kingship which was with his many generations was lost due to the injustice and treachery of the persons around, despite the fact that he was ruling with considerable merit and charity. Meanwhile, a prosperous Vysya (business person), named Samadhi, who was also disowned by his vicious wife and children and drove him away from his palatial building, came to the King and the Hermit Megha. Samadhi said that despite their cruel treatment, he still had great affection for his wife, children and relatives and that he did not at all have any aversion for them. The King asked as to how Samadhi bore no ill will to his close persons, inspite of their insensitive feelings for him. The Muni replied that just as a bird which might be hungry would still prefer to feed the baby birds, human beings never bother for their selfish considerations but are infatuated with their children, although the children might not always have reciprocal feelings. It is in the same way that Maha Maya tends to obscure human feelings and insensitize any illwill towards their own children for their wrong doings affecting the parents. Tanmaatra vismayah Kaayom Yoganidra Jagatpathey, Maha Maya Harischaisha tatha sammohyatey Jagat/ Jnaaninaamapi chetaamsi Devi Bhagavati hi saa, Baladaa krishya mohaaya Maha Maya prayacchati/ Tayaa visrujyatey Viswam Jagadethacharaacharam, saa vidya Paramaa Muktiheturbhuta Sanaatani/ samsaarabandhu hethuscha saiva Sarveswarewari/

(It is not surprising to say: Maha Maya is the Nidraswarup (Sleepy Illusion) of Jagatpati Hari who spreads over the net of ignorance all over the Universe. It is that Bhagavati Maha Maya who pulls down intelligent human beings forcefully into ignorance; is that Devi who creates the totality of the Universe, turns benvolent to humanity and bestows Salvation; is that highest 'Hetuswarup Sanatani Brahmagyana Swapura Vidya' or the Everlasting Reason of Reasons-the Embodiment of Brahma Gyan Vidya; She is the Eswari of Eshwaris who is the cause and effect of Birth and Death and the final Provider of 'Mukti'. The King Surata asked Muni Megha as to who was that All-Pervading Maha Maya, and how did it come into being? The Muni replied that it was highly incorrect to say that Maha Maya came into being at a time since it was Everlasting; however one could surmise the Great Illusion was recognised at the end of a 'Kalpa' as the whole Universe got submerged into fathomless waters at the time of Grand Annihilation and Bhagavan Vishnu was resting in 'Yoganidra' or the Yogic Sleep. It was at that very time, there were two 'Asuras', named Madhu and Kaitabha, who were materialised from the ear-rejects of Vishnu; they chased Brahma who prayed to Nidra Bhagavati (Goddess Of Slumber) so that Vishnu could be woken up.He said: Devi! Twam Swaha Twam Swadha Twamhi Vashatkaarah Swaraatmika, Sudha twamakshare nithye Tridhaamaatratmika -asthitha/ Ardhamaatraa sthita nithya Yaanucchhaarya viseshatahah, Twameva Sandhya Saavitri twam Devi Janani Para/ (You are the 'Swaha' Mantra of the 'Havis' or oblations to Agni meant for Devatas; the Swadha Swarup of the 'Shraddha' to Pitras; You are the 'Vashatkar' Mantra Swarup of 'Havis' meant for Indra; You are the Sudha Swarup of the Three 'Matras' (Letters) of Deergha, Hraswa and Pluth Rupas; You are the famous Gayatri Swarup; and You are the Sublime Mother of the Universe). Brahma continued the Prayer to say: Devi! You are the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of 'Srishti' (Creation); You are the Maha Vidya (The Highest Form of Learning), Maha Medha (Highest Brain Power), Maha Maya, Maha Smriti (Highest Consciousness), Maha Moha (The Highest Obsession); You are the Trigunatmika Prakriti of Satva, Rajas and Tamo Gunas; You are the 'Kalaratri Bhayankara Yama Swarup'; You are the 'Lakshmi beeja', Ishwari, Lazza (Embodiment of Modesty), Buddhi, Divya Gyan, Pushti, Thsti, Shanthi, and Kshanti Swarup, Khadgini, Shulini, Gadini, Chakrini, Shankhini, Dhanushdharini, Sowmya, Soumyatara, Apeksha Sundari; How could one be able to commend You!! Devi, You are most humbly requested to spread Your 'Mayajaal' or the Wide Net of Illusion over the two Demon Brothers of Madhu and Kaitabha, wake up Maha Vishnu from the Yoga Nidra and facilitate Him to destroy the demon brothers who tended to grow in form and might minute by minute! Bhagavan Vishnu woke up and fought with the Demon Warriors for five thousand years

relentlessly, but there was no sign of surrender of the Asuras as they were apparently fighting by their turns whereas Vishnu was battling single handed. Maha Maya advised Vishnu to seek a boon from the brothers as they were indeed invincible, but out of bravado, they asked a boon from them instead. Cashing immediately on the offer made by the Demon Brothers, Vishnu asked them to die in their hands; the Brothers agreed to die in His hands on the condition where there was no trace of water in that Vast Universe which was full of Water. Lord Vishnu expanded his thighs far and wide, thus materialising a dry area of his massive thighs and killed the Evil Brothers who threatened Lord Brahma!

## Maha Devi destroys Mahishasura and his clan (Gratitude Hymns to Devi included)

The most ferocious and brutal Demon of the times, Mahishasura, harassed and subdued King Indra and all the Devas including Surya, Agni, Pavan, Yama, Varuna etc. and occupied the Throne of the Swarga. Mahishasura's cruel acts created havoc among the helpless Munis and human beings and there was no end to the persecution that they were subjected to. The Trimurthis-Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara- got so angry that they their eyebrows released massive Fires of Fury which got combined as a huge 'Agni Parvat' (Fire Mountain), into which the individual Energies of all the Devas headed by

Indra got merged too. The Form of Maha Devi so materialised created a luminous face with combined Shaktis in a formidal feminine form: while Yama's powers created her hair, Vishnu's power provided both her arms, Chandra's radiance gave sparkling jewels, Indra contributed the belly, Varuna's powers created thighs, Prithvi the rear, Brahma contribruted the feet, Surya provided the fingers of the feet; Vasuganas contributed hand fingers; Kubera's 'Tejas' created the nose, Prajapati's energy provided the teeth, Pavaka created all her three eyes, both the 'Sandhyas' gave away 'bhrukutis' (mid-portion of eye brows) and Vayu supplied the Devi's ears. Maha Deva then contributed his Shula from his own, Narayana gave away a Chakra born out of his Chakra, Varuna gave a Shankha, Hutashana / Agni his Shakti, Vayu the Dhanus with powerful arrows, Indra gave his Vajra and a bell from Iravata, Yama gave his 'Kaladanda', Varuna a 'Pasha', Daksha Prajapati his Akshaya Maala (Rosary), Brahma his Kamanadalu (water vessel), Surya supplied his rays into Maha Devi's skin pores; Kaal gave away his 'Khadga' (sword); Samudra Deva contributed pure pearls, shining clothes, valuable chudamani, precious ear-rings, and bangles; Moon gave away 'Bhuja Kirtis' (Shouder-Ornaments), neck laces, and finger rings; Vishwakarma donated 'Astras', 'Kavacha' (Body Secure); Himalaya provided the carrier Simha (Lion); and like wise all the various Devas gifted various items of their valuable possessions. When suddenly, there was a bewildering roar of a Lion's resound, the 'Trilokas' shuddered and felt that it was the end of the Universe! Mahishasura and his followers got startled with unprecedented shivers and took time to realise that indeed that was not the end of the Universe, but the beginning of the historic battle. Maha Devi's radiance got spread all over the directions when her thousand arms came into flashes of mercurial actions. The Senapati of Mahishasura's army named Chakshusa began a fierce fight and an additional 'Chaturangani Sena' (Four-winged army force comprising soldiers, horses, elephants and chariots) of an Asura named *Chamara* joined the stream while another sixty thousand chariots and following army led by Udagra too joined the Force. A further Force of one crore chariots reinforced the existing army of Mahishasura, which was led by Maha Hanu. Another Asura called Asiloma led a five crore ratha sena, and yet another Rakshasa named Bakshal brought in sixty thousand chariots further reinforcements, thus making a highly formidable force; further forces joined the fray from other directions. On the other hand, Maha Devi's 'niswas' and 'ucchvas' (exhaling and inhaling of breathing) created crores of her army and killed crores of enemy forces too. The hell-like of Mahishasura army was destroyed like flies in huge

flames. In this melee, Chakshura's charioteer died, his chariot was destroyed and as he tried to leap over Maha Devi, her Lion tore his body into pieces; Chamara became offensive as Chakshura died and sped up his elephant towards Devi along with his 'Mayavi' Shakties; Devi's lion leapt in the air sky-high and with one pounce squeezed his elephant to death and Chamar's body was hit with such a smash that there were no traces of his body parts. In the battle that ensued, Udagra was hit by Devi's forceful throws of stones and boulders, while *Uddhatasura* was crushed by Devi's mace hits. Next, the demon *Bashkal* was destroyed by her Bhindipala and *Tamra and Andhak* were shot by her arrows. By the blaze of her Three Eyes, Maha Devi burnt off three demons called *Ugraveerya*, *Ugrastha and Maha Hanu*. She cut into pieces the head of Bidalasura by the might of her sword. *Durdar and Durmukh* tried to send mantik arrows at her but the return arrows sent them away to Yamaloka. Devi Kaalarathri used Kaladanda and Kalasura was put to instant death. She sported her Khadga with a light touch and *Ugradarshan* flew away to a far off place never to return. *Asiloma* who led a five crore army of Charioteers fell like a sick bird on the battle ground with the fire that emerged from Devi's angry eyebrows! The Devi Ganas and the Great Lion who went berserk as Mahishasura's army made a depleted and demoralised retreat to save them.

Now, Mahishasura led a fresh reserve of army, assuming his original form of a Mahisha or a buffalo, made several offensive gestures by way of forcefully pulling up his powerful horns high, by taking speedy circlings, by throwing up his mighty tail and by thumping his hooves making sounds like earthquakes. The Asura jumped forward towards the Lion who created havoc and killed many of his warriors, whereby Maha Devi became livid with rage but Mahisha too got enraged and dug deep into the Earth and threw mountains by braying with frightful reverberation. The Asura's breathing was so heavy that mountains shivered and sand storms got into motion with high velocity. Chandi Devi desired to kill Mahishasura in one go, but Maha Devi restrained Chandi and threw a powerful rope around the buffallo neck; She then assumed the form of a roaring lion, then as a huge elephant, and like a mammoth 'Veera Purusha'. Meanwhile Chandika Devi consumed a huge cup of wine, got drunk with a resounding laugh with blood red eyes and said like a drunkard; 'Oh miserable Stupid! Keep on with your roar as long as my wine is swallowed; your last moments have now started ticking and you should soon leave this World as your ignominous life would get terminated.' By so saying, Chandi jumped up and strangled Mahishasura's mighty neck and sliced it open; soon Rishi ganas performed 'Veda Parayana', Gandharvas sang sonorous hymns of praise for Devi Chandi who was but a shadow of Maha Devi, Apsaras danced to their glory and Devas headed by Indra went into deep raptures in great jubilation with unreserved gratitude to Parama Maha Devi. In one high voice, all the Devas glorified Maha Devi as follows: 'We greet with reverence that Ambika Devi, whose capability is spread all over the moving and non-moving objects of the universe, whose Supreme Energy enables all the Deva Murthis to be on their own; whose Origin or Qualities defy description by Brahma, Vishnu or Mahendra, let alone illustrious Maharshis; and whose unparalelled kindness and consideration is ever-fulfilling and never failing to humanity. We salute Devi Chandika who would ever neglect nor ignore those who have unqualified faith and commitment in that Punya Swarupa (Embodiment of Propitiousness) and also never spare those who persist in evil deeds and never have the psyche of remorse nor any sense of guilt. Ya Shreeh Swayam Sukrutinaam Bhavaneshwa Lakshmih Paapaatmanaam Krutadiyaam hrudayeshu buddhhih, Shraddhaa sataam kulajanaprabhavasya lajjaataam twa natah sma paripaalaya Devi Viswam/ (We greet Her who is present in the form of Wealth in the houses of the Virtuous; who disappears in the form of poverty in the residences of the vily and the vicious; who is present with those who are well read and of clean conscience as also of practitioners of Shraddha or diligence, Buddhi or Composure and Lazza or Modesty.) How are we competent to describe your Achinthya Rupa? Devas further exclaimed: Hethuh Samasta jagataam Trigunaapi Devairna Jnaayase Hariharaadibhi rapyapara, Sarvaashraya akhilamidam Jagadamsha bhutamayyakrutaa hi paramaa prakrutistwama adya (Hey Devi, You are the Adya Prakruti devoid of 'Vikaras' of Satva, Raja and Tamo gunatmika and thus the Cause of the Universe; Even Vishnu and Maha Deva who are subject to 'Raga Dveshas' would not be able to realise

Your 'Tatva'; You are the nucleus of all the Materialistic Manifestations). Yasya Samastasurathah Samudeeranena Truptim Prayaanti Sakaleshu makheshu Devi, Swaahaasi vai Pitruganasya cha trupti hethuruchaaryase twam eva janaihi swadhacha (Devi, in all the 'Yagnas', taking your mere name would satisfy all the Devas, since the two Expressions of Swaha and Swadha signify your own Swarupas or Forms. Ya muktiheturavichinthya mahaavrataa twamabhayasyasey suniyatendriaya tatwa saaraih, Mokshaardibhirmuni bharista samasta doshai vidhvaamsi saa Bhagavati Paramaa Devi (Hey Devi, the Subject matter of 'Upaasana' or concentrated meditation of Munis targetted to you is stated to be the Moksha Vidya, which is Yourself as that is devoid of sins and impurities of any kind). Shabdaatmika suvimalargya jushaam nidhaana mudreetatha ramya pada paathavataam cha samnaam, Devi trayee Bhagavati bhava bhaavanaaya vaartaasi sarva jagataam paramaarti hantreem/ Medhasi Devi viditakhila shastra saraa Durgasi Durga bhava saagaranaurasangah, Sreehi Kaitabhaarithrudayaika krutaadhiyasaa Gauri thyameya Shashi mouli kruta prathishtha ( Devi! You are the 'Shabdamaya Tri Veda Swarupi' or the Complete Form of Three Vedas with intonation; the nucleus-like Pranava Swarup of Ruk, Yajur and Sama Vedas; the embodiment of Opulence, the Life Providing Security and the destroyer of all difficulties and physical ailments. Devi! You are the Buddhi Swarupa because You are the unique Ship which alone could pass through the Ocean of 'Samsara' and Devi Lakshmi, the heart-throb of Vishnu- the destroyer of Madhu Kaitabha demons-as well as Devi Gauri firmly installed on the left thigh of Bhagavan Sashisekhara! )Devi Prasada parama Bhagavati Bhavaaya Sadyo vinaayashayasi kopavati kuleeni, Vignatameta -dauardhunaiva yadastametadreentam Balam savipulam Mahishasurasya / the sammataa janapadeshu dhanaani teshaam Yashaamsi na cha seedati bandhuvargah, Dhanyaasta eva nibhrutatmajabhrutya daaraa eshaam sadaabhyudayadaa bhavati prasanna / (Devi! Kindly be free from anger as You must bestow on us peace, prosperity and propitiousness; if You are irritated due to Mahishasura and army which you had already destroyed, Your normal composure gets disturbed and hence should please regain and soon recover Your complete 'Kalaas'

(features); when You are cooled and inspirational, then only our worship gets maximum advantages, since only in those Regions where Pujas are performed sincerely that the persons concerned become wealthy, famous, and contented with good progeny, family and servants. It is with Your kindness that human beings preform Dharmic acts, leave behind the fears of death and disease and reach the goals of attaining 'Swarga' thus providing the benefits of the Three Lokas). Trailokyametadakhilam ripunaashanena traatham twaya samaramardani thepi hatwa, neetaa divam ripuganaa bhayamapya paastmasmaakamunmada suraari bhavam Namasthey/ Shulena Paahi no Devi Paahi khadgena chaambike, Ghantaaswanena nah Paahi chaapajyaanih swanenacha/ Praachyam raksha prateetyancha Chandike raksha Dakshiney/ Bhraamanenaathma shulasya urraraayam tatheswari / Soumyani yaani Ruupaani Trailokye vicharitanti they, yaani chaathyanta ghoraani thy rakshaasmantatha bhuvam/ khadga shula gadaadeeni yaani chaastraani thembikey karapallava sangeenithairasmaanthraksha sarvatah/ (Devi, You have killed all the enemies, saved the Tree Lokas, bestowed Swarga to them all and demolished our fears and saved us; do protect us with your Shula, Khadga, Ghanta, Dhanush and its 'tankaara' or sound; Chandika! Eswari! Do protect us by circling our East, West, South and North directions; You have as many frightening Forms as benign Forms which move about all over the Three Worlds; do save us with all Your varied Forms and always guard us with Your arms and armoury). Highly pleased by the above commendations of Devatas, Maha Devi gave an opportunity to them to ask for boons and they said politely that after the killing of Mahishasura, they had no further requests to make, excepting that She should kindly respond as and when exigencies might arise in future and She said: 'Thadhaastu'! (Be it so!)

Shumbha and Nishumbha executed by Maha Devi -('Stotras' of 'Ya Sarva Bhuteshu', 'Sarva Mangala Maangalye' and 'Sarva Swarupey' included)

The Sacred Birds described to Sage Jaimini the immortal Story of the killing of Shumbha Nishumbha Demon brothers as was told by Mahatma Markandeya to Brahmana Kroushtiki. The most infamous Danava brothers, from the notorious lineage of the Hiranyakasipu, attacked Indra the King of Devas; diverted the 'havis' or the uncooked offerings to Agni at Yagnas meant for Devas to themselves; performed the tasks of Surya, Chandra, Kubera, Varuna, Vayu and other Devatas and turned all the Devas from Swarga, who became wanderers and as refugees in forests. They remembered the assurance given by Devi Vishnu Maya, when they celebrated Her victory at the devastation of Mahishasura and his followers; at that time She said: *Tasmaakam varo dattho yathaptsu smrutaakhilah, bhavataam naashayashyaami tatshanah paramaapadaah* (As and when You remember me when faced with a hardship, I will demolish your difficulties at once!). Thus Devas headed by Indra made a desperate appeal to Maha Devi as follows:

NAMO DEVYAI MAHA DEVYAI SHIVAAYAI SATATAM NAMAH

NAMAH PRAKRUTHYAI BHADRAAYAI NIYANTHAH PRANATAH SMA TAAM

ROUDRAYI NAMO NITHYAYI GAURYAIH DHAATRAI NAMO NAMAH

NAMO JAGATPRATHISHTHAYI DEVYAI KRUTHYAI NAMO NAMAH

JOTSNAAYI CHANDRARUPINYAI SUKHAYAI SATATAM NAMAH

KALYANAI PRANATAAMRUDDHYAI SIDDHAYI KURMYAI NAMO NAMAH

NAITRITYAI BHUBHRUTAAM LAKSHMYAI SHARVAANYAI THE NAMO NAMAH

DURGAYAI DURGAPAARAAYAI SAARAAYAI SARVAKAARINI

KHYATYAI TATHIVA KRISHNAYAI DHUMRAYAI SATATAM NAMAH

ATISOWMYATHI ROUDRAYAI NAMASATHYAI NAMO NAMAH

NAMO JAGATPRATISHTHAYAI DEVYAI KRUTYHAI NAMO NAMAH

YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU VISHNU MAYOTI SHABDITA

NAMASTASYAI NAMASTASYAI NAMASTASYAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU CHETANETYABHIDHIYATHE NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMHA YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU BUDDHI RUPENA SAMSTHITA NAMASTATMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU NIDRAA RUPENA SAMSTHITA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU KSHUDHA RUPENA SAMSTHITA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU CHHAYA RUPENA SAMSTHITHA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU SHAKT IRUPENA SAMSTHITHA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAINAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU TRISHNAA RUPENA SAMSTHITA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU KSHAANTI RUPENA SAMSTHITA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU JAATI RUPENA SAMSTHITA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU LAZZAA RUPENA SAMSTHITA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU SHAANTI RUPENA SAMSTHITA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU SHRADDHA RUPENA SAMSTHITA

NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU KAANTHI RUPENA SAMSTHITA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU LAKSHMI RUPENA SAMSTHITA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU DHRITI RUPENA SAMSTHITA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU VRITTI RUPENA SAMSTHITA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU SMRITI RUPENA SAMSTHITHA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU DAYAA RUPENA SAMSTHITHA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU NITI RUPENA SAMSTHITHA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU TRISHTI RUPENA SAMSTHITHA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU PUSHTI RUPENA SAMSTHITHA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU MAATRU RUPENA SAMSTHITHA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU BHRAANTHI RUPENA SAMSTHITHA NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH

INDRIYANAAMADHISHTHATHRI BHUTAANAAMAKHILESHU YA

BHUTESHU SATATAM VYAPTHAI TASYAI DEVYAI NAMO NAMAH

CHITI RUPENAYA KRUSTRAMETATVYAPYA STHITHA JAGAT

NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMASTASMAI NAMO NAMAH

STUTA SURAIH PURVAMABHHESTA SAMSRAYATHHATHA SURENDRESHAADINESHA SEVITA

KAROTU SA NAH SHUBHA HETURESHWARI SHUBHAANI BHADRANYABHI HANTU CHAPADAH

YA SAMPRATAM CHODHATA DAITYATAAPITAIRASMAABHIREESHA CHA SURAIRNAMASYATE

YA CHA SMRITA TAKSHANAMEVA HANTI NAH SARAVAAPADO BHAKTIVINAMRA MURTHIBHIH/

(Devas said: Our Greetings to Devi, Maha Devi, Shiva, Praakriti, Bhadra, Roudra, Nithya, Gauri, Dhaatri, Jagatpratishtha, Kruthya, Prakasharupa, Chandrarupa, Paramaanandarupa, Kalyani, Buddhi rupa, Siddhirupa, Naikruti swarupa, Lakshmirupa, Sharvaani swarupa, Durga, Durgapaara, Saara, Sarvakaarini, Khyati, Krishna, Dhumraswarupa, Atyanta Sowmya, Atyanta Roudra and Karyarupini.

We greet that Devi who resides in all Beings in the form of Vishnumaya, Chetana swarupa or the Spirit of Awakening, Nidra rupa or in a semi-conscious state, Kshudarupa or in the form of hunger, Chhayarupa or in the form of a shadow, Shaktirupa or in the form of Energy, Trishnarupa or in the form of thirst, Kshantirupa or in the form of Fortitude or Patience, Jaatirupa or Varnashramarupa, Lazzarupa or the form of immense modesty, shanti rupa or the form of Eternal Peace, Shraddharupa or the form of Absolute Faith or conviction, kraanti rupa or in the form of dynamism and challenge, Lakshmirupa or in the form of Aiswhwarya / Opulence, Dhruti rupa or in the form of Great Endurance/ Staying Power, Vritti rupa or esoteric experiences of Yogis such as Mualadhara / Bliss, Swadhishtana / feeling of delusion, Manipura / disgust, Anahata / repentance, Vishuddha / Purity etc.; Smritirupa or Vedas / Sacred Scriptures, Dayarupa or the form of unparalelled mercy, Nitirupa or High Morality / Integrity, Tushti rupa or the form of towering contentment, Pushti rupa or the form of sublime glory, Matru rupa or the form of Universal mother who creates and preserves and Bhranti rupa or the form of Great Illusion or Make-belief Maya. We are beholden to that Devi who is the controller of the whole Universe, its creations, the 'Indriayas' and the Omni Present Vidya or the Supreme Energy.)

As Devas extolled Maha Devi, Devi Parvati was bathing in the pure water of Ganga and realizing that Devas were dislodged from the Swaraloka, appeared before them as Ambika whose popular name was Kaushiki or Kalika of dark skin but of unprecedented charm and beauty. Devas realised that Devi Kaushiki decided to reside at the top of Himalayas. Two Danavas named **Chanda and Munda**, the followers of their Masters **Shumbha and Nishumbha** of the lineage of Hiranyakasipu, happened to vision Kaushiki Devi on the Himalayas and were completely taken aback at her extraordinary magnificence. They hurried up to their Masters and conveyed to them of their greatest discovery of Devi Kausiki. They said that their Masters had no doubt achieved the most precious possessions of the

Universe like the Iravata Elephant, Ucchaiswa Horse, Parijata Tree, Hamsa (Swan) Viman, Maha Padma Nidhi of Kubera, Kinjilkini called Kamal from Samudra Deva, Kanchanasraavi named Umbrella from Varuna Deva, the most valuable Ratha or Chariot from the Foremost Prajapati, Maranaprada Shakti of Lord Yama, the most potent 'Pasha' of Varuna Deva, all the richest 'Ratnas' or jewels of Samudra Deva and the 'Uttariya and Vastra' (clothes) sanctified by 'Vahni' (Flames) of Agni Deva; But without possessing the Rarest 'Stree Rathna' or the Most Invaluable Jewel of a Woman was visioned by Chanda and Munda would pale into insignificance before that prized possession! When Chanda and Munda described so much about the 'Stree Ratna', Shumbha and Nishumbha sent an able emissary called Sugreeva to Devi Kausiki to convince her about their unique qualities of proven bravery and capability. Devi replied: What ever had been said was indeed correct, since the two great brothers were the mightiest warriors in the Trilokas, but she had a 'Pratigna' or Vow viz. : Yo mam jayati samgraame darpa vyapohati, yo me pratibalo loke sa me Bhartaa bhavishyati, tadha gacchatu Shumbhotra Nishumbho vaa Mahaasurah, maam jitva kim chirenaatra paanim grihaantu me laghu/

(Whosoever could win me over in a battle, crush my pride and equalise my Shakti would be my Master; now, let either Shumbh or Nishumbh try their luck and take on me in the duel and why delay further?). As the emissary told Devi in great anger that let alone Shumbha or Nishumbha but even he could take her by hair and present her before his Masters, as Devi replied coolly that it was not proper to harm an emissary and as such he would better convey what she had said to his Masters. Enraged by this arrogance of Devi, Shumbh instructed **Dhumralochan** to bring her by hook or crook. The latter ran up to Devi Ambika with a view to humble her, but by her mere 'Hunkaar' sound, the Demon got turned into ash; his huge army of soldiers came to action as they shot arrows, a variety of objects like Shulas and Shaktis and despatched horses, elephants and chariots. The Carrier of Ambika, named Kesari (Lion) got provoked with anger and with an earth-shaking roar, jumped out in lakhs of Forms and tore the bodies of soldiers apart into pieces. Shumbha went into white rage with biting lips as Dhumralochana was turned into ash and his large army of front ranking soldiers was destroyed; he ordered Chanda and Munda to march a huge army and drag 'that woman' tied up by her long hairs and present her before him. When Chanda Mundas led an oceanlike 'Chaturanga Bala' or the Four Divisioned army comprising Charioteers, Elephants, Horses and Foot Soldiers adept in offensive warfare with high skills of military power, they all witnessed a grand and lonely female figure sporting a mischievous smile on the mountain top. From the smile of Devi's face, there was a sudden transformation of her skin to black, her eyes became red, her teeth got protrusive and her tongue was elongated. This appalling figure of Devi jumped from the mountain top along with the roaring Lion, creating lakhs of such figures all over, and playing one elephant against another, one horse against another and one chariot against another, breaking heads, and turning the battle field into streams of blood and disfigured bodies without heads of many, limbs of several and carcasses of lakhs of dead animals. As the ocean-like army of committed soldiers was massacred, both Mundasura and Chandasura rushed towards Ambika Devi, one raining away strings of 'Astras' and another flinging sharp weapons at mighty speed simultaneously, She threw around illusionary meshes which placed both of them into straight-jackets and with powerful blows smashed their heads; the ferocious Devi took the broken heads of the Asura brothers into her hands and laughed so violently that thundered the Earth and Sky, thus attaining the memorable epithet of Chamundi.

The desperate Shumbha and Nikumbha ordered that the entire reserve army be marched with **Udhayudh** leading eighty six core Group of Commanders, **Kambu Daitya** with eighty four, **Kotiveerya** with fifty, **Dhumravamsajat** with hundred Group Commanders, each of them being equal to the combined efforts of Devas who ran away once before as they could hardly defend Indra's Chair. Noticing the desperate effort of the Danava brothers, Parama Devas including Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu, Kartikeya and Indra

collected their respective Shaktis; Brahma flew by his Hamsa Vahana (Swan) along with his Brahmani Shakti, Vishnu by Garuda as also Varaha Shakti, Narasimha Shakti etc. Devi Chandika asked Shiva to warn the Shumbha and Nishumbha brothers to end up the war even at this stage and make a retreat to Patala and leaving Swarga. But the highly arrogant brothers heckled at Maheswara and there was no way but to return to the battle field. Brahma utilised Brahmani Shakti to pour forceful waterfalls from his Kamanadalu; Maheswari Shakti through Tri-Shulas, Vaishnavi Shakti through innumerable 'Chakras', Kaumari Shakti through Shulas, Indra by Vajra, Varahi Shakti by Damshras, Naarasimha Shakti by the help of sharp nails etc. The highly notorious core Group commanders were thus destroyed without trace. **Raktabija**, the sister's son of Shubha and Nishumbha Brothers had the boon of creating as many Raktabija Danavas as the blood drops of each new body. Devi Ambika desired Chamundi to lap up the blood even before fresh Raktabijas were born. But there was a mismatch in the blood drops and the instant creation of further Danavas and hence Devi decided to extend her tongue so farther that finally blood drops dried up and Raktabija met his termination. Both Devas and Munis witnessed this strange happening and were mesmerised as to how Devi Ambika tackled the tricky situation!

When even the invincible Raktabija got killed despite his crafty tricks, Shumbha and Nishumbha came face to face against Devi. Both the brothers rained arrows on her while she poured heavy waterfall-like Astras from the clouds and kept the brothers at dismay. Suddenly, Nishumbh hit the head of Devi's lion on his head. Devi retaliated like a lightning and used an 'Astra' named 'Kshurapra', and destroyed his sword; he used a Shakti while Devi despatched a double Shakti. He threw a 'Shula' against her but she shielded it with her 'Mushtighaath' (grasp of her grip). He threw at Devi his mace and she responded it with her Trishul. Losing further patience, Devi Ambika finally felled Nishumbha on the ground with a torrential knock of her arrows. As Nishumbh fell down, Shumbha expanded his body all over the sky assuming eight hands with a variety of potent arms and approached her like a flash. That was the time when Ambika sounded her conchshell as though the ultimate time had arrived to script the end of Shumbha. In the most ferocious form of Kaali, Devi Ambika jumped up sky high and as she came down with a thud and as Shumbhasura released his final Astra called 'Ugradeepti' emitting flames and heat which was controllled by her 'Maholka' Astra. Then Devi said: 'you 'Duratma', you have still not realised my Power. This is all my Creation; I am the Cause, I am the Doer and I am the Act; you are a part of my scheme; never think high of you; your time of death is ticking!' As she was saying this, Shumbhasura reached to her like a flash and tried to jump at her but she slapped him so hard that he tumbled down. She pierced her Shula right into his heart and he fell on to earth with a thud as there was a quake and Rivers and Oceans overflowed and mountains quivered momentarily. But soon there was a clear sky, good omens appeared, there were pleasant rains of flowers, Apsaras danced to their glory, Gandharvas sang melliflous hymns in praise of Devi, Trimurthis exclaimed that truth was vindicated, Devas led by Indra fell into raptures with joyful tears in their eyes and Maharshis and Yogis predicted the arrival of a propitious era here again. Out of immense gratitude, Devas commended Ambika Devi as follows:

DEVI PRAPANNARTI HARE PRASEEDA PRASEEDA MATARJAGATOKHILASYA,

PRASEEDA VISWESWARI PAAHI VISHVAM TWAMEESWARI DEVI CHARAACHARASYA/

ADHAARABHUTA JAGATSTWAMEKA MAHISWARUPENA YATAH STHITAASI

APAAM SWARUPASTHITAYAA TWAYAITADAAPYAYYATHEY KRUTSNAMALAMGHYA VEERYE
THVAM VAISHNAVI SHAKTIRANANTHA VEERYA VISHWASHYA BEEJAM PARAMAASI MAYAA
SAMMOHITHAM DEVI SAMASTHAMETATVAM VAI PRASANNA BHUVI MUKTI HETUH
VIDHYAAH SAMASTASTVA DEVI BHEDHAH STRIYAH SAMASTHAA SAKALAM JAGACHHA
THVAYAIKYAYA POORITAMAMBAYAIATKA TEY STUTI STAVYAPARAA PAROKTHIH

SARVA BHUTA YADAA DEVI BHUKTI MUKTI PRADAAYANI TWAM STUTAYE KA VA BHAVANTI PARAMOKTAYAH, SARVASYA BUDDHIRUPENA JANASYA HRIDI SAMSTHITEY SWARGAAPAVARGADEY DEVI NARAAYANI NAMOSTUTEY/ KALAA KAASHTHAADI RUPENA PARINAAMA PRADAAYANI VISHVASYOPARATAU SHAKTEY NARAYANI NAMOSTUTHEY

(Devi! We are your refugees and we are thankful to have demolished our great grief; kindly cool down, Akhila Jagajjanani, Visveshwari, You grant us safety as you are the Eswari, the unique fulcrum of the Universe residing on Earth in the form of water but satisfying the totality of 'Srishti' as Your gallantry is irresistible. You are the unending and valiant Vaishnavi Shakti; You are the cause of creation and the great Illusion, You have got the entirety of the World mesmerised, You have the compassion to lead us to Salvation. You have the 'Murthivisesh' or Boundless Form; the Form of all females and in fact the entire Femineness, Mother! You are spread all over and how could anybody praise You, as You are beyond the bounds of commendation. As You are present among all of the Beings, and the final goal of life, we all tend to praise You, but You are a 'Nirguna' deviod of all features and impulses stated to be a 'Brahma Swarupa' and as such which kind of tribute could be paid to You! Devi, You reside in the hearts and souls of all the Beings as 'Buddhi Rupa' and Provider of Swarga Mukti, Devi Narayani! You are equally capable of Universal Devastation instantly; assuming evolving powers of 'Kalaas' signifying positive forms and 'Kaashthas' indicating negative impulses with equal ease).

SARVA MANGALA MAANGALYE SHIVE SARVAARTHA SAADHIKEY
SHARANYE TRIAMBAKE GAURI NARAAYANI NAMOSTHUTEY
SRUSHTHI STHITI VINAASHAANAAM SHAKTI BHUTEY SANAATANI
GUNAASHRAYE GUNAMAYE NARAYANI NAMOSTUTHYE
SHARANYAGATA DEENAARTI PARITRAANA PARAAYANEY
SARVASYAARTIHARE DEVI NARAAYANI NAMOSTHUTHEY

HAMSAYUKTHA VIMAANASTHEY BRAAHMANI RUPADHAARINI

KAUSHAMBHAHKSHARIKE DEVI NARAYANI NAMOSTUTEY

SHANKHACHAKRAGADAA SHAARANAGRUHEETA PARAMAAYUDHEY

PRASEEDA VAISHNAVI RUPEY NARAYANI NAMOSTUTEY

GRUHEETHOGRA MAHAACHAKREY DAMSHTRODHRUTA VASUMDHAREY

VARAHA RUPINI SHIVEY NARAYANI NAMOSTUTEY

NRISIMHA RUPEYNOGRENA HAMTU DAITYANKRUTODYAMEY

TRAILOKYA TRAANA SAHITEY NARAYANI NAMOSTUTEY

KIREETINI MAHA VAJREY SAHASRA NAYANOJJVALEY

VRITTRA PRAANAHAREYCHENDRI NARAYANI NAMOSTUTEY

SHIVADUTI SWARUPENA HATA DAITHYE MAHAA BALEY

GHORA RUPE MAHAARAVEY NARAYANI NAMOSTUTEY

DAMSHTRA KARAALA VADANEYSHIRO MAALAA VIBHUSHANEY

CHAMUNDEY MUNDA MATHANEY NARAYANI NAMOSTUTEY

LAKSHMI LAZZEY MAHAVIDYE SHRADDHEY PUSHTEY SWADHEY DHRUVEY

MAHARATHREY MAHAAMAAYEY NARAYANI NAMOSTUTEY

MEDHEY SAARASVATIVAREYBHUTI BABHRAVI TAAMASI

NIYATHEY TWAM PRASEEDESHEY NARAYANI NAMOSTUTEY

SARVATAH PRAANI PAADANTHEY SARVATOKSHI SHIROMUKHEY

SARVATAH SHRAVANI GHRAANEY NARAYANI NAMOSTUTEY

(Devi, You are the embodiment of alround propitiousness, Shiva Swarupa or the Form of auspiciousness, Fulfiller of all kinds of desires, I seek refuge from You Triambaka or of Three Forms of Shaktis viz. Lakshmi, Sarasvati and Parvati; Gauri, Narayani; My sincere Namastes or Greetings. Oh! Sanatani, Gunashraya, Gunamaya, Narayani, Shakti Bhuta, You are the Epitome of Srishti or Creation, Sthiti or Existence and Vinaasha or Demolition; You are the Saviour of those helpless victims of insecurity and sorrow; Being of Brahma Swarupa, You fly by a Swan-shaped aeroplane and sprinkle water with kushagrass along with powerful and Sacred 'Mantras' to save such sufferers. You ride over the bull in the form of Maheswari with half moon, sporting ornaments of Serpents and carrying Trishul; You don the

Form of Kaumari Shakti along with Peacock and Rooster; Greetings to You as the Vaishnavi Shakti on the battle field duly adorned with Shankha, Chakra, Gada and Saranga; You as the Mahavarahi or the Great Boar lifting Earth from the deep waters of Patala loka by Your 'damshtras'; You are the Saviour of Tri Lokas as Naarasimhi who slaughtered the Daitya Hiranya Kasipu; You have the bejewelled golden Kireeta or the headgear, a diamond like strong physique with a sparkling thousand eyes and exterminated the mighty Vritrasura. You are the Indrani and Narayani who with a Shivaduta Swarupa killed innumerable Danavas by Your mere sound reverberation. You are the assassinator of Chanda-Munda Rakshasas, my salutations. You are the personification of Lakshmi (Prosperity), Lazzza (modesty), Shraddha (fortitude), Swadha (Righteousness / oblations at Yagnas), Maharatri (the darkest night or the Great Delusion), Mahamoha Swarupa (the Form of Mighty Obsession), Dhruva (the Constant), Medha (the intellect), Sarasvati (personification of Knowledge), Vara (Shreshtha or the Noblest), Babhravi (Fiery or the Fierce), Bhuti (Frightful) and Tamasi (Dark Night or of Tamasika nature). Devi! My humble obeisances to You, the representation of hands, feet, eyes, head, face, hearing power, nose or the totality of a Physique.)

SARVA SWARUPE SARVESHEY SARVA SHAKTI SAMANVITEY

BHAYEBHYAHSTRAAHINO DEVI DURGA DEVI NAMOSTUTEY

YETATTEY VADANAM SOUMYAM LOCHANASTRAYA BHUSHITAM

PAATU NAH SARVA BHEETIBHYAH KATYAYANI NAMOSTUTEY

JWALAA KARAALA MATYUGRAMASESHAASURA SUDANAM

TRISHULAM PAATU NO BHEETEY BHADRA KAALI NAMOSTUTEY

HINASTI DAITYATEJAAMSI SWANENAPURYA YA JAGAT

SA GHANTA PAATU NO DEVI PAAPEBHYO NAH SUTAANIVA

ASURAASRUGVA SA PANKACHARCHITASTEY KAROJJVALAH

SHUBHHAYA KHADGO BHAVATU CHANDIKEY TWAAM NATA VAYAM

ROGAANASESHAANAPAHAMSI TUSHTA DADAASI KAAMAAN SAKALAANABHEESTAAN

TWAAMA ASRITAANAAM NA VIPANNARAANAAM TWAMAASRITA HYASHRAYATAAM PRAYANTI

YATATKRUTAM YATKADANAM TWAYADYA DHARMADWISHAAM DEVI MAHAASURANAAM

RUPAIRANEKAIR BAHUDHATMA MURTHI KRUTVAAMBIKE TATPAROTI KANYA

VIDYASU SHASTRESHU VIVEKADEEPESHVADYESHU VAAKYESHU CHA KA TWADANYA

MAMATVAGARTETI MAHAANDHAKAAREY VIBHRAMAYASTETADATEEVA VISHVAM

RAKSHAAMSI YATROGRA VISHAASCHA NAAGA YATRAARAYO DASYU BALAANI YATRA

DAAVAANALO YATRA TADAABDHI MADHYE TATRASTHITA TWAM PARIPAASI VISHWAM

VISVESHYA VANDYAA BHAVATI BHAVANTI VISHWASHRAYA YE TWAYI BHAKTI NAMRAAH

DEVI PRASEEDA PARIPALAYA NORIBHITEYRNITYAM

YATHAASURA VADHAADUDHAINEVA SADYAH

PAAPAANI SARVAJAGATAAM PRASHMAM NAYAASHU

UTPATAPAAKAJANTAAMSCHA MAHOPASARGAAN

PRANATAANAAM PRASEEDA TWAM DEVI VISHVAARTI HAARINI

TRAILOKYA VAASINAMEEDYE LOKAANAAM VARADA BHAVA

(Devi! You are Sarva Swarupa, Sarveswari, Sarva Shakti Samanvita or the Possessor of Omni-Potence; Katyayani, kindly secure all the Beings from the Tranquillity of Your Three Eyes. Bhadra Kaali, Save us by using the blistering flames of Your frightening face and the powerful Trishul against the infamous and brutal Rakshasas. Let the deafening echo of the forceful 'Ghanta' (Bell) in Your possession which demoralises the reckless Danavas and demolishes their arrogance pardon our accumulated sins and provide us an amnesty. Devi Chandika! Let the sparkling sword of Your mighty hands slice open the body parts of the Asuras so that streams of blood and fat rush out and let the reflections of the sword's radiance purify us and provide protection to us. Devi! If You are satisfied our ailments vanish away, but otherwise all our possessions and desires are destroyed at once; those who are dedicated to You never face any difficulties, however insurmountable they might be. Would it be possible to assume myriad forms to smash the highly immoral Danavas with all their viles and powers by any other woman? Could there be any other capability beyond Yours which excels with the expertise of forty Vidyas, Six Shastras, Vedas, and incomparable Gyan and mental acumen that keeps the equilibrium and stability to the Universe which is surfeit with dark desires and passions! Devi! By staying in the deep Waters of Oceans, You reach any and every spot of the Universe where there is a Rakshasa, a cruel serpent, an enemy, a thief, or a Davaanala (Huge Fire) to safety and well being. You are Vishweswari since You stand guard to us; You are Vishwatma since You are the Soul of the Vishwam or the Vishwaadhara, being saluted by Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara with reverence and admiration. Devi! Just as You have got rid of the World from the Rakshasas now, do sustain Your kindness in removing our enemies, natural calamities, diseases, disasters, dread and disorders of any description!)

Extremely gratified by the eulogies of Devas, Maha Devi assured unremitting support to Devas as and when there would be a need besides saving the virtuous and punishing the guilty as an integral part of Her scheme of activities. She stated that in the course of Vivaswata Manvantara, She would be born again as Vindhyachalavasini and kill Vaipachitta named Danavas; while She would eat the Rakshasas at that time, She would be known as 'Raktadantika' as Her teeth would look like blood-red 'Dadimi Kusuma'. Some hundred years hence, Munis would make Group Prayers for her as there would be severe drought and famine of water and Munis could percieve her by her red eyes alone as 'Shataakshi' since She would be 'Ayoni janita' or born on Her own. As there would be no rains for long time, She utilised Her own Physique and generated food grains and vegetables to sustain humanity to be acclaimed as 'Shakambhari' and assuming a frightful form at Himalayas killed a very treacherous Demon called Durgama. When Muniganas would pacify her with their prayers, She would be popular as Bhima Devi. When another 'Mahasura', called Aruna would torment Trilokas some time later, She would assume the form of Sixlegged 'Bhramaras' (Bees) in countless numbers and annihilate the Asura and his companions.

# Devi Mahatmya Phala Shruti

Those who read or hear the eulogies about Maha Devi, particularly on Ashtami, Navami or Chaturdashi days would qualify human beings for diminishing sins, removal of poverty, as also safe-guarding against enemies, robbers, fire and water hazards, weapons, diseases, family unrest and general discontentment. The specific households, where 'Devi Mahtatmya' is observed, are never neglected by Devi; in fact She resides there for good. The auspicious timings when Pujas, Agni Karyas, Marriages, Festival Days, and such other propitious Functions are celebrated, Maha Devi doubles up happiness and satisfaction to those responsible for the house-holds. Bhava kaaley Nrinaam saiva Lakshmi buddhi pradaa grihey, Sevaabhaavey tatha Lakshmi vinashyayopjaayatey/ Stutaa Sampujita Pushpair gandhadhupaadibhistatha, Dadaati vittham Putracscha Matim Dharmeygatim Shubham/

Having heard 'Devi Mahatmya', King Suratha and Vaishya Samadhi expressed sincere gratitude to Muni Megha and immediately left the hermitage to a River nearby and performed Tapasya t Maha Devi for three years and Maha Devi appeared before them and blessed them; She forecast to the King that soon he would regain his lost Kingdom and after a long successful Kingship would become the **Eighth Manu Saavarni** by the grace of Surya Deva. She blessed Vaishya Samadhi with 'Purna Gyan' so that his obsession and extreme attachment to his family would vanish and pursue a Dharmik life spreading knowledge to several followers and finally attain salvation thereafter.

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Future Manus-Daksha, Brahma, Dharma and Rudra Saavarnis

While the eighth Manu would be Saavarni-the son of Surya Deva and Chhaya Devi, following the present seventh Manu Vaiwasvatha born of Surya Deva and Sajna Devi, **Daksha Saavarni**, the son of Daksha Prajapati, would be the ninth Manu; during his time, the principal Devata Ganas would be Para, Marichi, Bharga and Sudharma and auxiliary Twelve Ganas. Kartikeya would be the King Indra, while the Sapta Rishis would be Meghaatithi, Vasu, Satya, Jyotishman, Dhrutimaan, Sabala and Havyavahan. The tenth Manu **Brahma Saavarni** would have Sukhaaseena, Nirudraswa and Dwiprakara and auxiliary Devas would be as many as hundred since the number of human beings would be increased. Saptarshis would be Apomurthi, Havishyamaan, Sukrut, Satya, Naabhhaga, Apratima, and the Seventh Vasishtha. **Dharma Saarvani** should be the eleventh Manu with three main Devatas viz. Vihangama, Kaamag, and Nirmanapati each with thirty Ganas; Indra would be Vrishaakhya; and the Sapta Rishis would be Havishyaman, Varishtha, Aruna Tanaya, Nishwar, Anagha, Vishti and Agni Deva. The twelfth Manu Rudra Putra **Rudra Saavarni** would have five Deva Ganas viz. Sudharma Sumana, Haritha, Rohita, and Suvarna each having ten Devatas in each Gana, while the Sapta Rishis would be Dyuti, Tapaswi, Sutapa, Tapomurthi, Taponighri, Taporathi and Tapodhriti.

# Pitra's 'Upadesha' (Instruction) on 'Garhasthya' (Family Life) to Ruchi Muni ('Pitru Stuthi' included)

**Rouchya Manu** would be the thirteenth in the series, the son of Prajapati Ruchi and Malini; Pushkara the son of Kubera and Apsara Plamocha gave birth to Malini. Ruchi Muni was not only unmarried, but had virtually renounced the World, was homeless, ate single meal and was not eligible to perform Agni Karyas as he was a bachelor. The Pitru Devatas appeared before the Muni and said that they were not able to receive any contribution from him as he was not married, could not perform any 'Punya Karyas'

(Propitious Tasks normally executed by house-holders), nor provide 'Atithya' (treat guests at home).'Grihasties' (family men) could pronounce the Mantra 'Swaha' and give away oblations to Agni to satisfy Devatas and also say 'Swadha' and satisfy Pitras. The three 'Runas' (debts) to Devatas, Pitras and Aththis thus remain unfulfilled! When 'Tarpanas' are not performed to ancestors, what kind of noble purpose would there be to a person in his life! But Ruchi Muni counter argued that the institution of marriage was the worst possible enemy to 'Atma Samyam' (Self Control) which was the rudimental step towards 'Mukti' (salvation), that a married person would perforce get dragged into the deep sludge of temporary worldly attractions of a woman, children, grand chidren, their responsibilites and a thick net of 'Maya' like earning money, family health, routine life etc. which hardly leave time for Godly activities, adding there by fresh sins by way of hypocrisy, insincerity and double standards, let alone try to clear the backlog sins of previous births. Pitru Devatas then gave the Upadesha as follows: Is the method that you have adopted is a ladder to 'Moksha'! It would be a fallacy that you would reduce the 'Karma phala' of previous births by abstaining from sins in the current birth since human births in the everlasting cycle of lives follow like day and night and there is no question of striking equations between pluses and minuses! Equally fallacious is the argument that family life tends to be a deep-drag into slush, since Vedas prescribed 'Samyam' (Self-control), 'Niyama' (Self-discipline) and 'Karma' (Duty). What is controversial is not the Institution of marriage, but transgressing the limits of desire, decency and virtue. In fact, Garhastya is a test of life. Vihitaa karanaatpumbhirasadbhih kriyatey thu yah, samyamo Muktaye naasou prathyutadhogati pradah (Those bogus persons who seek to practise the so-called self-control without executing duties prescribed by the Sacred Texts shall be doomed at the end). My Son! What you are imagining as cleaning up your own Soul is indeed burning your consciousness into ash without

performing your duties as a human being! Thus, our final advice and instruction is to become a 'Grihasta' (House holder), do your duties, be a drop on lotus leaf, and ascend to the mountain top step by step.

Fully convinced of the Upadesha on 'Garshastya' by the Pitru Devas, Ruchi Muni performed Tapasya to Lord Brahma who blessed him to follow the 'Grihastashram' and bestowed the Title of Prajapati. Ruchi then commended Pitru Devas by his Pitru Stuti that the 'Pitras' were the Adhishtana Devatas at the 'Shraddhas' responding to the oblations to Agni with the Mantras of 'Swaha' by Devas; that Maharshis satisfy the Pitras at Shradhas as they desire to attain Bhukti (fulfillment at Earth) and Mukti (salvation); that Siddhaganas at Swarga do satisfy Pitras with celestial Gifts at the Shraddhas; that 'Martyalok vasis' or human beings worship Pitras with 'Shraddha Sahita Archana'or Pujas; that 'Naishtika Brahmacharis' or Brahmana Vydarthis / bachelors try to please Pitras by their Yoga Samadhis; that Kshatriya Kings seek to offer and satisfy Pitruganas with 'Shraaddhaanna' to keep up their Kshatriya Dharma; that Vaishyas satisfy Pitras with Pushpa Dhup with pure water; that Shudras seek to satisfy 'Shukaalena Pitra' and his followers through periodical Shraddhas; that Mahasuragana of Patalaloka at Shraddhas seek to satisfy the Pitras by Swadhakaar Mantra; that Nagas of Rasatala too implore Pirtuganas to fulfil their desires; that those residing at Devaloka and 'Antariksha' (Celestial Region) offer their their reverences directly to the Pitruganas; that Brahmanas satisfy Pitras by making offerings of Ghee and cooked rice through Agni as also through Pindadaan; and that dutiful human beings satisfy Pitruganas on Annual Ceremony Days, Amavasya days, Eclipse days, Days of change of Ayanas, and Days of Festivals, Kartika and other significant months and so on. Pitras are satisfied by destroying Rakshasas, Evil Spirits, Poisonous Creatures and enemies. Devas are satisfied through Pitruganas. Specifically, the Pitras viz. Agnishvakta, Baahirshad, Ajyapa, and Somapa safeguard against Evil Forces in the Four Directions of East, South, West and North respectively. The Nine Pitruganas viz. Vishva, Vishwabhuk, Aradhya, Dharma, Dhanya, Shubhaana, Bhutida, Bhutikrit, and Bhuti safeguard all the directions. Kalyan, Kalyanakarta, Kalya, Kalyatarashraya, Kalyatahatu, Anagha, Vara, Varenya, Varada, Pushtida, Trushtida, Vishwapata, Dhata, Mahan, Mahatma, Mahita, Mahimaavan and Mahabal-all sin demolisher Pitraganas. A total of hundred thirty other Pitruganas do also bestow happiness, fame, posperity, contentment, good health and so on. (The above Stuti of Pitraganas is considered worthy of remembrance at the time of performing Shraadhas).

Being highly pleased by Ruchi Muni's tributes, Pitruganas were happy that the Muni agreed finally to marry, located a suitable damsel for the wedlock and repeated Lord Brahma's boon to beget the next Manu Rouchya. During this Manu's time, the Sapta Rishis would be Dhritiman, Avyaya, Tatvadarshi, Nirmoha, Sutap and Nishprakapya who ensured that in the thirteenth regime of Rouchya there would be least disturbance of Peace and Dharma. Dharma vriddhisthadaarogyam Dhana Dhaanya Sutodbhahah, Nrunaam Bhavatyasandigdhamasmin Manvavantarey Shrutey/ Pitrustavam tathaa Shrutvaa Pitruumaamcha tathaaganaan, Sarvaankaamaanavapnoti tatprasaadaan Maha Muney/ (Listening about the account of this Manvantara, human beings would benefit by the enhancement of Virtue, Health, Prosperity, Foodgrains and Good Offspring. Hearing the extollment of Pitras and Pitruganas would confer fulfillment of all wishes.)

Bhouthya last Manu-Prayers by 'Shanti' to Agni Deva to rekindle 'Nitya Agni'

Sage Bhuti was the ever-angry disciple of Angirasa Maha Muni who was dreaded by one and all for any minor irritation that might attract a curse to the victims. He had no children and that was one of the causes for his annoyance and frustration. Even Surya Deva desists from being too hot in the Ashram of Sage Bhuti, and Vayu Deva, Varuna Deva and Chandra could ill-afford to display their extreme features! Bhuti Muni had a brother called Suvarcha who also did not have a child and desired to perform one Yagna and entrusted the task of organising it to Bhuti. The responsibility of managing the Ashram was entrusted to one of Bhuti's disciples named Shanti and Bhuti made special mention of maintaining 'Nithya Agni' or Constant Fire at the Ashram. As Shanti went out of the Ashram to fetch Samidhas (Dried pieces of wood), flowers and fruits to maintain the daily chores at the Ashram, Shanti went out once and the 'Nitya Agni' was found put off on return. Shanti was frightened of the consequences as Bhuti Muni would certainly tear him down; the Guru would also come to know if the Nitya Agni in the Ashram was rekindled by his remote sense. Not knowing what to do, the disciple could only seek refuge from Agni Deva and entreat Him with high concentration and **Agni Stuti** is as follows:

Om Sarva Bhutaanaam Sadhanaaya Mahatmaney, Eka dwi panchadhishinyaya Rajasuye Shadaatmaney/Namah Samasta Devaanaam Vritthidaaya Suvarchasey, Shukra rupaaya Jagataamaseshaanaam Sthithih pradah / Twam Mukham Sarva Devaanaam Twayaanti Bhagavahnivih, preenayasyakhilaam Devaamstath praanaah Sarva Devataah / (My sincere respects to You Mahtama! You are the facilitator of all human beings with a single or two or five Rupas or Forms, but with Six Murtis at Rajasuya Yagnas; You are the 'Mukha Rupa' or the Facial Form of all the Devas engaging them with their respective occupations as also Suvarcha or the Sparkle as the Shukra Rupa, the Preserver of the Universe and Satisfier of Devas through oblations of 'Ghee' (classified butter) and as such the Life to them!) Hanthu havisthavyyanala medhatwamupagacchhati, tattascha jalarupena parinaamupaiti yat / thenaakhiloushadhee janma bhavatyanilasaarathey, Aoushadheebhira sheshaabhih Sukham jeevanti jantawah/Vitanvathey naraa Yagnaamstvatsrushtaasvoshadheeshu cha, Yagnairdevastatha Daityaasta dvandrakshaamsi pavaka/Aapyaayanthey cha they Yagnaastvaadhaaraa Hutaashana, Atah Sarvasya Yonistwam vahney sarvamayas tatha/Devatha Daanavaa Yakshaa Daityaa Gandharva Raakshasaah, Maanushaa Pashavo Vrikshaa Mriga Pakshisareesrupaah/ Aaapyayyanthey twayaa sarvey samvarthantheycha Paavaka, Twattha yodbhavam yaanthi twayyanthey cha tathaa layam/ (You convert 'Havis'into 'Medhatva' or Brain Power which takes the Form of Water as that produces 'Aushadhis' or Medicines and humanity is happy and healthy as a result. When human beings enjoy themselves with contentment, they perform Yagnas and these Sacred Rituals enabled by You (Anila Saarathey!) satisfy Devas, Daityas, Rakshasas and so on; thus Hutashana! You are the Adhara Swarup or the Fulcrum, the Utpanna Karta or the Creator and Sarvamaya or the Omni Present! In other words, the whole Universe comprising Devatas, Danavas, Yakshas, Daithyas, Gandharvas, Rakshasas, Human Beings, Animals, Trees, Birds, Reptiles is indeed the 'Srishti' of Almighty! You are the conduit or the Great Medium of Srishti, Stithi and Laya) Apah srujaasi devatvam twamatsi punarevata, pachyamaanaastwaya taascha praaninaam pushti -kaaranam /Deveshu tejorupena kaantatya siddheshvavasthitah, visharupena Nageshu Vaayurupah patatrishu/ Manujeshu bhavaankrodho mohah pakshi mrimaadishu, Avashtambhosi tarusha kaathinyam twam Mahiprati/ Jale dravas Bhagavaajjya rupi tadhhaniley, vyapityena tadhaiyaagney nabhaasitwam vyavasthitah / Twamagney Sarva bhutaan antascharaasi paalayan, twamekamaahuh kavayastvaamaahus trividha punah (Deva, You produce water and also consume it; all 'Pranis' or Animate Beings are sustained, fit and dynamic. You are the Tejo Swarupa of Devatas, Buddhi Rupas of Siddhas, Visha Rupas or of Poisonous Forms of Nagas, Vayu Rupas (Forms of Wind) of Birds, Krodha Rupas or Forms of Antagonism of human beings, 'Moha Rupas' (Passionate Forms) of Animals,

'Sthita Rupas' (Forms of Steadiness) of Vrikshas (Trees), 'Kathinyata' or Endurance of Earth, 'Drava Rupa' (fluidity) of Water, Vega Rupa (Speed) of Vayu (Wind), 'Vyapti Swarupa' (All Encompassing Form) of Akash (Sky); but Agni Deva! You administer all the Beings and mobilise the inner consciousness of all and also end up the Universe; that is why Poets depict You as one entity but also describe You as Three, since You perform all the Three Acts of Srishti, Sthiti and Laya!) Thwaamashtadha kalpayitva Yagnamaahamakalpayan twaya shrishtimidam viswam vadanti paramarshyah/ twaamrutehi jagatsarvam sadyo nashyadyutaashana, thubhyam krutvaa Dwijah pujaam swakarma vihitaam gatim / Prayanti havyakavyadyaih Swadhaa Swahabhaabhyu -deeranaat, Parinaaamatma veeryaani ninaamamaraarchita/ Dahanti sarva bhutaani tatho Nishkramya hetah, Jaatavedastavyai vedam vishwam srashtam Mahaadyutey/ Tavaiva Vaidikam karma Sarva bhutaatmakam jagat, Namastonala Pingaaksha Namastestu Hutaashana/ Paavakaadya Namastesthu Namasthey Havya -vaahana twameva bhukta peetaanaam paachanaadyishwa paachakah/ (Agni Deva! Poets actually describe You in Eight Forms right from Yagnas onwards till destruction; Brahmanas through the 'Havya- Kavya' recitations and oblations by the Mantras of Swaha and Swadha which fulfil all the required rituals and take steps forward to Realisation of the Almighty; Your 'Agni Sikhas' from the Homa Kundas and destroy Bhuta ganas, Jaataveda, Hutashana, Adya, Pavaka! My sincere respects to You, the materials that You absorb by way of 'bhukta' and 'Peeta dravya' (by eating or intaking) and clean up the World.)

Shanti continued his Stuti: Sasyaanaam paaka karta twam poshta twam Jagatastatha, Twameva Meghastwam Vaayustwam Beejam sasyahetukam/ Poshaaya Sarva bhutaanaam, Bhuta Bhavya Bhavodyasi, Twam Jyotih Sarva bhuteshu Twamaadityo Vibhaavasuh/Twamahastvam tatha Raatriubhey Sandhey tatha Bhavaan, Hiranyaretastwam Vahney Hiranyodbhava kaaranam/ Hiranya garbhascha Bhavaan-hiranyasadrusha prabhah, Twam Muhurtam Kshanascha Twam Twam Trutistvam tatha Lavah/ Kalakaashtaa nimeshaadi paapebhya Ihikaachya Maha bhayat, Karaalee nama ya jihvaMaha Pralaya kaaranam/ Tatha nah paahi Paapebhya Ihikaacha Maha Bhayaat, Karoti kaamam Bhutebhyo ya the Jihva Sulohitaa/ tayaa nah paahi Paapebhya Ihikaccha Maha Bhayat/ (You are the Bija Swarupa enabling farming, You are the Preserver, You are the Megha or Clouds, the Vayu or Air; the Past, Present and the Future; the Jyoti Rupa, the Aditya Surya; the Dawn, Dusk and Night; You are the Golden Sperm, the Golden Belly, the Gold-like Swarupa; You are the measurements like

Muhurta, Kshana, Triti and Lava. You are the Kaala Kaashta Nimesha Rupas or Forms and of Eternal Time; Please save us from the changes of Time, from the fear of 'Ihika' or the on-going Life by the grace of Your Fiery Tongue named 'Manojava'; also provide boons by another tongue of Yours called 'Sulohita'; may another tongue called 'Sudhumra -varna'demolish our illnesses; may 'Sphulingini'named tongue secure us from 'Samsara Bhaya'; and may 'Viswa' named tongue bestow propitiousness to humanity.) Pingaaksha Lohitagreeva Krishna Varna Hutaashana, traahimaam sarva doshobhyah samsaaraadudhareha maam/ Praseeda Vahney Saptaarchi Krushaano Havyavahana, Agni Pavaka Shukraadi naamaashtaabhirudeeritah/ Agneygrey Sarva Bhutaanaam Samutpakttir Vibhaavaso, Praseeda Havyavaahaasya abhishtuth mayaavya, Twamakshayo Vahniraachintya rupah samruddhimandushprasahoti teevratah/ thavyayam Bhimamashesha lokasamvardhakam hanthyathati viryam, twamutthamam tatvamashe satvathrutpundareekastha mananthameediam/ Tatvaa tam Vishva midam Charaacharam Hutaashanaiko Bahudhaa twamatra/ (May Your orange coloured eyes, red coloured neck and Krishna Varna Form safeguard me from performing 'doshas' or sins. You are the Saptarchi, Havyavahana, Krushanu, Agni, Shukra, Pavaka and such other Eight Names. You were the far earlier Creation to all Beings; Vibhavasu! Avyaa Havya Vaha! May I extol You so that You receive my 'Stuti' and grant me equanimity; You are the 'Akshaya' (Never Diminishing), 'Achintya' or Beyond Sorrow of any kind,

'Samruddhi Sampanna' (Epitome of Abundance), the Shelter-Point, Balashaali, 'Avyaya' or Inexhaustible, Bhima Rupa, Protector and Destroyer, the Satva Swarupa, Lotus-heart of all the Beings, the revered Brahma Swarupa, the Sarva Vyapi or the Encompasser of the Universe, the Singular Entity displayed in multiple Images and the Omni- Present).

Twakshayah sagiri vanaa Vasundhara Nabhah Sasomaarkamahadimvaakhilam, Mahodadherjatharagatascha vaadav bhavaanvibhuvuh pibati prayaamsi Paavaka/Hutashanaastwamiti sadaabhi pujyasey Mahaa kratou niyamaparair maharshibhih, Abhishtutah pibasi cha Soma madhvareyvashatkrutaanyapi cha harshamshi Bhutaye/Twam Vipraih SatatamihejyasePhallartham Vedangyoshvatha Sakaleshu geeyase twam, Tadvetoryajana parayana Dwijendra Vedaangaanyadhi gamayanthi Sarva Kaale/Twam Brahma yajanaparasthaiva Vishnu Bhuteshah Surapatir Yamaa Jaleshah, Suryendu Sakala Suraasuraischa Havyaih Santhoshaamata phalaanya

-thatpruvanti/ Archibhih Paraamoghapaghata drushtam sampushtam tava Shuchi –jaayatey samastam, Snaanaaam Paramamathiva Bhasmaanaa Sat Sanandhyaayam Munibhirateeva sewasye tat/Tat krutwa Tridivamavaapnuvanti Lokaah sadbhaktya Sukhaniyataah samuhi gatim, Praseeda Vahney Shuchi naamadheya Praseeda Vayo Vimalaati deeptye/Praseeda me Paavaka Vaidhyutaabha Praseeda Havyashana Paahi maam twam, Yattey Vahney Shivam rupam ye cha tey Saptahetayah The paahi na stuto Deva Pita putramivaatmajam/ (Anila Deva! You are Eternal, You have the Swarupa of Prithvi along with coutless Mountains, the 'Akaash Swarupa' or of the Form of Sky with Sun and Moon; the 'Kaala Swarupa' of Days and Nights; the 'Badabagni' or the Mammoth Fire outside of the Massive Oceans; the Recipient of Huta Havis as Food due to which reason Maharshis performing 'Maha Yagnas' pay spontaneous tributes to You; You are the Consumer of Somarasa and Havis along with Vashatkaar; You are the Unique Entity who is constantly praised by 'Yagna paraayana' Brahmanas, through the Medium of Vedangas; You are Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara, Devarajendra, Yama, Varuna, Surya, Chandra and all other Devaganas; the Purifier of any and every material by the touch of Your blazes as the best method of sanitization among all types of 'Snanaas' (baths) is by converting any object into 'Bhasma' or ash! Vahni Deva, You are the Unique Cleanser of the entire Srishti! If a Human Being adopts this method of purification, then Vayu Deva would oblige the transfer of the Being from Bhuloka to Swarga loka at Great Speed! Let the same velocity be assumed by Vayu Deva to bring Agni Deva to the Ashram of Sage Bhuti and let Vahni Deva take note of my sincere appeal to save me from my great predicament and bless me to materialize His very kind appearance in the 'Homa Kunda'as 'Nitya agni'and pardon my carelessness and foolishness just as a father would do to his son.

By being immensely pleased with the earnest Stuti, Agni Deva appeared before Shanti and granted the boons of re-kindling the Everlasting Fire at the Homa Kunda at the Ashram of Maha Muni Bhuti, providing an Illustrious Son to the Sage who would be the ensuing Manu to be called Bhoutya as his Manvantar would be acclaimed as Epoch-Making as also blessed Shanti who did not wish for any boon displaying his self-lessness and sincere devotion; Agni Deva sanctioned the fulfillment of generic desires to humanity as contained in the 'Stuti' by Shanti. He assured Shanti that whoever reads or hears the above 'Stotra', especially during Yagnas, Festival Days, Tirtha Yatras, Eclipses, Mangala Karyas like weddings, Vratas, and Purnima and Amavaasyas or at any time during night or daytimings would be provided security from Fire hazards, illnesses, poverty, want of good progeny and discontentment. During the regime of Bhoutya Manu, the Deva Ganas would be Chakshusa, Kanishtha, Pavitra, Swajira and Dhaaraavruka. Indra would be called Shuchi. Agnighna, Agni baahu, Shuchi, Mukta, Madhava, Shakra and Ajita would be the Sapta Rishis.

#### Manyantara Phala Shruti

Reading or hearing the accounts of the first Manvantara of Swayambhu provides Dharma Prapti (Virtue); the second Manvantara of Swarochisha yields 'Sarva Kamna Siddhi' (Fulfilment of all desires); the third Mamvantara of Uouttama gives prosperity; the fourth Tamasa Manvantara endows with 'Gyana Laabha' (Profit of Knowledge); the fifth Raivata Manvantara grants 'Buddhi' (Mental Power) and 'Swarupavati Stree' (Beautiful Woman); the sixth Chakshsa Manvantara offers 'Arogya Labha' (Good Health); the seventh or the present Manvantara headed by Vivaswata Manu grants physical strength; the forthcoming eighth Manvantara of Surya Sawarna supplies Putra Poutra Labha (Good Progeny); the ninth Brahma Savarni Manvantara offers 'Mahatmya' (Great Significance); the tenth Dharma Savarni Manvantara yields 'Mangala' (propitiousness); the eleventh Manvantara of Rudra Savarni yields 'Sumati' (Brain Power) and 'Jaya' (Victory); the twelfth Manvantara of Daksha Sawarni bestows Superiority of the entire Vamsa as also of Best Gunas or Features; the thirteenth Manvantara provides (the strength to destroy enemies) and Phala Shruti of the last and fourteenth Manvantara of Bhoutya gives Deva Prasada and Agnihotra Phala (Blessings of Devas, especially of Fire God).

### Surya Deva-Vedic Origin, Physical Birth, Wedding and Progeny

Markandeya told the Brahmana Kroushti as folows: As Lord Brahma desired to intiate the task of Creation, he created Daksha from his right thumb and Aditi from his left thumb and their children were Kashyapa and Martanda Deva. The latter is of Brahma Swarupa; the Provider of boons to the entire Universe; is present at 'Adi-Madhya-Antha' (the Beginning, Middle and End) of 'Srishthi- Sthiti and Pralaya' (Creation-Preservation and Termination); 'Sarva Bhuta Swarupa' (The Form of all Beings), 'Sarvatma' (The Soul of the Entirety) and 'Sanatana Paramatma' (The Most Ancient and Greatest Soul). He has many names like Vispashta, Parama, Vidya, Jyoti, Shaswati, Prakashita, Deepti, Kaivalya, Gyan, Aavirbhava, Praakaamya, Samvita, Bodha, Avitgati, Smriti and Vigyan. Herebefore Creation, when there was utter darkness, an endless Egg was materialised, in the midst of which, Pitamaha Brahma was present atop a lotus stem. As he broke open the Egg in the middle and from his mouth emerged the 'Maha Shabda' (The Enormous Sound) 'AUM'. This Sound was followed by the the Foremost Sound 'BHU'; then came BHUVAH, followed by SVAHA; the Sum of these Three Echos formed Surya. The Maha Shabda AUM consituted the 'Sukshma Rupa' or the Tiniest Form Surya Deva; this was tagged along the 'Sthula Rupas' or the Gross Forms viz. MAHAH, JANAH, TAPAH, and SATYA (*Omityasmatswarupatu Sukshma Rupam Raveh Param/Tatho Mahariti sthulam janam sthulataram tathah, tathasthapasthtah* 

satyamiti murtaani saptadha/ Sthitaani tasya rupaani bhavanti na bhavanti cha, Swabhaava bhaavayorbhaavam yato gacchanti samsayam/Aadyantam tatparam suhkshmam rupam param sthitam, Omithuktam maya Vipra! Tatpara Brahma tadyupuh/)

Markandeya continued to explain to Brahmana Kroshti that when the Sacred Egg was burst and Brahma emerged, his principal head released Rig Veda; from his eastern head came out Yajur Veda; from the western head came out Sama Veda and from the mouth of the northern head materialized Atharva Veda. Rig Veda was of Rajo Guna, Yajur Veda of Satvika Guna, Sama Veda of Tamasika Guna and Atharva Veda of a blend of Satvika and Tamo Gunas. The splendour of Rig Veda gave a powerful sound 'AUM'; the first segment was encircled by a second circle of Yajur Veda giving out a reverberation of AUM, the third circle of radiance being of Sama Veda furnished the resonance of AUM again and the final segment too echoed the sound of AUM; thus AUM was the common feature of all the Vedas. The Rig, Yajur and Sama Vedas are of the nature of 'Shanti' (Peace), 'Pushti' (Well being) and 'Abhicharika' (Negative) respectively while Atharva Veda is an 'Antargita' (enclosed) entity. Since the entire Universe was engulfed in darkness and just emerged clean, it had instantly become lit up on its upper, lower and side ways, following the radiance of Vedas and had thus assumed an identity and definiteness; the initial signs of illumination of 'Adyagni' (the foremost blaze) came into being then! The threeVedas of Rig, Yajur and Sama attained prominence at the mornings, noons and evenings respectively. Before the 'Purvahna' (prenoon), Rig Veda based 'Shanti Karmas' of positive nature are performed; at 'Madhyahna' (noon), Yajur based Pushti Karyas (growth oriented tasks) are performed; at 'Aparahna' (afternoon) are executed Sama Veda Karyas of Pitras; while at 'Sayamahna' or even later only negative or maledictory nature are done based essentially on Atharva Veda. It is stated that Srishti Kaala is of Brahma Swarupa signifying Rig Veda or of Satvika character, Sthiti Kaala is of Vishnu meant for Yajur Veda highlighting Rajasika Guna and Samhaara Kaala is of Rudra Deva based on Sama Veda representing Tamasika Guna; thus Aparahna Kaala is of 'Asuchi' (impurity). These timings are hence of Vedatma, Veda Samsthita and Veda Vidyatmika respectively of Purvahna, Madhyahna/ Aparahna and Sayahna.

Since radiance and radiation constitute the essential ingredients of Srishti (Creation),

-besides of course water, the primary hold of existence of all Beings- Lord Brahma before initiating 'Srishti' formally acknowledged the primacy of Surya Deva and eulogised him to say that Sun God was the 'Atma Swarupa' or the Soul Form of the Universe as also the 'Vishva Rupa' and 'Vishva Murthi' (the Form and Profile of the Universe), and the Unique Embodiment of Luminosity and Heat which were the sine-qua-non of Existence. Brahma also said that Surya Deva was the nucleus of Vedas, and the featureless 'Para Brahma' Swarupa possessing all powers of Creation, Preservation and Annihilation; that he had the Omnipotence which facilitated the existence of 'Pancha Bhutas' or the Five Elements of Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Sky; that he was the Omni-Present Saviour of the Worlds. Having said thus Lord Brahma initiated the process of Creation. As happened at the erstwhile Kalpanta, Brahma created Devas, Asuras, human beings, animals, trees, and the rest of flora and fauna. Kashyapa and Aditi were responsible to produce Devas while the former and Diti created Daityas. Among Kashyapa's other wives Daan produced Danavas, Vinati gave birth to Garuda and Aruna; Khasa produced Yakshas and Rakshasas; Kadruma gave birth to 'Nagas' (reptiles); Muni produced Gandharvas; Krodha produced Kulyaganas; Riskta gave birth to Apsaraas; Ira created Iravata and all other Elephants; Tamna created Shyeni and such other Kanyas; Ukka produced Shyana, khechara ganas including parrots and Pratha produced the rest of the birds.

As Devas on the one hand and Danavas, Rakshasas and Daityas on the other confronted each other, Aditi extolled Surya Deva and prayed for victory to Devas in their battles:

Namastubhyam Paraam Sukshmam Souvarnim vibratey tanum, Dhaamdhaama vataamesha dhaamnaadhara Sahvata! (You are the smart archer of golden arrows; the profile of luminosity and the Holder of radiance, my greetings to you!). Aditi eulogised him further to say that he would assume a mercilessly blistering form to absorb water for eight long months and facilitate timely rains as Maha Megha Murti or the Grand Form of Clouds and save the World from famines and droughts; that he saved the World from diseases and untimely deaths by making available 'Aushadhis' from Nature; that he was entirely responsible for the lives of human beings by nurturing crops, foodgrains, fruits, vegetables and flowers; that he was enabling Yagna Karyas, Tarpanas, and other holy tasks and satisfy Devas and Pitru ganas; that he was the Omkara Rupa determined to save Dharma (Virtue) and nullify Evil and preserve and promote Peace and Prosperity. Aditi further praised Surya Deva saying: Twam Brahma Harirajasanjnita stwamindro Vitteshaha pitrupatiratpatih Sameeraha Somognirgaganapatihir maheedharobhihi kim stavya tava sakalaatmarupadhaamnih (You are Brahma, Vishnu, Maha Deva, Indra, Kubera, Pitru Pati Yama, Ambupati Varuna, Sameera Vayu, Soma, Agni, Gagana, Mahidhara, Samudra, Teja and Sakalatma Rupa! How much could I extol you! Please save my children Devas and vindicate justice and virtue!). As Aditi prayed to Surya Deva, the latter appeared before her and bestowed the boon to her that he would be born to her, destroy the enemies and make Devas happy. So saying, the 'Soushumna Kiran' or the Sun Ray called Soushumna of 'Sahasraamshu' or the Thousand Rayed Surya Deva entered Aditi's garbha (womb). Devi Aditi performed 'Chandrayana and such other 'Vratas' and drastically reduced her food intake. Her husband Kashyapa Muni was highly annoyed at her heavy penances and questioned: Kim maarayasi garbhaanda miti Nityopa- vasini! (Why are you destroying the conception with your heavy penances?). Aditi replied: Sa cha tam praaha garbhaanda metat pashyati Kopana! Na maaranti vipakshaanaam mrutavey tadbhavishyati (Hey Angry man! This garbhaanda which you see is not being destroyed by me; this shall destroy the enemies!) However, Aditi felt insulted by the remarks of Kashyapa and tried to remove the conception, but Kashyapa Muni revived the same with appropriate 'Mantras' and the kind Ravi Deva came out of her abdomen even as a loud 'Asharira Vani' or a Celestial Voice was heard addressing Kashyapa Muni to say: Maaranti the yatah proktametadanda twaya Muney, tasmaan Muney stutasteyam Maartaandakhyo bhavishyati/ Suryadhi kaaramcha vibhur jagatesha karishyati, Hamishyatya suraanaamschaayam yagna bhaagaharaanareen (Hey Muni! You said that the 'Anda' (Egg) would be destroyed (Maarit)! That is why your son would be called **Martanda**. This 'Vibhu' would replace Surya Deva and destroy the 'Yagna bhaaga haari' or the thieves of 'Yagna Phala' (the fruits of Yagnas), viz. Asuras! On hearing the Celestial Announcement, Devas became extremely delighted but Daanavas realised that their end would arrive soon. As prophesied, Devas headed by Indra challenged Danavas, Daityas and Rakshasaas and Martanda Deva's blaze and illumination burnt the latter into ashes and Devas regained their lost glory once again.

Prajapati Viswakarma's daughter Sanjna was married to Vivaswan or Surya Deva. Their elder son was Vaivasvata (the present Manu) followed by Yama and daughter Yami.But Sanjna was unable to withstand the vision of Martanda and hence materialised Chhaya Devi who promised to replace Sanjna as long as Surya Deva would not touch her hairs and would not curse her with a 'Shaap' on learning the truth that she was a surrogate! Sanjna shifted to the abode of her father Viswakarma, who in course of time nagged his daughter to get back to her husband; as the father's pressure became intense, she left her father's residence too and became a mare to perform 'Tapas' in a forest. Chhaya Devi who proxied for Sanjna

gave birth to Saavarni who too was destined to become a future Manu and Shaneswara, besides a daughter called Tapati who married a King called Samvaran eventually. Yama was annoyed at her mother's partial treatment to some children at the cost of others and in the course of a heated argument, he raised his ankle. The angry mother Chhaya said that after all she was the wife of a glorious Deity and certaily deserved respect to her and since he did not do so, the flesh of his ankle would fall off! Dharmatma Yama was taken aback by this curse and in righteous agitation approached Surya Deva in great despair along with his brother Vivasvata. He told the father that indeed he behaved rashly with her mother for which he readily sought her forgiveness and that he would never repeat the mistake again; however, the curse given was unduly disproportionate to his relatively minor act of indiscretion that no mother would award. Even if a son did a mistake, a mother would ignore or chide the son, but in this case the curse given smacked of vengence. Surya Deva too wondered that a person of Yama's virtue and truthfulness was indeed badly hurt and asked Sanjna about her version. Chhaya Sanjna got afraid when she was confronted and made a clean confession that she was a replacement to the original Sanjna who went to her father's abode as she was unable to bear the excessive heat and dazzle of Surya Deva. On enquiry, Viswakarma too suggested the Sanina should return to her husband and thought that she did so. From his Inner Vision, Surya Deva realised that Sanjna got converted as a mare and was performing Tapasya at Shaka Dwipa eversince. Surya Deva felt remorseful of

what all happened. He sought Brahma's approval to reduce the severity of his heat and radiance gradually and Brahma instructed Viswakarma to take actions as follows: Original Surya Deva be kept as a reserve in the Surya Mandala (Solar Orbit) by one-sixteenth; of the rest, one-fifteenth part was utilised to materialise Vishnu Bhagavan's Sudarshana Chakra, Shiva's Trishula, Kubera's Palki (Palanquin), Yama's 'Danda', Kartikeya's Shakti and various 'Astras' of Devas. Thus Surya Deva became less severe and manageable of his vision to Trilokas, which however was harsh enough to destroy enemies. Subsequently, Bhanu Deva assumed the form of a horse and shifted to the Place where Sanjna was performing Tapasya in the form of a mare. Sanjna mistook the horse as a stranger and sought to secure back. The mare and the horse rubbed their noses and Surya's virility entered through the noses to the mare's 'garbha' (womb); instantly two Ashwani Kumars called 'Naasatya' and 'Dastra' as the horses gave out similar sounds in their union. Out of the rest of Surya's semen, another son called Revanta emerged as seated on a horse back carrying bow and arrows and a powerful sword. Both Surya Deva and Sanjna returned to their original forms and abodes. The eldest son Vivaswanta was declared as the Seventh Manu, Yama Dharma Raja was blessed to become 'Lokapalak' and also as the Chief of Pitruganas, Yamuna became a holynriver, Aswani Kumars were appointed as Physicians to Devas, Revant became the Chief of Guhyaganas, Saavarni was declared as the eighth Manu, Shaneswara became a popular 'Graha' (Planet) and Tapti too became a holy River.

#### 'Surya Mahatmya'-An illustration of Rajyavardhana (Surya 'Stuti' included)

Mahatma Markandeya narrated to Brahmana Kroushti illustrating the example of King Rajyavardhana, while highlighting the importance of Surya Deva. The King ruled his Kingdom so ideally that there were no robberies, diseases, and poverty. He married a Princess named Manini and his family life was ideal too. Having ruled the Kingdom for seven thousand years of contented life, the King found his wife's disposition rather sad one day and sought the reason for it; she noticed a white hair on his head. He said that it was time for him to take to 'Vanaprasthashrama' or retirement to forest life. None in the Royal Court approved of his proposal including the Ministers, Army, Brahmanas, the entire Administration and

the normal citizens and in fact they all vehemently protested, despite the King's argument saying 'Jaatasya maranam dhruvam' and none could defy the laws of Nature. But every body in the Kingdom performed Vratas, Pujas, Yagnas, and all kinds of sacrifices to let the life of the King extend his life.Brahmanas performed Tapasyas, Homas, Veda Pathanas, Surya Namaskaras in deep waters of Holy Rivers. In fact, a group of them worshipped a Popular Gandharva Deva named Sudama; he appeared in person and advised that the wish of longevity for Rajyavardhana was surely fulfilled of groups of the Subjects of the Kingdom should pray to a Temple of Bhaskara Deva Temple at 'Guha Vishala Vana' on the Kamarupa Mountain. As such groups were formed and collective worship gathered momentum in the Temple by turns by way of Nithya Pujas along with 'Shodasopacharas' of Pushpas, Gandha, Dhupa, Deepa, Japa, Homa, Naivedya and Stutis as follows:

Deva Danava Yakshaanaam grahaanaam Jyotishaamapi, tejasaathyaadhikam Devam Vrajaam sharanam Ravim/ Divim sthitaam cha Deveshaam dyotayantam samantatah, Vasuhaamantarikshim cha vyapyuyantam Mareechibhih/Adityam Bhaskaram BhaanumSavitaaram Divaakaram, Pushaanamaryamaanam cha Swarbhaanum Deepta deedhitam/ Chaturyugaanta kaalaagnidyushprakshyam pralayaantagam, yogeeswara maanantham cha raktampeetam sitaasitham/ Rusheenaamagnihotrushu Yagna deveshavaasthitam, vrajaam sharanam Devam tejoraashim thamachyutam/Aksharam Paramam guhyam mokshadwaraamanuttamam, Chandobhiraswarupaischa sakrudyukthair vihangamam/ Udayaasthamaneyuktam sadaa Meroh Pradakshiney, Anrutam charitam chaiya punya teertham pruthagyidham/ Vishwa sthitimachintyam cha prapannah sma Prabhaakaram, Yo Brahma yo Mahadevo Yo Vishnuryam Prajaapatih/ Vayurakaashamaapascha Prithivi girisa girah, Graham Chandradya Vanaspatyam drumashadham/Vyaktaavyakshetu Bhuteshu Dharmaadharma pravartakah, Braahmi Maheswari chaiva Vaishnavi chaiva the tanuh/ Tridha yasya Swarupam tu Bhaanor-bhaaswan praseedatu, Masya sarva mayesyedamangam bhutam Jatprabhoh/ sa nah praseedakaam bhasangkitaam yascha jeevanam,Yasaikamaksharam rupam Prabhaa mandaladrusham/ Dviteeyamaindavam soumyam sa no Bhaaswavan praseedatu, tabhyam cha tasya rupaabhyamidam Vishvam vinirvitam/ Agnishomayam baaswaamsa no Devah praseedatu/

(We take refuge from Surya Deva who is far more lustrous than all other Devas, Danavas, Yakshas and Jyotishka Grahas. We pray to that Deveshwara who stays on the Sky and illuminates all the Directions; that Bhaskara, Savita, Diwakara, Pusha, Aryama, Swabhanu, Diptadidhiti and Yogeswara whose rays are spread out all over Vasudha (Earth) and 'Antariksha' (Sky); that Kaalaagni Swarupa who could never be possibly visioned with his fiery form in multi colours of blood red, yellow, white and black; that Deva who experiences the august presence of Yagna Deva who is Eternal, Indestructible and of 'Parama Guhya' (highly confidential) Brahma Swarupa; that Parama Deva who is identified with the 'Saptaashwa Ratha' (Seven horse drawn chariot) circumambulating the Meru Mountain from dawn to dusk, all over the firmanent; that Prabhakar who took a physical form from 'Aditi Garbha'; that Ananta (Endless), Achintya (Incomprehensible), Adi Deva who is illusive yet real; that Brahma, Maha Deva, Vishnu, Prajapati, Vayu, Aakaash, Jal, Prithvi, Parvat, Samudra, Graha, Nakshatra, Chandra, Vanaspati, Vriksha and Auoshadhi Swarupa; that Prabhakara who is conceivable yet inconceivable as also the Provocator of Dharma and Adharma among all human beings; and that Parama Devata who is Braahmi, Maheswari and Vaishnavi who appears in three distinct Forms, yet the same Entity. We salute with veneration and unreserved devotion to that Unique Jagat Prabhu who is impossible to look at for long and yet of the Chandra Swarupa who is cool and soothing. We seek protection from that Bhaskara who is of the Swarupas of Agni as well as of Soma; or in other words of contradictory identities and manifestations). The sincere Prayers that the groups of Devotees made to Bhaskara Deva pleased him and appeared in a form that could be visible and granted them the boon of active life of ten thousand years to the King with excellent health and contentment. The King was no doubt happy but desired that all his citizens should have similar benefit of longevity and prosperity. As the King raised this genuine doubt, all concerned including the

Queen performed similar pujas and prayers. As a result, those who undertook the worship were able to receive Bhaskara Deva's blessings and boons. Sage Markandeya thus affirmed that sincere 'Aradhana' would always pay to a readily visible God on the Sky, day in and day out, depending on the intensity of faith and devotion.

# Some highlights of 'Surya Vamsa' Kings and their unrelenting virtues

In the current Manvantara headed by Vaivaswata Manu, quite a few illustrious Kings reigned in the lineage; Vaivaswata had seven sons, viz. Ikshvaku, Saryati, Naabhaga, Rishta, Narisyanta, Prushaghna and Dhrushta. For example, *Ikshvaku's* lineage was of Vikukshi-Sasada-Puranjaya-Kakustha-Pruthu and so on; it was in this ancestry that the Epic Hero Shri Rama belonged to.From another son of Vaivaswata, viz. *Saryati* was born Sukanya who was wedded to Chyavana Muni; the girl visiting a garden happened to pierce the eyes of the old Muni in Tapasya covered by a bush mistaking the eyes for twinkling worms and father Saryati gave away the girl in wedlock to appease the Muni who was blinded due to the piercing, but by the grace of Aswini Kumars (the Physicians of Devas) the Muni regained his eye sight as well as youth. *Nabhaga* was another son of Vaivaswata and the former's junior son also called Naabhaga was cheated by his brothers by taking away his share of the property too. The Junior Naabhaga complained to the father and the junior was advised to recite Vedic Mantras in a Yagna of Planetary heads nearby; the Devas were pleased and blessed the junior to receive considerable wealth. But, a dark person with a frightful face and an offensive tone objected to the Junior Nabhaga receiving the wealth; the junior complained to his father but the latter

realised that the dark person was none else but Lord Shiva Himself! The underlining Message of the Lord was that the son should rather prefer Spiritual Wealth to material prosperity. Another son of Vaivaswata called *Visishta* performed Yagna for securing a son under the over-all management of Sage Mitra Varuna but due to an indiscretion of the 'Hota' (Manager) of the Yagna, a daughter Ila was born instead of a son. But by the mantrik powers of Matravaruna, the daughter Ila was converted as a boy called Sudyumna. As Sudyumna became a King eventually, he went out on a hunting spree and unknowingly entered the gardens of a forest which were inaccessible since Siva and Parvati were in privacy there. Siva cursed Sudyumna to become a woman, but when Sage Vasistha prayed to Lord Shiva, the latter bestowed a dispensation that the King would be a male for six months and return to womanhood as Ila for the rest of a year! During the womanhood, Ila begot Pururava from Buddha the son of Chandra. Vaivaswata Manu's yet another son King *Prashaghna* who killed a cow hidden in a bush on a hunting spree mistaking it as a deer. The dead cow belonged to Rishi named Agnihotri and the latter's son was about to curse the King but the Rishi stopped the son to do so; he said:

Kopastapo naashyati Krudhro Bhrashyantaayushuh, kruddhasya galatey Jnaanam kruddhaascharthachha heeyathey / Na dharmah krodhasheelasya naarthamchaproti roshanah, naalam sukhaaya kaamaaptih kopenaavishta chetasaam/ (Anger kills Tapasya; it reduces life span; wavers 'Jnaanam' or wisdom and 'Artha heenata' or 'daridram'/poverty; angry humans can never save wealth nor fulfill their wishes)!

In the Surya Vamsa again, there was a King named *Vidurath* who found a huge cavity on Earth in a forest and asked a Muni nearby performing Tapasya about it. The Muni told that there was a demon of Patala called Kujrumbha who made several such cavities all over the forest visiting often to destroy what ever came in his way, especially Yagnas and noble persons. The Muni further cautioned the King that his Kingdom was in danger, especially since he had a potent weapon called Sunanda, a Mushal (Mace) which was created originally by Twashta Prajapati; however the weapon would become useless and ineffective if a woman touched it. On return to his Kingdom, Vidurath consulted his Ministers and decided to send his sons to be deputed for sending his sons Sunuta and Sumanta to locate the demon and kill him. Unfortunately, the demon imprisoned the sons and also kidnapped the Princess Mudavati, who had incidentally known about the ineffectiveness of the weapon if touched by a woman. The King announced that whoever could free the Princes and the Princess from the custody of the demon would be wedded to the Princess. An intrepid Youth called Vatsandra came forward and fought the demon, since the Princess had already touched the weapon while being kidnapped. The brave youth Vatsandra killed the demon, married Princess Mudavati and lived happily together.

Yet another King of Surya Vamsa was Vishal of Vidisa Kingdom who was blessed with an extraordarily pretty Princess named Vaishali. The King announced a 'Swayam vara' (bride's own choice for marriage) and various Princes attended the function. But the son of a reputed King Karandhama named Balaaswa, who was known for his valour attended the Function; actually, the Prince's name was popular as Aveekshit since he was not viewed by 'Grahas' (Planets) at malefic positions in the 'Kundalini' or the birth chart. He tried to take away the Princess by force after defeating one by one, but when confronted by all the suitors got defeated and imprisoned. The King advised the Princess to select any one of the rest but she said that he would like only Aveekshit. The King was reluctant to agree. Meanwhile, King Kardhama attacked Vidisa and freed his son, but Avvekshit felt humiliated and did not want to marry the Princess or anybody else. A highly disappointed Princess Vaishali too was firm that she would marry either Aveekshit or none else. She retired to a hermitage in a forest to meditate. Devas were happy with her Tapasya and blessed her to give birth to a son who would be an Emperor of 'Sapta Dwipas' (Seven Islands) or literally the entire Universe. The Princess wondered as to how this could be possible since she took the vow of celibacy, excepting when wed to Aveekshit. After some time, a demon called Dhrudhakesha sought to kidnap her when she raised alarming shouts and since Aveekshit happened to pass by, fought the demon and rescued the Princess. On mutual consent, they married as per Gandharva way and returned to King Vishal. In due course, the couple gave birth to a son Marut who indeed became the Supreme Sovereign of the Sapta Dwipas.

Marut was not only the 'Chakravarthi' (literally he whose chariot wheels move forward without being interrupted by any Opponent) of Sapta Dwipas controlling the Sky, Prithvi, Patal and other Under-Sea Lokas as well as 'Jalasthaans' or wherever water existed, but also the most reputed and virtuous Sovereign of the contemporary times. He performed thousands of Yagnas with Mahatma Samvarth, who was the son of Angirasa and the brother of Deva Guru Brihaspati as the 'Ritvik' or the High Conductor of the Yagnas. The Yagnas were so lavish that the 'Yagnashalas' or the Places of the Sacrifices glittered with gold and jewellery. Brahmanas, who were proverbially poor full of family needs and desires, were surfeit with 'Dhana' (Cash), Dhanya (Foodgrains), Vastu (material wealth), Vahana (chariots, horses, elephants and such other carriages) and Kanaka (Gold). Marut's sovereignty was at such peak that virtue reigned, human desires and ambitions were absent, 'Varnashrama' Rules were most predominant, sins were at the lowest ebb and Peace and Contentment were the watch words. In such an idyllic situation, came the discordant note from the Royal Grandmother 'Vira' who sent a word of caution to the Emperor. She was no doubt satisfied with the general atmosphere but stressed that utmost vigilance was required since there

had been increasing lapses of General Administration and the channels of Communication and Intelligence Wings needed to be strengthened. Vira underlined that even one drop of poison would turn a pond unuseable. She gave recent examples of killing 'Brahmana Vidyardhis' by Nagas of Nagaloka. This information infuriated Marut and made extensive preparations to attack Nagaloka; a few culprits of the Serpent Land responsible for the mischief were rattled out of shiver and fear and instantly sought the refuge of Marut's father Aveekshit. Marut was bent on destroying Naga Loka 'en masse'! Aveekshit desired Marut to slow down against the Naga loka and pleaded mercy to the offending Nagas who apologised profusely for their sins of 'Brahma hatya'. Both the son and the father took strong positions since Marut argued for 'Raja Dharma' and for destroying the Snake dynasty for their unpardonable killings of Brahmanas, while Aveekshit pleaded for mercy to 'Sharanaarthis' or those seeking pardon and shelter on the basis of 'Ashrita Dharma'. As the trouble started with Vira the Grand Mother, she appeared and explained that it was she who informed Marut about the killings. Evenso, the postures taken by the father and son were so intense that they were ready to fight with each other in a battle! Both the Nagas and Brahmanas wondered that the principles of Rajya Dharma so vehemently followed might surely end up in mutual killings of the father and son. Thus Nagas tried to use their expertise in 'Aoushadhis' (Natural Medicines) and Brahmanas tried their Mantra Shakti to revive the dead Brahmana Vidyardhis and thus the controversial storm got averted!

# Phala Shruti of Markandeya Purana

Chatuh Prashna samopetam Puraanam shrutvapunascha they paapam kalpakoti shathai krutam/ Brahmahatyaadi paapaani yaanyaayaanya shubhaanicha, taani sarvaani nashyantitrunaam vaatahatam yathaa/ pushkarey daanamjo punyam shravanaasya jaayatey, Sarva Vedaadhika phalam samaapthyaachadh gacchati /

(Listening to this highly virtuous Markandeya Purana with Four Questions of Maha Bharata, would abrogate sins committed through hundred crore 'Kalpas'! Even Brahmahatya and such other serious 'Pancha Patakas' or the worst listed Five Major Sins would fly away as mere straws with the forceful velocity of winds. Substantial 'Punya' or fruits of high meritorious deeds would be earned in the same manner as of 'Daan' or charity at Pushkara Tirtha and of reciting all the Four Vedas with sincerity and devotion.)

Puranashravanaa devaparam yogamavaapnuyaat, naastikaaya na daatavyam vrushaley Vedanindakey/Gurudwijaati nindaaya tatha bhagna vrataayacha, Maataapitro nindakaaya Vedashastradinindaney/ bhinnamaryaadiney chaiva tatha vai jnaati kopiney, yetheshaam naiva daatavyam Praanaih kanthagatairapi/

(Listening to Markandeya Purana even once would bestow high merits, but do not be instrumental to give the Purana to 'Nastikas' (Non-believers), Shudras, Critics of Vedas and Gurus, those who failed to complete performing Vratas and abandon half way, those who discard their parents, close relatives and normal courtesies etc. Do avoid giving this Sacred Purana, even if such persons demand and try to read it by hook or crook).

Markandeya Vuvaacha/ Yetatsarvamupaakhyaanam Dharmai Swargaapavargadam, Yah Shrunoti pathedvaapi sidhham tasya sameehitam/ Aaadhivyaadhija duhkhena kadaa chhinnaabhiyujyatey, Brahmahatyaabhi paapebhyomuchyatey naathra samshayah/ Samtah swajana mitraani bhavanti hita buddhayah, Naarayah sambhavishyanti dasyavo vaa kadaachana/ sadartho mishtabhogi chadhurbhikshairnaarvaseedati, paradara para- dravya parahimsaadikilbishaih/ muchyateyneka duhkebhyo nityam chaiva Dwijottama, Ruddhivruddhih smritih shantihi Shreeh Pushtistrushtirevacha/ Nithyam tasya bhavodvipra yah shrunoti kathaamimam/

(Mahatma Markandeya said: This complete exposition in the Purana bestows Dharma, Swarga and Apavarga or Fulfillment; whoever reads or hears shall achieve their inner desires; such persons shall never be victims of physical ailments, worldly difficultes and complexities, or of any kind of mental troubles or natural calamities; their failings and indulgences including the worst kind of sins are washed out; their relatives, friends and well-wishers get more intimate and helpful; they shall have no enemies; they shall never be troubled by robbers; they attain prosperity; they enjoy excellent food; they shall never be bothered or involved by other women, other's money, and other's actions of violence and their fears; they shall get rid of sorrows of any description; and they enjoy Ruddhi or prosperity, Buddhi or intellect, Smriti or memory, Shanti or Peace, Lakshmi or Wealth / propitiousness, Pushti or physical well-being, and Tushti or contentment.)

### Shri Durga Sapta Shloki

Om Jnaaninaamapi chetaamsi Devi Bhagavati hi sa, Baladaakrushya mohaaya Maha Maya prayacchati/ (Bhagavati Maha Maya! You pull the minds of even 'Gyaanis' with force towards obsession!)
Om Durgey smritaa harasi bheeti masesha jantoh, Swasthaih smritaa mati mateeva shubhaam dadaasi/

(Devi Durga! A mere thought of Yours demolishes fright among 'Praanis' or Beings, while You provide auspiciousness in response to the meditation by sensible humans)

Daaridra duhkha bhaya haarini ka twadanya, Sarvopakaara karanaaya sadaardra Chitta/

Who else is there but You that is readily prepared with extreme benevolence to ward off our sorrows, fears and adversities?)

Om Sarva Mangala Maangalyey Shivey sarvaartha saadhakey, Sharanyey Thriabikey Devi! Narayani Namostuthey/ (Devi! Narayani! You are the embodiment and Provider of Auspiciousness to one and all; You are Shiva Swarupa or the Form of Propitiousness fulfilling all our wishes; You are Traimbika or the composite personification of Lakshmi, Saraswati and Parvati; We seek shelter from You, as we bend down and greet!

Om Sharanaagata deenaarta paritraana parayaney, Sarvasyaarti harey Devi! Narayani Namostutey/ (Our greetings to You Narayani! Devi! We seek refuge and safety from You as we are helpless and harassed).

Om Sarva Swarupey Sarvesey Sarva Shakti samanvitey, Bhayebhyastraahino Devi! Durga Devi Namostutey/ (Devi! You are the all-comprehensive Form, the Supreme Sovereign, and the all-Powerful; kindly shield us from diverse types of fears and apprehensions; our earnest salutations to You, Durga Devi!)

Om rogaanaseshaa napahamsi Tushtaa, Rushtaa tu kaamaan sakasaa nabhishtaan/
(As You assume compassion, all our diseases disappear; but if indignant, all our wishes get to nought)

Twam ashritaanaam na vipannaraanaam, Twam ashritaa hyashrayataam prayaanti / (Those who have already taken asylum from You would never face difficulties any way; on the other hand, such persons saved by You could as well provide protection to others too in their turn!)

Om Sarva baadhaa prashamanam Thrailokya syaakhileswari, Evameva twayaa kaarya masadvairi vinaashanam/ (Sarveswari! Do continue to alleviate the tribulations of one and all among the Three Lokas and destroy the enemy elements everywhere).

Ya yetatsaramam guhyam Sarva Rakshaa vishaaradam, Devya sambhaashitam Stotram sadaa Saamraajya daayakam/ (This Sapta Shloki is at once striking yet classified but bestowing protection; this is a Sacred Hymn related to the Supreme Mother yielding immense benefits including 'Samraajya' or Empires!

Shrunuyaadwaa pathedyaapi paathayeydwaapi yatnatah, Parivaara yutho Bhuutwaa Trailokya Vijayeebhavet! (Hearing, reading or narrating the Sapta Shloki with sincere efforts along with family and friends would secure accomplishments in all the Three Lokas!)

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# ESSENCE OF MATSYA PURANA

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#### ESSENCE OF MATSYA PURANA

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#### ESSENCE OF MATSYA PURANA

Prachandathandavaapo prakshipta ena diggajaah,

Bhavantu vighna bhangaaya bhavasya charanaambujaah/

(May the Lotus feet of Bhagavan Shankara protect us from all kinds of obstacles, as He throws away huge and fierce elephants while performing 'Prachanda Thandava' or tempestuous Shiva dance). Patalaadutpatishnor makara vasatayo yasya puchhaabhighaata- durdhvam Brahmaanda khanda vyatikara vihitwyatyayena patanti/ Vishno Matsyaavataarey Vasumatee —mandalam vyasruvaanatasyasyodeeritaanaam dhvanirapaharataadisrayam vah shrutinaam/ (As Bhagavan Vishnu incarnated as 'Matsyaavatara', the powerful whack of the huge tail of the gigantic fish on the deep ocean wobbled and tossed Prithvi (Earth) up and down; may the resounding sound of Shrutis (Vedas) that emerged from the Lord's mouth devastate all the 'Amangalta' or inauspiciousness!)

Maha Muni Suta while addressing a massive congregation of Rishis at Naimisharanya described the Matsya Purana as follows: *Punyam Pavitramaayuashya midaaneem Shrinut Dwijaah, Matsyam Purana Makhilam Yajjagaat Gadaa dhararah*/ (Matsya Purana is Punyaprada (propitious), Parama Pavitra (highly sacred), and Ayurvardhak (Life Extending).

#### Brahma's boon to Satyavrata, Matysavatar, Pralaya and Srishti again

In the past, King Satyavrata / Vaivaswa Muni, the son of Surya Deva, entrusted his Kingdom to his son and did 'Tapasya' for innumerable years to Brahma Deva who was finally pleased and gave the Muni a boon of saving the 'Sthaavara Jangama Jeevas' or all moveable and immobile Beings at the time of next 'Pralaya' or the Great Annihilation of the Universe. In course of time, as Satyavrata was doing Pitru Tarpana in a waterbody and noticed a tiny fish in his palms and entreated him not to throw away but keep in his 'Kamanadalu' (water-vessel) as the big fish would swallow it in the water. Satyavrata took pity, retained the fish and transferred it in a Well. As the fish larger size and filled up the Well, he transferred it to a 'Saroyar' and within days it was growing in size further and further. Satyayrata finally transferred the huge fish to an Ocean and recognised it as Vaasudeva himself. Bhagavan informed the King that very soon there would be a Pralaya when Prithvi (Earth) would get submerged in deep waters with mountains, forests etc.as a mammoth Ship, constructed by Devas would arrive and that he should keep ready samples of various species of 'Svedaja' (born of sweat), 'Andaja' (born of eggs) and 'Udbhija' (born out of Earth) as also 'Jaraayuja' (born from womb such as human beings, animals etc. which were subject to birth and death). Bhagavan further suggested that when the ship arrived he should tie it with the horn of the giant fish. As the Pralaya approched, there would be severe drought in the Universe for spells of years, fiery winds would blow all over, severity of Sun would burn off most of the species, there would be 'badabaagni'/ sulphurious fumes from the Seas devastating the flora / fauna as also mountains and forests, and then there would be incessant rain from the Seven clouds of Pralayakaala named Samvarta, Bheemanaada, Drona, Chanda, Balaahak, Vidyudpataak, and Shona.

The Seven Seas would flow in a single flood submerging Earth totally. In this Pralaya, only Surya, Soma, Brahma, Narmada River, Maharshi Markandeya, Shankara, Four Vedas, Puranas, and Suvrata who after the post Pralaya age who would become the Prajapati as the famed Vaivaswata would be the survivors and the rest of Creation including even Devatas. As predicted, at the end of the Chakshusa Manvantara, the ship appeared and along with it a huge rope like serpent was materialised with which Satyavrata connected the ship and the horn of Matsyavatara Bhagavan Vishnu and got seated by the ship too. As the Pralaya subsided, Matsya Bhagavan explained to Prajapati Satyavrata who became the Vaivasvata Manu

about the re-creation of the Universe and its end again, the creation of humanity, Manvantaras, the illustrious personalities among human beings, 'Bhuvana Vistaar' or the expansion of Srishti, Daana dharma vidhi, Varna and Ashrama vidhaan, reapparance of Devas, Rakshasas, and so on.

**Punah Srishti:** At the beginning, Swayambhu Vishnu created water first and placed his seed in it and a Golden Egg emerged outside which Bhagavan Aditya and as Vishnu recited Vedas Brahma was in position. The latter divided the Golden Egg into two parts viz. Swargaloka and Bhuloka as the space in between were created the 'Dishas' (The Directions) and 'Akash' (The Sky), From the 'Jaraayu Bhaag' of the Egg appeared Seven Mountains like Meru and from the 'Garbhaashaya' (womb), 'Vidyutmegha Mandal'or the Clouds with Lightning and Rivers, Pitruganas, Manus, and Seven Seas full of 'Ratnas' (Precious Stones) and Salt, Sugarcane juice, Sura, etc produced out of the water from inside the egg. As Prajapati Deva desired to create out of the Egg which was no longer alive, he materialised 'Martanda' from the dead Egg and hence the name of Mrita+Anda. The 'Rajoguna' of that Mahatma generated 'Chaturmukha Brahma' who in turn crafted Devatas, Asuras, and the entirety of the World including humanity. Matsya Bhagavan continued to describe to Manu that the Chaturmukha Brahma performed very rigorous Tapasya by the power of which the Vedas were rediscovered and Six Vedangas viz. Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Jyotisha, and Chhanda were materialised and so did were the 'Upangas' viz. Puranas, Nyaya, Meemaamsa, and Dharma Shastra.; besides, 'Pada-paatha' or the 'Nirdharana' (methodology) of reciting Vedic Mantras as well as the 'Krama' or the seriatim was decided. There after, Shastras and Puranas were created of which the latter comprised crores of 'Shlokas'. From Brahma's mouth then emerged Eight 'Pramaanas' or Evidences of Meemamsa viz. 'Prathyaksha', 'Anumaama', 'Upamaana', 'Shabda' (Aaptavachana), 'Anupalabhi', 'Arthaapatti', 'Aaitiha', and 'Swabhava' as well as 'Nyaya Shastra'. Brahama desired to produce ten 'Manasa Putras' out of his 'Manosamkalpa', viz. Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulasthya, Pulaha, Kratu, Pracheta, Vasishtha, Bhrugu, and Narada. Also Brahma created motherless sons, viz. Daksha Prajapati from his right hand thumb, Dharma from chest, Kusumaayudha /Kamadeva from his heart, Lobha (avarice) from his lips, Krodha (Anger) from his evebrows. Moha (infatuation) from his Buddhi, 'Mada' (Arrogance) from his Ahamkara (Ego), Pramod or Joy from his Kantha (throat), 'mrityu' from his eyes and Bharata Muni from his elbow. The tenth child of Brahma's body was a girl naned 'Angaja'. Viswavasu Manu enquired of Matsya Deva about the link of Buddhi- Moha-Ahamkara-Krodha and the reply was that there were the Three Gunas (Features) of Satva-Rajas-Tamas represented by Brahma-Vishnu and Maheswara respectively. Then 'Mahatatva' got generated which led to 'Ahamkara' and the latter led to the creation of Ten 'Indrivas' or Sense Organs, viz. Five 'Jnaanendriyas' governed by Buddhi called Shrotra (Ears), Twacha (Skin), Netra (Eyes), Jivha (Tongue) and Nasika (nose), besides Five Karmendriyas Hasta (Hands), Paada (feet), Vaani (mouth), Paayu (anus) and Mutrendriya. The Ten Indriyas experience ten activities viz. Shabda (Touch), Rupa (Vision), Rasa (drink), and Gandha (smell); also there are Ten Karyas or Deeds viz. 'Utsarga' or ablutions, 'Aanadan' or providing joy, 'Aadaan' (giving away), 'Gaman' (movement) and 'Aalaap'. Besides the Ten Sensory Organs, the Eleventh Organ is 'Manas' ot Mind. From these 'Indriyas' or sensory organs, there is a 'Sharir' or Body constituting 'Tanmatras' or Physical Properties. When the urge for 'Srishti' (Creation) is felt by Brahma, the 'Shabda Tanmatra' materialises Aakaasha (Sky); from Aakaasha is Vayu (Air) is generated by the interaction of Shabda and Sparsha. Then Vayu and Sparsh together materialised 'Tejas' or Illumination; hence the interaction of Shabda, Sparsha and Rupa which was the amalgam of three ingredients led to the creation of 'Jal' (water) and the amalgam of Akasha, Vayu, Tejas, and Jala led finally to the creation of Prithvi. This was how the sum total of Twenty Four Tatvas (covering, five jnanendriyas, five Karmendriyas, Pancha Maha Bhutas, Five Tanmatras, one 'Manas', one Buddhi, One Ahamkaara and final one Unique Paramatma); the twenty fifth was of Purushanamak Tatwa. Added to this was the Twenty Sixth Tatwa called 'Jeevatma' which is controlled by Paramatma and Sages Kapila and other Sankhya Yogis called it as 'Jnaana' with which Brahma aimed at scripting 'Jagat Racchana' While doing so, Brahma divided his body into two parts, one half as a woman and another as a man. The woman Sarasvati came to be known as Shatarupa, also called

Savitri, Gayatri and Brahmani. Brahma was astonished at her beauty and as the performed 'Pradakshina' (circumambulation) around him, he was unable to take away his looks on her and thus while staring away he materialised five heads in the four directions and on the sky above. Then he instructed his Manasa Putras like Marichi to go ahead and create human beings and various other species. He wedded Shatarupa who gave birth to Swayambhu Manu, Shatarupa and Brahma also gave birth to Rati, Manas, Tapa, Buddhi, Mahaan, Dik and Sambhrama. Brahma on his own created earlier Vama Deva the Trishula dhaari who in turn created Brahmanas from his face, Kshatriyas from his arms, Viashyas from his thighs and Shudras from his feet. The latter also created Bijli (Lightning), Vajra (Diamond), Megha (Clouds), Indradhanush (Rainbow/ Vibgyor), Chhanda (Prosody), and eightyfour crore Saadhyaganas who were ageless and there after Brahma disallowed further Srishti by Vamadeva who thence onward became a Swayambhu Manu then intiated the process of Maithuni Srishti 'Sthanu' or ineligible for Srishti. (man-woman creation) by wedding a Kanya named Ananti, after Tapasya and by their union begot Priyavrata and Utttanapada. Prajapati Priyavrata had the distinction of demarcating the Sapta Dwipas, while Uttanapada and Sunruta / Suruchi gave birth to the illustrious Dhruva who attained a higher position than that of Saptarishi mandala on the Sky! Agni Kanya- Dhishana- and King Pruthi's son Havirdhan gave birth to Prachina Barhisha Prajapati among other sons and in this lineage was born Daksha Prajapati who gave birth to eighty crores of children by Sankalpa (thought), Darshana (vision) and Sparsha (touch). He also gave birth to ten Dharmas, thirteen Kashyapas, twenty seven Chandramas, four Arishtanemis, two Shukras, two Kushvaswaas and two Kanyas named Angirasaas. Their descendants included Ten Vishwadevas, Twelve Sandhyas, Thirty nine Marutvatis, Ashtavasus or Eight Vasus viz. Aapa, Soma, Dhruva, Dhara, Anila, Anala, Prathyusha and Prabhasa as also Dwadasa Suryas, Arundhati, Muhurta, Lamba, Yami and Sankalpa.Marichi's son Kashayapa had thirteen wives viz. Aditi, Diti, Danu, Arishta, Surasa, Surabhi, Vinata, Taamra, Krodhavasha, Ira, Kaddu, Viswva, and Muni. Aditi's sons were Devaganas who were Manyantara specific. Diti's sons included Hiranyaksha ans Hiranya kashipu. Danu begot hundred sons, Vinita's sons were Garuda and Aruna the charioteers of Vishnu and Surya respectively. Surasa and Kaddu gave birth to the famed serpents lika Sesha, Vasuki, Karkotaka, Shankha, Padma, etc.; Surabhi gave birth to Cows and bulls; Arishta created Gandharvas and Kinnaras, Ira produced trees, and related things; Vishwa created Yakshas and Rakshasaas, and Muni created Apsaras and so on.

After describing the highlights of Adi Sarga and Prati Sarga, there was Pratyeka Sarga, in which Pruthu of Surya Vamsha became the 'Adhinayaka' (Chief) of Prithvi, when Brahma appointed Chandrama as the Head of 'Aushadhis' (Medicines), Pitras, Yagnas, Vratas, Tapas, Nakshatras (Stars), Dwijas, Trees, and related entities. Varuna was made in charge of water, Kubera of 'Dhana' (Prosperity), Vishnu in the care of Aditya, Agni of Vasus, Daksha of Prajapathis, Indra of Maruds, Prahlada as the Chief of Daythas and Danavas, Yamaraja of Pitaras; Shiva as in charge of Pishachas, Rakshasas, Pashus, Bhutas, Yakshas, and Vetalas; Himalayas of Parvatas, Samudra as in Charge of Rivers, Chitraratha as the Head of Gandharvas, Vidyadharas, and Kinnaras, Vasuki as the in-charge of Nagas, Takshak of Serpents, Iravata as the Head of Elephants, Garuda as the Leader of Birds, Uhhaishrava as the head of horses, Lion as the Chief of Animals, Vrisha as the in-charge of Cows etc. Also Brahma appointed as the in charge of Sargaarambha of Dishas / Directions, Shankha paad as in charge of East, Shanarapaad as the head of South, Suketuman as the Chief of the West, Hiranya Roma as of North.

#### How Bhumi was renamed as Prithvi?

In the past, there was a Prajapati named Anga during the regime of Swayambhu Manu who married the daughter of Mrityu called Sunita, who was very ugly and from their union, a very powerful Soverign called Vena was born. When Vena came to power, there was predominance of 'Adharma' (Non-Virtue

and Injustice) as Vena himself was cruel, non-scrupulous and malicious. As the good advices of Maharshis fell flat on Vena's ears and there was 'Araajakata' or utter lawlessness, the Maharshis gave curses to him and the Brahmanas trapped Vena and killed him. From Vena's body emerged the shadow of a dark and ferocious woman from the dead body of Vena and from the right hand of the body manifested a Figure resembling Prajapati Anga who was a symbol of Dharma and Nyaya, with a 'Kireeta and Kavacha' (golden headgear and body shield), 'Dhanush and Baana' (Bow and Arrows) etc. Since the manifestation came out of the 'Pruthu bhujas' or fat shoulder of Vena, the Figure was named Pruthu. The Brahmanas who killed Vena made Pruthu the 'Chakravarti' and gradually he became the undisputed Chief of the entire World, turned out to be a Super King by virtue of his valour, fame and Tapasya and endeared him as a role-model. He found that there was no Swadhyaya, Vashatkara and Dharma in the Rule of Vena and being extremely annoyed with Bhumi for the negligence of the Moral Values took up his arms and chased her to burn off the sins of moral depravity. Devi Bhumi was frightened and tried to escape in the form of a Cow. He hounded her but could not run further and out of desperation stopped over and surrendered to Pruthu; she asked him as to what could she do for him and the reply was that the whole 'Charachara Jagat' or the moveable or immobile inhabitants of Earth should be free from any desire whatsoever. Then Pruthu converted Swayambhu Manu as a calf and started extracting milk from Bhumi as cow its udder which turned out to be 'Shudda Anna' with which there were no wants on Earth for the Citizens. On seeing this, Rishis took the example, turned Sun God as the Cowherd, Indra as the calf and milked Prithvi to satisfy their Dharmik desires. Devatas too were tempted, turned out to be the Cowherds, requested Yama Dharma Raja to be the calf, and squeezed 'Swadha Rasa' into golden vessels to fulfill their own respective desires. The Pitruganas brought their silver vessels to extract as much milk as they wished. Nagas were not far behind as the Nagaraja was the cowherd, Takshak was the calf and filled up a copper vessel to sqeeze 'Visha' (poison). 'Asuras' jumped into the queue and milked 'Maya' by converting Virochan-the son of Prahlad as the calf. Yakshas were for long desired to learn 'Antardhana Vidya' or the Lesson of Vanishing, and thus converted Kubera as the calf and extracted the Vidya from the Cow. Pretas and Rakshasas organised themselves and deputed Ropuanabha Preta as the cowherd and Preta Sumali as the calf and extracted blood from the udder. Apsaras and Gandharvas brought Chatraratha as the calf and milked the sweet smell of Lotus leaves from the Kamadhenu, while Natyacharya Gandharva Vararuchi as the cowherd. Mountains too were tempted to fulfil their wishes of milking 'ratnas' (precious stones) and Aushadhis (herbal medicines) into a 'shila patra' or rock vessel; Mahachala Sumeru was the cowherd and Himavanta was the calf. Trees exctracted the milky liquid while cutting them from the Cow into a Palaasa Patra, while Shala Vriksha along with flowers and leaves was the Cowherd and many other trees took the form of a calf. Likewise, many species including each and every human being fulfilled their own wishes.

In the regime of Maharaja Pruthu the population was prosperous, happy, long living and highly contented. There was no pauper, no sinner, no fear of Adhi Bhoudhika, Adhi Daivika or Adhyatmika problems (Physical, God-made and Internal). None had diseases nor mutual illwill, no greed, no fear, and no external and internal threats. Little wonder Bhu Devi was called the Prithvi!

#### Devi Sati's self-immolation and her Shakti-Peethas

Matsya Deva described to Vaivaswata Manu about Pitru Vamsha in Swarga, comprising seven 'Ganas', of whom three were 'Murtirahit' (without Swarupa) and four Murtimaan (with Swarupa), all of whom were highly resplendent. The Formless Pitru ganas were the progeny of Vairaja Prajapati whom Devaganas worship too. These 'Vairajas' had earlier attained Paralokas but due to reversions in Yoga Marga taking rebirth as Brahmavadis at the end of Brahma's each day but enjoyed the memory of previous births. They attained siddhi by yoga and hence only the material meant for Shraddhaas were to

be offered to them. Devi Mena the wife of Himavant and mother of Devi Parvati was the Maanasi Kanya of Pitrus. Mena and Himavant gave birth to two sons viz. Krauncha of the Krauncha Dwipa surrounded by ghrita (Ghee) and Minaka besides three daughters viz. Uma, Ekaparni and Aparni –all the members of the family were practioners of Yoga. The daughters were wedded to Shiva, Sita and Jogeeshva respectively.

'Avatar', Devi Uma was famed as Devi Sati, who was the daughter of Daksha Prajapati and the wife of Lord Rudra. Daksha organised a Maha Yagna but did not invite Lord Rudra due to his hatred for him. Devi Sati attended the function uninvited and asked as to why he did not invite her husband. He replied that Rudra was inauspicious since he was in charge of destruction and hence was ineligible to attend the Yagna. He also abused Rudra as an associate of piscachas and subhumam evil spirits. Devi Sati felt insulted and infuriated and said that she was getting rid of the body which she got from him and gave a curse to him that he would in his next birth become the son of ten fathers and that he would be killed by Rudra's men as soon as she would sacrifice her body by Yogaagni. Daksha repented and requested her vision again and again at various Tirtha yatras. Devi Sati replied: Sarvada Sarva bhuteshu drushtavya Sarvato bhuvi, Sarava kaaleshu yat kinchit rahitam na mayaa bina/ Tathaapi yeshu Sthaaneshu drushtavya siddhimeepsubhih, Smartavya Bhutikaamairwy taani Vakshyaami tatvatah/

(Daksha! As a matter of fact, there would be no place where one could find without me. However, if somebody wishes to have my darshan, they could do so at the specified Tirthas.). Devi Sati thus affirmed: I exist in Varanasi as Vishalaakshi, Naimishaaranya as Lingadharini, Prayaga as Lalitha Devi, Gandhamaadan Parvat as Kamakshi, Manasarovartha Tirtha as Kumuda, Amber as Viswakaaya, Gomanta (Goa) as Gomati, Mandarachala as Kaamacharini, Chaitraratha Vana as Madotkata, Hastinapura as Jayanti, Kanyakubja as Gauri, Malayaparvat as Rambha, Ekaamrak (Bhuvaneswar) as Kirtimati, Vishweswar as Vishwa, Pushkar as Puruhuta, Kedarnath as Margadayani, Himavan Pushtha Bhag as Nanda, Gokarnika Tirtha as Bhadrakarnika, Sthaneswar (Thaneswar) as Bhavani, Bilwa Tirtha as Bilwa Patrika, Shrishaileswara as Madhavi, Bhedreshwara Tirtha as Bhadra, Varahashaila as Jaya, Kamalaalaya Tirtha as Kamala, Rudrakoti as Rudrani, Kalanjara Giri as Kali, Mahalinga Tirtha as Kapila, Markot as Mukuteswari, Shalagrama Tirtha as Maha Devi, Shivalinga as Jalapriya, Mayapuri (Rishi kesha) as Kumari, Santana Tirtha as Lalitha, Sahasraaksha Tirtha as Utpalaakshi, Kamalaaksha Tirtha as Mahotpala, Ganga as Mangala, Purushotthama Tirtha (Jagannathapuri) as Vimala, Vipaasha as Amoghaakshi, Pundravardhana as Paatala, Supaashwa Tirtha as Narayani, Vikuta as Bhadrasundari, Vipula as Vipula, Malayachala as Kalyani, Koti Tirtha as Kotavi, Mahayayana as Sugandha, Godaashrama as Trisandhya, Gangadwar (Haridwar) as Ratipriya, Shivakunda Tirtha as Shivananda, Devika (Devanadi in Punjab) as Nandini, Dwarakapuri as Rukmini and Brindavan as Radha, Mathurapuri as Devaki, Patala as Parameswari, Chitrakuta as Sita, Vindhyaparvat as Vindhyavasini, Sahyadri as Ekaveera, Harischandra Tirtha as Chandrika, Rama Tirtha as Ramana, Yamuna as Mrigavati, Karavira (Kolhapuri) as Maha Lakshmi, Vinayaka Tirtha as Uma Devi, Vaidyanath as Aroga, Mahakaal as Maheswari, Ushna Tirtha as Abhaya, Vindhya kandar as Amrita, andavya Tirtha as Mandavi, Maheswarapura as Swaha, Chaagamandala as Prachanda, Makaranda as Chandika, Someswara Tirtha as Vararoha, Prabhasa as Pushkaravati, Sarasvati as Devamata, Samudratatavarti Mahalaya Tirtha as Mahabhaga, Payoshani (Pena Ganga) as Pingaleswari, Kruta shoucha Tirtha as Simhika, Kartikeya as Yashaskari, Utpalaavartak as Lola, Shonasinga as Subhadra, Siddhapura as Lakshmi Maata, Bharatashram as Angana, Jaalandara Parvat as Vishwa Mukhi, Kishkindha Parvat as Tara, Devadaruvana as Pushti, Kashmiramandal as Medha, Himagiri as Bhima Devi, Vishveswara as Pushti, Kapalamochana as Shuddhi, Kayayarohana (Karayaan, Gujarat) as Maatha, Shankhoddhaara as Dhwani, Pindaaraka Kshetra as Dhriti, Chandrabhaga (Chenab) as Kaalaa, Aacchheda as Shivakarini, Vena as Amrita, Badari Tirtha as Urvashi, Uttarakuru as Aoushadhi, Kusha Dwipa as Kushodaka, Hemakuta Parvat as Manmatha, Mukut as Satyayadini, Ashwattha Tirtha as Vandaniya, Vaishwanaalaya as Nithi and Vedayadana as Gayatri. Sati Devi also exists at Shivasannithi as Parvati, Devaloka as Indrani, Brahma Mukh as Saraswati, Surya Bimba as Prabha, among Maataas as Vaishnavi, Satis as Arundhati, Sundari Strees as Tilotthama, in Chitta as Brahmakala and Akhila as Shariradharis.

Whosoever reads or hears the above hundred and eight names of Devis and Tirthas would be blessed and rid of sins; those who actually visit the Tirthas and Devis would be eligible to attain Mukti in Shiva loka; while in the current life, the devotees concerned would achieve Putra labha, Dravya labha and Yasha labha (good progeny, money and fame). As the hundred eight names were rendered, Devi Arundhati secured Yoga Siddhi, Rajarshi Pururava became invincible, Yayati received Putra Prapti, and Bhrugunandan got Dhana Prapti. Those who read the names with shraddha and Bhakti would never be unhappy but would be always contented.

### Amavasya's importance for Pitru Devas & Its link with the mother of Veda Vyas

The Pitrugana of Maharshi Maricha Vamsa resided at Somapatha loka and Devatas meditate to them. These Pitruganas were constantly engaged in Yagnas and were called 'Agnisvatthas'. There was a River / Sarovar named 'Aaccheda' [presently called as Aachhavana in Kashmir] and she was the 'Manasi Kanya' or the Virgin of Pitras' Conscience. The Mansi Kanya performed severe Tapasya for thousand Divya Years, the Pitru ganas were satisfied with it and shifted nearby the Sarovar. The Pitruganas were of Celestial Forms who had radiant bodies full of 'Sugandha' wearing garlands of scented flowers; they were all youthful and charming like Kamadeva. Among the Pitrus, there was an attractive youth named 'Amaavasu' whom Aachheda Kanya fell in love and begged him to wed her. Due to this aberration of her mind, she fell down from the Celestial Region to 'Bhutala'. The day that Aachheda proposed to Amavasu Pitra and fell down to Earth was since known as 'Amavasya'; but for the momentary indiscretion that she had, the Agnisvatthaa Pitrus were indeed fond of her as though she was their own daughter, especially in the background of her Tapasya. Aachheda felt sad and shy that all the Tapasya that she performed was wasted and kept on crying as she down to Earth. The Pitrus gave her solace and said that in the Upper Lokas, whatever 'Karmaphal' (fruits of good or bad deeds) was achieved would be experienced in the same life, where as the fruits were experienced post-life that is after death in Bhuloka. Hence the fruits of her meditation would certainly be rewarded but after her life. They visioned into her future and assured her that in the twenty eighth Dwapara Yuga, she would be born as a fish but thereafter she would be born as the daughter of Fishermen's Chief as Satyavati alias Matsya Gandhi; that she would be attracted by Maharshi Parashara as she transferred him once by her boat; that the Maharshi would give her the boons of transforming her body odour of fish to that of the fragrance of sandal wood to spread by vojanas thus changing her name as 'Yojana Gandhi', wedded her once but retaining her as a Kanya (virgin) to enable her to remarry to a King later and would secure an illustrious son from the Maharshi as Veda Vyasa or Badarayana born at Badari Vriksha Vana or the forest of badari trees. Devi Achheda was thus pacifed her that a son of Narayana's 'Amsa' would be born to her with the unique distinction of dividing a single Veda into Four and she herself would marry a Puru Vamsa King Shantanu who would beget Vichitraveerya and Chitrangada; Vichitraveerya would beget Dhritarashtra and Pandu whose progeny viz. Kauravas and Pandavas would be responsible to script the immortal Epic Maha Bharata! As Shantanu's wife, Devi Achheda would finally be born as Ashtaka in the Pitruloka and thus Satyavati in Bhuloka and Ashtaka in Pitru loka would bestow excellent health to their devotees!

# Highlights of Pitru Vamsha and the concept of 'Shraddhas'

In the Celestial Region, there was a Vibhraja Loka in which Pitara Barhishad resided who had thousands of Peacock-shaped 'Vimanas' always ready to bless those persons offering the barhi (kusha) fruits, especially among Devas, Asuras, Gandharvas, Apsaras and Yakshas. At this very Loka, Maharshi Pulastya's thousands of sons who were always engrossed in Tapasya and Yoga, were also resident that Loka. Among them was a Manasi Kanya- one Yogini and Yogamata- named Peevari who performed deep

Tapasya and pleased Bhagavan Vishnu and sought a boon from him to secure an oustanding youth as her life partner who should be a great Yogi, Jitendraya, an erudite scholar and an Orator. Vishnu blessed her and said that Veda Vyasa would beget a person fitting into the qualifications that she described and would be called Shuka Muni; after wedding him, she begot a girl who was 'Yoga parayani' by name Krutvi or 'Gow' as also four sons and thereafter she attained Moksha by virtue of her Yoga Shakti. In another case, Maharshi Vasishtha's son named Sukali was also a Pitara known as Manasa who was an embodiment of Dharma living in Jyotirbhasi Loka beyond Swarga; he obliged even 'Shudra Kartas' on Earth in their Shraddha Karmas to fulfill their desires let alone the Bhrahmana Kartas of Shraadhhas. There was a Manasa Kanya named 'Gow' in Swarga who was Shukra Deva's wife who was engaged in the task of expanding the fame of various Pitras among the different Pitra lokas. Similarly there was a loka called Marichigarbha in Surya mandala where the son of Maharshi Angira lived as a Pitara known as Havishmaan and was mainly the reciever of Shraddhas from Kshatriyas and was often travelling to the Kshatriya Kshetras to receive their offerings. In that very Loka, there was a Manasi Kanya Yashoda who was King Anshuman's wife, the mother of King Dilip and the famed grandson Bhagiratha who brought Ganga from Swargaloka to purify the souls of his grand father's dead owing to Muni Kapilka's curse. There was another Pitruloka called Kamadudh where Suswadha Pitra lived and was ready to ask for boons for the asking. From the body of Maharshi Pulaha there were a number of 'Vaishyas' born and the Shraddha Kartas of the Vamsha were able to experience visions of their ancestors. The Manasi Kanya called Viraja who was the wife of King Nahusha and mother of King Yayati and was renamed as Ekashtaka. The Pitras of Brahmanas lived in Manasa where Somapa the Pitra of Brahmanas resided. The Manasi Kanya of this Manasa Loka was River Narmada who purified many devotees in Dakshina Bharat. Thus, the Institution of Shraddhas was established in the Society as a multi-gate medium to receive the offerings of the Shraddha Kartas from Pitru Devas -who qualified the Status of Pitru Devas the hard wayas also to bless the Shraddha Kartas on the one hand and the departed souls on the other thus alliveating their miseries while passing on the Shraddha benefits to them from the Kartas. The Shraddha Kartas would do well by giving silver or silver-coated vessel to a Brahmana to please the Pitru Devas and perform 'Tarpanas' to Agni, Soma and Yama addressed to them and offer to them water, tila (sesame seeds), cow's curd, honey, kusha grass, rice, sugar cane, and ghee. With these offerings, Pitru Devas would be pleased and bestow good health, progeny, longevity and prosperity. (The procedure of Shradda was given in the Essence of Padma Purana by the same writer).

#### Chandra's origin, wedding with Stars, Tara and birth of Budha & their progeny

Suta Mahamuni desired to know about Chandra Deva who was in charge of Pirtu Lokas. As Brahma instructed one of his 'Manasa Putras' Maharshi Atri to take up take up some responsibility to 'Srishti', the Maharshi performed an 'Anutthar' (unprecedented) 'Tapasya'due to which the Unique Paramatma whom Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra and Surya reside was pleased to materialise 'Ashtamaamsu Shishu' or Chandra Deva from the mind's eye of Shiva and as a result flowed out a stream of illumination from the Maharshi's physical eyes. That radiance filled up all the 'dishas' (directions) and a woman appeared who was conceived and confined for three hundred years; as she could not carry the child, she sacrificed her life and Lord Brahma pulled out a 'Purusha' of extraordinary blaze with arms decorated with 'Audhaas'and placed him on a chariot driven by thousand horses with 'Vedamantras'and took him away to Brahmaloka. There Brahmarshis declared that the newly arrived Youth was their Chief and as Pitaras, Gandharvas and personified Aushodhis arrived, all the Devas and Brahma extolled him by 'Somadaivitya' Mantras. With the 'Stutis' (praises), Chandra's glow increased manifold and 'Aoushadhis' started germinating on the Earth in the nights and the Chandra mandala became by the day from Amavasya to Pournami and waned till next moon-fall till the moon-rise again.

Daksha, the son of Pracheta, gave away his twenty seven daughters in wedding to Chandra. Later on, Chandra performed Tapasya to Bhagavan Vishnu for tewnty lakh years who felt pleased and fulfilled Chandra's wishes that he would like to win over Indraloka by which Devas could come to his residence in person and take away their respective shares of Yagnas. He also secured a boon to perform a Rajasuya Yagna in which Brahma and other Devas were the invitees, Maha Deva was the protector to ward off Rakshasas and other evil forces, Maharshi Atri was the 'Hota' as Rigveda Paathak, Bhrigu as 'Adharvyu' (Yajur Veda Paathak), Brahma as Sama Vedak Paathak, Vishnu as 'Upadrishta' and Atharva Veda Paathak, Sanaka Kumaras as 'Sadasyas', and the Ten Vishvadeva Chamasaatharvyu or as the Soma Rasa drinkers. Ruthvijas arrived from all the Lokas and received Dakshinas. At the time of 'Avabhruta snaana' the excellent Form of Chandra desired to witness and without their husbands separately, came the Devis like Lakshmi without Narayana, Cinivaali without Kardama Muni, Dhtuti without Vibhavasu, Tushti without Brahma, Prabha without Prabhakara, Kuhoo without Havishmaan, Kirti withot Jayant, Vasu without Kashyapa the Marichi putra, and Dhruti without Nandi. Thereafter, Chandra Deva illuminated all the Sapta Lokas and dominated all the 'Dishas'.

In course of time, Chandra got infatuated with **Devi Tara**, the wife Deva Guru Brihaspati and took her away to his residence despite heavy protests of Deva Guru, Sadhyagana, Lokapalakas, Marudganas, and even Bhagavan Shiva himself. Shiva felt highly offended and invoked the Ekadasha Rudras led by Vamadeva, pulled out his bow called 'Ajagava', and accompanied by eighty four Ganas, Ganesha, Kubera with his shata koti Yakshas, Padma Vetala, three lakh Nagas and twelve lakh Kinnaras and so on. Chandra on his part too elisted the support of Nakshatras, Rakshasas, Asuras, Daityas, Shanishwara, Mangala, and so on. The entire Universe was tensed up and finally, Brahma intervened and gave a curse to Chandra at the 'Maha Pataka' of the latter to have enticed Tara Devi the Guru Patni and brought the Universe to a precipice; the curse was while the entire world woud be blessed with peace, happiness and coolness till the Paurnami during the first half a month, Chandra would be treated as a Paapa Graha (sinful) as a Papa Graha in the second half. Brihaspati excused Tara's misdeeds and accepted her back.

Devi Tara gave birth to **Budha** who was highly intellectual with erudition in 'Artha Shastra' (Economics), Gaja Shastra, and Administration and was known as Rajaputriya, and Palakapya. Brahma granted Budha the status of a 'Graha' (Planet / Mercury).

From Budha and his wife Ila, there was a famous son called **Pururava** who was respected by one and all and performed over hundred Ashwamedha Yagnas, as also executed worship to Vishnu for several years, ruled Sapta Dwipas, killed innumerable Daityas like Keshi, got Apsara Urvashi infatuated with him, and by the grace of Lord Vishnu, secured half of Indra's throne! Once three Maharshis personifying Dharma, Artha and Kama visited Pururaya and desired to test him; Puru made them seated on golden thrones and performed puja to Dharma first, continued with the puja to Artha and later to Kama, but he took longer time in the worship to Dharma, two-thirds of it to Artha and only half of the least time to Kama; both Artha and Kama gave curses to Puru; Artha cursed him saying that the latter would become greedy and that would ruin the King; Kama cursed Puru that he woul be a victim of 'Viyog' for Urvasi; but Dharma gave the King the boons of long life, reputation for ages till Surya and Chandra would exist and that his 'Vamsa'(clan) would thrive for ages! Having tested the King, the Maharshis disappeared and the curses given by Artha and Kama also proved to be actually their blessings! Pururava was in the habit of visiting Amarapura in Indraloka daily; once he found two Apsaras viz. Chitralekha and Urvashi were being kidnapped by Danavaraja Keshi and on seeing the plight of the Apsaras, Pururava threw away the Danava off by 'Vayavyastra'- feat that even Indra could not in the past. Indra was highly pleased and honoured Pururaya with a dance drama titled 'Lakshni swayamyara' that was enacted under the direction of Bharat Muni, the famed authority on Natya Shastra. But Urvashi was so much absorbed looking at Pururava that she faltered in the dance steps and Bharat Muni cursed both Urvashi and Puru that they would suffer

pangs of separation from each other after her fall down to Earth for fifty five years of family life begetting eight sons and after the limit when she would return to Swarga and he would become a Piscacha wandering and searching for her till the time limit of the curse lasted. The eight sons were Ayu, Dhrudhaayu, Ashwaayu, Dhanaayu, Dhritimaan, Vasu, Shuchividya and Shataayu. Ayu was blessed with five sons viz. Nahusha, Vriddhi Sharma, Raji, Dambha and Vipaapma. The illustrious Nahusha had seven sons namely Yati, Yayati, Samyati, Udbhav, Paachi, Sharyati, and Meghajaati. As Yati renounced the normal world and became a Yogi, Yayati took over the Kingship. King Yayati was virtuous, invincible, and reputed. He married Sharmishtha, the daughter of Danava King Vrishaparva and Devayani, the daughter of Shukracharya. From Yayati, Devayani gave birth to Yadu and Turvasu, while Sharmishtha begot Druhu, Anu and Puru. As King Yayati became old, he called all the sons and proposed that any of the sons might assume his old age in exchange of their youth so that he continued as a King for more time not only to enjoy his life but also to perform certain Dharmic activities like Yagnas, chatities and Tirtha Yatras etc. which could not be completed as Shukracharya the father of Devayani cursed him to lose his youth and presentbility since he instructed that he should not sleep with her. All the sons declined the exchange proposal made by Yayati, excepting the youngest son of Sharmishtha; Yayati cursed all the other sons of both the wives, excepting Puru, named Puru as his heir apparent so that his Vamsa or Clan would henceforth be known as Puru Vamsa and by his 'Tapobal' (might of his meditation) exchanged his old and ugly body with that of youthful and handsome Puru.

# Deva Guru's son Katch became Danava Guru's disciple to learn 'Sanjivini Vidya'

In the context of the ever increasing hostilities of Devas and Danavas culminating the massacre of innumerable Danavas, the Danava Guru Shukracharya performed a thousand year long severe Tapasya to Maha Deva and obtained an unprecedented boon of 'Mrita Sanjeevani Vidya' by the power of which, Shukracharya was able to revive the lives of all Danavas dead in the battles or otherwise. Lord Indra and Deva Guru asked the latter's elder son Katch to approach Shukracharya and some how manage to learn the Sanjivini Vidya which Devas did not possess. Deva Guru Brihaspati also briefed his son Katch that Shukracharya had a daughter Devayani and a handsome young man that Katch was might not be difficult to make friends with her who was a pretty, virtuous and poised girl. It was very interesting that Deva Guru sent his son to seek tutorship from Danava Guru and to make friends with the latter's daughter Devayani, all for the sake of the security of Devas and to learn the extraordinary Mrita Sanjivini!

Katch approached Sukracharya and introduced himself as follows: Risherangirasam Poutram Putram Sakshaat Brihaspateyh, Naamnaa Kacheti vikhyatam Sishyam gruhnaatu maam Bhavaan/ Brahmacharyam charishyaami twayyaham Paramam Guro, Anumanyaswa maam Brahman Sahasrapariyartsaraan/ (Bhagayan! I am the grandson of Angira Rishi and actually the son of Brihaspati and my name is Katch. I seek you to accept me as your disciple and as my Guru. I wish to be near you for thousand years and practise Brahmacharya; kindly accept me!) Shukracharya agreed to take in Katch as his student and the latter assumed the vow to be a celibate on his own. Under the tutelage of Shukracharya, Katch spent some five hundred years and Devayani's friendship with Katch became more and more intense by the day. Meanwhile Danavas came to realise the antecedents of Katch as he was the son of Deva Guru and owing to the animosity of Brihaspati killed the boy. Devayani who was fond of Katch so much that she approached her father to use the Mrita Sanjivini to revive the life of Katch. Sukracharya brought the disciple back to life. But, as the news spread among Danavas that Deva Guru's son became the disciple of Danava Guru, several Danavas made many efforts to kill the boy and each time the latter was coming back to life thanks to the Sanjivini Vidya known to Shukracharya. Thus Danavas made a plan to kill him, burn his body into ashes and managed to administer the ashes in the wine that was offered to the Guru on the sly! Devayani became restive and stopped eating food in the

absence of her dear friend Katch. Shukracharya heard the desparate shouts of Katch from his own stomach and learnt as to how the Danavas tricked their own Guru; the latter had only two options of saving the boy viz. either he had to tear off the stomach of Shukracharya or let the boy get digested for ever. Devayani suggested that her father should teach the Mrita Sanjivini Mantra to Katch in the stomach of her father and after his rescue by tearing his father's stomach should revive Shukracharya by the Mantra that Katoch would have taught! The Plan worked and as Danava Guru fell dead and Katoch came out and said: Nidhim Nidhinaam varadam varaanam, ye naadriyantey Guru marchaneeyam, Praaleyadriprojjyaladbhaala samstham paapaamllokaamstatey yrajantya pratishthaah/ (If those who are the Nidhis or mines of Nidhis, who could bestow boons to boon-givers, who possess thick white hair like Himalayas on their heads and are highly worshippable are not heeded, then such persons are certainly destined to reach sinful Naraka lokas). So saying, Katch memorised the Mrita Sanjivini Mantra and revived to life his own Guru. Shukracharya repented that due to extraordinary circumstances, Danavas tricked their own Guru (himself) due to which reason the wine administered to him by the crafty Danavas landed in such ugly situations. Hence Danava Guru warned the entire Brahminhood not to become targets of intoxicants and be vigilant not to become victims of this material. Eyo Brahmanodya Prabhruteeh kaschimohaat suraam paasyati Mandabuddhih, Apeta dharmaa Brahmaahaa chaiva syadasmmullokey garhitah syatparey cha/ Maya chemaam Vipradharmottha seemaam maryaadaa vai sthaapitaam sarvalokey, Santo Vipraah Shrushruvaamso Guruunaam Devaa Daaityaaschopashrunvantu sarveh/ (If from now onward, any stupid Brahmana consumes wine by mistake or otherwise shall be expelled from Dharma, considered as having perpetrated the sin of Brahma hatya and be liable to defame in this world and the next loka. 'Brahmana Dharma' as enunciated in 'Dharma Shastras' specified limitations that should not be transgressed and those established Principles ought to be observed all over the world. Let all the Sadhus, Brahmanas, Gurus and their disciples, Devatas, and entire humanity beware that this lesson be heard and observed strictly.)

As per the time limit of thousand years, Katch remained with Sukracharya and after receiving his affirmation left to his father's abode in Swarga. While leaving Danava Guru's place, Devayani tried her best to dissuade Katch not to leave her, expressed her deep sentiments of love for him and begged him to wed her. Katch explained that since she was the daughter of his Guru, it would be most improper by the Principles of Dharma. There were many arguments by both of them; she affirmed that she pressurised her father to save him each time the Danavas killed him only due to her great desire to wed her, but he stood by the Principle that Guru Patni or Guru Putri were the same and to marry a Guru's wife or daughter was against the Principle of Dharma. Finally, she was exasperated and cursed that the Sanjivini Vidya that was learnt from his Guru would not be effective whenever he recited by himself. Katch said that even if the Vidya was ineffective in his personal use, it would be useful to those who would learn from him after all! He gave a reverse curse to her that she would never be able to marry a Brahmana in her life time! On return to Swarga, his father, Indra and all the Devatas were immensely delighted at the great accompishment of Guru Putra Katch. Devayani married to King Puru subsequently. Meanwhile, Danava Guru Sukracharya called Danayas and admonished them for their senselessness as they tried to kill Katch several times, but each time he had to be revived and finally created such an absurd situation when his own life was in peril and had to be saved by giving away the Great Vidya so easily to Katch!

Shiva's boon to Shukra, the latter weds Jayanti and Indra's maneuver ('Shivaashtottara' included)

In the distant past, Danava King Hiranyakashipu was stated to have ruled Trilokas for one arab seven crores twenty lakh and eighty thousand years (170,20, 80,000), while King Bali ruled for two crore and seventy thousand years; it was stated further that ten full yugas, Universal Administration was in the control of Daityas. In the subsequent ten yugas, the Administration was with Devas and there was peace without battles. Danava Guru shifted loyalty to Devas and commenced to attend Deva Yagnas. Danavas were disturbed at this development and approached Shukracharya as to why this had happened. Then the Guru explained that it was a temporary phase only and that he would donate to them away all his

possessions viz. Mantras, Auoshadhis /Medicines, and wealth / Ratnas, Meanwhile, Devas got perturbed that Shukracharya was meddling in their internal affairs in favour of Danavas. Deva-Danava skirmishes ensued and Danavas looked up for the advice of Shukra. The Acharya then explained to Asuras that ever since Vishnu incarnated as Vamana, cheated King Bali and obtained the proverbial 'three feet of land' occupying the whole Universe, there had been serious injustices to Danavas such as the control of King Bali and the killings of stalwart Danavas especially Jambhasura and Virochana; in fact, over a dozen battles, the strength of Daityas got awfully depleted. As such, Shukra advised the Danava Chiefs to raise the flag of truce to Indra and Devas for the time being and completely desist from further battles; meanwhile he would perform Tapasya to Maha Deva to seek his boons in favour of Danavas. Accordingly, Daityas headed by Prahlada discarded their battle attires and war material and dispersed into forests to to execute Tapasyas. On his part, Shukracharya prayed to Maha Deva, and the latter responded to him favourably and taught a Vrata to be performed by the Danava Guru. The Vrata was never performed earlier and was indeed quite tough since it had to be observed for thousand years with head down and erect, by taking in the smoke of wood. But meantime, Devas started tormenting and provoking Danayas and they approached 'Guru Mata'named Khyati since their Guru was away in penance. She utilised some 'Abhicharika' (negative) Mantras and made Indra and Devas motionless and still (stambhana), but Vishnu absorbed them all into his (Vishnu's) physique. Devi Khyati retalliated by her asserting that both Indra and Vishnu would be burnt off from her 'Tapobala' or the might of her Tapasya. Vishnu called up his Sudarshan Chakra and directed it to cut the neck of Devi Khyati, the mother of Shukracharya. Bhrigu Maharshi, Devi Khyati's husband, said that even being aware of Dharma Vishnu killed a woman and thus cursed Vishnu that he would be born ten times from a female body; he put together Khyati's neck and body and revived her by his Taposhakti. Indra was afraid of Shukracharya and being aware of the impending danger of the Danava Guru returning after his 'Tapas' to Maha Deva, planned that he should despatch his daughter Jayanti to secure goodwill first from the mother Devi Khyati and eventually serve Shukra in his 'Tapas' and gain confidence of his to enable him to perform the Vrata that he was asked by Mahadeva. As prescribed, Shukra performed the Vrata and Mahadeva was pleased and taught the Secret Mantra never to be revealed to anybody and that he could conquer any opponent in the Universe; Maha Deva also bestowed to Shukra the boons of 'Prajsetwa' or Prajapati, 'Dhanestwa' (Chief of Wealth) and 'Avadhyatwa' (Invincibility). Shukra was thrilled at Maha Deva's kindness and eulogized him as follows:

Namostu Shitikanthaaya Kanishthaaya Suvarchasey, Lelihaanaaya Kavyaaya Vatsara -andhasah patey/ (He who possesses 'karpura goura kantha' or blue-throat due to his retention of 'Haalaha Visha'; The youngest of Brahma's sons as Rudra; possesses radiance due to his Adhyayan and Tapas; tongue mover at Pralaya time; has the characteristics of a Poet; the Chief of Anna / Food) Kapardiney karaalaaya haryakshaney varadaayacha, Samstutaaya Suteerthaaya Devadevaaya ramhasey/ (Jatajutadhaari; of frightening Form; of yellow eyes; the boon provider; is extolled all over; the Form of excellent Tirthas; the most Superior of Devas.; highly swift and fast) Ushneeshiney Suvaktraaya Bahurupaya vedhasey, Vasuretaaya Rudraaya Tapasey Chitravaasasey ( wears a turban on his head; of attractive countenance; One among the Eleven Rudras; Vidhaan karta; Agni rupa; the Life of all the species on the Creation; of the Form of 'Tapas' or high meditation; wears highly colourful dresses) Hrasvaaya Muktakeshaaya Senaanye Rohitaayacha, Kavaye Rajavrikshaaya takshaka kreedaanaaya cha/ (of short stature; with fully opened Jataajutas); Senapati / Commander in Chief; Of the Form of a deer; has extraordinary knowledge of matters; Representation of a Rudraksha Tree; Playful with Nagaraja Takshak) Sahasrasirasey chaiva Sahasraakshaaya Meedhushey, Varaaya Bhavyarupaaya Swetaaya Purushaayacha/ (Possessive of thousand heads; thousand eyed; augmenter of commendations; highly meritorious; exceedingly handsome; of pleasing colour of pure white; Self Regulator) Girishaaya Namokaarya Baliney Aajyapaayacha, Sutruptaaya Suvastraaya Dhanviney Bhaargavaayacha/ (Rests on Kailasa Mountain; Greetings to Arka or the Cause of Surya's Creation; The Epitome of High Energy; the guzzler of Ghee; Extremely contented; wears clean and beautiful 'vastras'; Carrier of bow and arrows; of Parashurama

Swarupa) Nishanginey cha Taaraaya Swakshaaya Kshapanaayacha, Taamaraaya chaiya Bhimaaya Ugraaya cha Shivaayacha (Possesses mighty arrows; Vishwa Rakshak / Protector of the Universe; Has attractive eyes; has the Swarupa of a mendicant; Has red lips; Bhima / one of the Eleven Rudras and ferocious; Ugra or Violent; Shiva or of the Embodiment of Propitious -ness) Mahadevaya Sharvaaya Vishwarupa Shiyaayacha, Hiranyaya Varishthaaya Jeyshthaaya Madhyamaaya cha/ (Highly venerated by Devas; Sharva or The Destroyer at the Pralaya time; The Lofty Swarupa of the Universe and the Source of Auspiciousness; The Original basis of Gold; Sarva Sreshtha or the Noblest and the most Vituous; Adi Deva; Madhyastha or the Central / Prime Energy) Vaastoshpatev Pinaakaaya Muktaye Kevalaayacha, Mrigavyaadhaaya Dakshaaya Sthaanavey Bhishanaayacha/ (The Principal Founder of Vaastu Shastra; The distinguished Wearer of Pinaka Dhanush; The Bestower of Salvation; The Singular and Unique Purusha; The Hunter of Animals being the Epitome of Tamasa Guna; Daksha or the Great Enthusiast; Sthanu or the Prime Pillar of the Universe; of dreadful Form) Bahu netraaya Dhuryaya Trinetrayeswaraaya cha, Kapaalineycha Veeraaya Mrityavey Traimbakaayacha/ (Sarvadrashta or Multi-Visioned; Agraganya or The ultimate; The Three Eved of Surya-Chandra and Agni; Ishwara or the Supreme Controller; The Wearer of Kapala or Skull by his fourth hand; Shuraveera; Mrityu or the Great Annihilator; Traiyambaka or The Three Eyed, being the last of Ekadasha Rudras) Babhravecha Pishingaaya Pingalaayarunaaya cha, Pinaakiney cheshmatey Chitraaya Rohitaayacha/ (Vishnu Swarupa; of Pishaga or Reddish brown colour; Pingala or mix of blue and yellow; Aruna or Surya Varna; Pinakini or Trishula dhaar; Ishu matey or wearer of Arrows; of astonishing Form; and red coloured deerlike).

Dundubhyayaika paadaaya Ajaaya Buddhidaayacha, Aaranyaya Grihastaaya Yataye Brahmachaariney/ (He is pleased with the thumps of 'Dundubhis' big drums; Ekapada, one of the Eleven Rudras, who is unique in seeking protection from; Aja, another of the Ekadasha Rudras named Ajanma or birthless; Buddhidaataa the bestower of mental power; Aaranya or the Resider of Forests; Grihasta who likes to stay in family atmosphere too; Yati or Sanyasi; Brahmachari or Unmarried male / student; Sankhya or who has the capacity to sift Atma or Anatma; Yoga or the Samadhi Swarupa who has the ultimate knowledge of Atma (One's own Soul) and Paramatma (The Supreme); Vyapi or All Pervading; Dikshita or Somayaga Karta or a member of Eight Murtis of Yagna; Anahata or he who has the Eight leaves of Lotus Chakra inside his heart; Sharva who mesmerises the Sages in Daruka Forest; Parvati's dearest husband; Yama at the time of destruction) Rodhasey chekitaanaya Brahmishthaya Maharshiye, Chathuspaadaaya Medhyaya rakshiney seeghragaaya cha/ (He who obstructs Adharma like the shores of Seas); abundant Form of Jnaana; Unparalelled Veda Vidyan; Maharshi like Vasishtha and such other distinguished Mahatmas; Chatushpaada or He who has four feet viz. Vishwa, Tejas, Pragna, and Shivadhyana Rupa; Medhya or Outstanding Form of Purity; Rakshi or Saviour; Mobile at high speed) Shikhandiney Karaalaya Damshtriney Vishwayedhasey, Bhaaswaraaya Prateetaaya Sudeeptaaya Sumedhasey (The wearer of Jataagra cluster on Jataas; Bhayanaka; possessor of sharp 'Dumshtras'/Tusks; Creator of the Universe; Most Lustrous; Admired and Accepted; Unimaginably beaming; possessive of towering acumen).Kruraayaa vikrutaaaiya bheeshanaaya Shiyaaya cha, Sowmyaaya chaiya Mukhyaaya Dhaarmikaaya Shubhaayacha/( Cruel; completely devoid of negative actions; fearful; Emblem of Propitiousness; Shanti Swarupa; Sarva Sreshtha; Practitioner of Virtue; Mangala Swarupa; Unending; Indestructible; Permanent; Everlasting; Action-oriented; Highly Distinguished; Promoter of Lokas; Saakshi or the Unique Evidence of all Actions) Kshemaaya Sahamaanaaya Satyaya chaamritaayacha, Kartrai Parashavey chaiva Shuliney Divyachakshusey/ (The Sign of Safety; Equitable; the Final Truth; Imperishable; Karta or the Performer; Parashudhari or the Holder of Axe ready to destroy the Evil; Trishula dhaari; The Omnisient) Somapayaajyapaayaiva Dhumapaayoshma –paayacha, Shuchaye paridhaanaaya Sadyojaataaya Mritavey/ (Supreme Pitara Swarupa; The Great consumer of Ghee; Dhumapa or the Smoke Inhaler ready to absorb the sins of Devotees and Exhaler to bless them; Ushmapa or the Distinct Pitara Swarupa; Embodiment of Cleanliness / Bahyaantara Shuchi; Ornamened at the time of Tandava Dance; Sadyojaataaya or who presents himself in one Swarupa from Five separate Forms; Kaala Swarupa) Pishitaashaaya Sharvaaya Meghaaya Vaidyutaayacha, Vyavritthaaya Varishthaaya

Bharitaaya tharakshayey (Eater of the bottom of fruits; Sarva Vishwa Rupa; The great benefactor like the clouds; lustrous like a lightning; He puts on the Tiger Skin or Elephant Skin to please his devotees; Varishtha or the most distinguished; Paripurna or Full of Mercy; of the Form of a Tiger) Tripuraghnaaya Tirthaayaavakraaya Romashaaya cha, Tigmaayuryudhaaya Vyakhyaaya Susamudhhaya Pulastaey/ (The obliterator of Demon Tripurasura; Tirtha Swarupa; Straight forward; The possessor of long and thick curly hairs; He has sharp weapons; highly extolled; Epitome of Siddhas; of the Pulastya Rupa) Rochamaanaaya Chandaaya Spheetaya Rishabhaayacha, Vratiney Ujjumaanaaya Shuchaye chodharva retasey/(Granter of happiness; Chanda or very volatile; Ever Inflator; Rishabha or the Paramount; Vrata parayana; Always absorbed in works; Nirmala Chitta; Urdhwareta or Highly Celibate) Asuraghnaaya Swaghnaaya Mrityughney Yajniyaayacha krushaanavey Prachetaaya Vahnaye nirmalaayacha/ (demolisher of Demons; Swaaghna or the Provider of Security to his own trusted; Victorious over Mrityu/ Death; The benefactor to those who perform Yagnas; he could minimise materials into miniscule size; has extreme awareness of happenings around; Agni Swarupa; devoid of all impurities; ) Rakshoghnaaya Pashughnaayaavighnaaya Swasitaaya cha, Vibhraantaaya Mahaantaaya Atyantam durgamaayacha/ (Destroyer of Rakshasas and Beings; Devoid of obstacles; He takes deep breathing at the time of Tandava Dance; has no illusions; the Noblest; almost impossible to approach) Krishnaya cha Jayantaaya Lokaanaameeswaraayacha, Anaashritaaya Vedhyaaya Samatvaadhi -shthaaya cha (The ever joyful Form of Krishna; always victorious over his opponents; The Master of all the Lokas; fully independent; the High Target for devotees to aim at; and the Embodiment of Equity) Hiranyabaahavey chaiva vyaptaaya cha Mahaayacha, Sukarminey Prasahyayacheshaanaaya Suchakshasey (Possessive of goldlike shining hands; All-pervading; the Supreme; Oriented to the Best of Actions; Extremely Patient; The Greatest Administrator; has the most benevolent eyes and looks ) Kshipreshavey Sadashvaaya Shivaaya Mokshadaaya cha, Kapilaaya Pishingaaya Mahadeyaaya Dhimatey (Releaser of soaring and speedy arrows; of the Swarupa of the unique horses like Ucchhaaishva; Shiva the quintessence of auspiciousness; The awarder of Moksha; Of Kapila Varna or the colour of reddish brown; Pishinga or of the golden coloured physique; Maha Devaya or the Most Transcendent of Devas; Depository of Astuteness) Mahakalpaaya Deeptaaya Roadanaaya Hasaayacha, Dhrudha dhanviney Kavachiney Rathiney cha Varuthiney/ (He who assumes Colossal Form at the time of Pralaya; the characterization of tremendous luminosity; He who formulates sobs and laughters to human beings; holds the strongest bow ever; sports the toughest body shield ever; enjoys the blissful ride in a unique Chariot ever; the Commander of Piscachas and Bhutas) Bhrigunathaaya Shukraaya Gahvareshtha Vedhasey, Amoghaaya Prashaantaaya Sumedhhaya Vrishaaya cha/ (The Protector of Maharshi Bhrigu; Agniswarupa; He enjoys Gardens and Trees; Highly beneficient; Prashanta or Serene; Personification of Intellect; Dharma Swarup) Namastestu Tubhyam Bhagavan Vishwaaya Kruttivaasasey, Pashuunaam Pataye tubhyam Bhutaanaam patayenamah/ (Bhagavan! My greetings to you, You are the Vishwa Rupa, Kritthivaasa / Wearer of Elephant Skin; Pashupati or the Swami of all the Beings in Srishti; Bhutapati or the Supreme Master of Bhuta-Pretas) Pranavey Ruggyajussaamney Swahaaya cha Swadhaaya cha, Vashatkaara atmaney chaiya tubhyam Mantraatmaney Namah/ (Bhagayan is Pranaya Swarupa; Vedatrayi-Ruk Yajur Sama Veda Swarupa; He is of the Form of Swaha-Swadha-Vashatkara; He is Mantra Swarupa) Twashtey Dhaatrey thatha Karthrey Chakshuh Stortamayaya cha, Bhuta Bhavya Bhaveshaaya tubhyam Karmaatmaney Namah/ (Bhagavan is also Prajapati Twashta; Dhata or abides the whole Universe; Karta / Karma Nishtha; Karma Swarupa) Vasavey chaiva Saadhyaaya Rudraaditya Suraayacha, Vishwaaya Maarutaayaiva tubhyam Devaatmaney Namah/ (Bhagavan! You are the Unique among the Eight Vasus; More than Koti Gana Devas; Rudra or Duhkha Vinaashaka; You are like Aditya or the Son of Devi Aditi; Vishwa Deva Swarupa; Maaruta or of the Vayu Swarupa; Mahadeva! You are the Atma Swarupa of all Devas) Agnishoma vidhi jnaaya Pashu mantraoshadhaya cha, Swayambhuvey hyaajaayaiva Apurva Prathamaayacha/ (The discerner of Agniishoma Yagna Vidhi; the decider of Pashus / animals and Auoshadhis or material to be used in the Yagna; You are Swayambhu or Self-born; the Unborn and Birthless; Apurva Prathama or the Exclusive and Singular Foremost); Prajaanaam Patayechaiva tubhyam Brahmaatmaney Namah (You are the Supreme Master of the 'Praja' or Jeevas / Beings and the Super Soul of the Universe, My Sincere salutations to You) Atmeshaayaatma vashyaaya Sarveyshaatishayayacha,

Sarva bhutaanga bhutaaya tubhyam Bhutaatmaney Namah/ (Bhagavan! You are the Paramatma or the Utmost Soul; The Grand Controller of Consciousness; The Finality of the Ishwaras; You are the Physique of all the Jeevas; Indeed You are the Inner Soul of all the Bhutas / Beings; My venerable obeisances to You!) Nirgunaaya Gunajnaaya Vyakruta –ayaamrutaayacha, Nirupaakhyaaya mitraaya tubhyam Yogaatmaney namah/ (Far beyond the Trigunas viz. Satwa, Raias and Tamasa; Yet, He is fully aware of the attributes of the Three Gunas; He has no Form; Yet, He is Amrita Swarupa; He is 'Adrusya'/ Invisible; Mitra or Universal Friend / Well Wisher to one and all; Yogatma or Yoga Swarupa; my Greetings to You!) Pridhivyai chantarikshaya Mahasey Tridivaayacha, Atmajnaaya Viseshaaya Tubhyam Lokaatmaney Namah/ (Bhagayan! You are the Master of Seven Lokas viz. Bhuloka, Antariksha loka, Maharloka, Tridivya /Swargaloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka and thus the Lokaatma) Avyaktaaya cha Mahatey Bhutaader- indriyayacha, Atmajnaaya viseshaaya tubhyam Sarvaatmaney namah/ (Bhagavan! You are an invisible entity; immensely adorable; The Prime Most Supreme Being; yet of Indriya Swarupa; The Basis of Atma Tatwa; the Most Exceptional; the 'Antaraatma' or the Innermost Consciousness of every Being) Nityaya chatmalingaaya Sukshmaayai –vetaraayacha, Shraddhaaya vibhayeychaiya tubhyam Mokshaatmaney namah/ (Bhagayan! You are 'Sanatana'-the Timeless, whose origins are untraceable; the 'Atmalinga'who is 'Swayambhu'/ materialised on His own; Sukshma or smaller than atom; Mahaan among Mahaans or The Greatest among the Great; Shuddha Gyana Rupa; All-Permeating; and Mokshatma! My reverential prostrations to You!)

As Shiva disappeared after the Prayer of Shukracharya, he found Indra's daughter Jayanti near him already in his service as approved by his mother and the Maharshi by his Divya Drishti (Celestial Vision) came to know of her antecedents and agreed that she could stay with him for ten years as his wife, partly due to his instant liking for her and mainly due to the spell of 'Maya' that surrounded him. He spent all the ten years with her in seclusion and in fulfillment of his marital bliss. Prompted by Indra, Guru Brihaspati assumed the form of Shukracharya and addressed the Danavas that he returned after his 'Tapas' to Mahadeva after obtaining the Mantra of Invincibility and Danavas were greatly delighted at the news that it would be their turn to claim Swarga soon. As he made Danavas mistake him to be Shukracharya, Deva Guru gradually changed the outlook of Danavas to perform meditation, Agni Karyas and the like and sought them to become less cruel and more timid. Meanwhile, Jayanti was able to secure all the Mantras including the most powerful Shiva Mantra, gave birth to Devayani and after the limited time of ten years left Shukracharya to Indra. Danava Guru returned to Danavas but since Brihaspati already confused Danavas including their King Prahlada, Shukracharya was not recognised while Brihaspati reiterated his claim that he was real Shukracharya and Brihaspati falsely claimed that he was the real Danava Guru! The real Shukracharya was non-plussed and since Danavas were foolish not to recognise him, gave a curse that Danavas would be defeated badly in their next battle with Devas. As his purpose was fully served, Brihaspati had the last laugh and revealed his real identity. The real Danava Guru told Prahlada that Danavas could win Swarga only at the time of Bali Chakravarti.

# Description of Agni Vamsha-Origin of Main Line Agnis

Agni Deva was Brahma Manasa Putra (the mind-born son). From Swaha Devi, Agni begot three sons viz. 'Paavaka' (Dakshinaagni), 'Pavamaan' (Garhapatya), and 'Shuchi' (Aahavaniya) who are also known as Agni. Paavaka is also called 'Vaidyut' or produced from the currents of water, Paavana as 'Nirmathya' or created by Nirmathana (friction) and Shuchi is 'Soura' or created purely from Surya's radiation. All the Agnis are stated to be of 'Sthira Swabhava' or of stable nature. Pavamaan's son is called 'Kavyavahan'; Paavak's son is 'Saharaksha' and Shuchi's son's name is 'Havyavahana'. Devata's Agni is Havyavah, who was Brahma's first son. Saharaksha is the Agni of Asuras, while Kavyavaahan is the Agni of Pitru Devas. Thus the three Agnis are of Deva-Asura- Pitaras and their progeny-sons and grandsons-are as follows: Pavana's son or the grandson of Brahma is known as 'Brahmaodanaagni' called 'Bharat'; 'Vaiswanara Agni' carries Havya for hundred years; if 'Pushkar'/ Aakash (Sky) is resorted to 'Manthana'

(skimming), Athavarka Rupa's Agni was created and that Agni is called 'Dadhyangaartha Varna' or Dakshinagni.

The Ahavaniya Agni which is the favourite of Devas and Brahmana's too got divided into sixteen parts int Kaveri, Krishna veni, Narmada, Yamuna, Godavari, Vitasta or Jheelam, Chandrabhaga, Iravati, Vipaasha, Kaushiki (Kosi), Shatadru (Satlaj), Sarayu, Sita, Manaswini, Hladini and Pavana. The Agni which emerges from these Rivers is called 'Dhishnu' or 'Dhishnya', which caters to the purposes of Yagnas on the banks of these Rivers. Thus this Agni moves about to the banks of various Rivers to facilitate various punya Karyas by the names of 'Vibhu', 'Pravaahan', 'Agnirgha' and such other Dhishnu Rupas. In addition, there are certain 'Anirdeshya' and 'Anivarya' (unforeseen and inevitable) circumstances, when 'Vasavi' Agni also known as 'Kushanu' is always available on the northern part of alternative Vedika or Platform of Yagnas. This Vasavi Agni has eight sons whom Brahmanas venerate, viz. Barhish (hotriya Agni Havyavahan), Pracheta (Samsahayak), Vishwadeva (Brahmanaachhamsi), 'Swambhu'Agni called Setu; Avabhruta Agni originating from Varuna, Hridaya nama Agni or popularly known as 'Jatharaagni' originating from the food items, Manumaani Agni which is Badabaagni emerging from deep Seas and Saharakshak Agni residing in households fulfilling desires of human beings. Besides, Agnis are meant for Kaamna Purti (fulfillment) or to those who perform Yagnas viz. Rakshoha Agnis also known as 'Yatikritas'. Additionaly there are eight Agnis viz. Surabhi, Vasuratna, Naada, Haryaswa, Rukmavaan, Pravagya, and Kshemavan who were all the progeny of Shuchi.

#### Creation of Agasthya and Vasishtha as brothers by MitraVaruna from Urvashi

Sage Narada enquired of Bhagavan Shankara about the origin of Agastya Muni and Vasishta. Maheswara explained tha once Indra despatched Vayu and Agni to destroy Danavas and having successfully killed thousands of the enemies, ignored some Daityas like Taraka, Kamalaaksha, Paravasu, Kaladamshtra and Virochana as they fled away and concealed in deep Seas. The Danavas who hid themselves kept on tormenting human beings as also Devatas eventually. Indra ordered that Vayu and Agni should dry up the Sea water, especially to kill dangerous Diatyas like Jambhasura, but the both the Devas argued that in the process of drying up the Seas even in a minor manner there would be serious havoc caused to crores of Jeevas. Indra was annoyed at their argument and cursed them to fall down on Earth from Swarga and both the Devas entered into a 'Jala Kumbha' or Water Pitcher as a single body. Meanwhile, Sages Nara and Narayana were in Tapasya on Gandhamadana Mountain, and Indra was concerned that they might not be a threat to his chair; he despatched a few Apsaras to the Mountain along with Kamadeva but their attempts to tempt the Maharshis failed. As the Apsaras continued to be stationed there, Narayana Rishi created a damsel of exquisite attraction from his thighs and named her Urvasi; he desired that Apsaras should realize that their beauty was nothing compared to whom they could materialise as Urvasi and they could not possibly tempt Nara Narayan Maharshis, after all! Mitra (Sun God) and Varuna (Rain God) happened to see the damsel and could not resist the fall of their combined semen of Mitravaruna which was deposited in the same Jala Kumbha (pitcher) that fell down from the Swarga and thus Agastya was born as Kumbha Sambhava. Vasishtha too was reborn from the pitcher earlier since he felt offended when King Nimi did not properly attend to him as he visited the King and hence gave a curse to Nimi to live as 'Videha'or without body, but the King too gave a return curse; both Nimi and Vasishtha approached Lord Brahma who solved the problem by retaining Nimi's life in his Eyes and Vasishtha to be reborn to Mitravaruna since the latter's semen fell in the pitcher on seeing Apsara Urvashi. Subsequently Agastya married Lopamudra, absorbed the entire Ocean in his Kamandulu to isolate the Danavas to enable Indra to kill the notorious Danavas and released it later as his urine and was thus stated to be salty!; he also razed down the ego of Vindhya Mountain by making him bend for ever thus banning the Mountain to stoop for ever till the Sage's return which never happened as he continued to stay down the

Vindhyas. There was also the legend attributed to Agastya about the Daitya brothers Ilvala and Vatapi, who knew the Mrita Sanjeevani Mantra; they would assume the forms of Brahmanas and seek the passers by to tempt them to a feast of goat-meat, and after consuming the meal ask Vatapi to come out and Vapati would come out piercing through the tummy of the stranger and the brothers would enjoy his meat. But Agastya Muni was too clever to bless the good food saying 'Vatapi! Jeerno bhava' and Vatapi was fully digested even before Ilvala was able to recite the Mrita Sanjeevani Mantra! [Till date, devotees recite Lalita Sahasranama and Aditya Hridaya scripted by Agastya Muni. Vasishtha, the Brahmarshi was the arch-enemy of Rajarshi Viwswamitra ever since the latter claimed Nandini the Celestial Cow and fought a battle in which Viswamitra was defeated. The enmity continued till once both the Rishis cursed each other to become birds and finally Brahma had to intervene and convert them back as human beings].

Agastya Muni satisfied Maheswara with ruthless penance for several years and secured boons of longevity for twenty five crores of years as long as thousand lives of Brahmas. The boon also covered that whosoever worshipped him for seven days for seven years with 'Arghya' or offering water addressing the Muni along with charities of a white cow and calf, silver vessel, and white clothes as follows would be blessed with good health, good Form, and contentment: *Kaashapushpa prateekaasha Agni Maruta Sambhava, Mitraavarunayoha putra kumbhayoney Namostutey/* The first Arghya would provide Good Form, the second one Bhuvarloka and the third Swarloka.

#### Features of 'Nava Grahas' and Procedure of Navagraha Shanti

Adithyaya Somaaya Mangalaaya Budhaayacha Guru Shukra Sanirbhyascha Rahavey Ketavey Namah/ Surya, Chandra, Mangala, Budha, Brihaspati, Shukra, Shani, Rahu and Keta are all expected to be basically benificient 'Grahas' (Planets). Description of their 'Swarupas' (Forms) is as follows:

Padmaasanah Padmakarah Padmagarbha samuddhitah, Saptaashvah Saptarujjuscha Dwibhujah syaat sadaa Ravih/ (Surya Deva has two hands wearing two lotuses, seated on a lotus flower; his luster is abundant like that of the outside part of a lotus; Surya Deva is comfortably seated on a magnificent chariot driven by Seven Horses).

Swetah Swetaambaradharah Swetaashvah Swetavaahanah Gadaapaanirdwibaahus cha Kartavyo varadah Shashee (Chandra Deva is of white colour, wears white clothes, has white horses, white chariot, with 'gada'/ mace and 'Varada Mudra' or sign of Protection).

Raktamaalyaambara dharah Shakti Shula Gadadharah, Chaturbhujah Raktaromaa varadah syad Dharaasutah/ (Dhrarani nandana or the son of Earth, Mangala is adorned with Shakti, Trishula, Gada and Vara Mudra on his four hands; his body colour is blood red, wears red clothes and red flower garland)

Peetamaalyaambara dharah Karnikaa –rasamadyutih, Khadgacharma gadaa paanih Simhastho varado Budhah/ (Budha Deva wears yellow flower garland and yellow clothes with body colour too yellowish; he sports a sword, shield, mace and 'Vara mudra' by his four hands and is seated on a lion);

Deva daitya Guru Taddhat peetaswaitow chaturbhujaow, Dandinow Varadow Kaaryao Saakshasutra Kamandalu/ (The 'Pratimas' or Idols of Deva Guru Brihaspati and of Danava Guru Shukraachaarya should respectively be of yellow and white colours; their hands are ornamented with Danda, Rudrakshamaala, Kamandalu and Varada Mudra). Indra neela dutih Shuli varado Grudhra vaahanah Baana baanaasanadharah kartavy -orka suthastathaa/ (Shanaischara's body colour is of 'Indraneelamani' / blue diamond; he rides a 'Grudhra' / Vulture and carries bow and arrows, Trishula and Varada Mudra). Karaala vadanah Khadgacharma Shuli Varapradah, Neela simhaasanascha Rahuratra Prashasyatey/ (Rahu Deva is fierce looking, carries sword, skin sheath, Shula and Vara Prada by his four hands and is seated on a blue throne). Dhumraa Dwibaahavah Sarvey Gadino vikrutaananah,

Grudhraasana gataa nithyam Ketavah Syurvara pradaah/ (Ketu Deva is of grey colour and of fierce Rupa with two hands showing gadaa and varada mudra seated always on a vulture) Sarvey kireetinah kaaryaa Grahaa Lokahitaavahaah, Hyaanguleynocchritaah Sarvey shatamashtottaram sadaa/ (These are all beneficient Grahas worthy of ornamentation with 'Kiritas'/head gears and be of hundred eight inches of Pratimas / Idols).

A 'Vedi' (platform) is to be prepared with white rice grains with Surva Deva the Center, Mangal in the South, Brihaspati in the North, North East with Budha, East as Shukra, South East as Chandra, West as Shani, South West as Rahu, and North West as Ketu. The Adhi Devatas to each of the Planets are as follows: Shiva for Surya, Parvati for Chandra, Skanda for Mangal, Vishnu for Budha, Brahma for Brihaspati, Indra for Shukra, Yama for Shanaischara, Kaala Devata for Rahu and Chitragupta for Ketu. The Pratyabhidevatas respectively are Agni, Varuna, Prithvi, Vishnu, Indra, Aindri, Prajapati, Sarpa and Brahma. Besides, Vinayaka, Durga, Vayu, Aakasha, and Ashvini Kumars and these are also to be invoked by individual names. While visualising the various Grahas, one has to visualise Mangala and Surya as of red colour, Chandra and Shukra as of white colour, Budha and Brihaspati as yellow, Shani and Rahu as black and Ketu as grey. The Kartha who is to perform the worship the Grahas should try to secure these coloured Vastras (clothing) and flowers as also apply Gandha (Sandalwood paste), offer Dhupa, Dipa and fruits. By way of Naivedya, Surya has to be offered 'Anna Payasa'/ kheer; Chandra to be offered material made of ghee and milk; Mangala to offer cow's products, to Budha cooked rice and milk, Brihaspati curd rice, Shukra ghee and cooked rice mix, Shanaischara to be offered 'Khichidi' or cooked rice with lentils and ghee, to Rahu cooked corn grain and to Ketu 'chitraana' to be offered. On the Northeast side of the Vedika, a 'Kalasha' (vessel) has to be arranged containing 'Akshatas' (raw rice grains mixed with turmeri powder) and curd inside, covered on its top with tender mango leaves, and duly wrapped around with new cloth, with fruits kept besides. In side the Vessel should be placed 'Pancha Ratnas' and 'Pancha Bhang' or the roots of Five Trees viz. Peepal, Bargad, Paakad, Gular and Mango. Into this Vessel, 'Avahana' or salutary reception/invocation of waters of Varuna, Ganga and other Sacred Rivers, Samudras, Sarovaras should be performed. Then the Chief Priest would pre-collect the Earth of Riverbeds, Goshaalas etc and apply to the 'Karta'/devotee and recite the Mantra saying: Sarvey Samudraah Saritah Saraamsi jaladaa nadaah aayaantu Yajamaanasya duritah kaarakaah/ ( May all the waters of Samudras, Rivers, Rivulets, Sarovars and cloud / rain waters be prayed to clean up and purify the Karta. Later on, let 'havan' be intiated with ghee, rice, yavas, til /sesame seeds; then 'samidhas' or the bark / branches of specified trees viz. 'madaara', 'palaasha', 'khaira', 'chichinda', 'peepul', 'gular', 'duub' and 'Kusha'should be used to appropriate 'Grahas'. To each of the 'Grahas', there should be one hundred offerings (or atleast twenty eight) 'Ahutis' should be made along with honey, ghee and curd; the measurement of 'Samidhaas' must optimally be of the size of thumb-top to pointing finger-top made of branches, barks and leaves. The Purohitas / Priests should address each or the specified Grahas with the relevant Mantras as designed appropriately and slowly in proper intonation. Again, the samidhas with ghee are to be offered ten times. There after, each Graha has to be appeased one by one: Surya should be pleased with the havan as per the Mantra Akrishnena Rajasaa vartamano nivesayannamrutam marthaumcha Hiranyayena savitaa rathenaa Devo yati bhvanaani pasyan; then to Chandra with the Mantra: Apyaayaswa sametutey Viswataassoma vrishniyam, Bhavaayaajasya sangadhey; to Mangala by the Mantra viz. Agnirmurdhvaah Kakuppatih Prithivyaa Ayam, Apaagum retaamsi jinvati/; to Budha with the Mantra: Udbhudhvassajney prati Jaagruhey namishtaa purtey sagum srujedhaamayamcha, punah krunnvag sya pitaram yuvaa namanvaataagum srujethaa mayamcha/; to Guru by the Mantra: Brihaspatey ati yadaryo arhaaddyumadwi bhaati kratumajjeneshu, yaddeedayaccha vasarta prabhaata tadasmaasu dravinam dehi chitram; to Shukra by the Mantra: Sukramtey anyadyajatam tey anyadwishah ruupey ahaneedyouri vaasi, Vishwaahi maayaa avasi swadhaayo bhadraatey puushanniharaatirastu/; to Shanaischara with the Mantra: Sham no devirabhheshtaye or alternately with the Mantra: Shamagniragni bhiskarachannastapatu Suryah sham vaatovaa tvarasaa Apasridhah; to Rahu, the relevant Mantra is: Om kayanaschitra Aa Bhuvadutee Sadaa Vrudhaas -sakhaah kayaa shachishthayaavrutaah/; and to

Ketu, the relevant Mantra is: *Om Ketumkrunvanna ketaveypeso maryaa Aa pesasey Samushadbhirajaayathaah*/

After seeking the blessings of the Nava Grahas, other significant Deities are also to be pleased by performing 'havans': To RUDRA DEVA first corresponding to Surya: Aa Vo Raajaana Madhvasarasya Rudram or alternatively: Kadrudraaya prachetasey meedushthamaaya tavyasey, vochema shantamagum hrudey; to DEVI UMA corresponding to Chandra: Apo hi shtha mayo bhuvah taana oorjey dadhaatana, Maheranaaya chakshusey yoh vah Sivatamorasah tasya bhaajahateha nah/ Usiteerava Maatarah/ Tasma arangamama vah yasya kshayaaya jinvatha, Apo janaayata cha nah/ Om Bhurbhuvassavaha or alternatively Gowrimimaaya salilaani takshatyeke padi dwipati saa chatushpadi, Astaapadi Navapadi babhuvushi Sahasraakshaaraa paramevyoman; to Swami KARTIKEYA: Syona Prithivi Bhavaanruksharaa nivesani yacchaanassarmasa prathaah; to Vishnu: Idam Vishnurvichakramey tredhaa nidadhey padam, Samoodhamasyapaagum Surey; to BRHAMA: Taneeneesaanam Jagatasthasdhushash pati dhiyam jinwamavasehoo maheyvayam, Pusaano yatha Veda Saama Sadvradhey rakshitaasaayu radabdha swastaye/ OR- Brahmaajajnaanam prathamam purastaadwi simatassuruchovena aavah, Sabuddhniya Upamaa Asyavishtha assatascha yonimasatas cha niyah; to INDRA: Indram yo Visswatassari havaamahe janebhuah Asmaatamastu kevalah; to Lord YAMA: Ayam Gowh prusni rakrami dasananmaataram punah pitaramcha priyamtsuvah; to CHITRAGUPTA: Sachitra chitram chitayamtamasmey chitrakshatra chitratamam vayodhaam/ Chandram rayim puruveeram Bruhantam Chandra chandraabhirgrunutey yuvaswa/ to AGNI: Agnim dutam vruneemahey hotaaram Vishvavedasam, Asyayajjassya sukrutum/ to VARUNA: Imam mey Varuna shrudhee havamadya cha mrudaya twamanassuraachakey, Tatwaayaami Brahmanaa yandamaanasta daasaastey Yajamaano havirbhih/ Ahedamaano Varuneha bodhuru sagmusma maa na Ayuhu pramosheeh, Yacchidhetey visho yathaa pradeva Varuna Vratam meemaamsi dyavidyavi/ Yat kinchidam Varuna Daivye jenobhidroham mamaanushyaascharaamasi, Acchithee Yattaava dharmaa yupomimaa nastamaadenaso Devari rishah/ Kitavaaso yadrirupurna deevi yadvaagha satyamuta yannavi, sarvaa taa vishya sthitireva devatha te syaama Varuna priyaasaha; PRITHVI Mantra: Prithivy -antariksham etc.; to VISHNU DEVA: SahasraRirshaa Purushah sahasraakshas –sahasrapaat, Sa bhumim Vishwato vrutvaa Atyathishthaddashaangulam/; to Devi DURGA: Om Jatavedasey sunamaava Soma araati yato nidahaati Vedah, Sanah parushadati Durgaain Viswaanaaveya Sindhum diritaadyaghnih; to PRAJAPATI: Praja patena twadetaanyanyo Vishwaa jaataani paritaa babhuva, Yatkaamaastey juhumastanno Astuvagagg syama patayo rayeenaam; to VINAYAKA: Om Ganaana – antwaa Ganapatigum hayamahey Kayim Kaveenaamupashramastapam, Jyestha raajam Brahmanaam Brahmanaspata Aanashrunvannootibhisseeda saadhanam/ to VAYU: Tava Vayavrtaspatetwashtarjaamataradbhuta, Aavaasya vrinee mahey/ to ASHWINI DEVATAS: Kraanaashishmura heenaamhinvanrutasya deedhitam, Viswaaparipriyaa bhuyadadhyitaa/ Aaditpratatnassya retaso Jyotih Pasyanti yaasaram paroyaddhyatey Divaa/ Thus satisfying the Deities above and others with appropriate Mantras with 'Havans' with 'Ajyam', that is ghee plus other suitable materials, POORNAHUTI should be performed commencing with Muurthaanam Diva etc. including fruits, flowers, dry fruits, and other suitable materials including vastras, gold etc. as a grand finale with musical instruments, 'Veda ghosha', and parikramas of Yagna Purusha. This would be followed by 'Abhishka'/ 'Mangalika Snaan' to the Karta and his wife along with Mantras saying: May Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara purify you; may Vaasudeava, Balaraama, Pradyumna and Aniruddha bring in Victory to you; may Indra, Agni, Kubera, Yama, Nirruti, Varuna, Pavan, Sehanaaga and Dikpalakaas protect you; May Kirti, Lakshmi, Dhurti, Medha, Pushti, Shraddha, Kriya, Niti, Buddhi, Lazza/modesty, Shanti, Tushti, Vapu and Kanti-the wives of Dharma bless you; may the Navagrahas safeguard you; may Deva, Danava, Gandharva, Yaksha, Naga, Daithya, Rakshasa, Sarpa, and the entire Srishti provide you 'raksha'. After the 'Ashirvaad'/blessings, the chapter of 'Daanas' to satisfy the Brahmanas would commence. There are prescribed Danaas as follows: to propitiate Surya Graha, the Daana is a Kapila cow, Chandra a Shankha, Mangal a bull; to Budha gold, Brihaspati yellow clothes, Shukra a whirs horse, Shanaischara a black cow, to Rahu the suitable Daana of a Metallic 'Vastu'/ material and Ketu a goat.

# Significance of 'Vratas', procedures and their fruits (Over-view of Sixty Vratas included)

Matsya Bhagavan narrated to Manu that Mahadeva explained to Uma Devi a number of formal 'Vratas' meant for fulfillment of human desires, especially to assure all round propititiousness, health and wealth, name and fame and forward steps towards 'Moksha'. Among several Vratas so described by Mahadeva, a few selected Vratas are given below:

ANANTA TRITEEYA VRATA: This Vrata is observed on Shukla Triteeya of Bhadrapada, Vaishakha, Pousha, or Margasirsha months by either male or female after taking bath with yellow mustard seeds and wearing 'tilakam' on the forehead by a mix of 'chandana', curd, 'gomutra', cowdung, 'gorochana' and mushta (cyprus rotundus) which is a favourite of Devi Parvati. The color of 'Vastras' may be yellow of men, red for women, unmarried girls white and widows ochre or terracota / Indian Red colour. The Idol of Devi should be bathed first in Panchagavya (cow's milk, curd, urine, dung and ghee) and later in milk, honey, chandana and flower mix. Lalitha Devi is fond of white flowers, variety of fruits, milk and curd. Puja is to be performed as follows: Varadaai Namah (paadow pujayami/ feet), Shria namah (gulfow/ ankles), Parvathainamah (Janghow lower sheen) Ahokayai namah (Jaanuh or knees) Mangala kaarinyai naah (Uru or hips), Vamadevyai namah (kati or waist), Padmodaraayai namah (udara or stomach), Kaamaashriyai namah (vakshasthala), Sowbhaagyadaayinyai namah (both hands), Shriyai namah (hands, stomach and face), Darpana vaasinyai namah (mirror-like or teeth), Smaradaayai namah (smile), Gouryai namah ( nasika or nose), Utpalaayai namah (netra or eyes), tushtyai namah (lalaata or forehead), Katyaayanyai namah (head and hair); thereafter, touch the feet of the idol by saying: Dhishtyai namah, Kaanthyai namah, Shriyai namah, Rambhaayai namah, Lalitaayia namah, and Vaasudevyai namah/ After the puja on the above lines, 'Archana' with 'Kunkuma' with lotus leaves spread over on the platform twelve times be performed to the Idol; then set up Pratimas of Gauri and Aparna on the Eastern side, Devi Bhavani on the Southern side, Nirruti side Rudrani, Western side Sowmya Rupa Madanavasini, Vayavya side Devi Paatala, and on the Northern side Devi Uma. In the Madhya bhaaga or the middle area, the idols of Lakshmi, Swaha, Swadha, Tushti, Mangala, Kumuda and Sati should be set up. Lord Rudra is to be set up in the Central portion of the Lotus and on the Lotus earside, Lalita Devi is to be established. Then, songs and musical instruments may be organised; white 'Akshatas' and plain water be used to sprinkled on the Deity, red clothing be offered, red flower garland be worn, and hair-parting on her head be coloured with 'sindoor'; Devi is fond of Sindoor and Kunkuma always. Guru / Acharya puja is also done later as a finale.

In Bhadrapada month, the puja is done with Neel Kamal (Blue Lotus), in Aswin Month with Bandhujiva flowers, in Kartik with Shatapatrak Kamal, in Margashira month with Jaati Malati, in Pushya Month with yellow Kurantak/Katasaraia flowers, in Maagha Month with Kunda and kumkuma, in Phalguna with Sinduwara or Malati, in Chaitra with Mallika and Ashoka, in Vaishakha with Gandhapatala, in Jyeshtha with Lotus and Mandara, Ashadha with Champa and in Shravana with Kadamba and Malati. In the months of Bhadrapada through Ashwin, the material to be used are Gomutra, Gobar, milk, curd, Ghee, Kushodak, Bilwa patra, Mandara flower, Goghrundeka, Panchagavya, and Bel patra; and in other months Naivadya is as per standards prescribed. At the end, there must be Dampati Puja or reverence to husbandwife pair by way of Vastra, flower garland, and chandana-Tambula. Ananta Triteeya Vrata shall indeed yield long life, ideal progeny, excellent health, prosperity, contentment and 'Shilaloka prapti'at the end of life.

SARASVATHA VRATA: Matsya Deva described to Manu about the importance of this Vrata to be observed by persons for 'Sowbhagya' (great propitiousness), high intelligence, expertise in 'Vidyas', excellent relationship between husband and wife, affection with relatives, long healthy life, and contentment in life. Devi Saraswati is pleased even by taking her name. Men and women may observe this Vrata any 'Panchami' day or any Sunday when 'Tara' (Star) and 'Graha' (Planets) are in order, as decided by Brahmanas. After performing puja by way of 'Shodasopachaaraas' or the Sixteen Services to Gayatri with devotion including 'Avahana', 'Snaana', 'Vastra', 'Sweta / white Pushpa mala', 'Phala, 'Chandana', 'Dhupa', 'Deepa' and 'Naivedya', the following be recited: Yathaa na Devi Bhagavan Brahmalokey Pitamahah, Twam parityajya samtishthet tathaa bhava Varapradaa/ (Devi! just as Brahma never leaves you in Brahmaloka alone, bestow to me the same kind of boon); Vedah Shastreena Sarvaani Geeta nrityaadikam cha yat, Na viheenam twayaa Devi tathaa mey santhu siddhaayah/ (Devi! Just as Vedas, Shastras in totality, all the fine arts including Geeta-Nrityas never exist without you, do favour me the same way to provide fulfillment to me also) Lakshmi Medhaa Dharaa Pushti Gauri Tushtih Prabhaa Matih, Etaabhih paahi Ashtaabhistanubhimaam Saraswati! (Kindly provide me protection from the Ashta Murtis viz, Lakshmi, Medha, Dhara, Pushti, Gauri, Tushti, Prabha, and Mati). This way, Gayatri who wears Veena, Rudraaksha Maala, Kaandalu, and Pustak, should be addresed to her and give away to a Brahmana as 'daan' including rice, milk, ghee, Suvarna /gold and bell and treat him to Bhojan (Meals) to secure the blessing of Gayatri Devi. Those who perform the Vrata with devotion and humility shall bestow smartness and attractiveness as also stay in Vidyadhara loka and Brahmaloka in three 'Kalpantaas'.

BHIMA DWADASHI VRATA: Popularised as Bhima Vrata since Bhima of Maha Bharata fame observed it and secured multiple benefits, this Dwadashi Vrata is held in Magha month's Sukla Paksha. This Vrata was prescribed by Bhagavan Shri Krishna to Bhima: Ashesha yagnaphaladamaseshaagha vinaashanam, Aseshadushtashamanamasesha sura pujitam/ Pavitraanaam Pavitram cha Mangalaanaam cha Mangalam, Bhavishyamcha Bhavishya –anaam Puraanaanam puraatanam/ (This Vrata is equated with many yagnas, destroyer of all kinds of sins, reliever of all kinds of blemishes, respected by all Devatas, sanctified among all kinds of materials, provider of all types of propitiousness, the best of all holy deeds in future and indeed one of the ancient Vratas.) Having taken bath with ghee and 'tilas' / sesame seeds, a Bhakta should commence the Vrata on Ekadashi day by reciting the name of *Om Namo Narayanaaya/* By saying Krishnaya namah touch both the feet of the Idol, Sarvaatmaney namah worship the mastak /head; Vaikunthaya namah touch the kantha / neck; Shri Vatsa dhaariney namah touch yakshasthala /chest; and then recite the 'Avahana Mantra' with Shankhiney namah, Chakriney namah, Gadiney namah, Varadaaya namah, Sarva Narayanasya touch Bhagavan's hands; then perform Puja to Udaraayanamah udaram pujayaami, Panchasharaayanamah jananendriyam pujayami, Sowbhaagya nathaayanamah jenghey pujayami, Bhuta dhaariney namah jaanuh pujayami; namo Neelaaya yai janghey paadow Vishwa srujey namah, then to Devi Lakshmi: Namo Devyai namah Shaanthai namo Lakshmai namah Shriyai/ Namah Pushtyai Namastushtyai Dhrushtyai Hrushtyai namo namah/ later on perform worship to Garuda saying: Namo Vihanga naathaaya Vayuvegaaya pakshiney, Vishapramaathiney nityam Garudam chaabhi pujayet/ Now, worship with Gandha, Pushpa, Dhupa, Deepa and Naivedya to Shri Krishna, Maha Deva, and Ganesha. By Sun set time, after Sandyha Vandana, pray to Shri Krishna: Namo Narayanaayeti twaamaham sharanam gatah (Bhagavan Narayana! my reverential salutations to you and all the Deities; I am in your 'Sharanam' / protection). That night, the devotee Karta should observe 'Jaagaran' or night long prayers, singing of Bhajans and such activitees. Next morning on *Dwadashi day*, puja be performed to Keshava and make oblations into Agni by ghee

Next morning on *Dwadashi day*, puja be performed to Keshava and make oblations into Agni by ghee and declare before Bhagavan: *Ekaadashaayam niraahaarah samabhyarcha Keshavam, Raatrim cha sakalaam sthitwaa snaanamcha payasaa tatha/ Saprisha chaapi dahanam hutwa Brahmana pungavaih, Sahaiva Pundarikaaksha Dwadashyam Ksheera bhojanam, Karishyaami yataatmaaham nirvighnenaastu tacchamey/* (Pundarikaaksha! I am on fast on Ekadashi and on Dwadashi shall have 'Ksheera' along with Brahmanas; kindly bless me to see through the Vrata without any obstacle). To start the actual Vrata, a Vedika be prepared. There must be a kalasha hanging from the ceiling with strings with a small hole at

the bottom through which water drops must fall on the head of the Kartha through out the previous night seated on the vedika. Similarly another hanging kalasha should drop milk through a minute hole on the idol of Bhagavan Vishnu. Through another kalasha with a hole there should be ghee drops into the Havan kund. Down on the Vedika there should be thirteen Kalashas with white cloth around each filled up with various 'Bhakshya Padarthaas' (Eatables), along with a copper vessel and 'Pancha Ratnas' or five kinds of jewels. Four Brahmanas should be reciting Rig Veda facing north of the Havan Kunda, four Yajurvedi Brahmanas should recite Rudraadhyaaya, four more Samavedi Brahmanas should recite Arishadvarga sahita Vaishnava Sama. The designated twelve Brahmanas should be revered with Vastra, Pushpa, Chandana, Golden Ring, wrist ornament, golden chain, and bed to each. The thirteenth Brahmana would be the Acharya who should be respected with double of the items provided with the other Brahmanas as also cows additionally. At the end of the Daanaas, there should be a full and hearty meal with Bhakshya, Bhojya, Lehya, Choshya, and Paaniyas. But the Karta should only eat saltless rice meal. The Karta, his wife, children and all other family members should then pray to Keshava with the avowed identity of Keshava and Shiva: Shivasya hridaye Vishnur Vishnoscha hridaye Shivah, Yadhaantaram na pashyami tathaamey Swastichaayushah/ (May we have the confirmed view that Shiva and Vishnu are just the same, and thus may we be blessed with longevity and extreme propitiousness).

MAHESWARA (SHIVA CHATURDASHI) VRATA: Nandikeswara described the Procedure of the Vrata to Brahmarshi Narada which is observed in all the Lokas. On Margasirsha Shukla Trayodasi, a person resolving to perform the Vrata should take food only once on the day and declare to Maha Deva: Margaseersha Trayodasyaam sitaayekabhojaam, Praarthayet Devadevesham twaamaham sharanam gatah/ Chaturdashyam niraahaaram samyagbhyarchya Shankaram, Suyarma Vrishabham datwaa bhyokshyaami chaparehani/ (Shankara! As a first of this Vrata, I shall take only one meal on Margaseersha Sukla Trayodashi as you should take me in my 'sharan' / procection; being on fast on Chaturdashi and only after my worship to you and daana of a Golden Vrishabha to a deserving Brahmana that I shall take next meal again.) Next morning after ablutions, Snaana and Nitya Karmas, the Karta should perform puja to Maha Deva and Devi Parvati with lotus and other flowers, Chandana and Dhupa/ Deepa as follows: Paadow namah Shivaayeti- Shirah Sarvaatmaney namah, Trinetraayeti netraani-Lalaatam Haraye Namah/ Mukhamindu mukhaayeti-Shrikanthaayeti kandharam, Sadyojaataaya karnou tu Vaamadevaayai bhujow/ Aghora hridayaayeti-hridayam chaabhipujayet, Stanow Tatpurushaayeti tatheshaanaaya chodaram/ Parshou chaananta Dharmaaya Jnaana bhutaaya vai katim, Uru chaananta vairaagya simhaayetyabhi pujayet, Anaantyaiswarya nathaaya jaanunee chaaryayed Budhaah, Prathaanaya namo janghai gulfou Vyomaatmaney namah/ Vyomakeshaatma rupaaya keshaan pushtam cha pujayet, Namah Pushtyai Namasyushtyai Parvateem chaapi pujayet/ Thus after worshipping the feet, head, forehead, face, neck, ears, hands, heart, chest, stomach, waist, knees, lower sheen, ankles, back etc.of Shiva and Parvati 'Pratimas', the Karta should perform 'daana' to a Brahmana of waterful 'Kalasha', white flower garland, Vastras, pratima of golden Vrishabha studded with Pancha Ratnas and a variety of food preparations and treat Brahmanas to hearty meals and give ample 'dakshinas'/ cash. The Karta himself should take in that night only curd and ghee of cows and sleep on floor northward (Uttaabhimukha). On the next morning, after Puja again, then only the fast would be broken along with Brahmanas. The Vrata is to be performed every month year-long on Shukla Trayodashi-Chaturdashi

ending with Krishna Chaturdashi next. The repeat Pujas every month till Kartika month should be performed as follows: *Shankaraaya namastestu namastey karaveeraka/ Traimabakaaya namastestu Maheswaramatah param, Namastestu Mahaa Deva Staanavecha tatah param/ Namah Pashupatey naatha Namastey Shaambhavey punah, Namastey Paramaananda Namah Somaartha dhaariney/ Namo Bheemaaya ityevam twaamaham sharanam gatah/* Every month on Trayodashi-Chaturdashi days, the Karta's intake should alternatively be Gomutra, Gobar, milk, curd, ghee, kushodak, Panchagavya, bel, karpur, Agaru, Yava, and black til. Similarly, the special flower of the respective months would be Mandara (Paribhadra), Malati, Dhatura, Sinduvaara, Ashoka, Mallika, Paatala or red rose, Mandara (Suryamukhi), Kadamba, Shatapati (White Lotus or Gulab), and Kamal. On the Kartika Krishna

Chaturdashi, similar program is to be repeated as on the final day of the previous year. Those who duly observe the Shiva Chaturdashi Vrata as prescribed secure the fruits of performing thousand Ashvamedha Yagnas. If he or his father / brothers had perpetrated huge sins like Brahma hatya or equivalent ones would be free from these 'paatakaas'. The Kartas would receive long life, excellent health, prosperity to his/her entire family and even to their 'Vamsa'. After their life they would be four armed Ganaadhipas in Swarga and later on in Shivaloka for several 'Kalpas'.

#### **Over-view of Sixty Vratas**

Nandikeswara indicated that while innumerable Vratas were described in the Eighteen Maha Puranas or otherwise as per the beliefs of humanity in several parts of Bharat, sixty select Vratas were worthy of shortlisting. \*Persons observing day long fast till the evening for the duration of a full year, after performing daily puja to Bhagavan Shiva and after a year donating a golden Chakra and Trishula to a family Brahamana along with food and dakshina is called *Deva Vrata* which entitles Shivaloka Prapti.\* Those who perform *Rudra Vrata* by fasting similarly during every day till the dusk time to worship Shiva and after a year donate a pair of golden pratimas of a cow and ox to a Brahmana with bhojan and dakshina are also sanctioned Rudra loka, besides destroying their previous sins and future discomfitures in life.\* Similar day time fasting and worship of Vishnu for a year and giving away daana of a sugarful of vessel and a golden neel-kamal (blue lotus) along with a live'Vrishabha'/Ox is called Neela Vrata bestowing great contentment in life and Vaikuntha thereafter. \* Preeti Vrata is called when a devotee observes it without applying and using oil for four months beginning from 'Ashadha' month and donates Bhojana Material including vessels to vegetables and glasses to grains at the end of the Vrata would endear himself to one and all. \*Those who abstain from milk, curd, ghee and sugar as also their related products during the Chaitra month and resort to sincere worship to Devi Gauri daily after which make charity to a Brahmana couple with silver vessels full of various fruits and juices and honour them with Vastras and gifts are stated to have acted upon Devi Gauri Vrata. \* Persons who execute Kama Vrata resort to fasting day long on the day previous to Trayodadshi coinciding with Pushya Nakshatra and donate a golden Ashoka tree of ten inches along with sugar cane and vastras to a Brahmana before proper Puja to Pradyumna Deva are blessed with destruction of all difficulties and obstacles in life and attain Vishnu loka there after. \*Those observing four-month long Shiva Vrata from Ashadha Purnima to Kartika Purnima without cutting hair and nails and refraining from eating 'bhanta' or round brinjals and at the end of that period donating pots of honey and ghee and donating a golden bhanta on the Purnima to a Brahmana are destined to contentment in life and 'Sivaloka prapti'thereafter. \*Resisting from the beauty and fragrance of the seasonal flowers during 'Hemanta and Shishira Ritus' (winter and cold /dewy seasons), persons observing Sowmya Vrata on Phalguna Purnima day would perform puja to Bhagavan Shiva and Keshava would donate seasonal flowers of their choice in gold to a Brahmana in the evening time for fulfilment of desires and attaining 'Paramapada' after life. \*Sowbhagya Vrata commences from Phalguna Month's Triteeya Tithi for a full year when the Karta should stop consuming salt and salty food and the Deity for worship is Devi Bhayani. At the close of the Vrata, Karta and his wife should perform 'Dampati Puja'-husband and wife-presuming that the worship was for 'Adi- Dampatis' of Bhagavan Shiva and Bhavani and give away all kinds of household items as donation, especially beds; this Vrata bestows the fruits of 'Gauri loka Nivas' till 'Kalpanta'to both Karta and his wife. \*Those who take up the Sarasvata Vrata should observe silence in evening Sandhyas for a year and at the end of the year donate gheeful 'ghatas'/ pots, Vastras, tila seeds, and ghanta (bell). The Kartas would be blessed with Soundarya, Vidya and intelligence and 'Sarasvata Pada'/ Vidyadhara and Brahmalokas later on.

\*Sampad Vrata is commenced on a 'Panchami'and goes on for a year on a Panchami again when Lakshmi's puja is held to Devi Lakshmi. On the concluding day, formal Puja is performed and a cow as also a golden lotus is given as 'daan' to a Brahmana. In the present life, the Karta's sorrows and

difficulties are terminated and in every subsequent life he would be born in exceedingly properous and renowned families. \*Ayur Vrata is performed by those who carry out 'lepana' or paste their heads to the Bhumi before the Idols of Shiva and Keshava for a year and at the close of the year donate a cow with waterful of pot would be Kings for thousand years (ie. for long, long time) and after death reach Shiyaloka. \* Persons who abstain from jealousy, take food once a day, practise silence and try to worship 'peepul' tree, Surya Deva and Ganga for a year and at the end donate three cows and golden tree replicas to a husband-wife pair are known to have observed Kirti Vrata who are blessed with instant opulence and reputation and attain the benefit of organising an Ashwamedha Yagna. \* Saama Vrata is successfully done by devotees of Bhagavan Shiva or Keshava who are required to reside in a cow-dung house for a year and worship the Deities by performing snaan with ghee and puja with flowers, Akshatas, Dhupa, Deepa etc. After a year's observance of the Vrata, charity of a cow with Tila seeds as also an eight inch long golden lotus is to be made a Sama Veda Pandit for attainment of Shivaloka.\* Veera Vrata is essentially meant for women and observed on Navami days for a year; they should take a single meal in the day along with as many 'Kanyas' as possible and gift them 'Asanas' (Chairs) along with gold embroidered jackets with stars and sarees, besides a golden Simha / Lion as a symbol of bravery and strength to be given away to a Brahmana; such ladies would become prettier, healthier and happier by the day and through crores of births ahead to finally reach Shivaloka. \*Pitru Vrata commences on a Purnima day and goes on for a year when the Karta lives only on milk and at the twelfth Purnima again, perform Shraadha and provide 'daanaa' of five milk yielding cows, red Vastras and waterful of pots; this Vrata would relieve of the 'pitaras' of hundred past generations, and bestow them Kingship for the current and next Kalpa times too. \*Those persons who perform Ananda Vrata for four months from Chaitra Month by providing running water or 'Jala daana' without asking and at the end provide 'Anna daana', besides donate Vastras and pots of water with tila seeds apart from suvarna (gold) to a Brahmana would certainly become a 'Bhupala'/ King in the same life and at the end of his/her life qualify to reach Brahmaloka. \* Ghriti Vrata is observed by performing 'Panchamrita Snaana' (bathing with milk, curd, ghee, madhu/honey, and sugar) to the Idol of Bhagavan for a year daily and after the year donating a cow with Panchaamrita and a 'Shankha'/ conchshell would yield the fruits of becoming a King and attaining Brahmaloka. \* Those that do not eat meat for a year and donate a cow and a golden deer's pratima at the end would get the fruit of performing Ashwamedha Yagna and becoming a King at the 'Kalpantha' and this is known as *Ahimsa Vrata*. \* If a person takes bath in the 'Brahma Muhurta' in Magha Month, prays to rising Sun and performs 'Brahmana Dampati Puja' by providing 'Bhojan'along with donation of Vastras and ornaments, that is called Surya Vrata and he is entitled with Suryaloka till 'Kalpaanta'. \* Vishnu Vrata has duration of four months from the beginning of Ashadha month till Kartika Purnima and its procedure is to worship Vishnu Deva commencing from 'pratahkaala snaana', daily puja to Vishnu Pratima by way of Pushpa, Gandha, Dhupa, Deepa and Naivedya and Brahmana Bhojana every day and Go-daana at the close of the Vrata; this Vrata bestows Vishnu loka.\*Those devoted persons who abstain from flowers and ghee from Uttarayana to Dakshinayana and at the end of the Vrata at the Uttarayana time, donate a cow to a Brahmana with 'pushpa malaas'/ flower garlands along with 'Khaadya Padaarthaas'/ sweets and savouries made of milk and ghee would accomplish Shivaloka; this is called Sheela Vrata which bestows 'Sushilata' / Excellent Manners and 'Neerogata' / Good health. \* Persons who give 'deepa daana' every evening for a year, give up oil and ghee items of food and at the end of a year donate golden chakra, Trishula, two Vastras and deepas become 'Tejaswis' or bright and brilliant and after their life attain Rudraloka and this is called *Deepa Vrata*. \* *Ishwara Vrata* is observed for a year from the beginning of Kartika Month to perform 'Nakta Vrata' or eating food only at the night and donate a cow at the end; this Vrata provides Kingship and the 'phala' of residing in Gauri loka till Kalpanta. \*Dhrudha Vrata involves abstinence of 'Sugandhas' or scented materials from Chaitra Month and gives up 'Gandha dharana' for a year and at the end of the Vrata donates a variety of scented material and vastras; those who observe the Vrata attain Varuna loka. \* Kanti Vrata bestows body radiance and brilliance of mind to the Karta of the Vrata who has to give up salt and flowers during Vaishakha month and at the close of the Vrata performs 'Godaana'; at the end of the Vrata, the Karta would achieve a position of royalty and fame during his on-going life and thereafter accomplish Vishnu loka. \*Those who

observe Brahma Vrata should prepare an Idol of 'Brahmaanda' (Universe) in gold and set it on a 'tila raashi', perform Agni homas for three days and organise meals to Brahmanas with til daanas, and on the fourth day execute Brahmana Dampati Puja while donating 'pushpamaalaas'/ flower garlands, vastras/ clothes and golden ornaments as also the Brahmanda Pratima in gold would attain Moksha and have no rebirth. \* Dhenu Vrata is performed by taking a little milk only for a full day and the next morning donate a 'dwi-mukhi pratima' (two faced idol) of a cow and calf with as much gold as possible to a Brahmana; this would impart the blessing of Moksha on 'punaraagamana rahit' or non-return to another life basis. \* Similarly, if a Karta carries out a three day long milk-consuming Payovrata and donates a golden Kalpa Vriksha / tree pratima on top of a heap of rice on the next day, he/she would achieve Brahmapada as a result of Kalpa Vrata. \*Those devotees who are 'niraahaars' without food and complete a month observing *Bhima Vrata* and donate a healthy cow to a Brahmana would possess right of entry to Vishnu loka.\* By executing *Dhara Vrata*, an individual takes milk once a day and next morning gives charity of a golden replica of Prithvi, he/she is allowed firm and lasting entry to Rudra loka. \* If a human being performs 'Gud-Dhenu daan'/ molasses-cow charity after keeping a 'guda vrata' either on Chaitra or Maagha Triteeya, that human being would attain Gauri loka and that is called Maha Vrata. \* Prabha Vrata requires 'nirahara'/ without food for a fortnight and donation of two 'kapila' cows thereafter; such a devotee who does so becomes worship-worthy by both Danavas and Devatas and is readily admitted into Brahmaloka and after one Kalpa becomes a Sovereign on Earth.\* If a person takes only one meal a day for a year and therafter provides a full-fledged bhojan with 'Shadrasas' or six courses of tastes to a Brahmana along with a big pot of water, this activity is called *Prapti Vrata* and the Karta would be destined to Shivaloka for a Kalpa time. \* Sugati Vrata is to be observed by fasting till the evening on every Ashtami day of a year and donates a cow at the conclusion of the Vrata and it entitles Indraloka after life. \* From Varsha Ritu (rainy season) for four Ritus onward, if cooking material is donated daily to a Brahmana, and at the end of the Vrata a cow is donated then the donor's sins are washed out and after death gets absorbed in Parabrahma; this is called Vaishvanara Vrata. \* If a day long fast is observed for a year on every Ekadashi and on the last Ekadashi evening a Brahmana is treated to a wholesome meal along with a golden Vishnu Chakra, the Krishna Vrata facilitates the donor to reach Vishnu loka and by the 'Kalpantara' enables the donor to become an Emperor, \*Eating 'Kheer' (milk and cooked rice /wheat grains) once a day for a year and donating two cows after the Vrata enables a person performing Devi Vrata to get prosperous in life and reach Lakshmi loka after life. \* Bhanu Vrata involves single bhojan on Saptami after sun-sets during a full year and provides charity of a healthy cow on the last Saptami after prayers to Surya Deva at the Sun-set time blesses the Karta with good health and Suryaloka prapti.\* For one full year on every Chaturthi if day-long 'Upavaas'is exercised and on the last Chaturthi donation of a golden elephant is given to a Brahmana, Vinayaka Vrata enables removal of obstacles in life and Shivaloka prapti there after. \* Phala Vrata involves avoidance of five fruits viz. bel fruit, jamun (Indian blackberry), ber (Indian jubub), kaith (wood apple) and seedy lemon for four months preceding Kartika Purnima and donation of the five fruit pratimas in gold and a cow, resulting in contentment in on-going life and Vishnuloka prapti after life.\* Soura Vrata entails fastings on Saptami days for a year and donation of a golden lotus, cow, potful of water, and Bhojana to a Brahmana on the last Saptami shall result in Surya loka prapti and great fame in the on-going life. \* Dwadashi Upavasas for a year and 'daanaas' of vastra, dhenu and suvarna help secure eventful and long healthy life and attainment of Vaikuntha after life in Vishnu Vrata. \* Nakta Vrata on Kartika Purnima as also 'Vrushotsarga' (release of a bull) is known as *Vaarsha Vrata*. \* Those perform Krucchrut- Chandrayana Vrata (increasing the daily meaures of food-units from Prathama to Purnima Tithis in Shukla paksha and decreasing the daily intakes from Prathama to Amavasya in Krishna paksha) and at the end of the month, provide Bhojana and dakshina to as many Brahmanas as possible is called Praajaapatya Vrata its punya would be such that the Karta is blessed with health and wealth on his life and Shilaloka later. \*Triayabaka Vrata is observed by fasting on all Chaturdashis till the nights for a year and providing go-daan at the close of the Vrata which secures Shivaloka prapti. \*Those performing day-long fasts till the nights and at the end of the week donates 'Ghata purna Ghrita' or pot-ful of ghee are stated as Ghrita Vrata kartas and their destiny after death would be Brahma loka.\* Whoever sleeps in the open during the Varsha Ritu or rainy season and at

the end of the Season donates a cow with calf shall be gifted with access to Indraloka to stay there for long time and this is called *Indra Vrata*. \*Persons not eating cooked items on Triteeya tithis for a year and concludes the Shreyo Vrata by Go-daan would reap excellent happiness and health and reach \* Without taking food till night, Ashwa Vrata is concluded after a year with Shivaloka after life. food and donation of a golden pratima of a chariot drawn by two horses to a Brahmana and this would yield the fruits of becoming a King in life and residence of several Kalpas in Satyaloka.\* Similar is the pattern of *Kari Vrata* of daily fasting for a year and donation of golden pratima of two elephants drawing a chariot to a Brahmana and the results would be simlar too. \* Observance of day-long 'upavasa' for a year and performing Go-daana at the end is called Sukha Vrata which would yield happines as long the Karta lives and later on would be in high position in Yakshaloka. \* If a person lives in water through out the night and performs Go-daana next morning, he / she would be eligible for Varunaloka and the task is known as Varuna Vrata. \* Chandraloka prapti is bestowed on a person practising Chandrayana Vrata or eating measured meals as per the Tithis of Shukla and Krishna Pakshas respectively and at the end donating a golden Pratima of Moon.\* *Maha Rudra Vrata* is practised by those who stay with Panchagnis around through out the day till the evenings of Jyeshtha Ashtami and Chaturdashi days and by the evening of the latter tithi make a donation of gold made cow would be ever contented in life and attain Swargaloka eventually. \* A person arranging silver work in a Shiva Temple on a Triteeya tithi and after a year executes Go-daan is blessed with entry in Bhavaniloka for the successful completion of Bhavani Vrata. \* Pavana Vrata involves any bhakta of Vayu Deva who keeps drenched wearing wet Vastras through out Magha Saptami night and donates a cow next morning after ablutions and bathing; such a person would become a King and a resident of Swara for a period of a Kalpa. \* Dhaama Vrata is observed a person who practises 'Upavaasa' for three nights and donates a beautiful house to a Brahmana on Phalguna Purnima day; that person is bestowed with opulence in the on-going life and Surya loka prapti thereafter. \* A fasting person who would perform 'Dampati Pujas' to Brahman couples three times a day in the morning, afternoon and evening with ornaments, vastras and gifts is stated to be executing more than *Indra Vrata* and eventually would be highly prosperous and happy in the on-going life and finally qualify for Moksha Prapti. \* There is a reputed Vrata in the name of Soma Deva called Soma Vrata and whosoever would perform this has to donate to a Brahmana a vessel full of salt in the name of the Deva on a Shukla Paksha Dwiteeya and at the end of a year make go-daana; the fruits of the Vrata are immense including contented and healthy life besides Shivaloka Prapti and Kingship on Prithvi by the Kalpantara. \* Maha Deva Vrata is observed on Pratipada Tithi by taking only one meal a day and at the end of a year donates a kapila cow, and then the person concerned would accomplish 'Vaishwanara loka'.\* Those who take a single meal a day commencing from Dashamis and after a year donate golden plaque depicting 'Dasa dishas'/ ten directions and ten cows to Brahmanas are stated to have successfully concluded the Vishwa Vrata and such persons attain great fame besides eventually becoming highly renowned 'Adhipatis' or Overlords of 'Brahmanda' (Universe). This Vrata destroys 'Maha Patakas' or the Those persons who read or listen about the afore-mentioned accounts of the SHASTHA Greatest Sins. VRATAS would indeed qualify for Gandharva Loka.

#### Yudhishtara's atonement of killings at Kurukshetra by Visit to Prayaga Kshetra

Nandikeshwara informed Brahmarshi Narada that Maharshi Markandeya pacified Yuddhishtara about the havoc created at the Maha Bharata Battle where eleven Akshouhinis of warriors fought from Kuru Vamsha and seven Akshouhinis from Pandavas and survivors were but a few and far between. There was such huge bloodshed and slaughter where brothers killed brothers, grand sons killed grandfathers, and nephews killed uncles. A person of Yudhishtara's virtuosity had to be a liar and fraud to announce 'Ashvatthhama hatah' loudly and whisper: 'Kunjarah' to let down his revered Guru Drona so that Arjuna could pierce his arrows into the Guru's body; and arranged Shikhandi to face Bhishma 'Pitamaha' who taught Pandava Kumaras to put their feet on the ground! Thus overwhelmed by extreme remorse and sense of shame, Yuddhistra wondered: *Katamo viniyogo vaa niyamam Tirthamevacha, Yenaaham sheeghramaa- munchey mahaa paataka kilimbhashaat/ Yatra sthitwa naroyaati Vishnuloka manutthamam/* (Is there a dispensation / atonement or a possible relief or Tirtha!). Maharshi Markandeya

replied: Shrunu Rajan Mahabaaho Sarva paataka naashanam, Prayaaga gamanam shreshtham naraanaam punyakarmanam/ (Dharma Raja! For all human beings, the most propitious deed would be to make a visit to Prayaga that would destroy all 'paatakas'. Prayaga is near Pratishthanapura (near Jhansi) which was in the days of yore a residing place of the famed Kambal and Ashvatara Nagas who were the descendants of Maha Naga Vasuki Deva and was also the illustrious Prajapati Kshetra known all over the Three Lokas of Prithvi, Patala and Swarga. It is believed that bathing at Prayaga Sangam-the Meeting Place of the Three Most Sacred Rivers of Ganga, Jamuna and Sarasvati- fetched the 'Punya' (Phala) of demolishing all the sins committed thus far, that those who died at this hallowed place would have no rebirth and that Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara were always present there to bless the devotees and keep vigil to protect the Kshetra. Indra too was ready to make sure they were no disturbances of Adhi Daivika, Adhyatmika and Adhibhoudhika nature. Surya Deva always kept a watchful vision, especially of his daughter Yamuna. Markandeya thus explained to Yudhishtara: Prayaagam smaramaanaasya sarvamaayaati sankshayam/ Darshanaat tasya teerthasya Nama sakeertanaadapi, Mrittikaalambhanaad vaapi narah paapaata pramuchyatey/ (At the very thought of Prayaga, its 'darshan'/ vision, 'naamasamkeertana' or the chanting of its hymns, and the smearing of the mud of its river-bed are all the means of obliterating wrong doings and crimes of the persons concerned). Even as one entered the Prayaga Kshetra, one would experience a vibration or an intense feeling of mental quiet and as one sights the River of Ganga, all the sins would fade out. At the point of Ganga-Yamuna -Sarasvati Sangam (confluence) if one took a dip, not only all the piccadillos would get washed out but whatever desires came to the top of one's mind would be fulfilled. When Pitru Tarpans and Shraddhas are dutifully performed at the Sangam, the responses of Devas and Pitrus would literally be on line instantly. It is believed that Bhagavans, Brahma, Shankara / Narayana are visioned before the devotees in the form of the Rivers! A stay of atleast a month at Prayaga with full control of body, mind and soul would lead to shaping one's own life ahead; little wonder that Devas, Danavas, Gandharvas, Rishis, Siddhaas, Chaaranas and all make frequent trips the Sangam for the fulfillment of their own wishes and prayers. Among those human beings, who are 'daridras' or born poor, or sufferers from long-drawn diseases and infirmities due to old age, if somebody happened to breath last in this Maha Kshetra, they would alight into 'Vimanas' destined to Swarga and enjoy the company of Gandharva and Apsaras. Also, when a person performs Go-daana, Bhu daana, Griha daana, Suvarna daana, Rajita daana, Mani daana, Dhana daana, Vastu daana, Kanya daana, Shayya daana, Vidya daana, Vahana daana, etc. he or she is qualifed with returns of thousand fold, lakh fold and crore fold, depending the index of the utility and happiness to the receiver of the daana and the sacrifice that the donor made in parting with the quality, quantity, numbers and of the daana under reference. Tatra daanam prakrutavyam yathaa vibhava sambhavam, tena teertha phalam chaiva vardhatey naatra samshayah/ Swargey tishthati Rajendra yaavadaabhuta (Charity in Prayaga has to be according to the means of the donor; if done so the benefits would get multiplied and the donor would continue to reside in Swarga till the Pralaya time, undoubtedly). If Kanya daan is performed at Prayaga as per Vedic Rites, the Kartas would never have to visit 'Naraka' and on the other hand the couple would live for long with happiness and excellent progeny of grand children for ensuing generations too. Even at the time of 'Pralaya', Maharshi Markandeya conveyed to Yudhishtar, then too Bhagavan Vishnu would take the Form of an infant and rest in Yoga Nidra (Yogic Sleep) atop an 'Akshaya Vriksha' in Prayaga submerged in endless water; such is the Mahatmya of Prayaga. That was the reason why even Brahma, Devas, Rishis, Siddhaas, Chaaranas, Lokapalakas, Sadhya ganas, Pitru Devas, Sanaka and other Parama Rishis, Angira and other Maharshis and Brahmarshis, Nagaas, Garuda, and all other Celestial Beings, and above all Vishnu and Maheswara had been extolling the unimaginable significance of this unparalelled Punya Kshetra. Tatraabhishekam yah kuryaat Sangamey shaamsitavratah, Tulyam phalamavaapnoti Rajasuyaashwamedhayoh/ (Those persons with 'Vrata nishtha' or abiding by the Vrata bathe in this Sangama Kshetra, would secure the fruits equivalent to performing Rajasuya and Ashwamedha Yagnas). Yaa gatiryoga yuktasyasatyasthasya maneeshinah, saa gatistasyajatah praanaan Gangaayamuna sangamey/ (Persons who die at the Ganga-Yamuna Sangam would have the same kind of 'Parama gati'or unique position that only 'Yoga Nishta'/Experts in Yoga or Satyaparayana Vidwans /Great Persons of Learning and Truthfulness) could

think of). Further, those who had not visited Prayaga wasted their valuable lives and those who had would have their sins abandoned like Rahugraha left Chandragraha after Lunar Eclipse! Incidentally, formal bathings in the 'Sangam'after Lunar or Solar Eclipses by prayers to Moon and Sun respectively should not only wash off their sins instantly but also reside in the respective lokas for unimaginably long times. At Prayaga, all the Trimurthis are believed to reside, since Brahma stays in the northern portion of the five yojana long Kshetra in a hidden form to ensure that wrongdoings are forestalled as watched by teams of Devas under his supervision; Bhagavan Vishnu is present in the Sangam area in the Venee Madhava Rupa and Parama Shiva in the Form of Akshaya Vriksha. In the neighbourhood of Prayaga are quite a few other Tirthas: on the southern banks of Yamuna where two famed Nagas called Kambal and Ashvatar resided and taking that water and bathing it is expected to destroy all the sins of the Yatris; there is a 'Hamsaprapatan' on the northern side of Pratishthana pura where bathing fetches the punya of performing Ashwamedha Yagna; 'Hamsapandura' Tirtha where bathing enables at the end of life to reach Swarga for the company of Apsaras like Urvashi; another Tirtha known as 'Tripathaga' where bathing as long as possible would enable so many bones of the body to rest in Swarga. In fact, the Tirthas nearby this hallowed Place are all significant, each bestowing great benefits. Fully convinced of the significance of Prayaga Kshetra as described by Markandeya, Yudhishtar visited the Place along with his brothers and Draupadi, where he performed 'Tarpanas' to Pitaras, and relatives and associates who attained 'Vira Swarga' at the battle. With surprisingly, Lord Shri Krishna too appeared before Pandavas and asserted: Mama vaakyam cha kartavyam Maharaja braveemyaham, Nityam japaswa juhwaswa Payaago vigatajwarah/ Prayaagam smara vai nityam sahaasmaabhir yudhishtarah, Swayam Praapyati Rajendra Swarlakokam na Samshayah/ Prayagamanu -gaccheda vaa vasatey vaapi yo narah, Sarva paapa Vishuddhaatmaa Rudralokakamsa gachati/ (Yudhishtara! you should always perform 'japa' and 'havan' at Prayaga and side by side, take the name of Prayaga devoid of any sorrows whatsoever. Undoubtedly indeed, you would all reach in Swarga in course of time. Those who visit Prayaga and reside for a few days there would certainly get rid of all kinds of transgressions and attain Rudraloka!)

# Tripurasuras harass Trilokas and Maha Deva destroys Tripuras

As the ever shrewdest and the nastiest Daitya called Maya commenced his brutal Tapasya, two more Danavas of equal disrepute and desperation viz. Vidyunmali and Taraka joined him and their extreme tenacity was such that they meditated in snow valleys during high winter nights, amid 'Panchagnis' during blood blister summer days and during incessant and torrential rains standing under open skies. It looked that Earth trembled with the severity of their meditation and Brahma had to bestow the choice boons of indestructibility except by Parameswara that too by a single arrow-shot destroying their abodes together. The most noted top architect and builder that he was, Mayasura built 'Tripuras'/ three Tower Castles-each of hundred yojanas- one of indestructible iron on Earth, another on the Sky made of shining silver and the third above the second one made of glittering gold, all encased in inner- castle structures of same size of circumference but each invisible from outside in all directions. Each of the Tripuras is equipped with 'yantras'/ machines that could destroy hundreds in each shot, Chakras, Trishulas, Dhwajas on the high wall structures, and 'Shikharas' (minarets) recognisable through the mountain tops of Meru and Mandarachala. These 'Puras' were insurmountable, let alone destructible to Devas, Danavas and any other species, excepting Maha Deva! Daithyas had very contented lives inside the Tripuras. Devas and other Celestial Beings were thrown out of their abodes and all the luxuries and joys of Swarga were confiscated. In course of time, the inhabitants of Tripuras became intolerable, awfully sinful, corrupt, wicked and highly immoral. While Maya Daitya was kept busy in the deeds of beauty, living comfort and pressing into the services of Devas as their servants to cater to the happiness of the inhabitant Daityas, Vidyunmali was kept busy with matters of Internal Administration and Taraka was made commander in Chief. In course of time, there came inevitable internal dissensions, group politics, differences of living styles and class-distinctions, 'Alakshmi' (poverty), 'Asuya' (jealousy), Trishna (avarice), 'Vibhuksha' (hunger), Kali and Kalaha (quarrels) among the residents of the Tripuras. This situation of 'Alakshmi' led

to 'Atyaachaaras' or transgressions on Devas, other Celestial Beings, Maharshis, the entire humanity and all other species of Lord's creation. The canker spread across the 'Tribhuvanas' and Devas sought refuge from Brahma who gave the boons to the three goons! Lord Brahma pacified the delegation of Devas and assured that the heinous and wildly vicious deeds of the Trio of Daityas reached a climax and that it was time to approach Parama Shiva who was the one and only Saviour that could destroy the abodes of the three Daityas in one go with one arrow, even if these residences were far apart from each other on Prithvi, Akaash and far beyond in the strong-hold Tripura fortresses! As Devas and Brahma reached Maha Deva, they visioned 'Trishulapaani Shankar' relaxing with Devi Parvati and Mahatma Nandi. They saw that 'Bhuta bhavishya Swami'whose eyes were red like 'Agni kundas'and physique was shimmering with thousand Suns with a pleasant countenance ornamented with a Bala Purna Chandra, even as Devas broke down into ecstacy and extolled him as follows: Namo bhavaaya Shravaya Rudraaya Varadaayacha, Pashuunaam Pataye Nityam ugra -ayacha Kapardiney/ (Our reverences to you the Creator and Preserver of Srishti; the Annihilator of the Universe; the life-line of all the Beings; the provider of welfare to 'Pranis'; Ugra or the seniormost among the Ekadasha Rudras and 'Jatajuta dhari'!) Mahadevaya Bheemaaya Triyambakaya cha Shaantaye, Ishaanaaya Bhayaghnaaya namaswandhaka ghatiney/ (The Supreme of Devas, the awesome, Trinetraya/ the Three Eyed Deity - the Junior most of Eleven Rudras; the Embodiment of Peace, The highest Administrator, the Destroyer of Terror and the Exterminator of Andhakaasura); Neelagreevaya Bhimaya Vedhasey Vedhataastutey, Kumara Shatru nighnaaya Kumaara janakaayacha/(The blue-necked; the frightener, Brahma Swarupa, the Praised one by every body, the destroyer of the Enemies of Kartikeya, and the illustrious father of Kumara) Vilohitaaya Dhumraaya Varaaya Krathanaaya cha, Nityam neela shikhandaaya Shuliney Divyashaayiney/ (The Red and Ashcoloured, the Protector of the Universe, the Maker of Pralaya, the unique one with blue course-hair, the carrier of Trishula, the one immersed in Celestial Nidra) Uragaaya Trinetraaya Hiranyavasu -retasey, Achintyaambikaa Bhartrey Sarva devaastutaayacha/ (Sarvadhaari, the Three-Eyed Bhagavaan, the ultimate of gold and opulence, the inconceivable, the husband of Ambika, who is eulogized by all Devas) Budhadhwajaaya Mundaaya Jatiney Brahma -chariney, Tapyamaanaaya sasiley Brhahmanyaajitaayacha/ (The one with hoisted Bull-flag, Munda dhaari, Jataadhaari, Brahmachari, he who meditates inside water bodies, the devotee of Brahmanas, and the invincible); Vishwatmaney Vishwasrujey Vishwama -avruttya tishthatey, Namostu Divya rupaaya Prabhavey Divyashambhavey/ (The Supreme Soul of the Universe, the Super Creator, the All-Pervading Authority, the Highest Form of Sanctity, the Most Capable, and the Epitome of Auspiciousness) Abhigamyaya Kaamyaaya Stutayaacharya Sarvadaa, Bhakta -anukampiney Nityam dishatey yanmanogatam/ (Our salutations to the Ultimate Haven and Refuge, the Most Charming, the most extolled, the Unique source of Kindness and the bestower of desires).

Having pleased Parama Shiva thus, Devas explained the gravity and seriousness of the crisis created by the Tripura Daityas who not only unseated and tormented Devas and Celestial Entities but were also sending shock-waves all over the Universe, humiliating Sages, frightening women and children, making mass-scale carnage and blood bath of humanity and uprooting Dharma and age-old Values and Principles. Parameshwara infused confidence into the demoralised Devas and asked them to construct an exceptional chariot with unique specifications: Prithvi as the Ratha / Chariot, Meru and Mandara Mountains as axles, Surya and Chandra as Chakras made of gold and silver respectively, the Four Vedas of Ruk-Yajur-Sama and Atharva acted as the horses; Shukra, Brihaspati, Budha, Mangal, and Shanaischara seated on the Ratha ready to charge; the famous serpents viz. Takshaka, Karkotaka, Dhanajaya and Padmadwaya acted as the strings which were tied to the horses; most poisonous snakes like Surasa, Devashuni, Sarama, Kadru, Vinata, Shuchi, Trusha, and Bubhuksha were used as arrows; Mrutyu, Brahmahatya, Gohatya, Balahatya and Prajaabhaya were loaded on the Chariot so that they get activised as maces; Omkara and Vashatkara were the symbols on the Ratha; Sinivali, Kuhu, Raaka and Anumati - the 'Adhishtana'/ in charge Deities of Chaturdashi, Amavasya, Suddha Purnima, Pratipadika Purnima respectively were used as auxiliary strings to the horses; the dhanush made of six 'ritus'/ seasons which is safeguarded by Devi Ambika herself never to be broken; the specific arrow with which to kill the Tripurasura was strengthened by Vishnu, Soma and Agni and its head propelled by Agni and Chandra by its rear and Vishnu Maya

smeared all over; and the extreme poison of Nagaraja Vasuki was loaded to ensure stability and speed of the arrow; Vayu was made in charge of the high velocity of the Chariot and finally Brahma was the Charioteer and Sesha Naag was made in charge of the personal security of Brahma as also of the Chariot. Yama Raja with his buffalo, Kubera on his serpent, Indra on Iravata, Ganeswara by his Mushika Vahana, Karikeya on his Peacock, Nandeshwara with his Shula running behind and sides of the Ratha were in full preparedness. Maharshis Bhrigu, Bharadwaja, Vasishtha, Goutama, Kratu, Pulastya, Pulaha, Marichi, Atri, Angira, Parashara, and Agastya were there too at the kick-start of the Battle to recite Veda Vachanas and Shiv Stutis. The Pramatha ganas were ready to charge as the army against the opponents- all swarmed around the Rath. Meanwhile, Sage Narada reached the Tripuras and tried his best to mend his ways, give back Indrapuri to Devas and avoid the worst ever battle in which the indestructible Tripuras would be destroyed along with the Three Demons as Maha Deva himself was approaching these Places with full preparation. Instead of talking peace, the Demons alerted their vast armies, and prepared for turning their defensive positions to that of an offence. On the instruction of Shankara Deva, Indra took his enormous army and attacked Tripura. As the Deva Sena made a highly offensive assault in full force, what with the revenge and frustration experienced by them for long as they were out of power as also owing to the excellent backing of Maheswara, they seized the best part of Tripuras. While quite a few Danavas sought to escape for their lives through the exit gates of Tripuras, Pramatha ganas calculated that the enemies would try to sneek out at those points and buchered thousands of Danavas. The remaining Danavas inside the Trinagaris were utterly confused by contradictoy shouts that Taraka died or Shiva was defeated. In that melee, a srong contingent of Danavas quickly regrouped their men and material to make offensive attacks under the leadership of Vidunmali and Maya. Ganeswara divided Tripuras in three regions as Nandeswara was attacking Vudyunmali, while he was in position against Maya. Meanwhile, Vidyunmali threw a 'Parigha' on Nandi who was hurt and the enraged three 'Parshadaganas' named Ghantaakarna, Shankukarna and Mahakaal retaliated; they assumed the Forms of Ganeswara and assailed Vidyunmali by making the roars of lions. Even while the Parswaganas were about to leap on Vidyunmali, the hurt Nandikeswara hurled a Rudra Shakti on the demon who fell down like a mountain. There was utter silence among Danavas who were stunned and retreated. But, the highly cunning and crafty Mayasura chased the Ganas of Ganeshwara to divert attention of his own men from the fallen Vidyunmali to the Ganesha ganas. Mayasura created rains of Agni, crocodiles, snakes, huge mountains, lions, tigers, trees, black deers, eight-legged 'Sharabhas' / a species of oversized deer, torrential rain and powerful sand storms. As Taraka came into the battle field, Devas too appeared in full force, including Yamaraja, Varuna, Bhaskara, Kartikeya heading a Deva Sena of a Crore, with Indra, Shanaishchara, Chandra, and Rudras. The 'Maayavi' Mayaasura created several Wells full of herbal juices for envigoration and Danavas were in high spirits as their body strength increased manifold. But Keshava took the form of 'Vrishabha' and drank up the juice along with Devas and dried up the wells and Devas occupied the Tripuras finally. Mayasura and other Daityas were forced to hide in the Sea. That was the decisive moment when there was an all-out battle on the seashores. Shankara divided the 'Tridevamaya' arrow into three parts and released it when Tripuras were destroyed; Shiva felt sad however that one of his own dear devotees, Mayasura too was involved. Nandi went faster than the arrow and saved Maya, well before the Tripuras were destroyed. In the end Taraka and Vidyunmali were killed and Maya was condoned with the curse of Indra that all his constructions would be burnt off eventually and Mayasura continued to hide in the Seas.

# 'Skandopaakhyaana' (The Chapter on Skanda)

Brahma Manasa Putra Prajapati Dhaksha married Veerini and they were blessed with sixty daughters; of these daughters, ten were married to Dharma, thirteen to Maharshi Kashyapa, twenty seven to Chandra Deva, four to Arishtanemi, two to Bahuka and two to Krushaswa. Kashyapa's wives were Aditi, Diti, Danu, Vishwa, Arishta, Surasa, Surabhi, Vinata, Taamra, Krodhavasha, Ira, Kadru and Muni. Aditi begot Devendra, Upendra, Surya and all Devatas. Diti gave birth to Hiranyakashipu and innumerable Daityas.

Danu gave birth to Danavas; Surabhi the cows and other animals; Vinata the birds like Garuda; Kadru the Nagas and other repitles; and so on. As Devas and Daityas developed mutual hatred and enemity, there had been periodical battles and each time Daityas defeated and occupied Swarga for long spells of time, Devas with the help of Narayana were regaining Swarga again and there had been as a result mass killings of Daityas and Devas had been enjoying the last laugh! Diti was unable to bear this let-down time and again. Kashyapa Muni taught to perform a severe Vrata which she performed meticulously for thousand years and after some time got pregnant. Indra came to know the purpose of Diti's Vrata viz. to bless her to conceive a boy who could terminate Indra and Devas, Indra ultilised his powers / Siddhis of Anima and Parakaya; entered her womb and cut the foetus with the help of his Vjrayudha seven times making seven slices from each of the seven parts thus making forty nine 'Marudganas'. After this tragic end, Diti once again prayed to Kashyapa to grant her a son who was indestrcutible even by a Vajra and as result of ten thousand years of Tapasya there was a mighty Daitya called Vajranga was born to Diti. As per Diti's instruction Vajranga brought Indra imprisoned to his mother. But Brahma and Kashyapa asked Vajranga to release Indra by saying: Apamaano Vadhah proktah Putra Sambhaavitasyacha, Asmadvaakyena yo mukto viddhitam mrutamevacha/ (Son! Respectable personalities like Indra ought to feel humbled and humiliated; hence release Indra on my instruction.). Brahma also created Varangi so that Vajranga would wed her. Brahma instructed the couple to perform Tapasya in dfficult situations, some times by raising hands, sometimes sitting with Panchagnis around, sometimes sitting in deep waters and invariably without food and even water. Finally, the couple was blessed with a mighty and unique son, named Tarakasura. Fully understanding the purpose of his birth which his parents had strived for after performing thousands of years of Tapasya as also to fulfill the singular ambition of his grand mother to destroy Indra and Devas, Tarakasura took a vow at a grand conference of Daityas and Danavas-the descendents of Diti and Danu- and proceeded to Paritraya Parvat (the western side of Aravali and Vindhya mountain range and observed strict Tapasya during hundred year time-slots by rotation by way of 'Niraahaara' (without food), Panchagni (in the midst of Five huge Fire bodies) in sizzling summers, 'Jala madhya' inside in chilled running water in the worst winter nights, eating only fallen dry leaves, etc. Brahma had no option but to present himself and ask for his boons. He bargained of absolute invincibility and deathlessness but finally agreed that only a seven days long boy could kill him, if at all! Not far from the day when Brahma bestowed the boons, Tarakasura redesigned and reformed his lines of Military Forces and attacked Indraloka. A long-drawn and ferocious Devasura-Daitya ensued when there was considerable blood-shed in either side, Danayeswara Grasan and Yama Dharma Raja, Jambha and Kubera, Durjaya and Varuna, Mahishasura and Chandra, Kalanemi and Surya were the prominent opponents. As it looked that Devas were at the moment of collapse under the leadership of Tarakasura, Lord Vishnu sat on Garuda Deva and alighted on the battle field. All the Asura-leaders surrounded Vishnu and rained Astras against him in one go; Kalanemi shot sixty arrows, Nimi hundred arrows, Mathan fired eighty arrows, Jambhaka seventy, Shumbha ten powereful Astras, and many others as many as they could at just one target, viz. Narayana. Bhagavan Vishnu responded to all these arrows and shot severally and on one-to-one basis. The battle continued on and on; inspired by Vishnu Deva, Indra regrouped Deva Sena by strenghening patches and enlarging the volumes of the Deva Sena by recalling Yakshas, Gandharvas, and Kinnaras who brought their own powerful weapons. Vishnu called up for the assistance of Ekadasha Rudras viz. Kapali, Pingala, Bheema, Virupaksha, Vilohita, Ajesha, Shasana, Shasta, Shambhu, Chanda and Dhruva. The Rudra Swarupas dominated the battle field by annihilating thousands of Daityas. Maha Daitya Gajasura was torn into pieces and his skin was draped over the body of Kapila Rudra the Daityas made 'hahaakaaras' when they ran helter-skelter. Indra attacked Daitya Nimi and thumped his chest with his 'Vajraayudha'. At the humilation of the death of Gajasura by Rudra, Jambhasura challenged Indra and after a fearful skirmish, Lord Indra shot Brahmastra and the Daitya was killed instantly. But fully armed by the boon of invincibility, the end result was that Tarakasura over powered Devas, Vishnu was indeed aware of the boon to Tarakasura and withdrew from the battle and the defeated Indra and Devas were dislodged from Swarga.

Indra and Devas reached Satyaloka to seek Brahma's help and the latter predicted that soon the King of Himachala would be blessed with a daughter named Parvati who would be married to Parama Shiva and the couple woud beget a child named Skanda; that boy after attaining seven days should kill Tarakasura. Brahma further told Devas that meanwhile they would have to be patient and that he had already chalked out action plans till the objective was achieved. Having assured Devas thus, Brahma called for Devi Vibhavari (Ratri Devi) and briefed her that Shiva's earlier wife Sati Devi had immolated herself as she could not control her emotions arising out of her own father's (Daksha Prajapati) misdeeds of insulting Bhagavan Shiva, that the latter avenged Sati's self-immolation by destroying Daksha Yagna and Daksha and that Shiva was at the moment not in a mood to remarry but that the Sacred Wedding between him and Devi Parvati was of top urgency since the child of their union could save the entire universe as their son could only kill Tarakasura as per the boons that the Demon secured. The instruction of Brahma to Devi Vibhavari therefore was as follows: Virahokanthitaa gaadham Hara sangama laalasaa, Tayoh sutapta tapasoh samyogah swaacchhubaananey/ Garbhastaaney cha tanmaatruhu swena ruupena rajjaya/ (As both the 'Tapaswinis' would be tempted to unite with each other, she should enter Devi Parvati's 'garbha' and imprint Shiva Deva's manly image there). Then the virility so discharged would be carried by Agnideva and the Sarovara's reefs that would carry the drops would help Krittikas to bring up the boy from the spills-over of Shiva's virility; Devi Parvati would then retire to bed and would know only later that she gave birth to a boy. In the action plan, the next step as devised by Indra was to stimulate Shankara with feelings of romance and to create favourable situations around; indeed Kamadeva was able to succeed momentarily but when Shiva understood the game plan; Manmatha was burnt

into ashes by Shiva's 'humkar' followed by the opening of third eye in a split-second!

Devi Rati was stunned at the sudden turn of events, since she felt that the Act of Madana Kumara was to usher in propitiousness and happiness as the worst menace of three Lokas would be rid of by the end of Tarakasura, pursuant to Shiva- Parvati's wedding and the hastening of their son's auspicious birth. Unfortunately, her husband became the victim, for no fault of his, as the entire drama was enacted by Indra Deva, who too could not be blamed since each step in Lord Brahma's Action Plan was for the great advantage of the Universe as a whole. She stooped down at her husband's ash-heap and while crying incessantly prayed to Bhagavan Shiva as follows: Namah Shivaayaastu Niraamayaaya Namah Shivayaayastu Manomayaya/ Namah Shivaayaastu Suraarchitaaya, Tubhyam Sadaa Bhakta Kripaaparaaya/ Namo Bhayaayaastu Bhayodbhayaaya, Namostu tey Dhwasta mano bhayaaya/ Namostutey goodha mahaa yrataaya, Namostu Maaya Gahanaashrayaya/ Namostu Sharyaaya Namah Shivaaya, Namostu Siddhaaya Puraatanaaya/ Namostu Kaalaaya Namah Kalaaya, Namostutey Jnaana vara prasaadaaya/ Namostutey Kaalakalatigaaya, Namo Nisargaamala bhushanaaya/ Namostvameyaandhaka mardakaaya, Namah Sharanyaaya Namo gunaaya/ Namostutey Bheemaganaanugaaya, Namostu Nanaa bhuvanenakartrey/ Sarvaavasaaneyhyavi naasha netrey, Namostu Naanaa Jagatey Vidhhaatrey, Namostu tey Chitra phala Prayoktrey/ Namostu Bhaktaabhimata pradaatrey, Namah sadaa teybhava sanga hatrey/ Ananta rupaaya sadaiva tubhyamasya kopaaya namostu tubhyam/ Shashaanka chihnaaya sadaiva tubhya mameya maanaaya namah stutaaya/ Vrishendrayaanaaya Puraantakaaya, Namah prasiddhaaya Mahoushadhaaya/ Namostu Bhaktyaabhimata pradaaya, Namostu Sarvaarti haraaya tubhyam/ Charaachara vichaaravarya maachaaryamutprekshita bhutasargam/ Twaamindu moulim sharanam prapanna Priyaaprameyam mahataam Mahesham/ Prayacchamey kaamayashah samruddhim, Punah Prabho jeevatu Kamadevah/Priyam binaa twaam Priya jeeviteshu, Twattoparah ko bhuvaneshwahaasti/ Prabhuh Priyaayaah prasavah priyaanaam, Praneetaparyaaya paraparaarthah/ Twameyvameko Bhuvanasyanaatho Dayaalurnmeelita bhakabheetih/

(Parama Shiva! My salutations to you; you are the Spotless; the mental reflection of all the Beings; worshipped by all the Devas always; the epitome of kindness to the devotees; the Supreme Creator of the World; you burnt up Kamadeva, my husband and my deferential apologies to you for the diturbance

caused when you were in a confidential Vrata. Kindly accept my devotion since you do protect those and who take refuge as they become victims of the forests of 'Maya'; You are the Punisher as well as the Provider of Propitiousness; the Kala Swarupa / Appraiser of Time as also of Achievements since you are the Supreme Gyani / with the knowledge of those who transgress limits of time; You are the Form of Nature and the Wearer of Sacred and Untainted Ornaments; You possess spontaneous Might and destroy Evil Forces like Andhakaraasura; the Nirguna devoid of features and the point of ultimate refuge; You are the Creator of several Worlds and the Scripter of many Universes; the bestower of multiple benefits, the patented destroyer at the time of Pralayas as also the saviour of a few Beings at such extreme situations; the Enjoyer of the due 'Yagnaphala' which is liberally distributed to devotees; the demolisher of worldly desires; you possess myriad forms but your anger is unbridled; you are the coolness of Moon, the Symbol of self-esteem, the eulogy to all, the carrier of Nandi, the obliterator of Tripuras, the Source of 'Aushadhis'/ medicines, the donor of desires, the remover of all difficulties, the Ultimate Regulator of 'Acharas' Vichaaras' traditions and customs; The 'Acharya' or the Unique Guide to the Moving and Immobile Object; The Over Seer of the entire Srishti; the Provider of Coolness and radiance to the Moon of his head; the Unparalelled Personification of Pure Love, Maheshwara! do kindly bestow everlasting fame and name to my husband Kama Deva with which he would get back to life; You are the one and only Saviour who could bring blossoms to his ashes; who else in the Universe could be competent to get my husband back to Life!). Pleased by the 'Stuti' of Rati Devi, Maha Deva cooled down from his anger and pacified her to assure that she would secure her husband back after some time and would be popularly called 'Ananga'. Disturbed by the happenings that happened as Kama Deva was burnt by Maha Deva and Devi Rati's distress, Devi Parvati was rather disllusioned and decided to proceed to perform Tapasya, Her father gave her encouragement and said: Umeti Chapaley Putri! na kshamam taavakam vapuh, Sodhum klesha swaruupascya Tapasah Soundarya darshiney/ (My daughter, you are too restless; 'U'-stands for THIS and MA-stands for: 'do not do this'; in other words: 'you do not have to perform 'Tapasya'; Your slender and tender body is not capable of withstanding Tapasya). As Himavan was pleading to his daughter not to think of Tapasya thus, there was a Celestial Voice (Akasha vaani) addressed to Himavaan which asserted that Parvati should not think in terms of Tapasya; Umetinaama tey naasyaa Bhuvaneshu Bhavishyati, Siddhim cha Murtimatyashey Saadha vidhyanti chintitaam/ (Himaraja! what you uttered was that your daughter was really 'Chanchala' or highly unsteady and wavering; in the entire Universe her name shall be everlasting and would always be bestowing boons to the fulfillment of her 'Bhaktas').

Indra Deva who was anxious to take further steps in expediting Shiva-Parvati's wedding, called up the illustrious Sapta Rishis to ascertaining the mind of Devi Parvati by visiting her personally and once convinced to visit Parama Shiva too to find out his inclination too. The Chief Negotiators were thus engaged in the delicate task which however had to be given a soft and swift push; they reached Parvati first and presented to her a negative picture of Shiva stating that he was perhaps not an appropriate candidate befitting her beauty and grace and that she might as well seek of another 'greater' and more presentable and qualified husband; they argued that he was a semi-clad, uncouth, funnily dressed, resident of 'Smashaanas' / grave yards, kapala dhari / wearer of skulls, bhikshukh / mendicant, with frightening eyes, apparently looking mentally unsound! Devi Parvati was rather annoyed and even surprised at the opinions expressed by the Sapta Rishis of their popular standing and affirmed: Naaham Bhadraah kileycchaami Rutey Sharvaat Pinaakinah, Sthitamcha taaratamyena Praaninaam paramam twidam/ Dheebalai –shvaryakaaryaadi pramaanam mahataam mahat, Yasmaatra kinchitaparam sarvey yasmaat pravartatey/Yasvaishwaryamanaadyantam tamahamsharanam gataa, Eshamey Vyaavasaayascha deerghoti vipareetakah/ (Bhadra Purusha Saptarshis! I am not at all ready to wed any unsteady and pettyminded entities, excepting Pinakadhari Shankara Maha Deva; despite what might be described about the greatness of other suitors, I am most emphatically anchoring my hopes on him, as he is the most certainly outstanding Maha Purusha, whose might, mind and magnificence are unparalelled. This unflinching resolution of mine might look odd to you; you may either concede or quit!). As the Saparshis heard Devi Parvati, they were overjoyed; they said they were only testing her resolve before approaching Maha Deva to sound his mind. May this determination of yours be fulfilled soon! After all, how could the radiance of

Surva be without Surva! How could the sparkle of a diamond be without the diamond! How could the meaning of 'Aksharas' (letters / alphabet) be detached from their 'meaning/ implication'! Similarly how Devi Parvati could be disconnected from Maha Deva! So saying, the Saptarshis proceeded to Himalaya Mountain peak to meet Parama Shiva to sound him on the subject of the most auspicious wedding of Shiva-Parvati. They met the Veeraka the Dwarapalaka and sensitised him about the purpose of their visit and in course of time, Bhagavan met the Saptarshis. The latter being an Omniscient he said: Jaaney loka vidhhanasya Kanyaa satkaarya mutthamam, Jaataa praaleya shailasya samketaka nirupanaah/ (I am aware that for the welfare of the whole world, the role of this damsel is quite significant; she is the daughter of Himavaan and you are desirous of proposing her for this task). Satya mutktah kanthitaah sarvey Deva kaaryaarthamudyataah, Teshaam twaranti chetaamsi kinthu kaaryam vivakshitam/ (This is indeed true that there has been considerable enthusiasm and haste, yet there would be some slow down in completing the task). Lokayaatraanugantavya viseshana vichakshanaihi, Sevantey they yato Dharma tat pramaanaayaat parey sthitaa/ (The Vidwans would do well in properly following the formalties and the established traditions of 'Dharma', since this action plan would constitute a regular standard to the posterity). The implication of what Maha Deva stated was fully understood by Sapta Rishis and they left to the Palace of Himavanta instantly. They conveyed to Himavanta and his wife Mena the exciting news of Maha Deva's implicit consent to offer himself as the bridegroom to Devi Parvati. Mena said that normally the parents of the bride would propose an alliance but the bridegroom proposed instead! Anyhow, she asked that they might as well approach Parvati directly. The Rishis replied that the ground was already prepared and Parvati was in fact performing Tapasya only to accomplish Shiva's hand. In any case, they would approach her as a formality and in response, Parvati terminated her Tapasya and came back home. Parvati felt so anxious that the previous night before the wedding preparations commenced was like ten thousand long nights. Next morning at the 'Brahma Muhurta, the propitious acts were initiated; the 'Shadritus' or the Six Seasons arrived; Vayu Deva and Varuna Deva took up the cleaning operations of the huge mountain range to receive the Wedding Guests; Devi Lakshmi set various arrangements including the golden and silver vessels required; Chitamani and many other jewels were spread all over; Kalpa Vriksha and Kamadhenu were pressed into service; all kinds of 'Aoushadhis', 'Rasaayans', and 'Dhatus' turned up to be of use in the food preparations.

There at the 'Gandhamaadana' Mountain range, assemblies of Maha Munis, Nagas, Yakshas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras started hotting up. Brahma intiated the make-up of Parama Shiva and for a start, combed the 'Jatajutas'/ the coarse hair and set the position of 'Chandra Khanda' right; Devi Chamunda decorated a big 'kapaala' on one side of Shiva's broad head and said that once a son was born from the wedding, the latter should fill up the skull with the blood of Tarakasura and gift that Kapala to her to enjoy the drink! Vishnu arrived with a golden 'Kirita ('head gear) studded with 'Nava Ratnas' and well-ornamented with live snakes which added to the luster of the 'Sarpa Manis' on the heads of the snakes; Indra arrived in haste with the 'Gaja Charma'/ Elephant Skin and draped it on the body of Shiva; Lord Vayu took over the charge of Nandeswara and took great pains to swathe a gold-laced white silk bejewelled with nine gems decorated on the back to make a cushioned seat on which Maha Deva could be seated comfortably; 'Loka Sakshis' (Ready Universal Evidences) Surya, Chandra and Agni Devas lit up the 'Three Netras'/Three Eyes with renewed radiance and radiation and garnished them with dark clouds as eye-tex; Preta Raja Yama Deva embellished Shiva's broad forehead with 'Chita bhasma' in three straight lines and ornamented his fore arms and wrists with strings of human bones; Kubera gifted invaluable jewellery made of nine gems studded in pure gold worn along with a heap of live and hissing snakes, while Varuna brought special 'Kundalas'/Ear rings with coiled Vasuki and Taksha serpents.

As the bride groom got ready and sat comfortably on Nandeswara, the procession commenced with firm and dignifiedly slow steps and Bhu Devi was in shivers with each step of Nandeswara carrying the Supreme Lord of Trilokas, and behind him were Vishnu, Brahma, Indra, Dikpalakas, the Nava Grahas, Devas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Pramatha Ganas and so on each with their wives, unless they had already reported to duty at the bride's Palaces. Veerak, the Dwarapalaka of Maha Deva, in the lead was addressing hoarse the surging crowds ahead of the 'Ratha' to make way and let it pass; after all, when

Maha Deva was himself moving ahead, could any one in the hysteric mass of humanity resist the temptation of catching a glimspe of Bhagavan! Behind the Dignitaries following the procession were the celebrations of singing Gandharvas, dancing Apsaras, and the tuneful Kinnaras, further followed by Maharshis, Sages and Brahmanas reciting Vedas and Sacred Hymns. The whole Universe was charged with myriad emotions as the groom's party arrived at the bride's palace.

At the 'Kalyana Mandapa', the Parvarta Raja Himavan was in a state of dazed ecstacy since Parama Shiva himself was his son-in-law. *Pranateynaachalendrena* 

Pujitotha Chaturmukhah, Chakaara vidhinaa Sarvam Vidhimantra purah saram/ (Parvata Raja performed puja with respects to Brahma and with the full course of formal Mantras, the wedding was celebrated in tradition and dignity); Sharveyna Paanigrahana maagneena saakshikamakshatam, Daataa Mahibhrutaam Natho hotaa Devaschaturmukhah/ Varah Pashupati Saakshaat Kanyaa Vishaaranistathaa (Then Parama Shiva wedded Parvati with Agni Saakshi or in the presence of Agni, when Daata / donor was Himavaan, Brahma as Hota (the Head Priest), Shiva as the bride groom and bride as Aranibhuta Devi Parvati.). Devas were extremely happy that the best was yet to happen; Indra gifted a golden umbrella, Gandharvas sang tuneful songs, Apsaras danced to their best, Kinnaras organised instrumental extravaganza and the whole world cebebrated, but of course Daityas and Danavas who had ruled for thousand years were highly dejected quite understandably. After a few days the new couple of Shiva and Devi Parvati took permission of Parvata Raja Himavaan and moved back to Mandarachala.

Years passed by and Shiva and Parvati continued to enjoy their marital bliss. Out of fun, Bhagavan Shiva teased Parvati once as follows: Shareerey mama tatwaangi sitey bhaasya sitadyutih, Bhujaangee vaasita shuddhaa samslishtaa chandaney tarow/ Chandraatapena sampruktaa ruchirambaraa tathaa, Rajaneevaasitey pakshey drushti dosham dadaasimey/ (Devi Parvati! As your physical colour is rather dark and mine is fair, it looks that a dark serpent is circling a chandana tree! Also, there is a similie - comparison- of a shining Moon against the background of dark cloud on the sky!). Understandably, Parvati was not amused, and in fact, badly hurt, when Shankara made these remarks even as a joke. Instantly, she left out home and proceeded to perform 'Tapasya' to Brahma for a number of years to change her body colour. Any amount of pleading and supplication by Shiva did not change her mind.

Meanwhile, the son of Andhakasura and the brother of Bakasura called 'Aadi' performed strict 'Tapas' to Brahma Deva and asked for the boon of 'Amaratwa' or immunity from death. As Brahma could not grant this advantage, Aadi amended the request that he should be able to convert his Body Form as per his wish; Brahma agreed provided that the Daitya could do so only twice. As Veerak was guarding the Entry Point of Shankara and as it was not possible to enter 'Shiva dwar', Aadi converted his Form as a snake and entered Shankara's abode through an under ground hole and slithered in; thereafter Aadi assumed the Form of Devi Parvati, approached Maha Deva and pretended that she had given up Tapasya as the severity of meditation just to change of body colour from 'Krishna Varna' to 'Gaura Varna' was not worth the strict regimen. Parama Shiva was happy initially that she changed her mind and returned back to him. But on second thoughts and knowing that Parvati would not take a flippant decision to return without achieving her objective, he suspected the fake Parvati and killed the 'Mayavi' Daitya. The original Parvati Devi's Tapasya pleased Brahma Deva and blessed her to change her body colour as she pleased either as of Gaura (white) Varna or of Shyama Varna; Parvati returned home to Maha Deva but the unwitting Veeraka, the 'Dwarapalaka' refused her entry to her own house! As any amount of convincing did not help Veeraka, Devi Gauri was tired out to reason him and finally gave a 'Shaap' that he would be born as a human and after the duration of the curse would return to her again. Parama Shiva was so excited as Gauri entered his interior bed room that a delegation of Devas headed by Indra was turned out saying that he was busy. Indra detailed Agni Deva to take the form of a parrot and peep in through a window as to what was happening inside their bed-chamber. Exactly at that time, the parrot peeped in when Shiva-Parvati were actually seen in action on their bed; Shiva noticed the parrot and

recognised Agni. He scolded Agni and said now that he created 'Vighna' (obstacle) between him and Parvati and hence he might as well rectify the situation by drinking up his virility. The highly explosive drops shining like molten gold punctured Agni's belly and got spread over the Maha Sarovar nearby. Several lotus flowers which got sprouted all over in the deep waters emitted strong and fragrant scents and the intoxication affected 'Krittikas' who happened to bathe in the Sarovar; the Krittikas desired to take the lotus leaves home but Devi Parvati jocularly remarked to the Krittikas that she could take the drops of water on the lotus leaves as well. In turn Krittikas joked that they would take the water home, provided the child born of the water consumed by them should have equal right to the motherhood of the boy so born! As the deal was struck between Kritthikas and Parvati, the Krittika damsels gave the lotus leaves as also the water drops to Parvati. Subsequently, Devi Parvati drank up the water around the lotuses and from her right and left 'kukshis' gave birth to two male children later united into one and the child who had the extraordinary radiance of Surya Deva; each of the Six Krittikas shaped up one head each of the child; thus the boy was named 'Kumara' by Parvati; 'Kartikeya', 'Shanmukha', 'Shadvaktra' by the Krittikas and as 'Vishakha' or the different 'Shakhas'/ branches of the lotus leaves that carried the golden drops. On Chaitra Shukla Shashthi, the child was declared as the 'Deva Senapati'/ the Commander-in-Chief of Devas. Vishnu gifted varieties of 'Ayudhas'/ Arms and 'Astras' or Mantrik Arrows. Kubera presented him a lakh-strong of yaksha army. Vayu Deva gave him a 'Mayura Vahana'/ Peacock Carrier, while Twashta Prajapati gifted a toy in the form of a Cock which could change its form as the boy wished. All the Devas presented souvenirs, prostrated before Skanda and extolled him:

Namah Kumaaraaya Mahaa Prabhaaya Skandaayacha Skandita daanavaaya,

Navaarka Vidyutdyutaye Namostutey, Namostutey Shanmukha Kaamarupa/

Pinadwi nanaabharanaaya Bhartrey Namo raney Daarudaaranaaya,

Namostu teyrka pratima prabhhaya, Namostu Guhyaaya Guhyaaya tubhyam/

Namostu Thrailokya bhaayaapahaaya, Namostutey Baala kripaa paraaya,

Namo Vishaalaamala lochanaaya, Namo Vishaakhaaya Maha Vrataaya/

Namo Namastestu Manoharaaya, Namo namastestu Ranotkataaya,

Namo Mayurojjwala vaahanaaya, Namostu Keyura dharaayatubhyam/

Namo Dhrutodagna pataakiney Namo Namah Prabaavapranataaya testu,

Namo Namastey Varaveerya shaalininey, Kripaaparo no bhava Bhavyamurtey/

Kripaaparaa Yagnapatim cha stutwaa, Viromirowam twamaraadhi paadyaah,

Yevam tadaa Shadwadanam tu sendraa mudaa santhushta Guhastatastaan/

(Our Greetings to You, Kamarupa Shanmukha! You are Kumara, the radiant son of Maha Shiva and the destroyer of Danavas; your physical form is the glow of rising son and of the heat of Agni; you are appropriately adorned, the Army Chief of Devas; the dreadful on the battle front; Guhya Rupa, the abolisher of fear in Trilokas in the Form of a Child; gifted with broad and clear eyes; Vishaakhaa! Our reverences to you as the practitioner of Maha Vratas; you are a terror in battle fields although of pleasant visage otherwise; you have a peacock as your carrier and wear a Keyura / wrist bangles; the high flier of flags; the bestower of boons to devotees; the high profile symbol of courage and strength; you possess a Magnificent Form. This was how Indra and Devas extolled Skanda.)

Even as Kumara was replying to assure Devas that very soon the desire of retrieving their lost glories would be fulfilled, an emissary of Tarakasura arrived and conveyed their Chief's message to Indra with a warning not to repeat his past mistakes of challenging a giant Daitya of the stature of that great Tarakaura who shook up the Universe and converted Devas as his servants; he also remarked that instead of playing balls and toys, the baby boy Skanda should gradually get acclimatised to battle fields and face mighty

Asuras much later in life! As Tarakasura was in a jocular mood, Skanda Deva said: 'Taraka! Never underesimate the 'Shakti' of a kid; can you not realise that a baby serpent could perform permanent damage to you and that a boy who has 'Alpaakshara Gyan'in releasing 'Astras' could reach you directly to Naraka! Even while Skanda was conversing like this, Taraka threw a 'Mudgara' (hammer) and an agile Kumara destroyed it with his 'Vajraayudha; Taraka threw a 'Bhindapaal' which was destroyed by Kumara's own hands. Skanda materialised a Gada / Mace and despatched it against Kalanemi Daitya who became furious and rained a stream of Arrows. These arrows had little impact on Skanda. Instead, Kalanemi and his associates were thrashed by Kumara and they had to sprint from the battle lines. Takakasura then appeared center-stage and was furious in releasing a powerful arrow which hurt Kumara Swami's 'MayuraVahana'; The infuriated Skanda and threw the most potent' Shakti Bana' which was indeed the decisive point that sealed Tarakasura's fate and the greatest menace in the Trilokas who dominated the scene for thousands of years was finally destroyed, even as Devas sounded 'dundhubhis' (large drums) and showered rose petals which filled up the Earth, Sky and the Nether lokas with the fragrance of Parijata flowers from Swarga. Gandharvas and Kinnaras sang melliflous praises of Kumara and his proud parents, Apsaras were ecstatic and Sapta Rishis recited Mangala Mantras. Those who read or hear about the glories of Skanda would neither have sins nor diseases but lead a contented life ahead!

# Bhagavan Vishnu's Incarnation as Lord Nrisimha

Daitya Hiranyakashipu was engaged in stiff 'Tapasya' with 'Mouna Vrata' (Silence), 'Manah Samyama' (Control of Mind), 'Indriya Nigrah' (Command of Physical Limbs), 'Brahma charya' (Celibacy) and 'Niyama Palana' (Administering of Regulations) for eleven thousand years in deep water and Lord Brahma arrived at last by his 'Hamsa Vimana' along with **Twelve Adityas** viz.Dhata, Mitra, Aryama, Shakra, Varuna, Amshuman, Bhaga, Vaivaswanta, Pusha, Savita, Tvashta and Vishnu; Eighteen Vasus Viz. Apa, Dhruva, Soma, Dhara, Anila, Anala, Pratyusha and Prabhasa; Forty Marud-ganas from seven categories viz. Avaha, Pravaha, Sambhava, Udvaha, Vivah, Parivaha, and Varvah of seven each; Ekadasha Rudras viz. Hara, Bahurupa, Tryambaka, Aparajita, Vrisha kapi, Shambhu, Kapardi, Raivata, Mriga Vyadha, Sarpa and Kapali, Devas, Saptrashis, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Yakshas etc. In the presence of all these Deities Brahma gave the boon of invincibility from Devatas, Asuras, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Nagas, Rakshasas, human being, piscachas, Rishi ganas with immunity from 'Shaapaas' or curses, Astras, Shastras, Mountains, Trees, neither dried material nor wet, neither during day nor night, from Planets, Grahas, Nakshatras, Ten Directions, Krodha, Kama, varuna, Indra, Yama, Kubera, and Kimpurashas. As Brahma granted the boon to the Daitya accordingly, there were protests from all the Celestal quarters but Brahma conveyed that he had to give away the boons, since in all fairness the Tapasya that was performed by the daitya was genuine and had to be according to the wishes of the Danava. It did not take much time that Hiranya Kashipu waited to dethrone Indra and Devas; controlled Lokapalas, Pancha bhutas, Navagrahas, Dikpalakaas, Adityas, Vasus, Marudganas, and Rudras; obtained Yagna bhagaas and changed the texts of Sacred Scriptures; forced human beings to worship him but not Srihari, humiliated and killed Vishnu Bhaktas as they did not fall in line and in short tampered Vedic Tradtions to his personal advantage. There was hue and cry and Devas who approached Bhagavan Vishnu who assured Devas that he would soon take an incarnation of a species which would defy the imagination of Hiranyakashipu while he took the boons from Brahma. Parama Bhakta of Narayana, Prahlada the son of Hiranyakashipu realised in his Celestial Vision that Lord Vishnu had arrived in an incarnation as Nrisimha (Half Man and Half Lion) and that it was becoming increasingly clear that the Incarnation would end up the King Hiranyakashipu and Daityas. The vision indicated further that in the Physique of the Man-Loin were images of all Devatas, Oceans, Rivers, Himalaya and other Mountains, Stars on the Sky, Adityas, Vasuganas, Kubera, Varuna, Yama, Indra, Marudganas, Gandharvas, Maharshis, Yakshas, Nagas, Piscachas, Rakshasas, Brahma and Shankara.

Even as Prahlada cautioned the Great King in a full House of top officials, the latter commanded the peculiar Man-Lion to be caught where ever it would be, the 'beast' as the King imagined stood then and

there right before him; the stunned Danava King lost his senses for a while but quickly recovered his composure and materailised Astras, Kala Chakras, earth-shaking Brahmastras, hell-binding Danava Chakras, Vajraayudhaas, Trishulas, Kankaals, Musalas, Mohanas, Shoshans, Santaapanaas, Vilaapanaas, Vaayavyaas, Mathans, Kaapaals, Shaktis, Brahmashitaastraas, Somaastras, Kaalamudgaras, Gandharvaastras, Vavavvastras, Havashirastras, Naagastras, Paishachastras and such 'Maaranastras' against Nrisimha Swami who got more and irritated in devastating the 'Astra-Shastras' which were either smashed by his Vajra-like body or redirected them back to Hiranyakashipu which had to be defended or tore parts of his body in the process. Simultaneously, the hastily grouped warriors, Senapatis, Ministers and the armies of Hiranyakashipu attacked Nrisimha and the highly enraged Bhagavan went so angry that fire balls emerged out of his eyes and relentless roars shattered the distant regions. Even by the fire and sound thus released, the battalions of soldiers whose shapes and forms were nauseating and frightening with faces of donkeys and wild pigs got decimated in thousands. Hiranyakashipu kept on hurling Shakti-weapons which were instantly retaliated by the mere 'Hunkaar' of Bhagavan and as though he was tired of fighting further, he tossed the body of the demon up, sat on an elevated place, kept the body of the demon on his thighs and with his pointed finger nails tore apart his stomach and heart when blood surged out in spirals and the greatest menace in Trlokas breathed his last. As the son of Diti succumbed, the whole universe fell into a strange spell of silence mingled with feelings of deliverance and disbelief, even as Prithvi, Kaal, Chandrama, Akash, Grahaganas, Surya, the Ten Dishas, Oceans, Rivers, Mountains and the Forests suppressed their surging incredibility. Lords Brahma, Rudra and Mahendra led the chorus of spontaneous Eulogy of Nrisimha Deva by Devatas, Gandharvas, Apsaras and Maharshis as follows:

Param cha siddhim cha Paramcha Devam, Paramcha Mantram Paramam Havischah/ Paramcha Dharmam Paramcha Vishvam, Twaamaahuragryam Purusham Puraanam/ Param shareeram Paraamcha Brahma, Paramha Yogam Paramaamcha Vaaneem/ Param rahasyam Paramaam gatimcha, Twaamaahargryam Purusham Puraanam/ Yevam Parasyaapi Param Padam yat, Param parishyaapi Paramcha Devam/ Param parisyaapi param cha Bhutam, Twamaahuragryam Purusham Puraanam/ Param parasyaapi param rahasyam, Param parasyaapi Param mahatvam/ Param parasyaapi param Mahadyat, Twamaahuagryam Purusham Puraanam/

Param parasyaapi param nidhaanam, Param parasyaapi param pavitram/

Param parasyaapi param cha daantam, Twamaahuragryam Purusham Puranam/

(Devadi Deva! You are Brahma, Rudra and Mahendra; the Loka Karta, Samharta, Upasthitaana/ Creator, Destroyer and Preserver; You are imperishable, the Utmost Siddhi /accomplishment; Paratpara, Parama Deva, Parama Mantra, Parama Havi /Invocation to Agni by Ghee; Parama Dharma, Parama Vishwa, Adi Purusha; You are the Supreme Physique, Param Brahma, Parama Yoga, Parama Vaani, Parama Rahasya, Parama Gati / Direction and Target; and Purana Purusha / the Very First Being; indeed you are the Paratpara Pada /Supreme Step Forward, Paratpara Deva, Partpara Bhuta / Organism, Paratpara Mahatva, Sarva sreshtha / the noblest of all; the One beyond comprehension, the Highest Form of Sacredness and Spotlessness!).

As Brahma and Parameswara expressed the gratitude of Devas and in fact of the entire Universe, Bhagavan Nrisimha was extremely happy, Gandharvas sang tuneful songs in praise of the Lord, Maharshis recited Vedas and Shanti Mantras, Apsaras danced to their heart's content and Devas sounded celestial drums and rained flowers from the skies. Bhagavan Vishnu then boarded Garuda Vahana and flew toward Kshira Sagara. Brahma and Indra asssured that the Avatar of Nrisimha Bhagavan would be worshipped for ever since Lord Vishnu would incarnate Himself; he assured that as and when Dharma was in jeopardy, he would reappear again and again in every 'Yuga'.

# Daityas dominate over Devas and Kalanemi terminated by Vishnu

There had always been mutual hatred and battles among Devas and Daityas, the progeny of Sage Kashyapa and his wives Diti and Aditi; Diti's offspring were Daityas and that of Aditi were Devas. There were several phases when wicked Daityas dominated the scene of the Universe and the virtuous Devas were defeated, kicked out of their rightful Place of Swarga and were humiliated and harassed; history was replete with innumerable instances when long spells of supremacy of Danavas were prominent as and when a powerful leader among them got floated. When such long and dark chapters occurred and Dharma, Nyaya and Devotion hit the lowest ebbs, the Preserver of the Universe, Vishnu had to intervene and revive moral values depending situations and exigencies.

Eversince Parameswara excused Mayasura at the time when Tripuras were destroyed, Mayasura and several of his associates were hiding under the Seas; they were awaiting opportunities to attack Indra and Devas to once again occupy Swargaloka. It was at that juncture that Maha Daitya Kalanemi joined Mayasura and fought so fiercely with Devas that Devas could not recover from their injuries for long. As Kalanemi's evil deeds reached climaxes, Veda, Dharma, Kshama / endurance, Truth and Lakshmi were being gradually replaced with their opposite qualities. Kalanemi was curious-in fact envious of Narayana and saw him once with four hands wearing Shankha, Chakra, Gada and Padma and when Vishnu was rotating his mace to show off that he would destroy the Evil any time and anywhere. That particular scene of Narayana had badly hurt the Demon's pride and ego and ruminated that after all it was that Vishnu who had been the sworn enemy of Daityas who killed stalwarts like Hiranyakashipu and Madhu-Kaitabha brothers. It was he who cheated King Bali as a 'Vamana Brahmachari' and pretended that only three-steps of narrow area was required and occupied Three Worlds! It was he under whose protection, Maharshis performed oblations of ghee into Agni and enabled various Devas to become prosperous and contented; it was he who was responsible for mass-murders of Daityas and made their wives hapless widows and rendered them and their children homeless! It was indeed due to him that all the Daityas got into the vicious circle of his Sudarshana Chakra! Kalanemi thus got tempted with a golden opportunity of being near to Bhagavan, little realising that 'opportunity' was created by Bhagavan Himself as it was time to terminate Kalanemi's existence!

When Kalanemi prepared himself with his armoury and 'Astras' to attack Narayana by making huge shouts and allegations, Bhagavan smilingly replied: Alpam darpabalam Daitya Sthiramakrodhajam Balam, Hatastwam Darpajairdoshairhitwa yad bhashasay kshamaam/ (Boasting is a sign of cowardice and determination is a symbol of strength; since you are showing audacity and bluster, I am convinced of your timidity). He further said the norms of decency and regulations established by Brahma should never be infringed at any cost; and whoever tried to do so had no place for existence. As Vishnu was counselling Kalanemi, the latter raised his thousand hands and released 'Astras' on Vishnu which were deftly retaliated by Bhagavan, but as Garuda attacked the Davava, the latter hit the Giant Bird with his 'Gada' / mace which hurt Garuda Deva on his head. The infuriated Vishnu Bhagavan summoned his Sudarshana Chakra and insructed that his thousands of hands be mutilated first; but the Danava remained steady and like a tree without branches continued his fight with his utterances of Mantras which took various forms of ugly creatures that attacked Garuda as also Bhagavan. Garuda Deva expanded the length and breadth of his wings and as the velocity and might of Vayu helped his wings, thumped the Daitya's huge chest and knocked him down from a sky-high elevation to fall on the ground with a thud. As Lord Brahma extolled Bhagavan Vishnu, the latter was no doubt happy but cautioned Devas not to be complacent as other Daityas like Virochana and the Rahu Graha ran away and should be on the constant vigil; he therefore appointed Indra to safeguard the East, Varun to keep alert on the Western front, Yama on the South and Kubera on the North. Surya Deva should ensure that the 'Ayanas'-the Uttaraayana and

Dakshinaayana-should be in Place always and similarly the 'Ritus' or the Six Seasons must not be disturbed and rains ought be timely. In the 'Yagnaas', the Devas ought to turn up without fail and repond as and when the Yagna kartaas recall them; Brahmanas should offer oblations with ghee into Agni; Devas should take advantage of the 'Agnihotra Karyas'; Maharshis should be contented with 'Swadhyaayaas' and Pitru Devatas should be satisfied with 'Shradhaas' and finally all the Trilokas be contented.

#### Andhakasura's killing necessitated Shiva to create 'Maatrikas'

Armed heavily with 'Tapobala' (power of extreme meditation), Andhakaasura desired to abduct Devi Parvati and Mahadeva fought with him in the frightful 'Mahakalavana' near Avantika. As the Demon was not coming under control even after a long drawn battle, Rudra Deva had to finally utilise the most powerful Shakti called 'Pashupati Astra'. As blood flowed in streams from the Daitya's body, each drop of blood produced an 'Andhakasura' and to lick up the drops of blood, Maha Deva had to create innumerable 'Matrikas' such as Mahewari, Braahmi, Kaumari, Malini, Sowparni, Vyayavya, Shaakri, Nairruti, Shouri, Sowmya, Shiva, Duuti, Chamunda, Varuni, Vaarahi, Naarasimhi and so on. All the Marikaas accomplished the deed of lickng the blood drops and enjoyed the same. But the progeny of the Matrikas also gave birth to Andhakasuras with a 'shula' and a 'mudgara' and kept on pestering Shiva. Mahedeva approached Vishnu for help and the latter created 'Sushka Revati' who dried up the blood of all the Andhakas. It was then easy for Shiva to target the Daitya's head and the destoyed. Andhakasura eulogized Parama Shiva who was pleased and bestowed 'Ganeshatwa' or the Title of 'Ganas'.

But the innumerable 'Matrikas' who were created by Shiva threatened him saying that they would gradually eat up humanity; Shiva warned the Matrikas that they were only to perform virtuous deeds but not kill human beings; nonetheless, these Matrikas defied the instructions and were let loose eating up men, women and children. Shiva meditated Nrisimha Deva who appeared and destroyed all the vicious Matrikas. Shiva displayed his gratitude to Nrisimha Deva and prayed to him as follows:

Namastestu Janannatha Narasimhavapurdharah, Daitya naathasrujaa purna nakha shakti viraajita/
Tatah Sakalasamlagna Hemapingala Vigrah, Natosmi Padmanaabha twaam Surashakrajagadguro/
Kalpaantaambhoda nirghosha Suyakoti samaprabha, Sahasrayamasamkrodha Sahasrendra paraakrama/
Sahasradhanadaspheeta Sahasra varunaatmaka, Sahasra kaala rachita Sahasra niyatendriya/
Sasrabhumahaadhairya Sahasraananta murtiman, Sasra chandra pratima Sahasra graha vikrama/
Sahasra Rudra tejaska Sahasra Brahma Samstuta/ Sahasra baahuvegogra Sahasraasya
nireekshana/Sahasrayantra mathana Sahasra vadhamochana/

(Jagannadha! You had assumed the Form of Nrisimha and with the sharpness and might of your nails had torn apart Hiranyakashipu and tasted his blood, my reverences to you; Padmanabha! You are all pervading, your physique is of molten gold colour and you are the mentor of Devaraj Indra, my sincere greetings to you; Your lion's-growl is like the continuous reverberation of black clouds at the Pralaya Time, your splendour is like that of crores of Suns, your rage is like that of thousands of Yamas, your valour is like that of thousands of Indras, your opulence is like that of thousands of Kuberas, your profusion is comparable to that of thousands of Varunas, abundance of your fortitude is comparable to that of thousands of Prithvi, your unique courage was amply scripted of the thousands of 'Kaalas' or times rolled by, your poise and coolness of attitude is comparable to thousands of Chandramas, your energy is thousand times more forceful than those of Navagrahas, your radiance is comparable to thousands of Rudras, thousands of Brahamas are ready to commend you, you are of thousands of hands, faces and eyes; your swiftness and momentum is of the highest order, your Shakti is such that it could devastate thousands of 'yantras'/ machines in one go; and your competence is such that you could make or mar thousands of persons at a time.)

Having said this, Bhagavan! I created countless 'Matrikas' to demolish Andhakasura, but these Shaktis are not obeying me; how could I knock down them all! That was how Shiva conluded his appeal to Nrisimha. Then Srihari-the Incarnation of Nrisimha- segregated **Vageeswari** from the tongue, **Maya** from the

hridaya / heart, **Bhavamalini** from the Guhya Pradesha and **Kalika** from the extraordinarly strong bones of Sushkarevati and created afresh thirty two Matrikas from his own body and these new Matrikas are:

Ghantaakarni, Trailokyamohini, Punyamayi Sarvasattva- vashamkari, Chakra hridaya, Panchavi Vyomacharini, Shankhini, Lekhini and Kaala samkarshini who are the deputies of Vageeswari. The deputies of Maya are Sankarshini, Ashraddha, Beejabhaava, Aparaajita, Kalyani, Madhudamshtri, Kamala, and Utpalahastika. The deputies of Bhavamalini are Ajita, Sukshma -hridaya, Vruddha, Vesharama darshini, Nrisimha bhairava, Bilwa, Garudmad -hridaya, and Jaya. The deputies of Kalika/Sushkarevati are: Aakarshini, Sambhata, Uttaramalika, Jwaalaamukhi, Bheeshanika, Kamadhenu, Baalika and Padmakara.

Each one of these Matrikas is of extraordinary Shakti and capacity to destroy the Trilokas! Nrisimha Deva instructed the Matrikas that just as human beings and animals / birds etc. bring up their progeny, they should also safeguard them and ensure no untoward incident should occur to them; the Matrikas should hold Rudra in their high esteem and he would too bestow them powers to be utilised for the welfare of every being; when human beings perform puja to them they too respond to their wishes for fulfilment. Sushkaam sampujayishyanti eye cha Purtaardhino janaah, Teshaam putrapradaa Devi bhavishyati na shamshayaha/ (Those who worship Sushkara Revati Devi for excellent progeney and fulfillment of worldy desires would certainly be granted by her.)

# The Incarnation of Vamana Deva and Bali Daanava's humiliation (Prayers to Bhagavan Vishnu by Aditi and Brahma included)

Aditi Devi, the hallowed mother of Devas felt agitated when Indra and all oher Devas were defeated in a series of fierce battles and had to leave Swarga as refugees in the Celestial Regions *incognito*. The highly disillusioned mother prayed to Bhagavan Vishnu to reinstate them to their respective posts *without any battle*. Her prayer was as follows:

Namah sarvaarti naashaaya namah Pushkara maliney, Namah Paramakalyanaadi -vedhasey/ Namah pankaja netraaya namah pankajannaabhaye, Shriyah kaantaaya daantaaya Paramaarthaanaaya Chakriney/ Namah Pankaja sambhuti sambhaavaatma-yonavey, Namah shankhaa sahi hastaaya Namah Kanakaretasey/ Tathaatma jnaanayogi chintyaamaatma yoginey, Nirgunaayaaviseshaaya Haraey Brahmarupiney/ Jagatpratishthitam yatra Jagataam yo na drushyatey, Namah sthulaati sukshmaaya

Tasmai Devvaya shaaranginey/ Yam na pashyanti pashyanto jagadyakhilam naraah, Apashyadabhirjagatraya sa Devo hrudi samsthitah/ Yasminneva vinashyet yasyaitadakhilam jagat, Tasmai Samasta jagadaadhaaraaya namo namah/ Aaadyah Prajaapati patiryah Prabhuunaam Patih parah, Patih Suraanaam yatasmai namah Krishnaaya Vedhasey/Yah pravurtthou nivrutthou cha ijjatey karmabhih swakaih, Swaraapayarga phaladou Namastasmai Gadaabhrutey/ Yacchinthyamano masah sadyah paapam vyapohati, Namastasmai Vishuddhaaya Paraaya Hari vedhasey/ Yam buddhvaa sarva bhutaani Deva deveshamavyayam, Na punarjanma maraney Praaptunanti Namaami tam/ Yo yagney Yagna paramaireejyatey Yagna saginitah, Tam Yagna purusham Vishnum namaami Prabhureeshwaram/ (My salutations to Kamala Mulaa- dhaari Bhagavan! You are the demolisher of all sins and the Prime bestower of propitious -ness; you are the Lotus Eyed, the Lotus navelled, Lakshmipati, Chakradhaari, the Epitome of capability and of Supreme Profile! My obeisnances to you; You are the Creator of the Creators and the Self-Generator; the bearer of Shankha and Khadga and of Golden Sperm; You are the target of Soul-searchers and Yogis; the Featureless, Endless, All-pervading but invisible; the most magnified yet the most miniscule; the absorber of the entire Universe in his heart and vice versa; You are the fulcrum of the 'Jagat'; the Decider of the 'Karma Phala' (Fate) of every Being in existence; Gadaadhari! Adikarta! Each of one's thoughts about You Sri Hari, snips off sins and difficulties at once; those who could break the vicious circle of births and deaths deserve my sincere falicitations; and those who perform Yagnas, the deeds in the name of Yagnas as also worship that Maha Yagna Purusha Vishnu deserve my admirations too). Aditi continued her prayer further:

Geeyatey Sarva Vedeshu Vedavidbhirvidaam Patih, Yastasmai Veda Vedyaaya Vishnavey Iishnavey namah/ Yato Vishwam Samutpannam yasmimscha layameshyati, Vishwaagama pratishthaaya Namastasmai Mahatmaney/ Brahmaadistamba paryantam ena Vishwamidam tatam, Mayaajaalam samurttatrum tamupendram Namaamyaham/ Yastu toyawasa rupastho Vibhartrakhila meeshwarah, Vishwam Viswapatim Vishnum tam Namaami Prajaapatim/ Yamaaraadhya Vishudhena manasaa karmanaagiraa, Taranyaty avidyaamahilaam tamupendram namaamyaham/ Vishaadathosha roshaa -dwaiyourajastram Sukhadhukha jaih, Nrutyatyakhila bhutasthastamupendram namaamyaham/ Murtam taosuramayam tadhaat vinihantiyah, Raatrijam Suryaswarupeeva tamupendram namaamyaham/ Kapilaadi swarupastho yaschagnaana mayam tamah, hanti Jnaana pradaanena tamupendram namaamyaham/ Yasyaakshini Chandra Suryou Sarva loka shubhaashubham/ Pashyatah karma satatamupendram tam namaamyaham/ Yasmin Sarweswarey Sarvam Satyameytanmayoditam, Naanrutam tamajam Vishnum namaami Prabhavaapyayam/ Yaccha tatsatyamuktam mey bhuyaamschaato Janaardanah, Satyena tena sakalaah puryantaam mey manorathaah/

(I salute the victorious Vishnu who is chanted by Vidwans by the Four Vedas and is sought to be approached through that medium; I pay my reverences to Bhagavan Vishnu who is the Creator of the Universe which is finally absorbed into Him and who safeguards the regulations of Vedas; my respects to that Supreme Architect who encompasses 'Srishti' from Brahma downwards to a piece of grass to lift me from the deep morass of 'Mayajaal' or the heavy pulls of illusion; I hail that Vishveshwara who is set in the form of water protects and preserves the entire Creation; I greet that Upendra whom those illustrious persons worship through their hearts, adulations and deeds far beyond the reaches of Avidya / Ignorance and seek salvation; I pray to Vishnu who makes all the 'Charachara Praanis' (moving or immobile Beings) hop, jump and dance with various emotions of laughing, crying, anger, passion and pity; my prostrations to that unique Super Power who like Surya Deva devastates pitch darkness typified with Asuras and Evil Spirits with glorious and ever-resplendent radiance; my entreaties to Narayana who assumes the sacred form of Maharshis like Kapila to demolish 'Ajnana'/ ignorance and usher in 'Vijnana' /knowledge) to enlighten humanity about the do's and don't of life; and my veneration to the Omni-scient who like Surya and Chandra as his eyes notice each and every thought, feeling, act and deed of all the Beings. Viswesvara! the illustrations that I have presented to you are pure and simple facts and not figs of my imagination. Bhagavan! Kindly fufil my request of reinstating my children to their original positions.) Pleased by the supplication that Devi Aditi made, Bhagavan Narayana gave his vision and said that soon he would be born to Kashyapa Muni and her and subdue the enemies to facilitate the restoration to Devas. In course of time as Aditi conceived King Bali experienced peculiarities of Nature as earth was trembling, mountains were quivering and Oceans were disturbed and ascending high. King Bali approached his grand father Prahlada and told that the premonitions were not favourable to Daityas. The great Prahlada performed concentrated meditation to Vishnu-of whom the former was a bench-mark Bhakta of Narayana who destroyed his demon father Hiranyakashipu-and realised that Bhagavan was to take birth to Kashyap and Aditi soon.

Prahlada told King Bali: Vatsa! Jnaatam mayaa sarvam yadartham Bhavataamiyam, Tejaso haanirutpannaa tacchun twamaseshatah/ Devadevo Jagadyoniryonir jagadaadi –krit, Anaadiraadirviswasya Varenya Varado Harih/ Paraavaraanaam Paramam Parah Paravataamapi, Pramaanamcha Pramaanaanaam Saptaloka Guroguruh/ Prabhuh Prabhunaam Paramah Paraanaamanaadi madhyo Bhagavaanantah/ Tralokyamamshena Sanaathamesha kartrum Mahaatmaaditijovateernah/ Na yasya Rudro na cha Padmayoni –nindro na Suryendu Marichi mukhyaah/ Jaananti Daityadhipa yatswarupam, sa Vaasudevah kalayaaviteernah/ (Now I guess the reason as to why all the Rakshasas are getting un-nerved: Vaasudeva who is the Devadi Deva, the Creator of the Universe, the 'Ajanma' or the Unborn, the Originator, the Timeless, the Highest and the Supreme, the Best of the Best, the Guru of Gurus, the King of Kings; without a beginning, middle and the end; and the mightiest of the mightest, is the about to incarnate as the son of Aditi. It is from the 'Amsa' of Vishnu

whose worth could never be guessed by Rudra, Brahma, Indra, Surya or Chandra that Vaasudeva would be born very soon). King Bali replied:

Oh, Grand father! Who is this Vaasudeva that the entire Universe has to be afraid of! We have thousands of Rakshasas who are the mightiest of the mightest like Viprachitti, Shivi, Shankha, Ayah Shankha, Aya Shiraa, Aswa shira, Bhangakaari, Maha Hanu, Prataapa, Praghasa, Shumbha, and Kukura-each one of them being able to lift and throw Bhudevi into Patala! Enraged by these comments, Prahlada said that the comparisons made by the King between the Rakshasas that he mentioned and Bhagavan Vishnu were so invidious and unbecoming of a King that too born out of a Parama Bhakta like Prahlada; he said that such comments arose out of arrogance and sheer ignorance.

Thus he cursed Bali as follows: Yathaa mey shiraschhedadidam Gurutaram vacha, Twayottama achytamaakshepi Raajyabhrashstathaa pata/ Yathaacha Krishnaanna param paritraanam bhavaarnavey, Tathaachirena pashyeyam bhavantam raajyavichyutam/ (The way that such harsh language was used in offending Bhagavan as to have my head cut off should be the same as the King Bali's pitiless exit from the latter's Kingship! Also, the manner in which Bhagavan would provide refuge and protection to a Bhakta would be the same as the King would be disgraced and defamed!). On receiving the 'Shaap', King Bali was taken aback at the extreme view taken by Prahlada and cursed him forthwith. Bali apologised and so did Prahlada; the latter said: Vatsa! Kopena Moho mey janitasten tey maya, Shaapo dattho vivekascha mohonaapahyato mama/ yadi mohena mey Jnaanam naakshiptam smaanmahaasura, Twaktham sarvagam jaanan Harim kinchiccha paam -yaham/ (Vatsa! My anger was as a result of excessive attachment which resulted in the curse; since attachment knocks down 'Viveka' or capacity for thinking!) So saying, the curse would have to become a reality; yet since the King's heart was basically pure, Prahlada said that the curse would get mollified on its own and by the grace of Vishnu.

Meanwhile, Devi Aditi gave birth to Bhagavan Vishnu as Vamana Deva and Devas became ecstatic and Rakshasas felt extremely disturbed. There was excitement alround as the inhabitants of Prithvi, Akash and Swarga celebrated the day as that of Liberation. Brahma performed the 'Jatakarma' and other 'Samskaras' in the presence of Maharshis, Dikpalakas, Devas and Indra. There was an extollment by Brahma which was joined by Indra and Devas as a mark of Victory: Jayaadhyesha Jayaajeya Jaya Sarvatmakatmaka, Jaya Janma jaraapetha Jayaanantha Jayaachuta, Jayaajita Jayaameya Jayaayyaktta sthitey Jaya, Paramaarthaartha Sarvagna Gnaanagneyaat munihstutah/ Jayaasesha Jagatsaakshinya Jagatkarta Jagad Guro, Jagatosyanantakrud Deva sthithi paalayantu jaya/ Jaya sesha Jagaasesha Jayaakhila hridisthita, Jayadaadi madhyaanta Jaya Sarvajgna nithey Jaya/ (Victory to you, Parameshwara, Ajeya, Sarvatma Swarupa; You are free from birth, old age and destruction; You are Ajita/ undefeated, Avyakta / unrevealed, Ameya / immesurable; You are Sarvajna / All-Knowing, disclosable by Knowledge and Yoga, and singularly utilitarian for common welfare; You are Jagat Saakshi / Universal Evidence, Jagat Karta / Creator of the Universe, and Jagat Guru / the Universal Preceptor; You are responsible for Sthiti (Existence), Palan (Preservation) and Samhar (Termination); You are the Sesha Rupa (The Remainder Form), the Asesha Rupa (The distinctive Form) and Existent among the Beings all over; and You are 'Jagadaaditya Madhyaanta' / The Beginning, the Middle and the End). Mumkshubhiranirdeshya Swayamdhrishta Jayeswara, Yoginaam Murti phalada Damaadiguna bhushana/ Jayaati sukshma durjeya Jaya sthula jaganmaya, Jaya Sthullati sukshma twam Jayaateendriya sendriya/ Jayaswamayaayogastha sesha bhoga -shayaakshara, Jayaika damshtraapraantaagra samuddhita Vasundhar/ Nrikesmarin jayaaraati vakshahsthala vidaarana, Saampratam jaya Vishwaatman Jaya Vamana Keshav, Nijamaayaapatacchaanna Jagan murtey Janaarana, Jayaachintya Jayaaneka Swarupaikavidha Prabho/ Vardhaswa Vardhataasesha Vikaara Prakrutey Harey, Twayyeshaa Jagataameesho samstithaa Dharma paddatih/ Na twamaaham na cheshaano nendraadyaastridashaa Harey, Na jnaatumeeshaa munayah Sanakaadyaa na Yoginah/Twanmaayaapata samveeto Jagannyatra Jagatpatey, Kastwaam vetsyati

sarveshatwat –prasaadam vinaa narah/ Twameraadhito yena prasaada sumukha prabho/ Sa yeva kevalo Deva vetti twaam netarey janaah/ Nandeeswareswareshaana Prabho vardhaswa Vaamana, Prabhavaasya Vishwasya Vishwaatman Pruthu lochana/ (Victory to you Jayeswara! You bestow Mukti to Yogis who seek the 'Agnaat'/ The Unknown, Swayam dhrushta/ Self realised, and the Possessor of endurance / fortitude and such other quailties; You are the Sukshma / the Minutest, Sthula / the most huge, the All- Pervading, and the Supreme Controller of Indriayas; You are the Adi Varaha, who stays in the thick veil of Maya / illusion and sleeps in Yoga Nidra on the soft hoods of Sesha Naga; You are Nrisimha who ripped off the broad chest of Hiranyakashipu; You are now in the Sacred Incarnation; You are the 'Achintya' / the Inconceivable and of Unique as also of myriad Rupas / Forms; You have all the 'Vikaras'/ Characteristics and at the same time devoid of any Vikara! You possess the 'Buddhi' and Shakti to enforce 'Dharma Maryada; neither me-Brahma-, nor Shankara, nor Indra and Devas, the Sanakaadi Maharshis nor Maha Yogis possess the comprehension and capability to guess your reality; the Universe is shrouded by the covering of Maya and who else could realise who you are! Is there a way of finding out except 'Araadhana' that one could achieve you! Maha Vamana! Give us strengh of Mind to dedicate us to the betterment of the Universe). To Vamana Deva, Brahma gifted 'Krishna Mriga Charma'/ The Skin of a black deer; Brihaspati gave an 'Yagnopaveet' / the Holy Thread; Marichi Maharshi provided a 'Palasha Danda'; Vasishtha Muni gave a 'Kamandalu' with everful the Ganga water; Angira donated a 'Kushaasana' and Vedas; Pulaha Maharshi an 'Aksha Sutra'; and Pulastya offered two white robes. Then Vamana Deva prodeeded to the Place where King Bali was performing a Sacred Yagna along with Jata, Danda, Chatra / umbrella, and Kamandalu, accompanied the personified Vedas, Shastras and Sankhya Yoga. At the 'Yagna Shaalaa', King Bali welcomed Vamana Deva and said: Dhanyoham krutapunyascha yanmey Yagnapatih Swayam, Yagnamabhyaagato Brahmanmattah konyodhikah pumaan/ (I am extremely excited that honoured that Bhagavan 'Yagna Pati' Himself has arrived; could there be any better miracle which could happen than this!). Then King asked Shukraachaarya for an advice and the reply was that as per Vedas, Devaganas were authorised 'Yagna bhoktas' but the King ordered against that pratice and made Senior Daityas and Danavas eligible instead. Hence, the Guru advised the King not to promise any thing to be donated to Vamana. But Bali argued with the Daitya Guru that if Vishnu himself asked for any thing, then he would be prepared to give away, especially because that in his Kingdom there was no poverty, ill-health or any discontentment and all his citizens were extremely happy, prosperous and joyous. The King thus disregarded Shukra's advice and told Vamana Deva: Suvararathna sanghaatam Gajaashwamamitam tathaa, Striyo Vastraanyalankaaraamsthathaa graamaamscha pushkalaan/ Sarvaswam sakalaamurveem bhavatovaa yadeepsitam, Taddamaami vrunushwa twam yanaarthi Vamanah priyah/ (Vamana Deva! You may ask me for any thing; would you wish for Jewellery, gold, several elephants or horses, women, clothes, villages, my entire land and riches!). Vaman Murti replied in a soft and sweet voice: Mamaagnisharanaarthaaya dehi Rajan Padatrayam, Suvanagraama ratnaani tadarthibhyah pradaanam maargataam bhavaan/ (Raja! To set and keep Agni, I request you to donate three feet of land to enable to set up mainain Agni; you may donate gold, villages, ratnas and money may be given to beggars!) He said that three steps of land would be quite insufficient for the purpose; I am giving away one lakh feet. Vamana said politely that the King might as well give away one lakh feet to any body else but he was happy with the three feet only. As desired, Bali did the 'Samkalpa' proposal for thee feet only. Even as the water of the Samkalpa was poured, Vamana Deva's appearance grew up as follows: Chandra Suryamchanayaney dhourmurthaa charanow kshitih, Paadaangulya pishaachaastu hastaangulyascha Guhyakaah/ Vishvey Devaascha jaanusthaa janghey saadhyaah Surotthamaah, Yakshaa nakheshu sambhutaa rekhaascha apsarastathaa/ Drushtow Rukshaanyasheshini keshaah Suryaamshavah Prabho, Taarakaa romakupaani romaani cha Maharshayah/ Baahavo viditastashya Dishaa Shrotrey Mahaatmanah/ Ashvanow Shravaney tasya naasaa vaayur -mahaatmanah, Prasaadaschandramaa Devo mano Dharmah samaashritah, Satyam tasyaabhavad Vaani jihvaaDevi Saraswatee/ Greevaaditirdeva maataa Vidyaastha –dwalayastathaa, Swargadwaar bhun maitram twastaa Pushaa cha vai bhruvow/ Mukham Vaishwaanaraschaascha Vrushanow tu Prajaapatih, Hridayam cha Param Brahma Pumstwam vai Kashyapo Munih/ Pushthesya Vasavo Devaa Marutah Sarva sandhishu, Sarva suktaani dashanaa

jyoteemshi Vimalaprabhaah/ Vakshasthaley Mahaadeyo Dhairya chaasya Mahaarnayaah, Udarey chaascha Gandharvaah Sambhutaascha Maha Balaah/ Lahsmirmedhaa Dhrutih Kaantih sarva Vidyaascha vai katih, Sarva Jyoteemshi jaaneehi tasya tatparam mahah/ Tasya Devaadhi Devasya Tejah prodbhutamuttamam, Ratnow kukshee cha Vedaascha Udaram cha Mahaamakhaah/ Ishtayah Pashu bandhha –scha Dwijaanaam cheshtitaanicha. Tasya Deya mayam rupam drushtaa Vishnormahaa balaah/ (Chandra and Surya are Bhagavaan's eyes; Sky his head; Prithvi his feet; Pishaachaganas his foot fingers; Skanda his hand fingers; Vishwadeva his knees; Sahyaganas thighs; Yakshas his nails; hand lines Apsaras; Nakshatras the illumination of his eyes; Suryakiranas / rays his hair; Stars his hair-roots; Maharshiganas his romaavali; 'Dishaa konaas'/ Angularities of Directions his shoulders; Ears his Directions; Ashvini Kumars his Ear roots; Vayu his nose; His Prasannata or Coolness is Chandra Deva; his mind is Dharma /Virtue; his voice is Devi Vaani and tongue is Sarasvati; Aditi his neck; eyebrows are Twashta and Pusha his eyebrows; Vidyas are Valaya/ bracelet; Swarga dwaar Maitri / friendship; his face is Vaishwaanara; Andakosha Prajapati; hridaya/ heart is Parabrahma; Kashyapa Muni is Pumstva; his back constitutes Vasuganas; Saandhi -bhaaga the Marudganas; Suktas / Pravachanas his teeth and pure radiance Jyotirganas; His Vakshasthala is Mahadeva; Dharma is Maha sagara; Stomach full of Gandharvas; his Kati pradesha / lower back are the Deities viz. Lakshmi, Medha, Dhruti, Kaanti and various Vidyas; all Jyotis are his illuminations; Vedas and Ratnaas in his Kukshi / belly; in his stomach are Maha Yagnas, Balidaanaas, and the noble deeds of Brahmanas. Such was the Form of Vamana Deva which was visioned by Maha Bali Asura!) Vamana Deva expanded his stature to occupy the whole Universe, then measured Bhu Devi as the first step, 'Antariksha' as also the Lokas above as the second step and the third foot was reckoned as the underground lokas of Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Rasatala, Talaatala, Mahatala and Paataala and donated these to reign as their King. Vamana Deva bestowed the 'Varas' to Bali to enjoy Kingship for the on-going Vaiwasvanta Manvantara in the 'Adholokas' and blessed him to become Indra on the arrival of the next Manvantara of Savavarni; meanwhile not only he should create problems to Indra but also control any evil forces to raise their heads as also perform 'Vishnu Aradhana' till then; at the same time, never antagonise Devas and Brahmanas, Vamana Deva warned King Bali.

# Varahaavatara uplifts Prithvi from Rasaatala

As Prithvi was gradually getting pulled down under into Rasatala and like a weak cow unble to resist the force of the drag into the slush, Bhagavan Vishnu decided to haul up the massive attempt being made by the Daitya Hiranyaaksha. The helpless Prithvi appealed to Narayana who took up the ferocious Form of Varaha Deva to boost it and save her. She cited the example of reinstating Indra and Devas back to Swarga by incarnating Bhagavan as Vamana Deva. As the 'Dhaata'/ the Creator, 'Vidhata' the Preserver and the 'Samharta'/ the Destroyer, his unique powers were displayed everywhere as Manus, Prajapatis, Yama Deva, Agni, Pavana Deva, Megha /Clouds, Varna Dharma, Ashrama Dharma, Samudras, Mountains, Trees, Rivers, Dharma, Kama, Yagna and related activities, Vidya, Human and other Beings, Shri / Opulence, Kirti / Fame, Dhairya /Courage, Kshama / tolerance, Puranas, Vedas, Vedangas, yoga, Sankhya, Janma/Birth, Marana /Death, Bhuta /the Past, Bhavishyat / the Future etc. .

Bhu Devi commended Paramatma further saying: *Bhaasi Vaasi Pratipaasi twam paasi vichestasy*, *Kruddhyamasi Ksaantimaayeesi twamdeepayaasi varshasi/ Twam haasyaasi na niryaasi nirvaapayaasi Jaagrasi, Nih seshayaasi Bhutaani KaaloBhutwaa Yugakshaye/* (Paramatma! You shine, you flow, you heat up, you save, and you act decisively; also you get angry, you cool down, you display radiance and heat, you pour rains; You laugh, you stay still, you hit and kill, you wake up and at Pralaya times you destroy and terminate). Interestingly, Bhagavan re-creates the Universe again out of the 'sehsha' or the remainder and hence is called the *Sesha*. Even as Brahma, Indra, Varuna and all other Devatas are subject to an end, Vishnu is permanent and thus known as *Achuta;* since others Deities are of the 'haran' type or

the ephemeral unlike Narayana, the latter is called *Hari*; since Brahma and other Devas could not perceive his 'Anta' or the End, Bhagavan is known as *Ananta*; even for thousansds of crores of 'Kalpas' Vishnu remains without 'ksharata' or damage, he is *Akshara*; as he is capable of 'Vishtambhana' or obstruction to the 'Charaachara Jagat'/ mobile or immobile worlds, Bhagavan is titled *Vishnu*; as Rishis defined water as 'Naara' and as Bhagavan resides in it, Vishnu who rests on water is *Narayana*; as Prithvi which is characterised as a 'Gov' / Cow gets submerged in water at the end of each and every Yuga, Bhagavan Narayana is *Govinda*; in the context of Tatwa Gyana, 'Indriyas' or Human Limbs are excitable with emotions or 'harshikas' and thus Govinda is called *Hrishikesha*; at the Pralaya, all the Beings from Brahma downward take refuge in Vishnu and also get absorbed into him, Narayana is designated as *Vaasudeva*; in each and every Kalpaanta / Yugaanta, Total Existence is subjected to 'Akarshana' or gets magnetised to Vishnu and hence he is known as *Samkarshana*; since Bhagavan separates distinct sectors of Devas, Rakshasas and Asuras, he is known as *Samkarshana*; as 'Dharma Viseshajna', he is *Praduymna*; and as no Praani / Being could resist him, he is called *Aniruddha*. I am your refugee, Bhagavan!

As Prithvi was desperate, Bhagavan replied that since she rendered the Madhaviya Stotra with extraordinary devotion, she would never be let down and be afraid of any untoward happening. He then assumed the form of a 'Varaha': Shata yojana vistirnarmucchritam dwigunam tatah, Naala jeemuta samkaasham meghastanitanihswanam/ Girisamhananam Bhimam sweta teekshanaagra damshtrinam, Vidyudagni prateekaashaama adityasama tejasam, Peenavrittatayataskandham drupta shaardulagaaminam/ Peenonnata kateedeshey Vrushalakshana pujitam, Rupasaasthaaya vipulam Vaaraahamajitho harih/ (The Varaha was invincible to any Being in 'Srishti'; its body was spread over hundred yojanas across and was double its height; was like a huge mountain; ferocious and white, its top part with most powerful horns; unvisionable and radiant like lightning and fire; illuminated like Surya Deva; had magnificently broad shoulders, royal gait, etc. with the features of a massive sized bull.)

Pruthvyuddharanaiva pravivsha Rasatalam, Vedapaado yupadamshtrah kratudanti schutibhushanah/ Aajyanaasah struva tundaha Samaghoshaswano Mahaan, Satya dharma mayah Shrimaan karmavikrama satkrutah/ Praayaschhita nakho ghorah Pashujaanurmukhaakritih . Udgeetha homalingostha beejoushadhi mahaakalpah/ Vayavyaaraatmaa yagnaastha vikrutih Somashonitah, Vedaskandho havirgandho havyakavya vibhagavaan/ Pragavamsha kayo dhrutimaan naanaa deekshaaabhiranvitah, Dakshinaahrudayo yogi Mahaasatramayo Mahaan/Upakarmoshtha ruchakah Pravargyavatartha bhushanah/ Naanaachhando gatipatho gruhyopanishadaasanah, Chhaayaapatnee sahaayo yai mandishringa iyocchhitah/ Rasaatalatalo magnaam Rasaatala talam gataam, Prabhurloka hitaayaarya damshogrenojjwahara taam/ Tatah Swasthaanamaaneeya Varaahah Pritheedharah, Mumocha purvam manasaa dhaaritaam cha Vasumdharaam/ Tato Jagaama nirvaanam modini tasya Devaaya sambhavey/ (Vishnu as Varaha thus entered 'Rasatala'; its four feet were like four Vedas; its teeeth like Yagnas, its face was like the Yagna Kunda; its tongue was Yagna; Brahma was like Varaha 'mastaka'/ head; Agni was like his tongue; Kusha grass was like his body hairs; day and night were like his eyes; the Six Vedangas were like the ear-ornaments; Ghrutahuti or the oblations of ghee in a homa was his gulp; Sama Veda was like his raised sound of groan; Prayaschitta like his his fierce nails; his 'rupa' was like Yagna; Vayu like his Antaratma; his blood was like Somarasa; Vedas were like his shoulders; Dakshina was his heart; Upakarma was like the region between his lips; Veda-gamana Marga and Upanidhads were like seat; and Chaaya was like his wife. Such Varaha Murti dived into the depths of Rasatala and with the sheer push of his tusks lifted Bhudevi in one huge lift-up, deposited her on the tusks and in one giant leap emerged to keep her in her original position. Thus the unique 'Achintya' relieved the helplessness of Prithvi Devi forever.)

Kurmaavatara, 'Amrita Mathan', Kaalakuta and Devi Mohini

As Danava Guru Shukracharya secured Sanjeevani Vidya from Maha Deva after thousands of penance and meditation to enable Danavas and Daityas the restore their lives, especially after their killings in battles with Devas, there were series of victories of Danavas and all the like minded evil forces, while Injustice and Vice prevailed in suppression of Virtue, Justice and Peace. In response to a delegation of Devas led by Indra and Deva Guru, Brahma appealed against passion for battles and enemities. He also called King Bali the Head of Daityas and Danavas and to refrain from frequent quarrels with Devas and suggested a Master Plan for the mutual benefit of Devas, Gandharvas and like minded allies on the one hand and Daityas, Danavas, Rakshaas, Nagas and Yakshas on the other. The Plan proposed by Brahma was follows: Both Daityas and Devas should jointly organise the Project of 'Kshira Sagara Mathana'; approach Vishnu under the leadership of King Bali to revive the Form of 'Kurma' (Tortoise) present in Palala loka; request Mandarachala or the Mountain of Mandara to be the churning rod; pray to 'Sehsha Nag'or the Giant Serpent who bears the weight of the entire Universe to be the long and strong rope to be used for the churning. As planned the joint delegation prayed to Bhagavan Kurma liyng in Patala loka first and the latter agreed readily saying: Thrailokya dhaarineynaapi na glanir-mama jaayatey, Kimu Mandarakaat Kshudraat gutikaa samnibhaadiha/ (I have no problem in holding the Mandhara Mountain for this noble cause as this so like a pebble for me!) Later on when the delegation approached Sesha Nag, he replied: Brahmanda veshtinaanaapi Brhahmaanda mathanenavaa, Na mey glanirbhaved dehey kimu Mandara vartaney! (If I could bear the brunt of the Universe what is the problem in holding it while churning and rotating it!). At that time, Kurma Deva was right underneath the Mountain, but neither Daityas nor Devas could rotate the mountain much less churn it. The delegation reached Vaikuntha and prayed to Vishnu under the Leadership of Bali, when Vishnu was in Yoga Nidra lying on Sesha Nag on Ksheera Samudra, as follows:

Namo loka trayadhaksha tejasaa jita bhaskara, Namo Vishno Namo Jishno Namastey Kaitabhardana/ Namah sargakriyaakartrey Jagatpaalayatey Namah, Rudrarupaaya Sharvaaya Namah Samharakaariney/ Namah Shulaayudhadhrushya Namo Daanava-ghaatiney, Namah Trayaakranta Trailokyaayaabhavaaya cha/ Namah Prachanda Daitreyndrakulakaala mahaanala, Namo naabhihrudodbhuta padmagarbha Mahabala/ Padmabhuta Mahabhuta karthrey hatrey Jagatpriya, Janitaa Sarvalokesha kriyaa kaarana kaariney/ Amaraari vinaashaaya Mahaasamara shaaliney, Lakshmi mukhaabja madhupa namah keerti nivaasiney/ Asmaakamamaratwaaya ghritayaam ghriyataa -mayam, Mandarah Sarvashailaanaamayutaatayaayuta vistrutah/ Anantabala baahu bhyamavasht abhaika paaninaa, Madhyataamamrtutam Deva Swadhaa Swaadhaartha kaaminam/

(Bhagayan Vishnu, Jishnu, Trilokaadhyaksha! our sincere greetings to you; You are the famed demolisher of Kaitabha; The Creator, the Presever and also the Destroyer of the whole world with Trishula in your hands; You expanded and occupied in merely three steps of yours all the Three Lokas; You are like the Agni who put the total 'Vamsha' or the race of the frightful of Daitya Clan into flames and ash; You materialised Brahma from the lotus of your navel; You are the Jagatkarta, Harta and Priya; the Karya, Karana and Karta or the Deed, the Doing and the Doer; Our endeavours are due to create 'Amrit' for 'Amaratwa' or everlasting life; kindly enable with your mighty arms the 'Manthana' or churning of the Madarachala in the Ksheera Sagara!) As Bhagavan agreed to do so and initiated the circling of Sesha Nag around the Mountain, the Daityas and Danavas out of bravado held the head of Sesha Nag's thousand mouths that emitted poisonous flames and many of them perished even before the process of churning; Devas on the other hand held the tail and manouvered it. As both the churning got momentum, both the Parties were extremely tried and Indra materialised cool showers to reduce the tiresomeness. Lord Brahma alerted and encouraged with cheerings and heartening remarks periodcally to both the facedrawers and tail-enders of the Sesha Nag. As the churning of the ten thousand yojana wide Mountain continued, from its top fell down several groups of elephants, eight-footed Sharabha animals, wild lions, tigers, boars and bears, crores of fearful poisonous reptiles, besides heavy and tall trees, branches, fruits, leaves, medicinal herbs and plants into the Ocean. The resultant pulp of the 'Manthan' of the materials dropped from the Mountain produced 'Varuni' and its envigorating smell pleased Devas and Danavas and became refreshed and mightier; the speed of churning pepped up and Bhagavan Vishnu held the sides of

the Mountain by his shoulders-grip and the radiance of the jewels on the thousand hoods was reflected on the blue dazzle of Vishnu's shoulders and hands looking like a 'Brahma danda' even as thousands of roars and lightnings emerged from the defeaning sounds of clouds above and sky-rise sea tides below. From the tail side of the Sesha Nag, Indra, Aditya, Rudragana, Vasugana, and other Devas were getting more and more active while the Rakshasa ganas including the powerful Viprachit, Namuchi, Vritra, Shambar, Dwimurtha, Vajradamshtra and Rahu, all headed by King Bali were displaying their respective energies with arrogance and self-pride. In the process countless animals, fishes, reptiles and othe varieties of Seas and the under-Sea Beings were destroyed in millions. Unfortunately however there was no indication of the much awaited 'Amrit' and all the Parties concerned were fully exhausted and disappointed. They all in one voice of unanimity prayed to Bhagavan Vishnu once again and the Lord assured them: Balam dadaami sarveshaam karmaitad ye samaasthitaah, Kshubhyataam kramashah Sarvair Mandarah parivartataam/ (To all the persons involved in this Manthana Venture, I am according 'Shakti'herewith and all concerned should perform their maximum from now on). As the action had improved mani-fold now, there was Purna Chandra, who emerged with the illumination of hundred Survas yet with extraordinary coolness that would readily bring about breezy freshness to the whole world. Then Devi Lakshmi was materialised with considerable grace and gorgeousness who desired to opt for Bhagavan Vishnu; she was followed by Sura Devi and Ucchaishwa and these were granted by Asuras to Indra as they were rather keen only for Amrita. Then followed the emergence of Koustubh Mani and that was gifted away to Vishnu to adorn the ornament on his broad chest. Further on, there was a Parijata Vriksha, which had bunches of flowers whose intoxicating fragrance filled up all over the gardens of Swarga. Eventually, there occurred dense and blue smoke which appeared all over the Ocean and reached the sky as well, when all the participants of the Churning were unable to increasingly bear it and had to temporarily call off the action as there were poisonous flames and fumes surrounding them, choking them all and killing several of them. Meanwhile, a highly frightful figure making terrible noises descended from the pitch dark clouds; as Daityas and Devas were frrightened to the core and Bhagavan Vishnu interrogated that horrendous figure as to who that it was! The reply came to Vishnu that it was KAALAKUTA VISHA and that could devour the whole Universe instantly, that it emerged pursuant to the huge scale churning of Ksheera Samudra and that all the participants should at once take the refuge of Maha Deva. The panicky Deva-Danavas as well as Brahma and Vishnu made a bee-line to a Golden Cave on the top of Mandara Mountain which too was a Principal participant of the Manthana Drama. At the Entry Gate of 'Shiva Nivasa', Ganeswara took Maha Deva's permission to let the agitated Devotees in as they all in a chorus commended Shiva (Shiva Stuti) as follows:

Namastubhyum Virupaksha Namestey Divyachakshusey/ Namah Pinaaka hastaaya Vajrahastaaya dhanviney/ Namah trishula hastaaya Dandahastaaya Dhurjatey, Namastrailokya naathaaya Bhutagraama shareeriney/ Namah Suraari hantrey cha Somaagnya kaaryagnya chakshushey, Brahmaney chaiva Rudraaya Namastey Vishnu —rupeney/Brahmaney Vedarupaaya Namastey Deva rupiney, Saamkhya yogaaya Bhutaanaam Namastey Shaambhavaaya tey/ Manmathaayaanga vinaashaaya Namah Kaalakshayankara, Ramhasey Deva Devaaya Namastey Vasuretasey/ Eka Viryaya Sarvaaya Namah Pinga kapardiney, Uma bhartrey Namastubhyam Yagna Tripura ghaatiney/ Shuddha bodha prabuddhaaya Muktakaivalya rupiney, Lokatraya vidhhatrecha Varunendraagni rupiney/ Rugyasussama rupaaya Purushaayeswaraaya cha, Agraaya chaiva chograaya Vipraay Shurti chakshusey/ Rajasey chaiva Satvaaya Tamasey Timiraamaney, Anintya nityabhaavaaya namo nityacharaatmaney/ Vyaktaaya chai vyaktaaya Vyaktaavyaktaanaya vai namah, Bhaktaanaamaarti naashaaya Priyanaraayanaayacha/ Umaapriyaaya Sharvaaya Nandivaktraaschitaaya cha, Rutu manvata kalpaaya Paksha maasa dinaatmaney/ Nanaarupaaya Mundaaya Varuutha Pruthu dandiney, Namah Kapaalahastaaya Digvaasaaya Shikhandiney/ Dhaniney rathiney chaiva yatayey Brahmachaariney, Ityevamaadi charitaih stutantu tubhyam namo namah/

(Virupaaksha! Divya netradhaariney! Our obeisances to you; you carry Pinaka, Vajra and Dhanush; our reverences to you! Jataadhaari! you hold Trishula and Danda in your hands, our sincere respects to you; You are the Trilokanatha and the Swarupa of all 'Pranis' / Beings; our greetings to you the annihilator of

'Deva Shatrus'; the Possessor of 'Chandraagni Surya Rupas' as also of Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra Rupas'; You are the Swarupas of Brahma, Veda an Rudra Rupas; You are also the Sankhya Swarupa and the unique provider of Propitiousness to all the Beings; You are the destroyer of Kamadeva's physique of love and the terrminator of Kaala Deva; You are the Vegashali, Devadhi Deva and Vasureta; Sarva Shreshtha, Vira, Sarva Swarupa and wearer of the vellow coloured 'Jataas' twisted hair: Umanatha, Tripura Vinaashaa! The Epitome of Pure Form of 'Jnaana'/ knowledge; Triloka Vidhata; The Swarupa of Varuna, Indra, Agni; the Rupa of Ruk, Yajur and Sama; Purushottama, Parameswara, Sarva Sreshtha, Bhayankara, Brahmana Swarupa; the Possessor of Satwa, Rajasa and Tamasa Gunas; Andhakaara Rupa, Achintya, Nitya, Nityacharaatma; Perceivable and Unperceivable; the demolisher of the difficulties of Devotees; the Great Friend of Narayana, the beloved of Devi Uma; The Great Terminator; The shine of Nandeswara's countenance; the Unique Measures of Time like Manvantaras, Kalpas, Ritus, Months, Fortnights, Weeks and Days; the Activiser of Myriad Rupas / Forms; of the Shaven Head; Digambara/ Sanyasi/ Brahmachaari, Maha Shankara! Our prostrations to you; Maha Deva! You are the only Supreme Energy which could gulp the 'Kalakuta Visha'; if uncontrolled; it could devour the Universe as a whole!). As the Deva-Daanava's joint delegation prostrated before Bhagavan-which incidentally was a historical event of unique significance, Shankara agreed: Bhakshayishyaamyaham ghoram kalakutam Maha visham, Tathaanyadapi yatkruthyam kruchhasaadhyam Surasuraah, Tacchaapi saadhayishyaami tishthadhwam vigatajjwaraah/ (Deva Suraagana! I am no doubt consuming this terrible poison anyway; if you entrust me any other worse and more difficult deeds to be performed, they too would be executed; never worry!) By so saying, Bhagavan took the 'Halaahala Visha'into his left hand and consumed and retained it in his throat as Devas headed by Brahma as also Asuras led by King Bali hailed Parameshwara exclaimed: Shobhatey Deva Kathastey gaatrey kundaniprabho, Bhrungaamaalaanibham Kanthepyathraivaastu visham tawa/ (Devadeva! As your Physique is white, slender and fragrant like a jasmine flower while the blue tinge of your throat has a remarkably distinct-look with the spot on your throat; please do retain it as it is!) All the concerned parties involved in the 'Operation Amrit' returned back to their respective positions once again anxiously awaiting the materialisation of Amrit.

In the final exercise of Churning the 'Ksheera Sagara', Bhagavan *Dhanvantari*, the Deity of 'Ayurveda' surfaced along with the most awaited Pot of Amrit; then followed the Large and Attractive Eyed Devi Madira the symbol of Intoxication; Kamadhenu the celestial cow which fulfilled the desires of any Living Being got materialised later on; the Celestial Elephant Iravata which Indra Deva claimed; Surya Deva accepted Dhanvatari as also the Ucchaishvraya horse that came up even earlier; Varuna Deva claimed the Celestial Chhatra (umbrella) and as Indra desired the Kundala Dwaya or the magnifecent Ear-Rings. At this juncture, Dhanvantari declared AMRITA and then commenced an all-out scuffle between Devas and Daityas making claims and counter claims. The fight assumed larger proportions as Bhagavan Vishnu materialised Mohini Devi and the demons became victims of Maya -Illusion-as they were completely enchanted by her and allowed her to distribute the Elixir. In this confusion, Mohini let Devas seize the Eternal Pot and they drank it off one by one; one Asura viz. Rahu however managed to consume the drops of Amrit upto his throat and as Surya and Chandra shouted against Rahu, Vishnu in a swift action cut off the Demon's throat by his Sudarshana Chakra, but the damage was already done and Rahu became immortal, all though all the rest of Asuras were denied of the Divine Drink. This followed fierce battles between Devas and Danavas and there was extensive massacre and blood-bath when innumerable Danavas and Daityas suffered losses and Devas became victorious under the stewardship of Bhagavan Vishnu. The left-over Danava-Daitya Stalwarts disappeared into the Oceans to retire into Patala Loka. There after, Mandarachala was restored to its original position; so did Sesha Nag and Sudarshana Chakra too. The havoc created in the Oceans too limped back to normalcy. The Dikpalakas, Devas, Gandharvas and all the Celestial Beings got reinstated and were extremely delighted and overjoyed. Tatomrutam sunihitameya chakrirey, Suraah Paraam tudamabhigamya pushklalaam/ Dadduscha tam nidhimamrutasya rakshitam, Kiritiney Balibhirathaamaraih saha/ (Thereafter, the Devaganas were gladdened to safeguard and hand over the 'Amrita Nidhi' /The Remaining Deposit of the Elixir to the custody of Bhagavan Vishnu himself.)

#### The Basics of 'Vaastu Shastra'-Origin, Construction methodology & Vaastu Yagna

When Bhagavan Shankara was demolishing Andhakaasura, there was a drop of sweat that fell on the ground and an awesome and nasty Being who kept on drinking the blood of the slain Asura; since that 'Praani' was not satisfied with its hunger, it started to eat up whatever came handy. As the Praani requested Shankara, the latter gave a boon of being able to consume any where in the Trilokas; in Swarga, the Praani was called 'Deva Vaastu'. As the Praani came down to Earth, Brahma gave the dispensation that whenever there was a talk of Vaastu or the Rules and deeds of Construction, there would be 'Bali' or Naivedya / offering of food at the end of 'Vaishwanara' Bali or oblations to Agni. Also separate 'Vaastu Shanti'/appeasement deed to the Deity of Vaastu would fetch food to him, as and when construction activities are commenced all over the Universe. That was also the Origin of 'Vaastu Yagna'.

Eighteen Rishis gave the Rules and Regulations of Vaastu Shastra to the posterity and these Rishis were: Bhrigu, Arti, Vasishtha, Vishwakarma, Maya, Nagnajit, Bhagavan Shankara, Indra, Kumara, Nandeswara, Shounaka, Garga, Vasudeva, Aniruddha, Shukra and Brihaspati. As regards, the knowledge of *Griha Nirmaana*, the results of initiating construction activity in various *MONTHS* are as follows: in Chaitra Month 'Vyadhi'or diseases are caused; in Vaisakha the Constructors gain cows and Ratnas; in Jeyshtha Month, death is indicated in the family; in Ashadha month construction helps gain of servants, Ratnas and 'Pashus' or domestic animals; in Shraavana Month there would be gain of servants; dangers and risks in Bhadrapada Month; construction in Aswin Month might lead to risk to wife; in Kartik Month there would be gain of Dhana- Dhanya or Money and Crops; in Margasirsha month there would be surplus of Bhojyas or Food Items; commencement of construction in the month of Pausha might lead to thefts and loss of materials; Construction in Magha Month there would be benefits but some fear or possibility of Fire and finally, activities of construction during Phalguna Month should yield gold, progeny and prosperity.

Initiating the Construction of Grihas / houses is considered the best in respect of the following NAKSHATRAS OR STARS: Ashvini, Rohini, Mula, the three Uttaraas, Mrigashira, Swati, Hasta, and Anuradha. As regards the DAYS, all the days of a week are good, except Sundays and Tuesdays. In regard to YOGAS, construction should not start on the following yogas viz. Vyaaghat, Shula, Vyatipaat, Atiganda, Vishkambha, Ganda, Parigha and Vajra. Following MUHURTAS are stated to be ideal for contstruction viz, Sweta, Maitra, Maahendra, Gaandhawa, Abhijit, Rouhini, Vairaja, and Savitri. To decide on the SHUBHA LAGNA, the activity of construction should be commenced when the Chandra bala as also Suryabala would be equally positive. The most important activities apart, 'Stambharohana'or the hoisting of the Pillar should be taken up first; similarly the procedures should be the same as in respect of the costruction of Praasaads, wells and such mini water bodies. SOIL TEST would be the foremost activity before the actual construction is taken up. Sweta (White), Lal (Red), Peeta (yellowish) and kaala (black) may be the ideal soils for the Four 'Varnas' of Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Shudra respectively. Taste-wise, the soil may be sweetish for Brahmanas, sour for Kshatriyas, 'tiktha' or bitter for Vaishyas and 'Kasaili'/ Kashaya / Pungent for Shudras. As a part of the soil quality test, saplings are to be planted and the best soil quality would yield the growth over three nights; medium growth over five nights and minimal growth over a week. The best soil obviously would give out the quickest yield. By way of a diagram, the area meant for construction is drawn as a big square which is divided into nine squares while each square is further sub-divided into nine smaller squares, thus making a total of eighty one squares. Of these, thirty two Devatas are worshipped in as many sub-squares and thirteen Devatas from outside those sub squares, thus accounting for forty five squares. The names and the positioning of the respective Deities are: Shikhi, Parjanya, Jayant, Indra, Surya, Satya, Brusha, Antakisha, Vayu, Pusha, Vitatha, Brihatsakshatha, Yama, Gandharva, Bhring raaja, Mriga, Pitrugana, Daivarika, Sugreeva, Pushpadanta, Jalaadhusha, Asura, Sesha, Paapa, Roga, Ahi, Mukhya, Bhallata, Soma, Sarpa, Aditi and Diti; these thirty two Deities are Baahya Devatas. These Deities are to be worshipped in the four Dikkonas like Ishaana. Now, outside the Vaastu Chakra the following four Deities are to be worshipped viz.

Aapa, Savitra, Jaya, and Rudra. In the middle nine squares, on the four sides of Brahma, eight Sadyha Devatas are to be positioned and these are Aryama, Savita, Viviswaan, Vibhudha -adhipa, Mitra, Raajayakshma, Prithvidhara, and Apavatsa. Apa, Apavatsa, Parjanya, Agni and Diti-these are of five Devataa varga to be worshipped in Agneya-kona. Further, twenty Devataas are positioned in two rows: Aryama, Viwaswaan, Mitra and Pritvidhara-these four are stationed on three sides of Brahma in three, three positions each. This is the Procedure of worship to all the relevant Deities.

The methodology of construction varies from one building to another such as Chatuhshaala, Trishaala; Dwishala etc. The Chatuh shaala is open from all four sides with gates /doors on all the sides, known as Sarvatomukha and is normally ideal for a Palace or a Temple. A building which has no door to the west is called Nandyavarta; without a door on the Southern side is called Vardhamaana; without a door on the Eastern side is called Swastika; and without an opening on the Northern side is Ruchaka. A King's Palace is ideally measured the hundred and eight hand-lengths, while that of a Prince has sixty six measures; a General's abode with sixty four measures; forty eight measures to forty eight measures; and thirty two for (Pillar) in an ordinary house, its circumference is an ordinary citizen. As regards the 'Stambhas' multiplied by nine times and the result must be the depth of the pillar underground; a four angled pillar is called 'Ruchak'; eight angled pillar is 'Vajra'; sixteen angled pillar is 'Dwi Vajra', thirty two angled pillar is 'Praleenak' and a pillar whose mid-region is round is called 'Vritra'. All the residential homes should be entered from the right side 'Pravesha Dwar'. Entry from the eastern side where Indra and Jayanta exist is the best; in the southern side 'dwara', it is said that Yamya and Vitatha are supposed to be ruling and is good too; on the western dwara, Varuna and Pushpadanta are prominent; Uttara dwar is governed by Bhallat and Sowmya and is quite propitious. But one should be careful of 'vedhas' or forced entries: for instance, such vedhas through side-lanes might result in 'Kulakshaya' or damage to the Vamsha; forced entry through trees might end up in mutual hatred of family members; vedha through mud would bring in sorrows; vedha through water ways would result in problems; vedha through pillars might end up through difficulties arising due to women. Entering from one house to another could end up in grief to the master of the house. A house which opens on its own might result in madness of a family member. Similarly, a house which gets closed on its own could end up in 'Kula naasha'/ distress to the Kula. Entry through a very high door could lead to 'Raja bhaya' or difficulties on account of Authorities. If the door is too low, there could by 'Chora bhaya' or fear of thefts. A door just above another door could attract Yamaraja darshan. If a house with a main door of disproportionate size is built in the middle of a big road is made, the master of the house would not live for long. If the main door is smaller than the other doors of a house, that house might not have contentment and would be a constant abode of recurring predicaments. The rear portion of the house must be kept duly adorned with trees, foliage, pots and decoratives. The east of the house there should be 'Vata' vriksha; in the Southern side Udumbara tree and the western side Pippala Tree and Pluksha tree on the northern side. Nearby the house, trees with thorns and Ksheera Vrikshas or milk-yielding trees are not good. It would be propitious to grow trees like Pumnaga, Ashoka, Shami, Tilaka, Champa, Dadimi, Peepali, Draksha, Arjuna, Jambeera, Puga, Panasa, Ketaki, Malati, Kamala Chameli, Mallika, Coconut, Kela, Kadali and Patala as these Trees are signs of Lakshmi / prosperity. Houses are better not built in the extreme vicinity of temples, Dhurtas or mischievous elements, General Adinistration, Four-Lane Centers, since there might be causes for irritation, fear and problems. Leaving ample space before, rear and sides of the building is a must. It would be advisable to have the southern part of the house elevated and such an abode is called a 'Sampurna' or complete from the Vaastu point of view and would thus bestow the best of advantages. To lay the 'Adhara Shila' (Foundation Stone) of a building, the Priest should determine the 'Muhurat', decorate the Stone with white cloth, lay 'Nava Ratnas' and Gold along with Nava Dhanyas or nine varieties of appropriate seeds and with the help of masons fix up the stone, and perform 'puja' to Ganapati, Vaastu Deva, Ishta Devata or the Family Deity with formal 'Mantrocchaarana', also perform 'Havan'/ homa to Agni Deva with milk, ghee and honey: The relevant Havan Mantra is: Vaastoshpatey Pratijaanee -hyasmaantswaavesho anameevo bhavaa nah, yat tvemahey prati tanno jupuswa sham no bhava dwipatdey sham chatushpadey/ VAASTU YAGNA

comprises: Sutrapath, Stambhaaropana or hoisting of the main Pillar, Dwara vamshocchraya, Griha Pravesha and Vaastu Shanti. Sutrapath takes place in the Ishana Disha and Stambhaaropana in Agneya kona. Vaastu Deva's 'Pada Chinhas' or foot prints should be set up and the 'Karta'should do 'pradakshinas' (circumambulation) around the foot-prints. It is stated that water with the powder of Munga, Ratna and Suvarna should be sprinkled while designing the 'Pada-Chihnaas'. Incidentally, the signs of Vaastu should never be ash, lit up firesticks, nails, skins, horns, bones, and skull as some illinformed persons tend to do so and such material would lead to distress, danger and difficulties. It is advisable that masons and other workers are present at the time of Griha Prayesh. *Ishaaney* Devataagaaram tathaa Shaanti gruham bhavet, Mahaanasam thathaagneye tatpaarswam chottarey jalam, Gruhasyopakaram sarvam Nairutye Sthaapaded Buddhah/ Bandhasthaanam bahih kuryaat snaana mandapameyyacha, Dhana Dhaanyam cha Vaayayye karmashaalaam tato bahih, Evam Vaastu viseshah syaad Ghruha bhatruh shubaavaham/ (To the Ishaana side of any house, the Devataagruha and Shantigriha must be set up; its kitchen must be in the Agneya kona; to the northern side the 'Jala sthaan' (Water reservoir); all the house materials be kept in the Nairuti kona; the place for keeping domestic animals like cows and buffalos as well as bathing rooms are better constructed outside the house; the storage place for Dhana-dhanya should be kept in the Vayavya kona; the 'Karya shala' or the Offices should be organised outside the residential place. This pattern of living would certainly assure excellent propitiousness and happiness to the entire family. At the 'Griha Prayesh' function (House Warming Time) approaches, Peace and Prosperity is ushered in as stated: Krutwaagrato Dwijavaraanatha Purnakumbham Dhadyakshataamala pushpa phalopa shobham/ Datwaa hiranyavasanaani tadaa Dwijebhyo, Maangalya Shaanti nilayaya gruham vishekthu/ Gruhoktahoma vidhaanaa Bali karma kuryat, Praasaada Vaastu shamaney cha vidharya uktah, Santarpayed vijavaraanatha bhakshya bhojjyeh, Shuklaambarah Swabhayanam prayishet sa dhupam/ (As the house is fully ready, the Head of the family should initiate the action of conducting 'Mangala Shanti' with a group of Brahmanas ahead along with a 'Kalasha'/Vessel, full of Sweet Water, Curd, Akshatas, tender mango leaves, flowers, fruits and coconuts as also scented sandal water, agarbattis/ incense sticks and oil-wick lamps nicely lit and decorated, as Brahmanas recite Veda hymns and musical instruments are played, while entering the house at the appointed 'Muhurta'. There after Griha praasaadas/ doors and other household items are purified for Vaastu Shaanti and Homa and Balidaana are performed. Brahmanas are treated with Bhojan and gifts of gold, vastras and dakshinas, where after relatives and friends are treated too with bhojan and gifts.)

#### Dharma Raja impressed with Savitri's conviction and reverses Satyavan's death

In the days of yore, there was a King named Ashwapati of Shaakala Vamsa in Madra Desha (the present Sialkot Territory) who did not secure a son. Being highly devoted to Devi Savitri (Gayatri), he intensified his worship to her and performed a daily 'havan'/ oblation to Agni with white 'Tilas' (Sesame seeds) in the presence of thousand Brahmanas for ten months and finally Devi Savitri appeared to Ashwapati on a Chaturthi day and granted an illustrious daughter to him and queen Malati; the baby was named as Savitri since she was born by the grace of Devi Savitri. The daughter grew into a charming and highly virtuous girl; a chance visit of Brahmarshi Narada to the King and the daughter indicated that her husband would die on a specified day after her wedding. They both indeed were terribly worried about Narada's prophesy but she was married in due course to the son of King Jhumnatsen called Satyavan who was a charismatic prince. But unfortunately the King lost his kingdom as also the eye sight of his and of the wife. Savitri emboldened herself and faced the situation with confidence and performed unreserved and steadfast service to the parents-in-law. At the sametime, she served her husband so much that Narada's prophesy was always ringing in her ears constantly and never allowed the husband even for a while. She also worshipped her Guru and followed each and every advice of his as a word of law. Thus she was worshipping her husband, her parents-in-law and her Guru as much as never in history had performed in the past. As the specific Chaturthi that Narada warned about her husband's death within a year, she took permission of her blind parents-in-law and her Guru and entered a jungle along with Satyavan and

decided to keep her husband the happiest man and spent every moment with him by showing and sharing with him the most memorable beauties of Nature, the waterfalls, the cool waters, the fragrant and colourful flowers and so on. She described that coulpes of hares, crows, lions, monkeys, and deers were all in a state of maddening infatuation and such wonderful experiences tended to extend lives forever! Meanwhile, Satyavan felt like cutting wood from some dry trees but Savitri cautioned that he should not be away from her. In great fun, he said that he would never ever dare to be away from her. Suddenly, Satyavan felt excruciating pain in his head and fell flat. Even while realising as to what was happening, she sensed that some thumb-long figures tied to Satyavan's soul and were ready to draw it towards the Southern direction and visioned that Yama Dharma Raja himself was present there. She screamed with astonishment and closely following Yamaraja sobbed away and said: Sacred Scriptures assured that sincere devotion to mother provided this loka, devotion to father would secure Swarga and devotion to Guru would fetch Brahma loka but of what avail was her sincerity if Scriptures made false promises? Dharma Raja replied: Do not interfere with my duty; indeed the Scriptures were right, the dead soul was a virtuous person and that she too was a real Pativrata, but there was a fixed procedure of terminating a human being as per one's life span which was pre-determined and judgment was given as per norms. Savitri counter argued that for a woman, husband was a Deity and the provider of safety; a father, brother or a son were no doubt the safeguarders but the husband was above all and if he were to be forcibly taken away then she had no other alternative but to immolate her life. Dharma Raja was indeed taken back ar her firmness and smilingly said that such an incidence as this was rare and that he would be pleased to bestow any boon excepting her husband's life. As Savitri took up the opportunity, she requested him to restore the eyesight as also the Kingdom to her in-laws and Dharma Raja readily granted these boons and asked her to go back so that he could perform his duty. He also asked her not to follow further and tire out herself without any aim or useful purpose. Devi Savitri replied that she would never feel tired following great celebrities of the stature of Dharma Raja, even if they were annoyed because only such emblems of Dharma could sift persons of genuineness or other-wise; it was stated in the Scriptures that one should never be afraid of even Agni, poison, and snakes compared to evil persons where as 'Satpurushas'had an inner conscience and even if they were apparently rude and hurtingly outspoken, their basic quality would be outstanding and subject to change of stance since such 'Mahatmas' test the authenticity of other persons being faced. Even normal and impartial Kings and Administrators would tend to examine the realities of those who make requests and a Deity par excellence like Dharma Raja would like to the make sure whether her supplications were pure and straight from the heart or not. That was the reason why Savitri felt untired of following Dharma Raja! Apparrently, Dharma Raja was pleased with the logic of Savitri and replied that without insisting on the life of Satyavaan, she might ask for another boon. She grabbed the opportunity and requested that her parents were not blessed with a son; despite performing countless Sacred deeds and their daily homas in favour of Gayatri / Savitri they succeded on giving birth to a daughter but not a 'Vamsoddhaaraka'. Dharma Raja conceded the second boon too and firmly admonished Savitri to pester further but should return home at once to organise the obsequies of her departed husband. Having secured the second boon from Dharmaraja, Savitri still followed the former and stated that any human being would like to fulfil three essential steps of Dharma, Artha and Kama as the corner-stones of an ideal life. She affirmed: Dharmaarjanam tathaa kaaryam purushena vijaanataa, Tallaabham Sarva laabhebhyo yadaa Daiva viseshatey/ Dharmaschaartha scha kaamascha trivargo janmanah phalam, Dharma heenasya kaamaarthey vandhyaa sutasamou Prabho/ Dharmadarthastathaa kaamo Dharmaallokadwayam tathaa, Dharma ekonuyaatyenam yatra kwachanagaaminam/ Shareerena samam naasham sarvamanya -ddhi gacchati, Ekohi jaayatey jantureka eva vipadyatey/ (Deva! Any Enlightened person seeks to earn Dharma since that secures the best of gains; the objective of life is to fulfil the means of Dharma viz. Artha and Kaama; conversely, wealth and fulfilment of desires alone without Dharma would be wasting one's life. Dharma would certainly fulfil the means to achieve it and could at the same time lead to Salvation too. In the final analysis, a dying person leaves every thing behind except Dharma and a person born does not bring any possessions nor takes anything at death). Dharma Raja was pleased with what Savitri said and asked her a third boon to that outstanding Pativrata who had been fighting for her husband's life. In turn, Savitri asked the boon: Varayaami twayaa dattam

putraanaam shatamourasam, Anapatyasya lokeshu gatih kila na vidyatey/ (Deva! I request you to give me the boon of securing hundred sons of my own, since without obtaining sons,

there would be no 'Sadgati'to her and husband as parents).

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

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

# 'Gotra Pravara Nirnaya' (Determination of Gothras /Vamshas and ancestry)

Matsya Bhagavan enlightened Vaivaswata Manu about the origin of Maharshis who got materialised from Agni pursuant to Brahma Deva's blessings. While Bhrigu Maharshi emerged from the radiance of Agni, Maharshi Angira came out of 'Angaaraas' or 'Agni's flame bursts; Atri appeared from Agni 'Sikhas' or ends of flames; Marichi came out of the rays of Agni; Pulastya surfaced from 'Agni Keshas' or hairs; Pulaha Maharshi floated from the long reaches of Agni; and Vasishtha was created from the glow. Maharshi Bhrigu married the daughter of Puloma Rishi and from the union was born twelve celestial sons likened to Devas viz. Bhuvana, Bhouvana, Sujanya, Sujana, Kratu, Vasu, Murdha, Tyajya, Vasuda, Prabhava, Avyaya and *Daksha*. Thus Bhrigu was known as Deva Bhrigu. Also the couple of Bhrigu and Paulomi gave birth to innumerable Brahmanas, the most illustrious ones being Chyavan and Aapuvaan, the latter's son and grand son being Ourva and Jamadagni respectively.

Thus came into being the **Bhargava Gotra** and their 'Pravartakas' viz. Bhrigu, Chyavana, Anupavan, Ourva, Jamadagni, Vatsya, Dandi, Nadayan, Vaiyagana, Veetuhavya, Paila, Shaunaka, Shounakaayana,

Jeevanti, Aayeda, Kaarshani, Vaiheenari, Virupaksha, Rouhityaayani, Vaishwaanari, Neela, Lubdha, Saavarnika, Vishnu, Poura, Baalaaki, Ailika, Anantabhahina, Mriga, Margeya, Manda, Maandya, Maanduka, Phenapa, Stanati, Sthala pinda, Shikhaavarna, Sharkaraakshi, Jaaladhi, Soudhika, Kshubhya, Kutsa, Galava, Mandukaayana, Gargyayana, Vaishampayana, Koutsa, Koutili, Vaageeyani, Anumati, Ashtishena, Rupi, Veetihavya, Revasa, etc. *Normally, among these Rishis, five Pravaras are mentioned viz. Bhrigu, Chyavana, Aapnuvaan, Ourva and Jamadagni.* Also, inter-marriages are not allowed among these descendants of Rishis mentioned above, especially among the first three above plus Arshishena and Rupi; Bhrigu, Veetihavya, Revasa, and Vaivasa; and likewise Bhrigu, and four generations ending the last four fathers mentioned as above.

Coming to Angirasa Gotra, Surupa the daughter of Marichi Maharshi was wedded to Angira and they had ten sons viz. Atma, Avu, Damana, Daksha, Sada, Praana, Havishmaan, Gavishtha, Ritu and Satva. Foremost Gotra / Pravartakas of this lineage are: Angira, Brihaspati, Bharadwaja, Goutama/ Moudgulya and Samvarta/Shaishira. Other Gotra Preavarakas are Utatha, Thouleya, Abhijit, Sardhanemi, Salougaakshi, Ksheera, Koushtiki, Rahukarni, Soupuri, Kairaati, Samalomaki, Poushaajiti, Bhargavat, Chairidaya, Kaarotaka, Sajeeyi, Upabindu, Suraishina, Vaahinipati, Vaishaali, Kroshta, Aarunaayani, Soma, Atraayani, Kaaseru, Koushalya, Parthiva, Rouhinyaayani, Revaagni, Mulapa, Pandu, Kshayaa, Vishwakara, Ari and Paarikaaraari. Angira, Suvachotathya and Urija Rishis lineage cannot resort to inter-Gothra marriages. Also, Angira, Brihaspati, Bharadwaja, Garga and Saitya cannot enter into alliances or their descendants. Further, the Rishis viz. Kapitar, Swastitar, Daakshi, Shakti, Patanjali, Bhuyasi, Jalasandhi, Vindu, Maadi, Kusidaki, Urvi, Rajakeshi, Voushandi, Shamsapi, Shaali, Kalashikantha, Kaaririya, Kaathya, Sowbuddhi, Dhaanyayani, Ladwi and Devamani are stated to have three Pravaras of Angira, Damavaayha and Urukshaya and hence cannot be inter-married. Samkruti, Trimaashthi, Manu, Sambadhi, Nachaketi, Thala, Daksha, Narayani, Lokshi, Gargya, Hari, Galava and Aneha have same Pravara of Angira, Samkuti, and Gauraviti and inter marriages are not permitted. Katyayana, Haritaka, Koutsa, Pinga, Handidasa, Vaatsyayani, Maadri, Mouli, Kuberani, Bheemavega and Shashwadarbhi have common Prayara of Angira, Brihadashwa and Jeevanaashwa and here again mutual weddings are not allowed. Likewise, those Rishis who have common Pravaras like Angira, Bruhadukhta and Vamadeva; Angira, Sadasyu, and Purukutsa; Angira, Virupa and Vrushaparva/Rathitara, Angira, Matsyadagdha and Mridula; Angira, Taandi and Moudgulya; Angira, Ajameedha and Katya; Angira, Tithiri, and Gargya/Kapibhu are all disallowed for mutual weddings.

Maharshi **Atri** had two major Gotra Kartas viz. Kardamaayan and Shaarana shaakhiya and the lineage of Rishis were Udvaalika, Shounakarniratha, Shoukratava, Gouragriva, Gourajina, Chatraayana, Arthapanya, Vaamarathya, Gopana, Aastika, Bindu, Karnajihva, Harapreeti, Laidraani, Shaakalaayani, Tailapa, Savaileya, Atri, Gonipati, Jalada, Bhagapaada, Sowpushpi and Chhandogeya. Their Pravara is Shyavaashwa, Atri and Archanaamsha; mutual weddings among these Gotras are forbidden. Daakshi, Bali, Parnavi, Urnunaabhi, Shilaardani, Beejavaapi, Shirisha, Mounjakesha, Gavishthara, and Bhalandana have the common Pravara viz. *Atri, Gavishthara and Purvatithi*. Atri's daughter Atreyi gave birth to Kaleya, Vaaleya, Vaamarathya, Dhaatreya and Maitreya and the Pravara Rishis are Atri, Vaamarathya and Poutri and their inter-marriages are dis-allowed too.

In the same Vamsha of Atri, there was another 'Shaakhaa' (branch) of **Soma** in whose Vamsha was born Sage **Vishwamitra**; the latter obtained Brahmanatwa by the might of his Tapasya. In the lineage of Vishwamitra, the followings were born, viz. Vaishwamitra

(Madhucchanda), Devarat, Vaikruti, Galava, Vatanda, Shalanka, Abhaya, Ayataayan, Shyaamaayan, Yajnyavalaka, Jaabaala, Saindavaayana, Vaabhravya, Kareesha, Samsrutya, Ulupa, Auopahaava, Payoda, Janapaadapa, Kharabaacha, Halamaya, Saadhita, and Vaastukoushika. The Pravara of these Rishis is *Vishwamitra, Devavrata and Uddaala*. In respect of other Rishis, the Pravaras are as follows: Devashrava, Devarata and Vishvamitra; Vishwamitra, Dhananjaya and Madhucchandasa; Viswamitra, Madhucchandasa and Aghamarshana; Vishwamitra, Aramarathya and Vajjuli; Viswamitra, Lohita,

Ashtaka / Purana; Runavaan, Gatina and Vishwamitra; Khilikhili, Vidya and Vishwamitra: in respect of all the above inter-marriages are prohibited.

The Gotra Pravara Rishis of the Vamsa of **Kashyapa** are as follows: Asraayani, Meshakiritakaayana, Udagraja, Maathara, Bhoja, Vinayalakshana, Shaalaahaleya, Kourishta, Kanyaka, Asuraayana, Mrigaya, Shetana, Bhotapaayana, Devayana, Gomayaana, Adhascchaya, Abhaya, Katyaayana, Shaakraayana, Barhiyoga, Gadaayana, Bhavanandi, Mahaachakri, Dakshayana, Bodhayana, Kaartikya, Hastidana, *Vatsyaayana*, Pracheya, Jnaana sanjneya, Aagna, Praasevya, Vaivashyapa, Udddalaayan, Maaricha, Vaikarneya, Kaashyapeya, Matangi Bhrigu etc. The Pravara of these Rishis is: *Vatsara, Kashyapa and Nidhuvi / Vasishtha*; in these cases too, mutual weddings are forbidden. In respect of other Rishis viz. Samyati, Nabha, Pippalya, Jalandhara, Bhujaatapura, Purya, *Kardama*, Gardhabhimukha, Kulaha, Vrishakanda, Mrigaketu, *Shandilya*, Devajaati and *Pappalaadi*, the common Pravara is *Asita, Devala and Kashyapa*.

As regards Maharshi **Vasistha**, the lineage included Vyaghrapada, Aoupagava, Vaiklava, Shraaddhalayana, Kapishthala, Aoupaloma, Alabdha, Shatha, Katha, Goupaayana, Bodhapa, Daakavya, Vaahaka, Balishya, Lobhayana, Aapasthuna, Swastikara, *Shaandili*, Sumana, Upavriddhi, Brahmabala, and *Yagnyavalkya*; all these Rishis have the Pravara of Vasishtha and are not permitted inter-marriages. Another set of Rishis including Sailalaya, Mahakarna, Koukhya, Krodhina, Kapinjala, Baalakhilya, Koulayana, Suraayana, Kaanva, Upalapa, Lambaayana, Kaalashikha, Aoupamanyu, Saankhaayana, Udgaah, etc have a common Prahara viz. *Bhageevasu, Vasishtha and Indrapramadi*. Yet another set of Rishis like Aoupasthala, Bala, Haala, Hala, Madhyandina, *Pippalaadi*, Saibalka, Kundina etc.have the Pravara in favour of Vasishtha, Vitraavaruna and Indrapramadi. Hereagain, restrictions of inter-gotra marriages apply. The background of **Maharshi Parashara** is indeed interesting [See the earlier Chapter of this Purana on Pages 20-21 regarding Vasishtha and Agastya as the sons of Mitravaruna and Urvashi; Vasistha married Arundhati later and their son was Parashara].

King Nimi decided to perform one Yagna and asked Vasishtha to facilitate its performance. But Vasishtha had just concluded another Yagna and requested the King to postpone it by a few weeks but Nimi insisted to perform the Yagna soon; he said that in the matters of 'Para loka Karyas', one could not afford to delay, since life was uncertain and 'Kaal'/ death might strike any body at any time; the King said: Aayushyey kramani ksheeney Prasahya haratey janam, Praanavaayoschalatwam cha twayaa vidita meyva cha/ (Execution of good deeds ought to be hurried up since the span of life would not wait but ticks away, as you are aware of the unpredictability of time). The King further told Vasishtha that in case he might not be able to do the Yagna immediately, he might as well approach another fit person to take up. Vasistha was infuriated and cursed King Nimi to become a 'Videha' (body-less) at once; the King too lost his temper and cursed Vasistha to become a Videha. King Nimi as well as Vasishtha approached Lord Brahma as both the parties were justified in their own views but lacked restraint and objective thinking. Brahma solved the problem of the King's 'videha' stature by bestowing the power of sight as soon as he would open up his eyes and thus enabled him to successfully perform his Yagna. As regards Vasishtha, Brahma arranged that he would become the son of Mitra-Varuna as Vasishtha once again with the capacity to be a Jaatismara or memory of previous birth; Surya and Varuna Deva who went in for Tapasya to Badarikaashram and the got infatatuated by a passing Apsara Urvashi and as their semen spilt out on their respective deer-skin seats, Urvashi out of fright of curses by Mitra and Varuna deposited the semen in a 'Kalasha'/ Kumbha(Pot) full of water and out of the combined deposits of Mitra and Varuna emerged Agastya and Vasishtha reborn. This Vasishtha (MitraVaruna) married Brahmarshi Narada's sister Arundhati and their son called Shakti; the latter's son was Maharshi Parashara and the Maharshi's son born of Matsya Gandhi of Maha Bharata fame was of Bhagavan Vishnu's 'Amsha' (feature/aspect) famed as Dwaipayana / Veda Vyasa! Now on to the Parashara Vamsha details: Kandashaya, Vaahanapa, Jaihyapa, Bhaumatapana and Gopaali are Fair-complexioned; Prapohaya, Vaahmaya, Khyateya, Kautujaati, and Haryashvi are Blue; Krishnaayan, Kapimukha, Kaakeyastha, Japati and Pushkar are

black; Shravishthaayan, Baaleya, Swaatashta Upaya and Ishikahasta are white; Vatika, Baadari, Stambha, Krodhanayan and Kshaimi are Shyama Parasharas. *TheirvPravara is Parashara, Shakti and Vasishtha.* 

The illustrious **Agasthya**, --who dried up the Ocean to kill Danavas, who got Vindhya bent down till date enabling Surya Deva to follow his course of movement around the Universe, and over-smarted Demon Vaataapi by digesting him for ever--had an equally famed progeny including Karambha, Kousalya, Shakat, Sumedha, Mayobhuva, Gandharakayana, *Poulastya*, *Poulaha and Kratuvamshotpanna*. *Their Pravara was Agastya*, *Mahendra and Mayobhava*. As Maharshi Kratu was childless, he adopted Agastya's son Idhmavaaha, since when Kratu and Agasthya Vamshas got unified. Also, Pulaha Maharshi was unhappy with his sons and adopted Agastya's another son Drudhaasya and grandson Pulastya's progeny too got identified with Agastya's Vamsha.

Mahatma **Dharma**'s Vamsha included Eight Vasus viz.Dhara, Dhruva, Soma, Aapa, Anila, Pratyusha and Prabhasa. The Astavasu's sons were Dravina, Kaala, Varcha, Shrimaan, Anala, Devala and Viswakarma respectively.Dharma's vamsha also included Twelve Sadhyaganas (Man, Manu, Pran, Narosha, Noch, Viryavan, Chittaharya, Ayana, Hamsa, Narayana, Vibhu and Prabhu) and Ten Viswadevas (Kratu, Daksha, Vasu, Satya, Kaalakama, Muni, Kuraja, Manuja, Beeja and Rochaman). The Twelve Adityas including Bhanava, the Marudganas the sons of Devi Marudvati, Nashatras, Grahas, besides 'Sankalpa' and 'Muhurta'-the sons of their mothers by the same name were all a part of the Dharma Vamsha! In the Pravara Kirtana, the Dharma Vamsha was thus highlighted prominently, especially since it included some of the most popular celebrities of the whole Universe.

# 'Matsya Purana Phalashruti'

Etat pavitra maayushyametat kirti vivarthanam, Etat pavitram kalyanam Maha paapa haram Shubham/ Asmaat Puraanaat sukritam naraanaam, Tirthaavali namamavaga –ahanaanaam/ Samastadharmaacharanod bhavaanaam, Sadaivalaabhascha mahaa phalaanam/ Etat Puraanam Paramam Sarva dohaavidhaatakam, Matsya rupena harinaa katitham Manavernavey/ (This Matsya Purana is sacred, life-extending, status-providing, sanctifying, propitious and sin-demolishing. It yields the fruits of 'Punya', the benefit of many 'Tirtha Snaanaas' and of virtuous life. This exalted Purana is a purifier of all blemishes. It is likened to Narayana at Pralaya and Manu who assisted the Matsya Deva. Asmaat Puranaadapi paadamekam pathet tu yah sopi vimukta paapah/ (Whoever reads even half of a Shloka would be rid of all sins and imperfections). If one reads or hears through this confidential and 'Punyaprada' Purana fully, the person concerned would be blessed by Maha Deva with the boon of performing Ashwamedha Yagna as also the 'Avabhruta Snaana'. Shivam Vishnum Samarbhyarcha Brahmaanam Sadivaakaram, Shlokam Shlokaardha paadam vaa Shraddhayaa yah shrunotivaa, Shraavayed yaapi Dharmagnasthala phalam shurunt Dwijaah/ Braahmano labhatey yidyaam Kshatriyo labhatey maheem, Vaishyo dhanamavaapnoti sukham Shudtastu vindita/ Ayushmaan Putravaamschaiva Lakshmiyaan papayarjitah, Shrutwaa Puraanamakhilam Shatrubhis —cha paraajitah/(When a person reads or listens one-or half a stanza of the Purana sincerely after worshipping Shiva or Vishnu, Brahma or Surya, he or she would secure vidya to a Brahmana, Kingship to a Kshatriya, opulence to a Vaishya and pleasures to a Shudra. If the Purana is read or heard fully would be 'Paapa rahit', 'Putravaan' and 'Lakshmiyaan' whom no evil/enemy could over-power!). Whoever disturbs, or leaves halfway, eats 'tambul', sits on a higher seat than that of a 'Purana Vakta', sits without greeting the Vakta, sleeps during the proceedings or is inebriated would be punished with loss of wealth, loss of wife/ progeny; and rebirth as a dog, as a crow, as a tree, an Ajagar snake, respectively. Interruption without justification or passing careless and casual remarks or criticism of the 'Vakta' would surely open up gates of hell. But sincerity, devotion and faith would assure 'Iha sukham' and 'Para Moksham'! Shradhha Bhakti Samaayukta Naanya karyeshu laalasaah, Vaagyataah Shuchayoyyagraah shrotaarah Punyabhaaginah/ (Those who possess dedication and commitment devoid of mean attractions pay peaceful attention to this Sacred Purana observing silence are the active partners of propitiousness and recipients of fruits of fulfillment).

# ESSENCE OF NARADA PURANA

Composed, Condensed and Interpreted by V.D.N.Rao, Chennai

# ESSENCE OF NARADA PURANA

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#### ESSENCE OF NARADA PURANA

Brahma Vishnu Maheswaraakhyaayam Yassamshaya Loka saadhaakaah Tamaadidevaam Chidrupam vishuddham Paramam bhajey/ (I meditate that

Pure and Innermost Form of Supreme Consciousness called the Super Soul whose 'Swarupas' or Appearances constitute Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara).

While Vedas are known as the oldest Scriptures that emerged from the mouth of Lord Brahma, Puranas are stated to have preceded Vedas. Narada Purana has the significance of being one of the Eighteen Major Puranas, which was narrated by Devarshi Narada himself to Maharshi Sanaka of the four Illustrious Manasika Putras (Mind- born Sons) of Brahma viz. Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanaatana and Sanat Kumaras. This was retold by Maha Muni Suta at a huge congregation of twenty six thousand Munis headed by Saunaka at 'Naimisharanya'. Narada Purana has two Parts-the 'Purva' and 'Uttara- the first Part with Four Chapters describing the Origin of the Universe, Application of Mantras, Worship through Rituals and Vratas while the latter Part dealing with Incarnations and significance of Pigrimages and Daanas (Offerings). The Sages prefaced their query as to how the normal aspirations of human beings viz. 'Dharma' (Virtue), 'Artha' (Prosperity), Kama (Fulfillment), 'Moksha' (Salvation) could be realized and how Narada Purana approached this objective.

# **Brief on Primary Creation by Maha Vishnu**

As the Kumara brothers were on way to Brahma, Sanaka and Narada met at the top of Meru Mountain and had a dip in Ganges that emerged from the Sacred Feet of Vishnu. Extolling the magnitude and enormity of Lord Vishnu, Narada asked Sanaka as to how could one realize Lord Vishnu, what was the cause of Creation, what were the features of devotion, knowledge and penance and how did Bhagavan create Brahma and other manifestations! Sanaka explained that Vishnu materialized from the right part of his body the Lord Brahma (sprouted by the stem of Lotus from Bhagavan's navel), Rudra from his middle part and created Vishnu, a replica of his own from the left side. He also created images/illusions of Lakshmi, Uma, Chandika and Sarasvati which were his Shaktis (Powers). He is of 'Vyakta' (Visionable) and 'Avyakta' (Invisible) nature but is all-pervasive and has Sat-Chit-Ananda as his basic features; he is Prakriti, Purusha and Kaala; he is Paramatma creating Five Karmendriyas (Sight, Sound, Scent, Touch and Taste), the corresponding Gyanendriyas (Eyes, Ears, Nose, Skin and Tongue), Three 'Gunas ( Characteristics) of Satvika-Rajas-Tamasika form; Maha Tatwa leading to the 'Ahamkaras' (Natural dispositions) creating 'Tanmatras'; and Pancha Bhutas (Earth, Water, Light, Air and Sky). Then Brahma commenced Srishti (Creation) of Tamasika nature to start with of Pasu-Pakshi and Mriga (Cattle, Birds and Animals) and Rakshasas but quickly took up the Creation of Satvika Sarga of Devatas, of human beings by Rajasika Sarga, followed by Daksha and progeny and thus the World got full by now. Then came into existence of the Seven Lokas viz. Bhurloka, Bhuvarloka, Swarloaka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapaloka and Satyaloka, besides the Under-Sea Lokas viz. Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talatala, Mahatala, Rasatala and Patala. Brahma created Loka Palakas (Administrators) of each of the Lokas as also the Mountains, Rivers, and all the essential provisions to enable life. At the Center of Earth, Brahma created Meru Mountain as also the peripheral areas beyond which were materialized the Seven Seas viz. Kshiroda, Ikshurasoda, Surida, Grita, Dadhi and Swadu; and Seven Dwipas (Islands), viz. Jambu, Plaksha, Shalmali, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaakha and Pushkara. It is at the north of Kshira Sagara and south of Himalayas that Bharata Varsha is situated, known as the 'Karma Bhumi' where by and large the population worship Narayana, Krishna and Vasudeva or Shiva, Neelakantha and Shankara. Those who did not worship out of ignorance or arrogance would visit various hells since they hardly had the tendency to be virtuous, devoted and even-minded; yet Bhagavan who had been most impartial, extremely forgiving and always merciful, would await every small good turn of any human being or even a negligible Being in the 'Charaachara' (Moving or Immoveable) Srishti and bestow multiplying effects in

providing boons. This was the reason why one should worship Vaasu Deva always: Vaasu Deva paro Dharmo Vaasu Deva param Tapah, Vaasu Deva param Jnaanam Vaasu Deva paraa gatih/ Vaasu Devaatmikam sarva jagat sthaavarajangamam/ AaBrahmastambha paryantam tasmaadanyatra vidyatey/ Sa yeva Dhaataa Tripurantaakascha sa yeva Devaasura Yagna rupah, sa eva Brahmaandamidam tatonyatra kinchidastit Vyatirikta rupam, Yasyaatparam naparamasti kinchidysmadaneeyatra tatha Mahiyan, Vyaptam hi tenedaminda vichitram tam Deva Devam Pranametsameedyam (It is Vaasudeva who is the final goal of all Dharmas; the end result of all Tapasyas; awareness of Vaasudeva Tatwa is the best Gyan and route to attain Vaasudeva; from Brahma down to 'Krimikeetas' (insects and flies) is the manifestation of Vaasudeva without doubt; He is Brahma and Shiva; He is all Devatas, Asuras, Yagna Rupa and Brahmaanda and none else; there is neither bigger nor smaller than him; Bhagavan Vishnu has pervaded this entire Universe; is there any other Super Force who is worthy of worship!)

# 'Shraddha-Bhakti', the corner stones of Supreme Realization

Maharshi Sanaka assured Devarshi Narada that 'Shraddha' (Faith) and 'Bhakti' (Devotion) were the corner-stones of realizing Narayana; Shraddha purvah Sarva Dharmaa Manoratha phala pradaah, Shraddhayaa Saadhyatey Sarvam Shraddhaya tushyatey Hari/ (Any Dharmik task performed with faith would yield fruits; Bhagavan Srihari is satisfied only with Shraddha alone). Any amount of 'Daan' (charity), 'Tapasya' (Meditation), Yagnas along with Dakshinas would be rendered waste without Shraddha-Bhakti; daan of as much of gold as Meru Mountain or Tapasya drying of one's own body, or executing 'Vedokta Ashwamedha Yagnas' would never attract Bhagavan's attention without faith and devotion. Sanaka Maha Muni underlined three major facets viz. 'Satsang' or Company of Bhagavat Bhaktas, Vishnu Bhakti and a strong feeling of equanimity while experiencing joy or sorrow. Given these basic strengths, observation of the Purusharthas of Dharma-Artha-Kama-Moksha within the precincts 'Varnashrama' regulations constitute the firm steps to Realization of the Supreme. When asked about the features of a 'Model Bhakta', Maharshi Sanaka cited the great example of Markandeva to Narada Maha Muni who had such unfailing faith and devotion to Bhagavan Narayana. In the days of yore, Maharshi Bhrigu' son Mrikunda did very rigorous 'Tapasya', as Lord Indra was apprehensive and approached Narayana that Mrikandu's Tapasya might not pose threat to his own Chair at Swarga. Bhagavan assured Indra that Mrikunda's meditation was certainly not for the Swarga throne; he gave his Appearance before Mrikunda and asked him to ask for a favour. The Sage said that indeed Vishnu's 'Sakshaatkar' (Direct Appearance) was paramount by itself; yet since Bhagavan offered to bless the Sage, he would secure a glorious son with high accomplishments and long life. Thereafter the Sage was married and got a son called Marakandeya who was brought up in a typical Vedic kind after reaching his fifth year's 'Upanayana'/ 'Gayatri Upadesha' (Instruction of Gayatri Mantra), the Sage taught the boy to practice Brahmacharya, reverence to the Elders and the Learned, Tapasya, Yagna, Adhyayana or constant reading and absorption of knowledge and supreme Vishnu Bhajana-Dhyana-Puja. Bhagavan Vishnu blessed Markandeya to script 'Purana Samhita'; he further blessed Markandeya to become 'Chiranjeevi'; One thousand Chatur Yugas make one day to Brahma and the latter's life span is one hundred years of day/night, which is one day of Vishnu. Markandeya survived the 'Ati Maha Pralaya' with Vishnu's 'Mahima' and when extolled Vishnu in his 'Yoga Nidra', the latter blessed Markandeya to witness such 'Srishti' once afresh! Bhagavan Vishnu himself described the characteristics of a Model **Bhagavat Bhakta** to Markandeya: Such a person wishes the happiness of all Beings and complains against none; has no envy but controls one's mind and body; has no desire and anxiety; does not hurt any body through mind, conversation and action; has no desire to possess nor a habit to take; has spontaneity in hearing, learning and absorbing anything related to 'leelas' or miracles of Bhagavan or of Bhaktas who demonstrate their marvels due to their Powers obtained by the grace of Bhagavan; strongly believes and serves one's mother as Ganga and father as Bhagavan Vishvanath; fully involves in 'Puja' by himself or assists in performing the worship, or even witnesses or at least approves of a Puja actively; distances from those who ridicule those performing Vratas, service to 'Yatis' (God men or women) and tasks related to devotion and duty; considers the advice of others for one's own good and act with discretion by absorbing what is approved of one's conscience; treats everybody alike without prejudice or ego; is an active protagonist of the virtues of Dharma Shastras and truthfulness; publicises Puranas and their contents; serves cows and Brahmanas and encourages promotion of their causes; undertakes and organizes 'TirthaYatras'; is genuinely happy at the progress of other's activities and supports them; involves in the tasks of construction of public gardens, temples, water bodies, wells, resting places of tourists without expecting returns; immerses in 'Hari nama smarana' by way of Bhajans, Stutis, group activities of religious nature and plays active role in such movements; has immense interest in Tulasi-related tasks like worship, wearing on person and enjoying the fragrance; observes 'Varnashrama dharma'; performs 'Atithi Seva' or service to Guests; engrosses in taking the name of Shiva, wears 'Rudraksha malas' and 'Vibhuti'(ash) all over the body; observes Vishnu and Shiva with equal devotion and conviction that both are one and the same; observes daily Agnihotra Homa and recites Ashtakshari or Panchakshari Japa always viz. Om Namo Narayanaya or Om Namah Shivaya; and performs whatever 'danaas' (charities) are possible without publicity or for name, especially 'Anna daana', Jala daana, Go daana, Vastu daana, Kanya daana, etc. Basically, a Bhakta ought to control 'Panchendriyas' (the Eyes, Ears, Nose, Tongue and Skin) as also 'Karmendriyas' (Pada, Hasta, Vacha, Paya and Upastha or feet, hands, speech, excretion and genitals) and most importantly the 'manas' or the mind. In brief he should observe the maxim of 'do good and be good' and that is a Bhakti all about! Lord Vishnu assured Markandeya that practice of Dharma on the above lines would further his life till the next 'Maha Pralaya' leading to 'Parama Moksha'.

## Sacred Ganga from Vishnu's feet to Earth by Bhagiratha's tenacity

Sage Narada enquired from Maharshi Sanandana as to how by the mere touch of Ganga, which originated from the feet of Lord Vishnu, purified the entire clan of King Sagara causing them all to reach Vaikuntha! Sanaka Maharshi then recounted the story of King Bahu of Surya Vamsha who ruled 'Sapta Dwipas' with great ability when the entire Public was highly contented and happy with 'Dharma' (Virtue) and 'Nyaya' (Justice) in full swing. In course of time, King Bahu developed a superiority feeling and ego that he was a powerful, wealthy, intellectual, youthful King without parallel; it is said that: Youvanam dhanasampatthih Prabhutvamavivekitaa, iaka kampanya -naarthaaya kim yatra chathushtayam! (Either of Youth, Wealth, Superiority and Ego would be enough to bring about disaster to a person; if all the four are in place, what else to talk about him?) When King Bahu became too overbearing and developed hostilities with his neighboring Kings viz. the Haihayas and Talajanghas, the latter defeated the King Bahu and he became a fugitive along with his queens and progeny and fled into forests without food, shelter and sleep. He then regretted saying: Naastyakirti samo Mrityur Naasti krodhasamo Ripuh, Naasti nindaasamam paapam naasti moha samaasavah/ Naastyasuuyaa samaakirtih naasti kaama samonalah, Naasti raga samah paasho naasti sangasamam visham/ (There is no disgrace worse than death; no enemy worse than anger; no humiliation worse than sin; no obsession worse than terror; no jealousy worse than disrepute; no passion worse than fire; no desire worse than shackles; and no Company worse than poison!). Out of shame and disease, the King Bahu died in the Ashram of Sage Aurva and the youngest Queen who was expecting a child desired to immolate but the Sage prevented her from doing so and assured her that a very renowned son would beget her. As the day of birth was nearing, the elder Queen being envious of the younger Queen poisoned her but due to the 'Satsang' (Good Company) and service given to the Sage, a bright son was born whom the Sage named as 'Sa'+ 'Gara' (with poison) that is Sagara. The Sage trained Sagara as he grew of age in archery, military skills and Raajaniti (Kingship talents). Soon, Sagara was able to defeat enemy Kings and became a renowned Monarch, especially after Maharshi Vasishtha guided him in all the matters of importance. Emperor Sagara married Keshini and Sumati and Sage Aurva blessed the Queens to beget progeny with two choices viz. one to secure one single boy whose son would be a great King and another who could beget sixty thousand sons; Keshini opted for a single issue while Sumati preferred the latter. Keshini gave birth to Asamanjasa who turned out to be whimsical although his son Amshuman grew up as an up-holder of virtue and wise with all the qualities of a Monarch. But the sons of Sumati grew up as a bunch of notorious, quarrelsome and unmanageable crowd often causing tremendous embarrassment to the Emperor. Even Indra complained to Sage Kapila to control the gang of sons as they were too uncontrollable day by day. Sage Kapila suggested performing Ashvamedha Yagna

as a diversion to the vagabond sons of the Emperor. The Yagna horse was hidden by Indra and the sixty thousand sons of Sagara who searched for the horse and finally found it where Sage Kapila was in concentrated Tapasya. The sons suspected that Sage Kapila stole the horse, abused as also man-handled him and by his mere vision of fury the Sage reduced them to ashes. Sagara was concerned and sent Amshuman to search and came to learn of the entire episode; he prayed to the Sage Kapila who informed that his grandson Bhagirath-the son of Dilip- was destined to bring Ganga from heavens to the place where his great-grand-uncles ie. the sixty thousand sons of the Emperor were lying scattered as ashes and liberate their souls to Salvation. As Bhagirath came of age, he executed very severe Tapasya to Lord Brahma, who appreciated the grit and resolve of the Youth and blessed him to fulfil his wish. Emboldened by his success in securing Brahma's boon, Bhagirath displayed his tenacity and doggedness to perform rigorous Tapasya to Bhagavan Shankara and with his grace the Holy River Ganga landed on Shiva's head; a stream of the River was released from Bhagavan's Jatajut (curled hair) down to the Earth which was guided by Bhagirath to the Place where the ashes of his great-grand fathers were lying dispersed and their souls were redeemed and directed to Swarga. This kind of persistence which purified the souls of his fourth generation kith was indeed so exemplary that came to be popularly known as Bhagirath's tenacity in the annals of Bharata Varsha.

Narada was desirous of knowing from Sanaka Kumara as to how the Holy Ganga descended from Vishnu's Sacred Feet. This was traced back to the Story of Vishnu's Incarnation as Vamana and Bali Chakravarti / the Great Sovereign of Three Lokas. The Illustrious Muni Kashyapa had two wives viz. Diti and Aditi, the former having begotten Hiranyakashipu who was killed by Lord Narasimha-another incarnation of Vishnu- to save the Danava's son Prahlada, the exemplary Vishnu Bhakta. Prahlada's son was Virochana and the latter's son was Bali who conquered the Three Lokas. Aditi the other wife of Kashyap was the mother of Devas who were all dislodged from Swarga by Bali; pained by this disaster Aditi performed Tapasya to Lord Vishnu that Indra and Devas be re-installed in Swarga. Devi Aditi secured a boon that Narayana would be born to her as Vamana (midget) Brahmachari and free Swarga from the control of Bali. At the Yagna being performed by Bali under the supervision of Daitya Guru Shukracharya, Vamana Deva arrived and asked for three feet of land to perform Tapasya. Bali agreed despite Shukracharya's protests saying that if Vishnu had arrived as Vamana Murti himself and asked for charity of three feet, he was fully prepared to 'oblige' the Lord! Bali further told the Guru: Jihvaagrey vasatey yasya Harirtyhakshara dwayam, sa Vishnu loka maapnoti punaraavritthi durlabham (He whose tip of the tongue recites the two letters-Hari- has no birth again and achieves Vishnu loka!). As Bali picked up the 'Kalasha' (Vessel) full of water to formalize the charity, Shukacharya made the last attempt by sitting inside the vessel trying to stop the flow of water through the nozzle so that formalization of the 'daan' could be obstructed. But the omniscient Lord Vishnu pushed a darbha (grass piece) into the nozzle making permanent damage to one of the Guru's eyes. As the act of Charity was done successfully, the Vamana expanded his body to occupy his head touching Brahmaloka, measured the entire Bhumi with one of his feet and the other foot was lifted to the top-tip of 'Brahmanda' piercing it into two pieces by the impact of his toe. While millions of streams of water sprang out, Ganga water beyond the top of Brahmanda was sanctified by washing Vishnu's foot and flowed downward thus purifying all the Three Lokas; Brahma, Devatas and 'Saptarshis' too purified the unending flows which fell on Meru Mountain. The third foot suppressed Bali down to the lower lokas and made him the Monarch of Rasatala. The provision of food to King Bali and his followers included whatever was thrown into 'Agni' without Mantras; whichever daana was given as 'Apaatra daana'/ Nishphala daana or ill-deserved charity.

## Shukla Paksha Dwadashi Vratas from Margasirsha to Kartik Months

Sage Narada desired to ascertain the procedure of performing monthly Dwadashi Vratas from Sanaka Kumara with a view to enlightening the normal Public; Bhagavan Vishnu is pleased easily with devotees performing Vratas by way of 'Puja'(worship), 'Dhyana'(meditation), 'Bhajan' (collective singing) and 'Stutis' with 'Shraddha' (sincerity) and 'Bhakti' (Devotion). Indeed it is not essential to execute 'Yagnas' and 'Tapas' involving considerable rituals and complications, but simple Pujas by

merely taking the name of Bhagavan. Such Vratas have far reaching impact for fulfilling desires in 'Iham' or the on-going life and attainment of Mukti in 'Param' or post-life. On Shukla Dwadashi in Margashirsha month, a devotee needs to observe fasting and silence and perform dutiful worship with Gandha (Sandalwood paste), Pushpa (flowers), Akshata (rice grains mixed with turmeric powder), Dhupa (Incense), Deepa (Light), Naivedya (offering of food items and fruits) and such other Upachaaras (Services), while reciting the simple Mantra at each service viz. Keshavaya namastubhyam. By reciting the same Mantra, one should offer hundred eight oblations to Agni Deva with ghee mixed with til (sesame seed) oil, keep awake through night ensuring the lights are lit and perform three 'Abhishekas' (bathing by milk the Salagram / Pratima representing Bhagavan Vishnu along with Maha Lakshmi) followed by three 'pujas' with a gap of three hours along with the Upacharas of Dhupa, Deepa, Naivedya etc.as also devotional music and dances in praise of Bhagavan. Next morning, after ablutions and bathing, maintaining external and internal cleanliness), one should Puja again and offer 'Kheer' (boiled milk and cooked rice with jaggery) along with coconut / fruits and 'dakshina' (cash) to the Brahmana engaged for the Vrata or otherwise), while reciting the following Mantra: Keshavam Keshiha Devah Sarva Sampat pradaayakah, Paramaanna pradaanena mama swadishtadayakah/ (Keshaya! You had destroyed the Keshi named Daitya; You are the provider of boons to me to receive all kinds of wealth; I am hereby giving away charity of Quality Anna to a Brahmana). After the 'daana', satisfy the Brahmana with good food and eat along with family and friends with devotion and silence. Conclusion of the Vrata on the above would fetch the 'Punya' of eight Paundarika Yagnas.

On Shukla Paksha Dwadashi of **Pousha** Month, a devotee should observe fasting and silence as also perform Puja to Narayana as above by continuously reciting the Mantra *Om Namo Narayanaaya* and provide Naivedya of 'Kheer' along with fruits. Jaagaran (keeping awake through out the night), performing three Pujas as also intermittent musicals and 'nrityas' of devotional kind in exalting Bhagavan's deeds and miracles are observed. Next morning after the Punah Puja (repeat worship), give away 'daana' of 'Khichidi' (cooked rice / wheat grains and vegetables) along with dakshina by reciting the Mantra: *Saravatmaa Sarva Lokeshah Sarva Vyaapi Sanaatanah, Narayanah Prasannah Syat Kushaanna pradaanatah*/ (May Narayana - who is the Soul present in every body, the Over Lord of the Universe, the All Pervasive and the Timeless-be contented as I am offering the daan of 'Khichidi' along with dakshina). Then full meals are organized to Brahmanas and eat the food later along with family and friends; observance of this Vrata would secure the fruits of executing eight Agnishtoma Yagnas.

Observing a Madhava Vrata as above with fast and devotion, the Shukla Dwadashi Vrata of 'Magha Maasa' is also performed, while the devotee offers eight oblations to Agni Deva with ghee by reciting the Mantra *Namastey Maadhavaaya*, performs 'Abhisheka' (Bathing) to Bhagavan Madhava and Puja as above with Gandha, Pushpa, Akshata etc. followed by 'Jaagaran', three Pujas during the night and 'Punah Puja' next morning. With a view to destroying sins, 'daana' of til, clothing and dakshina should be given away by reciting the following Mantra: *Maadhavah Sarva Bhutaatmaa Sarvakarma phala pradah, Tila daaneyna mahata Sarvaan kaamaan prayachhatu*/ (Bhagavan Lakshmipati! You are the bestower of all of our desires and the Omni-Present Supreme Soul; kindly be contented with this Maha Daan of Tilas and fulfill our wishes too). The Vrata is concluded by organizing satisfactory food and Dakshina to Brahmanas. By performing the Vrata as above, the devotee is qualified for the 'Punya' of executing hundred Vajapeya Yagnas.

**Phalguna** Shukla Paksha Dwadashi Vrata of Govinda is observed with the key Mantra of *Govindaaya Namastubhyam* along with one hundred and eight oblations of Til and Ghee into the Fire Place; 'Snaan' to Govinda; formal worship with the services, day-night fasting, jaagaran and three Pujas in the night as described above. Next morning, after Punah Puja along with the prescribed 'Upacharas' (Services), daana is given away to a Brahmana comprising four big measures of food grains while reciting the Mantra as follows: *Namo Govinda Sarvesha Gopikaajana vallabha*, *Anena Dhaanya daanena Preeto bhava Jagadguro*/ (Govinda! Sarveshwara! Gopi Vallabha! Kindly be pleased with this daana of 'Dhaanya'). By performing this Vrata with Bhakti and Shraddha (devotion and conviction), the devotee

would get rid of all the sins committed in the current birth, besides reaping the fruits of a Maha Yagna. *Namostu Vaishnavey Tubhyam* is the Mantra to be recited at all the Pujas to be done at the Vrata of **Chaitra** Shukla Dwadashi. 'Abhisheka' is performed with milk and / ghee before worship as suggested at that of Margasirsha month's puja above. Observing fast, Jaagaran, musical intermissions after the three pujas in the night, the schedule for the next morning would include one hundred 'Ahutis' (oblations) in the 'homas' using honey, ghee and thila-mixed rice as also Daana to Brahmana of big measures (four seers) of rice while reciting the Mantra: *Praana ruupih Maha Vishnuh Praanadah Sarva Vallabhaha*, *Tandulaadhaka daanena preeyataam me Janaardana*/ (Bhagavan Maha Vishnu is the epitome and bestower of Life to all the Beings in Creation; May Janaardana be pleased with this daana of major measure of rice). A devotee who performs the Chaitra Shukla Dwadashi Vrata would not only be free from sins but would also obtain the fruits of executing 'Atyagnishtoma Yagnas' eight times!

A devotee desirous of observing **Vaishakha** Shuddha Dwadashi Vrata has to fast with dedication and give 'Shuddhodaka Snaana' (Pure water bathing) to Madhusudana with milk and perform worship as prescribed above in the context of Margasirsha month's Vrata; oblations of ghee to Agni Deva be offered hundred and eight times along with the Key Mantra *Om Namastey Madhu hantrey* followed by Puja with the usual services like Gandha, Pushpa, Dhupa, Deepa, and Naivedya. During the night that would follow, the devotee would perform three Pujas with attention and devotion and on the next morning after repeat Puja, he should give away daan and dakshina in the name of Maha Vishnu with the Mantra Om Namo Vaasudevaaya. Whoever does the Vrata would qualify for abolition of sins and be eligible of securing the fruits of eight Ashwamedha Yagnas.

The key Mantra to be recited at the Vrata of **Jyeshtha** Shukla Dwadashi is *Namas Trivikrama* as the name that Vishnu is worshipped on that day is Trivikrama. The hundred and eight oblations to Agni would be in the form of 'Kheer', following which there would be 'Abhisheka'(Sacred bath) to the Trivikrama Rupa Vishnu by a very large measure of milk (four seers) continuously reciting the Mula Mantra of the day as mentioned. The Homa and Abhisheka is followed by the formal worship by the prescribed Sevas (Services) viz. Gandha, Pushpa, Dhupa, Deepa and Naivedya. Observing a day-night fast and silence, the devotee would be engaged in three Pujas and 'Bhaganan naama smrarana' viz. the Key Mantra, besides Sangeeta-Nrittha-Vaayidya or music-dance and instrumentals all dedicated to Lord Trivikrama. On the next morning after repeat Puja, 'daana pradaana' or giving away charity of twenty measures of food grains along with Dakshina by reciting the daana mantra as follows: *Deva Deva Jagannatha Praseeda Parameswara*, *Upaayanam cha samgruha mamaabhishtha prado bhava/* (Deva Deva! Jagannaatha! Parameswara! Kindly be pleased with me by accepting the daana and fulfilling my desires). This Trivikrama Vrata shall indeed help eradicate the sins of the 'Vrata Karta' and bestow the Punya of Eight Yagnas.

Dedicated to Vamana Swarupa Vishnu, the **Aashaadha** Shukla Dwadashi Vrata has to be given a heavy bath of milk with the Mantra viz. *Namastey Vaamanaaya*, besides oblations of hundred and eight inputs of ghee and durvara tree figs to Agni Deva, followed by Vamana Deva Puja with the services of Gandha-Pushpa-Dhupa-Deepa and Naivedya. Observing fast and Jaagaran the devotee would perform three pujas through the night along with intermittent hymns, bhajans and Vishnu-related activities and on the following morning after Punah-Puja, charity to Brahmana be given by way of cooked rice, curd and coconut simultaneously reciting the Mantra: *Vaamano Buddhido hota dravyasto Vaamanah sadaa*, *Vaamanas taarakosmaachya Vaamanaaya namonamah*/ (Bhagavan Vaaamana is a Provider of intellect; he is the 'hota' or the Chief Priest of Yagnas; he is also known for his wealth; he is the unique device to cross the deep ocean of 'Samsara'; my sincere salutations to Vamana Deva again and again). Thereafter, Brahmanas are treated with good food and dakshina. Vamana Vrata would confer the advantage of Agnishtoma.

On the Shukla Dwadashi of **Shraavana** month, execution of the Shridhara Vrata grants the benefit of one thousand Ashwametha Yagnas. Bathing with honey and milk of Bhagavan Shridhara is an integral component of the worship on this day along with the recitation of the Shridhara Mantra viz. *Namostu* 

Shridharaaya, besides the Puja with Gandha, Pushpa, Dhupa, Deepa and Naivedya as well as hundred eight 'Ahutis' to Agni with curd /ghee. After jaagaran and three hourly pujas, the next morning Puja would be followed by daana to Brahmana of large quantity of milk, 'vastra dwaya' and dakshina while reciting the Mantra: Ksheerabdhi shayana Devesha Ramaakaanta Jagatpatey, Ksheera daanena supreeto bhava Sarva sukhah pradah/ (Deveshwara who rests on the Ocean of Milk! Lakshmi kaanta! Kindly be contented with this 'daana' of milk and fulfill all our comforts). After the Daana, full meals should be served to Brahmanas and satisfied with dakshinas.) As always on Shukla Dwadashi Vratas, fasting is a must on **Bhadrapada** month also which is dedicated to Hrishikesha when the Idol is bathed by milk by reciting the Mantra viz. Hrishikesha Namostutey. After the formal Puja to the Deity with the requisite 'Upachaaras', hundred eight 'Ahutis' are offered to Agni with honey. Having done Jaagaran and three pujas through the night, the Vrata performer has to purify with bath for doing Punah Puja and then give away 'daan' of large measures (six seers) of wheat grains if possible with gold as dakshina while reciting the Mantra: Hrishikesha namastubhyam Sarva lokaika hetavey, Mahyaam sarva sukham dehi godhumasya pradaanatah/ (Bhagavan Hrishikesha! You are the chief cause of Creation and my sincere Salutations to You; do accept this daana of wheat and confer to me all kinds of happiness). By completing the Vrata after 'bhojan' to Brahmanas, the devotee would have no sins left, besides acquiring the fruits of performing a Maha Yagna.

Padmanabha Vrata is observed on Aswayuja Sukla Dwadashi with piety, fasting and cleanliness. Observance of the Vrata is stated to assure the benefit of thousand Maha Yagnas. Worship of Padmanabha starts with bathing the 'Vigraha' with milk with the Mantra Namastey Padmanaabhaaya; the Mantra should be continued while doing the Puja with Gandha, flowers, etc. Hundred and eight oblations to Agni as a mix of til, cooked rice and ghee are also done with it. After Jaagaran, three Pujas and singing, there would be a repeat Puja on the next morning, followed by daana to a Brahmana with lot of honey and dakshina; the Mantra along the daana is: Padmanaabha namastubhyam Sarva loka Pitamaha, Madhu daanena supreeto bhava Sarva sukhapradah/ (Our Salutations to You Pamnanaabha, the great grand father of the Universe! Please be gratified with this daana of honey and bestow comforts to us). Damodara Vrata on Kartika Shukla Dwadashi is stated to be of extremely high in significance as the 'Punya' to be acquired would equal to two thousand Ashwamedha Yagnas! The key Mantra to be recited is Om Namo Damodaraya at the time of 'Abhisheka' of the Deity which is prescribed as large quantity of milk (four seers), curd / ghee; or at the time of hundred and eight 'Ahutis' to Agni with honey, ghee and til seeds; or at the time of Jaagaran in the night and the three hourly Pujas as also the hymns in commendation of Lord Vishnu who incarnated himself as Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, and so on; or at the Punah Pujas with lotus flowers on the day after. When the devotee performs daana to Brahmanas with five kinds of 'Bhakshya Padarthas' (Snacks and food recipes) along with dakshina, the following Mantra is to be recited: Damodara Jagannatha Sarva kaarana kaarana, trahimam kripayaa Deva Sharanaagata Paalaka/ (Daamodara! Jagannatha! You are the Cause of Causes and the Supreme Protector of refugees; my sincere request to You Bhagavan to provide me fortification). If the Vratas on all the Shukla Dwadashis in a year are performed, **Udyapana** (winding up) needs to be performed in Margasirsha month by Pujas, Homams, Illuminations, Ringing bells, floral arrangements, flying Dwaja Flags, Purana Shravanas, musical and dance extravaganza, Anna Daanas, and so on. The Concluding obeisance and prostration to the Lord would say: Lakshmipatey namastubhyam Ksheeraarnava nivaasiney, Arghyam grihaana Devesha Lakshmyaaka Sahitam Prabho/ Yasya smrityaa cha naamoktya tapoyagna kriyaadishu, nuunam Sampurnatam yaati Sadyo vande tamachytam/ (Lakshmi Pati who is lying on the Ocean of Milk! My salutations to you and Lakshmi; please accept our 'Arghya'. The Yagnas and Tapas pale into insignificance when Your mighty names are memorized and uttered with commitment; there is no end to our worship to you, excepting that we bend our heads in awe and total dedication.

# 'Sandhyopasana'-Procedure, Meaning and Interpretation

While taking bath for purification before 'Sandhyopasana' a devotee may recite the following Mantra: Gangecha Yamunechaiva Godavari Saraswathi, Narmadey Sindhu Kaveri Jalosmin sannidhim kuru/ Pushkaraadyaani Tirthaani Gangaadyaah Saritastatha, Aagacchhantu Mahaabhaagaah Snaana kaaley sadaa mama/ Ayodhya Mathuraa Maayaa Kaashi Kaanchihyavantika, Puri Dwaravati Jneyaah Saptaitaa Moksha –daayikaah/ (May the waters flowing in the Rivers of Ganga, Yamuna, Godayari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri be present in the waters that I am bathing in. May Pushkara and other Tirthas as well as the Sacred Rivers like Ganga be present here. May also the Seven Sacred Kshetras of Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya (Haridwar), Kashi, Kanchi, Avanti (Ujjain) and Dwaravati as renowned be also present.) After bath, 'Arghya' (Water) / Dhyana (meditation) are offered to Surya Deva; the devotee would then wear clean, two white robes, settle down on a 'kushasana' (mat) facing 'Ishana' (North-East) direction, commence 'Achamana' with Harih Om and Pavitra Mantra viz. Apavitrah pavitrova sarvaavasthaangatopivaa, yasmaret Pundareekaaksham sa Baahyaantarah suchih (Let me remember the name of 'Pundarikaaksha' always-whether physically clean or otherwise-with cleanliness from within or without); while doing 'Achamana' or sipping spoonfuls of water thrice with Gayatri Mantra, utter the Mantras viz. Om Rutamcha Satyam cha abheedaat tapasodhyajaayata, tato Ratrasya Jaayata tatassamudro Arnavah (Even before meditation, the Self-illuminated Para Brahma created the authentic Truth and from that Truth generated darkness which created the waters of the Oceans); Samudraarnavaat Adhi Samamvatsaro Ajaayata, Ahoraatraani vidadhat Vishvashya mishato vashee/ (Days/ nights as also Years and the concept of Time got materialized only after the waters of Oceans were generated and Paramatma held the Universe in His full control); Survaa Chandra masow Dhaata Yathaa purvamakalpayat, Divamcha Prithiveem chaaantariksha mathosvah/ (As in the past, Dhata (Paramatma) created Surya Chandras, Celestial Region including Heaven, besides the Sky and Earth). Then the devotee performing Sandhya Vandana sips water by way of 'Achamana' once again. Thereafter, the devotee is to spray water in all the directions as also on the self. Then, he readies himself to do 'Praanaayaam' and recites Pranava while proposing the seven 'Vyahritis' (relevant expressions of Gayatri) viz. Om Bhuh, Om Bhuvah, Om Suvah, Om Mahah, Om Janah, Om Tapah, Om Satyam, Om tatsavatir varenyam bhargo devasya dheermahi dhiyo yonah prachodayaat, Om Apo Jyoti rasomritam Bharma Bhurbhuvatswarom/ simultaneously sprinkle drops of water on one's own head. Pranayama (Control of Prana) is performed by touching the nose by the thumb and second finger and air must be taken in slowly through the left nostril and sent out by the right nostril; inhalation is known as 'Puraka', retaining is 'Kumbhaka' and exhalation is Rechaka, the three tasks done by 1:3:2 ratio, completing one Pranayama.

The 'Viniyogas' or attributions of Gayatri / Shiro Mantras are as follows:

Gayatri Mantra -Omkaarasya Brahma Rishih, Devi Gayatri Chhandah, Paramaatmaa Devataa, Sapta Vyahriteenaam Prajaapatirrishih Gayatri ushnik anushtup Brihati Pankti trishtup jagatyah chhandaamsya AgnirVaayu Surya Brihaspati Varunendra Vishvadeva Devatah/
PraanaayamaViniyogah)

Mantra -Tatsavituriti Vishwamitra Rishih Gayatri chaandah Savitaa Devataa Apojyotiriti Sirasah Pajapatirishi yajuschhando BrahmagniVaayu Suryaa Devataah/ (Praanaayaamey Viniyoga. After the Pranayaama Viniyoga, the devotee has to perform Kara Nyasa and Anga Nyasa as follows: Kara Nyasa: Om Angushthaabhyaam Namah (Touch both the thumbs); Om Bhuh Tarjanibhyam namah (Touch both thumbs with both fore-fingers); Om Bhuvah Madhyamaabhyaam Namah (Touch both thumbs with both middle fingers); Om Swaha Anaamikaabhyaam Namah (Touch the thumbs with ring wearing finger); Om Bhur bhuvah kanishtikaabhyaam namah (Touch the thumbs with little fingers) and Om Bhur bhuvah swah karatala hastaabhyaam namah (Touch both the back sides of the palms) Anganyasa:: Om Hridayaa Namah (Touch the heart with right hand); Om Bhu Sirasey swaha (Touch the head); Om Bhuvah Shikhaya vashat (Touch the tuft); Om Swah kavachaaya hum (Touch shoulders with both the hands); Om Bhurbhuvaha netraa -bhyaam voushat (Touch the eyes with respective hand-fingers); Om Bhurbhuvah swaha Astraya phat ( take the right hand behind the back and clap to rest it on left palm). After Pranayama as above, then Gayatri Avahana Sankalpa states: Mamopaattha Samasta duritakshaya dwara

Shri Parameswara preetyartham Praatah Sandhyaamupaasishy/ or Maadhyaahnikam Karishey/ or Saayam Sandhyaamupaasishey (May I begin to worship Goddess Sandhya in the morning/afternoon/evening by destroying all of my sins by the grace of Parameswara). In the morning Gayatri is in the form of 'Tryaikshari', Veda Maataa and Brahma Vaadini: Aaagachha varade Devi Tryaiksharey Brahma Vaadini, Gayatricchandasaam Maata Brahmayoney Namostutey; In the afternoon she arrives as Savitri by a vrishabha (bull) with white robes as Rudra Vaadini: Madhyaahney Vrishabha aruudhaam Savitreem Rudra yonim chaavaahayerudravaadineem; in the evening Gayatri appears mounted on Garuda as Sarasvati with crimson robes as VishnuVaadini: Saayamtu Garudhaarudhaam Peetaambharasamaavitaam, Sarasvatim Vishnuyoni maahvayed Vishnu Vaadineem/ After the Sankalpa follows Maarjanam by the Mantra: Aapohishta mayo bhuvah, tana oorje dadhaatana/ maheranaaya chakshase, yo vah Shiva tamo rasah/ tasya bhajayateha nah/Usiteeravah Matarah, Tasma arangamama vah, yasya kshayaya jinvath/ Apo janaa yahta cha nah/ Om bhurbhuva suvah/ (Aapohishtha: The Goddesses of Water indeed; Mayo bhuvah: are the causes of granting happiness; tah nah: Such Goddesses; Mahe Ramaaya chakshasey: are Great and charming to view; oorje dadhaatana :provide nourishment; sivatamo rasah: most propitious bliss; Usitih Matara iva: like loving mothers; Bhajayateha yasya kshayaaya: make us worthy of that bliss; Jinvatha tasmaa vah aram gamaamah :we go in for that bliss with great eagerness; Apo janaayata: may we be born in rebirth with pure knowledge. Pratah Sandhya (Morning) Mantra Sandhya states: Suryascha ma manyuscha manyupatayascha manukriteebhyah/ Paapebhyo rakshantaam/ Yadraatriya paapamakaarsham/ manasaa vaachaa hastaabhyaam/ Padhmyamudarena sisna/ Raatristadavalumpatu/ yat kimcha duritam mayi idamaham mamaamritayanau/ Surve Jyotishi Juhomi swaha (Protect me from sins committed due to rage and temper as also by the Sun and the Deity of Fury apart from the wrongdoings by my mind, conversation, limbs, stomach and sex; once such sins are excused, may the Great Radiance of Sun God make me worthy of Salvation). By so saying, sip water from the hollow of right palm. *Madhyaahna Sandhya* (Noon time) Mantra: Apah punantu Prithivim Prithivi puta punatumaam, Punatu Brahmanaspatih Brahma puta punatu maam, Yaduchhistam abhojam yadva duscharitam mama, Sarvam punatu maamaposatam chapratigrahagg swaha (Let the Deity of Water clean up the Earth, me and my Guru who is a depository of Vedas and let Vedas sanctify me. May the wrong food that I consumed, the questionable deeds that I did or the dubious presents that I received from doubtful characters be all mollified, as I propose myself to get purified by the flames of the Swaha or Paramatma.) After this Mantra, the devotee should sip water signifying it as a vow. Sayamkala Sandhya (Evening) Mantra states: Agnischa ma manyuscha manyupatayascha manyu kritebhyah Paapebhyo rakshantaam yadanha paapamakaarsham, Manasa vaachaa hastaabhyam Padbyaam udarena sishnaa Ahastadalumpatu, yat kincha duritam mayi idamaham maamamritayonau satye jyothishi juhomi swaha/ (Let all the Deities of Fire, fury and ferocity safeguard me from their attack on me due to the unpardonable sins perpetrated by me by the day by my mind, stomach, sex organ; may I be purified me of despicable deeds and qualify me to proceed on the path of Moksha. Achamana-Punarmarjana and Marjana be followed with the Mantra viz. Dadhikravinno akaarisham jishnorasyasya vajinah, surabhi no mukha karat prana Aagumshi tarishat/ (May the Lord who is the Sustainer, Administrator and Evaluator in the form of Hayagriva the Victorious and the Seat of knowledge be worshipped to facilitate our Life without any obstacle). This Mantra may be followed by the afore-mentioned Mantra Aapo hi shtha while sprinkling water on the head of the devotee and touching the feet and thereafter recite Apo janayata cha nah while water is thrown round the head. Arghya pradaanam: Recite the Gayatri Mantra pour water thrice to the East in the morning, face north and pour water twice in standing position and face west in sitting posture as follows: Om Bhurbhuvassavah, Tat Saviturvarenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi, dhiyo yo nah prachodayaat/ Praanaayama should be done there after.

Deva Tarpana: Adityam Tapayami, Somam Tarpayami, Angaarakam Tarpayami, Budham Tarpayami, Brihaspatim Tarpayami, Sukram Tarpayami, Shanaischaram Tarpayami, Rahum Tarpayami, Ketu Tarpayami/ Keshavam Tarpayami, Narayanam Tarpayami, Govindam Tarpayami, Vishnum Tarpayami, Madhusudanam Tarpayami, Trivikramam Tarpayami, Vaamanam Tarpayami, Shridharam Tarpayami, Hrishikesham Tarpayami, Damodaram Tarpayami.

Gayatri Avahaana: Omityekaaksaram Brahma, Agnirdeyata Bhrahma ityaarsham Gayatreem Chhandam Paramaatmam Swarupam, Sayujyam viniyogam/ (The unique word AUM is of Parabrahma form, Agni is Main Devata, Brahma is related to Rishi, Gayatri is related to Chhanda, Paramaatma is allpervasive and the terminal point of Moksha); Aayaatu varada Devi Akhsharam Brahmasammitam, Gayarimchhandasaam Maatedam Brahma jushaswa me (May I humbly request Gayati to guide me about Brahma); Yadannaatkurutey paapam tadhanaat pratimuchyatey, Yadraatrikurutey paapam tadraatriyat pratimuchyateyi( let the sins committed during the day be destroyed in the day itself; let the sins done during the night be destroyed on the same night) Sarva varney Mahadevi Sandhya vidyey Sarasvati, Ojosi Sahosi Balamasi Bhraajosi Devaanaam Dhaamanaamasi Vishvamasi Vishvaayuhu sarvamasi Sarvaaurabhibhuurom Gayatriimaavaayahayaami Savitreemaavaahayami Saraswateemaayaahayayami, Shriya maayaahayaami, Balamaayaayaha yaami (Sarva Varna! Sandhya Vidya! Sarasvati! Maha Gayatri! You are the embodiment of Radiance, the Grip Holder and of the Strength; the Shakti of Devatas, the Life of the World, the Veritable Universe and the Totality! May I invoke You Omkara Swarupa Savitri! May I invoke Chhandasas, Rishis and Lakshmi!); Gayatryah Gayaree Chhandah Vishwamitra Rishih, Savitaa Devataa, Agnirmukham, Brahma Shiro, Vishnur hridayam, Radrah Sikhaah, Prithivi Yonih, Praanaa paana vyaanodaana samaanaa sa praanaa swetavarnaa saamkhyaayana sa gotra Gayatree Chaturvimsatyaksharaa Tripadaa Shatkukshih, Panchaseershopanayaney viniyogah (I invoke Gayatri, whose Chhanda is Gayatri, Rishi is Vishwamitra, Agni is Face, Brahma is head, Vishnu is heart, Rudra is the tuft, Prithi is the generator as also Gayatri with Five Praanaas viz. Praana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samaana; white coloured; with the Gotra of Rishi Samkhyayana; with twenty four Alphabet Letters; Three feet; six bellied; five heads and the main deity of 'Upanayana'). Gavatri Karanyaasah: Om tatsavituh Angushthabhyaam namah, Om varenyam tarjanee -bhyam namah, Om bhargo Devasya

Angushthabhyaam namah, Om varenyam tarjanee –bhyam namah, Om bhargo Devasya Madhyamaabhyam namah, Om Dheemahi Anamikabhyam namah, Om Dhiyoyonah kanishthikabhyaanamah, and Om Prachodayaat Karatalaprishthaabhyaam namah. *Gaytri Anganyasah:* Om tatsavituh hridayaayanamah; Om Varenyam Sirasey Swaaha; Om Bhargo Devasya Shikhaayavoushat; Om dheemahi kavachaayahum; Om dhiyoyonah netratrayaaya voushat; Om prachodayaat Astraaya phat; Om Bhurbhuvassurom iti dikbhandhayah.

Dhyaanam: Muktaa vidruma hema neela dhayala cchaayair mukhyai stryakshanair yuktaamindu nibaddha ratna makutaam tatvaartha varnaatmikaam, Gayatreem varadaa -bhayamkusa kasaa shrubhram kapaalam gadaam shankham chakra madaara vinda –ugalaam hastairvaham teem bhajey/ (I pray to Gayatri who has five faces with the colours of Pearl, coral, golden, blue and white; three Aksharas or Letters, Moon-ornamented headgear, tatwas and varnaas, seated on kusha grass mat denoting purity and also possessing Kapaalam or skull, Gada or mace, Shankham or conchshell, chakram or wheel and two lotuses). In the morning Gayatri is of Rigveda Swarupa as a baby Girl with Brahma Shakti possessing four faces, seated on a soft hamsa (swan) and with shining jewellery; in the afternoon she is called Savitri as a grown-up youth with Rudra Shakti, three eyes, tiger skin, having Mudras of khatvanga (cut-limbed), trishula, Aksha valaya and Abhaya/ Protective Mudras; as mounted on a bull. In the evening, Gayatri assumes the form of Saraswati with Vishnu Shakti wearing purple silk dress exuding black colour as an elderly woman seated on a 'Garud'. Visioning Devi Gayatri according to the timings, the devotee would then commence the recitation of Gayatri Mantra saying Mamopaattha samasta duritakshayadwara Sri Parameswara preetyartham: Pratah Sandhya Gayatri Maha Mantra japam karishye/ Madhyahnika Gayatri Maha Mantra Japam karishey/ Saayam Sandhya Maha Mantra japam karishey viz. OM BHUHRBHUVASSAHA TAT SAVITUR VARENYAM BHARGO DEVASYA DHEEMAHI DHIYO YONA PRACHODAYAAT/ Each time, Gayatri Japa is best performed one thousand and eight times which is reckoned as Uttama; one hundred and eight times as Madhyama or fifty four /twenty eight times as heena / minimum. Gavatri

Upasthaanam: First perform Pranaayama and recite: Uttamey Shikhare Devi Bhumyaam parvata murdhani, Brahmanebhoy hyanujnaanam gahha devi yathhaa sukham/ (Devi Gayatri, You have the clearance to stay on top of the Meru Mountain by Brahmanas); Stuto maya varadaa Vedamataa prachodayanti pavaney dwijaataa, Ayuh Prithivyam dravinam Brahma varchasam mahyam datvaa

prayaatum Brahmalokam (As extolled by us Devi Gayatri! You are the bestower of our desires and the epitome of Purity, Veda Rupa and of two forms; kindly bless me on Earth to provide me long life, prosperity, Brahma Teja!)

Surya

Upasthanam (Pratahkaala): Mitrasya charshani dhritah shravo devasya sanaasim/ Satyam chitrasrayastamam Mitro janaan yaayaati prajaanan Mitrodaadhara Prithyee -mutadyaam/ Mitra krishtee ranimishaabhichashte Satyaaya havyam ghritavadvidhema// pra sa Mitra marto Astu Payaswaan yasta Aditya sikshati vratena/ Na hanyatey na jeeyatey twoto nainama gumho Asnotyantito na dooraat ( Surya is omni-scient and supports earth, heaven and all Beings vigilantly. May I offer my oblations of ghee to secure lasting blessings to that Supreme God as he is the Universal friend to sustain Dharma, to insulate us against diseases, worldly difficulties and sins from far and near, as also to give us longevity and happiness.) (Madhyahne): Aasatyena rajasa vartamano nivesayannamritam martyam cha/Hiranyayena Savita rathenaa devo yaati bhuvna vipasyan (Surya travels all over the Universe by his golden chariot with a special eye at the World and witnesess by the light of the souls of Gods and mortals of each one of their activities); Mitrasya Varunasya Agneh Chakshuh Devaanaam chitram Aneekam Jagatastasthushascha Atma Suryah Daiyaa Prithiyeem Antarihsham Aa Purasthat sukram ucharat Devahitam chakshuh tat Saradassatam pasyama jeevama saradassatam Nandaamaa saradassatam modaamaa saradassatam Bhaavanaa Saradassatam Shrunavaama saradassatam Prabravaamaa saradassatam Ajeetah Saradassatam jyok cha Suryam drsey (Let Surya who is the embodiment of Mitra, Varuna and Agnideva be empowered to dominate the soul of all moving and non moving Beings on Earth, Heaven and Atmosphere; May we vision and pray to him for hundred years and enjoy life for that time; May we be blessed with fame, hear pleasant things for hundred years, converse good words for hundred years, be victorious for hundred years and be with Sun God for hundred years.) (Sayam kaale): Imam me Varuna shrudhee havamadyaa cha mridaya, Tatvaamavasyuraachakey Tatva yaami Brahmanaa Vanda maanastadaasaastey Yajamaano havirbhih Ahedamaano Varuneha Bodhyurusagumsa maa na Ayuh pramosheeh// Yacchhiddhi te visho yataaa pradeva Varuna vratam/ mineemasi dyavidyavi/ Yat kinchedam Varuna daive janebhidroham manushaascharaamasi/Acchitte yattava dharma yuyopima maa nastamaadenaso Deva Risheeah/ Kitavaaso yadriripurna deevi yadvaaghaa satyamuta yanna vidma/ Sarvaa taa vishya stitireva devataa te syaama Varun priyasaah / (Varuna Deva! Kindly consider my request and provide me protection as I seek shelter with Veda Mantras; do not ignore my appeal to reduce my life span. I might have omitted my daily prayer knowingly or otherwise but do save me of the sin of negligence. Hereafter, I should be careful).

After the 'Upasthana' of Surya / Varuna there ought to be Samishtyabhivandanam or collective salutation to Deities: *Sandhyayai namah Saavitrainamah Gayatrai namah Saraswatyai namah Sarvaabhyo devaatabhyo namo namah*/ *Kaamo kaarsheen manyurakaarsheen namo namah*/ (My prostration to the Deities Sandhya, Savitri, Sarasvati and all others; do forgive my sins done under the influence of passion and fury).

Devata Vandanam: Praachai namah, Dakshinayai namah, Praachai namah, Urthvayai namah, Atharayai namah Antarikshayai namah, Bhumyai namah, Brahmaney namah, Vishnavey namah Mrityavenamah/ (Salutationns to the Deities of East, South, West and North as also to those in upper, lower and the Skies, to Earth, Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra). Aakaasaat Patitam toyam Yatha gachati Saagaram, Sarvadeva namaskarah Kesavam prati gacchati Om nanah iti// (Just as waters from Sky descend to Oceans, all salutations reach Keshava); Kayenavaachaa manaserviyairva buddhyaatmanaava prakriteh swabhaavaat karomi yadat sakalamparasmai Naarayanayeti Samarpayami/ (I dedicate whatever has been done by body, speech, mind and senses to Narayana).

### Yoga, the proven way to 'Moksha Prapti'

Brahmarshi Narada gave a direct question to Sanaka Kumara as to which 'Karma' (Holy Action) would assure the attainment of Moksha and Sanaka replied that Yoga was indeed the unique way and 'Jnaan'backed by 'Bhakti' was the best form of Yoga- a mix of Karma Yoga and Jnaana Yoga, or a blend of 'Karma' (Action) with Bhakti (devotion). *Ahimsa Satyamakrodho Brahamacharyaa Parigrahou*, *Aneershyaa cha Daya chaiva yogayorubhayo samaah*/ (Non-Violence, Truth, absence of hatred,

Brahmacharya, Aparigraha or non acceptance, destruction of jealousy, mercifulness and benevolencethese are the features in required proportions). The person who treats the way that he himself desires to be treated is qualified for Yoga. Contrarily, the person who is overcome by envy and fault-finding might be immersed with Dhyana and Tapasya, but these noble qualities are considerd futile. That is why restraint, self-control and equanimity in terms of speech, thought and action are the cornerstones of 'effective' Vishnu Puja . Given these basic pre-conditions, Pujas, Stutis, Fastings, Vratas, Purana Shravanas, Tirtha Yatras, Daanaas, Yagnas and the like assume redoubled proportions of efficiency and are truly termed as implements of Karma Yoga. The lack of distinction between Jeevaatma and Paramatma, signifying the Maha Vakyas of Vedas viz. Tatvamasi or Sohamasi constitute the basis of Vedas and forms of the Ashtanga Yoga viz. Yama, Niyama, Aasana, Pranahaara, Pratyaahaari, Dharana, Dhyana and Samaadhi. The relevant definition is: Yamaascha, Niyamaavaschaiva, Asanaani cha sattama, Praanaayaamah, Pratyaaharo Dharana Dhyanamevacha, Samaadhi Munusreshthah yogaangaani Yatha kramam/ While 'Yama' denotes Ahimsa, Satya, Steya (non-stealing), Brahmaharya, Aparigraha, Akrodha, Anasuya and Daya are the constituents of Yama; Niyama 'comprises of Tapas, Swadhyaya (self-learning), Santosha (contentment), Shaucha (Cleanliness), Aradhana or worship and Sandhyapasana. 'Tapa' includes meditation, Chandrayana and other Vratas which signify fastings, Pujas, Stutis etc. 'Swadhyayana' encompasses Japas of three kinds viz. Vaachika/ Uchhaarana or Vocal, Upaamshu or slow and distinct rendering and 'Maanasa' or recitation within while considering the meaning and context of the Mantra). 'Santosha' basically refers to mental satisfaction that the life style is smooth and contented, organised, wholesome and virtuous. 'Shuchi' means 'Bayha Shuddhi' or physical as also 'Antassuddhi' without interaction with the 'Arishat vargas' viz. Six enemies from within viz. Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, and Matsara; 'Aradhana' including 'Stuti' by 'Manas', 'Vani' or vocal; 'Kriya' or Tirtha Yatras, bathings, Daanas, good deeds such as digging of water bodies/ wells, construction of Public Utilities etc. and most significantly 'Sandhyopasana'. Aasana is the next significant 'Yoga Sadhana'; it is stated that there are thirty prominent Aasanas 'Sitting postures' viz. Padmasana, Swastikasana, Peethasana, Simhasana, Kukkutasana, Kunjarasana, Kurmasana, Vajrasana, Varaahasana, Mrigasana, Chailikasana, Krounchasana, Naalikasana, Sarvatobhadrasana, Vrishabhasana, Nagasana, Matsyasana, Vyaghrasana, Artha Chandrasana, Dandayatasana, Shailasana, Khadgasana, Mudgarasana, Makarasana, Tripathasana, Kaashtaasana, Sthanurasana, Vaikarnikasana, Bhowmasana and Veerasana. The next Yoga Sadhana is Pranaayama which could be Agarbha or Sagarbha; the Agarbha type is without Japa and Dhyana and the better kind one is while performing Japa and Dhyana. Pranayama comprises 'Rechaka' or exhaling air through left nose, 'Puraka' is inhaling through the right nose and 'Kumbha' is holding air as also 'Shunyaka' (stand-still). The right 'nadi' of the human beings is called 'Pingala' whose Deity is Surya / Pitru yoni. The left Nadi is 'Ida' / Deva yoni nadi whose Deity is Moon. In between the Pingala and Ida nadis is a minute and hidden nadi called 'Sushumna' whose 'Adhi Devata' or Deity is Lord Brahma. Pratyahaara is the next Yoga Sadhana, by which 'Indriyas' or Limbs are controlled by being dis-associated with worldly matters. This is the preparatory step of mind-control when one could close the eyes or even keep them open but possess high degree of concentration on a blank screen or any chosen object irrespective of surrounding visions, sounds, nasal / touch reactions and mind-borne reactions except the focussed one, say an illumination through which to probe the Almighty! Having conquered the external limbs and internal feelings, a stage is set to hold or practise Dhaarana of the required vision of Paramatma even for split seconds by regulating the vision and once that is practised, the length and depth of the visualization could be prolonged as Yogis could. The vision when continued the Yogi enters a stage of Samadhi when the Yoga Purusha could neither hear, nor see nor react to any situation, except the one that is focussed! Such a situation is not death but death-like since that trance could be retrieved, as claimed by those Maharshis who experienced! They were able to realize Para Brahma Paramatma in their hearts that was ever lasting, pure, dazzling and complete through their inner vision. In the World, there are three kinds of feelings viz. 'Karma- 'Brahma' and 'Ubhayatmaka Bhavanas'. Till Karma Bhavana is not demolished or controlled, one would not visualise Brahma Bhavana. Only when differences of worldly nature and Para Brahma are completely merged, that state is called as Brahma Gyan or of the real Nirakara Vishnu. Also, there are three kinds: 'Para', 'Apara' and

Karma Shaktis. Bhagavan is the Para Shakti; 'Kshetrajna' is the Apara Shakti and 'Avidya' (ignorance) is the Karma Shakti. Indeed, Kshetrajna Shakti is dormant in all Beings; it is minimal in 'Jada' rupas like trees and mountains, some what weak among animals and birds, but human beings are fairly aware of the Shakti; while it is conspicuous among higher levels like Gandharvas, Yakshas and of course Devas. Like the Sky the Kshetrajna Shakti is all pervading in different 'Rupas'; it is the awakening of that Shakti which Yoga is all about.

## King Bharata turned as Jada Bharata who counselled King Souvira about Advaita

King Bharata, after whose name was popularized Bharata Varsha, was an exemplary practitioner of Dharma deeply engaged in noble deeds as Yagnas, charities and Tirtha Yatras; after retirement he moved to the Ashram of Pulastya Muni practising Dhyana and devotion. One morning while taking bath in a River, he found a pregnant deer delivered on the banks of the River on hearing the frightening sounds of a tiger and died. Bharata took the baby deer to the Ashram and in course of time became terribly attached to it. As Bharata was dying his infatuation for the animal was so much that in the next birth, he was born as a deer as a 'Jaatismara' or with the knowledge of previous birth. Even as a deer, it continued the habit of performing Puja by flowers etc. and eventually died and was born into a Brahmana family; when he came of age, he never followed the habits of a disciplined life as other Brahmana boys but whiled away his time attracting unhappiness of his parents and associates, however claiming that he was a deer and King Bharata in his previous births. As everybody felt that he was good for nothing, he acquired the epithet of Jada Bharata. One day, King Souvira of the Kingdom desired to reach the Ashram of Kapila Maha Muni and Jada Bharata was also instructed to carry the palanquin of the King along with other carriers. Since Jada Bharata was not able to carry the palanquin properly, the King shouted on him and said that he was fat, slow, tired and out of step with other carriers. The Brahmana (Jada Bharata) replied that indeed he was neither fat nor tired but that under his feet was Prithvi (Earth), over which were two feet, legs, thighs, stomach, chest, hands and shoulders which were all carrying the King's body; that the bodies of the King as also that of his own were both made of the same 'Pancha Bhutas' (Five Elements of Earth, Water, Air, Light and Sky) and were governed by the mix of three 'Gunas' (features) of Satvika, Rajasika and Tamasika nature and these Gunas result in the 'Karmas' (Actions) performed by the Live Beings as per the level of their own Vidya or Avidya (learning capacity or other wise), as also the Maya or illusions of the Self and others (the 'Me'and 'You'), little realising that the 'Atma' (inner consciousness) was pure and blemishless, everlasting, peaceful, and featureless that was distinctive and different from Prakriti ( Nature); it was that Prakriti which made the differences like one person was fat or lean, smart or dull, etc. On the same analogy, one being might not be able to carry a palanquin properly but another manifestation of the Super Soul viz. Earth might be able to withstand the load of mountains, trees, and seas. The Source-Material was basically one and the same and that was the same Supreme Being! When the Brahmana gave the reply to the King as above, the latter was non-plussed and having got out of the palanguin enquired as to the Brahmana was. The reply was: the words 'You' or 'I' were the countless forms of the same Super Shakti and were irrelevant and that the placements of each 'Charaachara' (Moveable/Immoveable) being in the Creation of Paramatma depended on the basis of one's own 'Karma' or Actions; for eg. Some as Kings and another's as a beggar. Jada Bharata narrated to the King Souvira the illustration of Brahmana called Nidagha the son of Sage Pulastya and Muni named Rijhu as to how the ramifications of Avidya or Ignorance tended to influence the psyche and deeds of every being. Rijhu as a stranger visited Nidagha at his house once and the latter requested the Muni to indicate where he was from and asked him to have his food; after the food, the Brahmana asked whether the food was it was good. The Muni replied that when a person was hungry or thirsty the food or drink served would indeed satisfy and one need not delve into the nuances of taste, quality, colour etc. as they were not as important as long as the food and drink agreed the body-system; eqally unimportant was as to where did he come from and was going to. Then Muni explained to Nidagha as to what Advaita was all about; that

the 'Jeevatma' and 'Paramatma' were one and the same, that 'Maya' or illusion made the distinction of the two, since the body was temporary and subject to destruction; that the pattern of the ephemeral life would get shaped as per the Karma or fate on the basis of the good or bad deeds performed by a being; that the cycle of births and deaths would go on till the Jeevatma in various forms ranging from the most insignificant species to human beings broke the Cycle and reached 'Mukti' or Salvation to higher levels of existence than human beings and finally to 'Paramatma'.

Thus 'Paramatma' like the Supreme Energy is present in all the forms, shapes, and end-variations but present as a Unique Entity everywhere, everlasting and all-pervasive. As Jada Bharata gave the example of Nidagha and Rijhu, the King was fully enlightened and decided to give up 'Bheda Buddhi'or the feeling of differences and started realising the 'Adhaytmika Gyan', while Jada Bharata too regained his complete awareness of King Bharata's past life and pursued the path of Brahmana's responsibilities like Yagnas, Vratas, Tirtha Yatras and daily pujas.

# Six 'Vedangas' constitute the means of knowledge to attain 'Mukti'

In the process of 'Siksha Nirupana', Maharshi Sanandana explained to Brahmarshi Narada that six Vedangas constituted the 'Sadhanas' or the means to accomplish Mukti, viz. <u>Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakarana, Nirukti, Chhandas and Jyotisha.</u> Maha Shuka Muni was a glorious example of 'Anuchan' or an outstanding expert in all the Six Vedangas, besides being an epitome of Dharma and an unparalelled 'Adhyayi' or a Master of the Four Vedas of Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva.

Siksha: In relation to Siksha, Sage Sanandana emphasised the significance of Swara (notations) in the discipline of **Sangeeta** (**Music**). In the Swara Shastra, the Swara of Archika is related to Rig Veda, 'Gaandhik' is to 'Gaadha' and 'Saamik' is to Sama Veda. A 'Swara' is according to 'Ruchas' (Hymns) and their variations, while in 'Gathas' or metered rhythemic verses Sama Veda has 'Vyavadhaanas' or pauses. The Yagina stotras, karanas and Mantras are required to be pronounced as per Swaras; otherwise they turn out to be 'Viruddha Swaras'. In the entire 'Vangmaya' Shastra (Vocabulary), pronounciation originates from 'Vakshasthala' (chest), 'Kantha' (throat) and 'Mastaka' (head); from the chest emerges the low level sounds normally resorted to morning singing, from the Kantha emerge the medium and very broad variety of sounds and from Mastaka are emanated high pitch sounds and their variations of volume. The Sapta Swaras-Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Da, and Ni-are 'Prathama' (Shadaja), 'Dwitiya' (Rishabha), 'Tritiya' (Gandhara), 'Chaturtha' (Madhyama), 'Mandra' (Panchama), 'Krushtha' (Dhaivata) and 'Atiswara' (Nishadha). Shadaja-Sa- stands for 'Sagar' (Sea) with peacock as the representative bird, 'Muladhara' (the base of the spine) as the Chakra (body part) and the ruling Deity as Ganapati. Rishabha Re-means bull representing the bird Skylark, 'Swadhishtana' or genital as the Chakra and the ruling Deity is Agni. Gandhara Swara 'Ga'means Gagan or Sky with goat as the representative animal, 'Manipura' (solar plexus/ naval) as the Chakra and Rudra is the concerned Deity. Madhyama-Ma-means the Middle, represented by the bird dove, Anahata (heart) being the relevant body part and Vishnu as the Ruler concerned. Panchama-Pa-means the fifth, represented by nightingale and 'Vishuddha' (throat) as the relevant body part and the Ruling Deity is Sage Narada. The Swara titled Dhaivata-Dha- means Dharti or Earth, the representative animal being horse, the relevant Chakra being 'Aaajna' or the third eye and the Ruler being Sada Shiva. The Seventh Swara viz. Nishada-Ni- meaning Hunter and standing for the animal Elephant, has 'Sahasrara' (the crown of the head) as the body part, the Ruler being Surya as the Deity. Besides the Swaras, Shadaja, Madhyama and Gandhara are known as three 'Graamaas' (gamut or scale in music). Those who render 'Saama Gana' approve twenty graamas in Madhyama Swara, fourteen in Shadaja and fifteen in Gandhara. Also there are seven Murchanas (Intonations / Modulations) meant for Devatas viz. Nandi, Vishaala, Sumukhi, Chitra, Chitravati, Sukha and Bala; and seven for Pitaras viz. Aapyaayani, Vishwabhruta, Chandra, Hema, Kapardini, Maitri and Baarhati. For Rishis too there are seven Murchanas viz. Uttara Mandra in Shadaja Swara, Abhi Rudrata in Rishabha, and Ashvakranta in Gandhara. Besides, there are other Murchanas like Souvira in Madhyama Swara, Harshika in Panchama and Uttarayata in Dhaivata Swara. The seven Murchanas utilised by Rishis are also normally used by humans. Normally, there are ten 'Gunas' in music viz. Rakta, Purna, Alankrita, Prasanna, Vyakta,

Vikrushta, Slakshana, Sama, Sukumara, and Madhura. When 'Venu' (Flute), 'Veena' (stringed instrument) and Vocal are rendered together then that combination is known as Rakta or 'Ranjana'. Swara and Shruti (for eg. Kshobini Shruti in Shadaja, Tivra in Komala Rishabha, Dayavanti in Komala Gandharva, Prasarini in Tivra Madhyama, Alapini in Shuddha Dhaivataini in Komal Nishad) as also 'Chhanda' (Prosody) along with clear pronounciation are called 'Purna': Alankrita denotes the Swara from the throat down to the place of heart and taking the sound up to the head; Prasanna emerges from kantha in 'gadgada' sound; Vyakta or clearly pronounced by the 'Pada' (letter), Padartha (material), vachana (eka or bahu / single or many) etc. When the sound is clear in high pitch and understood by the letters of Alphabet is Vikrushta; Slakshan is that Shriti which is devoid of either Dhruta or quick and Vilambita or elongated; Sama is that Shriti which normal by aspects without ups and downs; Sukumara Shruti is of soft nature and Madhura is sweet and sonorous. In regard to the *Swaras of Padas (letters)* there are eight varieties viz. Antodaatta (like Agnih in 'Agnirvritraani'), Adyudaatta (like Somah in Somah pavatey), Udaatta and Anudaatta respectively are like Pra and vah in the word 'Pra voyahvam'; Neecha Swarit is the word Veeryam in the expression 'Balam nyubjam veeryam'; Madhyadaatta like Havisha in the word 'Havishaa vidhema'; Swarita like Swaha in the expression 'Bhurbhuvah swaha' and finally Dirudaatta as 'V'kara and 'spa' in 'Vanaspatih'.

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

Kalpa Granth: The second Vedanga relates to Kalpa Granth as described by Sanandana to Narada. Kalpa comprises Nakshaktra Kalpa, Veda Kalpa, Samhitaa Kalpa, Aangirasa Kalpa and Shanti Kalpa. In the Nakshatra Kalpa, there was a description of the Head of Stars, viz. Chandra as also of the notable Nakshatras. In Veda Kalpa, the methodology of achieving the 'Purusharthas' (Human Objectives) related to Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha was detailed. In Samhita Kalpa there was guidance to 'Tatwa Darshi'to Munis regarding the 'Mantras' about the Rishis, Chhandas and Devatas. In the Angirasa Kalpa, Lord Brahma himself was stated to have given the 'Abhichara Vidhi Vidhana' or of the procedures of magical / charms / benevolent or manevolent Karmas like Vashya, Mohana, Ucchhaatana and Unmaada. In the Shanti Kalpa, Mantras and Procedures to ward off dangers or to usher in Good Tidings from Celestial, Terrestrial or Extra-Terrestrial Sources are detailed.

Apart from the Five Kalpas mentioned above, the most significant Kalpa relates to *Griha Kalpa* which describes the details of the preparation of 'Homa Vedika'; usage of Kusha grass in the fingers of the Karta performing the Homa; the role of housewives to bring Agni to install in the Homa Kunda; the features of Agni Deva with two faces, six eyes, seven tongues, 'Pingala Varna', three hands on his left side and four on the right, three mekhalas or waistbands and three feet; dhyana to Agni; performance of homa of milk, curd, honey, ghee or ghee-cooked items like Anna with Til; the mudras to be used viz. Mrigi, Hamsi and Suukari (Suukari Mudra in Abhicharika Karmas only); and the application of appropriate Mudras and the finger prescription for targetted purposes. Thereafter, the 'Karta' or the principal performer of the Homa ought to invoke Ganapati and do the Puja to ensure that there would be no obstacles faced by the Karta. [By the pre-arranged water vessels, 'Mangala Snaana'is performed to 'Karta' or the Person performing the Puja reciting the Mantra: *Sahasraaksham shata dharamrishibhih paavanam krutam, teyna* 

twaamabhishnchaami paavamaanyah punantu tey (May the sacred waters which have thousands of eyes representing as many Shaktis having innumerable flows sanctified by Maharshis purify you along with powerful hymns being rendered!)

There after, 'Abhishekas' of Varuna, Surya, Brihaspati, Indra, Vayu, and Saptarshigana would follow with the Mantra: *Bhagam tey Varuney Rajaa Bhagam Suryo Brihaspatih, Bhagamindrascha Vaayuscha bhama Saptarshiyo daduh*/ (Raja Varuna, Surya, Brihaspati, Indra and Vayu as also Saptarshis, please provide 'Kalyan' (auspiciousness). Then there should be Jala Shanti with the Mantra: *Yattey keseshui dourbhagyam seemantey yacchha Murdhani, Lalaatey Karnayo rakshanopaadastad ghnantu sarvadaa*/ (Whatever 'dourbhagya' or inauspiciousness is present in your hairs, hair parting, head, forehead, ears and eyes be obliterated for ever with this Jala Shanti or peaceful showers). After the Puja of Ganaadhyaksha, Devi Parvati's worship be taken up by prostrating before Ganapati and Parvati, first reciting *Tat purushaaya Vidmahey Vakra tundaaya dhimahey, Tanno Danti prachodayaat*; then to Devi Gauri saying: *Sowbhaagyayai Vidmahey, Kamala Maalinyai dheemahey, tanno Gauri prachodayaat*. Worship of Devi Parvati with Paadya, Pushpa, Dhupa, Dipa, Naivedya and Mantra Pushpa reciting the hymn: *Rupam Dehi Yasho Dehi Bhagam Bhagavati Devi mey, Putraan dehi dhanam dehi Sarv kaamaanscha dehi mey*/ (Bhavati! Kindly bestow on me good appearance, fame, auspiciousness, good progeny, wealth and fulfillment of all my desires!).

This Puja would be followed by the worship of 'Nava Grahas' by arranging idols of Surya with copper, Chandra with silver or sphatika or crystal, Mangala with Rakta varna Chandana or red sandalwood, Budha and Guru with gold, Shukra with silver again, Shani Deva with loha /iron and Rahu and Ketu with glass as also with appropriate Vastras or coloured clothing, Mantras and Puja material especially the flowers suitable to Nava Grahas. Venerable worship of Matrikas viz. Gauri, Padma, Shachi, Medha, Savitri, Vijaya, Jaya, Devasena, Swadhaa, Swaahaa, Vaidhruti, Dhruti, Pushti, Hrishti, and Tushti would follow. The Griha Kalpa Vidhana then describes the worship of Pitrus viz. Vasu Rupas, Rudra Rupas, and Aditya Rupas, especially on Amavasyas, Ashtakas, Vriddhi Karyas like the occasions of weddings, Krishna Pakshas, the days beginning the Uttarayana and Dakshinayana, Surya Sankranti, Vyatipata Yoga, Gaiachhaaya, Chandra Grahana (Lunar Elipse), Surva Grahana (Solar Eclipse) and of course on the Tithis of the Karta's dead parents. After reciting *Pitrubhyah Staanamasi* or keeping Pitras in their respective places, then the task of Agnou Karana, meaning thereby perform 'Aahuti' or oblation of Cooked Rice with ghee saying: Agnaey kavyavaahanaya swaaha namah, Somaaya Pitru mataye swaha etc. The rest of Naivedya is served to Brahmanas, Karta and family. Such is the 'Kalpa Vidhana' in brief and its execution with sincerity and devotion would certainly bestow wealth, Vidya, keerti, progeny, contentment in life and salvation thereafter.!

**Vyakarana Shastra:** The third component of Vedanga pertains to since Vyakarana (Grammar) constitutes 'Veda Mukha' or the Face of Vedas. For example, Sanandana proposed two words to Narada viz. 'Subanth' and 'Tidanth'; suppose the last letter is 'Ananth' and the Pratyaya or prefix is 'Sup', then the word is Subanth; 'Sup'has seven 'vibhaktis' (Cases), of which the first is *Su* (Prathama or 'Eka' vachana), *Au* (Dwi or two) vachana and '*Jas'* (bahu or many vachanas).

In *Prathama Vibhakti* or the first vibhakti (Nominative / about the performer or subject) the proposed person's 'linga' (gender), Parimaan (volume or quantity) and 'Vachan' (number), etc. need to be specified. For instance, linga is 'thata'; 'thati' and 'thatam'; parinama is one kg. of rice and vachan is one, two or many. The specific Karma (Predicate or part of sentence excluding the Subject) is as 'Harih sevyatey' or Hari is served (by Bhaktas/ devotees) and in this sentence karma is the Vaachya; whereas in another sentence 'Lakshmya sevitah' or [Bhaktas] served through Lakshmi. If Karta himself is vaachya, then the sentence could be 'Harih karoti' or Hari performs.

In Dwiteeya (second) Vibhakti (accusative or the Object) the affix words used are 'Am', 'Aou', and

'Shas' followed by the vachan or number like one, or two or many. If the sentence is 'Harim pujati' ie Hari is worshipped, then kartha is not specified and that is 'Anukt'or silent / unspecified. Also, dwiteeya vibhakti is utilised with words like 'Antara' or 'Antarena'; for eg. Antaraa twaam Harih which means Hari is outside you and me; Antarena Harim sukham which means 'There is no happiness without Hari. In the *Triteeya* (third) Vibhakti, (Instrumental/instrument) the suffix words used are 'taa', 'bhyaam' and 'bhis' followed again as always by the vachan as in the earlier vibhaktis. In the context of 'Karan' (doing), 'Karya' (action) and 'Anukta' or unspecified 'Karta' or the doer, this Vibhakti is utilised as in the sentence: 'Ramena baaneyna hato Vaali'meaning Rama's arrows killed Vaali; here Rama is the unspecified Karta.

In the Chaturthi

Vibhakti, (dative or from whom action is performed) the words applicable are 'im', 'bhyaam' and 'bhyas' and is used when 'sampradaan karaka' or giving away / donastion of a vastu (thing / material) is to be performed: 'Brahmanaaya gaam dadaati' or Brahmana is given a cow. This vibhakti is also utilised when a tasteful thing is given away: 'Haraye roachatey bhaktih' or Hara is happy with Bhakti. In Panchami Vibhakti, (ablative or where action is performed), the relevant suffix words are 'Imsi', 'Bhyaam' and 'Bhyas' and is used in 'Apadaan karaka' when somebody goes away somewhere, something is brought or taken, something or sombody is seperated. The examples are 'Graamaadpaiti' or Goes away from the village; 'Devaduttah Yajnadadaat pustakam samaadatey' or Devadatta takes away a book from Yajnadutta; 'Paatraat odanam grihnnati' or Food is taken from a vessel; 'Ashvaat patati' or Falls from a horse; 'Parvataat Nadee nissarati' or River falls from a Mountain. The suffix words used in Shashthi Vibhakti (Possessive or possession) are 'Ims', 'Ose' and 'Aam' and the Vibhakti emphasises the 'bhedak' relationship of Master and Servant or the difference of status such as in the expressions like 'Grihasya Swami' or the Master of the house hold; 'Raajnah sevakah' or servant of Raja; and 'Dasaradhasya putrah' or Dasaratha's son. In the Saptami Vibhakti (locative of action), the affix expressions are 'Ims', 'Ose' and 'Sup' used in Adhikarana kaarak

such as in 'Grihey vasati' or Resides in the house. The context of 'Adhaara' (hold) is also used in Saptami Vibhakti. Adhaara is of three varieties viz. Auopashloshaka, Vaishayaka and Abhivyaapaka; the respective examples are 'Katey aastey' or seated on a mat / 'Mokshey icchhaa asti' or Moksha is desired, 'Sarvasmin Atma asti' Atma is in everything and 'Chouryaa -dvibheti' or afraid of stealing. Raksharthak *Dhaatu* (verbal root, an ingredient of an expression) is used in this Vibhakti as in 'Paapaad rakshati' or saved from the sin.

Sambodhana

Vibhakti (denominative/ used to address someone) as in Prathama Vibhakti.

To sum up with Rama shabda and Purusha linga:

Vibhakti	Eka Vachana	Dwi Vachana	Bahu Vachana	Suffixes
Prathama	Raamah	Raamou	Raamaah	Su, Au, Jas
Dwitiya	Raamam	Raamou	Raamaan	Am, Au, Shas
Triteeya	Raamyena	Raamaabhyam	Raamaih	Ta, bhyaam, bhis
Chaturtha	Raamaaya	Raamaabhyaa	Raamebhyah	Im, bhyaam, bhyas
Panchami	Raamaat	Raamebhyaam	Raamebhyah	Imsi, bhyaam, bhyas
Shasthi	Raamasya	Raamayoh	Raamaanaam	Ims, Ose, Aam
Saptami	Raamey	Raamayoh	Raameshu	Ims, Ose, Sup
Sambodhana	Hey Rama	Hey Raamou	Hey Raamaah	(As in Prathama)

Illustrations: In the usage of 'Pari', Apa', 'Aayim', 'Itara', 'Rutey', 'Anya' and 'Digvachaka Shabda', Panchami Vibhakti is used; for eg. Pari Harey Samsaarah or Srihari is different from Samsara; Apa Hareyh Sarva doshaaah or All the blemishes are far from Hari; Aa Muktey Samsaarah or Till the attainment of Moksha Samsaaraa cintinues; Itarah Krishnah or distinct from Krishna; Rutey Bhagavatah or deviod of Bhagavan; Anyah Shri Raamaat or different from Shri Rama; Aaraat Vanaat or Forest is near or far etc. To signify the words, Lakshana, Itthhambhutaakhyan, Bhaga and Veepsa; the 'Avyayas'\* viz. Prati, Pari, Anu are used as Karmapravachaneeya Sanjnaas. In respect of Lakshana the illustration is

Vriksham prati pari anu vaa vidyotatey vidyut or Vidyut is attracted to run into the tree; vriksham is manifested and vidyu gets awareness. \*[Indeclinables viz. prepositions or upasargas, adverbs, particles, conjunctions and interjections].

Again, Bhakto Vishnum prati pari Anu vaa: here the shabda Idyambhut means the obtaining of 'viseshan'; Bhakto Vishnum prati pari anu vaa: Bhakta Swarup is viseshan, Purush is to obtain Him; vibhakti is dwiteeya. To illustrate the word 'Bhaga', it may be said: Lakshmi Harim prati pari anu va, which means Lakshmi is Vishnu's belonging with a right over her as she is a 'bhaag' or part of him. The word Veepsa as afore mentioned, the illustrative sentence would be 'Vriksham Vriksham prati sinchati' or pari sinchati or anu sinchati, meaning there by: The trees are interlinked.

There is also a method to use Avyayas viz. Namah, Swasti, Swadhaa, Swaahaa, Alam and Vashat in Chaturthi Vibhakti viz. Haraye namah, Swasti Prajaabhyaha, Agnaye Swaahaa, Pitrubhyah swadhaa, Alam mallow Mallaaya, vashat Indraaya. If an action is meant for a 'vastu' (thing), that vastu would be in Chaturti Vibhakti expressed in bodhaka shabda, like Muktaye Harim bhajati or Hari is worshipped for Mukti.

After the usage of Vibhaktis,

Sanandana explained to Narada about *Swar-Sandhis* like Madhudakam (Madhu+Udakam or Honey plus water), and Pitrushabhah (Pitru+ Rishabhah or the senior in the Paternal side) known as Siddhi Sandhis; Gangodakam (Ganga + Udakam) or Krishnaikatwam (Krishna+Ekatwam or Krishna's singularity or uniqueness); these examples are Vriddhi Sandhis; Dadhyanna (Dadhi+anna or curd rice) and Pitrathah (Pitru+Artha) or Father's wealth as the egs.of Yuga Sandhis; Haraye (Hara+Ye) or for Hara and Lavanah (Lo+Anah) or salt as egs.of Yagadi Sandhi; Tasmaarghya (Tasmai+arghya or Water for him) and Ta Adyaah (Tey+ Aadhyaah or they are the foremost) are egs. of Yalopa and Valopa Sandhis; Hareva (Hara+eva or Hara! Save me) is a Purva Rupa Sandhi; Amegha (Ami+Agha or He is a sinner) and Shouri+Etou (these are Krishna Balaram), Vishnu+imou or these are both Vishnu rupas or Durga+amu or these two are of Durga rupas as examples of Prakriti bhava sandhis; Shadastra (Shat+astra), Shanmaatarah (Shat+matarah) and Vaak+Surah or Vaakchurah/ Expert in conversation are vyanjana Sanshis. Padachhedana sandhis are Chakrim -shicchhandhi or Chakrin+Chhindi or Chakradhari! do snap my bandhan etc. So far Vyanjana Sandhis were described.

Now Visarga Sandhi examples are given as below: Ramaah kaamyah krupah pujyo Harih pujyorcha eva hi/ Raamo drushtobalaa Atra supta drishtaa imaa yatah (Ramah+ kaamyah or Shri Ram is dear; Kripah + Pujyah or Kripacharya is worthy of worship; Pujorarchayah -Pujyasya+ Archayah- pujaniya and Archaniya; Ramodrishtah or Ramas + drishtah / Ram has been seen; Abalaas+atrah or there are women; Suptadrishta or supatas+drishtaah or looked like slept off; imaayatah or Imaas +Atah or these women thus. Thus are the examples of Samhitas / Sandhis.

<u>Subhanta Prakarana</u>: 'Mangalacharana'- In the name of Rama, following Stanza covers each of the Vibhaktis:

Raamenaabhihitam karomi satatam Raamam bhajey saadaram, Raamenaapahyatam samasta duritamRaamaaya tubhyam namah/Raamaanmuktirabheepsitaa mama sadaa Raamasya daasomyaham, Raamey rajyatu mey manah Suvishadam hey Raama thubhyam namah (I follow the instructions given by Shri Rama always. I perform bhajan to Shri Rama as an ideal. Ram has destroyed all my sins. Bhagavan Shri Rama! My salutations to you. My desire from Shri Ram is to accomplish Moksha. I am always Shri Rama's servant. May my clean conscience be contented by me. Hey Shri Rama! These are my greetings to you).

Sarvanamas: In Sanskrit Literature, 'Sarva naamaas'

occupy an important place, like the Srava Shabdas:Sarvah, Sarvou, Sarvey- Sarvam, Sarvou, Sarvaan-Sarvena,Sarvabhyaam, Sarvaih - Sarvasmai, Sarvabhyaam, Sarvebhyah-Sarvasmaat, Sarvabhyaam, Sarvebhyah-Sarvasya, Sarvayoh, Sarveshaam-Sarvasmin, Sarvayoh, Sarveshu. Also, in Hari Naama: Harih, Haree, Harayah-Harim, Haree, Hareen- Harinaa, Haribhyaam, Haribhih- Haraye, Haribhyaam, Haribhyah- Hareyh, Haryom, Harinaam- Harou, Haryoh, Harishu-, Hey Harey Hey Haree, Hey Harayah. Then there are examples like Kartru Shabda in karya vachaka like in Karthaa Kartarou Kartaarih etc., Rai shabda as Raah, Raayou, Raayah etc. in dhana Vachaka; Nou shabda is in nouka vachaka; dwi, thri or chatur shabda in sanjna vachaka etc.

Tadhita Pratyayanta Shabdas (Noun form suffixes) have been illustrated such as Devatarthaka (Aindram Havih or this is for Indra); Idamarthaka (Tasya Idam like kumkumena raktam Vastram); Bhavarthaka (Kshtrasyaapatyam jaatih Kshatriyah or in Ksartakula, only Kshatria is born); Jaatartha (Dayaalu, Kripaalu); Praachyurta or Adhikata (Annamayo Yagnah; Annamaya, Streemaya, Mrunmayah Ashwah (or horse made of mud): Jaatardha (Shrevan shrevaamsou shrevaamsi) etc. The pratvayas referred to are: 'an' pratyaya, 'twal' pratyaya, 'tal' pratyaya, 'mayat' pratyaya, 'in' pratyaya, and 'matup' pratyaya. Tendu Prakarana: Dhatus (Tissues or Elements of the Language) Vyaiyakaranas (Grammarians) classified ten kinds of Dhatus: Bhavadi, Adyaadi, Juhotyadyaadi, Devaadi, Swaadi, Trutaadi, Rudhhadi, Tanaadi, Vrayaadi, and Churaadi. In respect of Bhavaadi, the formations possible include Bhavanti Bhavatah Bhavanti. In Adyaadi Gana, the permutations possible include ati bhakshan.In 'Johothyadi gana', 'hu' dhatu is significant like juhoti, juhova, juhavaanchakaar, juhavaamba bhuy, juhavaamas, hota, hoshyati, juhuyat, huhaat, ahousheet, ahoshyat etc. In Devaadi ganas, Diva dhatu is important which has many meanings like kreeda, Vijaya-oriented desire, vyavahar, dyuti, stuti, moda, mada, swapna, kaanti and gati; as in the earlier gana the expressions generated are Deevyataat, Devata, Devishyati, Deevyatu, Adeevyat, Deevyeta, etc. In Swaadi gana, 'su dhhat' is important like Sunotu, Sushaava, Sotha, Soshyati, Asunotu, Sunayaat, etc. In 'Tudaadi gana', 'Thudu'dhhatu is important which means creating difficulties like in the suffixes tudati, tutoda, tottha, totsyati, tudatu, anudatu, tudetu etc. In Rudhhadi dhatu, Rudh dhatu is the main one for example, rundhe, rurudhey, rotasatey, arundh, rundheet, rotseeshth, etc. (deepening, surrounding, stopping and so on). 'Tan' dhatu is significant in Tanadi gana dhatus whose task is to expand, spread out and increase like Tanoti, tataana, tanita, tanishyati, atanot, tanuyaat, atanishyat etc. The word 'kri' is important in Vrayaadi dhatu which refers to purchasing, exchanging, selling etc.; the illustrations are kreenaati, chikraaya, kreta, kreshyati, kreenaatu, akreenaat, akresheet etc. Finally, in the context of Churaadi gana the reference is for 'chora' or stealing / thieving and examples include chorayati, chorayamaas, chorayanchakara, chorayita etc. Krudanta Prakarana: Those Pratyayas or Verb forms (suffixes) end up with the expression 'krit' are called Krudanth Pratyayas viz. nyavul, truch, achi, tavyat, tavya, aneeyar, kelimar, etc. The sentence 'Twaya maya anyaischa yedhitavyam' includes the verb forms of tavya and aneeyar. [Elsewhere, other verb forms were also mentioned such as 'tumun' pratyaya, 'ktvaaccha pratyaya, 'lyap' pratyaya, 'ktavatup' pratyaya, 'vat' pratyaya, shatri pratyaya, 'shaanach' pratyaya, 'ktin' pratyaya, ghunj pratyaya, and 'khal' pratyaya]. Samaasaas (Compound noun): Muni Sanandana then described 'Samaasa Prakarana'. Normally, there are five kinds of Samasas viz. Avyayi bhava, Tatpurusha, Karma Dhaaraya, Bahuvreehi and 'dwigu'. When the first word is Avyaya, that Samaasa is known as of Avyai bhava (eg. upa nagaram or near the town). Tatpurusha's illustrations are: Ramaashrita (Rama+Ashrita); Dhyaanaartha (Dhyaanena+ Artha); Rajapurushah (Rajnajh+purusha) etc. Digu (numerical determinative compound) is a Sankhya vaachaka samaasa like 'Panchaanaam gavaam samaahaarah panchagavyam' or Panchagavyam is the mix of cow's five products (viz.milk, curd, ghee, urine and dung). Tatpurusha's Karmadharaya (Adjective compound) is a compound of Viseshya and Viseshana like Neela + Utpala or the blue water lily. Bahuvreehi Samaasa is illustrated by the expression: 'Paaptam udakam yam sa praaptodakam graamah' or the village where water reaches is noted as water-receiver. Dwandwa samasa is called 'samuchya' or combination of various words like in the sentence: 'Isham Gurum cha bhajaswa' which means Ishwara and Guru-both-are doing bhaiana.

### Karaka Prakarana:

Karaka	Vibhakti / Case	Process	Example
Karta	First / Nominative	Subject used with verb	Ramaha nripaanaam ratnam
Karma	Second/ Accusative	Denotes the object	(Aham) Raamam pujayami
Karaka	Third / Instrumental	Denotes agent / action	Ramena Ravanah hatah
Samprada	ana -Fourth/ Dative	Denotes object/action	Ramam namami
Apadana	Fifth / Ablative	Seperation/division	Ramasya adhi gamyam
*Genitive	Sixth/ Possessive	Denotes noun to noun	Ramasya daasaa asmi aham

Adhikara Seventh/Locative Place of action Ramasyopari hridayam bhavatu Sambodhana- As in the First Person being addressed Bho! Rama maam uddhhara

\*Normally, this usage of noun to noun in the same sentence is not used. Hindupedia.

Source:

#### Nirukta Varnana:

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

### 'Chhandas Shastra':

Maharshi Sanandana explained to Brahmarshi Narada about Chhandas Shastra which too is an important component of Vedangas; it is stated: *Chhandah paadow tu Vedasya* or Chhandas denotes the feet of Vedas. 'Chhandas' is of two types viz. 'Vaidik' or related to Vedas and 'Loukik' or for general use. Vaidik Chhanda expresses Gayatri Mantra: 'Tatsavitur varenyam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyoyonah prachodayaat'. *Anushthup Yajati, Brihatya Gaayati, Gaayatrya stoutati:* Anushthup is used fot Yagnas, Brihati Chhanda is for singing and Gayatri is used for Stutis. The Loukika chhanda is used in Puranas, Itihasaas, and Kavyas in poetical forms, for eg. *Sarva dharmaan parityajya maammekam sharanam vraja, Ahamtwa sarvapaapebhyo mokshamishyaami maa shuchah* (This Shloka is in Anushthup chhanda). Both the Vaidik and Loukik Chhandas have two kinds based on 'Matras' and Varnas' (units or quality) known as Martik and Varnik. The Chhanda Shastra comprises 'Ganas' (group of three Aksharas or letters) and Gurus / Laghus or Big and Small in terms of 'S' or 'I'. The Ganas are as follows: 1) 'Ya'gana: ISS for eg. Ya+Maa+Taa; 2) 'Ma' gana: SSS for eg.Maa+Taa+Raa; 3) 'Ta' gana: SSI for eg. Taa+Raa+ Ja; 4) 'Ra'gana: SIS for eg. Raa+ Ja+Bhaa; 5) 'Ja'gana: ISI for eg. JA+ BHA+ Na; 6) 'Bha' gana: SII for eg. Bhaa+Na+ Sa; 7) 'Na' ganam: III for eg. Na+SA+La; 8) 'Sa'ganam: IIS for eg. Sa +La+ Gaah. To summarise, the following may be noted for facility:

YaMaaTaa (ISS), MaaTaa Raa (SSS), TaaRaaJa (SSI), Raa JaBhaa (SIS); JaBhaaNa (ISI), **B**haa Na Sa (SII), **N**a Sa La (III), **S**a La Gah (IIS)

The Ruling Deities of the Ganas as above are: Ya gana (Jala), Ma gana (Prithvi), Ta gana (Akash), Ra gana (Agni), Ja gana (Surya), Bha gana (Chandra), Na gana ('Ayu'or Life/ Health), Sa gana (Vayu). The 'Phala'or fruits / results are: Vriddhi or Abhyudaya / Growth or Progress in respect of Ya gana; Lakshmi/wealth for Ma gana; Dhana Naasha for Ta gana; Vinasha for Ra gana; Roga or ill-health for Ja gana; Su yasha for Bha gana; Ayu for Nagana and Bhramana or travel for Sa gana.

In the Chhanda Shastra, the Akshar 'Ga' stands for Guru and 'La' for Laghu; combination of two Gurus (SS) is called Sarva Guru; two Laghus and a Guru (IIS) is Antya Guru; laghu+Guru+laghu (ISI) is Madhya Guru; Guru+Laghu+Laghu (SII) is Adi Guru; and four laghus are Chatur laghus (IIII). The diffrences are denoted as Karna, Karatala, Payodhara, Vasucharana and Vishta. Again, Samyog, Visarga and Anuswara in respect of Laghus are signified as in Ramam, Ramah and Ramasya, In respect of a Padya (Poem) or Shloka (Stanza), there is a 'Paada' (Line) consisting of four lines. There is a 'Yati'or a pausing point in each paada. In Chhanda, there are three 'Vrittas' (circles) viz. Sama Vritta, Artha Vritta and Vishama Vritta. In Sama Vritta, in all the four 'Paadaas' (lines), there are the same number of Hraswa-Deergha Aksharas (Short and Long Letters) numbering seventeen in each line, as for instance in Shikhirini Chhanda: Mukhey tey taambulam nayana yugaley kajjalakalaa lalaatey kaashmiram vilasati galeymouktika lataa Sphuratkaanchi shaati Pruthukatitatey haatakamayee bhajaami twam Gauri nagapati kishori -maviratam. An example of 'Ardha Sama Vritta' is Jagadamba vichitramatra kim paripurna karunaasti chenmayi, Aparaadha paramparaamparam na hi Maataa samupekshatey Sutam (This poem is in Harinapluta Chhanda). The example of Vishama Vritta is Nalinekshanam Shashi mukham cha Ruchidarshanam Ghanacchivam/ Chaarucharana kamalamKamaanchitaayraja Vraja Mahendra vandanam/This is in Udrataa naamaka Chhanda. Example of 'Dandakas' is in Twenty six letters: Iaha hi bhavati dandakaaranya desho sthitih punyabhaanjaam Muneenam manoharinii, Tridashaa Vijayi Veerya drupahaddashgrivalakshmi viraamena Raamena samsevitey. Apart from Dandakas, there are three or six lined 'Gathas'.

Then, there are many other kinds of 'Chhandas' ranging from one to twenty six lettered lines viz. Ukta, Atyukta, Madhya, Pratishtha, Supratishtha, Gayatri, Ushnik, Anushthup, Brihati, Padinkti, Trishthup, Jagati, Ati Jagati, Shakvari, Atishakvari, Ashti, Atyashti dhriti, Viddhtuti /Atidhruti, Kriti, Prakriti, Aakriti, Viktiti, and Abhikriti. Example of 'Ukta' is 'Vishnum Vandey' in 'Shri' Chanda; in 'Ayukta', the example is' Anya Sreebhih Sangastaajyaha in 'Stree' Chhanda (in two Deergha Maatras ie. SS). 'Madhya' has three letters each in 'Naari' Chhanda with the example 'Sarvaasaam Naareenam Bhatraa syadaaraadhyayah' in SSS formation. 'Pratishtha' has four letters each in fourlines (SSSS) in Kanya Chhanda: Bhhasvatkanyaa saikaa dhanyaa/ Yayaah kuuley Krishnokhelat; 'Supratishtha' has five letters in seven lines and the seventh line is different from the other lines and this is in Pankti Chhanda as in Krishnasa Naathhha Tarnika pancktih, Yaamuna kacchhey chaaru chachaara (in SIISS formation.). A formation of six letters in four of the Paadaas is seen in 'Gayatri' Chhanda Samuha (Group), which has four sub-divisions: 'Vidullekha' (SSSSS) as in Gogopigopanaam preyaamsam praanesham, Vidyullekha vastraam Vandeham Govindam; 'Tanumadhya' (SSIISS) as in Preetyaa prativeylam, saivey gatatan dram, Vrindavana Chandram; 'Shashivadan' (IIIISS) as in Paramamudaaram vipina vihaaram, Bhaja pratipaalam Vrajapati baala; and 'Vasumati(SSIIIS) as in Bhaktaartikadanam Samsiddha sadamanam, Noumeeduvadanam Govidmadhunaa/. In the 'Ushnik' Group, there is a seven-seven letter formation with as many as tewnty eight letters in each Paada or line, but the most known is Madalekha with SS SIISS SSSI ISS viz. Magana, Sagana and one Guru as illustrated in Rangay Baahuvirugnaad Danteendran madalekhaa, Lagnaabhunmura shatraou kasturi rasa charchaa/. In the eight lettered / four lined 'Anushthup' Chhanda' too, there are two hundred seventy six varieties, and there are differences among Vidyunmala, Manavakaa Kreeda, Chitrapada, Hamsaruth, Pranaamika or Nagaswarupini, Samaanika, Shloka and Vitana; for instance, Vidunmaala the letter combination is eight Gurus or SSSSSS SS such as in Vidyunmaalaalolaan bhogaan Miktwa Moukto Yatnam, kruyaat, Dhyanotpannam nih saamaanyam Soukhyam Bhoktum yadyaakaanthakshet. In Nagaswarupini Shiva tandava Sthotra with Ja, Ra, Ja, Ra, Ja and one Guru. Illustration is: Jatakatah sambhrama bhramatrilimpani jharee vilola veechi vallaree viraajamaana murdhini, Bhagad bhagaddhuga jjwalallalaata patta paavakey Kishora Chandra shekharey Ratih pratikshanam mama (ISISISISISISISIS). The nine-nine lettered and four lined Chhanda Samuha is called 'Brihati' is illustrated by 'Halamukhi' which has one each of Ra gana, Na gana, and Sa gana and 'Bhujanga Shishubhrita' which has two Na ganas and One Bhagana. Pankti is a ten-letter group and among thousand twenty eight variations such as Shuddha Virat, Panava, Rukmavati, Mayura saarini, Matthaa, Manorama, Hamsi, Upastita and Champaka maala. Trishthup which has eleven worded Chandasa group has innumerable variations (as many as 2048!) and was extensively used in old

'Granthas'; for instance 'Upendra Vaira': I SI SS I I SI SS as illustrated in the Prayer: Twameva Maathaa cha Pithaa twameva twameva Bandhuscha Sakhaa twameva/ Twameva vidyaa dravinam twameva twameva Sarvam mama Deva Deva! Indra Vajra Chanda (SS ISS II S ISS) in which there are two Ta ganas-one Ja gana and two Gurus as in: Nirmaana moha jitasanga doshaa Adhyatma nithya vini vritta kaamaah. Dwandwairvimuktaah Sukha Duhkha Saninairgacchhantya moodhah padamayyamam tat/ Also, in the same Trishthup category are 'Dodhaka Vritta' with three Bha ganas and two gurus; 'Shalini' with Ma gana, Ta gana, again Ta gana and two Gurus and many other Chhanda variations like Ratotthata, Swagata, Sumukhi, Shri Bhramara Vilasita, Bhadrika, Shyenika, Mouktikamala, Pramitakshara, and Upasthita. Jagati is the twelfth category of 'Chhanda Samooha' with four 'charanas' (lines) with as many as four thousand nine hundred six permutations, signifying the variety of poetic structure (Prosody) that one Chanda Samuha offered. The illustrations are 'Vamshastha' Chandas, Indra Vamsha, Drutavilambita, Totaka, Bhujangaprayata, Stragvini, Pramitaakshara, Vaishvadevi etc. Vamshastha has the form of I Ja gana, Ta gana, Ja gana, and Ra gana with 'Yati' at the end of each charana (line) viz.: I SI SS SS II SI SI S; 'Sa Shanka chakram Sa kireeta kundalam Sa Peeta vastram Sarasiruhekshanam/ Sahaaravakshasthala Kaosthubha shriyam Namaami Vishnum Sirsaa Chaturbhujam'/ Another example is the form of 'Indra Vamsha' constituted in Ta gana, Ta gana again, Ja gana and Ra gana with Yati or Viraam (break), the Stanza being: Yatkeertanam yatsmaranam yadeekshanam yadvandanam yacchhraavanam yadarhanam, Lokasya sadyo vidhunoti kalmasham tasmai Subhadrasravasey namo namah/

The next category is named *Ati Jagati* with thirteen letters and four lines with eight thousand one hundred ninety variations with Ma gana, Na gana, Ja gana, Ra gana, and one Guru with Yati on the third and tenth letters; the 'Praharshini'with SSS IIII S IS ISS formation is illustrated thus: *Jaagarti prasabhavipaaka samvidhatri Shri Vishnorlalita kapolajaa nadi chet, Samkeerna yadibhavitaasti ko vishadah samvaadah Sakala Jagat pitaamahain*/ Besides this are the Chhanaas like Kshama, Atiruchiraa Matta Mayura, Gauri, Manjubhaashini and so on. Another variety of Chhandas group is *Shakkari* with sixteen thousand three hundred eighty four variations, especially 'Vasanta tilaka' with Ta gana, Bha gana, two Ja ganas and two Gurus; another popular category is 'Praharana -kalita' with two Na ganas, one Bha gana, one Na gana again, one Laghu and one Guru as in: *Suramuni Manujai rupachita charanaam ripubhaya chakita Tri Bhuvana sharanam, Pranamata Mahishaasura vadha kupitaam praharana kalitaam Pashupathi dayitaam*/ The other 'Chhando samuhas' are called '*Ashti'*, '*Atyashti'*, '*Dhruti'*, '*Vidhruti'*, '*Kriti'*, '*Prakriti'*, '*Vikriti'*, '*Vikriti'*, '*Tanvi'*, '*Samkriti'*, and '*Utkruti'*.

The mind-boggling multitude of 'Chhandas' or Poetic Structures in Sanskrit Language is a standing proof of the opulence and magnificence of its 'Vangmaya' (Literature).

### Tri- Skandha Jyotisha Shastra

In the Jyotisha Shastra, Skanda Muni emphasized three Skandhas viz. *Ganita (Siddhaanta), Jaataka, (Hora), and Samhita.* In Ganita there is Parikarma of Yoga, Antara, Gunana, Bhaajana, Varga, Vargamula, Ghana and Ghanamula; ways and means of finding Graha madhyama and clarity of positioning, 'Anuyog' or the Knowledge of Desha, Disha and Kaalamaana ie. Place, Direction and Time; Chandra Grahana, Surya Grahana, Udaya (Rise), Astama (Setting), Chhaadhikara (dusk), Chandra Shrugonnati or Dwiteeya's Chandrodaya and Grahayuti (Graha's Yoga). In the context of Jataka Skandha, description is given of Jaati Bheda (differences of Jaatis), Graha yoni or the details of Jaati, Rupa and Guna; Viniyonija (Janmaphala according to human beings), Garbhadaana, Janma, Arishta, Ayurdaaya or Life span, Dashaakrama or the details of Dashas, Karmaajeeva, Ashtaka Varga, Raja Yoga, Naabh sayoga, Chandra yoga, Pravrajjyaa yoga, Rasi sheela, Anishta Yoga, Stree jaatakaphala, Mrityu vishay nirnaaya, Nashta-Janma-Vidhhana etc. As regards Samhityaskandha, details of Grahachara, Varsha Lakshana, Tithi, Dina, Nakshatra, Yoga, Karana, Muhurtha, UpaGraha, Surya Samkraanti, Graha gochara, Chandra bala / Taara bala, garbhadana to Upanayana and Vivaha, Yatras, as also tatkaala vrishti gyan or of rainfall are described. Among the various aspects mentioned above, some are mentioned briefly as follows: 'Sankhya bodhak Sangjnas' range from Eka (one), Dasha (tens), Shata (hundreds),

Sahasra (thousands), Ayut (ten thousands), Laksha (lakh), Prayuta (million), Koti (Crore), Arbud (ten crores), Abj (hundred crores or arab), Kharva (thousand crores or ten arabs), Nikharva (Kharva or one lakh crores), Maha Padma (one crore crores), Shankah (Neela / ten crore crores), Jaladhi (Ten Neela or hundred crore crores), Antya (Padma or one thousand crore crores), Paraartha (lakh crore crores) and so on. Ganitha Siddhantas were explained by Sanandana to Narada viz. Pari Karma (Yoga, Antara, Gunana, Varga, Vargamula, Ghana and Ghana Mula) ranging from addition or deletion of numericals, Gunana phala, 'Varga Mula' or Square Roots, 'Ghana' or multiplication of three numbers working out the 'Ghana Mula', Concepts of Hara or Bhajak (Divisor), Amsha or Bhajya (dividend) and Sesha or Remainder; finding out Varga Mula, usage of Viloma vidhi in ascertaining 'rashi' (Fund) etc. Referring to Kshetra Vyavahara, in a 'Tribhuja' or a right angle Triangle, the vertical is called 'Koti', 'bhuja' is the straight line across and 'Karna' is the (hypotenuse). If Koti is 4 and Bhuja is 3, the square of 4 is 16 and that of 3 is 9, then Karna is the total of the square roots of 16+9 or 25 and thus the value of Karna is 5. Again, in a Vritta Kshetra (Circle), if the Paridhi (Circumference) is 22 and the Vyas or diameter is 7 and both of these are multiplied and result is 154, its Chaturdhamsha or a quarter ie 38 1/2 is the Khetraphal. In the context of 'Annadi Rashi' for instance, the 'Rashis' are broadly reckoned as 'Sthula', 'Madhyama' and 'Sukshma' and their Parithis could be calculated as Shashthamsa, Navamamsha, Dasama -amsha and Ekadasas etc.on the basis of the quantity of land, the availability of water bodies with the details of length, width and depth; presence of stones and metallic content etc. Sanandana Maharshi then explained to Narada about the calculations of 'Kaala, Desha and Disha viz. Time, Place and Directions. The total duration of Four 'Yugas' put together was stated to be thirty three lakh twenty thousand years, of which four times of Dashamsha was the duration of Satya Yuga viz. sixteen lakh twenty eight thousand. In the Dasamsha, one third of the duration was of twelve lakh ninty six thousand years in Treta Yuga; Dwapara Yuga was of the duration of eight lakh sixty four thousand years, while Kali Yuga is only four lakh thirty thousand years. There are seventy one Chatur Yugas in one Manyantara. In Brahma's one day, there are fourteen Manyantaras and another fourteen Manyantaras are counted in his night additionally. In one Yuga, the Planets of Surya, Budha and Shukra (Sun, Mercury and Venus respectively) in the Eastern side, take a 'Bhagan' (Bhaga is Surya) as many as 4,320,000; Mangala, Shani and Brihaspati (Mars, Saturn and Jupiter also make such Bhaganas. Chandra (Moon) makes 577, 53,336 Bhaganas in a Yuga likewise. There are 157,79,17,828 Surya's one full day-night comencing from Sundays in a Maha Yuga measured in 'Soura mana', while the Moon day-nights from Mondays measured in 'Chandra mana' total up to 160,30,00,080 in a MahaYuga; this is to establish the difference in the Solar and Lunar Calendar daynights viz.2,50,822 days. 'Adhika Maasa' is 15, 93,336 in a Maha Yuga, while 'Thikshaya' is 250, 82,252. Looked in terms of Solar Months, the number is 518, 40,000 where as Lunar Months are 534, 33,336- all in Maha Yuga. The methodologies of calculating were offered in respect of the current Yuga about Graha Gyana, Bhumi Paridhi Pramaana; positioning and speed of Grahas (Planets), Graha Vakreekarana or of negative influences and Kaala Gyana. 'Panchanga S adhana' or Tithi, Vaara, Nakshatra, Karana and Yoga determine the results of good or bad nature to a person. There are Nakshatra Dashas like Vimshottari Dasha, Ashtottari Dasha, Kala chakra Dasha, Yogini Dasha, etc. Also threre are Rashi Dashas like Narayana Dasha, Ati Karaka Kendriya Dasha, Trikona Desha, as also Ayur Desha. In the context of determining Karanams or one half of Tithi or then time required for the angular distance between Moon and Sun; there are eleven Karanas viz four fixed ones called Kimshugna, Shakuni, Chatushpad and Naagava, besides repetitive Karanas viz. Bhaava, Kualava, Titula, Garaja, Vanaja, and Vishti. Karanam is active at the time of Sun Rise. Another important input relates to Yoga the angular distance along the eliptive view of any object on the sky (measured from Mesha or the start of Aries) called the longitude of an object when the longitudes of Sun and Moon are added; the result produced a value ranging from Zero degree to 360 degree and that is called Yogam, which is also active in the mornings. There are 27 Yogas like Visha Kamba, Preeti, Ayushman, Sowbhagya, Shobhana, Atiganda, Sukumara, Dhriti, Shula, Ganda, Vriddhi etc. Ayanamsha Sadhana: The word 'Ayana' denotes movement and 'Amsha' a component. Ananamsha bhaaga or portion is the amount of 'precession' or the orientation of the rotation axis of a rotating body. In astrology, this is a longitudinal difference between 'Sayana' (Tropical) and Nirayana (Sidereal) zodiacs. Ayanamsha is defined as the angle between the

Sidereal ecliptic longitude of a celestial body and its tropical ecliptic longitude. According to Surya Siddhanta, Ananamsa rises from 0 degree to +27 degrees during 1800 years and decreases to 0 degree to -27 degree thus oscillating within a range of plus/minus 27 instead of cyclically moving in a circle. In astronomy, precession refers to several slow changes in an Astronomical body's rotational or orbital parameters especially in Earth's precession of Equinoxes. Periodical changes of Earth's orbital parameters combined with the precession of equinoxes and the inclinatin of Earth's axis on its orbit is a part of Astronomy.

Grahana Sadhana: Chandra Grahana (Lunar Eclipse) takes place on a Pournami and Surya Grahana (Solar Eclipse) on Amavasya and these are called Parvas. As 'Grahas' rotate on their own axis and perform Pradakshina (circumambulation) around Bhumi, that path is known as the 'Kasksha' or region of that Graha. Prithvi is far away from the Sun path and Chandra is nearer and is in between Surya and Prithvi. In the direction in which Surya travels, the shadow of Prithvi falls in the opposite direction of Surya's path and the length of the rotating shadow is equal to that distance. As Prithi is round, the shadow of Chandra is also rounding, moving six 'Rashis' away from Surya. Chandra rotatating on its own axis moves along with Surva on the Southern Rekha (Line) and that time is known as Darshanta Kaala ie at the junction of the termination of Amavasya and the beginning of Shukla Pratipada; similarly, when Surya reaches six Rashis ahead that time is Pournima. Thus Surya is shadowed by Chandra and Chandra is shadowed by the shadow of Prithvi; that is why during Surya Grahana, Surya is known as Chhadya or the shadow maker and Chandra is Chhadak; again, in Chandra Grahana, Chandra is Chhadya, Earth's shadow or Bhubha is Chhadak or Grahana Karta. The 'Vilambana' or the delay of time between the 'Chhadya'and 'Chhedak' is known as 'Chhanna' or 'graas'. Thus when Chandra is fully invisible, then the Lunar Eclipse is stated to be complete or 'Sarvagraas'. If Chandra grahana is a 'Khanda Grahana' or a partial eclipse, then Prithvi's shadow falls on Chandra to that extent.

Surya Grahana (Solar Eclipse): When Chandra travels while in rotation between Surya and Prithvi and lies in the Southern direction under the level of Surya, that day when Sun rays fall on the top portion of Chandra, that night is called as Amavasya since Chandra's lower portion is invisible on Earth. It is on that Amavasya when Chandra comes in between Prithvi and Surya and Surya's 'bimba' disappears at a point of time, that particular Amavasya is stated to the time of Surya Grahana (Solar Eclipse). As in the case of Lunar Eclipse, there might be Sarva graas or Khanda Graas of Solar Eclipse too. On Amavasya, Chandra's Chhaya falls towards Prithvi and in that Chhaya Bhubhubhagh falls and Surya bimba disappears; the extent of disappearence denotes the full or partial Solar Eclipse. Maharshi Sanandana explained to Narada Muni the methodology of calculating the exact time and duration of the Eclipses as also the general impact on various other Grahas. The belief in Puranas that Rahu was responsible for the Eclipses as he was annoyed at the successful attempts made by Surya and Chandra to dismember him, although succeeded to secure 'Amrit' and as a result accomplished the status of Grahas, was not unfound; it is believed that Rahu was dismembered from one entity into two as Rahu and Ketu and Lord Brahma set up Rahu in the shadow of Chandra and Ketu in the shadow of Prithvi and appointed them as Grahas (Planets); while Rahu and Ketu were positioned as the shadows nearby to Surya and Chandra respectively and were thus stated to be responsible for the Eclipses.

Sadhana: If a concrete platform is made and a 'Shankha'is erected at a central point, mark a 'Vrittha' (circle) with twelve equi-distant portions from the centre drawn to the periphery, keep marking twelve 'dots'after every two hours, observing Sun's direction from the Sun-Rise point and the Sun-Fall, it is not difficult locate the Dishas/ Upa Dishas (directions), indicating the twelve Rashis, [viz.Mesha (Aries), represented by Ram, Fire and Mars; Vrishabha, represented by Bull, Earth, and Venus; Mithuna (Gemini), represented by a Couple, Air and Mercury; Karkataka (Cancer), represented by Crab, Water and Moon; Simha (Leo) represented by Lion, Fire and Sun; Kanya (Virgo) represented by Virgin, Earth and Mercury; Tula (Libra) represented by a Balance, Air and Venus; Vrischika (Scorpio) represented by Water and Mars; Dhanus (Saggitarius) represented by a Bow, Fire and Jupiter; Makara (Capricon) represented by Alligator, Earth and Saturn; Kumbha (Aquarius) represented by Pot, Air and Saturn and Meena (Pisces) represented by Fish, Water and Jupiter]. The Dashas and Upa Dashas respectively are North East (Ishana) representing Varuna or Water full of beneficial Energy; East (Poorva) ruled by Indra indicating

for Authority and Contentment; South East (Agneya) represented by Agni / Fire and Energy; Dakshina (South) ruled by Yama and standing for Dharma and Death; South West (Niruti) ruled by Nocturnal Deity known for Sleep, Fame and Income; West (Paschim) is ruled by Varuna for Water/ Rain and 'Karma'/ fate; North West (Vayavya) ruled by Vayu Deva standing for intellect, business and name; North (Kubera) known for prosperity and Career; Brahma is the Centre for Power and Creativity.

### 'Jaataka Skandha'

It is stated that the Rashis from 'Mesha' constitute the limbs of 'Kaala Purusha' in the order of head, face, hands, heart, stomach, thighs, 'Vasti' or urinary bladder, linga, knees, leg calves and two feet. Mangal, Shukra, Budha, Chandra, Surya, Budha, Shukra, Mangal, Guru Shani, and Guru are the Ruling Deities of the Rashis respectively as follows: Mesha-Vrisha-Mithun-Karka-Simha-Kanya-Tula-Vrischik-Dhanu-Makar-Kumbh-Meena Mangal-Venus-Budha-Chand-Surya-Budha-Shukra-Mangal- Guru- Shani-Shani- Guru.

In the context of specific Rashi, Shad Vargas are calculated in terms of Hora (from Sun Rise to Sun set), Drekshana (division of one third of a Rashi or a Varga), Navamamsha, Dwadashaamsha, and Trimshamsha (as each Rashi comprises thirty Amshas.), of which fifteen Amshas has one hora, ten Amshas make a drekshana, three and one third Amshas make a Navamamsha; (in other words, in each Raashi, there are nine Navamshas), two and half Amshas make one Dwadashamsha thus making twelve Dwadashamshas in a Rashi.Each Amsha is called a Trimshamsha. In malefic Rashis, first five Amshas are dominated by Mangal, the next five Amshas by Shani, the next eight Amshas by Brihaspati, the further seven Amshas by Budha and the last five Amshas by Shukra. In respect of 'Sama' (Even) Rashis, the reverse order is applicable viz. first five by Shukra, seven by Budha, then eight by Brihaspati, five by Shani, and finally five by Mangal.

The *Jnanaartha Chakra of Horas* indicates that during the first half or the fifteen Amshas, Mesha Rasi is governed by Ravi, Vrisha by Shukra, Mithun by Ravi, Karkataka by Chandra, Simha by Ravi, Kanya by Chandra, Tula by Ravi, Vrischik by Chandra, Dhanu by Ravi, Makara by Chandra, Kumbha by Ravi and Meena by Chandra; where as during the second half of 15 to 30 Amshas in the Hora Chakra, Ravi is dominant among Vrisha, Karka, Kanya, Vrischik, Makar and Meena and Chanrda in the rest of the Raashis viz. Mesha, Mithuna, Simha, Tula, Dhanu and Kumbha. In respect of Triteeyaamsha, viz. Dreshkaana the dominating Grahas in the first part of 1-10 Amshas are as follows: Mangala in Mesha and Vrischik, Shukra in Vrisha and Tula, Budha in Mithun and Kanya, Chandra in Karka, Surya in Tula, and Guru in nine and Twelve; during the period of eleven to twenty Amshas ot the middle phase, Surya is dominating in Mesha; Budha in Vrisha and Kumbha; Shukra in Mithuna and Makara, Mangal in Karka and Dhanu, Guru in Simha and Vrischik, Shani in Kanya and Tula; and Chandra in Meena; and finally during the Third and final Dreshkana ie from 21 to 30 Anshas, Guru is prominent in Mesha and Karka, Shani in Vrisha and Mithuna, Mangal in Simha and Meena, Shukra in Kanya and Kumbha, Budha in Tula and Makara, Chandra in Vrischik, and Surya in Dhanu.

Calculations in respect of *Navaamsha Jnaana* are exacting, since nine Amsha / Kalaas are involved from 3/20, 6/40, 10/0, 13/20, 16/40, 20/0, 23/20, 26/40 and 30/0; during these respective Amsha Kalaas, the juxta-positions of Raashi / Grihas are *Mesha* vs. Mangala (1), Shukra (2), Budha (3), Chandra(4), Surya (5), Budha (6), Shukra (7) Mangala (8) and Guru (9); *Vrisha vs.* Shani (10), Shani (11), Guru (12), Mangala (1), Shukra (2), Budha (3), Chandra (4), Ravi (5) and Budha (6); *Mithuna* Vs. Shukra (7), Mangal (8), Guru (9), Shani (10), Shani (11), Guru (12), Mangal(1), Shukra (2) and Budha (3); *Karka vs.* Chandra (4), Ravi (5), Budha (6), Shukra (7), Mangal (8), Guru (9), Shani (10), Shani (11), Guru (12); *Simha vs.* Mangal (1), Shukra (2), Budha (3), Chandra (4), Surya(5), Budha (6), Shukra (7), Mangala (8) and Guru (9); *Kanya vs.* Shani (10), Shani (11) Guru(12), Mangal(1), Shukra (2), Budha (3), Chandra (4), Ravi (5) and Budha (6); *Tula vs.* Shukra (7), Mangal (8), Guru (9); Shani (10), Shani (11), Guru (12), Mangala (1), Shukra (2), and Budha (3); *Vrischika vs.* Chandra (4), Ravi (5), Budha (6), Shukra (7), Mangala (8), Guru (9), Shani (10), Shani (11) and Guru (12); *Dhanu vs.* Mangal (1), Shukra (2), Budha

(3), Chandra (4), Surya (5), Budha (6), Shukra (7), Mangala (8), and Guru (9); Makara vs. Shani (10), Shani (11), Guru (12), Mangala (1), Shukra (2), Budha (3), Chandra (4), Ravi (5), and Budha (6); Kumbha vs. Shukra (7), Mangal (8), Guru (9), Shani (10), Shani (11), Guru (12), Mangala (1), Shukra (2), and Budha (3); and *Meena vs.* Chandra (4), Ravi (5), Budha (6), Shukra (7), Mangala (8), Guru (9), Shani (10), Shani (11) and Guru (12). Similar calculations may be done in respect of *Dwadashaamsha* Chakra has to be calculated in the juxtaposition of Raashis and Grahaas with the difference that instead Navamshi or nine Amshas, the reference is for Twelve Anshaas in the slots of 2, 5, 7, 10, 12, 15, 17, 20, 22, 25, 27 and 30. This is how Rashi of a native, hora, Dreshkaan, Navamaamsha, Dwadashaamsha and Trimshaamsha are worked out and the process is defined as Shadvarga. The Six of the Twelve Raashis viz. vrisha, Mesha, Dhanu, Karka, Mithun and Makara are known as Raatri Sanjnaatak as the are active in the nights, mainly; they are also known as 'Prushtodaya' since they are from the hind side of the body, excepting in respect of Mithuna. The rest of the Rashis are Dina Sanjnas and are active during the daytime (Meena Rashi is however Ubahyodaya) and the rest are of Seershodaya category. As regards the aspect of beneficient and malefic nature, Mesha, Mithuna, Simha, Tula, Dhanu and Kumbha are of Krura (Cruel) nature and the other Grahas are of Soumya / Soft nature. The Anga Sthhanaa or the predominant body-part of Mesha is Mastak (head), Vrisha is Mukha/Face, Mithuna is shoulder, Karka Hridaya, Simha (Stomach), Kanya (kamara / waist)), Tula (bladder), Vrischik (Linga), Dhanu (Uru / thighs), Makara (Jaanu/knees), Kumbha (jangha/shin) and Meena is feet. As regards the Sthira (Stable) or Chara (mobile) nature of the Rashis, Mesha, Karaka, Tula and Makara are of 'chara' nature while Vrisha, Simha, Vrischika and Kumbha are stable Rashis, but Mithuna, Kanya, Dhanu, and Meena are of both Swabhavas. Surya is in Ucchha (exalted position) in Mesha with ten Amshas, Chandra is exalted in Vrisha with 3 Ashas, Mangala in Makara with 28 Amshas, Budha in Kanya with 15 Amshas, Guru in Karka with 5 Amshas, Shukra in Meena with 27 Amshas and Shani in Tula with 20 Amshas in Paramoccha or highly exalted position. As regards the direction of the Rashis, Mesha, Simha and Dhanu are in the East; Vrisha, Kanya and Makara in South; Mithuna, Tula and Kumbha westward and Karka, and Vrischik and Meena northward. In Chara position, East Navamaamsha is Vargotthama; the fifth or Madhyama Navamaamsha is the best among the Sthira or stable positions; and in dwisvabhava the last Navamaamsha is the best of Vargottamaas. Talking of Lagnas, these are of twelve 'Bhaavaas'. The Mula Trikonas or Corner Triangles are stated to be Surya's Simha, Chandra's Vrisha, Mangala's Mesha, Budha's Kanya, Guru's Dhanu, Shukra's Tula and Shani's Kumbha. Chaturtha and Ashtabhavas are called Chaturasras or squares. The Navama and Panchama are called Trikonas. Dwadasha, Asthama and Shashtha are called Trikas; Laghna Chaturtha, Saptama and Dashama are Kendras (Center). The 'dwipadas' (bipeds), Jala charaas (water borne), Keeta (worms) and Pashu or animals are powerful in Kendra; in other words, Dwipadas in Lagna, Jalachara in Chaturtha, Keeta in Seventh and Pashu in Daswa or tenth become powerful. From Kendra, the positions at 2, 5, 8 and 11 are known as 'Panaphar'; the subsequent positions at 3, 6, 9 and 12 are named 'Aapovilma'. Mesha is 'Rakta Varna' or of blood-red colour, Vrisha Rashis colour is Sweta (white), Mithuna has the green colour of a Parrot, Karka's colour is rose like, Simha is Dhumra or grey, Kanya Raashi's colour is Wheatish, Tula's colour is Chitra or mixed, Vrischika has black colour, Dhanu has yellow colour, Makara is of Pinga /orange colour, Kumbha has Babhru or blue-like colour and Meena has 'Swaccha' or transparent varna. Surya Deva is known as Kaalapurusha's Atma or Soul, Chandra is the Manas or heart, Mangal is Parakrama or Valour, Budha is Vani or the power of Speech, Guru is Jnaana (Knowledge) and Happiness, Shukra is desire and Shani is sorrow. Surya and Chandra are the epitomes of a King, Mangal is Senapati or Head of Defence Forces, Budha is Raja Kumar or the Prince, Brihaspati and Shukra are the Ministers and Shanaischar is 'Doota' (Servant). Having given the colours of Raashis, the Varnas or colours of Grahas are given as Surya of Tamra (copper), Chandra of Shukla or white, Mangal of Rakta or blood, Budha of green colour, Brihaspati of 'peeta' or yellow, Shukra is of Chitra and Shaneshwara is of black colour. Agni, Jala, Kartikeya, Hari, Indra, Indrani and Brahma are the Deities of Nava Grahas. Surya, Shukra, Mangal, Rahu, Shani, Chandra, Budha and Brihaspati are the Rulers of Purva, Agneya, Dakshina, Nairuti, Paschima, Vayavya, Uttara and Ishana respectively. Ksheena or diluted Chandra, Surya, Mangal, and Shani are 'Paapa- grahas' (malevolent); Budha and Shani are Napumsaka (eunuchs); Shukra and Chandra are Stree

(effiminate) Grahas, and the rest of Grahas viz. Ravi, Mangala and Guru are Purushas. Mangal, Budha, Guru, Shukra and Shani are the counter-part Masters of the Tatwas of Agni, Bhumi, Aakaash, Jala, and Vaayu. Shukra and Guru are from the Brahmana Varna; Bhauma and Ravi are Kshatrias, Chandra is the Master of Vaishva Varna and Budha is the Head of Sudra Varnas. Shani is the Head of Antyajas (the least important of Varnas) and Rahu is the Master of Mlecchas. Chandra, Surya and Brihaspati are of Sathva Guna; Budha and Shukra of Rajo Guna, and Mangal and Shani are of Tamo guna. Surya is the Master of Devatas, Chandra of Jala, Mangala of Agni, Budha is the Master of Kreeda Vihara or Sports, Brihaspati of Bhumi, Shukra of Wealth, Shanaischara of Shayana or Sleep and Rahu the Master of 'Usar' or Chemeleons. Surva and the following Grahas viz. Chandra, Mangal, Budha, Guru, Shukra and Shani wear the respective Vastras (Clothes) viz. coarse, new, burnt, wet, medium, strong and worn ones. The respective Grahas from Surya as above are the 'Dhatus' of copper, diamonds, gold, glass, silver, pearls and iron. The beneficiaries of the dhatus are bones in respect of Surya; shronita (egg- developer of Virility) from 'Manis' or Jewels in respect of Chandra; 'Majja or bone-marrow from Gold in the case of Mangala; twacha or skin from glass in respect of Budha, 'Vasaa' or fat from silver in the case of Guru; 'Veerya' from pearls in the case of Shukra and 'snaayu' or sinews from loha or metal/iron as from Shani. Similarly Shani, Shukra, Mangala, Chandra, Budha and Guru are the Masters of the Seasons of Shishira, Vasanta, Greeshma, Varsha, Sharad and Hemanta.

Graha Kaalamaan: One 'Ayana' or six months, 'Muhurta' or two 'Ghadis', 'Ahoratra', 'Ritu' or two 'maasaas' or months, 'maasa', 'Paksha' or fortnight and 'Varsha' or a Year-these are the Kaalamaanas of Grahas commencing from Surya. These are also the 'Rasaas' or tastes of the Grahas viz. Katu /Mircha (Surya); Lavana (Salt) (Chandra), Tikta or bitter (Mangal); 'Mishra' or mixed tastes (Budha); 'Mathura' or sweet (Guru); 'Amla' or sour (Shukra) and 'Kashaya' or herbal decoction (Shani). Swaabhaavika Maitri of Grahas (Natural Compatibility): To Surya, Mitras or important friends are Chandra, Mangal and Guru; Budha is a normal friend but Shukra and Shani are enemies; to Chandra, significant friends are Budha and Surya, neutral friends are Mangala, Guru, Shukra and Shani but has no Shatrus at all; Mangala's very good friends are Chandra, Surya and Guru, his normal friends are Shukra and Shani and enemy is Budha; to Budha, very good friends are Shukra and Surya, normal friends are Mangala, Guru and Shani but Chandra is shatru; to Guru, Surya, Mangala and Chandra are very good friends, Shani is a neutral friend but Budha and Shukra are enemies; To Shukra good friends are Budha and Shani, neutrals or Mangala and Guru but Surya and Chandra are enemies; Shani's very good friends are Shukra and Budha, Guru is neutral to him but enemies are Surya, Chandra and Mangala.

Mataantara Maitri of Grahas (Compromised Compatibility): Surya is a friend of Brihaspati in normalcy, so is Chandra with Guru and Budha, Mangal with Shukra and Budha, Budha with all the Grahas excepting Surya, Guru is friendly with all excepting Mangala, Shukra is friendly ordinarily excepting Chandra and Ravi, and Shani is friendly with others excepting Mangala, Chandra and Ravi. Tatkaalika Maitri among Grahas: (Temporary Compatibility): Depending on the time/ positioning of Grahas in second and twelfth Houses; or third and eleventh Houses; or fourth and tenth Houses, even natural enemies might become friendly on temporary basis. Suppose Surya is in the First House and Budha, Shukra and Mangal are in second, third and fourth Houses respectively, then Surya would become temporary friends and Chandra, Guru and Shani become Shatrus.Similarly, Chandra becomes friendly with Shani, Guru, Shukra and Mangala if they happen to be in the third, fourth, eleventh and tenth Houses and others viz. Surya and Budha become Shatrus. There would be temporary friendships and enimities among other Grahas as well.

Nakshatra Phala (Star-wise birth results): Readings as per Nakshatra (Star)-wise birth of various human beings were narrated by Sanandana Maharshi to Narada Muni as follows: Those born in Ashwini are handsome and fond of wearing ornaments. Bharani-born are capable to perform and speak truthfully. Krittika-born tends to eatless, steady-minded, and conversational but have soft corner for other women. Rohini born are wealthy, Mrigashitaites are luxurious; Ardra-born violent, stubborn and criminal-minded; Punarvasu born are even-minded, and well behaved but suffer bad health; Persons born in Pushya Nakshatra are imaginative like Poets and are happy-go-lucky. Those persons who are born in Aslesha are

rude, obstinate, ungrateful, low-minded and uncouth. *Magha* born are rich, devoted and happy. If born in *Purva Phalguni*, the persons are charitable, adjustable, sociable and conversationalists. Born of *Uttara Phalguni* are wealthy and comfortable. *Hasta* born are shameless, mean-minded and crooks. Persons born in *Chitra* are well dressed, beautiful and charming. *Swati* born are virtuous, moralistic, kind hearted and charitable. *Vishakhaites* are greedy, deceptive, cunning and harsh. Born of *Anuradha*, the persons are fond of travel and non-resident. *Jyeshtha* born are principled and contented. Persons born in *Mula Nakshatra* are wealthy, happy and helpful. If born of *Purvashadha and Uttarashadha*, the persons concerned are happy- go- lucky and hearty /disciplined and virtuous respectively. *Shravanites* are rich, happy and famous; while born of *Dhanishta*, the persons concerned are donors, wealthy and courageous. A person born of *Shatabhisha*, the persons win over opponents but are susceptible of bad practices. Born of *Purvabhadra*, the persons concerned are heavily prone to feminine influence and rich; while *Uttrabhadraites* are independent, assertive, speech-makers, attractive and joyful. Finally, those born in *Revati* are energetic, enterprising, rich and pure-hearted.

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

Suryaadi Graha-Raashi- Phala: If Surya is in Mesha Raashi, the 'Jaataka' would be famed; in Vrisha Raashi the person would be a woman hater; in Mithuna the person is rich; Karka stands for angry nature; Simha for ignorance; Kanya for a Poet; Tila for an Artist; Vrischik for dhanavaan; Dhanu for Loka Pujyata; Makar for a miser; Kumbha for poverty, and Meena is unhappiness. If Mangal is in Simha the Jataka is of poverty; in Karka, the person is rich; in Swaraashi ie. Mesha / Vrischika the Jaataka is Bhramana sheela or fond of travel; in Budha Raashi (Kanya-Mithun), the person is full of gratitude; in Guru (Dhanu- Meena) fame and name; in Shukra (Vrisha-Tula) desire for opposite sex; Makara for good progeny and prosperity; and in Kumbha an unhappy, wicked and illusive nature. If Budha is in Surya's Simha Raasi, the native is a woman hater; Chandra Raashi in Karaka, the person would be a disliker of relatives; in Mangala raashi (Mesha Vrischika) suffers poverty; in Budha raashi (Mithun -Kanya), the person becomes intelligent and rich; the native in Guru Raashi (Dhanu/Meena) achieves fame; in Shukra Raashi (Vrisha-Tula) the person concerned the native gets rich by wife and children; and in Shani Raashi (Makara –Kumbha) goes in debt.

If Guru is in Simha, the native becomes Senapati; in Karka becomes rich by wife and children; in Mangal (Mesha-Vrischik) he/she would be wealthy and forgiving; in Budha (Mithuna-Kanya) the native would by wealthy by 'astraas' etc.; in Own Raashi (Dhanu-Meena), becomes District-Head; in Shukra's Raashi (Vrisha-Tula) the nbative becomes rich and happy; and in Shani (Makar-Kumbha), the person becomes the Poor and in Kumbha rich. If Shukra is in Simha attains prosperity by wife; in Karka becomes arrogant and unhappy; in Mangal (Mesha-Vrichak) receives hatred from relations; in Budha (Mithun-Karka) becomes rich and sinless; in Guru (Dhanu-Meena) becomes scholarly; and in own (Vrisha-Tula) becomes rich and forgiving; and finally in Shani (Makara-Kumbhja) gets disgraced by woman or opposite sex. If Shani is in Simha, the native becomes poor because of children and lack of money; in Mangal (Mesha-Vrischika), the native becomes friendless and poor; in Budha (Mithun-Kanya) the person turns out to be a Pradhaan Rakshak /Chief of Security; in Guru Raashi (Dhanu-Meena) the person becomes rich and happy due to life-partner and offspring; in Shukra (Vrisha-Tula) becomes a King anf finally in the own Raashi (Makara-Kumbha), the native would be the Territorial Head.

Graha Drishti on Chandra: Maharshi Sanandana further explained to Narada Muni the 'drishthi phal' or the visionary outcome of 'Nava Grahas' on Chandra positioned in various 'Raashis'; for instance, the

drishti of Grahas stationed in Mesha Stitha Chandra results in varying results like Mangala drishti yields 'Bhupa'(King); Budha drishti gives 'Jna'or Pandita, Guru's drishti gives 'Guni'; Shukra drishti provides 'Chora Swabhava' or the characteristic of a thief and Shani's drishti creates 'Aswa' or poverty. On Vrishascha Chandra, the Graha drishti yields Nirdhana from Mangala, Chora Swabhava from Budha, and Raja Swabhava from Guru, 'Pandita' Swabhava from Shukra; and Preshya / Bhritya Swabhava or of a servant from Shani. (Surya drishti is 'anukta' or unknown and may be considered as the drishti of Shani). The 'drishti phalas'are to be reckoned accordingly as per the above illustrations. Similarly, the 'drishti'of various Grahas on Chandra in terms of 'Navaamsha' and the resultant 'Phalas'might also be identified.

Maharshi Sanandana described various other aspects of Jyotisha to Narada Muni ranging from the fixation of muhurtas like agricultural operations (Seed-spreadings, tilling, crop-cuttings), Roga-Vimukti Snaanas or bathings to terminate illnesses, 'Nrityaarambha' or maiden dances (good Nakshatras being Uttara Phalguni, Uttaraashaadha, Uttara Bhadrapada, Anuraadha, Jeyshtha, Dhanishta, Shatabhisha, Pushya, Hasta and Revati); 'Yatra' or travel Nakshatras viz. Ashwini, Krittika, Mrigashira, Pushya, Moola, Chitra, Shravana, the Three Uttaras, Purva phalguni, Magha, Vishaka and Dhanishta ('varjita' or avoidable nakshatras are Rohini, Jeyshtha, Punarvasu, Swati, Revati, Hasta, Anuradha, Purvabhadra, Bharani and Aslesha) etc. Muhurthas for Garbhadaana Samskara, Pumsavana / Seemantotrayana, Jaata Karma/Naama karma, Anna Praasana, Chookaakarana, Saamaanya Kshura Karma, Upanayana or Gayatri Mantropaasana, Vivahas (weddings), Vadhu Pravesha or maiden entry of brides in the homes of husbands, Deva Pratishtha, Griha Nirmaana, Vaastu vishaya, Griha Pravesha or Entry of new residence, commencement of Deva Karyas like 'Vrataararambha'.

# Shukadeva's mastery of 'Vedangas', 'Upadeshas' by Janaka, Vyasa and Sanat Kumara

As directed by his father Veda Vyasa to achieve expertise in the Six 'Vedangas'viz. Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakaran, Nirukta, Vyakaran and Chhandas Shastra as stepping stones to accomplish 'Moksha', Suka Muni mastered the Vedangas and approached Veda Vyasa once again. The latter suggested to Shuka Deva to follow the normal route of 'Ashrama Dharma'viz. Brahma-charya, Vivahika Jeevana, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa and advised him to meet King Janaka at Mithilapura the father of Devi Sita and the Epic Hero Shri Rama. Veda Vyasa suggested that Suka Deva should adopt the normal route to the City of Mithila, instead of the Yoga Marg by 'Antarisha' or the Sky Route so that Suka Muni would be exposed to human experiences of joys and sorrows on the way. Veda Vyas asserted that King Janaka was not only his disciple but also his Master since he was a King and moreso an expert in the Moksha Shastra. As Suka Deva reached the Royal Palace, the Gate Keepers denied admission but an Official of the Court recognised the name of Veda Vyasa and that Sukha Deva was his son, admitted the latter into the private Chambers of the King, where several charming and coquettish girls sought to entertain the special guest of honour. But Suka Deva, being a person of full control of his faculties had no reactions either to women or wine. When he met the King, he conveyed that his father Vyasa suggested meeting him and clarifying some of his doubts; for instance: what were the duties of a Brahmana, what would be the Swarupa or Form of Moksha and how best to seek Moksha. King Janaka replied that a person born as a Brahmana would assume a second life after his 'Upanayana Samskara'-hence known as a 'Dwija'or twice born; he would then have the duties of Veda Pathana, Swaadhyayana, Tapasya, Guru Seva, strict practice of Brahmacharya, performance of homas, Shraddha/Tarpana and remittance of debts to Devas and Pitras, return from Gurukula to the Parents after giving Guru Dakshina, wedding, earning livelhood for the self and 'Samsara'; discharge of various 'Garhastya responsibilities' especially worship of deities, performance of Agni Karyas/ Yagnas, Vratas, Atithi Puja or worship of Guests, procreation of children,

bringing them up, Charities, Tirtha Yatras, Vanaprastha, Sanyasa and Moksha sadhana. It would be necessary to go through the entire cycle of life of observing the 'Purusharthas' of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. It would be erroneous to presume that one could reach final stage of Moksha without passing through the phases of life and absorbing the experiences while transgressing the Regulations of Socio-religious frame work and practising self-control at every stage.

After hearing King Janaka, Suka Deva questioned whether a person, who had already secured 'Jnana-Vignana' or the full Knowledge of Brahma during the Brahmachaya stage and was completely devoid of 'Raga-Dweshas' or desires and dislikes, would still have to pass through the other three Ashramas. In reply, King Janaka said that just as Moksha would not be possible of attainment without 'Jnana-Vignana', the latter too would 'truly' not be possible of attainment without a 'Sadguru' who alone could guide to swim through the Samsara. It was a Guru alone that could help draw lines of distinction between the 'Dharmik Maryada' or the limits of Virtue and those of 'Karmanushthan' or Rituals. This guidance of sifting the good and bad would not be possible unless specific situations were faced and surmounted. The significance of radiance would be learnt only when darkness was present! Similarly, the impact of Rajasa and Tamasa gunas would be evident only against the Satvika Guna. Then only, there would be the possibility of 'Atma Sakshatkaar' or Self-Enlightenment. 'Brahma Bhaava' would occur only when one were not afraid of anybody and none were afraid of him; when a person became unable to do anything against anybody either by speech, thinking or action, then only Brahma Bhava became evident. When jealousy, or desire or greed were abolished then only 'Brahmananda' or bliss was experienced; when one distinguishes what was seen and heard then only a comparison would be possible and then only there could be a question of treating the situations discreetly. Unless 'Duhkha' (sorrow) and 'Sukha' (happiness) were experienced, where was the question of eqanimity! Similarly, comparisons would be possible between blame-praise, iron-gold, cold-heat, Artha (wealth)-Anartha (poverty), likesdislikes and life-death; how could otherwise be possible to achieve Brahma-Bhava! King Janaka further said that Suka Muni had all the qualifications to accomplish Moksha, excepting the lack of awareness of the surroundings and the 'Loukya' or worldly wisdom which too was essential to recognise Brahma Gyan; that could be understood only when illumination and darkness were clearly differentiated and that would be possible when Ashrama Dharma was practised and control of 'Indriyas' was secured just as water drops on Lotus leaf were in the 'Samsara' without being affected by the leaf! As King Janaka sought to convince Suka Muni, the latter returned to his father VedaVyasa quietly with an implicit approval of following the 'Ashrama Dharma' and enter the phase of Grihasta Ashrama!

A highly delighted Veda Vyasa recited Vedas along with Suka Muni, there was a powerful sweep of wind which was recognised as a sign of Suka Muni's Divya-drishti or Celestial Vision and Veda Vyasa explained to Suka Muni about Pravaha or the First of the flows of Seven Vayus- the 'Prathama' or the First Wind Flow between 'Prithvi' and 'Aakash'. The second Vayu, viz. Aavaha would get created by the interaction of the 'Rasa-Matras' of Akaash and Vidyut (Sky and Lightening) which created thunders making huge sounds, Jeemutas would get created by the absorption of Sea water by Grahas or Planets like Sun and Moon. The Jeemutas would get converted as *Parjanyas* which in turn produce the third Vayu called *Uduh* and the latter would get interacted with massive clouds carrying collossal rain. The fourth Vayu Samvaha got created by hitting mountains. The high speed of the wind would uproot huge trees hitting 'pralaya kaala' type of clouds called *Blaahak* and the extremely swift and frightening fifth Vaya called Vivah, as a result of which Celestial waters would rain torrentially in the upper worlds; that sixth Vayu would be created further known as Parivaha; this Vayu was considered as a highly Tatvika. The seventh and final Vayu called *Paravaha* was indeed the Prana Vayu at the termination of life. These seven Vayus represent the Sapta Marudganas, who were born of Devi Diti. The Paravaha Vayu was so powerful that it could even shake Himalaya Mountains. This was stated to be the 'Nishwas' or the exhaling of Bhagavan Vishnu and whenever the pace of Vishnu Nishwas increased, then there would be hurricanes on Earth! After Suka Muni obtained Divya drishti, Veda Vyasa described the Seven Forms of Vayu as a result of which, Suka Deva's divya drishti was bestowed and Vyasa left Suka Muni to continue Swadhyayana of Vedas.

Meanwhile, Maharshi **Sanat Kumara** arrived and provided his Instruction to Suka Deva about Tatwas and Moksha Sadhana. Maharshi prefaced his Upadesha stating that there was no better 'Netra'(Vision) than 'Vidya' or Learning; no better Truth than Tapasya or Meditation; no worse Sorrow than Desire; no better happiness than 'Tyaga' or Sacrifice. He said: *Nityam krodhattapo rakshochhriyam rakshochha matsaraat, Vidyaam Maanaavamaana –bhyaamaatmaanam tu pramaadatah/ Aanrushyamsyam paroh Dharmah Kshamaa cha paramam balam, Atmajnaanam parm jnaanam Satyam hi Paramam hitam/* (Human Beings should shield against anger with Tapas /meditation and against the feelings of 'Maana' (praises) and 'Avamaana'(insults) with 'Vidya' (wisdom). Reversal of the mind-set of vindictiveness is by itself the highest Dharma. Forgiveness and tolerance are the greatest strength. Self-Realisation is the supreme Knowledge; and Truthfulness is the best tool of Action. Constant strife for acquisition/ possession is against the principle of a 'Pandita' or a 'Vidwan' whose basic trait is abandonment and detachment. Indifference leads to Self-Control, which leads to peace of mind and contentment; a feeling of satisfaction leads to happiness which is truly devoid of pulls and pressures of life and paves the route to 'Mukti'!

After obtaining the instructions of Veda Vyasa and Sanaka-Sanandana brothers, Suka Deva reached the top of Kailasha and after purifying himself externally and internally, commenced Yoga by Dharana and Samadhi, and gradually flew from the mountain-peaks to Vayu Mandal to various Lokas of Yaksha, Gandharva, Swarga, and Satya, before visioning Bhagavan Vishnu whom he eulogized in ecstasy as follows:

'Shantam prasanna vadanam peeta kousheya vaasasam, Shankha chakragadaa Padmairmurtimadbhvibhu rupaasitam/ Vaksthalasthyaa Lakshmyaa Kausthubhena viraajitam, Kati Sutra Brahma sutra katakaangad bhushitam/ Bhraajatkirita valayam Manirnupura shobhitam, Dadarsha siddhinkaraih sevyamaana maharnisham/ Tam drushta bhakti bhaavena trushtaava Madhusudanam, Namestey Vaasu Devaaya Sarva lokaika saakshiney/ Jagadbeeja swarupaaya Purnaaya nibhrutaatmaney, Harye Vaasukisthaya Shweta dwipa nivaashiney/ Hamsaaya Matsya rupaaya Varaaha tanu dhaariney, Nrisimhaaya Dhruvejyaja Sankhya yogeshwaraaya cha/ Chatuh Sanaaya Kurmaaya Prithavey Swasukhaatmaney, Nabhoyaya Jagaddhaatrey Vidhaatrenta karaayacha/ Bhargayendraaya Raamaaya Raaghavaaya Paraayacha, Krishnaaya Veda Kartrecha Buddha Kalki swarupiney/ Chaturvyuhaaya Vedyaya Dhyeyaya Parama -atmaney, Nara Narayanaakhyaya Shipivishtaaya Vishnavey/ Rutadhaamney Vidhaamnecha Suparnaya Swarochishey, Rubhavey Suvrutaakhyaya Sudhaanney chajitaya cha/ Vishwarupaaya Vishwaaya Srishthisthityantakaariney, Yagnaaya Yagna bhoktrey cha Sthavishtaayaana verthiney/ Aditya Soma netraaya Sahaojo balaaya cha, Eejyaaya Sakshineyjaaya Bahu seershonghri baahavey/ Shrishaaya Shrinivasaaya Bakta Vashya sharinginey, Ashtaprakruthyadhishaaya Brahmanenanta Shaktaye/ Brihadaaranya Vedyaaya Hrishikeshaaya Vedhasey, Pundarika Nibhakshaya Kshetrajnaaya vibhasiney/ Govindaya Jagat Karthrey Jagannadhaya Yoginey, Styaaya Satya sandhaaya Vaikuntha -yachutaayacha/ Adhokshjaaya Dharmaya Vamanaya Tridhaatavey, Ghrutaarchishey Vishnayey tenantaaya Kapilaaya cha/ Virinchiye Trikakrudey Rukyajussamarupiney, Eka Shringaya cha Suchishravasey Shaastrayonaye, Vrishakapaya Ridraaya Prabhavey Vishwakarmaney, Bhurbhuvah Swarupaya Daithagney Nirgunaayacha, Namaste paahi maameeha Sharanagatavatsala/.(My salutations to you Vasudeva, the unique substantiation of the entire Universe; the 'Bija Swarupa' or the Form of the Seed responsible for Creation; the Complete, Steady and Ever-lasting Supreme Soul; and the inimitabe occupant of Sweta Dwipa resting in 'Yoga Nidra' on the Vasuki Serpent's huge couch. You are the Forms of Hamsa, Matsya, Vaaraaha, Vaamana, and Nrisimha, as also the target of devotion by Dhruva. You are the epitome of Sankhya and Yoga disciplines; the reflections of Sanaka Brothers who were born with the Mission of prmoting Virtue. You were the Creator, Preserver and final Destroyer of the whole 'Srishti'. You are the image of Nabhi Putra Rishabha Deva. The Avatars of Parashu Rama, Shri Rama, Sri Krishna, Veda Vyasa, Buddha and Kalki Deva are your own to vindicate Dharma and devastate the Evil. You excel as Balabhadra, Pradyuna and Aniruddha as also like Nara Narayana and Sipivisht - the Most Intelligent. You are the Yagna, its Karta'and 'Bhokta and 'Sthula' and 'Sukshma' or the biggest and tiniest! Surya and Chandra are Your Eyes. You are the Ashta Prakritis viz. Bhumi, Jala, Agni, Vayu, Akasash, Mind,

Buddhi, and Ahamkar (Ego); Brahma, the unending Shaktis and Parameshwara. You are the Kshetrajna, Govinda, Jagat Karta, Jagannatha, Yogi, Satya, Satya Pratigna, Vaikuntha, Achyuta, Adhokshaja, Dharma, Tridhatu, Tejopunja and RukYajur, Sama Vedas. You are the Forms of Bhurloka, Bhuvarloka and Swarloka. You are Nitya, Niranjana, Avyaya, and Akshara; Ishwara! I am under your protection!). Bhagavan Vishnu was happy with Shuka Muni's steadfast devotion and blessed him to attain 'Siddhis' and facilities of movement all over the Universe like Vayu Deva and Surya Deva; he also instructed Suka Muni to go back to Veda Vyasa for further 'Adhyana' of Shastras and seek his further guidance till the final call to him from the mortal life.

Maharshi Sanatkumara described 'Bhaagayata Tantra' to Brahmarshi Narada to realise the Supreme

# Shiva Darshan- 'Pati', 'Pashu', 'Paasha' and 'Prapti'

Energy named Bhagavan through the route of 'Shiva Darshana'. In the context of Shaiva Maha Tantra, there are three 'Padaarthas' (Elements) viz. Pashupati, Pashu and Paasha. The 'Sadhanas' (tools) are fourfolded viz. Vidya (Learning), Kriya (Action), Yoga and Charcha (Deliberation). Till such time that human beings are unable to shed ignorance and illusion, they continue to be called 'Pashus' or Animals with the instincts of 'Pashutwa' which is tantamount to 'Daitya Bhava' or of devilish features. The word 'Pasha' denotes 'bandhana' or chains /shackles. These are of five types, viz. 'Malaja', 'Karmaja', 'Maayeya' or Mayaajanya, 'Tirodhana Shaktija' and 'Binduja'. Malaja and Karmaja Paashas are due to dormant forces hiding the natural inclinations or Swabhaavika tendencies. The Mayeya bandhanas are due to the illusory forces which cover up the Truth of 'Sat-Chit- Ananda' and suppressing the awareness of realities and highligting temporary attractions of woman, wine, wealth. The Tirodhana Shaktija Paasha lacks the power of reversal (Rodhaka Shakti) when human beings tend to ignore the distinction of Human Body and Atma or Inner Consciousness. Finally, 'Binduja Paasha' denotes the full awareness of the magnificence of Sat-Chit- Ananda Swarupa. Pashus are of three types viz. 'Vigynaakala', 'Pralayaakala' and 'Sakala'. The Vigyanakala Pashu is tied with Paashas full of 'Mala' or dirt / filth; Pralayaakala Pashu is tied with the chains of Mala and 'Maya' (Illusion) also and Sakala or Sarva Pashu is tied with the chains of Mala, Maya and Karma (Deeds). When a person recognises the Swarupa of Bhagayan and practises japa, dhyana and Sanyas or even through regular life of 'Samsara' (family life) and reduces the worldly pulls and pressures, excepting however the normal 'bandhanas' or shackles called 'Anava Mala', then that person is stated to possess 'Vignaana kala'. When the person controls the body and mind, but still possesses the Karmaja mala and Maya-held mala or 'Maayeya kala', then the person is stated to possess Pralayaakala. As the person whose 'Jeevatma' is rid of Anava mala, Mayeya mala and karmaja mala or Pashas, then the person is stated as 'Sakala'. Now, Vigyanakala Pashus are of two categories, viz. 'Samaapta Kalusha (blemish) and 'Asamaapta Kalusha'; when a Jeevatma continues to perform Karmas (deeds), then to the extent that Karma carries 'mala', that becomes Asamaapta Kalusha. But that person leaves off all Karmas, then that Jeeva is stated to possess Samapta kalusha. Such person reaches the status of 'Vidyeshwara' of eight types: Ananthaschaiva sukshmascha tathaiva cha Shivottamah, Ekanetrastathaivaika Rudraschaapi Trimurthakah/ Shri Kanthascha shikhandi cha proktaa Vidveshwara imey (Ananta, Sukshma, Shivottama, Eka Netra, Eka Rudra, Tri Murthi, Shri Kantha and Shikhandi). Asamaapti Kalusha is he whose stock of blemishes is still unfinished; the Parameswara Mantra has to be instructed to him for the purpose. 'Pralayaakala pashu'has two formats, viz. pakka paashadwaya and apakka -paashadwaya; as a Jeevatma sheds 'Mala', 'Karma' and 'Maya', then the 'Pashas' get weakened, then the Jeeva becomes qualified for 'Diksha', which is the 'Sadhana' or the facilitator of Shivatva. The ever merciful 'Parameshwara' then enters the Physique of a Guru and gives the 'Diksha' (Apprenticeship) to practise the seven 'Sadhanaas'viz. 'Kalaa', 'Kaala', 'Niyati', 'Vidya', 'Raaga', Prakriti and 'Guna' along with other Tatwas vix. Pancha Bhutas or Five Elements of Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Sky; Mana (Mind), Buddhi (Internal Feelings) and 'Ahankar' (Ego); Ten Indrivas (Physical Limbs); 'Pancha Tanmatras' or Five Sound, Form, Taste, Smell and Touch, five 'Antahkaranas' and Five Shabdas. The Mantra- Diksha for the demolition of the 'Bandhanas' would thus constitute steps forward to Shiva Darshana.

# Explanation of 'Mantras', 'Matrika Nyaasas' and 'Deva Puja Vidhi'

The basic forms of Mantras are of 'Stree' (Feminine), Purusha (Masculine) and Napumsak (Eunuch). The Stree Mantras end up with 'tha' or 'swaha'; Purusha Mantras end up with 'Hum' and 'Phut'; those Mantras end up with 'Namah' are used in Napumsak Mantras. The various Mantras are utilised in the context of six 'Karmas' deeds) viz. 'Shanti' (Peaceful purposes), 'Vashya' (subjugation), 'Stambhana' (paralizing), 'Dwesha' (creating hatred), 'Ucchhanana (uprooting) and 'Marana' (death-related). Whereever Pranavaanta (ending with the word OM) and 'maatras or 'consonants like 'repha'or 'raakaar' as also the word 'Swaahaa' are involved, these expressions are Agni-Sambandhi or related to 'Agni Karyas' such as oblations to Fire and these are for 'Sowmya' or peaceful (benevolent) purposes; the other Karmas (deeds) are invariably malefic. When the Soma sambandhi Mantras are used, these 'Agnishomatmatmak' or Fire- oblation oriented and are uttered to awaken Devas. Such Mantras are used along with control of breathing through 'Ida' and Pingala Nadis' (viz. left and right nostrils). These Mantras are never uttered while one feels sleepy or inattentive, lest they have negative impact. Also, special Mantras are not to be uttered while stopping, breaking or discontinuing. In the 'Anulomakrama' (inhaling), bindu / anuswaar is used and in 'Vilomakrama' (exhaling), 'Visarga' is used. The utterances of these Mantras bestow 'siddhis' or various accomplishments. There are several 'doshas' (deficiencies) possible in the utterances of these Mantras; for eg. they are not recited while being dull, arrogant, troubled, inattentive, dejected or feeling superior or inferior; such moods or mental complexes could be cured by Yoga, especially by 'Yonimudra Aasana Yoga, under the guidance of a Guru.

After performing the Sandhya-Tarpan and preparation for Puja, a devotee would first invoke Ganesha to ensure that no hindrances are encountered in the worship. Then, 'Maatrika Nyaasa' is taken up in connection with Vaishnava-Maatrika-Nyasa and / or Shaiva-Maatrika-Nyasa/ Gaanapatyta-Maatrika-Nyasa / Kalaa-Matrika-Nyasa. The Vaishnava-Matrika Nyasa (Aligned of Deva-Devi) is as follows: Kirti -Keshava, Kranti- Narayana, Tushti-Madhava, Pushti- Govinda, Dhriti-Vishnu, Shanti- Madhushudan, Kriya- Trivikrama, Daya-Vamana, Megha-Shridhara, Harsha-Hrishikesha, Shraddha- Padmanabha, Lajja-Damodara, Lakshmi- Vasudeva, Sarasvati- Sankarshana, Preeti-Pradyumna, Rati- Aniruddha, Jaya-Chakri, Durga- Gadi, Prabha- Sharangi, Satya- Khadgi, Chanda- Shankhi, Vani- Hali, Vilasini- Musali, Vijaya-Shuli, Viraja-Paashi, Ashtangi- Vishwa, Vinada-Mukunda, Sunanda-Nandaja, Smriti-Nandi, Vriddhi- Nara, Samruddhi-Narakajit, Shuddhi-Hari, Buddhi-Krishna, Bhuti- satya, Mukti- Saawat, Kshama-Shouri, Ramaa-Shura, Uma-Shiva, Kledini- Bhudhara, Klinna-Vishva Murti, Vasudha-Vaikuntha, Vasuda- Purushottama, Para-Bali, Parayana-Balaanuja, Sukshma-Bala, Sandhya- Vrusha hanta, Pragna-Vrisha, Prabha- Hamsa, Nishaa-Varaaha, Dhar- Vimala, and Vidyut-Nrisimha. The Nyasa would be followed by 'Vishnu Dhyana' by reciting Om 'Hreem' / Shaktih, 'Shreem'/ 'Shaktih', 'Kleem'/ Kaama; the Nyasa of Shakti and Vishnu should be done with the alphabet words 'Aa' with the latter's forehead; ( for eg. touch the forehead saying: Om Hrem kleem am kleem shreem hreem Keshava Kirthibhaam namah -lalatey sprarshayaami) 'Aaa' with face; 'E' and 'Ee'with His Eyes; 'Vu' and 'Vuu' with His hands; 'Ru' and 'Ruu' with His nose; 'Lu' and 'Luu' with His cheeks; 'Ye' and 'Yey' with His lips; 'O'and 'Auv'with upper and nether teeth; 'Am' with the tongue-origin; 'Aha' with the neck; right hand with 'Ka' varga and 'Cha' varga with lefthand; 'ta' varga and 'tha' varga with the Lord's feet; 'Pa' and 'Pha' with his belly sides; 'ba' for His posterior and 'bha' for navel; 'ma' for His heart; 'Ya', 'Ra', 'La', 'Va', 'Sa', 'Sha' and 'Saa' for the Sapta Dhatus viz. Rasa (lymph), Rakta (blood), Maamsa (Muscles), Medha (fat), Asthi (bones), Majja (bone-marrow) and Shukra (Semen); the word 'ha' with 'Praana'(life), 'Lla' with Atma (Soul) and 'Ksha' with Krodha (anger); this is how the Lord's Physical parts are aligned with each of the alphabet letters (in Sanskrit). This is the procedure of aligning with the body parts of Narayana.

<u>'Shiva- Maatrika Nyasa as follows:</u> The devotee's nyasa would be as per the idenified Matrikas and Shiva Murthis: Purnodari-Shri Kanthesha, Viraja-Anantesha, Shaalmali- Sukshmakeshah; Leelakshi and Trimurtesha, Vartulaakshi and Mahesha, and Deergha kona and Artheesha. (The procedure of the Nyasa is to recite 'Hu sow Am' Shri Kanthesha Purnodaribhyam namah, Hu sow Am Ananteshaya viraabhyam namah Mukha vrutey namah). The further Nyasa would be as follows: Deerghamukhi-Bhaara bhuteesha,

Gomukhi-Tirthisha, Deergha Jihva-Sthaanvisha, Kundodari-Haresha, Urthyakeshi-Jhantesha, Vikritaswa-Bhautikesha, Jwaalamukhi - Sadyojatesha, Ulkaamukhi - Anugrahesha, Aastha - Akrura, Vidya - Mahasena, Maha Kali-Krodhesha, Sarasvati-Chandesha, Siddha Gauri- Panchaantakesha, Trilokya Vidya-Shivottamesha, Mantra Shakti-Eka Rudresha, Kaamathi-Kurmesha, Bhuta Mata- Ekanetresha, Lambodari- Chaturvaktresha, Draavini-Ajesha, Nagari-Sarvesha, Khechari- Somesha, Maryada-Langalesha, Rupini-Darukesha and Virini-Artha naaresha. Kakodari and Umakanta, Putana and Aashaadheesha, Bhadra Kaali and Dandeesha, Yogini and Atreesha, Shikhandini and Meenesha, Tajani and Meshesha, Kaala Raatri and Lohitesha, Kubjani and Shikheesha, Kapardini and Chhalagandesha, Vajra and Dwirandesha, Jaya and Mahabalesha, Sumukheshwari and Balesha, Revati and Bhujangesha, Maadhwi and Pinaakesha, Vaaruni and Khandeesha, Vayavi and Vakesha, Vidarini and Sweteshwaresha, Sahaja and Bhrigeesha, Lakshmi and Lakuleesha, Vyapini and Shiveha and Maha Maya and Samvartakesha are the other examples of the Nyasa beteween Matrikas and Isha. The Nyasa is of Shri Kantha Matrika and Dakshina Murti Rishi, Gayatri as Chhanda, and Arthanaar-eswara as Devata and Viniyoga as Sampurna Manoratha Praapti or fulfillment of all desires of the devotee concerned. The Anga Nyaasa would be: Ha saam hridayaya namah, ha seem sirasey swaha, ha suum shikhaayai youshat, ha saim kavachaaya hum, ha sou netra trayaya voushat and ha saah astraaya phut/. After the Nyasas, a devotee should picturise Bhagavan Shiva like a Bandhooka pushpa and as a Golden Murti with his hands bestowing boons, Akshamala, Ankusha, and 'Paasha'; with a half-shaped Chandra, three eyes and all the Devas immersed in Bhakti surrounding Him. Shiva Shakti is visualised and meditated, then Ganesha-Maatrika Nyasa is performed as follows with

'Hree as the various Rupas of Ganesha on one hand with 'Shri'as Matrikas on the other by reciting: Ga am Vighneshabhyaam namah- Lalaatey, Ga am Vighnarajashri bhuam namah etc. The Matrika-Ganesha combinations are as follows: Pushti-Vinayaka, Shanti-Shivottama, Swasti-Vighnakrit, Sarasvati- Vighna harta, Swaha-Gananatha, Sumedha-Ekadanta, Kaanti-Dwidanta, Kamini-Gajamukha, Manohini-Niranjana, Nati- Kapardi, Parvati- Deergha Jihva, Jwalini- Shankha karna, Nanda- Vrisha dwaja, Sureshi-Gananayaka, Kamarupini-Gajendra, Uma-Surpakarna, Tejovati- Virochana, Sati-Lambodara, Vighneshi-Manananda, Surupini-Chaturmurti, Kaamada-Sada Shiva, Mada Jihva-Amoda, Bhuti- Durmukha, Bhaotaki-Sumukha, Smita-Pramoda, Ramaa-Eka Paada, Maharshi-Dwijihwa, Jambhini-Sura, Vikarna-Vira, Bhrukuti-Shanmukha, Lajja-Varada, Deerghona-Vaamadevesha, Dhanurdhari- Vakratunda, Yamin-Dwiranda, Raatri-Senaani, Graamani-Kamandha, Shashiprabha-Matta, Lolanetra-Mattha, Chanchala-Matthayaaha, Deepti- Jati, Subhaga-Mundi, Durbhaga-Khandi, ShiyaVarenya, Bhaga-Vrishaketana, Bhagini-Bhaktapriya, Bhogini-Ganesha, Subhaga-Mehghanaada, Kaala raatri-Vyapi and Kaalika-Ganesha. The invocation is as follows: 'Ganesha Maatrikagana is Rishih, Nichhidrud Gayatri is Chhanda, 'Shakti sahit Ganeswara is Devata, and six-deergha (long) Swaraa Yukta Ganesha Bija' viz. Gaam, Geem, Guum, Gaim, Gaum, Gahah'. Dhyana of Ganesha would then be performed visualising Him with four hands with 'Paasha', 'Ankura', 'Abhaya', and 'Varas' (boons), besides three eyes, along with his wife Siddhi seated on his lap.

<u>Deva Puja vidhi:</u> Maharshi Sanat Kumara then described to Brahmarshi Narada the procedure of worship. Having set up the Puja Region with a Trikona / Chatur kona Mandala with 'jala prokshana', a devotee would recite the Mantras viz. *Mam Vahni mandalaaya dasha kalaatmaney...Devataarghya paatraasanaaya namah; Arkamandalaya Dwadashaka -atmaney Devaarghya paatraaya namah; Om Somamandalaaya Shodasha Kalaatmaney Devaarghyaamritaya namah etc* invoking the ten Kalaas of Vahni mandala, twelve Kalaas of Surya Mandala, sixteen kalaas of Chandramandala etc. The devotee also would invoke the holy rivers of Ganga, Yamuna etc. and purify the waters by appropriate 'Mudras' or finger-designs like Dhenu Mudra, Chakra Mudra, Matsya Mudra etc. He would recite: *Om Atma tatwaatmaney namah, Om Vidya tatwaatmaney namah, Shiva tatwa-atmaney namaha*; then perform *Avaahana* (Welcome) of the 'Ishta Devata' or the Personalised Deity present in the form of a 'Pratima' (Idol) or Shalagrama or Linga with 'Pushpanjali' (flowers) as follows:

Atma samstha majam shuddam twa maham Parameswara, Aranyamiva havyaamsham Murtaava avahyaamyaham/ Taveyam hi Mahaa murtistasyaam twam savargam Prabho, Bhaktasneha

mamaakrishtam deepayas tathapayaamyaham/ Saryaantaryaaminey Deya Sarya beejamayam shubham, Swaatmasthaaya param Shuddha maanasam kalpamaam -yaham/ Ananyaa tava Devesha Murthi shaktiriyam Prabho, Saamnidhyam kuru tasyaam twam Bhaktaanugraha kaaraka/ Ajnaanaaduta mathaatvaada vaikalyatsaadhanasya cha, Yadya purna bhavet kalpam tathaapyabhi mukho bhava/ Drushaga peeyusha yarshinya purayan Yajnayishtirey, Murtiyaa Yajna sampurtyai sthito bhaya Maheswara/ Abhakta vaangmanas-chashthuh shrota duraayati dyutey, Swatejah panchareynaashu Veshtito Bhava Sarvatah/ Yasya darshanamicchanti Devah swabheeshta siddaye, Tasmai tey Parameshaaya Swaagatam Swaagatamchamey/ Krutaarthonugraheetosmi saphalam jeevitam mama, Aagato Deva Deveshaha sukhaagati midam punah/ (Parameswara! You exist by yourself devoid of birth and as an embodiment of supreme transparency and astuteness. Just as a powerful fire is dormant in a whirlpool, you are concealed and all-pervasive; may I hail you to be present here. This is a magnificent form of yours that I imagine in this Light with faith and devotion. Deva! as you are full in my innerconsciousness, I seek to vision you as the Omni-Present, Pure and Propitious Form and beseech you to be seated and pardon all my blemishes in the worship to you arising out of ignorance, mischance and carelessness, Maheswara! Do shower your nectar-like looks on me instantly. May your radiance expand and expel the darkness around persons like me in our mind, speech, sight, and hearing. Here are our welcome salutations to you to kindly respond to our prayers and trust.). Paadyam: Yadbhakti lesha samparkaat Paramaananda sambhayah, Tasmai tey charanaabjaaya Paadyam Shuddhhaaya kalpyatey (May I offer 'Paadya'/water to wash your pure and lotus-like feet, since the tiniest and insignificant spot of my devotion comes into contact with your ocean-like response of satisfaction for me!) Arghya: Tapatraya haram Divyam Paramaananda lakshanam, Tapatraya vinirmukthyai tawaarghya kalpayamyaham/ (Paramananda Swarupa Deva! May I offer 'Arghya'/ water to you as a part of my service to you and eradicate my 'Tapatrayas' or Adhyatmika, Aadhi -bhoutika and Aadhi Daivika 'taapas' or three-fold miseries arising out of body, mind and providence). Aachamaneeya: Vedaanaamapi Vedaaya Devaanaam Devamaatmaney, Aachaamam kalpataameesha Shuddhaanaam Shuddha hetavey/ (May I proffer 'Aachamaneeya'/ water to you as a emblem of your kind acknowledgment to my seva / service to you; indeed You are the embodiment of Vedas and their unique knowledge, the matchless of all Devas and the symbol of Sanctity and Purity. Madhuparka: Sarva kaalushya heenaaya Paripurna Sukhaatmaney, Madhupakamidam Deva kalpayaami praseedamey: (You are completely devoid of impurities and imperfections and the icon of contentment; may I tender 'Madhuparka' (Mix of honey, ghee, curd and butter) for your satisfaction.) Punaraachamaneeya: Ucchishtopya shuchirvaapi yasya smarana maatratah, Shuddhima –apnoti tasmai tey punara achamaneeyakam/ (As even a person of impurities and blunders could acquire spotlessness by merely taking your name, Parameswara! kindly reinforce my request with this repeat 'Achamana'). Sneh (Thaila/Oil): Sneham gruhaana Snehena Loka Natha Mahaashaya, Sarva Lokeshu Shuddhaatman dadaami Snehamuttamam/ (Lokanatha! You are indeed highly broad-minded and merciful and the whole world is full of your grace and elegance; may I propose this Oil for a friendly massage, before a holy bath to you.) Snaan/ Sacred Bath: Paramaananda bhodhaabdha nimagnija Murtayey, Saangopaanga -midam Snaanam Kalpayaamyaha meesha tey/ (Ishwara! Your natural Swarup (Form) is immaculate and ever-happy always floating in deep Seas of untold depth; is indeed a 'Braahma Snaana' needed or required; but; for my own satisfaction however, I propose a full bodied Snaan to you.) Abhisheka: Sahasram vaa Shatam vaapi yathaa Shaktyadarena cha, Gandha pushpaadi kaireesha manunachabhishinchayey/ (Eshwara! Give me an opportunity to perform 'Abhisheka' (Bathing) as per my capacity along with pushpaas and sandalwood paste; as per Mantras may I perform the Abhisheka some thousand times / hundred times. Vastra: Maya chitra patacchitranija gruhyoru tejasey, Niraavarana Vignaana vaasastey kalpmaamyaham/ (Niravruttha Vigyana Prarameswara! You seek to camouflage your extreme radiance by covering it with colourful clothes; may I offer you clothes for our satisfaction!). *Uttareeya:* 

Yamaashritya Mahamaya Jagatsammohini sadaa, Tasmai tey Parameshaya kalpayaamyutthareeyakam/

(As Bhagavati Maha Maya brings the whole world under a spell, may I present an outer garment with respect; Note: Uttareeya should be of red colour while worshipping Duraga Devi, Surya Deva or Ganesha, but in respect of Vishnu, it should be of yellow colour and to Shiva of white colour). Yagnopaveeta: Yasya Shakti trayenedam sapreetaakhilam jagat, Yagna sutraaya tasmai tey Yagna sutram prakalpaey/ (Bhagavan! You satisfy and regulate the entire Universe with the three kinds of 'Shaktis'viz. Satvika, Rajasika and Tamasika and thus are the Yagnasutra rupa! May I hence dedicate the Sacred Thread to you symbolically!). Bhushan: Swabhaava sundaraangaaya nana shaktyashrayaya tey, Bhushanaai vichitraani kalpayaamyaraarchita/ (Deva! You possess natural beauty and grace as also all kinds of Shaktis; it is my privilege to dedicate ornaments for my satisfaction). Gandha: Paramaananda Sourabhya paripurna digantaram, Grihaana parmam gandham kripaya Parameswara/ (Parameswara! You fill up the Universe with the all-pervading fragrance by your presence; kindly accept this 'Gandha'-Sadal wood paste-as a symbol)! Pushpa: Tureeya vana sambhootam nana guna manoharam, Amanda sourabham Pushpam Gruhyataamida muktamam/ (Prabho! You are the Creator of flowers which possess the qualities beyond all the three Avasthas of Jaagrut, Swapna and Sushupti viz. Tureeya! As a representation of flowers, may I offer a few flowers for my happiness! Note: Ketaki, Kutaja, Bandhuka, Naga kesara, jawa, and Malati are not to be offered to Shankara Deva; Matulunga or Vijoura neebu) and Tagara are never offered to Surya; Durva, Aaka, Madara and Palasha flowers as well as Tamala, Palasha, Tulasi, Avla and Durva leaves are not offered to Durga Devi; Tulasi must be avoided in the worship of Ganesha. Deva Puja may be done by Kamal, Dauna, Maruva, Kusha, Vishnukranta, Paan, Durva, Apamarg, Anar, Avla and Agastya leaves are approved; similarly, plantains, bair, Avla, Tamarind, Bijoura, Mangoes, Anar, Jambeer, Jaamun, and katahal fruits are approved). Dhup: Vanaspati rasam Divyam gandhadhyam sumanoraham, Aanghreyam Deva Devesha Dhupam Bhaktya gruhaanamey/ (Parameswara! I submit the aromatic Vanaspati 'Agar'at your service as a sign of my devotion; please accept and bless me). Deepa: Suprakaasham Maha Deepam Sarvadaa Timiraapaham, Ghrutavarti samaa yuktam gruhaana mama satkrutam/ (Bhagavan! Please accept this 'Deepa'-light-which is lit by ghee-soaked 'varti' with bhakti and discard darkness all around and usher in illumination). Naivedya: Annam chaturyidham Swaadu Rasaih Shadbhih samanyitam, Bhaktya grihaana mey Deva Naivedyam tushtidam sadaa/ (Deva! I am serving this 'Naivedya'-offering of 'Swadishta Bhojan'-with extreme devotion by way of tasty 'Anna', along with accompanying items made of 'Shadrasas' (sweet, hot, bitter, salty, sour and astringent / like pomegranate); Kindly accept the Naivedya and provide me contenment). Tambula: Nagavallidalam shreshtham puga khaadira churnakam, Karpuradi sugandhaadhyam yaddattam tada gruhaanamey/ (Prabhu! please accept a good 'Taambul'/ betel leaves along with betel nut powder, churnam, camphor and other scented material, cloves etc is being offered as a digestive after a meal and bless me). After the worship as above, a devotee would perform 'Avarana' Puja/ 'Bhuta Bali Arpana', 'Ashtanga Pranaam' or Eight-folded Greetings by both the hands, both the feet, both the knees, chest, head, eyes, mind and mouth, followed by 'Panchanga Pranaam' or up to the first five greetings as above and 'Parikramas'/ 'Pradakshinas' (circumambulations) as prescribed viz. to Vishnu four times, Bhagavan Shankara by half, Devi Durga once, to Surya Deva seven times and to Ganesha three times. Thereafter, the devotee would render 'Brahmaarpana Mantra'as: Om itah purvaprana buddhi dehadharmaadhikaarato jaagrat swapna sushupyavasthaasu manasaa hastaabhyaam padabhyaamudarena sishnena yatsrutam yadyuktam yadkrutam tatsarva Brahmaarpanam bhavatu swaahaa/ Maam madeeyam cha sakalam vishnavey tey samarpaye Om tatsat/ (With this, I dedicate my self as also all my deeds in the service of Bhgavan Vishnu, along with my life, thought and physique when I am awaken, or in dreams or during deep slumber; by my mind, speech, hands, feet, stomach and creative organ as also by way of what I think, speak and perform; my entirety belongs to Brahma and return the same to Him in His service). The 'Kshama-Prathana' or Prayer for Forgiveness is recited as follows: Agnaadwaa pramaadaadya vaikalyat saadhanaasya cha, Yanuunamitiriktam vaa tatsarvam kshantumarhasi/ Dravya heenam,kriyaa heenam Mantra heenam mayaanyatha, krutam yattat kshamaswesha kripayaa twam Dayaanidhey/ Yanmayaa kriyatey karma Jaagratswapna sushuptishu, Tat sarvamthaavaki puja bhuyad bhrutyai cha mey

Prabho/Bhumou skhalita paadaanaam Bhumirevaavalambanam, Twayi jaataapara –adhaanaam twameva sharanam Prabho/ Anyadhaa sharanam naasti twameva sharanam mama, Tasmaat kaarunya bhaavena khamaswa Parameshwara/ Aparaadha sahasraani kruyanteraharnisham maya, Daasoyamiti maam matwaa khamaswa jagataam patey/ Awaahanam na jaanaami na jaanaami visarjanam, Pujaam chaiva na jaanaami twam patih Parameshwara/ (Bhagayan!whatever deeds are executed by me either under instruction, or by chance or by design have mostly been full of shortcomings; kindly pardon these deeds, Oh, Merciful! Those deeds made by me with restrictions of money, faithful action, Mantras and prescribed procedures be kndly condoned; I might have done deeds either fully awaken, or half-asleep or in slumber but all these deeds be kindly converted as dutiful worship and bring in auspiciousness; just as the wrong steps taken on Earth have to be borne by Earth alone, each and every blunder committed by human beings need to be pardoned by Bhagavan Himself! There is none else to forgive and I therefore approach you alone for protection; the shortcomings in my deeds through day or night be instantly forgiven as I am your servant. I do not realise how to commence or terminate worship and as such you only have to support me and my actions). The Procedure of 'Visarjana' or ending of Puja is to offer flowers by reciting the Mamtra: Yacchha yacchha param sthaanam Jagadeesha Jaganmaya, Yatra Brahmaadayo Deva jaananticha Sadaashivah/ Thereafter, the devotee would sip the idol's 'Charanaamrita' saying: Akaalamrutyuharanam SarvavVyaadhi vinaashakam, Sarva paapa kshayakaram Vishnu paadodakamm Shubham/

## 'Vratas' on specific days for special purposes

Maharshi Sanatana enumerated various 'Vratas' (religious rites) to invoke specific Deities on particular days in each month through out the year for special purposes. On the *Pratipada* day of Chaitra month Shukla 'Paksha', Shouri Vrata and Vidya Vrata are scheduled, while on the same day of Shravana Shukla fortnight, Rotaka Vrata is performed for Goddess Lakshmi. Mahattama Vrata is observed in Bhadrapada Shukla, Ashoka Vrata and Navarathra Vrata are important on Ashvin Shukla and Dhana Vrata in Marga Sirsha. On Dwiteeya day, Netra Vrata is held in Vaishakha Shukla, Bhaskara Vrata in Jyeshtha Shukla, Jagannatha-Balarama-Subhadra Vrata in Aashaadha Sukla and Yama Dwiteeya Vrata in Kartika Shukla. Akshaya Vrata, Rambha Vrata, Swarna Gauri Vrata and Brihat Gauri Vrata are performed on the Triteeya day in Vaishakha, Jyeshtha, Shravana, and Ashvin Shukla Pakshas respectively. One of the most significant Vratas is held on Bhadrapada Krishna Chaturthi viz. Ganesha Chaturthi. Twenty specified Leaves are to be utilised for the Puja on this day by reciting the very popular Mantras coordinating Ganasha's names and specific Leaves viz. Sumukhaayanamah Shami patram pujayami, Ganaadheeshaya namah bhangaraiyaka patram pujayaami, Uma putraya namah bilwa patram pujayami, Gajamukhaaya namah Durvadalam pujayaami, Lambodarayanamah ber param pujayami, Harasunavey namah Dattura patram pujayai, Surpakanthayanamah tulasi dalam pujayami, Vakra tundaaya namah semaka patram pujayami, Grahagrajaayanamah Apaamarga patram pujayami, Ekadantaayanamah Banabhantaa patram pujayami, Herambaayanamah Sindura patram pujayami, Chaturhotreynamah Tejapatrm pujayami and Sarvewarayanamah Agasthya patram pujayaami; This puja is then followed by the Shodasha Upachaaras On the Panchami 'Tithis', Matsya Vrata is held in Chaitra Shukla, Naga Vrata in Vaishakha Shukla Paksha, Anna Vrata in Shravana Krishna Paksha, Upanga Lalita Vrata in Aswin Shukla, and Jaya Vrata in Kartika Shukla. On the Shashthi days, Kumara Vrata is performed in Chaitra Shukla, Skanda Vrata in Ashaadha Sukla, Lalita Vrata in Bhadra Krishna Paksha, and Chandana Shashti Vrata in Bhadrapada Shukla in the name of Devi. Saptami is the day for Surya Deva Vratas on Chaitra Shukla, Vaishakha Shukla, Jyeshtha Shukla, Aashada Shukla, and Sharvana Shukla; Shakha (Mitra) Saptami in Kartika Shukla, Abhaya Vrata in Pousha Shukla, and Achala Vrata (Ratha Saptami) in Magha Shukla are significant. Ashtami is an important 'Tithi'; Chaitra Shukla Ashtami is stated to be the birthday of Devi Bhavani and as such Mahashtami is a highly significant day. Similarly Jyeshta Krishna Paksha Ashtami is earmaked for Trilochana Puja, Ashadha /Shravana Shukla Ashtamis are also meant for Turmeric Puja and Dashaphal or Ten Fruits Vrata in favour of Devi.

Krishna Janmashtami in Shravana Krishna Paksha is a very essential day for Krishna Puja when day long fasting is observed and the ten Tulasi leaf- worship is performed by reciting Krishnaya Namah, Vishnavey Namah, Anantaaya namah, Govindaya Namah Garudadhwajaaya Namah, Daamodaraaya namah, Hrishi keshaya namah, Pama naabhaya namah, Haraye Namah, and Prahavey Namah. The Puja Vidhana would be as per the previous chapter. Aswin Suddha Ashtami is observed as the famed Durgashtami destroying Mahishasura during the Dussera Navaratras commencing from the Prathama day of the month. Shri Rama Navami Vrata in Chaitra Shukla Paksha is observed as a fast day for self-purification followed by the Puja as described erelier. During Vaishakha month both the Pakshas are earmarked for UmaVrata on the Navami day; but observed most importantly as the popular Maha-Navami during Aswin Shukla Paksha worshipping Devi Parvati. Bhadrapada Shukla Navami is known as Nanda Navami to worship Devi Durga and Kartika Shukla Namvami is Akshaya Navami when a devotee should perform 'Tarpana' to Devas, Rishis and Pitras.

As regards Dashami Tithi, Chaitra Shukla is stated to be a day which Dharma Raja is fond of and after fasting till the evening, worship of the Deity with flowers, fruits, 'Gandha' etc. should be observed and at the end of the Vrata, bhojan and dakshina is to be provided to fourteen Brahmanas. Jyeshtha Shukla Dashami is the day of 'Gangavataran' and is reckoned as 'Dasahara' or destroyer of Ten Sins when Ganga Snaan is highly recommended; this is the day when ten yogas coincided viz. Jyeshtha Maasa, Shuka Paksha, Hasta Nakshatra, Budha day, Dashami Tithi, 'Gara' karana, Ananda Yoga, Vyatipaata, Kanya Rashi's Chandra and Vrisha Raasi Surya. Shravana Shukla Dashami is marked for Shankara Puja when Nakta Vrata, Japa, Brahmana Bhojana and suvarna daana are commended. Bhadrapada Shukla Dashami is to observe Dashavatara Vrata to worship the Ten Incarnations of Vishnu viz. Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Nrisimha, Trivikrama /Vamana, Parashu Rama, Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki by day-long fasting and Brahmana Bhojana etc. Ashwayuja Shukla Dashami is the much-celebrated Vijaya Dashami when the Dussehra Festival of Nava Rathras get terminated to mark the killing of Mahishasura by Devi Durga as also to symbolise the Ramleela celebration as Shri Rama killed Ravana and brought back Devi Sita from Lanka. Margasirsha Shukla Dashami is the Arogya Vrata day when ten Brahmanas are to be treated with bhojan and dakshina, while ten Vishwa devas viz. Kratu, Daksha, Vasu, Satya, Kaala, Kaama, Muni, Guru, Vipra, and Rama are to be worshipped. Magha Sukla Dashami is the Day for Angira Vrata to meditate ten Angira Devas, viz. Atma, Vayu, Manah, Daksha, Mada, Praana, Barhishmaan, Gavishtha, Dutta and Satya, where as Phalguna Shukla Dashami, fourteen Yama Devas are worshipped viz, Yama, Dharma Raja, Mrityu, Antaka, Vaivaswata, Kaala, Sarva Bhuta Kshaya, Aoudumbara, Dadhna, Neela, Parameshthi, Vrikodara, Chitra and Chitragupta.

<u>Ekadashi</u> has a special significance among all the Tithis as the Shukla and Krishna Paksha Ekadashis are invariably observed with Upavaasa, Japa, Homa, Pradakshina, Stotra Paatha, Dandavat- Pranama and Ratri-Jaagaranas followed by Dwadashi's Brahmana Bhojanas and dakshinas. Chaitra Shukla Ekadashi is called 'Kamada' or the Fullfiller of Purusharthas and Sin-destroyer. Vaishakha Shula Ekadashi is known as 'Mohini'and Krishna Ekadashi is known as 'Varuthini' when Purushottama and Madhusudhana are worshipped. Jyeshtha Krishna Ekadashi is called 'Apara' to worship Trivikrama, whereas the Jyeshtha Shukla is 'Nirjala' which is observed with fasting without water from dawn to dusk, and thereafter treat Brahmanas with Bhojan. Ashadha Krishna Ekadashi is called 'Yogini'and is observed with day-night fast / puja and bhojan to Brahmanas on the following Dwadashi. Ashadha Shukla is 'Shayani' Ekadashi, Shravana Krishna is 'Kamika' Ekadashi, Shravana Shukla is 'Putrada' Ekadashi, Bhadrapada Krishna is 'Aja' Ekadashi, Bhadrapada Shukla is 'Padma' Ekadashi, Aswin Shukla is 'Papankusha' Ekadashi, Aswin Krishna is 'Indira' Ekadashi, Karik Krishna is 'Rama' Ekadashi, Kartik Shukla is 'Pabodhini', Margasirsha Krishna is 'Utpanna' Ekadashi, Margasirsha Shukla is 'Moksha da' Ekadashi, Pousha Krishna is 'Saphala', Pousha Shukla is 'Saphala', Magha Krishna is 'Shat Tila' Ekadashi observed with full penance including Snaana, Daana, Tarpana, Havan, Puja, fast unto Dwadashi Brahmana Bhojan and dakshina. Like-wise, Eakadashis are performed on Magha Shukla as Jaya, Phalguna Krishna as Vijaya, 'Aamalki' on Phaluna Shukla and 'Papamochini'on Chaitra Krishna.

As regards <u>Dwadashis</u>, details of 'Vrata Pujas' worshipping Vishnu Rupas viz. Keshava, Narayana, Madhava, etc.have been described from Marhasirsha to Kartika Months (Shukla Pakshas) along with the Puja-Vidhana. Following is gist of Vratas as follows):

'Madana Vrata' is perfomed on Chaitra Shukla Dwadashi to dedicate it to Kaama Rupi Shri Hari. On this very day, 'Bhartru Dwadashi' is also observed by worshipping Lakshmi and Vishnu too. Similarly, Vratas aiming at various forms/ names of Vishnu are observed on the Dwadashis herebelow: Vaishakha Shukla/ Madhava, Jyeshtha Shukla/ Trivikaram, Shravana Shukla/ Shridhara, Bhadrapada Shukla/Vamana, and Aswin Shukla/ Padmanabha. The Kartika Krishna Vrata called 'Govatsa Dwadashi Vrata' is addressed to Mother Cow reciting the Mantra: *Ksheerodarnava Sambhootey Suraasura namaskrutey, Sarvadeva mayey Devi Sarva devailankrutey/ Maatarmaatargavaam Maatagruheenaarghyam namostutey/* (Mother! Gomata! You manifested from the Ocean of Milk, ornamented by all Devas, worshipped by Devas and Danavas alike; kindly accept this 'Arghya' followed by Puja and 'Nivedana'. On this day of Govatsa Dwadashi, devotees should avoid oil-fried items, Cow-milk, curd, ghee etc. On Margasirsha Shukla Dwadashi, 'Sadhya Vrata' is performed by assuming the Twelve Sadhya Ganaas, Viz. Manobhava, Praana, Nara, Apaana, Veeryavan, Chiti, Haya, Naya, Hamsa, Narayana, Vibhu and Prabhu. The Ganaas are invoked into a rice spreading and worshipped, after which request Lord Narayana to be pleased. On this very day, a 'Dwadasha -aditya' Vrata be also performed by doing Puja to Dhata, Mitra, Aryama, Pusha, Shakra, Amsha, Varuna, Bhaga, Twashta, Viviswaan, Savita and Vishnu.

*Trayodashi* Tithis are well-known for 'Maha Vaaruni Vrata' in Chaitra Krishna paksha, if possibly coinciding with Saturdays/ Shatabhisha Nakshatra and if lucky futher along with a bath in River Ganga. On Jyeshtha Shuka Trayodasi, a Vrata for 'Dourbhagya Shamana' (pacifying misfortune) is performed with the Puja of Mandara, Karaveera and Arka flowers to Narayana, while 'Goraatra Vrata' is observed on Bhadrapada Shukla Trayodashi by performing 'Pradakshinas' and giving away charity to Veda Pandit. The Pradakshina should accompany the recitation of: Gavo mamaagratah santu gaavo may santu pustatah, Gaavo mey paasrvatah santu Gavaam Madhey vasaamyaham/ (Cow is ahead of me, behind me, by my side and I reside among Cows!). On Ashwin Shukla Trayodashi, a three-night long 'Ashok Vrata' is performed by continously praying to Shakara Maha Deva kept under an Ashoka Tree; the person who performs the worship gives away a Pratima as daan, along with dakshina to Brahmanas. 'Nrisimha Vrata' is well known on Vaishkha Shukla Chaturdashi, when a devotee requires to keep daylong fast and worships the Deity with 'shodasho-pacharas' and recites the Kshama Prarthana Mantra again and again: Taptahaataka keshaanta Jalatpaavaka lochana, Vajraadi nakha sparsha Divya Simha Namostutey/ (Divya Simha! Your mane is shining like molten gold and eyes are glowing like fire balls; the slightest touch of your diamond-strong nails are excruciating; my salutations to you!). After the Puja, the devotee should sleep on bare earth, with full control of body parts. The Vrata is to be performed a few years to secure high contentment and fulfillment of earthly desires as also salvation after life's termination. On this very date of Vaishakha Shukla Chaturdashi, Omkareshwar Linga Vrata is to be observed for demolition of all past sins. On Jyeshtha Shukla Chaturdashi, 'Rudra Vrata'is to be performed for securing unimaginable results by observing 'Panchagni Yogic Tapasya'. Bhadrapada Shukla Chaturdashi is earmarked for executing Ananta Vrata, while Kartika Shukla Chaturdashi, observance of Pashupat Vrata has far reaching impact. However the most outstanding Vrata of the day/night is stated to be on Shiva Raatri on Phalguna Krishna Chaturdashi, when Nirjala Upavas, Bilwa patra puja, high concentration, Night-long Jaagaran, Stotra-Paath, three-hourly Abhisheka and detailed Puja and japa, etc. purifies a devotee with fulfillment and Shiva Darshan.

On <u>Purnimas</u>, Anna-daana would please Chandra Deva in Chaitra month and any kind of charities on Vaishaka purnima would have multiplier-effect; Dharmaraja Vrata on the latter Purnima would please him with Go-Daan, Swarna Daan and Bhojan Daan. 'Vata Savitri' Vrata would certainly please Devi Savitri who conquered Lord Yama for the sake of her husband with the prayer of a devotee by reciting: Jagat pujye Jaganmatah Savitri pati devatey, patya sahaviyogam mey vatasthey kuru tey namah/ ( Jaganmata Savitri, You are worshippable to the entire Universe as you are the unique Pativrata. You reside in the Vata Vriksha and as such, I pray to the Vata Tree; do bless me to ensure that I am never

separated from my husband). Any woman who prays to Savitri and worships her and treats virtuous women with food and gifts would never lose her husband till she dies herself. Shravana Purnima is the day of Upa Karma of Vedas', when Yajurvedi Brahmanas should perform Tarpana to Devas, Rishis and Pitras; the Rishis whom Tarpana are to be offered would be of one's own 'Shakha'. Rigvedis on Chaturdashi day of Shrayana month and Sama Vedis on Bhadrapada Hasta Star should observe 'Raksha Vidhana'. 'Uma Maheswara Vrata is scheduled on Bhadrapada Purnima, which requires total abstinence, Upavas on the previous and on the day proper, Jaagaran on the previous night and fast till the dusk time of the day, Pujas on the previous night, on the day and night proper would be compulsory as per shodasopacharas as described in the previous pages of this write-up. This Vrata is expected to be performed for fifteen years, whereafter the 'Udyapan' function should be concluded with full formalities of Mantras, homas, and celerbrations. Shakra Vrata is also scheduled on the same day of Bhadrapada Purnima addressed to Indra Deva for 'Dhana-Dhanya Vriddhi' or all round prosperity. 'Kartika Purnima' Vrata is intended to attain/retain Brahmatva in the next birth as also to demolish enemies and the Deity to be worshipped is Kartika Deva. On this very day of Kartika Purnima at the Pradosha Time, organisation of 'Tripurotsaya' and Deepa Daana are considered propitious; display of illuminations, especially in the vicinity of a river or a water-body would help light up 'krimi-keetas', flies, mosquitos, trees, water, etc and would enable 'Punarjanmas' (rebirths) as human beings since the upgradation of such 'Praanis' would indeed be a welcome step for such 'praanis'.

As regards, the *Amavasya Vratas*, Sanatana Kumara explained to Narada Maharshi that Chaitra and Vaishakha Amavasyas were extremely significant since these days were very dear to Pitras for their Puja, Shraddha by way of offering 'Pindas' (cooked rice) prepared by the 'paarana vidhi', Brahmana Bhojana, especially 'daanas' of cows etc. In Jyeshtha month Brahma Savitri Vrata was stated to be imperative on Amavasya. In Ashaadha, Shravana, and Bhadrapada months, Amavasyas are essential for Pitru shraddas, Daanas, homas, and Deva Pujas. On Ashwin Amavasya, it would be good to perform Shraadha Tarpan to Pitaras in River Ganga or more ideally at Gaya. On Kartika Amavasya 'Deepa daan' given in a temple, or home, near a river, a garden, go-shaala or at a public Place is commendable; on this very day, Lakshmi Puja would be beneficial. Organising Brahmana Bhojan on a Margasirsha Amavasya or better still performing Shraddha on that day would be useful. In fact, Pitru Shraaddhas on Pousha, Magha and Phalguna Amavasyas would be effective too.

## Special implication of Ekadashi Vrata-the legend of King Rukmangada

As the 'Purvi Bhag' of Narada Purana was concluded in the form of Questions of Narada Maharshi and Replies from Sanaka Kumara brothers, the narration by Suta Muni to the Sages headed by Shounaka Muni was successfully terminated. Then Maharshi Vasishtha took over the narration of 'Uttari Bhag'of the Purana, as was stated by Maharshi Narada-the author of the Purana. Maharshi Vasishtha underlined the special connotation of Ekadashi Vrata to King Mandhata of Ikshavaku Clan and the ancestor of Lord Shi Rama. As Ekadashi was stated to be the Special Day of Vishnu, observance of 'Upavasa', 'Puja'and 'Vrata' on this day ought to be a pre-requisite to qualify the abolition of all the sins of a devotee. In fact, the advantage of performing the Vrata in full faith and high dedication as prescribed would secure the fruits of executing several Ashwamedha and Rajasuya Yagas, besides avoiding Yama Darshana! It is neither the Sacred Ganga, Gaya, Kashi, Pushkar, Kurukshetra, Narmada, Devika, Yamuna and Chandrabhaga that are stated to be more momentous than the Vrata. To signify the import of the Vrata, the Story of King Rukmangada was mentioned; he was in the habit of publicising through announcements on elephant tops the fact that the specific day was that of Ekadashi Vrata and all the citizens must observe fast, Puja, and penances as presribed. The annoucement was to alert that all the citizens in the age groups between eight and eighty five years ought to observe the fast and puja on that day and whosoever ate food and did not worship Vishnu would be liable for heavy punishment. Thus since a law was enforced, most of the citizens made a bee-line to Vishnu-dham and Lord Yama Dharma Raja became free and Chitragupta was jobless, as the paths leading to Yamaloka which were oherwise over-crowded had very few sinners in thin streams. Maharshi Narada made a visit to Yama loka and enquired of Dharma Raja as

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

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

## 'Yugala Sahasranama' of Radha-Krishna

Once, Brahmarshi Narada approached Bhagavan Maha Deva to endow him with Shri Krishna Parama Tatwa and the latter commenced the Mantra: *Gopijana vallabha charanaachharanam prapadye:*Bhagavan stated that this Mantra was of Surabhi Rishi, Gayatri was Chhanda, and Bhagavan Shri Krishna was the relevant Devata. He also said: 'Prapadyosmi' or May I offer respects. For this Mantra, there was no need to suggest 'Viniyoga' or application as also 'Anga Nyasa' or alignment with body parts. Only the Mantra is to be recited and Bhagavan would instantly be with the reciter. After securing the Mantra from the Guru and practise it with full faith, without thinking much about the fulfillment of desires in the present time and of what is in store after life; after all, the joys and sorrows in the current life are dependent of the previous deeds and the future course is decided by Bhavavan. One has to take shelter from Bhagavan and worship Him. However: *Gurovajnaam Saadhunam nindaam bhedam Harey Harou, Veda Nindaam Harernaama balaat paapa sameepatpapa sameehanam/ Artha vaadam Hareynmagni Paakhandam naama samgrahey, Alasey naastike chaiva Hari naamopa Harimaamopadeshinam/ Naama Vismaranam chaapi Naamyaamaadaramey va cha, Santyajeydam duratho Vatsa Doshaaneythaansudaaranan/ (Do not try to slander the Guru, never offend Sadhu or the Virtuous, never* 

differentiate Shiva and Vishnu, never resort to malign Vedas, never act against those who take the name of Bhagavan, never criticise those who give spiritual discourses, never spread rumours against devotees, convince and counsel 'nastiks' or atheists, facilitate those who forget or ignore the existence of Bhagavan- these are the Ten Principles that should be followed always). One should have the faith that Krishna's friends, parents, beloved, and followers exist forever and get into the mental-frame while reciting the 'Jugal Sahasra naamaas', stated Shiva to Narada:

1) Devakinandana: Provider of joy to Devaki; 2) Shouri: Surasena's progeny; 3) Vasudeva: Son of Vasudeva; 4) Balanuja: Younger brother of Balarama; 5) Gadaagraja (Elder brother of Gada/Mace); 6) Kamsamoha (He who mesmerised Kamsa);7) Kam sevaka mohanah: (He who mesmorised the followers of Kamsa); 8) Bhinnargala (eliminator of all obstacles); 9) Bhinnaloha (Breaker of metallic chains as in the case of his imprisoned father);10) Pitruvaahnah:( Rides over as Vasudeva kept the new born Krishna on his head through River Yamuna); 11) Pitrustutah (Praised by his father at the time of his birth); 12) Matrustutah (eulogized by his mother at his birth); 13) Shivadhyeyah (worshipped by Shiva); 14) Jamuna-jalabhedanah (He who smashed the flow of River Yamuna); 15) Vrajavaasi (He who resided in Vraja-bhumi); 16) Vrajaanandi (Who charmed the Vraja); 17) Nanda baala (The son of Nanda); 18) Dayanidhi (The Ocean of Mercy);19) Leela baalah (The Miracle-child); 20) Padma netrah (the Lotuseyed); 21) Gokulothsavah (The cause of Festivals at Gokula); 22) Ishwarah (Capable of any deeds); 23) Gopikanandah (The cause of joy for Gopikas); 24) Krishnah (Who attracts instant attention); 25) Gopaanandah (the epitome of happiness for Gopas); 26) Sataangatih (the destination of devotees); 27) Vaka praanaharah (the killer of Vakaasura); 28) Vishnuh (The all-pervader); 29) Vakamukti pradah (Provider of salvation to Bakaasura); 30) Harih (Destroyer of sins, ignorance and misery); 31) Baladolaashaya -shahayah (He who rests in the hoods of Sesha Nag, the Avatar of Balarama); 32) Shyamalah (the blue-coloured); 33) Sarva Sundarah (The embodiment of beauty); 34) Padmanabhah (from whose navel sprouted the lotus); 35) Hrishikeshah (The controller and provocator of physical limbs); 36) Kreeda manuja baalakah ( the funster in the form of a boy); 37) Leela-vidhvastwa shakatah (the destroyer of Shakatasura); 38) Vedamantra -abhishechitah ( He who is bathed in Veda mantras); 39) Yashodanandanah (The joy of mother Yashoda); 40) Kantah (The Form of Radiance); 41) Munikoti nishevitah (Worshipped by crores of Munis); 42) Nithya Madhuvana vaasi (the aboder of Madhu vana); 43) Vaikunthah (The Chief of Vaikuntha); 44) Sambhavah (The Origin of Everything); 45) Kratuh (Yagna Swarupa); 46) Ramapatih (Lakshmipati); 47) Yadupatih (The Chief of Yadavas); 48) Murarih (The demolisher of Murari Daitya); 49) Madhusudanah ( the killer of Madhu Daitya); 50) Madhayah ( Belonged to Madhu Kula of Yadu Vamsha); 51) Maanahari (Destroyer of ego and self-image); 52) Shripati (the husband of Lakshmi); 53) Bhudharah (The holder of the weight of Earth); 54) Prabhuh (The Super Lord); 55) Brihadvana maha leelah (The performer of great miracles); 56) Nandasuunuh (The illustrious son of Nanda); 57) Mahasasah ( He who sits on the seat of mighty Sesha serpent); 58) Trunavarta pranahari ( the executor of Trunavarta daitya); 59) Yashodavismayapradah (Who stunned Yashoda with his miracles); 60) Trailokyavakra (who visions the happenings of the Tri-Lokas by his face); 61) Padmaakshah (Has eyes like fully opened lotus); 62) Padma hastah (ornamented with lotushands); 63) Priyankarah (Brings joy to everybody); 64) Brahnamah (The benefactor of Brahmanas); 65) Dharmagopta (The saviour of Virtue); 66) Bhupatih (The Master of Bhudevi); 67) Shridharah (The retainer of Lakshmi on his physique); 68) Swaraat (Self Illuminated); 69) Ajadhyakshah (The Master of Brahma); 70) Shivakdhyakshah (The Master of Shiva); 71) Dharma -dhyakshaha (The Master of Dharma); 72) Maheshwarah (Parameswara); 73) Vedanta vedyah (He who could be visualised by Vedas alone); 74) Brahmasthitah (Resides in Brahma Tatwa); 75) Prajapatih (Master of the whole humanity); 76) Amoghadhruk (All- visioned); 77) Gopikaraavalambi (who dances by holding the hands of Gopis); 78) Gopabalaka supriyah (The beloved of Gopas); 79) Balaanuyayi (Who copies the actions of Balarama ); 80) Balavan (Full of Super Strength); 81) Shridaama priya (the great friend of Shridaama); 82) Atmavan (The Controller of Mind and Soul); 83) Gopigrihaangana ratih (The player in the homes and interiors of Gopis); 84) Bhadrah (The embodiment of propitiousness); 85) Sushlokamandalah (Brings in piety owing to his name and fame); 86) Navaneetaharah (The famed butter- thief); 87) Baalah (always

child-like); 88) Navaneeta priyashanah (whose staple food is butter); 89) Balabrindi (always in the company of children); 90) Markavrindi (Playful with monkey-like children); 91) Chakitakshah (always looks with surprised eyes); 92) Paalitah (Runs away being afraid of mother's call); 93) Yashodarjitah ( fearful of Yashoda's curses); 94) Kampi (shivers with the fear of his mother); 95) Mayarudita shobhanah (Looks splendid with false and childish cries): 96) Damodarah (held by mother by strings): 97) Aprameyatma (Has immesurable Form); 98) Dayaluh (Most merciful); 99) Bhaktavatsalah (Fond of devotees); 100) Ulukhaley sabandha (tied strong to a mortar-by his mother); 101) Namna shira (downheaded or submissive); 102) Gopikadrayitah (falsely repentant due to complaints from Gopis to his mother); 103) Vriksha bhangi (the demolisher of Yamalarjuna Trees while tied a rice-pounder by his mother); 104) Shokabhangi (self-safe but frightened others with cries); 105) Dhanadatmaja mokshanah ( Kubera's sons of their curse by a Sage to turn into trees); 106) Devarshi vachanashlaaghi (Considerate of Narada's statements); 107) Bhakta vaatsalya sagarah (An ocean of encouragement to devotees); 108) Vrajakolaahalakarah (keeps Vraja's residents extremely busy with his mystification); 109) Vrajaananda vivardhanah (Enhancer of the joys of Vraja's residents); 110) Gopaatma (The soul of Gopas); 111) Prerakah ( the booster of actions, mind and feelings); 112) Saakshi (The unique proof of actions world-wide); 113) Vrindavana nivasakrith (The famed resident of Brindavana); 114) Vatsa paalahah (the care-taker of Govatsas); 115) Vatsapatih (Safety provider of the young cows), 116) Gopadaraka mandanah (The benefactor of the society of gopabaalas); 117) Balakreedah (Involved in normal child-plays); 118) Balaratih (the endearer of Gopabalaas); 119) Balakah (of the form of a boy); 120) Kanakaangadi (the wearer of golden 'bhuja keertis' or hand-ornaments); 121) Pitambarah (Dressed in silk robes); 122) Hemamalahari (the wearer of golden neck laces); 123) Manimukta vibhushanah ( ornamented by gems and pearls); 124) waisted with bells and wristed with metal rounds; 125) Sutri (with cotton-threaded wrists and Yagnopaveeta); 126) Nupuri (with ornamented feet); 127) Mudrikaanvita ( finger-ringed); 128) Vatsasura pratidhwamsi (the killer of Vatsasura); 129) Vakasuranaashanah (the terminator of Vakasura); 130) Aghasura vinaashi ( the demolisher of Aghasura); 131) Vinidrikritabalakah (The reviver of the fained children due to the poison of Kaliya serpent); 132) Adyah (The Original Cause); 133) Atmapradah (Provider of his soulful to his dear devotees); 134) Sangi (the keeper of company to his companions); 135) Yamunateera bhojanah (The eater of food on the banks of River Yamuna along with his friends); 136) Gopaala mandali madhyaha (the central figure of Gopalaas); 137) Sarva gopala bhushanah (The jewel of all Gopalas); 138) Kritahastatalagraasah (carrier of plate with food in his hands); 139) Vyanjanaashrita shaakhikah ( the arranger of food-vessels on tree branches); 140) Kritabaahu shringa yashthih (keeps a whip and stick in hands); 141) Grunjaalankrita kanthakah (ornamented with grinjali mala around his neck); 142) Mayura pincha mukutah (sports peacock feathers on his headgear); 143) Vanamaali vibhushitah ( decorated with vanamali); 144) Gairikaachitrita vipunah (Expert in drawing pictures with red chalk on his body); 145) Navamedhavapuh ( with body colour as fresh cloud); 146) Smarah ( by far the most attractive form of Kamadeva); 147) Kotikandarpa lavanyah ( as attractive as of a crore Kamadevas); 148) Lasanmakara kundalah ( Wearing luminous ear rings of crocodile shape); 149) Aajaanu -baahuh ( with hands as long as the knees); 150) Bhagavan (Composite with five kinds of Aishwarya viz. Prosperity, Dharma (Virtue), 'Yash' (fame); 'Shri; (wealth); Gyana (Knowledge) and 'Vairagya' (detachment); 151) Nidra rahita lochanah ( devoid of sleep); 152) Koti saagara gaambhiryah (As complex as a crore oceans); 153) Kalakaalaha (He is the Supreme Kaala Swarupa); 154) Sada Shivah (the eternally auspicious Bhagavan); 155) Virinchi mohana vapuh (Even Brahma netted by his illusion); 156) Gopavatsa -vapurdharah (He who takes the forms of Gopas and calves); 157) Brahmandakoti janakah (The Creator of crores of Universes); 158) Brahma moha vinashakah (The demolisher of Brahma's illusions); 159) Brahma (He himself takes the form of Brahma); 160) Brahmeditah (Extolled by Brahma); 161) Swami (the Supreme of everybody / everything); 162) Shakradarpadi nashanah (The eliminator of Indra's egotism); 163) Giri pujopadeshta ( He who showed the procedure of worshipping Govardhan mouatain); 164) Dhruta Govardhanachalah (The elevator of Govardhana Mountain); 165) Purandareditah (Praised by Indra Deva); 166) Pujyah (revered by one and all); 167) Kamadhuprapujitah (adulated by Kamadhenu); 168) Sarva Tirthaabhishiktah (Enabled Surabhi to perform 'Abhishkas' by the Sacred waters of all the Tirthas on the

Seat of Indra); 169) Govindah (Famed as Govinda since he was the Indra of all cows ('Go-matas'); 170) Goparakshakah (safety-provider to cows); 171) Kaaliyaarti- karah (The subduer of Kaaliya serpent); 172) Krurah (cruel punisher of the vicious); 173) Nagapatniratah (exalted by Nagapatnis); 174) Virat ( Virat Purusha / The most maximised Being); 175) Dhenukaarih (the enemy of Dhenukaasura); 176) Pralambhaari (Destroyer of Pralambhasura in the form of Balabhadra): 177) Vrishaasura vimardanah ( the exterminator of Arishtasura who appeared in the form of a huge bull); 178) Mayasuratmaja dhwamsi ( the annihilator of Vyomaasura who was the son of Mayasura ); 179) Keshi kantha vidarakah ( the slicer of Keshi demon's head); 180) Gopa gopta (The saviour of Gopas); 181) Daavaagni parishoshakah (the desroyer of Daavaagni or the Gigantic Fire); 182) Gopakanya vastra haari (The appropriator of the clothes of Gopikas while they were bathing);183) Gopa Kanya varapradah (The boon provider to the Gopika maids); 184) Yajnapatyanna bhoji (the consumer of Anna bhojan of the wives of those who did the Yagnas); 185) Muni- maanaapa harah (He clipped the ego of those brahmanas who claimed as Munis; 186) Jalesha mana mardhanah ( the tamer of Varunadeva's ego); 187) Nanda gopala jeevanah ( saviour of Nandagopala from Vidyadhara who came in the form of a huge serpent 'Ajagara'); 188) Gandharva shapa mokta (The saviour of the Gandharva (Vidyadhara) from his earlier curse); 189) Shankhachooda shiroharah (He sliced the head of the Yaksha called Chooda); 190) Vamshivati (Miracle maker near the Vamshivata/ the Vamshi tree); 191) Venuvaadi (the great flutist); 192) Gopichinta -paharakah (Reliever of the sorrows of Gopikas); 193) Sarva gopta (the liberator of one and all); 194) Samahvaanah ( Addressed by all to save them); 195) Sarva Gopi manorathah (He who is the desire of all Gopis); 196) Vyangya dharma pravakta (preacher of Dhrama in a satirical manner);197) Gopimandala mohanah ( Mesmeriser of Gopikas in groups); 198) Rasakreeda rasaa swaadi (The enjoyer of the taste of Rasadance's juice); 199) Rasika (The experiencer of the 'Rasa'); 200) Radhika Praana -natha (Shri Radha's beloved / life's breath); 201) Kishori prana nadha (Kishori's life-breathing); 202) Vrisha bhanu sutaapriyah (Vrisha hanu nandini's beloved); 203) Sarva Gopi Janaanandi (The bliss of all the Gopijana); 204) Gopijana Vimohanah (The enchanter 'par excellence' of the Gopikas'); 205) Gopikageeta charitah (The sacred songs sung by the Gopika singers about the stories of Krishna); 206) Gopi nartana laalasah (He who enjoys the dances of Gopikas with relish); 207) Gopiskandhashrita karah (He who ambles along with his hands on their shoulders); 208) Gopi kuchambana chumbana priya (He who savors the kisses of Gopika's chest); 209) Gopika marjita mukhah (He who takes delight in wiping the sweet touches of Gopikas of his tender face by their silk 'anchals' / upper robes); 210) Gopi vyanjana veejitah (He who loves the experience of fanning by Gopikas as he is lying and resting); 211) Gopika kesha samskaari (Who goes into raptures while fondly caressing the softness of the hairs of Gopikas); 212) Gopika pushpa samstarah (He who loves to play games with flowers on the Gopikas); 213) Gopika -hridayalambi (He provides refuge to the hearts of Gopikas; 214) Gopivahanatatparah (He is ready to carry Radha on his shoulders); 215) Gopika mada haari (demolishes the self-image of Gopikas); 216) Gopika paramaarjitah (The fruit of the 'Punya'earned hard by Gopikas); 217) Gopika kruta salleelah (He whose memorable deeds are copied by Gopikas after the 'Rasaleelas'); 218) Gopikasamsmrutapriyah (The beloved of Gopikas who keep on floating in the fabulous memories of his); 219) Gopika vanditapada (The sacred feet which are sought after by Gopikas); 220) Gopikaa vashavartanah (He who is in the control of Gopikas); 221) Radhaaparaajitah (Conceded defeat from Radha); 222) Shrimaan (Epitome of prosperity); 223) Nikunjosuvihara vaan (He who performs playful deeds in the gardens of Brindavan); 224) Kunja priyah (He loves the gardens); 225) Kunjavaasi (The resident of the Gardens); 226) Vrindavana vikaashanah (He illuminates Bridavana); 227) Yamuna -jalasiktaangah (He had his body bathed by Yamuna waters); 228) Yamunasoukhya dayakah (He provides bliss to River Yamuna); 229) Rashistambhanah (Stops the movement of Moon on the night of Raasaleela); 230)Shurah (He is the archtype of courage); 231) Kaami (Always anxious to encounter with his Bhaktas); 232) Kamavimohanah (He who enthralls Kamadeva with his 'leelas'); 233) Kaamaadya (The Original Cause of Kamadeva); 234) Kama nathah (He is the Supremo of Kama / desire); 235) Kamamaanasa bhedanah (Capable of breaking the heart of Kamadeva himself); 236) Kamadah (The Provider of Kama or yearning); 237) Kamarupah (Assumes the Form of Kama /Craving); 238) Kamini -kamasanchayah ( Amasses the love of Kaminis); 239) Nityakreedah (Ever-ready to get absorbed in playful games); 240)

Mahaleelah (The Supreme Player of Miracles); 241) Sarvah (Sarwa Swarpa or assume any Form whatever); 242) Sarva gatah (All-pervading); 243) Paramaatma (The Supreme Soul); 244) Paradhesha ( Parameshwara); 245) Sarva karana karanah (The Cause of any or every cause); 246) Griheeta Naradayachaah (Concedes to whatever Brahmarshi Narada advises); 247) Akrura parichintitah (He who gave weightage to the counsel of Akrura); 248) Akruravandita padah (The feet that were worshipped by Akrura step by srep; 249) Gopikaa tosha kaarakah (Mollifies the feelings of frustration arising of out his absence among Gopikas); 250) Akruravakya sangraahi (Concedes the view-points of Akrura); 251) Mathurayaasa karanah (The reason for which the inhabitants of Mathura prefer to stay there); 252) Akrura tapa shamanah (He relieves Akrura's sorrows); 253) Rajakaayuh pranaashanah (shortens the life of Mathura's washerman due to his refusal of cleaning Krishna / Balarama's clothes under Kasa's influence of Kamsa); 254) Mathuraananda daayi (Provider of joy to the residents of Mathura); 255) Kamsa vastra vilunthanah (He who took away Kamsa's clothes due to an altercation with the washerman of Kamsa); 256) Kamsa vastra paridhanah (He sported Kamsa's clothes); 257) Gopavastra pradayikah ( Donor of clothes to Gopas ); 258) Sudama griha gaami (Visitor to the residence of Sudama Mali); 259) Sudama paripujitah (Worshipped by Sudama Mali); 260) Tantuyaayaka sapreetah (Bleesed the tailor); 261) Kubjachandana lepanah (Applied the chandana paste prepared by Kubja on his own limbs); 262) Kubjaarupapradah (Blessed beautiful Form to Kubja); 263) Vijnah (embodiment of knowledge); 264) Mukundah (The provider of Moksha); 265) Vishtira shravaah (Has far-reaching fame and wide-ranging hearing capacity); 266) Sarvajnah (The All-Knowing); 267) Mathuraaloki (Visited around Mathuranagar); 268) Sarvalokaabhinandanah (obtained showers of praises and accolades from one and all of the Public); 269) Kripakataaksha darshi (Visions every body with empathy and compassion); 270) Daityarih (The enemy of Daityas); 271) Devapalakah (The defender of Devas); 272) Sarva duhkha prashamanah (Reliever of all kinds of sorrows); 273) Dhanurbhangi (The smasher of Dhanush / the Mighty Bow); 274) Mahotsavah (The Cause of Great Celebration); 275) Kuvalaya peeda hantah (The killer of the haughty Elephant called Kuvalaya-peedana); 276) Dantahskandhah (The parader of the illfamed elephant's tusks on his shoulders); 277) Balaagrani (Always follows Balarama and keeps himself behind); 278) Kalparupadharah (Dresses according to the persons being met); 279) Dhiraha (Has supreme courage); 280) Divya vastraanu lepanah (Wears divya vastra and 'anga -raaga' (body-lepana); 281) Mallarupa (Sports the Form of a fearful wrestler in the sports arena of King Kamsa); 282) Mahakaala (Takes the profile of Death in the presence of Kamsa); 283) Kamarupi (Takes over various Forms as needs of time demanded); 284) Balaanvita (possesses endless energy and prowess); 285) Kamsa trasaharah (encountered a highly scared Kamsa); 286) Bhimah (Kamsa was mortally afraid of Krishna); 287) Mrushtikantah (In the form of Balabhadra, the fist-power was deadly to Kamsa); 288) Kamsaha (Krishna-the slaughter for Kamsa); 289) Chanuraghna (the destroyer of Chanura, the great wresler); 290) Bhayahara (the slasher of timidity)' 291) Shalaarih (the killer of King Shalya); 292) Toshaalantakah ( the destroyer of Toshaalka); 293) Vaikuntha -vaasi (As Vishnu, Krishna was residing at Vaikuntha); 294) Kamsaarih (Krishna, who destroyed his enemy Kamsa), 295) Sarva dushta nishudanah (The mighty killer of all his deadly enemies); 296) Deva dundhibinirghoshi (The reason why Devas sounded at Kamas's death); 297) Pitru shoka nivaarinah (Krishna avenged and pacified the parents); 298) Yadavendrah (The Chief of Yadu Vamsha); 299) Sataam naathah (The rescuer of Satpurushas), 300) Yadavaari pramadanah (The destroyer of the opponents of Yadavas); 301) Shouri shoka vinashi (The demolisher of Vasudeva's distress); 302) Devaki tapa naashanah (The terminator of Devaki's misery); 303) Ugrasena Paritraata (The redeemer of Ugrasena's despair); 304) Ugrasenaabhi pujitah ( adored by Ugrasena); 305) Ugrasenaabhisheki (He was responsible to make Ugrasena as King); 306) Ugrasena daya para (Secured gratitude from Ugrasena); 307) Sarva Saantwata saakshi (responsible for the revival of Yadu vamsha); 308) Yaduvamsha abhinandana (brought elation to all in the Yadu vamsha); 309) Sarva Maathura ( Achieved the veneration of all residents of Mathura Nagar); 310) Karunah (The merciful); 311) Bhakta bandhavah (the kith and kin to all devotees); 312) Sarvagopala dhanadah (Provider of wealth to all Gopas); 313) Gopi Gopaala laalasah (He who genuinely enjoys mixing with Gopas and Gopikas); 314) Shouri dattopaveethi (Vasudeva had the privilege of performing 'Upanayana' samskaara to him (Krishna); 315) Ugrasena dayaakarah (benevolent to Ugrasena); 316) Guru Bhakta (with devotion to Guru Sandipani); 317) Brahmachari (Krishna practised strict Brahmacharya while in Gurukul); 318) Nigama -adhyaney ratah (He was Veda Paarayana); 319) Sankarshana sahaadhyaayi (He was a co-student to Balarama); 320) Sudama suhrut ( Sudama was a dear Brahmana costudent); 321) Vidyanidhih (the great store-house of Vidya / education); 322) Kalaa koshah (Complete treasure-house of Kalas / Arts); 323) Mruta putra pradah (Brought back to life the Guru's son after death); 324) Chakri (The holder of Sudarshan Chakra); 325) Paanchajani (Paancha -jani the conchshell in his hands); 326) Sarva Naaraki mochanah (Provider of salvation to all who stayed in Narakas/hells); 327) Yamarchita (Worshipped by Yama Deva); 328) Parah (The Highest); 329) Devah (Dhriti maan/He who has singular forbearance and forgiveness); 330) Naamocchara vashah (Controlled by repetitive naama japa); 331) Achyutah (The Indestructible); 332) Kubjavilasi (The rectifier of Kubja's handicapped form); 333) Subhagah (Extremely fortunate); 334) Deena bandhu (The relative of the helpess); 335) Anupama (The unparaleled); 336) Akrura griha gopta (The defender of Akrura's home); 337) Pratijna Paalakah ( The Administer of Vows); 338) Shubhah (The Form of Auspiciousness); 339) Jarasandhajayi (Defeated Jarasandha by seventeen times); 340) Vidwan (Omniscient); 341) Yavanantah (witnessed the end of Kalayayana); 342) Dwijaashrayah (The shelter of Brahmanas); 343) Muchukundapriyakarah (Wellwisher of Muchukunda); 344) Jarasandha palayatih (Spared Jarasandha eighteen times); 345) Dwarakaa janakah (The creator of Dwarakapuri); 346) Gudhah (Paramatma hidden in the form of a human being); 347) Brahmanyah (The devotee of Brahmanya); 348) Satya -sangarah (He swears by Truth); 349) Leeladharah (The miracle man) 350) Priyakarah (Responsible for alround happiness); 351) Vishwakarma (Performer of several universally benificient deeds); 352) Yashapradah (Provider of Fame); 353) Rukmini priya sandeshah (Despatcher of love-message to Devi Rukmini); 354) Rukmi shoka vivardhanah (adds to of Rukmi's grief); 355) Chaidya shokalayah (augmentor of Sishupala's distress); 356) Shreshthah (Exemplary human being); 357) Dushta rajanya nashanah (The desroyer of evil-minded Kings); 358) Rukmi vairupya karanah (disgraced Rukmi with head-shaving); 359) Rukmini vachaney ratah (makes sure of following Rukmini's wishes); 360) Balabhadravachograahi (implicitly follows Balabhadra's feelings); 361) Mukta Rukmi (Left Rukmi alive instead of killing him); 362) Janaadrana (fulfiller of Bhakta's ishes); 363) Rumini praana nathah (Rukmini's heart throb); 364) Satyabhama patih (Satyabhama's beloved); 365) Swayam Bhakta pakshi (Takes the sides of Bhaktas on his own); 366) Bhakti yashah (Fully won over by Bhaktas); 367) Akrura mani dayakah ( the donor of Shamantaka mani to Akrura); 368) Shatadhanya praanahaari (Eliminator of Shatadhanya's life); 369)Ruksharaja sutaapriyah (The beloved of Jambavati, the daughter of Jambavaan); 370) Satrajitat -tanayaa kantah (the dear wife of Satrajita's daughter- Satyabhama); 371) Mitravida -apaharakah (The stealer of Mitravinda); 372) Satyapatih (Husband of Nagnajit's daughter Satya); 373) Lakshmanaajita (won over Lakshmana in a'Swayamvara'); 374) Pujya (worthy of worship); 375) Bhadra Priyankara (endears Bhadra); 376) Narakaasura ghaati (destroyer of Narakaasura); 377) Leelaakanyaa -harah ( took away sixteen thousand virgin girls as his wives for fun); 378) Jayee (the Victorious); 379) Murari (terminator of Murari daitya); 380) Madaneshah (Controller of Manmadha); 381) Dharitri duhkha naashanah (got rid of Bhu Devi's anguish); 382) Vainatevi (The Master of Garuda Deva); 383) Swargagaami (Visited Swarga to fetch Parijata flower); 384) Adityaah kundala pradah (Gave away ear-rings to Aditi); 385) Indrarchita (worshipped by Indra); 386) Ramaakaantah (the belived of Lakshmi); 387) Vajri bharyaa prapujitah (Worshipped by Sachi Devi, the wife of Indra); 388) Paarijaataapahaari (appropriated Parijaata tree); 389) Shakra maanaapahaarakah (razed to ground the ego of Indra); 390) Pradyumna janakah (the father of Pradyumna); 391) Sambatatah (father of Samba); 392) Bahusutah (father of innumerable sons); 393) Vidhuh (Of Visahnu Swarup); 394) Gargaacharyah (Made Gargaacharya as his desciple); 395) Satyagatih (Attainable by Truth alone); 396) Dharmaadharah (Dharma as his support); 397) Dharaadharah (The sustainer of Prithvi); 398) Dwaraamandanah (Dwaraka illuminated by him); 399) Shlokyah (worthy of reputation); 400) Sushlokah (praiseworthy by way of Stanzas); 401) Nigamaalayah (the Store of Vedas); 402) Poundraka praanahaari (The slayer of fake Vasudava); 403) Kashiraajashiro harih (The slicer of the fake Kashi's head); 404) Avaishnava vipradaahi (those Brahmanas who tried to bring disrepute to Yadu vamshaites were burnt off); 405) Sudakshina bhayavah (Frightened Kashi Raja's son Sudakshina into submission); 406) Jarasandhavidari (enabled Bhimasena to tear off Jarasandha); 407) Dharmanandana

vagna krit (facilitated the successful completion of Dharma Raja's Yagna); 408) Sishupalashiracchedi (The smasher of Sishupala's head); 409) Dantravaktra vishashanah (killed Dantavaktra); 410) Vidhurathantakah (the obliterator of Vidhurantaka); 411) Shrishah (The Swami of Devi Lakshmi); 412) Shridaha (The Provider of Prosperity); 413) Dwivida nashanah (The killer of Dwivida Vaanara as by Balabhadra): 414) Rukmini maana haari (eliminated Rukmini's self-image): 415) Rukmini maana vardhanah (Enhanced Devi Rukmini's pride); 416) Devarshi shaapaharta (Saved Narada from his curse); 417) Draupadi vaakya paalakah (Draupadi's statements made true); 418) Durvaasobhaya haari (Removed Muni Durvasa's fright); 419) Paanchaali smaranaagatah (Instantly appeared at Draupadi's call of desperation); 420) Paartha dutah (the personal emissary) of Kunti's sons; 421) Partha Mantri (Adviser of Kunti Putras); 422) Partha duhkougha naashanah (The destroyer of Pandava's miseries); 423) Partha maanaapahari (Ensured Pandava's self-respect); 424) Parthajeevana dayikah (Provider of life to Pandavas); 425) Panchali Vastra daata (Prevented Panchali's dishonour / disrobing and bestowed unlimited clothing to her); 426) Vishwapalaka palakah (Provides protection to Devas who guard the world); 427) Shwetashwa sarathi (the Charioteer to Arjuna's white horses); 428) Satyah (Satya Swarupa); 429) Satya sadhyaha (Possible to attain Him only through Truth); 430) Bhayapahah (Overcomes fright only by devotion); 431) Satyasandhah (Truth alone succeeds); 432) Satyaratih (Engrossed in Truth); 433) Satya Priyah (Endeared by Truth); 434) Udaradhih (Liberal-minded); 435) Mahasena -jayi (Even defeated Karikeya as he fought on Banasura's side.); 436) Shiva sainya vinashanah (Shivashena was destroyed by him); 437) Banasura bhujachhetta (cut-off the hands of Banasura): 438) Banasura baahuvarapradah (gave the boon of restoring the four hands of Banasura); 439) Tarkshya maanapahari (wiped out Garuda's ego); 440) Tarkshya tejo vivardhanah (Garuda's radiance enhanced by him); 441) Rama swarupadhari (assumed Shri Rama's Form); 442) Satyabhamaa mudaavahah (Provided joy to Satyabhama); 443) Ratnakara jala kreeda (enjoyed swimming in the Sea); 444) Vrajaleela pradarshakah (granted the vision of Vraja leelas to devotees); 445) Swapratijnaa paridhwamsi (did not mind breaking his own vow to enable Bhishma's vow); 446) Bhishmaajnaa paripalakah (Followed Bhishma's instruction); 447) Viraayudha harah (stole away the brave men's Astras and Shastras); 448) Kaalah (Kaala Swarupa); 449) Kaalikeshah (The Master of Kaali); 450) Mahabalah (Maha Shaktiman); 451) Barbarika shirohaari (chopped the head of Barbarika); 452) Barbarika shirapradah (restored the head of Bararika); 453) Dharma putra jayee (enabled Dhara Raja to be victorious); 454) Shura Duryodhana madaantakah ( the destroyer of Duryodhana's arrogance); 455) Gopikapreeti nirbandha nitya kreedah ( succumbs to the pressure of Gopikas and always resorts to playful activities); 456) Vrajeswarah (the Master of Vraja); 457) Radhaakundaratih (loves to Play in Radha's waterbody); 458) Dhanyah (worthy of gratitude); 459) Sadaandola samaashritah (enjoys swings on the Swings); 460) Sada madhu vanaanandi (Always joyful time in the Madhu Gardens); 461) Sada vrindaavani priyah (Loves to enjoy in Vridaavana); 462) Ashoka vana nannaddhah (always ready to play in Ashoka Vana); 463) Sada tilaka sangatah (With 'tilaka' on his forehead); 464) Govardhana ratih (Ready to play on Govardhana Mountain); 465) Sadaa Gokula Vallabhah (Ready for Gokula and cow-herds); 466) Bhaandira vata samvaasi (Lives in the Bhaandira vata often); 467) Nityam Vamshi vata sthitah (Likes to stay on at Vamshivata); 468) Nanda graama kritaavaasah (resident of Nandagraam); 469) Vrisha Bhaanugriha priyah (Likes to visit Vrisha Bhanu's Place); 470) Griheeta kaamini rupa (likes to sport the form of Kamini); 471) Nityam raasa vilaasa krit (Takes pleasure in performing Raasa leelas always); 472) Vallavijana samgopta (Provides security to Gopikaas); 473) Vallavee -jana vallabhah (The beloved of Gopikas); 474) Devasharma kripa karta (showers kindness on Deva Sharma); 475) Kalpapaada prasamstitah (takes pleasure under the Kalpa Vriksha); 476) Shilanugandha nilayah (Resides in the palace of perfumed stones); 477) Padachari (enjoys walking by foot); 478) Ghanachhavih (Has the cloud-like bluish colour); 479) Atasee kusumaprakyha (Has the body colour of Tisi flower); 480) Sadaa Lakshmi kripakarah (constantly shows extreme kindness to Lakshmi); 481) Tripuraari priyakarah (endears Maha Deva); 482) Ugra Dhanwa (carries a fearful bow); 483) Aparaajitah (Invincible); 484) Shaddhura naashanah (destroys Shaddhura); 485) Nikumbha praana haarakah (The eliminator of Daithya Nikumbha); 486) Vajra naabha puradhvamsi (devastated Vajra naabha pura); 487) Poundraka prana harakah (Poundraka's demolisher); 488) Bahulashwa preeti karta (Liked Mithila's King Bahulashwa);

489) Dwija varya priyankarah (Liked Shruta Deva, the Bhakta Brahmana);490) Shiva sankata haari ( eliminates problems for Shiva); 491) Vrikaasura vinaashanah (Krishna-the killer of Vrikasura); 492) Bhrigu satkara kaari (Bhrigu received honour from Krishna); 493) Shiva saatvikada praadata (provider of 'Satvikata' to Shiya); 494) Gokarna pujakah (worshipped at Gokarna); 495) Samba kushti vidhvamsah karanah (eradicated the leprosy disease of Samba); 496) Veda stutah (Eulogised by Vedas); 497) Veda vetta (Vedajna); 498) Yadu vamsha varthanah ( the Promoter of Yadu Vamsha); 499) Yadu vamsha Vinaashi (The termintor of Yadu vamsha); 500) Uddhavodhhara kaarakaha (endowed with Salvation to Uddhava); 501) Radha ('Aaraadhya Shakti' of Shri Krishna); 502) Raadhika ('Vrisha Bhanu Putri'); 503) Aanandaa (The Highest Form of Bliss); 504) Vrishabhanuja (The daughter of Vrisha Bhanu Gopa); 505) Brindavaneshwai (Bridavana's Queen); 506) Punya (Punyamayi / Devi of Propitious -ness); 507) Krishna maanasa haarini (The 'chitchor' or the Thief of Krishna's heart); 508) Pragalbha (Essence of radiance, courage, fearlessness and kindness); 509) Chatura (Versatile); 510) Kama (Epitome of Love); 511) Kamini (darling of Shri Krishna); 512) Harimohini (adored by Bhagavan); 513) Lalitha (Most gorgeous); 514) Madhura (sweet and rapturous); 515) Maadhwi (ecstatic); 516) Kishori (Lastingly youthful); 517) Kanaka Prabha (lustrous like gold); 518) Jita Chandra (wins over Moon God in pleasantness); 519) Jita mriga (wobbly-eyed surpassing that of a deer); 520) Jita Simha (of a waist that puts a lion to shame); 521) Jita dwipa (of the leisurely and relaxed walk of an elephant which disgraces that of Radha); 522) Jita Rambha (of better perfection than of Rambha in terms of physical features and voluptuousness); 523) Jita pika (of such squashy and soft voice that humiliates that of a cuckoo); 524) Govinda hridayodbhava (Manifested from the heart of Govinda); 525) Jita vimba (the redness of her lips is far superior to that of Vimba fruit); 526) Jita Shuka (The nose of a parrot is put to awkwardness compared to that of Radha's); 527) Jita Padma (Even Devi Lakshmi is put to embarrassment as compared to the unique elegance of Devi Radha's); 528) Kumarika (Ever Youthful); 529) Shri Krishnaakarshana (Radha had that magnetic charm that readily vanquished Shri Krishna); 530) Devi (Divya Swarupa / of Celestial Form); 531) Nitya yugma Swarupini (She has an everlasting double personality of Radha and Krishna); 532) Nityam Viharini (Playfully wild and non-stop); 533) Kanta (The most beloved favourite of Nandana Vana); 534) Rasika (Sips the juice of love); 535) Krishna Vallabha (the darling of Krishna); 536) Aamodini (Readily adored by Krishna); 537) Modavati (The symbol of enchantment); 538) Nandanadana bhushitha (Ornamented by Krishna with sixteen Shringaras viz. embriodered dress, flowers, kajal or Eyetex, 'bindi' or decorative red-spot on forehead, 'Maantika' or ornament on head- hair central parting, nose ring, ear rings, necklaces, armlets, designed 'mehendi' on hands and feet, bangles / bracelets, eight hand finger rings, waist band, anklets, fragrances and 'Sindoor'); 539) Divyaabara (wearer of Divya Vastra or Celestial Dress); 540) Divya haara (She who wears divinely garlands / necklaces); 541) Muktaamani vibhushita (ornamented with pearl necklace); 542) Kunji priya (fond of the shrubs of Bridavana gardens); 543) Kunja vaasa (likes to live in the big shrubs); 544) Kunjanayaka nayika (The heroine of Krishna kunjas); 545) Charurupa (the most attractive form of Radha); 546) Charu vaktra (the most charming face); 547) Charu Hemangada (Beautiful golden armlets); 548) Shubha (The most propitious); 549 (Shri Krishna Venu Sangeeta (The famed flute music of Shri Krishna); 550) Murali harini (Robbed of his flute for fun); 551) Shiva (The auspicious); 552) Bhadra (the fortunate); 553) Bhagavati (The symbol of Purity); 554) Shanta (The essence of Peace); 555) Kumuda (The all pervasive Form of Happiness); 556) Sundari (The Prettiest); 557) Priya (The beloved of Krishna); 558) Krishnakreeda (She who is playful with Krishna); 559) Krishna rathih (intensely unified in love with Krishna); 560) Shri Krishna sahacharini (Krishna's close companion moving about with him always); 561) Vamshivata priya sthaana (Vamshi vata as their amorous spot); 562) Yugmayugma swarupini (Duelpersonality of Radha and Krishna); 563) Bhandira Vaasini (Stays in Bhandira Vana); 564) Shubhra ( Fair-coloured); 565) Gopinaadha priya (The beloved of Gopikas); 566) Sakhi (The close pal of Shri Krishna); 567) Shrutinih shwasitah (Manifested by the exhaling of Vedas); 568) Divya (Of Celestial Form); 569) Govindarasa dayani (She provides sweet juice of love to Govinda);570) Shri Krishna praarthani (desirous of Shri Krishna alone); 571) Ishana (Ishwari); 572) Mahananda -pradayani (bestower of great bliss); 573) Vaikuntha jana samsevya (worthy of worship by the residents of Vaikuntha); 574) Koti Lakshmi sukhavaha (Provider of such happiness as would exceed that of crores of Lakshmis); 575)

Koti kandarpa lavanya (loveliness comparable to crores of Manmadhas); 576) Ratikoti rati prada (provider of such delight as from crores of Rati Devis; 577) Bhaktigrahna (attainable only by high devotion); 578) Bhakti Rupa (personification of devotion); 579) Lavanya sarasi (Lake-like of charisma); 580) Uma (Yoga Maya); 581) Brahma Rudraadi samradhya (worshipped by Brahma and Rudra); 582) Nitvam koutulahaanvita ( with persistent desire to learn); 583) Nitva leela (Always playful); 584) Nitva kama (anxious to unite with Krishna); 585) Nitya shringara bhushita (constantly amorous); 586) Nitya vridavana rasa (continuously fond of the joy of Vrindavana); 587) Nitya Nandanandana Samyukta (craves for the company of Krishna always); 588) Gopika-mandali yukta (surrounded by the circles of Gopikas); 589) Nitya Gopala sangatha (Ready to keep the company of Gopala); 590) Gorasa kshepini (The sprayer of Gorasa); 591) Shura (embodied with great bravery); 592) Saananda (full of cheerfulness); 593) Anandadayani (Provider of joy); 594) Maha leela prakrushta (worthy of the great romantic adventures); 595) Naagari (Highly cultured); 596) Nagacharini (freely roams over Govardhana Mountain); 597) Nityamaghurnita (in search of Krishna always); 598) Purna (Complete with excellent features); 599) Kasturi tilakaanvita (Adorned by 'kasturi tilaka' on her forehead); 600) Padma (Lakshmi Swarupa); 601) Shyama (The alluring); 602) Mrigakshi (with fluid eyes as of a deer); 603) Siddha Swarupa (The Profile of Stability); 604)Rasaavaha (Full of Krishna's juice of love); 605) Kotichandraanana (Her face as appealing and shiny as crores of Moons); 606) Gauri (white and radiant); 607) Kotikokila suswara (Has the sweet voice of crores of 'Koels'); 608) Sheela soundarya nilaya ( of outstanding beauty and character); 609) Nanda nandana laalita (receives enormous attention from Shri Krishna); 610) Ashoka vana samvasi (The illustrious resident of Ashokvana); 611) Bhandivana sangatha (accessible at Bhandi vana); 612) Kalpadruma talaa vishta (Seated under the cool shade of Kalpa tree); 613) Krishna (Krishna Swarupa); 614) Vishwa (Vishwa Swarupa); 615) Haripriya (Lover of Hari); 616) Ajaagamya (Unreachable even to Brahma); 617) Bhavaagamya (inaccessible even to Bhava); 618) Govadhanakritalaya (Resident of Govardhana Mountain); 619) Yamuna teera nilaya ( stays on at the banks of River Yamuna); 620) Shashvat Govinda japshini (Endlessly chanting the name of Govida); 621) Shaswata -maanavati (Eternally respectful); 622) Snigdha (Snehamayi); 623) Shri Krishna parivandita (esteemed by Shri Krishna); 624) Krishna stuta (As eulogised by Krishna); 625) Krishna vrataa (Krishnacentric); 626 ) Shri Krishna hridayalaya ( Resident of Krishna's heart); 627) Devadruma phala (Fulfiller of all desires like Kalpa Vriksha); 628) Sevya (worthy of worship) 629) Vrindavana Rasaalaya (Immersed in the juice of Vrindavana) 630 )Koti tirtha mayi (Of Koti Tirtha Swarupa ); 631) Satya (Satya Swarupa); 632) Koti Tirtha Phala prada (Provider of the fruits of Koti Teertha); 633) Koti yoga sudushpraapya (Unattainable by koti yogasadhanas); 634) Koti Yagna -duraashraya (not possible to access even by koti yagnas); 635) Manasa (The famed 'Manasa'); 636) Shashilekha (Chandra kala in the form of Shri Krishna); 637) Shri koti subhaga (As propitious as crores of Lakshmi); 638) Anagha (Devoid of sins); 639) Koti mukta sukha (As happy as possessing crores of Muktatmaas); 640) Sowmya ( of extremely pleasant nature); 641) Lakshmi koti vilasini (As jovial as crores of Lakshmis); 642) Tilottama (Extremely attractive since she sports a sesame-seed like 'bindu' on her forehead); 643) Trikaalastha (She exists in the past, present and future); 644) Trikalajna (She has the knowledge of the three tenses); 645) Adhishtari ( The 'Swamini' or the Leader); 646) Trivedajna (Proficient in the Three Vedas); 647) Tri lokajna (She is fully conversant with the happenings in all the Three Lokas); 648) Tureeyanta nivaasini (She exists in 'Jagriti'or fully conscious, 'Swapna' or dreams as well as blissful states); 649) Durgaaraadhya (worshipped by Devi Durga); 650) Ramaaraadhya (Worshipped by Lakshmi); 651) Vishwaaraadhya ( worshipped by the entire Universe); 652) Chidaatmika (Chetana Swarupa); 653) Devaraadhya (worshipped by Devas); 654) Paraaraadhya (The Supreme Parama Devi); 655) Brahmaaraadhya ( worshipped by Brahma); 656) Paramaatmika (Paramaatma Swarupa); 657) Shivaaraadhya (worthy of worship by Bhagavan Shiva); 658) Premaaraadhya (worthy of achievement through love and dedication); 659) Bhaktaadaadhya (Devi attainable by bhakti / devotion); 660) Rasatmika (Rasa Swarupa); 661) Krishna -praanaarpani (Dedicated her life to Krishna); 662) Bhama (The Ideal); 663) Shuddha prema vilasini (manifested by pure and spiritual love); 664) Krishnaaraadhya (She is the Araadhya Devi); 665) Bhakti Saadhyaa (Bhakti alone could accomplish her); 666) Bhakta brinda nishevita (worshipped by groups of devotees); 667) Vishvaadhara (The Great support of the Universe); 668) Kripadhara (The

sustainer of kindness); 669) Jeevaadhara (The prop to all Beings); 670) Ati navika (The Supreme of Nayikas / Leaders ); 671) Shuddha Premamayi (The pristine form of Love/adoration); 672) Lazza ( Modesty / humility); 673) Nitya Siddha (Swayam Siddha wiithout effort); 674) Shiromani (The topmost); 675) Divya Rupa (of the Celestial Profile); 676) Divya bhoga (Celestial pleasures); 677) Divya (blissful): 679) Divvangana vrinda saaraa (The Vesha (of Celestial costumes): 678) Mudaanvita essence of all celestial women groups); 680) Nitya nutana youvana (of fresh and innovative youth); 681) Parabrahmaavrita (Encircled by Parabrahma Tatwa); 682) Dhyeya (Highly worthy of meditation); 683) Maha Rupa (of the Highest Form); 684) Mahojjwala (The pinnacle form of Radiance); 685) Koti Surya Prabha (The dazzle of crores of Surya Devas); 686) Kotichandra bimbadhika chhavi (The reflecion of crores of Chandra bimbas); 687) Komalamrita vaak ( of Her sweet and soft-natured talk); 688) Aadya ( The Adi Devi); 689) Vedaadya ( of the Originating Swarupa of Vedas); 690) Veda durlabha (Beyond the reach of Vedas); 691) Krishnaasakta (Delighted in Krishna Tatwa); 692) Krishna Bhakta (Those devotees replete with Krishna's consciousness) 693) Chandraavali nishevita (worshipped by her companion named Chandraavali); 694) Kala shodasa sampurna (Complete with Sixteen 'Kalas') [The Sixteen 'Kalas'are ruled by Nitya Devis viz. Tripura Sundari, Kameswari, Bhagamalini, Nitya Klinnaa, Bherunda, Vahnivaasini, Maha Vajreshwari, Roudri, Twarita, Kula Sundari, Nitya, Neela Pataaka, Vijaya., Swarna Mangala, Jwalaa Malini, and Chhidrupal; 695) Krshna dehaadra dhaarini (She occupies half of His Physique); 696) Krishna buddhi (She dedicated her complete mental faculties); 697) Krishna saara (She gave away her enirety); 698) Krishna rupa viharini (She moves about with Krishna's totality); 699) Krishna kantaa (The topmost beloved of Krishna); 700) Krishna dhanaa (She has the conviction of Krishna's belonging his complete prosperity including physical, mental and spirtual resources); 701) Krishnamohana kaarini (Allures Kishna with her limitless love); 702) Krishnaa dhrishti (concentrated vision on Krishna); 703) Krishna gotra (has Krishna's gothra itself); 704) Krishna Devi (Krishna's target of worship); 705) Kuloduha (The best of the Kula); 706) Sarvabhuta sthitaatma (The Super Soul spread all over the Beings); 707) Sarvaloka namaskruta (venerated by all lokas); 708) Krishna daatri (makes possible to all deserving devotees to attain Krishna); 709) Premadhaatri (helps produce devotion among various persons on Krishna); 710) Swarna gaatri (of golden physique); 711) Manorama (Gives joy to Krishna); 712) Naga dhaatri (She creates the Devatas in charge of mountains; 713) Yashodaatri (Provider of name and fame); 714) Maha Devi (The highest Goddess); 715) Shubhankari (bestower of propitiousness); 716) Shri Sesha Deva Janani (The Creator of Lakshmi, Sesha Nag and Devatas); 717) Avataaranagana prasuh (The Creator of Incarnations); 718) Utpalangka( wears the sign of blue lotus on her hands and feet); 719) Aravindaanga (Has the Symbol of Lotus); 720) Praasaadangka (Has the icon of a Temple); 721) Adviteeyaka (None like her in Creation); 722) Rathaangaa (Has temple as her pictogram); 723) Kunchanjaanga (has the symptom of Elephant ) 724) Kundalaangka pada stitha (on her feet the indication is a kundali); 725) Chhatraanga (umbrella as her logo); 726) Vidyudanga (diamond as the emblem);727) Pushpamaalaangkita (a flower garland as her representation); 728) Dandaagka ('Dhanda' or the sacred stick as her insignia); 729) Mukutanga (headgear as her crest); 730) Purna Chandra (glowing like a full moon); 731) Shukaangkita (paarrot like her signage); 732) Krishnaahaara paaka (she is engaged in the kitchen as though Krishna is arriving for his food); 733) Vrindaakunja vihaarini (moves about freely in Vrindavani gardens); 734) Krishna prabodhanakati (She wakes up Krishna from sleep); 735) Krishna sesha bhojanakari (She loves to eat the left-over of Krishna's food as 'Prasada); 736) Padmakesara madhya -sthaa) (She is seated in the midst of the filaments of lotus flower); 737) Sangeeta agama vedini (versatile in the Sangeeta Shastra); 738) Koti kalpaanta bhu bhringa ( terminates crores of 'Kalpas' by her mere eye-brow frowns); 739) Apraapta Pralaya (Never affected by 'Pralayas'); 740) Achyuta (undiminishable); 741) Sarva Satva nidhi (embodiment of Satva Guna); 742) Padma shankhaadi nidhi sevita ( worshipped by the everlasting funds of Lotuses, conchshells etc.); Animaadi gunaishwarya (Replete with Siddhis like 'Anima')[ well-known Ashta Siddhis are: Anima (reduction of body size to an atom); Mahima (expansion of size to infinity); Garima (turning body heavy to any weight); Laghima (turning body weightless); Praapti (gaining access anywhere); Praakaamya (realisation of desires); Inaavaa (securing complete command) and Vaseetwa (gaining control of person / thing)] 743) Deva brinda vimohini ( capacity to control Deva groups); 745)

Sarvaanandaprada (Provider of happiness to one and all); 746) Sarvaa (Sarva Swarupa); 747) Suvarna latikaakritih (she has the form of a lean golden creeper); 748) Krishnaabhisaara sanketa (Krishna waiting to meet her at a designated spot); 749) Malini (decorated with a flower garland); 750) Nritya pandita (Connoisseur of dance); 751) Gopisindhu sakaashaapya (Krishna attainable among the groups of Gopikas); 752) Gopa mandapa shobhini (Lights up the platform of Vrisha bhanu Gopa by her presence); 753) Shri Krishna preetida (she bestows Krishna's love to others); 754) Bheeta (she is terrified of loneliness by Krishna's absence); 755) Pratyanga pulakaa -schita (Her each body limb is overjoyed with his presence); 756) Shri Krishnaalingana rataa (She yearns for Shri Krishna's embraces); 757) Govinda virahaakshamaa (His separation is unbearable for her); 758) Anantaguna sampanna Possessive of endless Gunas / features); 759) Krishna kirtana laalasaa (infatuated with lyrics about Krishna); 760) Bijatrayamayi -murti ( She is the Swarupa of the Bija / seed Mantras viz. Shreem, Hreem and Kleem); 761) Krishnaanugraha vaanchhini (She longs for Krishna's kindness); 762) Vimalaadi nishevya (Radha is worshipped by her companions like Vimala and Utkarshini); 763) Lalitaardyarchita (She is worshipped by Devi Lalita and other friends); 764) Sati (Highly virtuous and noble Devi); 765) Padma vrinda sthita (She is present among groups of Lotuses); 766) Hrishta (She is ever joyous); 767) Tripura pari sevitaa ( She is adulated by Tripura Devi); 768) Brindaavatya -archita ( She is venerated by Brindaavati); 769) Shraddha (She is the personification of fortitude); 770) Durjaya (She is beyond Intellect); 771) Bhakta Vallabha (She is the beloved of devotees); 772) Durlabha (Diffcult of achievement); 773) Sandra soukhyaatma (Solid Form of Comfort and contentent); 774) Shreyo hetuh ( The cause of happiness); 775) Subhogada (The provider of auspiciousness); 776) Saaranga (Like the thirsty bird 'Chaataki', Radha too thirsty of love for Krishna ); 777) Sharada (Sarasyati Swarupa); 778) Bodha (Full of 'Jnaana'); 779) Sadbridavana chaarini ( moves about all over the Sacred Brindavana); 780) Brahma -anandaa ( of the pious Form of Brahmaananda); 781) Chidaananda (Chidaa nanda mayi); 782) Dhyaanaananda (Engaged in the joyful meditation of Krishna); 783) Artha maatrika ( of the Form of Arthamaatrikaas); 784) Gandharvaa (Expert in Gaandharva Vidya); 785) Suratajna (Proficient in Surata kalaas); 786) Govinda praana sangamaa ( as though both Govinda and Radha have the same life); 787) Krishnaanga bhushanaa (She ornaments the body of Krishna); 788) Rathna bhushana (She decorates her body with jewels); 789) Swarna bhushita (wears exquisite gold jewellery); 790) Shri Krishna hridayaa yaasaa (She stays in the temple heart of Shri Krishna); 791) Muktaakanaka naasika ( puts on pearl-gold nose-screws); 792) Sadratna kankanaayuta (has superb gold jewellery bangles on her hands); 793) Shrimaaneela giristha (delighted to stay on Neela Giri); 794) Swarna nupura sampanna ( garnished her feet with golden anklets); 795) Swarna kinkini mandita (embellished 'Karadhanis' or handwear full of gold); 796) Asesha raasa kutuka (most anxious and restless to play 'raasa' with Krishna); 797) Rabhoruh (has plantain tree like thighs); 798) Tanu madhyama (of thin waist); 799) Parakritih (holds unique body-profile); 800) Paraananda( has supreme figure of bliss); 801) Paraswarga vihaarini (She has great mobility to visit worlds like Goloka on tours); 802) Prasuna kabari (adorns hair bun with flower garlands); 803) Chitra (beautifies in various ways); 804) Maha Sundara Sundari (The most outstanding beauty among beauties); 805) Kaishora vayasa (the ever teen-aged); 806) Bala (Child-like, yet, mature); 807) Pramadaakula shekhara (The most charming of the dynasty); 808) Krishnaadharaa sudhaawaada (The taster of the nectar of Krishna's lips); 809) Shyama prema vinodini (the ardently romantic love-partner of Krishna); 810) Shikhi pincha lasat chuda (dressed with peacock feathers on her hair-dress); 811) Swarna champaka bhushita (adorned her with golden champa flower); 812) Kumkumaalakta kasturi mandita (excels with the shine of red Kasturi and saffron); 813) Aparaajita (invincible); 814) Hema haaraanvita (decorated with golden necklace); 815) Pushpa haaraadhya ( beautified with fragrant flower garlands); 816) Rasavati (full of the juice of love); 817) Maadhurya madhura (the sweetest due to the sweets); 818) Padma (famed by the name of Padma); 819) Padma -hasta (wears a lotus by her hand); 820) Suvishruta (popular and admired); 821) Bhru bhangaa bhanga kodanda kataaksha rasa shara sandhini (She applies kindness on the arrows of prayers to Krishna as released by the bowlike movements of frowns and defrowns of her eye-brows); 822) Seshadeva shirahstha (She manifests as Devi Prithvi on the hoods of Sesha Deva); 823) Nitya sthala vihaarini (Constantly visits the usual Places of her tours); 824) Kaarunya jala madhyastha (Seated in the midst of waters of kindness);

825) Nityamattha (ever intoxicated with the love of Krishna); 826) Adhirohini (She is the means of achieving heights to salvation); 827) Ahshta bhashavati (Expert in Eight languages); 828) Ashta Nayikas (The eight companions of Radha stated to be Swaadheena Bhatrika, Khanditha, Abhsaarika, Vipra labdha, Kalahantaritha, Vasaksajja, Proshtith Bhatrika, and Virahol-khanditha); 829) Lakshanaanvita (Possessive of the righteous features); 830) Suneethijna (The byword of high morals); 831) Shrutijna (The personification of 'Shrutis' or Vedas); 832) Sarvajna (The Omniscient); 833) Duhkhahaarini (The destroyer of sorrows); 834)Rajoguneswari (Embodiment of Rajoguna); 835) Saracchandra nibhaanana (She is likened to the attractive visage of the Moon in Sharat month of autumn season/Sept-Nov); 836) Ketaki kusumaabhaasan (bright like the Kataki flower); 837) Sadaa Sindhu vanasthita (She moves about in Sindhu garden always); 838) Hemapushpaadhika karaa ( Has the graceful hands far superior to golden flowers); 839) Pancha Shakti mayi( Replete with the mystic powers of Pancha Shaktis responsible for Creation, Sustenance, Dissolution, Concealment and Bestowment); 840) Hita (The Provider of Counsel and Guidance); 841) Stanakumbhi (The high-chested); 842) Naraadhya (Ever-Present with Purushottama); 843) Kshinaapunya (Sinless); 844) Yashasvini (Abounding with reputation); 845) Vairaaja Surva janani (Mother of the most radiant Sun God who lights up the entire Universe); 846) Shreesha (The Life-Partner Lakshmi); 847) Bhuvana Mohini (The hypnotizer of the Three Worlds); 848) Maha Shobha (The quint-essence of brilliance); 849) Maha Maya (The Great Illusion); 850) Maha Kanti (The Supreme Radiance); 851) Maha Smritih (The epitome of Memory Power); 852) Maha Moha (The Great Enchantress); 853) Maha Vidya (The Highest knowledge of attaining Krishna); 854) Maha Kirthi ( The all-pervading fame); 855) Maha Rati (The personification of yearning); 856) Maha Dhairya (Unparalelled Courage); 857) Maha Veerya (The Most Valiant); 858) Maha Shakti (The Mightiest Power); 859) Maha Dyutih (The most lustrous); 860) Maha Gauri (The Fairest in Complexion); 861) Maha Sampat (Unimaginably wealthist); 862) Maha Bhogavilasini (The Ultimate in extravagance); 863) Samaya (The most opportune and well-timed); 864) Bhaktida (The bestower of Bhakti); 865) Ashoka ( Totally devoid of angst); 866) Vatsalyarasa dayini (The enormous source of encouragement and support); 867) Suhruda bhakti prada (Pro-active provider of Bhakti to the virtue-minded); 868) Swachha The most translucent); 869) Madhurya rasa varshini (The downpour of sweet charm); 870) Bhaava Bhakti prada (The motivator of Bhaava Bhakti or the abstract notion of devotion suggestive of 'Eko Paramatma'or the Unique Destination); 871) Shuddha Prema Bhakti vidhayani (Stimulator of Pure Bhakti, unsullied by worldly desires); 872) Gopa Rama (The Entertainer of Gopas); 873) Abhirama (The depository of Beauty and Grace); 874) Kreedaarama (engrossed in idyllic games); 875) Parameswari (The Supreme Energy); 876) Nitya Rama (The Permanent); 877) Atmaa Rama (The Soulful of Engrossement); 878) Krishnaaraama (total consciouness and involvement in Krishna); 879) Rameshwari (The Alternate Manifestation of Lakshmi); 880) Eakaaneka jagat vyaapta (The Unique and Singular but discernible in multitude Forms); 881) Vishwa leelaa prakaashini (perceptible in universal illusions); 882) Saraswateesha (The superior Form of Devi Saraswati; 883) Durgesha (Another embodiment of Devi Durga), 884) Jagadisha (An alternative materialization of the Universe); 885) Jagadvidhih (The Architect of the World); 886) Vishnu yamsha niyaasa (Resident of Vishnuvamsha); 887) Vishnu yamsha samudbhava (born of Vishnuvamsha); 888) Vishnu Vamshastuta (She was complemented by the comembers of the Vishnuvamsha); 889) Kartri (equipped with the Power of independent mastery of actions); 890) Sadaa Vishnu vamshaavani (Engaged in the security of Vishnu vamsha always); 891) Aaraamastha (Happy in resting in the Gardens); 892) Vanastha (Residing in Brindavana); 893) Suryaputryavagaahini (Delighted in bathing Yamuna, the daughter of Surya Deva); 894) Preethistha (Ever-evident in the Form of adoration); 895) Nitya yantrastha (set up in the Outline of 'Yantra'); 896) Golokastha (Exists in Goloka);897) Vibhutida (Provider of affluence); 898) Swaanubhutistha (She is maretialised in her own experiences); 899) Avyakta (Invisible); 900) Sarvaloka nivasini (She is spread all over the Worlds); 901) Amrita (Eternal); 902) Adbhuta (mysterious/Illusory); (903) Shrimanaarayana samirita (She is eulogised by Narayana and Lakshmi) 904) Akshara (The Everlasting); 905) Kutastha (Orientation of Paramatma); 906) Maha Purushasambhava (She presents to Rishis in myriad forms); 907) Aoudaarya bhava saadhya ( achieved by her sympathetic devotion ); 908) Sthula sukshmaati rupini (irrespective of huge or atomic dimensions but lasting spiritual delight); 909) Sirisha pushpa mridula

(softest and most delicate like a sirisha flower); 910) Gangeya mukura prabha (transparent like River Ganga or of a mirror); 911) Neelotpalajithaakshi ( her beautiful eyes decorated with eye-tex excel far better than the glow of Neelkamal); 912) Sadrathna kabaraanvita (her hair tresses ornamented by gems); 913) Prema paryanka nilaya (she rests comfortably on her lovely bed); 914) Tejo-mandala madhyagaa (she is in the center of a brilliant circle of dazzle): 915) Krishaanga gopanaabhedaa (She seeks to hide the physique of Krishna by sporting several Rupas); 916) Leelaavarana nayika (She plays the principal role in assuming playful acts of mischief); 917) Sudhaasindhu samullaasa (she whips and whisks the milk-like ocean of love with unlimited excitement and exuberance); 918) Amrita syanda vidhayani (sprays showers of Nectar on Krishna); 919) Krishnachitta (dedicates her full consciousness to Paramatma); 920) Raasa chitta (concentrates whole-heartedly in the Raasa dance for the delight of Krishna); 921) Prema chitta (focusses her full attention on her love for Krishna); 922) Haripriya (the most beloved of Hari); 923) Achintana guna graamaa (possesses the distressless features of Achyuta); 924) Krishna leela (the repository of Krishna's playful activities); 925) Malaaapaha (cleanses the dirt of mind and sinful attitudes) 926) Raasa sindhu shashanka (Krishna Raasa like the ocean with shimmering form of fullmoon); 927) Raasamandala mandini (She is the cynosure of Raasa leelas); 928) Natavrataa (the store house of courtesy); 929) Srihareechha sumurthi (represents Krishna's wish-list); 930) Suravandita (worshipped by Devas); 931) Gopichudamani (the head-worn ornament of all Gopikas; 932) Gopi ganedhya (extolled by Gopika groups); 933) Virajaadhika (held in higher esteem than by Goloka Shakti called Viraja); 934) Gopapreshtha (the darling of Krishna); 935) Gopakanya (daughter of Vrishabhanu Gopa); 936) Gopanaari (The Gopa maid); 937) Sugopika (the ideal Gopika); 938) Gopadhaama (The happy resident of Goloka); 939) Sudaamaaba (treats Sudaama as her mother); 940) Gopaali (Gopi); 941) Gopa mohini (intoxicated with Krishna's love); 942) Gopabhusha (Gopala considered as her nicest ornament); 943) Krishna bhusha (she is the adorner of Krishna's ornaments); 944) Shri brindavana chandrika (Krishna,the Full Moon of Brindavana); 945) Veenaadighoshanirata (engrossed in playing 'veena' and other musical instruments); 946) Raasotsava vikaasini (Brightens the Festival of Raasaas); 947) Krishnacheshta (She enjoys imitating Krishna's playful roles); 948) Aparijnaata (not possible to recognise others easily); 949) Koti kandarpa mohini (capable of enchanting koti Kamadevas); 950) Shri Krishna guna gaanaadyah (engrossed in singing lyrics in praise of Krisha); 951) Devasundari mohini ( Her beauty attracts all Deva Sundaris); 952) Krishna -chandra manognaa (She is fully conversant with the feelings of Krishna); 953) Krishnadeva Sahodari (Born to Devi Yashoda as Yoga Maya); 954) Krishnaabhilaashini (highly desirous of meeting Krishna); 955) Krishna premaanugraha vaanchhini (evereager to crave for Krihna's love and kindness); 956) Kshema (The Form of high security); 957) Mathuraalaapa (seeks to exchange sweet dialogues with Krishna); 958) Bhruvomaya (makes expressions of eyebrows); 959) Subhadrika (of highly propitious Form); 960) Prakritih (She represents the soothing powers of Krishna); 961) Paramaananda (of the Form of Supreme Happiness); 962) Neepadrumatalasthita (She likes to stand under a Kadamba tree); 963) Kripaakataaksha (Expressive of mercy to her devotees through her benign looks); 964) Vimbeshti (Her red lips are likened to Vimba fruit); 965) Rambha (called as Rambha since generally indicative of beauty, but far prettier otherwise); 966) Charu nitambini (charmingly buttocked); 967) Smarakelinidhana (The storehouse of Love escapades); 968) Gandatatanka mandita (cheeks ornamented by ear-rings); 969) Hemadri kantiruchira (Magnificent Radha Devi comparable to the golden mountain of Meru emitting rays of lustre); 970) Premaadhya (full up with Love); 971) Madamanthara (Slow-stepped due to excessive passion); 972) Krishna Chinta (Conscious of Krishna); 973) Prema -chinta (Krishna's charisma); 974) Ratichinta (obsessed with Krishna rati); 975) Krishnada (fulfiller of Krishna prapti); 976) Raasa chitta (possessed with Raasa); 977) bhava chitta (alongwith Prema bhava; 978) Shuddha chitta (Pure hearted); 979) Maha Rasa (climaxed Raas); 980) Krishnadrishti thriti yuga (unable to bear a second equalling a Yuga); 981) Drishti pakshma vinindini (controlling sleepless seconds of aching eyes awaiting Krishna); 982) Kandarpa janani (Radha the mother of Manmadha); 983) Mukhya (The Chief); 984) Vaikuntha -gatidayani (Provider of Mukti); 985) Raas bhava (manifested by Raasa); 986) Priyaaslishta (Embraced by Krishna); 987) Preshtha (Krishna's darling); 988) Prathama nayika (Prime Lover) 989) Shuddhaashuddha Swarupa; 990) Sudhadehini (Like a mother); 991) Shri Rama (As gorgeous as Lakshmi); 992) Rasamanjari; 993) Suprabhava (Well-featured); 994) Shubhaachaara (Noble tradition); 995) Swarnadi Narmadaambika (Mother of Ganga and Narmad); 996) Gomatichandrabhaagedhya (Praised by Gomati and Chandrabhaga) 997) Sarayu Tamraparni suh (She presents Sarayu and Tamraparni Rivers); 998) Nishkalanaka charitra (blemishless); 999) Nirguna (Featureless) and 1000) Niranjana (Nirmala Swarupa).

## Over-view of 'Ashtaadasa' (eighteen) Puranas

Brahma 'Maanasa Putra' Maharshi Marichi approached Lord Brahma to describe the 'beeja' (seed), 'lakshana' (characteristic), 'pramaana' (means of knowledge / contents), 'vakta' (Acharya) and 'shrota' (the Listener) of the main line Puranas which provide the knowledge of the 'Charaachara Jagat' or the moveable and immoveable Universe. Among all the 'Kalpas', there actually was stated to be one Single Purana comprising one hundred crore 'Shlokas' (stanzas) with the 'Four Purusharthas' of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Mokshas as the 'bijas'; but Bhagavan Vishnu created Vyasa Muni in each Yugas and the latter in turn condensed the Single Purana with only four lakh Shlokas and distributed it among Eighteen Puranas with varied number of Shlokas among these. In fact, it is stated that the Single Mother Purana continues to be in position in the Deva Lokas. The four-lakh shlokas are sub-divided among the Eighteen Puranas viz. Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, Vishnu Purana, Vayu Purana, Bhagavat Purana, Narada Purana, Markandya Purana, Agni Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Brahma Vaivartha Purana, Linga Purana, Varaaha Purana, Skanda Purana, Vamana Purana, Kurma Purana, Matsya Purana, Garuda Purana and Brahmaanda Purana.

Mahatma Vyas first produced **Brahma Purana** with the underlying message of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha and ten thousand 'Shlokas'. This Purana described about the creation of Devatas, Asuras and Prajapatis like Daksha; about the 'Vamsa' (clan) of Bhagavan Surya; the incarnation of Lord Vishnu viz. Shri Rama and of the Epic of Ramayana; about Chandra Vamsa and of another incarnation of Vishnu viz. Shri Krishna; description of 'Sapta Dwipas' as also of 'Bhugola', the higher lokas and of the Lower Lokas of 'Pataala'; about the activities in 'Narakas'; Daksha Yagna and Parvati's wedding with Maha Deva. In the 'Uttara Bhaaga' of the Purana, 'Tirtha Yatras' were detailed with special reference to Purushotthama Kshetra; 'Ashrama Dharmas' were highlighted and Principles of 'Vaishnava Dharma', Yoga / Shankhya Siddhanta, and 'Brahmavaada Digdarshana' were explained. The Purana's 'Vakta' was Suta Maha Muni and the 'Shrota'was Shaunaka Muni. Its 'pramana' and 'lakshanas' are of 'Bhoga' (Worldly Pulls and Pressures) while the principal objective is 'Moksha'. Even reading or listening to the 'Anukramanika' or the Contents of the Purana would result in the control of 'Indriyas' or physical and internal organs, while its reading or hearing of it on a Vaishakha Purnima by honouring a Brahmana with Bhojan, and charities especially of a cow and gold ornament would assure attainment of Brahma loka.

Padma Purana has five 'khandas' symbolising 'Panchendriyas' wherein Maharshi Pulastya delineated to Bhishma the details in 'Srishti Khanda' of Creation of Brahma as well as by Brahma of Eight Vasus, Eleven Rudras, Twelve Adityas, Forty Nine Maruganas, Fourteen Manus, Sapta Rishis and Pitras and so on besides of Pushkara and other Tirthas, Brahma Yagna, Veda paath lakshanas, Pitraas and Shraaddha Vidhana. In 'Bhumi Khanda', Pitru Bhakti and the illustration of Shiva Sharma were cited; Vritrraasura vadha; Prudhu / Vena and Sunita's tales, the interesting examples of Nahuha, Yayati, Chyavana Muni and Parrot Kunjal, Significancre of Tirthas etc. too were covered. 'Swarga Khanda', was about Tirtha Yatras especially to the neighbouring places of Narmada, Kurukshetra, Kalindi, and Kashi, In 'Patalala Khand', the highlights were of Ramayana and Krishaayana, while Bhagavad Gita Mahatmya and of the rest of Avataaraas of Vishnu were vividly depicted in 'Uttara Khanda'. Veneration of a Brahmana on a Jyeshtha Purnima with Bhojan and daanaas bestows the fruits of reading, hearing and meditating of Padma Purana.

Vishnu Purana comprising twenty three thousand 'Shlokas' is considered as a demolisher of past and present sins. The naarator of the Purana was Shakti Nandan Muni Parashara and the 'Shrota' was Maharshi Maitraya. In the 'Poorva Bhaaga', six major 'Amshas' or aspects were covered of which the First Amsha concerned with 'Adi karana Sarga (Primary Creation), 'Devotpatthi', 'Samudra Madhana', narratives of Dhruva, Pruthu, Praachatesa, and Prahlada. The Second 'Amsha' described the account of

Priyavrata who demarcated the Earth into Sapta Dwipas; depiction of the under-sea worlds of Pataala etc. as also of Seven Swargas; the movements of 'Grahas' Planets), 'Bharata charitra', 'Mukti Marga Nidarshana' etc. The third Amsha referred to Manvantyaras, importance of Karma kanda, Shraddhas etc. Portrayal of Surya vamsha and Chandra Vamsha Kings was attempted in the fourth Amsha. In the Fifth Amsha, vivid accounts were given on Shri Krishna's childhood 'leelaas', youthful acts of 'Dushta Sikshana' and 'Sishta Rakshana', his weddings, overnight transfer of the residents of Mathura to Dwarakaa etc. A picture of Kali Yuga, four kinds of Pralayas and Gyanopadesha of Brahma Tatwa were the underscores of the Sixth Amsha. In the 'Uttara Bhaga' of Vishnu Purana, Suta Maha Muni gave narrations to Shounaka Muni concerning various chronicles on Dharma titled 'Vishnu Dharmottaraas'such as Punya Vratas, Yama-Niyamas, Dharma Shastra, Artha Shastra, Vedanta, Jyotisha, Vamsha Varna Prakarana, Stotras, Mantras and all other 'Sadhanas' (means). This Vishnu Purana tries to cover all significant 'Siddhantas' of Shastras which Veda Vyasa considered fit for attaining Moksha. Those who read or hear the Vishnu Purana with reverence and earnestness would both secure the 'Ihika' or Worldly and 'Amushmika' or Other Worldy desires most certainly. If a devotee would write down or get it transcribed by others and donate a cow to a Vishnu Bhakta Brahmana on a Purnima of Ashadha Month would be readily qualified for Vishnu Loka after the end of his/her life! Even a mere perusal of the Contents of Vishnu Purana would help with encouraging results.

With twenty four thousand Shlokas scripted into it by Vayu Deva himself, the Vayu Purana yields the fruits of propitiousness by its reading, or having it read. Comprising two parts of 'Poorva' and 'Uttara', the Purana gives an effective delineation of the means of obtaining Salvation. In the Poorva Bhagaa, the features of Sarga (Creation) are vividly expressed, besides the descriptions of the different 'Manvantaras' and Kingships especially of Gayasura and of his extermination. The significance of 'Masaas' has been discussed, declaring that the month of 'Maagha' as the best. 'Daana Dharmas' and 'Raja Dharmas' have been dilated at length. Also, narrations about Prithvi, Pataal, Dishas and Aakaash have been made in some detail in the Poorva Bhaaga. The Uttara Bhaaga of the Vayu Purana contains 'Shiva Samhita' and is fully depictive of the Sacred River of Narmada and surroundings. It is stated that this River was materialised from Bhagavan Shiva's Body and was the confluence of Brahma and Vishnu too. It is further stated that the northern bank of Narmada comprised the devotees of Rudra and the southern bank of the River by Vishnu Bhakas. From the famed Omkareshwara Kshetra towards the west leading to the Sea, there are as many as thirty five 'Sangamas' of which eleven are positioned on the nothern bank and twenty three on the southern bank; the thirtyfifth sangam is said to be at the Maha Sangam of Narmada and the Sea. In fact, there are as many as four hundred Tirthas on either side of the banks including those at the Sangamas, although there really were stated to have existed sixty crore and odd dotting along the River lines! Those who write the Vayu Purana in full and donate a cow alongwith jaggery on Sravana Purnima to a Vedic Brahmana and his family would reside in Rudra Loka during the ensuing fourteen Indratvas.

Brahma Deva informed Maricha Maha Muni about the excellence of **Shrimad Bhagavata Purana** which had eighteen thousand Shlokas and assured that it was like a 'Kalpa Vriksha' with twelve branches represented by each 'Skanda' or Chapter. Veda Vyasa was the author of the Purana and 'shrotas' or listeners were several. The Opening Skanda, as reported by Suta Maha Muni to a congregation headed by Shounaka Muni, dealt with King Parithkshit's request to Suka Muni, the illustrious son of Veda Vyasa, to preach as much knowledge of Dharma and awareness of the Supreme Power as possible within a week's time since the King was cursed by Samika Rishi's son that Parikshit would die within a week due to snake bite; the King did the indescretion of hanging a dead serpent around the neck of the Muni who was in Tapasya. The second Skanda explained the concept of the Gross and Minute manifestations of Paramatma, the analysis of 'Maha Tatwas'- the Causes of 'Srishti' (Creation). The third Skanda described the dialogues between Vidura of Maha Bharata fame and Maharshi Maitreya about the procedure of Creation by Brahma as well as of Kapila Maharshi's narrative of Sankhya Yoga. The fourth Skanda depicted the process of 'Visarga' (Secondary Creation) and referred to the Stories of Devi Sati and Daksha Yagna, of Dhruva, King Prutha all in the context of Manus and Prajapatis and happenings during these time-frames. The fifth Skanda covered the history of Prajapati Priyavrata and progeny, demarcation of

Sapta Dwipas, description of Planets and Narakas etc. The sixth Skanda covered the Story of the illustrious Brahmana called Ajamila, Daksha Prajapati's creation, the termination of Vritrasura and creation of Marudganas. Prahlada charitra and varnashrama dharma as also the'dos' and don't's by way of 'Karma' were discussed in the seventh Skanda. Gajendra Moksha, Samudra mathana, King Bali and his control through Vishnu's Avatara as Vamana and Matsyavatara were described in the Ashtama Skanda. The Ninth Skanda dealt with Surya vamsha and Chandra vamsha Kings. The Tenth and Eleventh Skandas depicted the totality of Krishna's Avatar covering the Bala Leelas, escapades of Youth, extermination of Adharma and revival of Dharma, Happenings at Dwaraka, his extraordinary role on Bharata Battle, Prabhasa Kshetra, Udbhava Geeta and the end of Yadu Vamsha. The final and the Twelfth Skanda described the accounts of subsequent Kings, the end of Parikshit, Markandeya Tapasya, the magnificence of Surya Deva and winding up by Suta Maha Muni by the aspects of Moksha prapti. Those desirous of higher achievements of Bhakti would do well by organising Maha Bhagavata 'Pathana'/ 'Pravachana' and 'Shravana' by a virtuous Brahmana on Bhadrapada Purnima and perform 'Puja'to the Vakta along with Suvarna Daana/ Vastra daana.

Narada Purana comprised twenty five thousand Shlokas based on Brihad Kalpa Katha. Narrated by Suta Maha Muni to Shounaka Muni, the Purana was basically conceived by Brahmarshi Narada himself but preached by Sanaka Brothers to Narada. The earlier part of the Purana dealt with 'Pravritti Dharma' and the second part was devoted to 'Moksha Dharma'. Sanandana described at length the Six Vedangaas as Moksha Sadhanas and about the illustration of Suka Deva in this context. The Third Part gave 'Upadeshas' to Narada by Sanat Kumara about 'Pashu paasha vimoksha' and Mantras concerning major Deities, Diksha, Puja procedures, Stotras etc. The fourth Part provided details of tithi-wise and Maasawise Vratas as also an Index of 'Ashtadasha Puranas'. The 'Uttara Bhaga' of the Purana gave details of Ekadasha Vratas, Vasishtha-Mandhata Samvada, King Rukmanga and Mohini, curse to Mohini, her revival and her exposure to Tirtha Yatras. Sincere study and 'shravana' of the Purana on Ashwin Purnima followed by Puja to a Brahmana with daanas of seven cows, clothing and so on would surely pave the way to Salvation.

Markandeya Purana has nine thousand Shlokas and the various 'Dharma Sandehas' or doubts related to the practice of Virtue-oriented Principles raised by the Sage Jaimini to Mahatma Markandeya were referred by the latter to Holy Birds, who were the sons of Sage Vipulaswan viz. Sukrish and Thumbaru in their past life; the Muni cursed the sons to turn as birds as they refused his instruction to be eaten by Indra who appeared as a bird and demanded human flesh at the Muni's Yagna. Sage Jaimini's doubts were cleared by the Holy Birds as to why Devi Draupadi consented to marry all the Pandava brothers, why Bala Rama had to atone for the sin of 'Brahmahatya' and why were the defenceless sons of Draupadi killed by Ashvatthaama, the learned son of Dronaacharya. Having been satisfied by the replies of the Birds, Sage Jaimini sought to be enlightened by several other topics related to the exemplary Harischandra who stood firm to follow Dharma and Satya; the rivalry of Sages Vasishtha and Vishwamitra resulting in mutual curses to become birds; the story of the better enlightened 'Jatismara' Sumati with the knowledge of previous birth than his father Mahamati and the son's 'pravachana'or teachings about the aftermath of life, its recyclings, classification of hells and their experiences; retributions and rewards of human deeds; the great examples of Kaushiki and Anasuya as Pativratas; the Story of Dattatreya and Kartaveeryarjuna; King Alarka and Queen Mother Madalasa, Yoga Siddhis, the Accounts of Fourteen Manus; Devi Mahatmya and Surya Deva Mahatmya/ Surya Vamsha headlights. Those who read, hear and annotate the Purana and pay reverences to a virtuous Brahmana on a Kartika Purnami day by gifting a golden 'Pratima' with an enbossed elephant would qualify Shiva Loka.

Agni Purana was addressed by Agni Deva himself to Sage Vasishta through fifteen thousand Shlokas describing Ishaana-Kalpa. It provided an account of 'Dashavataras'at length followed by Agni Karyas, Mantras, DikshaVidhanas and Abhishekas. Then the details of Mandala Lakshanas, Devalaya vidhi, Shalagrama puja, Deva Pratishtha, Bhugola and Khagola Varnana, Shatkarmas, Yantra, Mantra, Shat prakara Nyasa, Koti homa vidhi, shraaddha vidhi, Griha Yagnas, Shrouta Smaarta Karmas; Maasa-Tithi-

Vaara-Nakhatra Vratas; Sandhya / Gayatri Vandana; Rajyabhisheka vidhi; Swapna/ Shakuna phalas; various Shant Mantras and Procedures; Dhanur vidya, Ayurveda, Yoga and Vedangas like Vyakarana, Chhandas, Sahitya, Jyotisha etc. Agni Purana Vachana, Pathana, Manana and Lekhana-hearing, reading, cogitating, and writing- on Margasirsha Purnima and daana of 'pratimaas'/ idols of golden lotus and cow with tilas would yield the 'Punya'to secure fulfillment of desires in 'Iham' or the on-going life and 'Param' / Swarga Prapti thereafter.

Bhavishya Purana which contained fourteen thousand Shlokas was originally recited by Brahma to Narada to Veda Vyasa to his disciple Sage Sumantu. The Purana is divided into five Parts viz. 'Brahma Parva', 'Vaishnava Parva', 'Shaiva Parva', 'Soura Parva'and 'Prati Sarga Parva'. The highlights of the Purana are Sacred Rites, Varnashrama Dharmas, Vratas including Ganesh Chaturthi, Naga Panchami, Skanda Shashthi, Ratha Saptami, Suryoraadhana, Agni Homa vidhi, over-view of Yugas, Satya Narayana Vrata; the advent of Jesus Christ and Prophet Muhammad, Revival efforts of Hindu Dharma, Shankara and Ramanuja Acharyas, Mughal Empire, Victoria and British Rule and finally various Vratas in prevalence. Veneration to the Purana is best done by reading, writing and Pravachana on Pousha Purnima and paying respects to learned Brahmanas along with daanas of gold ornaments, clothing and bhojan.

Brahma Vaivarta Purana scripted by Veda Vyasa consisted of eighteen thousand Shlokas and divided into four 'Khandaas' viz. Brahma Khanda, Prakriti Khanda, Ganesha Khanda and Shri Krishna Khanda; it underlined the identity of Shiva and Vishnu. In fact Narada prayed to Bhagavan Saavarni and the fact of one-ness of Shiva and Vishnu was over-emphasised. Addressing the congregation of Munis, Suta Maha Muni commenced with 'Srishti Varnana', Origin of Vishnu from the body of Shri Krishna, background of Radha, Gopas and Gopikas, and Creation of animate and inanimate beings. In Prakriti Khanda, the Mahatmyas of Devis Durga, Radha, Lakshmi and Sarasvati were given; besides narrations of and Savitri Satyavan, Surabhi, Swaha and Sudha, Surata, Ganga Mahatmya, Ramayana and worship of Lakshmi. In Ganesha Khanda, the supremacy of Ganesha was extolled at length, besides covering the accounts of Jamadagni, Parashurama, and Kartaveeryarjuna. Shri Krishna Khanda was totally devoted to Krishna's childhood leelaas, his youth and romantic accounts, his adventures in destroying evil forces and saving the virtuous, his key role on the context of Maha Bharata etc. This Sacred Purana is highly worthy of reading, concising, writing and worshipping especially on Magha Puranami. Charity to a Vidwan by way of Pratyaksha Godaan would grant the donor with Brahmaloka praapti and cotentment as long as one lived on Earth.

Highlighting Bhagavan Shiva's extraordinary magnificence, Linga Purana was written by Veda Vyasa but as conceived by Maha Deva Himself with some eleven thousand 'shlokas'. At the commencement of the Purana, Creation of Universe was depicted followed by 'yogaakhyaan' and 'kalpaakyaan'. 'Linga pradurbhaav' (emergence of Linga) and procedure of worship was explained later on. Subsequently, the Story of Muni Dadhichi, exposition of 'Yuga Dharma', description of 'Bhuvana kosha' or the World, as also details of Surya Vamsha and Chandra Vamsha were scripted. This was followed by the depiction of 'Linga Pratishtha' or formal set-up of Linga with Mantras as also the discussion of 'Pashu-paasha vimokshana' or salvation of human bondage. The topics of Shiva Vrata, 'Sadaachara', 'prayaschitta' and 'Shrishaila' Temple visit were also covered. The destruction Andhakasura and Jalandhara were described as also the 'Avataras' of Vishnu as Varaha and Nrisimha. The devastation of 'Daksha Yajna', the blazing of Manmadha and the wedding of Shiva and Parvati were covered. The sacred 'Shiva Sahasrtanaamaas' were rendered, besides description of Ganesha Mahatmya and Shiva Tandava. In the Uttariya Bhaga, the Vishnu and Shiva Mahatmyas were given. Then followed the coverages of Snaana, Yaaga, daana, Shraaddha and Shiva Puja 'Mahimas'. Pratishthaapana mantras, Aghora kirtana, Vajresdwara Maha Vidya, Gayatri Mahima, Triambika Mahatmya and such other topics too got extensive coverage. Those Shiva Bhaktas who would read, reproduce, reflect and render the most auspicious Linga Purana on any day but most certainly on Phalguna Purnima day would certainly yield considerable returns. If these deeds are accompanied by charity of 'tila dhenu' (cow) either as a Pratima or better still in a live form would definetely accomplish 'Shiva Sayujya'.

Varaha Purana scripted by Veda Vyasa with twenty four thousand stanzas divided into two Parts and was dominted by high Vishnu-consciousness. Initiated with a conversation between Bhagavan Varaha and Devi Prithvi, the Purana covered the exemplary devotion displayed by Kings Priyavrata, Ashwasira, and Vasuas well as Sages like Raibhya and Gomukh. After 'Shraddha' Kalpa, accounts of concerned Deities governing specified days were described for instance Agni on Pratipada, Aswini Kumars on Dwitiya, Devi Gauri on Triteeya, Ganesha on Chaturthi, Naga Devatas on Panchami, Kartikeya on Shashthi, Surya Deva on Saptami, Ashta Matrikas on Ashtami, Durga on Navami, 'Dasa Dishas' on Dashami, Dwadasi on Vishnu and ten incarnations, Dharma Purusha on Trayodasi, Chaturdasi on Rudra Deva, Amavasya on Pitaras, and Moon on Purnima. Then various 'Vratas', 'Daanas', and Tirtha Yatras/Punya Khestras were discussed in the Purana. The portrayal of Bhu Devi's rescue from the clutches of demon Hiranyaksha by Varaha Murti, which indeed was the main Subject matter of the Purana, was described very effectively. The Purana was indeed the Kalpa Vriksha of Vratas and Tirtha Yatras aside from 'Daana Mahimas'. Its veneration on Chaitra Purnima with its reading, writing, and memorising contents, along with 'daana' of a golden 'Garuda' should help secure Vaikuntha to Bhaktas.

The largest and one of the most popular of Puranas which was dominated by Bhagavan Shiva viz. the **Skanda Purana** also called as Kartika Purana has eighty one thousand Shlokas, divided by Veda Vyasa into Seven 'Khandas'viz. Maheswara Khanda, Vishnu Khanda, Brahma Khanda, Kasi Khanda, Avantya Khanda, Nagara Khanda and Prabhasa Khanda. A bird's eye-view of the entire Purana includes Kedara Mahatmya, Daksha Yagna, Shiva Linga Puja, Samudra Mathana, Shiva-Parvati's wedding, birth of Skandha, carnage of Tarakasura, Panchalinga Sthapana, Appearance of Maha Kaal, significance of various Tirthas like Arunaachala, Venkataachala, Purushottama Kshetra, Badari Kshetra; of the months of Kartika, Margashira and Vaishakha; and of the Mahatmya of Ayodhya, Rameswara, and Dharmaranya, Kashi, Avanti, Prabhhasa and Dwaraka; Shiva Mantra-Shiva Ratri-Shiva Pradosha and Shiva Kavacha etc. Perhaps the best coverage of Tirthas all over Bharat was attempted in Skanda Purana. Those who reproduce the entire Skanda Purana as scripted by Veda Vyasa and gift it to a deserving Vedic Pandita along a golden 'Trishul'(Trident) on a Magha Purnima day should indeed be blessed with 'Shivaloka prapti'.

Containing ten thousand 'Shlokas' Vamana Purana was originally conceived by Maharshi Pulasthya and advised Narada about it and the latter passed it on to Veda Vyasa, while Vyasa imparted it to his disciple Romaharshana with the instruction of reciting it at the congregation of Munis at Naimisharanya headed by Maha Muni Shaunaka. This Purana has two Parts; the former Part opened with the coverage of slitting Brahma's fifth head, Kapala mochana and destruction of Daksha Yagna. The subsequent contents included 'Madana Dahana', Prahlada-Narayana battle, the big conflict of Devas and Danavas, the Story of Sukeshi and Surya, Kaamya Vrata, Durga Charitra, Tapati Charitra, Kurukshetra, the birth of Parvati, the wedding of Tapati, the Stories of Gauri, Kaushiki, Kumara, and Jabala; Siva's battle with and killing of Andhakasura and former's request to Shiva to provide him with full-fledged Ganatwa; birth of Marudganaas; the tales of King Bali, Lakshmi, Trivikrama etc. In the 'Uttara Bhaaga', there are four 'Samhitas' pertaining to Maaheswari, Bhagavati, Souri, and Jnaneswari. In the Maaheswari Samhita, there was a vivid description of Shri Krishna and his devotees. In the Bhagavati Samhita, Jagadamba's delineation was provided, while in the Souri Samhita, Bhagavan Surya's Mahatmya was explained from the view point of destruction of sins. In the Ganeswari Samhita, there were the significant explanations about the extraordinary powers of Ganesha and Bhagavan Shankara. Reproduction of the text of Vamana Purana during 'Sharat kaala' and perform 'ghrita dhenu'daana would redeem 'Pitras' from 'narakas' to Swarga and the devotee himself would reach 'Vishnupada' after his end of life.

**Kurma Purana** with seventeen thousand 'Shlokas' divided into four Samhitas was essentially a Vishnu dominated 'Grandha' of great significance. Brahma introduced this Purana to Maharshi Marichi about several Principles of Virtue targetting the attainment of the Four Purusharthas of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. In the 'Poorva Bhaaga' of the Purana there were covrages of Bhagavan Kurma and Maharshi's conversation, Varnaashrama Principles, Creation of Universe, outline of the method of 'Kaala

Sankhya, Shankara Charitra, Parvati Sahasra naama, Yoga, Bhrigu Vamsha, Creation of Swayamshu Manu and lineage, Dahsha Yagna and its destruction, Daksha Srishti, Muni Kashyapa and progeny, Atri Vamsha, Shri Krishna-Markandeya Samvad (conversation), Vyasa-Pandava Samvad, Yuga dharmas, Mahatmya of Kasi and Prayaga, and the effectiveness of 'Vaidika Shaakhaa' or the Following of Veda practioners. In the 'Uttara Bhaaga' of the Purana, there were the Ishwariya Gita and Vyasa-Gita, and Instructions on Dharmic Principles. This was followed by 'Brahma Samhita' covering 'Prati Sarga'or Universal Destuction and Renewal. In 'Bhagavati Samhita', there are five Parts, the first four Parts being devoted to the four Varnas of Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudras and their respective duties; the fifth Varna viz. of 'sankara' or mixed origin was also prescribed of duties by following so that the persons concerned might be shifted to higher levels in future births. The third Samhita called 'Souri Samhita' which teaches 'Shat-karma bodha' and the Fourth one entitled 'Vaishnavi Samhita' is a Guide to accomplishing 'Moksha'. This Purana is an excellent exposition of the established Principles of Dharma and a comprehensive Guide to the pure and devout Hindus seeking 'Uttama Gati' or the most appropriate Route to Salvation. This Sacred Purana is best read, heard and written on a day of Solar Movement from Southern direction to Northern (Uttaraayana day) or vice versa called Dakshinaayana and give away charity of a golden 'Kurma' to a Vedic Brahmana.

Matsya Purana again scripted by Veda Vyasa over fourteen thousand 'Shlokas' commenced with the discussion between Matsya Deva and Manu, and continued with description of Brahmanda (Universe), Creation of Brahma, Devas, Asuras; emergence of Marud Ganaas, Manvantaras, King Pruthu, Creation of Surya and Vaivaswata Muni, Pitru Vamsha, Shraadhha kaal, creation of Soma and his vamsha, King Yayati, Kaartaveeryaarjuna, Bhrigu's curse, Vishnu's ten incarnations, Praise of Puru Vamsha, Hutaashana Vamsha, Nakshatra Vrata, Purusha Vrata, Martandashayana Vrata, Kishnaashtami Vrata, Ananata Triteeya Vrata etc. besides Graha Shanti, Shiva Chaturdahi, Sarva Phala tyaaga, Sankrasti Snaan, Shashthi Vrata Mahatmya, Snaana Vidhi, Antariksha gamana, Dhruva Mahima, Shreshtha Pitara Mahima, Shiva-Parvati wedding, Kartika's birth, Tarakaasura's extermination, the Story of Nrisimha, Vaaranasi / Narmada Mahatmya, Vaastu Vidya, Deva Mandira Nirmaana, future Kings etc. This highly virtuous Purana is conducive to excellent health, extension of life, securing fame and name, and fulfillment of wishes. Pathana, Shravana, Lekhana, Manana and Kirtana of this Purana as well as daana of a golden Pratima of Matsya to an erudite Brahmana also with Go-daana at 'Vishuva Yoga' would result in 'Vishuu dhaama praati'.

Garuda Purana was Vishnu Deva's sermon to Mahatma Garuda, as conveyed by Brahma to Maharshi Marichi and it contained nineteen thousand 'Shlokas'. At the beginning of the Purana in the 'Purva Bhaaga', there was brief introduction of 'Srishti' and was followed by the Puja of Surya Deva and other Deities, Diksha Vidhi or procedure of assuming Diksha or disciplined way of life; Shraadda Puja, Nava Vyuha Puja, Vaishnava Panjara, Yogaadhyaaya, Vishnu Sahasra naama kirtana, Vishnu Dhyaana, Surya Puja, Mrityunjaya Puja, Maalaa Mantra, Gopala Puja, Trailokya mohana Shridhara Puja, Vishnu-Archa, Pancha Tatwaarcha, Deva Puja, Sandhyopaasana, Durgaarchana, Maheswara Puja, Sarva Deva Pratishtha, Ashtaanga Yoga, Daanadharma, Praayaschitta vidhi, Naraka varnana, Jyotisha, Saamudrika Shastra, Swara Jnaana, Nutana Ratna pariksha, Tirtha Mahaatmya, Gaya Mahatmya, Pitaropaakhyaana, Varna Dharma, Ashrama, Preta shuddhi, Niti Shastra, Vratha katha (story), Surya/Chandra Vamsha, Shrihari Avataara katha, Ramayana, Hari Vamsa, Bhaaraataakhyana, Ayurveda, Chikitsa, Dravyaguna, Roga naashakaVishnu Kavacha, Garuda Kavacha, Traipura Mantra, Prashna chudaamani, Vyakarana, Chhanda, Tarpana, Bali Vaishva Deva, Sandhya, Paarvana Karma, Nitya Shaaddha, Sapindana, Dharmasaara, Praayaschittha (atonement of sins), karma phala, Yogashastra, Vishnu Bhakti, Nrisimha Stotra, Vishnvarchana stotra, Vedanta / Saankhya siddhanta, Brahma Gyana, Atmaananda, and Geetaasaara. The Uttara Khanda starts off with Preta Kalpa varnana. Asked about Dharma, Bhagavan Vishnu explained about the route to 'Urthwa lokas' or the higher destinations and the performance well defined acts of Virtue including Shodasa Shraaddhas, 'daanaas'etc. Then were scripted the route to Yamaloka, the wreched experiences on way, 'Preta's' features, 'sapindikarana', 'pretatwa mukti', the erstwhile deeds of help rescuing the Preta from various torments, Yama loka varnana, determination of sins or good deeds,

effectiveness of follow-up deeds by progeny performing the rites after the death under reference, Madhya shodasda shraaddha, proactive deeds to enable 'swarga prapti' of the deceased, 'sutaka dina sankhya' or the number of 'Asuchi' depending on the relationship to the deceased, Narayana bali karma, Vrishotsarga Mahatmya, Nishidha karma tyaga, criteria for Swarga Prapti, etc. The Purana also gives accounts of the seven under worlds, five upper worlds as also of Brahmanda Charitra, Pralayas, ever-repetitive cycles of birth and deaths etc. Reading, writing, hearing, thinking and imagining of post-life experiences of the contents of Purana during 'Vishuva' Yoga time along with charity of a golden swan to a Brahmana would help reduce the severity of sins.

Brahmanda Purana with twelve thousand 'Shlokas' has four Parts titled 'Prakriya paada', 'Anushanga paada', 'Upodghata paada, and 'Upa samhaara paada'. The first two Paadaas are considered as 'Purvi Bhaga' and the latter two as 'Uttari Paada'. The Prakriya paada narrrates Instructions on Duties, description of 'Naimisha' or the popular Forest Place of the Congregation of Rishis, Creation of Hiranyagarbha, formation of Lokas, etc. The Second Part gives a picture of Kalpas and Manvantaras, Lokagyana, Creation of human beings, Creation by Rudra, Rishi Sarga, Agni Vijaya, Kaala sadbhaava, Priyavrata's vamsha, Prithvi's length and breadh, Bharata Varsha, Sapta Dwipas, the under-world of seven regions like Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Rasatala, Patala etc; Bhurbhuvah like upper Lokas, details of Grahas (Planets) and their features, Adityayyuha's description, Devagraha anukeertana, the incident of how Shiva became 'Neela Kantha', Amavasya varnana, Yuga tatwa, Yana pravartana, features of human beings as per Yugas, Rishi pravara varnan, Swayambhu Manu's details, the chronicle of the rest of Manus, etc. In the 'Upodghaata Paada', there are the detyails of Sapta Rishis, Prajapatis, Marudganaas, Kashyapa's progeny, Rishi Vamsha, Pitru Kalpa, Shraadha Kalpa, emergence of Vaiwaswata Muni, the lineage of Manus, Ikshvaku Vamsha, Atri Vamsha, Amaavasu Vamsha, the tale of Yayati, Yadu Vamsa, Kaartaveerya, Parashu Rama, Vrishni Vamsha, Sagara charitra, Krishnaavataara, Bali Vamsha, and depiction of future Kings on the Earth. In the Uttara Bhaaga of the Brahmaanda Purana, there are descriptions of Upasamhaara Paada including 'Pralaya' (The Great Dissolution), Time measurements, account of Fourteen 'Bhuvanas' / worlds, sins and the resultant hells, practice of virtue and attainment of 'Shiva dhaam'.

Who should read Puranas! Lord Brahma told Maharshi Marichi that basically Bhagavan Vishnu bestowed a Single Purana to him which was of the volume of crores of Shlokas; Brahma passed on to Vasishtha Maharshi who in turn gave away to Parasara Muni and the latter pronounced it aloud and Vayu Deva carried it to Veda Vyasa. Vyasa selected only four lakh stanzas and disrtibuted these among Eighteen Puranas. These were sketched for 'Loka Kalyan' and even these highly abridged versions are apparently tough to digest. It is believed that a person who could read, hear, reproduce, annotate and assimilate all the Eighteen Puranas in full as written by Veda Vyas should have no rebirth into this 'Samsara'once again. Besides, this kind of ideal person, should practise the Sacred Principles enunciated among them. In any case, the contents of any or all Puranas should not be preached to a 'daambhik' (vainglorious), 'Paapaachari' (sinful), unbearable of Devas, Gurus and the Virtuous and to 'shath' (stubborn) persons. Only those who are self-controlled, matured, good-featured and God-fearing should be specially invited and inspired to inculcate interest in the Puranas and their contents.

# Narada Purana Phala Shruti

Narada Purana is considered as a Guide to Shastras and is best read or heard in Shivaalayaas, Vishnu Mandirs, other Temples, Gatherings of Devotees, Punya Kshetras, Tirthas, Holy River banks, Fasting days, Vratas, Jaagarans, Yagnas and so on. In this Purana, descriptions were made about 'Punya Karyas' or Deeds of Propitiousness, fruits of Meditation, 'Upavasaas' etc. References were made to Mantras; Vedangas like Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Chhandas, and Jyotisha. Details of Monthwise Dwadashi Vratas, Tithi-wise Vratas in each 'Maasa' especially Ekadashi Vrata Mahima were given. 'Daana Mahatmya' was given as an essential under-current of the Purana. Just as Ganga is the best of Rivers, Pushkar is the best of Sarovaras, Kasi is the best of Sacred Places, Meru is the best of Mouantains, Narayana is the best of Trimurtis as sin-destroyers, Satya is the best of Yugas, Sama Veda is the best of

Sama Veda, cow is the best of animals, Brahmana is the best of Varnas, 'Anna and Jal'are the best forms of charities, Margasirsha is the best of Months, Lion is the best of animals, Humans are the best of species, Peepal is the best of trees, Prahlad is the best of Daityas, face is the best of physical limbs, Ucchhaishrava is the best of horses, Vasant is the best of Seasons, Sesha is the best of Serpents, Aryama is the best of Pitaras, Dhanush is the best of Astras, Pavaka is the best of Vasus, Vishnu is the best of Dwadasha Adityas, Indra is the best of Devas, Kapi is the best of Siddhas, Brihaspati is the best of Purohitas, Arjun is the best of Pandavas, Hanuman is the best of Bhaktas, Kusha is the best of grasses, Chitraratha is the best of Gandharvas, lotus is the best of flowers, Urvashi is the best of Apsaras and gold is the best of metals, Narada Purana is stated to be the best of Puranas, since this is the best means of attaining the four Purushaarthas viz. Dharma, Artha, Kaama and Mokshas. Whether it is a Bhakta of Ganesha, an Upasaka of Surya Deva, a Vishnu Bhakta, an Upasika of Shakti, or a Shiva Bhakta, Narada Purana has universal appeal and interest. Whether a Purusha or a Stree, sincere reading or hearing of the Purana would fulfil their very desires and remove those very hurdles that they wish to. This outstanding Purana ensures that illnesses never bother the bhaktas, fears never reach their boundaries, nor defeats in life never allow them to occur. On the other hand, this Purana facilitates virtue, fulfillent of desires, growth in career, achievement of name and fame, provision of good health, mental satisfaction, social status, all round victory and the boon of excellent health. Those who read the 'Yugala Sahasra naama Stotra of Radha-Krishna' with patience and devotion would be free from the worst possible sins; their mental strength would get enhanced and the conciousness of Paramatma versus Prakriti would elevate the devotee to higher levels of their interaction. The 'Phala Shruti' of Narada Purana shall certainly inculcate the awareness of that Supreme Shakti which creates the Universe with Rajo Guna, preserves it with Satwa Guna and terminates it with Tamo Guna; of that Super Soul to whose heights of yogis or Siddhas or Maharshis or Lokapalas or Devas could not reach their Celestial Visions; and of that Indesructible, Infinite and Incandescent Paramatma. Shivam Shaiva vadantyenam pradhanam Sankyha vedinah, Yoginah Purusham Vipraah karma Meemaamsakaa janaah/ Vibhum Vaiseshikaadyascha chichhintam Shakti chintakaah, Brahmaadviteeyam tatdwandey naanaa rupa kriyaaspadam/ (I salute that Unique Paramatma whom Shivopaasakas call as Shiva; 'Saakyha vettaas'address him as Pradhana; Yogis call as Purusha; Meemaamsakas meditate as 'Karma' or means of Attainment; 'Vaiseshika' followers consider as 'Adya Shakti'and various others meditate in different 'Rupas' and 'Kriyas'as Adviteeya Brahma.)

\SHRINIVAASAM HARIM DEVAM VARADAM PARAMESHWARAM TRAILOKYANATHAM GOVINDAM PRANAMAAMYAAKSHARA -MAVYAYAM/

## ESSENCE OF MARKANDEYA PURANA

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#### ESSENCE OF NADADA PURANA

Brahma Vishnu Maheswaraakhyaayam Yassamshaya Loka saadhaakaah Tamaadidevaam Chidrupam vishuddham Paramam bhajey/ (I meditate that

Pure and Innermost Form of Supreme Consciousness called the Super Soul whose 'Swarupas' or Appearances constitute Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara).

While Vedas are known as the oldest Scriptures that emerged from the mouth of Lord Brahma, Puranas are stated to have preceded Vedas. Narada Purana has the significance of being one of the Eighteen Major Puranas, which was narrated by Devarshi Narada himself to Maharshi Sanaka of the four Illustrious Manasika Putras (Mind- born Sons) of Brahma viz. Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanaatana and Sanat Kumaras. This was retold by Maha Muni Suta at a huge congregation of twenty six thousand Munis headed by Saunaka at 'Naimisharanya'. Narada Purana has two Parts-the 'Purva' and 'Uttara- the first Part with Four Chapters describing the Origin of the Universe, Application of Mantras, Worship through Rituals and Vratas while the latter Part dealing with Incarnations and significance of Pigrimages and Daanas (Offerings). The Sages prefaced their query as to how the normal aspirations of human beings viz. 'Dharma' (Virtue), 'Artha' (Prosperity), Kama (Fulfillment), 'Moksha' (Salvation) could be realized and how Narada Purana approached this objective.

# **Brief on Primary Creation by Maha Vishnu**

As the Kumara brothers were on way to Brahma, Sanaka and Narada met at the top of Meru Mountain and had a dip in Ganges that emerged from the Sacred Feet of Vishnu. Extolling the magnitude and enormity of Lord Vishnu, Narada asked Sanaka as to how could one realize Lord Vishnu, what was the cause of Creation, what were the features of devotion, knowledge and penance and how did Bhagavan create Brahma and other manifestations! Sanaka explained that Vishnu materialized from the right part of his body the Lord Brahma (sprouted by the stem of Lotus from Bhagavan's navel), Rudra from his middle part and created Vishnu, a replica of his own from the left side. He also created images/illusions of Lakshmi, Uma, Chandika and Sarasvati which were his Shaktis (Powers). He is of 'Vyakta' (Visionable) and 'Avyakta' (Invisible) nature but is all-pervasive and has Sat-Chit-Ananda as his basic features; he is Prakriti, Purusha and Kaala; he is Paramatma creating Five Karmendriyas (Sight, Sound, Scent, Touch and Taste), the corresponding Gyanendriyas (Eyes, Ears, Nose, Skin and Tongue), Three 'Gunas ( Characteristics) of Satvika-Rajas-Tamasika form; Maha Tatwa leading to the 'Ahamkaras' (Natural dispositions) creating 'Tanmatras'; and Pancha Bhutas (Earth, Water, Light, Air and Sky). Then Brahma commenced Srishti (Creation) of Tamasika nature to start with of Pasu-Pakshi and Mriga (Cattle, Birds and Animals) and Rakshasas but quickly took up the Creation of Satvika Sarga of Devatas, of human beings by Rajasika Sarga, followed by Daksha and progeny and thus the World got full by now. Then came into existence of the Seven Lokas viz. Bhurloka, Bhuvarloka, Swarloaka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapaloka and Satyaloka, besides the Under-Sea Lokas viz. Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talatala, Mahatala, Rasatala and Patala. Brahma created Loka Palakas (Administrators) of each of the Lokas as also the Mountains, Rivers, and all the essential provisions to enable life. At the Center of Earth, Brahma created Meru Mountain as also the peripheral areas beyond which were materialized the Seven Seas viz. Kshiroda, Ikshurasoda, Surida, Grita, Dadhi and Swadu; and Seven Dwipas (Islands), viz. Jambu, Plaksha, Shalmali, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaakha and Pushkara. It is at the north of Kshira Sagara and south of Himalayas that Bharata Varsha is situated, known as the 'Karma Bhumi' where by and large the population worship Narayana, Krishna and Vasudeva or Shiva, Neelakantha and Shankara. Those who

did not worship out of ignorance or arrogance would visit various hells since they hardly had the tendency to be virtuous, devoted and even-minded; yet Bhagavan who had been most impartial, extremely forgiving and always merciful, would await every small good turn of any human being or even a negligible Being in the 'Charaachara' (Moving or Immoveable) Srishti and bestow multiplying effects in providing boons. This was the reason why one should worship Vaasu Deva always: Vaasu Deva paro Dharmo Vaasu Deva param Tapah, Vaasu Deva param Jnaanam Vaasu Deva paraa gatih/ Vaasu Devaatmikam sarva jagat sthaavarajangamam/ AaBrahmastambha paryantam tasmaadanyatra vidyatey/ Sa yeva Dhaataa Tripurantaakascha sa yeva Devaasura Yagna rupah, sa eva Brahmaandamidam tatonyatra kinchidastit Vyatirikta rupam, Yasyaatparam naparamasti kinchidysmadaneeyatra tatha Mahiyan, Vyaptam hi tenedaminda vichitram tam Deva Devam Pranametsameedyam (It is Vaasudeva who is the final goal of all Dharmas; the end result of all Tapasyas; awareness of Vaasudeva Tatwa is the best Gyan and route to attain Vaasudeva; from Brahma down to 'Krimikeetas' (insects and flies) is the manifestation of Vaasudeva without doubt; He is Brahma and Shiva; He is all Devatas, Asuras, Yagna Rupa and Brahmaanda and none else; there is neither bigger nor smaller than him; Bhagayan Vishnu has pervaded this entire Universe; is there any other Super Force who is worthy of worship!)

## 'Shraddha-Bhakti', the corner stones of Supreme Realization

Maharshi Sanaka assured Devarshi Narada that 'Shraddha' (Faith) and 'Bhakti' (Devotion) were the corner-stones of realizing Narayana; Shraddha purvah Sarva Dharmaa Manoratha phala pradaah, Shraddhayaa Saadhyatey Sarvam Shraddhaya tushyatey Hari/ (Any Dharmik task performed with faith would yield fruits; Bhagavan Srihari is satisfied only with Shraddha alone). Any amount of 'Daan' (charity), 'Tapasya' (Meditation), Yagnas along with Dakshinas would be rendered waste without Shraddha-Bhakti; daan of as much of gold as Meru Mountain or Tapasya drying of one's own body, or executing 'Vedokta Ashwamedha Yagnas' would never attract Bhagavan's attention without faith and devotion. Sanaka Maha Muni underlined three major facets viz. 'Satsang' or Company of Bhagavat Bhaktas, Vishnu Bhakti and a strong feeling of equanimity while experiencing joy or sorrow. Given these basic strengths, observation of the Purusharthas of Dharma-Artha-Kama-Moksha within the precincts 'Varnashrama' regulations constitute the firm steps to Realization of the Supreme. When asked about the features of a 'Model Bhakta', Maharshi Sanaka cited the great example of Markandeya to Narada Maha Muni who had such unfailing faith and devotion to Bhagavan Narayana. In the days of yore, Maharshi Bhrigu' son Mrikunda did very rigorous 'Tapasya', as Lord Indra was apprehensive and approached Narayana that Mrikandu's Tapasya might not pose threat to his own Chair at Swarga, Bhagavan assured Indra that Mrikunda's meditation was certainly not for the Swarga throne; he gave his Appearance before Mrikunda and asked him to ask for a favour. The Sage said that indeed Vishnu's 'Sakshaatkar' (Direct Appearance) was paramount by itself; yet since Bhagavan offered to bless the Sage, he would secure a glorious son with high accomplishments and long life. Thereafter the Sage was married and got a son called Marakandeva who was brought up in a typical Vedic kind after reaching his fifth year's 'Upanayana'/ 'Gayatri Upadesha' (Instruction of Gayatri Mantra), the Sage taught the boy to practice Brahmacharya, reverence to the Elders and the Learned, Tapasya, Yagna, Adhyayana or constant reading and absorption of knowledge and supreme Vishnu Bhajana-Dhyana-Puja. Bhagavan Vishnu blessed Markandeya to script 'Purana Samhita'; he further blessed Markandeya to become 'Chiranjeevi'; One thousand Chatur Yugas make one day to Brahma and the latter's life span is one hundred years of day/night, which is one day of Vishnu. Markandeya survived the 'Ati Maha Pralaya' with Vishnu's 'Mahima' and when extolled Vishnu in his 'Yoga Nidra', the latter blessed Markandeya to witness such 'Srishti' once afresh! Bhagavan Vishnu himself described the characteristics of a Model **Bhagavat Bhakta** to Markandeya: Such a person wishes the happiness of all Beings and complains against none; has no envy but controls one's mind and body; has no desire and anxiety; does not hurt any body through mind, conversation and action; has no desire to possess nor a habit to take; has spontaneity in hearing, learning and absorbing anything related to 'leelas' or miracles of Bhagavan or of Bhaktas who demonstrate their marvels due to their Powers obtained by the grace of Bhagavan; strongly believes and

serves one's mother as Ganga and father as Bhagavan Vishvanath; fully involves in 'Puja' by himself or assists in performing the worship, or even witnesses or at least approves of a Puja actively; distances from those who ridicule those performing Vratas, service to 'Yatis' (God men or women) and tasks related to devotion and duty; considers the advice of others for one's own good and act with discretion by absorbing what is approved of one's conscience; treats everybody alike without prejudice or ego; is an active protagonist of the virtues of Dharma Shastras and truthfulness; publicises Puranas and their contents; serves cows and Brahmanas and encourages promotion of their causes; undertakes and organizes 'TirthaYatras'; is genuinely happy at the progress of other's activities and supports them; involves in the tasks of construction of public gardens, temples, water bodies, wells, resting places of tourists without expecting returns; immerses in 'Hari nama smarana' by way of Bhajans, Stutis, group activities of religious nature and plays active role in such movements; has immense interest in Tulasi-related tasks like worship, wearing on person and enjoying the fragrance; observes 'Varnashrama dharma'; performs 'Atithi Seva' or service to Guests; engrosses in taking the name of Shiva, wears 'Rudraksha malas' and 'Vibhuti'(ash) all over the body; observes Vishnu and Shiva with equal devotion and conviction that both are one and the same; observes daily Agnihotra Homa and recites Ashtakshari or Panchakshari Japa always viz. Om Namo Narayanaya or Om Namah Shivaya; and performs whatever 'danaas' (charities) are possible without publicity or for name, especially 'Anna daana', Jala daana, Go daana, Vastu daana, Kanya daana, etc. Basically, a Bhakta ought to control 'Panchendriyas' (the Eyes, Ears, Nose, Tongue and Skin) as also 'Karmendriyas' (Pada, Hasta, Vacha, Paya and Upastha or feet, hands, speech, excretion and genitals) and most importantly the 'manas' or the mind. In brief he should observe the maxim of 'do good and be good' and that is a Bhakti all about! Lord Vishnu assured Markandeya that practice of Dharma on the above lines would further his life till the next 'Maha Pralaya' leading to 'Parama Moksha'.

# Sacred Ganga from Vishnu's feet to Earth by Bhagiratha's tenacity

Sage Narada enquired from Maharshi Sanandana as to how by the mere touch of Ganga, which originated from the feet of Lord Vishnu, purified the entire clan of King Sagara causing them all to reach Vaikuntha! Sanaka Maharshi then recounted the story of King Bahu of Surya Vamsha who ruled 'Sapta Dwipas' with great ability when the entire Public was highly contented and happy with 'Dharma' (Virtue) and 'Nyaya' (Justice) in full swing. In course of time, King Bahu developed a superiority feeling and ego that he was a powerful, wealthy, intellectual, youthful King without parallel; it is said that: Youvanam dhanasampatthih Prabhutvamavivekitaa, iaka kampanya -naarthaaya kim yatra chathushtayam! (Either of Youth, Wealth, Superiority and Ego would be enough to bring about disaster to a person; if all the four are in place, what else to talk about him?) When King Bahu became too overbearing and developed hostilities with his neighboring Kings viz. the Haihayas and Talajanghas, the latter defeated the King Bahu and he became a fugitive along with his queens and progeny and fled into forests without food, shelter and sleep. He then regretted saying: Naastyakirti samo Mrityur Naasti krodhasamo Ripuh, Naasti nindaasamam paapam naasti moha samaasavah/ Naastyasuuyaa samaakirtih naasti kaama samonalah, Naasti raga samah paasho naasti sangasamam visham/ (There is no disgrace worse than death; no enemy worse than anger; no humiliation worse than sin; no obsession worse than terror; no jealousy worse than disrepute; no passion worse than fire; no desire worse than shackles; and no Company worse than poison!). Out of shame and disease, the King Bahu died in the Ashram of Sage Aurva and the youngest Queen who was expecting a child desired to immolate but the Sage prevented her from doing so and assured her that a very renowned son would beget her. As the day of birth was nearing, the elder Queen being envious of the younger Queen poisoned her but due to the 'Satsang' (Good Company) and service given to the Sage, a bright son was born whom the Sage named as 'Sa'+ 'Gara' (with poison) that is Sagara. The Sage trained Sagara as he grew of age in archery, military skills and Raajaniti (Kingship talents). Soon, Sagara was able to defeat enemy Kings and became a renowned Monarch, especially after Maharshi Vasishtha guided him in all the matters of importance. Emperor Sagara married Keshini and Sumati and Sage Aurva blessed the Queens to beget progeny with two choices viz. one to secure one single boy whose son would be a great King and another who could beget sixty thousand sons; Keshini opted for a single issue while Sumati preferred the latter. Keshini gave birth to Asamanjasa who turned out to be whimsical although his

son Amshuman grew up as an up-holder of virtue and wise with all the qualities of a Monarch. But the sons of Sumati grew up as a bunch of notorious, quarrelsome and unmanageable crowd often causing tremendous embarrassment to the Emperor. Even Indra complained to Sage Kapila to control the gang of sons as they were too uncontrollable day by day. Sage Kapila suggested performing Ashvamedha Yagna as a diversion to the vagabond sons of the Emperor. The Yagna horse was hidden by Indra and the sixty thousand sons of Sagara who searched for the horse and finally found it where Sage Kapila was in concentrated Tapasya. The sons suspected that Sage Kapila stole the horse, abused as also man-handled him and by his mere vision of fury the Sage reduced them to ashes. Sagara was concerned and sent Amshuman to search and came to learn of the entire episode; he prayed to the Sage Kapila who informed that his grandson Bhagirath-the son of Dilip- was destined to bring Ganga from heavens to the place where his great-grand-uncles ie, the sixty thousand sons of the Emperor were lying scattered as ashes and liberate their souls to Salvation. As Bhagirath came of age, he executed very severe Tapasya to Lord Brahma, who appreciated the grit and resolve of the Youth and blessed him to fulfil his wish. Emboldened by his success in securing Brahma's boon, Bhagirath displayed his tenacity and doggedness to perform rigorous Tapasya to Bhagavan Shankara and with his grace the Holy River Ganga landed on Shiva's head; a stream of the River was released from Bhagavan's Jatajut (curled hair) down to the Earth which was guided by Bhagirath to the Place where the ashes of his great-grand fathers were lying dispersed and their souls were redeemed and directed to Swarga. This kind of persistence which purified the souls of his fourth generation kith was indeed so exemplary that came to be popularly known as Bhagirath's tenacity in the annals of Bharata Varsha.

Narada was desirous of knowing from Sanaka Kumara as to how the Holy Ganga descended from Vishnu's Sacred Feet. This was traced back to the Story of Vishnu's Incarnation as Vamana and Bali Chakravarti / the Great Sovereign of Three Lokas. The Illustrious Muni Kashyapa had two wives viz. Diti and Aditi, the former having begotten Hiranyakashipu who was killed by Lord Narasimha-another incarnation of Vishnu- to save the Danava's son Prahlada, the exemplary Vishnu Bhakta. Prahlada's son was Virochana and the latter's son was Bali who conquered the Three Lokas. Aditi the other wife of Kashyap was the mother of Devas who were all dislodged from Swarga by Bali; pained by this disaster Aditi performed Tapasya to Lord Vishnu that Indra and Devas be re-installed in Swarga. Devi Aditi secured a boon that Narayana would be born to her as Vamana (midget) Brahmachari and free Swarga from the control of Bali. At the Yagna being performed by Bali under the supervision of Daitya Guru Shukracharya, Vamana Deva arrived and asked for three feet of land to perform Tapasya. Bali agreed despite Shukracharya's protests saying that if Vishnu had arrived as Vamana Murti himself and asked for charity of three feet, he was fully prepared to 'oblige' the Lord! Bali further told the Guru: Jihvaagrey vasatey yasya Harirtyhakshara dwayam, sa Vishnu loka maapnoti punaraavritthi durlabham (He whose tip of the tongue recites the two letters-Hari- has no birth again and achieves Vishnu loka!). As Bali picked up the 'Kalasha' (Vessel) full of water to formalize the charity, Shukacharya made the last attempt by sitting inside the vessel trying to stop the flow of water through the nozzle so that formalization of the 'daan' could be obstructed. But the omniscient Lord Vishnu pushed a darbha (grass piece) into the nozzle making permanent damage to one of the Guru's eyes. As the act of Charity was done successfully, the Vamana expanded his body to occupy his head touching Brahmaloka, measured the entire Bhumi with one of his feet and the other foot was lifted to the top-tip of 'Brahmanda' piercing it into two pieces by the impact of his toe. While millions of streams of water sprang out, Ganga water beyond the top of Brahmanda was sanctified by washing Vishnu's foot and flowed downward thus purifying all the Three Lokas; Brahma, Devatas and 'Saptarshis' too purified the unending flows which fell on Meru Mountain. The third foot suppressed Bali down to the lower lokas and made him the Monarch of Rasatala. The provision of food to King Bali and his followers included whatever was thrown into 'Agni' without Mantras; whichever daana was given as 'Apaatra daana'/ Nishphala daana or ill-deserved charity.

Shukla Paksha Dwadashi Vratas from Margasirsha to Kartik Months

Sage Narada desired to ascertain the procedure of performing monthly Dwadashi Vratas from Sanaka Kumara with a view to enlightening the normal Public; Bhagavan Vishnu is pleased easily with devotees performing Vratas by way of 'Puja' (worship), 'Dhyana' (meditation), 'Bhajan' (collective singing) and 'Stutis' with 'Shraddha' (sincerity) and 'Bhakti' (Devotion). Indeed it is not essential to execute 'Yagnas' and 'Tapas' involving considerable rituals and complications, but simple Pujas by merely taking the name of Bhagavan. Such Vratas have far reaching impact for fulfilling desires in 'Iham' or the on-going life and attainment of Mukti in 'Param' or post-life. On Shukla Dwadashi in Margashirsha month, a devotee needs to observe fasting and silence and perform dutiful worship with Gandha (Sandalwood paste), Pushpa (flowers), Akshata (rice grains mixed with turmeric powder), Dhupa (Incense), Deepa (Light), Naivedya (offering of food items and fruits) and such other Upachaaras (Services), while reciting the simple Mantra at each service viz. Keshavaya namastubhyam. By reciting the same Mantra, one should offer hundred eight oblations to Agni Deva with ghee mixed with til (sesame seed) oil, keep awake through night ensuring the lights are lit and perform three 'Abhishekas' (bathing by milk the Salagram / Pratima representing Bhagavan Vishnu along with Maha Lakshmi) followed by three 'pujas' with a gap of three hours along with the Upacharas of Dhupa, Deepa, Naivedya etc.as also devotional music and dances in praise of Bhagavan. Next morning, after ablutions and bathing, maintaining external and internal cleanliness), one should Puja again and offer 'Kheer' (boiled milk and cooked rice with jaggery) along with coconut / fruits and 'dakshina' (cash) to the Brahmana engaged for the Vrata or otherwise), while reciting the following Mantra: Keshavam Keshiha Devah Sarva Sampat pradaayakah, Paramaanna pradaanena mama swadishtadayakah/ (Keshava! You had destroyed the Keshi named Daitya; You are the provider of boons to me to receive all kinds of wealth; I am hereby giving away charity of Quality Anna to a Brahmana). After the 'daana', satisfy the Brahmana with good food and eat along with family and friends with devotion and silence. Conclusion of the Vrata on the above would fetch the 'Punya' of eight Paundarika Yagnas.

On Shukla Paksha Dwadashi of **Pousha** Month, a devotee should observe fasting and silence as also perform Puja to Narayana as above by continuously reciting the Mantra *Om Namo Narayanaaya* and provide Naivedya of 'Kheer' along with fruits. Jaagaran (keeping awake through out the night), performing three Pujas as also intermittent musicals and 'nrityas' of devotional kind in exalting Bhagavan's deeds and miracles are observed. Next morning after the Punah Puja (repeat worship), give away 'daana' of 'Khichidi' (cooked rice / wheat grains and vegetables) along with dakshina by reciting the Mantra: *Saravatmaa Sarva Lokeshah Sarva Vyaapi Sanaatanah, Narayanah Prasannah Syat Kushaanna pradaanatah*/ (May Narayana - who is the Soul present in every body, the Over Lord of the Universe, the All Pervasive and the Timeless-be contented as I am offering the daan of 'Khichidi' along with dakshina). Then full meals are organized to Brahmanas and eat the food later along with family and friends; observance of this Vrata would secure the fruits of executing eight Agnishtoma Yagnas.

Observing a Madhava Vrata as above with fast and devotion, the Shukla Dwadashi Vrata of 'Magha Maasa' is also performed, while the devotee offers eight oblations to Agni Deva with ghee by reciting the Mantra Namastey Maadhavaaya, performs 'Abhisheka' (Bathing) to Bhagavan Madhava and Puja as above with Gandha, Pushpa, Akshata etc. followed by 'Jaagaran', three Pujas during the night and 'Punah Puja' next morning. With a view to destroying sins, 'daana' of til, clothing and dakshina should be given away by reciting the following Mantra: Maadhavah Sarva Bhutaatmaa Sarvakarma phala pradah, Tila daaneyna mahata Sarvaan kaamaan prayachhatu/ (Bhagavan Lakshmipati! You are the bestower of all of our desires and the Omni-Present Supreme Soul; kindly be contented with this Maha Daan of Tilas and fulfill our wishes too). The Vrata is concluded by organizing satisfactory food and Dakshina to Brahmanas. By performing the Vrata as above, the devotee is qualified for the 'Punya' of executing hundred Vajapeya Yagnas.

**Phalguna** Shukla Paksha Dwadashi Vrata of Govinda is observed with the key Mantra of *Govindaaya Namastubhyam* along with one hundred and eight oblations of Til and Ghee into the Fire Place; 'Snaan' to Govinda; formal worship with the services, day-night fasting, jaagaran and three Pujas in the night as

described above. Next morning, after Punah Puja along with the prescribed 'Upacharas' (Services), daana is given away to a Brahmana comprising four big measures of food grains while reciting the Mantra as follows: Namo Govinda Sarvesha Gopikaajana vallabha, Anena Dhaanya daanena Preeto bhava Jagadguro/ (Govinda! Sarveshwara! Gopi Vallabha! Kindly be pleased with this daana of 'Dhaanya'). By performing this Vrata with Bhakti and Shraddha (devotion and conviction), the devotee would get rid of all the sins committed in the current birth, besides reaping the fruits of a Maha Yagna. Namostu Vaishnavey Tubhyam is the Mantra to be recited at all the Pujas to be done at the Vrata of Chaitra Shukla Dwadashi. 'Abhisheka' is performed with milk and / ghee before worship as suggested at that of Margasirsha month's puja above. Observing fast, Jaagaran, musical intermissions after the three pujas in the night, the schedule for the next morning would include one hundred 'Ahutis' (oblations) in the 'homas' using honey, ghee and thila-mixed rice as also Daana to Brahmana of big measures (four seers) of rice while reciting the Mantra: Praana ruupih Maha Vishnuh Praanadah Sarva Vallabhaha, Tandulaadhaka daanena preeyataam me Janaardana/ (Bhagavan Maha Vishnu is the epitome and bestower of Life to all the Beings in Creation; May Janaardana be pleased with this daana of major measure of rice). A devotee who performs the Chaitra Shukla Dwadashi Vrata would not only be free from sins but would also obtain the fruits of executing 'Atyagnishtoma Yagnas' eight times!

A devotee desirous of observing **Vaishakha** Shuddha Dwadashi Vrata has to fast with dedication and give 'Shuddhodaka Snaana' (Pure water bathing) to Madhusudana with milk and perform worship as prescribed above in the context of Margasirsha month's Vrata; oblations of ghee to Agni Deva be offered hundred and eight times along with the Key Mantra *Om Namastey Madhu hantrey* followed by Puja with the usual services like Gandha, Pushpa, Dhupa, Deepa, and Naivedya. During the night that would follow, the devotee would perform three Pujas with attention and devotion and on the next morning after repeat Puja, he should give away daan and dakshina in the name of Maha Vishnu with the Mantra Om Namo Vaasudevaaya. Whoever does the Vrata would qualify for abolition of sins and be eligible of securing the fruits of eight Ashwamedha Yagnas.

The key Mantra to be recited at the Vrata of **Jyeshtha** Shukla Dwadashi is *Namas Trivikrama* as the name that Vishnu is worshipped on that day is Trivikrama. The hundred and eight oblations to Agni would be in the form of 'Kheer', following which there would be 'Abhisheka'(Sacred bath) to the Trivikrama Rupa Vishnu by a very large measure of milk (four seers) continuously reciting the Mula Mantra of the day as mentioned. The Homa and Abhisheka is followed by the formal worship by the prescribed Sevas (Services) viz. Gandha, Pushpa, Dhupa, Deepa and Naivedya. Observing a day-night fast and silence, the devotee would be engaged in three Pujas and 'Bhaganan naama smrarana' viz. the Key Mantra, besides Sangeeta-Nrittha-Vaayidya or music-dance and instrumentals all dedicated to Lord Trivikrama. On the next morning after repeat Puja, 'daana pradaana' or giving away charity of twenty measures of food grains along with Dakshina by reciting the daana mantra as follows: *Deva Deva Jagannatha Praseeda Parameswara, Upaayanam cha samgruha mamaabhishtha prado bhava/* (Deva Deva! Jagannaatha! Parameswara! Kindly be pleased with me by accepting the daana and fulfilling my desires). This Trivikrama Vrata shall indeed help eradicate the sins of the 'Vrata Karta' and bestow the Punya of Eight Yagnas.

Dedicated to Vamana Swarupa Vishnu, the **Aashaadha** Shukla Dwadashi Vrata has to be given a heavy bath of milk with the Mantra viz. *Namastey Vaamanaaya*, besides oblations of hundred and eight inputs of ghee and durvara tree figs to Agni Deva, followed by Vamana Deva Puja with the services of Gandha-Pushpa-Dhupa-Deepa and Naivedya. Observing fast and Jaagaran the devotee would perform three pujas through the night along with intermittent hymns, bhajans and Vishnu-related activities and on the following morning after Punah-Puja, charity to Brahmana be given by way of cooked rice, curd and coconut simultaneously reciting the Mantra: *Vaamano Buddhido hota dravyasto Vaamanah sadaa*, *Vaamanas taarakosmaachya Vaamanaaya namonamah*/ (Bhagavan Vaaamana is a Provider of intellect; he is the 'hota' or the Chief Priest of Yagnas; he is also known for his wealth; he is the unique device to cross the deep ocean of 'Samsara'; my sincere salutations to Vamana Deva again and again). Thereafter,

Brahmanas are treated with good food and dakshina. Vamana Vrata would confer the advantage of Agnishtoma.

On the Shukla Dwadashi of Shraavana month, execution of the Shridhara Vrata grants the benefit of one thousand Ashwametha Yagnas. Bathing with honey and milk of Bhagayan Shridhara is an integral component of the worship on this day along with the recitation of the Shridhara Mantra viz. Namostu Shridharaaya, besides the Puja with Gandha, Pushpa, Dhupa, Deepa and Naivedya as well as hundred eight 'Ahutis' to Agni with curd /ghee. After jaagaran and three hourly pujas, the next morning Puja would be followed by daana to Brahmana of large quantity of milk, 'vastra dwaya'and dakshina while reciting the Mantra: Ksheerabdhi shayana Devesha Ramaakaanta Jagatpatey, Ksheera daanena supreeto bhava Sarva sukhah pradah/ (Deveshwara who rests on the Ocean of Milk! Lakshmi kaanta! Kindly be contented with this 'daana' of milk and fulfill all our comforts). After the Daana, full meals should be served to Brahmanas and satisfied with dakshinas.) As always on Shukla Dwadashi Vratas, fasting is a must on **Bhadrapada** month also which is dedicated to Hrishikesha when the Idol is bathed by milk by reciting the Mantra viz. Hrishikesha Namostutey. After the formal Puja to the Deity with the requisite 'Upachaaras', hundred eight 'Ahutis' are offered to Agni with honey. Having done Jaagaran and three pujas through the night, the Vrata performer has to purify with bath for doing Punah Puja and then give away 'daan' of large measures (six seers) of wheat grains if possible with gold as dakshina while reciting the Mantra: Hrishikesha namastubhyam Sarva lokaika hetavey, Mahyaam sarva sukham dehi godhumasya pradaanatah/ (Bhagavan Hrishikesha! You are the chief cause of Creation and my sincere Salutations to You; do accept this daana of wheat and confer to me all kinds of happiness). By completing the Vrata after 'bhojan' to Brahmanas, the devotee would have no sins left, besides acquiring the fruits of performing a Maha Yagna.

Padmanabha Vrata is observed on **Aswayuja** Sukla Dwadashi with piety, fasting and cleanliness. Observance of the Vrata is stated to assure the benefit of thousand Maha Yagnas. Worship of Padmanabha starts with bathing the 'Vigraha' with milk with the Mantra Namastey Padmanaabhaaya; the Mantra should be continued while doing the Puja with Gandha, flowers, etc. Hundred and eight oblations to Agni as a mix of til, cooked rice and ghee are also done with it. After Jaagaran, three Pujas and singing, there would be a repeat Puja on the next morning, followed by daana to a Brahmana with lot of honey and dakshina; the Mantra along the daana is: Padmanaabha namastubhyam Sarva loka Pitamaha, Madhu daanena supreeto bhava Sarva sukhapradah/ (Our Salutations to You Pamnanaabha, the great grand father of the Universe! Please be gratified with this daana of honey and bestow comforts to us). Damodara Vrata on Kartika Shukla Dwadashi is stated to be of extremely high in significance as the 'Punya' to be acquired would equal to two thousand Ashwamedha Yagnas! The key Mantra to be recited is Om Namo Damodaraya at the time of 'Abhisheka' of the Deity which is prescribed as large quantity of milk (four seers), curd / ghee; or at the time of hundred and eight 'Ahutis' to Agni with honey, ghee and til seeds; or at the time of Jaagaran in the night and the three hourly Pujas as also the hymns in commendation of Lord Vishnu who incarnated himself as Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, and so on; or at the Punah Pujas with lotus flowers on the day after. When the devotee performs daana to Brahmanas with five kinds of 'Bhakshya Padarthas' (Snacks and food recipes) along with dakshina, the following Mantra is to be recited: Damodara Jagannatha Sarva kaarana kaarana, trahimam kripayaa Deva Sharanaagata Paalaka/ (Daamodara! Jagannatha! You are the Cause of Causes and the Supreme Protector of refugees; my sincere request to You Bhagavan to provide me fortification). If the Vratas on all the Shukla Dwadashis in a year are performed, Udyapana (winding up) needs to be performed in Margasirsha month by Pujas, Homams, Illuminations, Ringing bells, floral arrangements, flying Dwaja Flags, Purana Shravanas, musical and dance extravaganza, Anna Daanas, and so on. The Concluding obeisance and prostration to the Lord would say: Lakshmipatey namastubhyam Ksheeraarnava nivaasiney, Arghyam grihaana Devesha Lakshmyaaka Sahitam Prabho/Yasya smrityaa cha naamoktya tapoyagna kriyaadishu, nuunam Sampurnatam yaati Sadyo vande tamachytam/ (Lakshmi Pati who is lying on the Ocean of Milk! My salutations to you and Lakshmi; please accept our 'Arghya'. The Yagnas and Tapas

pale into insignificance when Your mighty names are memorized and uttered with commitment; there is no end to our worship to you, excepting that we bend our heads in awe and total dedication.

# 'Sandhyopasana'-Procedure, Meaning and Interpretation

While taking bath for purification before 'Sandhyopasana' a devotee may recite the following Mantra: Gangecha Yamunechaiva Godavari Saraswathi, Narmadey Sindhu Kaveri Jalosmin sannidhim kuru/ Pushkaraadyaani Tirthaani Gangaadyaah Saritastatha, Aagacchhantu Mahaabhaagaah Snaana kaaley sadaa mama/ Ayodhya Mathuraa Maayaa Kaashi Kaanchihyavantika, Puri Dwaravati Jneyaah Saptaitaa Moksha –daayikaah/ (May the waters flowing in the Rivers of Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri be present in the waters that I am bathing in. May Pushkara and other Tirthas as well as the Sacred Rivers like Ganga be present here. May also the Seven Sacred Kshetras of Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya (Haridwar), Kashi, Kanchi, Avanti (Ujjain) and Dwaravati as renowned be also present.) After bath, 'Arghya' (Water) / Dhyana (meditation) are offered to Surya Deva; the devotee would then wear clean, two white robes, settle down on a 'kushasana' (mat) facing 'Ishana' (North-East) direction, commence 'Achamana' with Harih Om and Pavitra Mantra viz. Apavitrah pavitrova sarvaavasthaangatopivaa, yasmaret Pundareekaaksham sa Baahyaantarah suchih (Let me remember the name of 'Pundarikaaksha'always-whether physically clean or otherwise-with cleanliness from within or without); while doing 'Achamana' or sipping spoonfuls of water thrice with Gayatri Mantra, utter the Mantras viz. Om Rutamcha Satyam cha abheedaat tapasodhyajaayata, tato Ratrasya Jaayata tatassamudro Arnavah (Even before meditation, the Self-illuminated Para Brahma created the authentic Truth and from that Truth generated darkness which created the waters of the Oceans); Samudraarnayaat Adhi Samamvatsaro Ajaayata, Ahoraatraani vidadhat Vishvashya mishato vashee/ (Days/ nights as also Years and the concept of Time got materialized only after the waters of Oceans were generated and Paramatma held the Universe in His full control); Suryaa Chandra masow Dhaata Yathaa purvamakalpayat, Divamcha Prithiveem chaaantariksha mathosvah/ (As in the past, Dhata (Paramatma) created Surya Chandras, Celestial Region including Heaven, besides the Sky and Earth). Then the devotee performing Sandhya Vandana sips water by way of 'Achamana' once again. Thereafter, the devotee is to spray water in all the directions as also on the self. Then, he readies himself to do 'Praanaayaam' and recites Pranava while proposing the seven 'Vyahritis' (relevant expressions of Gayatri) viz. Om Bhuh, Om Bhuvah, Om Suvah, Om Mahah, Om Janah, Om Tapah, Om Satyam, Om tatsavatir varenyam bhargo devasya dheermahi dhiyo yonah prachodayaat, Om Apo Jyoti rasomritam Bharma Bhurbhuvatswarom/ simultaneously sprinkle drops of water on one's own head. Pranayama (Control of Prana) is performed by touching the nose by the thumb and second finger and air must be taken in slowly through the left nostril and sent out by the right nostril; inhalation is known as 'Puraka', retaining is 'Kumbhaka' and exhalation is Rechaka, the three tasks done by 1:3:2 ratio, completing one Pranayama. The 'Viniyogas' or attributions of Gayatri / Shiro Mantras are as follows: Gayatri Mantra -Omkaarasya Brahma Rishih, Devi Gayatri Chhandah, Paramaatmaa Devataa, Sapta Vyahriteenaam Prajaapatirrishih Gayatri ushnik anushtup Brihati Pankti trishtup jagatyah chhandaamsya AgnirVaayu Surya Brihaspati Varunendra Vishvadeva Devatah/ ( PraanaayamaViniyogah) Shiro Mantra - Tatsavituriti Vishwamitra Rishih Gayatri chaandah Savitaa Devataa Apojyotiriti Sirasah

Pajapatirishi yajuschhando BrahmagniVaayu Suryaa Devataah/ (Praanaayaamey Viniyoga. After the Pranayaama Viniyoga, the devotee has to perform Kara Nyasa and Anga Nyasa as follows: Kara Nyasa: Om Angushthaabhyaam Namah (Touch both the thumbs); Om Bhuh Tarjanibhyam namah (Touch both thumbs with both fore-fingers); Om Bhuvah Madhyamaabhyaam Namah (Touch both thumbs with ring wearing finger); Om Swaha Anaamikaabhyaam Namah (Touch the thumbs with ring wearing finger); Om

Bhur bhuvah kanishtikaabhyaam namah (Touch the thumbs with little fingers) and Om Bhur bhuvah swah karatala hastaabhyaam namah (Touch both the back sides of the palms) Anganyasa:: Om Hridayaa Namah (Touch the heart with right hand); Om Bhu Sirasey swaha (Touch the head); Om Bhuvah Shikhaya vashat (Touch the tuft); Om Swah kavachaaya hum (Touch shoulders with both the hands); Om Bhurbhuvaha netraa -bhyaam voushat (Touch the eyes with respective hand-fingers); Om Bhurbhuvah swaha Astraya phat (take the right hand behind the back and clap to rest it on left palm). After Pranayama as above, then Gayatri Avahana Sankalpa states: Mamopaattha Samasta duritakshaya dwara Shri Parameswara preetyartham Praatah Sandhyaamupaasishy/ or Maadhyaahnikam Karishey/ or Saayam Sandhyaamupaasishey (May I begin to worship Goddess Sandhya in the morning/afternoon/evening by destroying all of my sins by the grace of Parameswara). In the morning Gayatri is in the form of 'Tryaikshari', Veda Maataa and Brahma Vaadini: Aaagachha varade Devi Tryaiksharey Brahma Vaadini, Gayatricchandasaam Maata Brahmayoney Namostutey; In the afternoon she arrives as Savitri by a vrishabha (bull) with white robes as Rudra Vaadini: Madhyaahney Vrishabha aruudhaam Savitreem Rudra yonim chaavaahayerudravaadineem; in the evening Gayatri appears mounted on Garuda as Sarasvati with crimson robes as VishnuVaadini: Saayamtu Garudhaarudhaam Peetaambharasamaavitaam, Sarasvatim Vishnuyoni maahvayed Vishnu Vaadineem/ After the Sankalpa follows *Maarjanam* by the Mantra: *Aapohishta mayo bhuvah*, *tana oorje dadhaatana/* maheranaaya chakshase, yo vah Shiva tamo rasah/ tasya bhajayateha nah/Usiteeravah Matarah, Tasma arangamama vah, yasya kshayaya jinvath/ Apo janaa yahta cha nah/ Om bhurbhuva suvah/ (Aapohishtha: The Goddesses of Water indeed; Mayo bhuvah: are the causes of granting happiness; tah nah: Such Goddesses; Mahe Ramaaya chakshasey: are Great and charming to view; oorje dadhaatana :provide nourishment; sivatamo rasah: most propitious bliss; Usitih Matara iva: like loving mothers; Bhajayateha yasya kshayaaya: make us worthy of that bliss; Jinvatha tasmaa vah aram gamaamah :we go in for that bliss with great eagerness; Apo janaayata: may we be born in rebirth with pure knowledge. Pratah Sandhya (Morning) Mantra Sandhya states: Suryascha ma manyuscha manyupatayascha manukriteebhyah/ Paapebhyo rakshantaam/ Yadraatriya paapamakaarsham/ manasaa vaachaa hastaabhyaam/ Padhmyamudarena sisna/ Raatristadavalumpatu/ yat kimcha duritam mayi idamaham mamaamritayanau/ Surve Jyotishi Juhomi swaha (Protect me from sins committed due to rage and temper as also by the Sun and the Deity of Fury apart from the wrongdoings by my mind, conversation, limbs, stomach and sex; once such sins are excused, may the Great Radiance of Sun God make me worthy of Salvation). By so saying, sip water from the hollow of right palm. *Madhyaahna Sandhya* (Noon time) Mantra: Apah punantu Prithivim Prithivi puta punatumaam, Punatu Brahmanaspatih Brahma puta punatu maam, Yaduchhistam abhojam yadva duscharitam mama, Sarvam punatu maamaposatam chapratigrahagg swaha (Let the Deity of Water clean up the Earth, me and my Guru who is a depository of Vedas and let Vedas sanctify me. May the wrong food that I consumed, the questionable deeds that I did or the dubious presents that I received from doubtful characters be all mollified, as I propose myself to get purified by the flames of the Swaha or Paramatma.) After this Mantra, the devotee should sip water signifying it as a vow. Sayamkala Sandhya (Evening) Mantra states: Agnischa ma manyuscha manyupatayascha manyu kritebhyah Paapebhyo rakshantaam yadanha paapamakaarsham, Manasa vaachaa hastaabhyam Padbyaam udarena sishnaa Ahastadalumpatu, yat kincha duritam mayi idamaham maamamritayonau satye jyothishi juhomi swaha/ (Let all the Deities of Fire, fury and ferocity safeguard me from their attack on me due to the unpardonable sins perpetrated by me by the day by my mind, stomach, sex organ; may I be purified me of despicable deeds and qualify me to proceed on the path of Moksha. Achamana-Punarmarjana and Marjana be followed with the Mantra viz. Dadhikravinno akaarisham jishnorasvasya vajinah, surabhi no mukha karat prana Aagumshi tarishat/ (May the Lord who is the Sustainer, Administrator and Evaluator in the form of Hayagriva the Victorious and the Seat of knowledge be worshipped to facilitate our Life without any obstacle). This Mantra may be followed by the afore-mentioned Mantra Aapo hi shtha while sprinkling water on the head of the devotee and touching the feet and thereafter recite *Apo janayata cha nah* while water is thrown round the head. Arghya pradaanam: Recite the Gayatri Mantra pour water thrice to the East in the morning, face north and pour water twice in standing position and face west in sitting posture as follows: Om

Bhurbhuvassavah, Tat Saviturvarenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi, dhiyo yo nah prachodayaat/ Praanaayama should be done there after.

Deva Tarpana:Adityam Tapayami, Somam Tarpayami, Angaarakam Tarpayami, Budham Tarpayami, Brihaspatim Tarpayami, Sukram Tarpayami,Shanaischaram Tarpayami, Rahum Tarpayami, Ketu Tarpayami/ Keshavam Tarpayami, Narayanam Tarpayami, Govindam Tarpayami, Vishnum Tarpayami, Madhusudanam Tarpayami, Trivikramam Tarpayami, Vaamanam Tarpayami, Shridharam Tarpayami, Hrishikesham Tarpayami, Damodaram Tarpayami.

Gayatri Avahaana: Omityekaaksaram Brahma, Agnirdevata Bhrahma ityaarsham Gayatreem Chhandam Paramaatmam Swarupam, Sayujyam viniyogam/ (The unique word AUM is of Parabrahma form, Agni is Main Devata, Brahma is related to Rishi, Gayatri is related to Chhanda, Paramaatma is all-pervasive and the terminal point of Moksha); Aayaatu varada Devi Akhsharam Brahmasammitam. Gayarimchhandasaam Maatedam Brahma jushaswa me (May I humbly request Gayati to guide me about Brahma); Yadannaatkurutey paapam tadhanaat pratimuchyatey, Yadraatrikurutey paapam tadraatriyat pratimuchyateyi( let the sins committed during the day be destroyed in the day itself; let the sins done during the night be destroyed on the same night) Sarva varney Mahadevi Sandhya vidyey Sarasvati, Ojosi Sahosi Balamasi Bhraajosi Devaanaam Dhaamanaamasi Vishvamasi Vishvaayuhu sarvamasi Sarvaaurabhibhuurom Gayatriimaayaayahayaami Sayitreemaayaahayami Saraswateemaayaahayayami, Shriya maayaahayaami, Balamaayaayaha yaami (Sarva Varna! Sandhya Vidya! Sarasvati! Maha Gayatri! You are the embodiment of Radiance, the Grip Holder and of the Strength; the Shakti of Devatas, the Life of the World, the Veritable Universe and the Totality! May I invoke You Omkara Swarupa Savitri! May I invoke Chhandasas, Rishis and Lakshmi!); Gayatryah Gayaree Chhandah Vishwamitra Rishih, Savitaa Devataa, Agnirmukham, Brahma Shiro, Vishnur hridayam, Radrah Sikhaah, Prithivi Yonih, Praanaa paana vyaanodaana samaanaa sa praanaa swetavarnaa saamkhyaayana sa gotra Gayatree Chaturvimsatyaksharaa Tripadaa Shatkukshih, Panchaseershopanayaney viniyogah (I invoke Gayatri, whose Chhanda is Gayatri, Rishi is Vishwamitra, Agni is Face, Brahma is head, Vishnu is heart, Rudra is the tuft, Prithi is the generator as also Gayatri with Five Praanaas viz. Praana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samaana; white coloured; with the Gotra of Rishi Samkhyayana; with twenty four Alphabet Letters; Three feet; six bellied; five heads and the main deity of 'Upanayana'). Gavatri Karanyaasah: Om tatsavituh

Angushthabhyaam namah, Om varenyam tarjanee —bhyam namah, Om bhargo Devasya Madhyamaabhyam namah, Om Dheemahi Anamikabhyam namah, Om Dhiyoyonah kanishthikabhyaanamah, and Om Prachodayaat Karatalaprishthaabhyaam namah. *Gaytri Anganyasah:* Om tatsavituh hridayaayanamah; Om Varenyam Sirasey Swaaha; Om Bhargo Devasya Shikhaayavoushat; Om dheemahi kavachaayahum; Om dhiyoyonah netratrayaaya voushat; Om prachodayaat Astraaya phat; Om Bhurbhuvassurom iti dikbhandhayah.

Dhyaanam: Muktaa vidruma hema neela dhavala cchaayair mukhyai stryakshanair yuktaamindu nibaddha ratna makutaam tatvaartha varnaatmikaam, Gayatreem varadaa -bhayamkusa kasaa shrubhram kapaalam gadaam shankham chakra madaara vinda —ugalaam hastairvaham teem bhajey/ (I pray to Gayatri who has five faces with the colours of Pearl, coral, golden, blue and white; three Aksharas or Letters, Moon-ornamented headgear, tatwas and varnaas, seated on kusha grass mat denoting purity and also possessing Kapaalam or skull, Gada or mace, Shankham or conchshell, chakram or wheel and two lotuses). In the morning Gayatri is of Rigveda Swarupa as a baby Girl with Brahma Shakti possessing four faces, seated on a soft hamsa (swan) and with shining jewellery; in the afternoon she is called Savitri as a grown-up youth with Rudra Shakti, three eyes, tiger skin, having Mudras of khatvanga (cut-limbed), trishula, Aksha valaya and Abhaya/ Protective Mudras; as mounted on a bull. In the evening, Gayatri assumes the form of Saraswati with Vishnu Shakti wearing purple silk dress exuding black colour as an elderly woman seated on a 'Garud'. Visioning Devi Gayatri according to the timings, the devotee would then commence the recitation of Gayatri Mantra saying Mamopaattha samasta duritakshayadwara Sri Parameswara preetyartham: Pratah Sandhya Gayatri Maha Mantra japam karishye/ Madhyahnika Gayatri Maha Mantra Japam karishey/ Saayam Sandhya Maha Mantra japam karishey viz. OM

BHUHRBHUVASSAHA TAT SAVITUR VARENYAM BHARGO DEVASYA DHEEMAHI DHIYO YONA PRACHODAYAAT/ Each time, Gayatri Japa is best performed one thousand and eight times which is reckoned as Uttama; one hundred and eight times as Madhyama or fifty four /twenty eight times as heena / minimum.

Gayatri

Upasthaanam: First perform Pranaayama and recite: Uttamey Shikhare Devi Bhumyaam parvata murdhani, Brahmanebhoy hyanujnaanam gahha devi yathhaa sukham/ (Devi Gayatri, You have the clearance to stay on top of the Meru Mountain by Brahmanas); Stuto maya varadaa Vedamataa prachodayanti pavaney dwijaataa, Ayuh Prithivyam dravinam Brahma varchasam mahyam datvaa prayaatum Brahmalokam (As extolled by us Devi Gayatri! You are the bestower of our desires and the epitome of Purity, Veda Rupa and of two forms; kindly bless me on Earth to provide me long life, prosperity, Brahma Teja!)

Surya

Upasthanam (Pratahkaala): Mitrasya charshani dhritah shravo devasya sanaasim/ Satyam chitrasravastamam Mitro janaan yaayaati prajaanan Mitrodaadhara Prithvee -mutadyaam/ Mitra krishtee ranimishaabhichashte Satyaaya hayyam ghritavadvidhema// pra sa Mitra marto Astu Payaswaan vasta Aditya sikshati vratena/ Na hanyatey na jeeyatey twoto nainama gumho Asnotyantito na dooraat ( Surya is omni-scient and supports earth, heaven and all Beings vigilantly. May I offer my oblations of ghee to secure lasting blessings to that Supreme God as he is the Universal friend to sustain Dharma, to insulate us against diseases, worldly difficulties and sins from far and near, as also to give us longevity and happiness.) (Madhyahne): Aasatyena rajasa vartamano nivesayannamritam martyam cha/Hiranyayena Savita rathenaa devo yaati bhuvna vipasyan (Surya travels all over the Universe by his golden chariot with a special eye at the World and witnesess by the light of the souls of Gods and mortals of each one of their activities); Mitrasya Varunasya Agneh Chakshuh Devaanaam chitram Aneekam Jagatastasthushascha Atma Suryah Daivaa Prithiveem Antarihsham Aa Purasthat sukram ucharat Devahitam chakshuh tat Saradassatam pasyama jeevama saradassatam Nandaamaa saradassatam modaamaa saradassatam Bhaavanaa Saradassatam Shrunayaama saradassatam Prabrayaamaa saradassatam Ajeetah Saradassatam jyok cha Suryam drsey (Let Surya who is the embodiment of Mitra, Varuna and Agnideva be empowered to dominate the soul of all moving and non moving Beings on Earth, Heaven and Atmosphere; May we vision and pray to him for hundred years and enjoy life for that time; May we be blessed with fame, hear pleasant things for hundred years, converse good words for hundred years, be victorious for hundred years and be with Sun God for hundred years.) (Sayam kaale): Imam me Varuna shrudhee havamadyaa cha mridaya, Tatvaamavasyuraachakey Tatva yaami Brahmanaa Vanda maanastadaasaastey Yajamaano havirbhih Ahedamaano Varuneha Bodhyurusagumsa maa na Ayuh pramosheeh// Yacchhiddhi te visho yataaa pradeva Varuna vratam/ mineemasi dyavidyavi/ Yat kinchedam Varuna daive janebhidroham manushaascharaamasi/ Acchitte yattava dharma yuyopima maa nastamaadenaso Deva Risheeah/ Kitavaaso yadriripurna deevi yadvaaghaa satyamuta yanna vidma/ Sarvaa taa vishya stitireva devataa te syaama Varun priyasaah / (Varuna Deva! Kindly consider my request and provide me protection as I seek shelter with Veda Mantras; do not ignore my appeal to reduce my life span. I might have omitted my daily prayer knowingly or otherwise but do save me of the sin of negligence. Hereafter, I should be careful).

After the 'Upasthana' of Surya / Varuna there ought to be Samishtyabhivandanam or collective salutation to Deities: Sandhyayai namah Saavitrainamah Gayatrai namah Saraswatyai namah Sarvaabhyo devaatabhyo namo namah/ Kaamo kaarsheen manyurakaarsheen namo namah/ (My prostration to the Deities Sandhya, Savitri, Sarasvati and all others; do forgive my sins done under the influence of passion and fury).

Devata Vandanam: Praachai namah, Dakshinayai namah, Praachai namah, Urthvayai namah, Atharayai namah Antarikshayai namah, Bhumyai namah, Brahmaney namah, Vishnavey namah Mrityavenamah/ (Salutationns to the Deities of East, South, West and North as also to those in upper, lower and the Skies, to Earth, Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra). Aakaasaat Patitam toyam Yatha gachati Saagaram, Sarvadeva namaskarah Kesavam prati gacchati Om nanah iti// (Just as waters from Sky descend to Oceans, all salutations reach Keshava); Kayenavaachaa manaserviyairva buddhyaatmanaava prakriteh swabhaavaat

karomi yadat sakalamparasmai Naarayanayeti Samarpayami/ (I dedicate whatever has been done by body, speech, mind and senses to Narayana).

# Yoga, the proven way to 'Moksha Prapti'

Brahmarshi Narada gave a direct question to Sanaka Kumara as to which 'Karma' (Holy Action) would assure the attainment of Moksha and Sanaka replied that Yoga was indeed the unique way and 'Jnaan' backed by 'Bhakti' was the best form of Yoga- a mix of Karma Yoga and Jnaana Yoga, or a blend of 'Karma' (Action) with Bhakti (devotion), Ahimsa Satyamakrodho Brahamacharyaa Parigrahou, Aneershyaa cha Daya chaiya yogayorubhayo samaah/ (Non-Violence, Truth, absence of hatred, Brahmacharya, Aparigraha or non acceptance, destruction of jealousy, mercifulness and benevolencethese are the features in required proportions). The person who treats the way that he himself desires to be treated is qualified for Yoga. Contrarily, the person who is overcome by envy and fault-finding might be immersed with Dhyana and Tapasya, but these noble qualities are considerd futile. That is why restraint, self-control and equanimity in terms of speech, thought and action are the cornerstones of 'effective' Vishnu Puja . Given these basic pre-conditions, Pujas, Stutis, Fastings, Vratas, Purana Shravanas, Tirtha Yatras, Daanaas, Yagnas and the like assume redoubled proportions of efficiency and are truly termed as implements of Karma Yoga. The lack of distinction between Jeevaatma and Paramatma, signifying the Maha Vakyas of Vedas viz. Tatvamasi or Sohamasi constitute the basis of Vedas and forms of the Ashtanga Yoga viz. Yama, Niyama, Aasana, Pranahaara, Pratyaahaari, Dharana, Dhyana and Samaadhi. The relevant definition is: Yamaascha, Niyamaavaschaiva, Asanaani cha sattama, Praanaayaamah, Pratyaaharo Dharana Dhyanamevacha, Samaadhi Munusreshthah yogaangaani Yatha kramam/ While 'Yama' denotes Ahimsa, Satya, Steya (non-stealing), Brahmaharya, Aparigraha, Akrodha, Anasuya and Daya are the constituents of Yama; Niyama 'comprises of Tapas, Swadhyaya (self-learning), Santosha (contentment), Shaucha (Cleanliness), Aradhana or worship and Sandhyapasana. 'Tapa' includes meditation, Chandrayana and other Vratas which signify fastings, Pujas, Stutis etc. 'Swadhyayana' encompasses Japas of three kinds viz. Vaachika/ Uchhaarana or Vocal, Upaamshu or slow and distinct rendering and 'Maanasa' or recitation within while considering the meaning and context of the Mantra), 'Santosha' basically refers to mental satisfaction that the life style is smooth and contented, organised, wholesome and virtuous. 'Shuchi' means 'Bayha Shuddhi' or physical as also 'Antassuddhi' without interaction with the 'Arishat vargas' viz. Six enemies from within viz. Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, and Matsara; 'Aradhana' including 'Stuti' by 'Manas', 'Vani' or vocal; 'Kriva' or Tirtha Yatras, bathings, Daanas, good deeds such as digging of water bodies/ wells, construction of Public Utilities etc. and most significantly 'Sandhyopasana'. Aasana is the next significant 'Yoga Sadhana'; it is stated that there are thirty prominent Aasanas 'Sitting postures' viz. Padmasana, Swastikasana, Peethasana, Simhasana, Kukkutasana, Kunjarasana, Kurmasana, Vajrasana, Varaahasana, Mrigasana, Chailikasana, Krounchasana, Naalikasana, Sarvatobhadrasana, Vrishabhasana, Nagasana, Matsyasana, Vyaghrasana, Artha Chandrasana, Dandavatasana, Shailasana, Khadgasana, Mudgarasana, Makarasana, Tripathasana, Kaashtaasana, Sthanurasana, Vaikarnikasana, Bhowmasana and Veerasana. The next Yoga Sadhana is Pranaayama which could be Agarbha or Sagarbha; the Agarbha type is without Japa and Dhyana and the better kind one is while performing Japa and Dhyana. Pranayama comprises 'Rechaka' or exhaling air through left nose, 'Puraka' is inhaling through the right nose and 'Kumbha' is holding air as also 'Shunyaka' (stand-still). The right 'nadi' of the human beings is called 'Pingala' whose Deity is Surya / Pitru yoni. The left Nadi is 'Ida' / Deva yoni nadi whose Deity is Moon. In between the Pingala and Ida nadis is a minute and hidden nadi called 'Sushumna' whose 'Adhi Devata' or Deity is Lord Brahma. Pratyahaara is the next Yoga Sadhana, by which 'Indriyas' or Limbs are controlled by being dis-associated with worldly matters. This is the preparatory step of mind-control when one could close the eyes or even keep them open but possess high degree of concentration on a blank screen or any chosen object irrespective of surrounding visions, sounds, nasal / touch reactions and mind-borne reactions except the focussed one, say an illumination through which to probe the Almighty! Having conquered the external limbs and internal feelings, a stage is set to hold or practise <u>Dhaarana</u> of the required vision of Paramatma even for split seconds by regulating the vision and once that is

practised, the length and depth of the visualization could be prolonged as Yogis could. The vision when continued the Yogi enters a stage of <u>Samadhi</u> when the Yoga Purusha could neither hear, nor see nor react to any situation, except the one that is focussed! Such a situation is not death but death-like since that trance could be retrieved, as claimed by those Maharshis who experienced! They were able to realize Para Brahma Paramatma in their hearts that was ever lasting, pure, dazzling and complete through their inner vision. In the World, there are three kinds of feelings viz. 'Karma-'Brahma'and 'Ubhayatmaka Bhavanas'. Till Karma Bhavana is not demolished or controlled, one would not visualise Brahma Bhavana. Only when differences of worldly nature and Para Brahma are completely merged, that state is called as Brahma Gyan or of the real Nirakara Vishnu. Also, there are three kinds: 'Para', 'Apara' and Karma Shaktis. Bhagavan is the Para Shakti; 'Kshetrajna' is the Apara Shakti and 'Avidya' (ignorance) is the Karma Shakti. Indeed, Kshetrajna Shakti is dormant in all Beings; it is minimal in 'Jada' rupas like trees and mountains, some what weak among animals and birds, but human beings are fairly aware of the Shakti; while it is conspicuous among higher levels like Gandharvas, Yakshas and of course Devas. Like the Sky the Kshetrajna Shakti is all pervading in different 'Rupas'; it is the awakening of that Shakti which Yoga is all about.

## King Bharata turned as Jada Bharata who counselled King Souvira about Advaita

King Bharata, after whose name was popularized Bharata Varsha, was an exemplary practitioner of Dharma deeply engaged in noble deeds as Yagnas, charities and Tirtha Yatras; after retirement he moved to the Ashram of Pulastya Muni practising Dhyana and devotion. One morning while taking bath in a River, he found a pregnant deer delivered on the banks of the River on hearing the frightening sounds of a tiger and died. Bharata took the baby deer to the Ashram and in course of time became terribly attached to it. As Bharata was dying his infatuation for the animal was so much that in the next birth, he was born as a deer as a 'Jaatismara' or with the knowledge of previous birth. Even as a deer, it continued the habit of performing Puja by flowers etc. and eventually died and was born into a Brahmana family; when he came of age, he never followed the habits of a disciplined life as other Brahmana boys but whiled away his time attracting unhappiness of his parents and associates, however claiming that he was a deer and King Bharata in his previous births. As everybody felt that he was good for nothing, he acquired the epithet of Jada Bharata. One day, King Souvira of the Kingdom desired to reach the Ashram of Kapila Maha Muni and Jada Bharata was also instructed to carry the palanquin of the King along with other carriers. Since Jada Bharata was not able to carry the palanquin properly, the King shouted on him and said that he was fat, slow, tired and out of step with other carriers. The Brahmana (Jada Bharata) replied that indeed he was neither fat nor tired but that under his feet was Prithvi (Earth), over which were two feet, legs, thighs, stomach, chest, hands and shoulders which were all carrying the King's body; that the bodies of the King as also that of his own were both made of the same 'Pancha Bhutas' (Five Elements of Earth, Water, Air, Light and Sky) and were governed by the mix of three 'Gunas' (features) of Satvika, Rajasika and Tamasika nature and these Gunas result in the 'Karmas' (Actions) performed by the Live Beings as per the level of their own Vidya or Avidya (learning capacity or other wise), as also the Maya or illusions of the Self and others (the 'Me'and 'You'), little realising that the 'Atma' (inner consciousness) was pure and blemishless, everlasting, peaceful, and featureless that was distinctive and different from Prakriti (Nature); it was that Prakriti which made the differences like one person was fat or lean, smart or dull, etc. On the same analogy, one being might not be able to carry a palanquin properly but another manifestation of the Super Soul viz. Earth might be able to withstand the load of mountains, trees, and seas. The Source-Material was basically one and the same and that was the same Supreme Being! When the Brahmana gave the reply to the King as above, the latter was non-plussed and having got out of the palanquin enquired as to the Brahmana was. The reply was: the words 'You' or 'I' were the countless forms of the same Super Shakti and were irrelevant and that the placements of each 'Charaachara' (Moveable/Immoveable) being in the Creation of Paramatma depended on the basis of one's own 'Karma' or Actions; for eg. Some as Kings and another's as a beggar. Jada

Bharata narrated to the King Souvira the illustration of Brahmana called Nidagha the son of Sage Pulastya and Muni named Rijhu as to how the ramifications of Avidya or Ignorance tended to influence the psyche and deeds of every being. Rijhu as a stranger visited Nidagha at his house once and the latter requested the Muni to indicate where he was from and asked him to have his food; after the food, the Brahmana asked whether the food was it was good. The Muni replied that when a person was hungry or thirsty the food or drink served would indeed satisfy and one need not delve into the nuances of taste, quality, colour etc. as they were not as important as long as the food and drink agreed the body-system; eqally unimportant was as to where did he come from and was going to. Then Muni explained to Nidagha as to what Advaita was all about; that the 'Jeevatma' and 'Paramatma' were one and the same, that 'Maya' or illusion made the distinction of the two, since the body was temporary and subject to destruction; that the pattern of the ephemeral life would get shaped as per the Karma or fate on the basis of the good or bad deeds performed by a being; that the cycle of births and deaths would go on till the Jeevatma in various forms ranging from the most insignificant species to human beings broke the Cycle and reached 'Mukti' or Salvation to higher levels of existence than human beings and finally to 'Paramatma'.

Thus 'Paramatma' like the Supreme Energy is present in all the forms, shapes, and end-variations but present as a Unique Entity everywhere, everlasting and all-pervasive. As Jada Bharata gave the example of Nidagha and Rijhu, the King was fully enlightened and decided to give up 'Bheda Buddhi'or the feeling of differences and started realising the 'Adhaytmika Gyan', while Jada Bharata too regained his complete awareness of King Bharata's past life and pursued the path of Brahmana's responsibilities like Yagnas, Vratas, Tirtha Yatras and daily pujas.

### Six 'Vedangas' constitute the means of knowledge to attain 'Mukti'

In the process of 'Siksha Nirupana', Maharshi Sanandana explained to Brahmarshi Narada that six Vedangas constituted the 'Sadhanas' or the means to accomplish Mukti, viz. *Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakarana, Nirukti, Chhandas and Jyotisha*. Maha Shuka Muni was a glorious example of 'Anuchan' or an outstanding expert in all the Six Vedangas, besides being an epitome of Dharma and an unparalelled 'Adhyayi' or a Master of the Four Vedas of Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva.

Siksha: In relation to Siksha, Sage Sanandana emphasised the significance of Swara (notations) in the discipline of Sangeeta (Music). In the Swara Shastra, the Swara of Archika is related to Rig Veda, 'Gaandhik' is to 'Gaadha' and 'Saamik' is to Sama Veda. A 'Swara' is according to 'Ruchas' (Hymns) and their variations, while in 'Gathas' or metered rhythemic verses Sama Veda has 'Vyavadhaanas' or pauses. The Yagjna stotras, karanas and Mantras are required to be pronounced as per Swaras; otherwise they turn out to be 'Viruddha Swaras'. In the entire 'Vangmaya' Shastra (Vocabulary), pronounciation originates from 'Vakshasthala' (chest), 'Kantha' (throat) and 'Mastaka' (head); from the chest emerges the low level sounds normally resorted to morning singing, from the Kantha emerge the medium and very broad variety of sounds and from Mastaka are emanated high pitch sounds and their variations of volume. The Sapta Swaras-Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Da, and Ni-are 'Prathama' (Shadaja), 'Dwitiya' (Rishabha), 'Tritiya' (Gandhara), 'Chaturtha' (Madhyama), 'Mandra' (Panchama), 'Krushtha' (Dhaivata) and 'Atiswara' (Nishadha). Shadaja-Sa- stands for 'Sagar' (Sea) with peacock as the representative bird, 'Muladhara' (the base of the spine) as the Chakra (body part) and the ruling Deity as Ganapati. Rishabha Re-means bull representing the bird Skylark, 'Swadhishtana' or genital as the Chakra and the ruling Deity is Agni. Gandhara Swara 'Ga'means Gagan or Sky with goat as the representative animal, 'Manipura' (solar plexus/ naval) as the Chakra and Rudra is the concerned Deity. Madhyama-Ma-means the Middle, represented by the bird dove, Anahata (heart) being the relevant body part and Vishnu as the Ruler concerned. Panchama-Pa-means the fifth, represented by nightingale and 'Vishuddha' (throat) as the relevant body part and the Ruling Deity is Sage Narada. The Swara titled Dhaivata-Dha- means Dharti or Earth, the representative animal being horse, the relevant Chakra being 'Aaajna' or the third eye and the Ruler being Sada Shiva. The Seventh Swara viz. Nishada-Ni- meaning Hunter and standing for the animal Elephant, has 'Sahasrara' (the crown of the head) as the body part, the Ruler being Surya as the Deity. Besides the Swaras, Shadaja, Madhyama and Gandhara are known as three 'Graamaas' (gamut or scale in music). Those who render

'Saama Gana' approve twenty graamas in Madhyama Swara, fourteen in Shadaja and fifteen in Gandhara. Also there are seven *Murchanas* (Intonations / Modulations) meant for Devatas viz. Nandi, Vishaala, Sumukhi, Chitra, Chitravati, Sukha and Bala; and seven for Pitaras viz. Aapyaayani, Vishwabhruta, Chandra, Hema, Kapardini, Maitri and Baarhati. For Rishis too there are seven Murchanas viz. Uttara Mandra in Shadaja Swara, Abhi Rudrata in Rishabha, and Ashyakranta in Gandhara, Besides, there are other Murchanas like Souvira in Madhyama Swara, Harshika in Panchama and Uttarayata in Dhaivata Swara. The seven Murchanas utilised by Rishis are also normally used by humans. Normally, there are ten 'Gunas' in music viz. Rakta, Purna, Alankrita, Prasanna, Vyakta, Vikrushta, Slakshana, Sama, Sukumara, and Madhura. When 'Venu' (Flute), 'Veena' (stringed instrument) and Vocal are rendered together then that combination is known as Rakta or 'Ranjana'. Swara and *Shruti* (for eg. Kshobini Shruti in Shadaja, Tivra in Komala Rishabha, Dayavanti in Komala Gandharva, Prasarini in Tivra Madhyama, Alapini in Shuddha Dhaivataini in Komal Nishad) as also 'Chhanda' (Prosody) along with clear pronounciation are called 'Purna'; Alankrita denotes the Swara from the throat down to the place of heart and taking the sound up to the head; Prasanna emerges from kantha in 'gadgada' sound; Vyakta or clearly pronounced by the 'Pada' (letter), Padartha (material), vachana (eka or bahu / single or many) etc. When the sound is clear in high pitch and understood by the letters of Alphabet is Vikrushta; Slakshan is that Shriti which is devoid of either Dhruta or quick and Vilambita or elongated; Sama is that Shriti which normal by aspects without ups and downs; Sukumara Shruti is of soft nature and Madhura is sweet and sonorous. In regard to the Swaras of Padas (letters) there are eight varieties viz. Antodaatta (like Agnih in 'Agnirvritraani'), Adyudaatta ( like Somah in Somah pavatey), Udaatta and Anudaatta respectively are like Pra and vah in the word 'Pra voyahvam'; Neecha Swarit is the word Veeryam in the expression 'Balam nyubjam veeryam'; Madhyadaatta like Havisha in the word 'Havishaa vidhema'; Swarita like Swaha in the expression 'Bhurbhuvah swaha' and finally Dirudaatta as 'V'kara and 'spa' in 'Vanaspatih'.

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

Kalpa Granth: The second Vedanga relates to Kalpa Granth as described by Sanandana to Narada. Kalpa comprises Nakshaktra Kalpa, Veda Kalpa, Samhitaa Kalpa, Aangirasa Kalpa and Shanti Kalpa. In the Nakshatra Kalpa, there was a description of the Head of Stars, viz. Chandra as also of the notable Nakshatras. In Veda Kalpa, the methodology of achieving the 'Purusharthas' (Human Objectives) related to Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha was detailed. In Samhita Kalpa there was guidance to 'Tatwa Darshi'to Munis regarding the 'Mantras' about the Rishis, Chhandas and Devatas. In the Angirasa Kalpa, Lord Brahma himself was stated to have given the 'Abhichara Vidhi Vidhana' or of the procedures of magical / charms / benevolent or manevolent Karmas like Vashya, Mohana, Ucchhaatana and Unmaada. In the Shanti Kalpa, Mantras and Procedures to ward off dangers or to usher in Good Tidings from Celestial, Terrestrial or Extra-Terrestrial Sources are detailed.

Apart from the Five Kalpas mentioned above, the most significant Kalpa relates to <u>Griha Kalpa</u> which describes the details of the preparation of 'Homa Vedika'; usage of Kusha grass in the fingers of the Karta performing the Homa; the role of housewives to bring Agni to install in the Homa Kunda; the features of Agni Deva with two faces, six eyes, seven tongues, 'Pingala Varna', three hands on his left side and four on the right, three mekhalas or waistbands and three feet; dhyana to Agni; performance of homa of milk, curd,

honey, ghee or ghee-cooked items like Anna with Til; the mudras to be used viz. Mrigi, Hamsi and Suukari (Suukari Mudra in Abhicharika Karmas only); and the application of appropriate Mudras and the finger prescription for targetted purposes. Thereafter, the 'Karta' or the principal performer of the Homa ought to invoke Ganapati and do the Puja to ensure that there would be no obstacles faced by the Karta. [By the prearranged water vessels, 'Mangala Snaana'is performed to 'Karta' or the Person performing the Puja reciting the Mantra: *Sahasraaksham shata dharamrishibhih paavanam krutam, teyna twaamabhishnchaami paavamaanyah punantu tey* (May the sacred waters which have thousands of eyes representing as many Shaktis having innumerable flows sanctified by Maharshis purify you along with powerful hymns being rendered!)

There after, 'Abhishekas' of Varuna, Surya, Brihaspati, Indra, Vayu, and Saptarshigana would follow with the Mantra: Bhagam tey Varuney Rajaa Bhagam Suryo Brihaspatih, Bhagamindrascha Vaayuscha bhama Saptarshiyo daduh/ (Raja Varuna, Surya, Brihaspati, Indra and Vayu as also Saptarshis, please provide 'Kalyan' (auspiciousness). Then there should be Jala Shanti with the Mantra: Yattey keseshui dourbhagyam seemantey yacchha Murdhani, Lalaatey Karnayo rakshanopaadastad ghnantu sarvadaa/ (Whatever 'dourbhagya' or inauspiciousness is present in your hairs, hair parting, head, forehead, ears and eyes be obliterated for ever with this Jala Shanti or peaceful showers). After the Puja of Ganaadhyaksha, Devi Parvati's worship be taken up by prostrating before Ganapati and Parvati, first reciting Tat purushaaya Vidmahey Vakra tundaaya dhimahey, Tanno Danti prachodayaat; then to Devi Gauri saying: Sowbhaagyayai Vidmahey, Kamala Maalinyai dheemahey, tanno Gauri prachodayaat. Worship of Devi Parvati with Paadya, Pushpa, Dhupa, Dipa, Naivedya and Mantra Pushpa reciting the hymn: Rupam Dehi Yasho Dehi Bhagam Bhagavati Devi mey, Putraan dehi dhanam dehi Sarv kaamaanscha dehi mey/ (Bhavati! Kindly bestow on me good appearance, fame, auspiciousness, good progeny, wealth and fulfillment of all my desires!).

This Puja would be followed by the worship of 'Nava Grahas' by arranging idols of Surya with copper, Chandra with silver or sphatika or crystal, Mangala with Rakta varna Chandana or red sandalwood, Budha and Guru with gold, Shukra with silver again, Shani Deva with loha /iron and Rahu and Ketu with glass as also with appropriate Vastras or coloured clothing. Mantras and Puja material especially the flowers suitable to Nava Grahas. Venerable worship of Matrikas viz. Gauri, Padma, Shachi, Medha, Savitri, Vijaya, Jaya, Devasena, Swadhaa, Swaahaa, Vaidhruti, Dhruti, Pushti, Hrishti, and Tushti would follow. The Griha Kalpa Vidhana then describes the worship of Pitrus viz. Vasu Rupas, Rudra Rupas, and Aditya Rupas, especially on Amayasyas, Ashtakas, Vriddhi Karyas like the occasions of weddings, Krishna Pakshas, the days beginning the Uttarayana and Dakshinayana, Surya Sankranti, Vyatipata Yoga, Gajachhaaya, Chandra Grahana (Lunar Elipse), Surya Grahana (Solar Eclipse) and of course on the Tithis of the Karta's dead parents. After reciting Pitrubhyah Staanamasi or keeping Pitras in their respective places, then the task of Agnou Karana, meaning thereby perform 'Aahuti' or oblation of Cooked Rice with ghee saying: Agnaev kavyavaahanaya swaaha namah, Somaaya Pitru mataye swaha etc. The rest of Naivedya is served to Brahmanas, Karta and family. Such is the 'Kalpa Vidhana' in brief and its execution with sincerity and devotion would certainly bestow wealth, Vidya, keerti, progeny, contentment in life and salvation thereafter.!

**Vyakarana Shastra:** The third component of Vedanga pertains to since Vyakarana (Grammar) constitutes 'Veda Mukha' or the Face of Vedas. For example, Sanandana proposed two words to Narada viz. 'Subanth' and 'Tidanth'; suppose the last letter is 'Ananth' and the Pratyaya or prefix is 'Sup', then the word is Subanth; 'Sup'has seven 'vibhaktis'(Cases), of which the first is *Su* (Prathama or 'Eka' vachana), *Au* (Dwi or two) vachana and '*Jas*' (bahu or many vachanas).

In *Prathama Vibhakti* or the first vibhakti (Nominative / about the performer or subject) the proposed person's 'linga' (gender), Parimaan (volume or quantity) and 'Vachan' (number), etc. need to be specified. For

instance, linga is 'thata'; 'thati' and 'thatam'; parinama is one kg. of rice and vachan is one, two or many. The specific Karma (Predicate or part of sentence excluding the Subject) is as 'Harih sevyatey' or Hari is served (by Bhaktas/ devotees) and in this sentence karma is the Vaachya; whereas in another sentence 'Lakshmya sevitah' or [Bhaktas] served through Lakshmi. If Karta himself is vaachya, then the sentence could be 'Harih karoti' or Hari performs.

In Dwiteeya (second) Vibhakti (accusative or the Object) the affix words used are 'Am', 'Aou', and 'Shas' followed by the vachan or number like one, or two or many. If the sentence is 'Harim pujati' ie Hari is worshipped, then kartha is not specified and that is 'Anukt' or silent / unspecified. Also, dwiteeya vibhakti is utilised with words like 'Antara' or 'Antarena'; for eg. Antaraa twaam Harih which means Hari is outside you and me; Antarena Harim sukham which means 'There is no happiness without Hari. In the *Triteeya* (third) Vibhakti, (Instrumental/instrument) the suffix words used are 'taa', 'bhyaam' and 'bhis' followed again as always by the vachan as in the earlier vibhaktis. In the context of 'Karan' (doing), 'Karya' (action) and 'Anukta' or unspecified 'Karta' or the doer, this Vibhakti is utilised as in the sentence: 'Ramena baaneyna hato Vaali'meaning Rama's arrows killed Vaali; here Rama is the unspecified Karta. In the Chaturthi Vibhakti, (dative or from whom action is performed) the words applicable are 'im', 'bhyaam' and 'bhyas' and is used when 'sampradaan karaka' or giving away / donastion of a vastu (thing / material) is to be performed: 'Brahmanaaya gaam dadaati' or Brahmana is given a cow. This vibhakti is also utilised when a tasteful thing is given away: 'Haraye roachatey bhaktih' or Hara is happy with Bhakti. In Panchami Vibhakti, (ablative or where action is performed), the relevant suffix words are 'Imsi', 'Bhyaam' and 'Bhyas' and is used in 'Apadaan karaka' when somebody goes away somewhere, something is brought or taken, something or sombody is seperated. The examples are 'Graamaadpaiti' or Goes away from the village; 'Devaduttah Yajnadadaat pustakam samaadatey' or Devadatta takes away a book from Yajnadutta; 'Paatraat odanam grihnnati' or Food is taken from a vessel; 'Ashvaat patati' or Falls from a horse; 'Parvataat Nadee nissarati' or River falls from a Mountain. The suffix words used in Shashthi Vibhakti (Possessive or possession) are 'Ims', 'Ose' and 'Aam' and the Vibhakti emphasises the 'bhedak' relationship of Master and Servant or the difference of status such as in the expressions like 'Grihasya Swami' or the Master of the house hold; 'Raajnah sevakah' or servant of Raja; and 'Dasaradhasya putrah' or Dasaratha's son. In the Saptami Vibhakti (locative of action), the affix expressions are 'Ims', 'Ose' and 'Sup' used in Adhikarana kaarak such as in 'Grihey vasati' or Resides in the house. The context of 'Adhaara' (hold) is also used in Saptami Vibhakti. Adhaara is of three varieties viz. Auopashloshaka, Vaishayaka and Abhivyaapaka; the respective examples are 'Katey aastey' or seated on a mat / 'Mokshey icchhaa asti' or Moksha is desired, 'Sarvasmin Atma asti' Atma is in everything and 'Chouryaa -dvibheti' or afraid of stealing. Raksharthak Dhaatu (verbal root, an ingredient of an expression) is used in this Vibhakti as in 'Paapaad rakshati' or saved from Sambodhana Vibhakti the sin.

(denominative/ used to address someone) as in Prathama Vibhakti.

To sum up with Rama shabda and Purusha linga:

Vibhakti	Eka Vachana	Dwi Vachana	Bahu Vachana	Suffixes
Prathama	Raamah	Raamou	Raamaah	Su, Au, Jas
Dwitiya	Raamam	Raamou	Raamaan	Am, Au, Shas
Triteeya	Raamyena	Raamaabhyam	Raamaih	Ta, bhyaam, bhis
Chaturtha	Raamaaya	Raamaabhyaa	Raamebhyah	Im, bhyaam, bhyas
Panchami	Raamaat	Raamebhyaam	Raamebhyah	Imsi, bhyaam, bhyas
Shasthi	Raamasya	Raamayoh	Raamaanaam	Ims, Ose, Aam
Saptami	Raamey	Raamayoh	Raameshu	Ims, Ose, Sup
Sambodhana	Hey Rama	Hey Raamou	Hey Raamaah	(As in Prathama)

Illustrations: In the usage of 'Pari', Apa', 'Aayim', 'Itara', 'Rutey', 'Anya' and 'Digvachaka Shabda', Panchami Vibhakti is used; for eg. Pari Harey Samsaarah or Srihari is different from Samsara; Apa

Hareyh Sarva doshaaah or All the blemishes are far from Hari; Aa Muktey Samsaarah or Till the attainment of Moksha Samsaaraa cintinues; Itarah Krishnah or distinct from Krishna; Rutey Bhagavatah or deviod of Bhagavan; Anyah Shri Raamaat or different from Shri Rama; Aaraat Vanaat or Forest is near or far etc. To signify the words, Lakshana, Itthhambhutaakhyan, Bhaga and Veepsa; the 'Avyayas'\* viz. Prati, Pari, Anu are used as Karmapravachaneeya Sanjnaas. In respect of Lakshana the illustration is Vriksham prati pari anu vaa vidyotatey vidyut or Vidyut is attracted to run into the tree; vriksham is manifested and vidyu gets awareness. \*[Indeclinables viz. prepositions or upasargas, adverbs, particles, conjunctions and interjections].

Again, Bhakto Vishnum prati pari Anu vaa: here the shabda Idyambhut means the obtaining of 'viseshan'; Bhakto Vishnum prati pari anu vaa: Bhakta Swarup is viseshan, Purush is to obtain Him; vibhakti is dwiteeya. To illustrate the word 'Bhaga', it may be said: Lakshmi Harim prati pari anu va, which means Lakshmi is Vishnu's belonging with a right over her as she is a 'bhaag' or part of him. The word Veepsa as afore mentioned, the illustrative sentence would be 'Vriksham Vriksham prati sinchati' or pari sinchati or anu sinchati, meaning there by: The trees are interlinked.

There is also a method to use Avyayas viz. Namah, Swasti, Swadhaa, Swaahaa, Alam and Vashat in Chaturthi Vibhakti viz. Haraye namah, Swasti Prajaabhyaha, Agnaye Swaahaa, Pitrubhyah swadhaa, Alam mallow Mallaaya, vashat Indraaya. If an action is meant for a 'vastu' (thing), that vastu would be in Chaturti Vibhakti expressed in bodhaka shabda, like Muktaye Harim bhajati or Hari is worshipped for Mukti.

After the usage of Vibhaktis,

Sanandana explained to Narada about *Swar-Sandhis* like Madhudakam (Madhu+Udakam or Honey plus water), and Pitrushabhah (Pitru+ Rishabhah or the senior in the Paternal side) known as Siddhi Sandhis; Gangodakam (Ganga + Udakam) or Krishnaikatwam (Krishna+Ekatwam or Krishna's singularity or uniqueness); these examples are Vriddhi Sandhis; Dadhyanna (Dadhi+anna or curd rice) and Pitrathah (Pitru+Artha) or Father's wealth as the egs.of Yuga Sandhis; Haraye (Hara+Ye) or for Hara and Lavanah (Lo+Anah) or salt as egs.of Yagadi Sandhi; Tasmaarghya (Tasmai+arghya or Water for him) and Ta Adyaah (Tey+ Aadhyaah or they are the foremost) are egs. of Yalopa and Valopa Sandhis; Hareva (Hara+eva or Hara! Save me) is a Purva Rupa Sandhi; Amegha (Ami+Agha or He is a sinner) and Shouri+Etou (these are Krishna Balaram), Vishnu+imou or these are both Vishnu rupas or Durga+amu or these two are of Durga rupas as examples of Prakriti bhava sandhis; Shadastra (Shat+astra), Shanmaatarah (Shat+matarah) and Vaak+Surah or Vaakchurah/ Expert in conversation are vyanjana Sanshis. Padachhedana sandhis are Chakrim -shicchhandhi or Chakrin+Chhindi or Chakradhari! do snap my bandhan etc. So far Vyanjana Sandhis were described.

Now Visarga Sandhi examples are given as below: Ramaah kaamyah krupah pujyo Harih pujyorcha eva hi/ Raamo drushtobalaa Atra supta drishtaa imaa yatah (Ramah+ kaamyah or Shri Ram is dear; Kripah + Pujyah or Kripacharya is worthy of worship; Pujorarchayah -Pujyasya+ Archayah- pujaniya and Archaniya; Ramodrishtah or Ramas + drishtah / Ram has been seen; Abalaas+atrah or there are women; Suptadrishta or supatas+drishtaah or looked like slept off; imaayatah or Imaas +Atah or these women thus. Thus are the examples of Samhitas / Sandhis.

<u>Subhanta Prakarana</u>: 'Mangalacharana'- In the name of Rama, following Stanza covers each of the Vibhaktis:

Raamenaabhihitam karomi satatam Raamam bhajey saadaram, Raamenaapahyatam samasta duritamRaamaaya tubhyam namah/Raamaanmuktirabheepsitaa mama sadaa Raamasya daasomyaham, Raamey rajyatu mey manah Suvishadam hey Raama thubhyam namah (I follow the instructions given by Shri Rama always. I perform bhajan to Shri Rama as an ideal. Ram has destroyed all my sins. Bhagavan Shri Rama! My salutations to you. My desire from Shri Ram is to accomplish Moksha. I am always Shri Rama's servant. May my clean conscience be contented by me. Hey Shri Rama! These are my greetings to you).

Sarvanamas: In Sanskrit Literature, 'Sarva naamaas' occupy an important place like the Sraya Shabdas Sarvah, Sarvay, Sa

occupy an important place, like the Srava Shabdas:Sarvah, Sarvou, Sarvey- Sarvam, Sarvou, Sarvaan-Sarvabhyaam, Sarvaih - Sarvasmai, Sarvabhyaam, Sarvebhyah-Sarvasmaat, Sarvabhyaam, Sarvabhyah-Sarvasya, Sarvayoh, Sarveshaam-Sarvasmin, Sarvayoh, Sarveshu. Also, in Hari Naama:

Harih, Haree, Harayah-Harim, Haree, Hareen-Harinaa, Haribhyaam, Haribhih- Haraye, Haribhyaam, Haribhyah- Hareyh, Haryom, Harinaam- Harou, Haryoh, Harishu-, Hey Harey Hey Haree, Hey Harayah. Then there are examples like Kartru Shabda in karya vachaka like in Karthaa Kartarou Kartaarih etc., Rai shabda as Raah, Raayou, Raayah etc. in dhana Vachaka; Nou shabda is in nouka vachaka; dwi, thri or chatur shabda in sanjna vachaka etc.

Tadhita Pratyayanta Shabdas (Noun form suffixes) have been illustrated such as Devatarthaka (Aindram Havih or this is for Indra); Idamarthaka (Tasya Idam like kumkumena raktam Vastram); Bhavarthaka (Kshtrasyaapatyam jaatih Kshatriyah or in Ksartakula, only Kshatria is born); Jaatartha (Dayaalu, Kripaalu); Praachyurta or Adhikata (Annamayo Yagnah; Annamaya, Streemaya, Mrunmayah Ashwah (or horse made of mud); Jaatardha (Shreyan shreyaamsou shreyaamsi) etc. The pratyayas referred to are: 'an' pratyaya, 'twal' pratyaya, 'tal' pratyaya, 'mayat' pratyaya, 'in' pratyaya, and 'matup' pratyaya. Tendu Prakarana: Dhatus (Tissues or Elements of the Language) Vyaiyakaranas (Grammarians) classified ten kinds of Dhatus: Bhavadi, Adyaadi, Juhotyadyaadi, Devaadi, Swaadi, Trutaadi, Rudhhadi, Tanaadi, Vrayaadi, and Churaadi. In respect of Bhavaadi, the formations possible include Bhavanti Bhayatah Bhayanti. In Adyaadi Gana, the permutations possible include ati bhakshan.In 'Johothyadi gana', 'hu' dhatu is significant like juhoti, juhova, juhavaanchakaar, juhavaamba bhuy, juhavaamas, hota, hoshyati, juhuyat, huhaat, ahousheet, ahoshyat etc. In Devaadi ganas, Diva dhatu is important which has many meanings like kreeda, Vijaya-oriented desire, vyavahar, dyuti, stuti, moda, mada, swapna, kaanti and gati; as in the earlier gana the expressions generated are Deevyataat, Devata, Devishyati, Deevyatu, Adeevyat, Deevyeta, etc. In Swaadi gana, 'su dhhat' is important like Sunotu, Sushaava, Sotha, Soshyati, Asunotu, Sunayaat, etc. In 'Tudaadi gana', 'Thudu'dhhatu is important which means creating difficulties like in the suffixes tudati, tutoda, tottha, totsyati, tudatu, anudatu, tudetu etc. In Rudhhadi dhatu, Rudh dhatu is the main one for example, rundhe, rurudhey, rotasatey, arundh, rundheet, rotseeshth, etc. (deepening, surrounding, stopping and so on). 'Tan' dhatu is significant in Tanadi gana dhatus whose task is to expand, spread out and increase like Tanoti, tataana, tanita, tanishyati, atanot, tanuyaat, atanishyat etc. The word 'kri' is important in Vrayaadi dhatu which refers to purchasing, exchanging, selling etc.; the illustrations are kreenaati, chikraaya, kreta, kreshyati, kreenaatu, akreenaat, akresheet etc. Finally, in the context of Churaadi gana the reference is for 'chora' or stealing / thieving and examples include chorayati, chorayamaas, chorayanchakara, chorayita etc. Krudanta Prakarana: Those Pratyayas or Verb forms (suffixes) end up with the expression 'krit' are called Krudanth Pratyayas viz. nyavul, truch, achi, tayyat, tayya, aneeyar, kelimar, etc. The sentence 'Twaya maya anyaischa yedhitayyam' includes the verb forms of tavya and aneeyar. [Elsewhere, other verb forms were also mentioned such as 'tumun' pratyaya, 'ktvaaccha pratyaya, 'lyap' pratyaya, 'ktavatup' pratyaya, 'yat' pratyaya, shatri pratyaya, 'shaanach' pratyaya, 'ktin' pratyaya, ghuni pratyaya, and 'khal' pratyaya]. Samaasaas (Compound noun): Muni Sanandana then described 'Samaasa Prakarana'. Normally, there are

five kinds of Samasas viz. Avyayi bhava, Tatpurusha, Karma Dhaaraya, Bahuvreehi and 'dwigu'. When the first word is Avyaya, that Samaasa is known as of Avyai bhava (eg. upa nagaram or near the town). Tatpurusha's illustrations are: Ramaashrita (Rama+Ashrita); Dhyaanaartha (Dhyaanena+ Artha); Rajapurushah (Rajnajh+purusha) etc. Digu (numerical determinative compound) is a Sankhya vaachaka samaasa like 'Panchaanaam gavaam samaahaarah panchagavyam' or Panchagavyam is the mix of cow's five products (viz.milk, curd, ghee, urine and dung). Tatpurusha's Karmadharaya (Adjective compound) is a compound of Viseshya and Viseshana like Neela + Utpala or the blue water lily. Bahuvreehi Samaasa is illustrated by the expression: 'Paaptam udakam yam sa praaptodakam graamah' or the village where water reaches is noted as water-receiver. Dwandwa samasa is called 'samuchya' or combination of various words like in the sentence: 'Isham Gurum cha bhajaswa' which means Ishwara and Guru-both-are doing bhajana.

## Karaka Prakarana:

Karaka Vibhakti / Case Process Example

Karta First / Nominative Subject used with verb Ramaha nripaanaam ratnam Denotes the object Karma Second/ Accusative (Aham) Raamam pujayami Karaka Third / Instrumental Denotes agent / action Ramena Ravanah hatah Sampradaana -Fourth/ Dative Denotes object/action Ramam namami Seperation/division Apadana Fifth / Ablative Ramasya adhi gamyam \*Genitive Sixth/ Possessive Denotes noun to noun Ramasya daasaa asmi aham Adhikara Seventh/Locative Place of action Ramasyopari hridayam bhavatu Sambodhana- As in the First Person being addressed Bho! Rama maam uddhhara

\*Normally, this usage of noun to noun in the same sentence is not used. Hindupedia.

Source:

#### Nirukta Varnana:

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

#### 'Chhandas Shastra':

Maharshi Sanandana explained to Brahmarshi Narada about Chhandas Shastra which too is an important component of Vedangas; it is stated: *Chhandah paadow tu Vedasya* or Chhandas denotes the feet of Vedas. 'Chhandas' is of two types viz. 'Vaidik' or related to Vedas and 'Loukik' or for general use. Vaidik Chhanda expresses Gayatri Mantra: 'Tatsavitur varenyam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyoyonah prachodayaat'. *Anushthup Yajati, Brihatya Gaayati, Gaayatrya stoutati:* Anushthup is used fot Yagnas, Brihati Chhanda is for singing and Gayatri is used for Stutis. The Loukika chhanda is used in Puranas, Itihasaas, and Kavyas in poetical forms, for eg. *Sarva dharmaan parityajya maammekam sharanam vraja, Ahamtwa sarvapaapebhyo mokshamishyaami maa shuchah* (This Shloka is in Anushthup chhanda). Both the Vaidik and Loukik Chhandas have two kinds based on 'Matras' and Varnas' (units or quality) known as Martik and Varnik. The Chhanda Shastra comprises 'Ganas' (group of three Aksharas or letters) and Gurus / Laghus or Big and Small in terms of 'S' or 'I'. The Ganas are as follows: 1) 'Ya'gana: ISS for eg. Ya+Maa+Taa; 2) 'Ma' gana: SSS for eg.Maa+Taa+Raa; 3) 'Ta' gana: SSI for eg. Taa+Raa+ Ja; 4) 'Ra'gana: SIS for eg. Raa+ Ja+Bhaa; 5) 'Ja'gana: ISI for eg. JA+ BHA+ Na; 6) 'Bha' gana: SII for eg. Bhaa+Na+ Sa; 7) 'Na' ganam: III for eg. Na+SA+La; 8) 'Sa'ganam: IIS for eg. Sa +La+ Gaah. To summarise, the following may be noted for facility:

YaMaaTaa (ISS), MaaTaa Raa (SSS), TaaRaaJa (SSI), Raa JaBhaa (SIS); JaBhaaNa (ISI), **B**haa Na Sa (SII), **N**a Sa La (III), **S**a La Gah (IIS)

The Ruling Deities of the Ganas as above are: Ya gana (Jala), Ma gana (Prithvi), Ta gana (Akash), Ra gana (Agni), Ja gana (Surya), Bha gana (Chandra), Na gana ('Ayu'or Life/ Health), Sa gana (Vayu). The 'Phala' or fruits / results are: Vriddhi or Abhyudaya / Growth or Progress in respect of Ya gana; Lakshmi/wealth for Ma gana; Dhana Naasha for Ta gana; Vinasha for Ra gana; Roga or ill-health for Ja gana; Su yasha for Bha gana; Ayu for Nagana and Bhramana or travel for Sa gana. In the Chhanda Shastra, the Akshar 'Ga' stands for Guru and 'La' for Laghu; combination of two Gurus (SS) is called Sarva Guru; two Laghus and a Guru (IIS) is Antya Guru; laghu+Guru+laghu (ISI) is Madhya Guru; Guru+Laghu (SII) is Adi Guru; and four laghus are Chatur laghus (IIII). The diffrences are denoted as Karna, Karatala, Payodhara, Vasucharana and Vishta. Again, Samyog, Visarga and Anuswara in respect of Laghus are signified as in Ramam, Ramah and Ramasya. In respect of a Padya (Poem) or Shloka (Stanza), there is a 'Paada' (Line) consisting of four lines. There is a 'Yati'or a pausing point in each paada. In Chhanda, there are three 'Vrittas' (circles) viz. Sama Vritta, Artha Vritta and Vishama Vritta. In Sama Vritta, in all the four 'Paadaas' (lines), there are the same number of Hraswa-Deergha Aksharas (Short and Long Letters) numbering seventeen in each line, as for instance in Shikhirini Chhanda: Mukhey tey taambulam nayana yugaley kajjalakalaa lalaatey kaashmiram vilasati galeymouktika lataa Sphuratkaanchi shaati Pruthukatitatey haatakamayee bhajaami twam Gauri nagapati kishori -maviratam. An example of 'Ardha Sama Vritta' is Jagadamba vichitramatra kim paripurna karunaasti chenmayi, Aparaadha paramparaamparam na hi Maataa samupekshatey Sutam (This poem is in Harinapluta Chhanda). The example of Vishama Vritta is Nalinekshanam Shashi mukham cha Ruchidarshanam Ghanacchivam/ Chaarucharana kamalamKamaanchitaavraja Vraja Mahendra vandanam/This is in Udrataa naamaka Chhanda. Example of 'Dandakas' is in Twenty six letters: Iaha hi bhavati dandakaaranya desho sthitih punyabhaanjaam Muneenam manoharinii, Tridashaa Vijayi Veerya drupahaddashgrivalakshmi viraamena Raamena samsevitey. Apart from Dandakas, there are three or six lined 'Gathas'.

Then, there are many other kinds of 'Chhandas' ranging from one to twenty six lettered lines viz. Ukta, Atyukta, Madhya, Pratishtha, Supratishtha, Gayatri, Ushnik, Anushthup, Brihati, Padinkti, Trishthup, Jagati, Ati Jagati, Shakvari, Atishakvari, Ashti, Atyashti dhriti, Viddhtuti /Atidhruti, Kriti, Prakriti, Aakriti, Viktiti, and Abhikriti. Example of 'Ukta' is 'Vishnum Vandey' in 'Shri' Chanda; in 'Ayukta', the example is'Anya Sreebhih Sangastaajyaha in 'Stree' Chhanda (in two Deergha Maatras ie. SS). 'Madhya' has three letters each in 'Naari' Chhanda with the example 'Sarvaasaam Naareenam Bhatraa syadaaraadhyayah' in SSS formation. 'Pratishtha' has four letters each in fourlines (SSSS) in Kanya Chhanda: Bhhasvatkanyaa saikaa dhanyaa/ Yayaah kuuley Krishnokhelat; 'Supratishtha' has five letters in seven lines and the seventh line is different from the other lines and this is in Pankti Chhanda as in Krishnasa Naathhha Tarnika pancktih, Yaamuna kacchhey chaaru chachaara (in SIISS formation.). A formation of six letters in four of the Paadaas is seen in 'Gayatri' Chhanda Samuha (Group), which has four sub-divisions; 'Vidullekha' (SSSSS) as in Gogopigopanaam prevaamsam praanesham, Vidvullekha vastraam Vandeham Govindam; 'Tanumadhya' (SSIISS) as in Preetyaa prativeylam, saivey gatatan dram, Vrindavana Chandram; 'Shashivadan' (IIIISS) as in Paramamudaaram vipina vihaaram, Bhaja pratipaalam Vrajapati baala; and 'Vasumati(SSIIIS) as in Bhaktaartikadanam Samsiddha sadamanam, Noumeeduvadanam Govidmadhunaa/. In the 'Ushnik' Group, there is a seven-seven letter formation with as many as tewnty eight letters in each Paada or line, but the most known is Madalekha with SS SIISS SSSI ISS viz. Magana, Sagana and one Guru as illustrated in Rangay Baahuvirugnaad Danteendran madalekhaa, Lagnaabhunmura shatraou kasturi rasa charchaa/. In the eight lettered / four lined 'Anushthup' Chhanda' too, there are two hundred seventy six varieties, and there are differences among Vidyunmala, Manavakaa Kreeda, Chitrapada, Hamsaruth, Pranaamika or Nagaswarupini, Samaanika, Shloka and Vitana; for instance, Vidunmaala the letter combination is eight Gurus or SSSSSS SS such as in Vidyunmaalaalolaan bhogaan Miktwa Moukto Yatnam, kruyaat, Dhyanotpannam nih saamaanyam Soukhyam Bhoktum yadyaakaanthakshet. In Nagaswarupini Shiva tandava Sthotra with Ja, Ra, Ja, Ra, Ja and one Guru. Illustration is: Jatakatah sambhrama bhramatrilimpani jharee vilola veechi vallaree

viraajamaana murdhini, Bhagad bhagaddhuga jjwalallalaata patta paavakey Kishora Chandra shekharey Ratih pratikshanam mama (ISISISISISISISIS). The nine-nine lettered and four lined Chhanda Samuha is called 'Brihati' is illustrated by 'Halamukhi' which has one each of Ra gana, Na gana, and Sa gana and 'Bhujanga Shishubhrita' which has two Na ganas and One Bhagana. Pankti is a ten-letter group and among thousand twenty eight variations such as Shuddha Virat, Panava, Rukmavati, Mayura saarini, Matthaa, Manorama, Hamsi, Upastita and Champaka maala. Trishthup which has eleven worded Chandasa group has innumerable variations (as many as 2048!) and was extensively used in old 'Granthas'; for instance 'Upendra Vajra': I SI SS I I SI SS as illustrated in the Prayer: Twameva Maathaa cha Pithaa twameva twameva Bandhuscha Sakhaa twameva/ Twameva vidyaa dravinam twameva twameva Sarvam mama Deva Deva! Indra Vajra Chanda (SS I SS II S I SS) in which there are two Ta ganas-one Ja gana and two Gurus as in: Nirmaana moha jitasanga doshaa Adhyatma nithya vini vritta kaamaah, Dwandwairvimuktaah Sukha Duhkha Sanjnairgacchhantya moodhah padamavyamam tat/ Also, in the same Trishthup category are 'Dodhaka Vritta' with three Bha ganas and two gurus; 'Shalini' with Ma gana, Ta gana, again Ta gana and two Gurus and many other Chhanda variations like Ratotthata, Swagata, Sumukhi, Shri Bhramara Vilasita, Bhadrika, Shyenika, Mouktikamala, Pramitakshara, and Upasthita. Jagati is the twelfth category of 'Chhanda Samooha' with four 'charanas' (lines) with as many as four thousand nine hundred six permutations, signifying the variety of poetic structure (Prosody) that one Chanda Samuha offered. The illustrations are 'Vamshastha' Chandas, Indra Vamsha, Drutavilambita, Totaka, Bhujangaprayata, Stragvini, Pramitaakshara, Vaishvadevi etc. Vamshastha has the form of I Ja gana, Ta gana, Ja gana, and Ra gana with 'Yati' at the end of each charana (line) viz.: I SI SS SS II SI SI S; 'Sa Shanka chakram Sa kireeta kundalam Sa Peeta vastram Sarasiruhekshanam/ Sahaaravakshasthala Kaosthubha shriyam Namaami Vishnum Sirsaa Chaturbhujam'/ Another example is the form of 'Indra Vamsha' constituted in Ta gana, Ta gana again, Ja gana and Ra gana with Yati or Viraam (break), the Stanza being: Yatkeertanam yatsmaranam yadeekshanam yadvandanam yacchhraavanam yadarhanam, Lokasya sadyo vidhunoti kalmasham tasmai Subhadrasravasey namo namah/

The next category is named *Ati Jagati* with thirteen letters and four lines with eight thousand one hundred ninety variations with Ma gana, Na gana, Ja gana, Ra gana, and one Guru with Yati on the third and tenth letters; the 'Praharshini'with SSS IIII S IS ISS formation is illustrated thus: *Jaagarti prasabhavipaaka samvidhatri Shri Vishnorlalita kapolajaa nadi chet, Samkeerna yadibhavitaasti ko vishadah samvaadah Sakala Jagat pitaamahain*/ Besides this are the Chhanaas like Kshama, Atiruchiraa Matta Mayura, Gauri, Manjubhaashini and so on. Another variety of Chhandas group is *Shakkari* with sixteen thousand three hundred eighty four variations, especially 'Vasanta tilaka' with Ta gana, Bha gana, two Ja ganas and two Gurus; another popular category is 'Praharana -kalita' with two Na ganas, one Bha gana, one Na gana again, one Laghu and one Guru as in: *Suramuni Manujai rupachita charanaam ripubhaya chakita Tri Bhuvana sharanam, Pranamata Mahishaasura vadha kupitaam praharana kalitaam Pashupathi dayitaam*/ The other 'Chhando samuhas' are called '*Ashti*', '*Atyashti*', '*Dhruti*', '*Vidhruti*', '*Kriti*', '*Prakriti*', '*Vikriti*', '*Vikriti*', '*Tanvi*', '*Samkriti*', and '*Utkruti*'.

The mind-boggling multitude of 'Chhandas' or Poetic Structures in Sanskrit Language is a standing proof of the opulence and magnificence of its 'Vangmaya' (Literature).

# Tri- Skandha Jyotisha Shastra

In the Jyotisha Shastra, Skanda Muni emphasized three Skandhas viz. *Ganita (Siddhaanta), Jaataka, (Hora), and Samhita.* In Ganita there is Parikarma of Yoga, Antara, Gunana, Bhaajana, Varga, Vargamula, Ghana and Ghanamula; ways and means of finding Graha madhyama and clarity of positioning, 'Anuyog' or the Knowledge of Desha, Disha and Kaalamaana ie. Place, Direction and Time; Chandra Grahana, Surya Grahana, Udaya (Rise), Astama (Setting), Chhaadhikara (dusk), Chandra Shrugonnati or Dwiteeya's Chandrodaya and Grahayuti (Graha's Yoga). In the context of Jataka Skandha, description is given of Jaati Bheda (differences of Jaatis), Graha yoni or the details of Jaati, Rupa and Guna; Viniyonija (Janmaphala according to human beings), Garbhadaana, Janma, Arishta,

Ayurdaaya or Life span, Dashaakrama or the details of Dashas, Karmaajeeva, Ashtaka Varga, Raja Yoga, Naabh sayoga, Chandra yoga, Pravrajjyaa yoga, Rasi sheela, Anishta Yoga, Stree jaatakaphala, Mrityu vishay nirnaaya, Nashta-Janma-Vidhhana etc. As regards Samhityaskandha, details of Grahachara, Varsha Lakshana, Tithi, Dina, Nakshatra, Yoga, Karana, Muhurtha, UpaGraha, Surya Samkraanti, Graha gochara, Chandra bala / Taara bala, garbhadana to Upanayana and Vivaha, Yatras, as also tatkaala vrishti gyan or of rainfall are described. Among the various aspects mentioned above, some are mentioned briefly as follows: 'Sankhya bodhak Sanginas' range from Eka (one), Dasha (tens), Shata (hundreds), Sahasra (thousands), Ayut (ten thousands), Laksha (lakh), Prayuta (million), Koti (Crore), Arbud (ten crores), Abj (hundred crores or arab), Kharva (thousand crores or ten arabs), Nikharva (Kharva or one lakh crores), Maha Padma (one crore crores), Shankah (Neela / ten crore crores), Jaladhi (Ten Neela or hundred crore crores), Antya (Padma or one thousand crore crores), Paraartha (lakh crore crores) and so on. Ganitha Siddhantas were explained by Sanandana to Narada viz. Pari Karma (Yoga, Antara, Gunana, Varga, Vargamula, Ghana and Ghana Mula) ranging from addition or deletion of numericals, Gunana phala, 'Varga Mula' or Square Roots, 'Ghana' or multiplication of three numbers working out the 'Ghana Mula', Concepts of Hara or Bhajak (Divisor), Amsha or Bhajya (dividend) and Sesha or Remainder; finding out Varga Mula, usage of Viloma vidhi in ascertaining 'rashi' (Fund) etc. Referring to Kshetra Vyavahara, in a 'Tribhuja' or a right angle Triangle, the vertical is called 'Koti', 'bhuja' is the straight line across and 'Karna' is the (hypotenuse). If Koti is 4 and Bhuja is 3, the square of 4 is 16 and that of 3 is 9, then Karna is the total of the square roots of 16+9 or 25 and thus the value of Karna is 5. Again, in a Vritta Kshetra (Circle), if the Paridhi (Circumference) is 22 and the Vyas or diameter is 7 and both of these are multiplied and result is 154, its Chaturdhamsha or a quarter ie 38 1/2 is the Khetraphal. In the context of 'Annadi Rashi' for instance, the 'Rashis' are broadly reckoned as 'Sthula', 'Madhyama' and 'Sukshma' and their Parithis could be calculated as Shashthamsa, Navamamsha, Dasama -amsha and Ekadasas etc.on the basis of the quantity of land, the availability of water bodies with the details of length, width and depth; presence of stones and metallic content etc. Sanandana Maharshi then explained to Narada about the calculations of 'Kaala, Desha and Disha viz. Time, Place and Directions. The total duration of Four 'Yugas' put together was stated to be thirty three lakh twenty thousand years, of which four times of Dashamsha was the duration of Satya Yuga viz. sixteen lakh twenty eight thousand. In the Dasamsha, one third of the duration was of twelve lakh ninty six thousand years in Treta Yuga; Dwapara Yuga was of the duration of eight lakh sixty four thousand years, while Kali Yuga is only four lakh thirty thousand years. There are seventy one Chatur Yugas in one Manvantara. In Brahma's one day, there are fourteen Manvantaras and another fourteen Manvantaras are counted in his night additionally. In one Yuga, the Planets of Surya, Budha and Shukra (Sun, Mercury and Venus respectively) in the Eastern side, take a 'Bhagan' (Bhaga is Surya) as many as 4,320,000; Mangala, Shani and Brihaspati (Mars, Saturn and Jupiter also make such Bhaganas. Chandra (Moon) makes 577, 53,336 Bhaganas in a Yuga likewise. There are 157,79,17,828 Surya's one full day-night comencing from Sundays in a Maha Yuga measured in 'Soura mana', while the Moon day-nights from Mondays measured in 'Chandra mana' total up to 160,30,00,080 in a MahaYuga; this is to establish the difference in the Solar and Lunar Calendar daynights viz.2,50,822 days. 'Adhika Maasa' is 15, 93,336 in a Maha Yuga, while 'Thikshaya' is 250, 82,252. Looked in terms of Solar Months, the number is 518, 40,000 where as Lunar Months are 534, 33,336- all in Maha Yuga. The methodologies of calculating were offered in respect of the current Yuga about Graha Gyana, Bhumi Paridhi Pramaana; positioning and speed of Grahas (Planets), Graha 'Panchanga Sadhana' or Tithi, Vakreekarana or of negative influences and Kaala Gyana. Vaara, Nakshatra, Karana and Yoga determine the results of good or bad nature to a person. There are Nakshatra Dashas like Vimshottari Dasha, Ashtottari Dasha, Kala chakra Dasha, Yogini Dasha, etc. Also threre are Rashi Dashas like Narayana Dasha, Ati Karaka Kendriya Dasha, Trikona Desha, as also Ayur Desha. In the context of determining *Karanams* or one half of Tithi or then time required for the angular distance between Moon and Sun; there are eleven Karanas viz four fixed ones called Kimshugna, Shakuni, Chatushpad and Naagava, besides repetitive Karanas viz. Bhaava, Kualava, Titula, Garaja, Vanaja, and Vishti. Karanam is active at the time of Sun Rise. Another important input relates to Yoga the angular distance along the eliptive view of any object on the sky (measured from Mesha or the start of

Aries) called the longitude of an object when the longitudes of Sun and Moon are added; the result produced a value ranging from Zero degree to 360 degree and that is called Yogam, which is also active in the mornings. There are 27 Yogas like Visha Kamba, Preeti, Ayushman, Sowbhagya, Shobhana, Atiganda, Sukumara, Dhriti, Shula, Ganda, Vriddhi etc. *Ayanamsha Sadhana*: The word 'Ayana' denotes movement and 'Amsha' a component. Ananamsha bhaaga or portion is the amount of 'precession' or the orientation of the rotation axis of a rotating body. In astrology, this is a longitudinal difference between 'Sayana' (Tropical) and Nirayana (Sidereal) zodiacs. Ayanamsha is defined as the angle between the Sidereal ecliptic longitude of a celestial body and its tropical ecliptic longitude. According to Surya Siddhanta, Ananamsa rises from 0 degree to +27 degrees during 1800 years and decreases to 0 degree to -27 degree thus oscillating within a range of plus/minus 27 instead of cyclically moving in a circle. In astronomy, precession refers to several slow changes in an Astronomical body's rotational or orbital parameters especially in Earth's precession of Equinoxes. Periodical changes of Earth's orbital parameters combined with the precession of equinoxes and the inclinatin of Earth's axis on its orbit is a part of Astronomy.

Grahana Sadhana: Chandra Grahana (Lunar Eclipse) takes place on a Pournami and Surya Grahana (Solar Eclipse) on Amavasya and these are called Parvas. As 'Grahas' rotate on their own axis and perform Pradakshina (circumambulation) around Bhumi, that path is known as the 'Kasksha'or region of that Graha. Prithvi is far away from the Sun path and Chandra is nearer and is in between Surya and Prithvi. In the direction in which Surya travels, the shadow of Prithvi falls in the opposite direction of Surva's path and the length of the rotating shadow is equal to that distance. As Prithi is round, the shadow of Chandra is also rounding, moving six 'Rashis' away from Surya. Chandra rotatating on its own axis moves along with Surya on the Southern Rekha (Line) and that time is known as Darshanta Kaala ie at the junction of the termination of Amavasya and the beginning of Shukla Pratipada; similarly, when Surva reaches six Rashis ahead that time is Pournima. Thus Surva is shadowed by Chandra and Chandra is shadowed by the shadow of Prithvi; that is why during Surya Grahana, Surya is known as Chhadya or the shadow maker and Chandra is Chhadak; again, in Chandra Grahana, Chandra is Chhadya, Earth's shadow or Bhubha is Chhadak or Grahana Karta. The 'Vilambana' or the delay of time between the 'Chhadya'and 'Chhedak' is known as 'Chhanna' or 'graas'. Thus when Chandra is fully invisible, then the Lunar Eclipse is stated to be complete or 'Sarvagraas'. If Chandra grahana is a 'Khanda Grahana' or a partial eclipse, then Prithvi's shadow falls on Chandra to that extent.

Surva Grahana (Solar Eclipse): When Chandra travels while in rotation between Surva and Prithvi and lies in the Southern direction under the level of Surya, that day when Sun rays fall on the top portion of Chandra, that night is called as Amavasya since Chandra's lower portion is invisible on Earth. It is on that Amavasya when Chandra comes in between Prithvi and Surya and Surya's 'bimba' disappears at a point of time, that particular Amavasya is stated to the time of Surya Grahana (Solar Eclipse). As in the case of Lunar Eclipse, there might be Sarva graas or Khanda Graas of Solar Eclipse too. On Amavasya, Chandra's Chhaya falls towards Prithvi and in that Chhaya Bhubhubhagh falls and Surya bimba disappears; the extent of disappearence denotes the full or partial Solar Eclipse. Maharshi Sanandana explained to Narada Muni the methodology of calculating the exact time and duration of the Eclipses as also the general impact on various other Grahas. The belief in Puranas that Rahu was responsible for the Eclipses as he was annoyed at the successful attempts made by Surya and Chandra to dismember him, although succeeded to secure 'Amrit' and as a result accomplished the status of Grahas, was not unfound; it is believed that Rahu was dismembered from one entity into two as Rahu and Ketu and Lord Brahma set up Rahu in the shadow of Chandra and Ketu in the shadow of Prithvi and appointed them as Grahas (Planets); while Rahu and Ketu were positioned as the shadows nearby to Surya and Chandra respectively and were thus stated to be responsible for the Eclipses.

Sadhana: If a concrete platform is made and a 'Shankha'is erected at a central point, mark a 'Vrittha' (circle) with twelve equi-distant portions from the centre drawn to the periphery, keep marking twelve 'dots'after every two hours, observing Sun's direction from the Sun-Rise point and the Sun-Fall, it is not difficult locate the Dishas/ Upa Dishas (directions), indicating the twelve Rashis, [viz.Mesha (Aries), represented by Ram, Fire and Mars; Vrishabha, represented by Bull, Earth, and Venus; Mithuna

(Gemini), represented by a Couple, Air and Mercury; Karkataka (Cancer), represented by Crab, Water and Moon; Simha (Leo) reprented by Lion, Fire and Sun; Kanya (Virgo) represented by Virgin, Earth and Mercury; Tula (Libra) represented by a Balance, Air and Venus; Vrischika (Scorpio) represented by Water and Mars; Dhanus (Saggitarius) represented by a Bow, Fire and Jupiter; Makara (Capricon) represented by Alligator, Earth and Saturn; Kumbha (Aquarius) represented by Pot, Air and Saturn and Meena (Pisces) represented by Fish, Water and Jupiter]. The Dashas and Upa Dashas respectively are North East (Ishana) representing Varuna or Water full of beneficial Energy; East (Poorva) ruled by Indra indicating for Authority and Contentment; South East (Agneya) represented by Agni / Fire and Energy; Dakshina (South) ruled by Yama and standing for Dharma and Death; South West (Niruti) ruled by Nocturnal Deity known for Sleep, Fame and Income; West (Paschim) is ruled by Varuna for Water/ Rain and 'Karma'/ fate; North West (Vayavya) ruled by Vayu Deva standing for intellect, business and name; North (Kubera) known for prosperity and Career; Brahma is the Centre for Power and Creativity.

#### 'Jaataka Skandha'

It is stated that the Rashis from 'Mesha' constitute the limbs of 'Kaala Purusha' in the order of head, face, hands, heart, stomach, thighs, 'Vasti' or urinary bladder, linga, knees, leg calves and two feet. Mangal, Shukra, Budha, Chandra, Surya, Budha, Shukra, Mangal, Guru Shani, and Guru are the Ruling Deities of the Rashis respectively as follows: Mesha-Vrisha-Mithun-Karka-Simha-Kanya-Tula-Vrischik-Dhanu-Makar-Kumbh-Meena Mangal-Venus-Budha-Chand-Surya-Budha-Shukra-Mangal- Guru- Shani- Shani- Guru .

In the context of specific Rashi, Shad Vargas are calculated in terms of Hora (from Sun Rise to Sun set), Drekshana (division of one third of a Rashi or a Varga), Navamamsha, Dwadashaamsha, and Trimshamsha (as each Rashi comprises thirty Amshas.), of which fifteen Amshas has one hora, ten Amshas make a drekshana, three and one third Amshas make a Navamamsha; (in other words, in each Raashi, there are nine Navamshas), two and half Amshas make one Dwadashamsha thus making twelve Dwadashamshas in a Rashi.Each Amsha is called a Trimshamsha. In malefic Rashis, first five Amshas are dominated by Mangal, the next five Amshas by Shani, the next eight Amshas by Brihaspati, the further seven Amshas by Budha and the last five Amshas by Shukra. In respect of 'Sama' (Even) Rashis, the reverse order is applicable viz. first five by Shukra, seven by Budha, then eight by Brihaspati, five by Shani, and finally five by Mangal.

The *Jnanaartha Chakra of Horas* indicates that during the first half or the fifteen Amshas, Mesha Rasi is governed by Ravi, Vrisha by Shukra, Mithun by Ravi, Karkataka by Chandra, Simha by Ravi, Kanya by Chandra, Tula by Ravi, Vrischik by Chandra, Dhanu by Ravi, Makara by Chandra, Kumbha by Ravi and Meena by Chandra; where as during the second half of 15 to 30 Amshas in the Hora Chakra, Ravi is dominant among Vrisha, Karka, Kanya, Vrischik, Makar and Meena and Chanrda in the rest of the Raashis viz. Mesha, Mithuna, Simha, Tula, Dhanu and Kumbha. In respect of Triteeyaamsha, viz. Dreshkaana the dominating Grahas in the first part of 1-10 Amshas are as follows: Mangala in Mesha and Vrischik, Shukra in Vrisha and Tula, Budha in Mithun and Kanya, Chandra in Karka, Surya in Tula, and Guru in nine and Twelve; during the period of eleven to twenty Amshas of the middle phase, Surya is dominating in Mesha; Budha in Vrisha and Kumbha; Shukra in Mithuna and Makara, Mangal in Karka and Dhanu, Guru in Simha and Vrischik, Shani in Kanya and Tula; and Chandra in Meena; and finally during the Third and final Dreshkana ie from 21 to 30 Anshas, Guru is prominent in Mesha and Karka, Shani in Vrisha and Mithuna, Mangal in Simha and Meena, Shukra in Kanya and Kumbha, Budha in Tula and Makara, Chandra in Vrischik, and Surya in Dhanu.

Calculations in respect of *Navaamsha Jnaana* are exacting, since nine Amsha / Kalaas are involved from 3/20, 6/40, 10/0, 13/20, 16/40, 20/0, 23/20, 26/40 and 30/0; during these respective Amsha Kalaas, the juxta-positions of Raashi / Grihas are *Mesha* vs. Mangala (1), Shukra (2), Budha (3), Chandra(4), Surya (5), Budha (6), Shukra (7) Mangala (8) and Guru (9); *Vrisha vs.* Shani (10),

Shani (11), Guru (12), Mangala (1), Shukra (2), Budha (3), Chandra (4), Ravi (5) and Budha (6); Mithuna Vs. Shukra (7), Mangal (8), Guru (9), Shani (10), Shani (11), Guru (12), Mangal (1), Shukra (2) and Budha (3); Karka vs. Chandra (4), Ravi (5), Budha (6), Shukra (7), Mangal (8), Guru (9), Shani (10), Shani (11), Guru (12); Simha vs. Mangal (1), Shukra (2), Budha (3), Chandra (4), Surva(5), Budha (6), Shukra (7), Mangala (8) and Guru (9); Kanya vs. Shani (10), Shani (11) Guru(12), Mangal(1), Shukra (2), Budha (3), Chandra (4), Ravi (5) and Budha (6); Tula vs. Shukra (7), Mangal (8), Guru (9); Shani (10), Shani (11), Guru (12), Mangala (1), Shukra (2), and Budha (3); Vrischika vs. Chandra (4), Ravi (5), Budha (6), Shukra (7), Mangala (8), Guru (9), Shani (10), Shani (11) and Guru (12); *Dhanu vs.* Mangal (1), Shukra (2), Budha (3), Chandra (4), Surya (5), Budha (6), Shukra (7), Mangala (8), and Guru (9); Makara vs. Shani (10), Shani (11), Guru (12), Mangala (1), Shukra (2), Budha (3), Chandra (4), Ravi (5), and Budha (6); Kumbha vs. Shukra (7), Mangal (8), Guru (9), Shani (10), Shani (11), Guru (12), Mangala (1), Shukra (2), and Budha (3); and Meena vs. Chandra (4), Ravi (5), Budha (6), Shukra (7), Mangala (8), Guru (9), Shani (10), Shani (11) and Guru (12). Similar calculations may be done in respect of Dwadashaamsha Chakra has to be calculated in the juxtaposition of Raashis and Grahaas with the difference that instead Navamshi or nine Amshas, the reference is for Twelve Anshaas in the slots of 2, 5, 7, 10, 12, 15, 17, 20, 22, 25, 27 and 30. This is how Rashi of a native, hora, Dreshkaan, Navamaamsha, Dwadashaamsha and Trimshaamsha are worked out and the process is defined as Shadvarga. The Six of the Twelve Raashis viz. vrisha, Mesha, Dhanu, Karka, Mithun and Makara are known as Raatri Sanjnaatak as the are active in the nights, mainly; they are also known as 'Prushtodaya' since they are from the hind side of the body, excepting in respect of Mithuna. The rest of the Rashis are Dina Sanjnas and are active during the day-time (Meena Rashi is however Ubahyodaya) and the rest are of Seershodaya category. As regards the aspect of beneficient and malefic nature, Mesha, Mithuna, Simha, Tula, Dhanu and Kumbha are of Krura (Cruel) nature and the other Grahas are of Soumya / Soft nature. The Anga Sthhanaa or the predominant body-part of Mesha is Mastak (head), Vrisha is Mukha/ Face, Mithuna is shoulder, Karka Hridaya, Simha (Stomach), Kanya (kamara / waist)), Tula (bladder), Vrischik (Linga), Dhanu (Uru / thighs), Makara (Jaanu/ knees), Kumbha (jangha / shin ) and Meena is feet. As regards the Sthira ( Stable) or Chara (mobile) nature of the Rashis, Mesha, Karaka, Tula and Makara are of 'chara' nature while Vrisha, Simha, Vrischika and Kumbha are stable Rashis, but Mithuna, Kanya, Dhanu, and Meena are of both Swabhavas. Surva is in Ucchha (exalted position) in Mesha with ten Amshas, Chandra is exalted in Vrisha with 3 Ashas, Mangala in Makara with 28 Amshas, Budha in Kanya with 15 Amshas, Guru in Karka with 5 Amshas, Shukra in Meena with 27 Amshas and Shani in Tula with 20 Amshas in Paramoccha or highly exalted position. As regards the direction of the Rashis, Mesha, Simha and Dhanu are in the East; Vrisha, Kanya and Makara in South; Mithuna, Tula and Kumbha westward and Karka, and Vrischik and Meena northward. In Chara position, East Navamaamsha is Vargotthama; the fifth or Madhyama Navamaamsha is the best among the Sthira or stable positions; and in dwisvabhava the last Navamaamsha is the best of Vargottamaas. Talking of Lagnas, these are of twelve 'Bhaavaas'. The Mula Trikonas or Corner Triangles are stated to be Surya's Simha, Chandra's Vrisha, Mangala's Mesha, Budha's Kanya, Guru's Dhanu, Shukra's Tula and Shani's Kumbha. Chaturtha and Ashtabhavas are called Chaturasras or squares. The Navama and Panchama are called Trikonas. Dwadasha, Asthama and Shashtha are called Trikas; Laghna Chaturtha, Saptama and Dashama are Kendras (Center). The 'dwipadas' (bipeds), Jala charaas (water borne), Keeta (worms) and Pashu or animals are powerful in Kendra; in other words, Dwipadas in Lagna, Jalachara in Chaturtha, Keeta in Seventh and Pashu in Daswa or tenth become powerful. From Kendra, the positions at 2, 5, 8 and 11 are known as 'Panaphar'; the subsequent positions at 3, 6, 9 and 12 are named 'Aapovilma'. Mesha is 'Rakta Varna' or of blood-red colour, Vrisha Rashis colour is Sweta (white), Mithuna has the green colour of a Parrot, Karka's colour is rose like, Simha is Dhumra or grey, Kanya Raashi's colour is Wheatish, Tula's colour is Chitra or mixed, Vrischika has black colour, Dhanu has yellow colour, Makara is of Pinga /orange colour, Kumbha has Babhru or blue-like colour and Meena has 'Swaccha' or transparent varna. Surya Deva is

known as Kaalapurusha's Atma or Soul, Chandra is the Manas or heart, Mangal is Parakrama or Valour, Budha is Vani or the power of Speech, Guru is Jnaana (Knowledge) and Happiness, Shukra is desire and Shani is sorrow. Surya and Chandra are the epitomes of a King, Mangal is Senapati or Head of Defence Forces, Budha is Raja Kumar or the Prince, Brihaspati and Shukra are the Ministers and Shanaischar is 'Doota' (Servant). Having given the colours of Raashis, the Varnas or colours of Grahas are given as Surya of Tamra (copper), Chandra of Shukla or white, Mangal of Rakta or blood, Budha of green colour, Brihaspati of 'peeta' or yellow, Shukra is of Chitra and Shaneshwara is of black colour. Agni, Jala, Kartikeya, Hari, Indra, Indrani and Brahma are the Deities of Nava Grahas. Surya, Shukra, Mangal, Rahu, Shani, Chandra, Budha and Brihaspati are the Rulers of Purva, Agneya, Dakshina, Nairuti, Paschima, Vayavya, Uttara and Ishana respectively. Ksheena or diluted Chandra, Surya, Mangal, and Shani are 'Paapa- grahas' (malevolent); Budha and Shani are Napumsaka (eunuchs); Shukra and Chandra are Stree (effiminate) Grahas, and the rest of Grahas viz. Ravi, Mangala and Guru are Purushas. Mangal, Budha, Guru, Shukra and Shani are the counter-part Masters of the Tatwas of Agni, Bhumi, Aakaash, Jala, and Vaayu. Shukra and Guru are from the Brahmana Varna; Bhauma and Ravi are Kshatrias, Chandra is the Master of Vaishva Varna and Budha is the Head of Sudra Varnas. Shani is the Head of Antyajas (the least important of Varnas) and Rahu is the Master of Mlecchas. Chandra, Surya and Brihaspati are of Sathva Guna; Budha and Shukra of Rajo Guna, and Mangal and Shani are of Tamo guna. Surya is the Master of Devatas, Chandra of Jala, Mangala of Agni, Budha is the Master of Kreeda Vihara or Sports, Brihaspati of Bhumi, Shukra of Wealth, Shanaischara of Shayana or Sleep and Rahu the Master of 'Usar' or Chemeleons. Surva and the following Grahas viz. Chandra, Mangal, Budha, Guru, Shukra and Shani wear the respective Vastras (Clothes) viz. coarse, new, burnt, wet, medium, strong and worn ones. The respective Grahas from Surya as above are the 'Dhatus' of copper, diamonds, gold, glass, silver, pearls and iron. The beneficiaries of the dhatus are bones in respect of Surya; shronita (egg-developer of Virility) from 'Manis' or Jewels in respect of Chandra; 'Majja or bone-marrow from Gold in the case of Mangala; twacha or skin from glass in respect of Budha, 'Vasaa' or fat from silver in the case of Guru; 'Veerya' from pearls in the case of Shukra and 'snaayu' or sinews from loha or metal/iron as from Shani. Similarly Shani, Shukra, Mangala, Chandra, Budha and Guru are the Masters of the Seasons of Shishira, Vasanta, Greeshma, Varsha, Sharad and Hemanta. Graha Kaalamaan: One 'Ayana' or six months, 'Muhurta' or two 'Ghadis', 'Ahoratra', 'Ritu' or two 'maasaas' or months, 'maasa', 'Paksha' or fortnight and 'Varsha' or a Year-these are the Kaalamaanas of Grahas commencing from Surya. These are also the 'Rasaas' or tastes of the Grahas viz. Katu /Mircha (Surya); Lavana (Salt) (Chandra), Tikta or bitter (Mangal); 'Mishra' or mixed tastes (Budha); 'Mathura' or sweet (Guru); 'Amla' or sour (Shukra) and 'Kashaya' or herbal decoction (Shani). Swaabhaavika Maitri of Grahas (Natural Compatibility): To Surya, Mitras or important friends are Chandra, Mangal and Guru; Budha is a normal friend but Shukra and Shani are enemies; to *Chandra*, significant friends are Budha and Surva, neutral friends are Mangala, Guru, Shukra and Shani but has no Shatrus at all; Mangala's very good friends are Chandra, Surya and Guru, his normal friends are Shukra and Shani and enemy is Budha; to Budha, very good friends are Shukra and Surya, normal friends are Mangala, Guru and Shani but Chandra is shatru; to Guru, Surya, Mangala and Chandra are very good friends, Shani is a neutral friend but Budha and Shukra are enemies; To Shukra good friends are Budha and Shani, neutrals or Mangala and Guru but Surya and Chandra are enemies; Shani's very good friends are Shukra and Budha, Guru is neutral to him but enemies are Surya, Chandra and Mangala.

Mataantara Maitri of Grahas (Compromised Compatibility): Surya is a friend of Brihaspati in normalcy, so is Chandra with Guru and Budha, Mangal with Shukra and Budha, Budha with all the Grahas excepting Surya, Guru is friendly with all excepting Mangala, Shukra is friendly ordinarily excepting Chandra and Ravi, and Shani is friendly with others excepting Mangala, Chandra and Ravi. *Tatkaalika Maitri among Grahas:* (Temporary Compatibility): Depending on the time/positioning of Grahas in second and twelfth Houses; or third and eleventh Houses; or fourth and

tenth Houses, even natural enemies might become friendly on temporary basis. Suppose Surya is in the First House and Budha, Shukra and Mangal are in second, third and fourth Houses respectively, then Surya would become temporary friends and Chandra, Guru and Shani become Shatrus. Similarly, Chandra becomes friendly with Shani, Guru, Shukra and Mangala if they happen to be in the third, fourth, eleventh and tenth Houses and others viz. Surya and Budha become Shatrus. There would be temporary friendships and enimities among other Grahas as well.

Nakshatra Phala (Star-wise birth results): Readings as per Nakshatra (Star)-wise birth of various human beings were narrated by Sanandana Maharshi to Narada Muni as follows: Those born in Ashwini are handsome and fond of wearing ornaments. Bharani-born are capable to perform and speak truthfully. Krittika-born tends to eatless, steady-minded, and conversational but have soft corner for other women. Rohini born are wealthy, Mrigashitaites are luxurious; Ardra-born violent, stubborn and criminal-minded; Punarvasu born are even-minded, and well behaved but suffer bad health; Persons born in *Pushya* Nakshatra are imaginative like Poets and are happy-go-lucky. Those persons who are born in Aslesha are rude, obstinate, ungrateful, low-minded and uncouth. Magha born are rich, devoted and happy. If born in *Purva Phalguni*, the persons are charitable, adjustable, sociable and conversationalists. Born of *Uttara Phalguni* are wealthy and comfortable. *Hasta* born are shameless, mean-minded and crooks. Persons born in Chitra are well dressed, beautiful and charming. Swati born are virtuous, moralistic, kind hearted and charitable. Vishakhaites are greedy, deceptive, cunning and harsh. Born of Anuradha, the persons are fond of travel and non-resident. Jyeshtha born are principled and contented. Persons born in Mula Nakshatra are wealthy, happy and helpful. If born of *Purvashadha and Uttarashadha*, the persons concerned are happy- go- lucky and hearty /disciplined and virtuous respectively. Shravanites are rich, happy and famous; while born of *Dhanishta*, the persons concerned are donors, wealthy and courageous. A person born of Shatabhisha, the persons win over opponents but are susceptible of bad practices. Born of Purvabhadra, the persons concerned are heavily prone to feminine influence and rich; while Uttrabhadraites are independent, assertive, speech-makers, attractive and joyful. Finally, those born in *Revati* are energetic, enterprising, rich and pure-hearted.

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

Suryaadi Graha-Raashi- Phala: If Surya is in Mesha Raashi, the 'Jaataka' would be famed; in Vrisha Raashi the person would be a woman hater; in Mithuna the person is rich; Karka stands for angry nature; Simha for ignorance; Kanya for a Poet; Tila for an Artist; Vrischik for dhanavaan; Dhanu for Loka Pujyata; Makar for a miser; Kumbha for poverty, and Meena is unhappiness. If Mangal is in Simha the Jataka is of poverty; in Karka, the person is rich; in Swaraashi ie. Mesha / Vrischika the Jaataka is Bhramana sheela or fond of travel; in Budha Raashi (Kanya-Mithun), the person is full of gratitude; in Guru (Dhanu- Meena) fame and name; in Shukra (Vrisha-Tula) desire for opposite sex; Makara for good progeny and prosperity; and in Kumbha an unhappy, wicked and illusive nature. If Budha is in Surya's Simha Raasi, the native is a woman hater; Chandra Raashi in Karaka, the person would be a disliker of relatives; in Mangala raashi (Mesha Vrischika) suffers poverty; in Budha raashi (Mithun -Kanya), the person becomes intelligent and rich; the native in Guru Raashi (Dhanu/Meena) achieves fame; in Shukra Raashi (Vrisha-Tula) the person concerned the native gets rich by wife and children; and in Shani Raashi (Makara –Kumbha) goes in debt.

If Guru is in Simha, the native becomes Senapati; in Karka becomes rich by wife and children; in Mangal (Mesha-Vrischik) he/she would be wealthy and forgiving; in Budha (Mithuna-Kanya) the native would by wealthy by 'astraas' etc.; in Own Raashi (Dhanu-Meena), becomes District-Head; in Shukra's Raashi (Vrisha-Tula) the nbative becomes rich and happy; and in Shani (Makar-Kumbha), the person becomes the Poor and in Kumbha rich. If Shukra is in Simha attains prosperity by wife; in Karka becomes arrogant and unhappy; in Mangal (Mesha-Vrichak) receives hatred from relations; in Budha (Mithun-Karka) becomes rich and sinless; in Guru (Dhanu-Meena) becomes scholarly; and in own (Vrisha-Tula) becomes rich and forgiving; and finally in Shani (Makara-Kumbhja) gets disgraced by woman or opposite sex. If Shani is in Simha, the native becomes poor because of children and lack of money; in Mangal (Mesha-Vrischika), the native becomes friendless and poor; in Budha (Mithun-Kanya) the person turns out to be a Pradhaan Rakshak /Chief of Security; in Guru Raashi (Dhanu-Meena) the person becomes rich and happy due to life-partner and offspring; in Shukra (Vrisha-Tula) becomes a King anf finally in the own Raashi (Makara-Kumbha), the native would be the Territorial Head.

Graha Drishti on Chandra: Maharshi Sanandana further explained to Narada Muni the 'drishthi phal' or the visionary outcome of 'Nava Grahas' on Chandra positioned in various 'Raashis'; for instance, the drishti of Grahas stationed in Mesha Stitha Chandra results in varying results like Mangala drishti yields 'Bhupa' (King); Budha drishti gives 'Jna' or Pandita, Guru's drishti gives 'Guni'; Shukra drishti provides 'Chora Swabhava' or the characteristic of a thief and Shani's drishti creates 'Aswa' or poverty. On Vrishascha Chandra, the Graha drishti yields Nirdhana from Mangala, Chora Swabhava from Budha, and Raja Swabhava from Guru, 'Pandita' Swabhava from Shukra; and Preshya / Bhritya Swabhava or of a servant from Shani. (Surya drishti is 'anukta' or unknown and may be considered as the drishti of Shani). The 'drishti phalas' are to be reckoned accordingly as per the above illustrations. Similarly, the 'drishti' of various Grahas on Chandra in terms of 'Navaamsha' and the resultant 'Phalas' might also be identified.

Maharshi Sanandana described various other aspects of Jyotisha to Narada Muni ranging from the fixation of muhurtas like agricultural operations (Seed-spreadings, tilling, crop-cuttings), Roga-Vimukti Snaanas or bathings to terminate illnesses, 'Nrityaarambha' or maiden dances (good Nakshatras being Uttara Phalguni, Uttaraashaadha, Uttara Bhadrapada, Anuraadha, Jeyshtha, Dhanishta, Shatabhisha, Pushya, Hasta and Revati); 'Yatra' or travel Nakshatras viz. Ashwini, Krittika, Mrigashira, Pushya, Moola, Chitra, Shravana, the Three Uttaras, Purva phalguni, Magha, Vishaka and Dhanishta ('varjita' or avoidable nakshatras are Rohini, Jeyshtha, Punarvasu, Swati, Revati, Hasta, Anuradha, Purvabhadra, Bharani and Aslesha) etc. Muhurthas for Garbhadaana Samskara, Pumsavana / Seemantotrayana, Jaata Karma/Naama karma, Anna Praasana, Chookaakarana, Saamaanya Kshura Karma, Upanayana or Gayatri Mantropaasana, Vivahas (weddings), Vadhu Pravesha or maiden entry of brides in the homes of husbands, Deva Pratishtha, Griha Nirmaana, Vaastu vishaya, Griha Pravesha or Entry of new residence, commencement of Deva Karyas like 'Vrataararambha'.

### Shukadeva's mastery of 'Vedangas', 'Upadeshas' by Janaka, Vyasa and Sanat Kumara

As directed by his father Veda Vyasa to achieve expertise in the Six 'Vedangas'viz. Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakaran, Nirukta, Vyakaran and Chhandas Shastra as stepping stones to accomplish 'Moksha', Suka Muni mastered the Vedangas and approached Veda Vyasa once again. The latter suggested to Shuka Deva to follow the normal route of 'Ashrama Dharma'viz. Brahma-charya, Vivahika

Jeevana, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa and advised him to meet King Janaka at Mithilapura the father of Devi Sita and the Epic Hero Shri Rama. Veda Vyasa suggested that Suka Deva should adopt the normal route to the City of Mithila, instead of the Yoga Marg by 'Antarisha' or the Sky Route so that Suka Muni would be exposed to human experiences of joys and sorrows on the way. Veda Vyas asserted that **King Janaka** was not only his disciple but also his Master since he was a King and moreso an expert in the Moksha Shastra. As Suka Deva reached the Royal Palace, the Gate Keepers denied admission but an Official of the Court recognised the name of Veda Vyasa and that Sukha Deva was his son, admitted the latter into the private Chambers of the King, where several charming and coquettish girls sought to entertain the special guest of honour. But Suka Deva, being a person of full control of his faculties had no reactions either to women or wine. When he met the King, he conveyed that his father Vyasa suggested meeting him and clarifying some of his doubts; for instance: what were the duties of a Brahmana, what would be the Swarupa or Form of Moksha and how best to seek Moksha. King Janaka replied that a person born as a Brahmana would assume a second life after his 'Upanayana Samskara'-hence known as a 'Dwija'or twice born; he would then have the duties of Veda Pathana, Swaadhyayana, Tapasya, Guru Seva, strict practice of Brahmacharya, performance of homas, Shraddha/Tarpana and remittance of debts to Devas and Pitras, return from Gurukula to the Parents after giving Guru Dakshina, wedding, earning livelhood for the self and 'Samsara'; discharge of various 'Garhastya responsibilities' especially worship of deities, performance of Agni Karyas/ Yagnas, Vratas, Atithi Puja or worship of Guests, procreation of children, bringing them up, Charities, Tirtha Yatras, Vanaprastha, Sanyasa and Moksha sadhana. It would be necessary to go through the entire cycle of life of observing the 'Purusharthas' of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. It would be erroneous to presume that one could reach final stage of Moksha without passing through the phases of life and absorbing the experiences while transgressing the Regulations of Socio-religious frame work and practising self-control at every stage.

After hearing King Janaka, Suka Deva questioned whether a person, who had already secured 'Jnana-Vignana' or the full Knowledge of Brahma during the Brahmachaya stage and was completely devoid of 'Raga-Dweshas' or desires and dislikes, would still have to pass through the other three Ashramas. In reply, King Janaka said that just as Moksha would not be possible of attainment without 'Jnana-Vignana', the latter too would 'truly' not be possible of attainment without a 'Sadguru' who alone could guide to swim through the Samsara. It was a Guru alone that could help draw lines of distinction between the 'Dharmik Maryada' or the limits of Virtue and those of 'Karmanushthan' or Rituals. This guidance of sifting the good and bad would not be possible unless specific situations were faced and surmounted. The significance of radiance would be learnt only when darkness was present! Similarly, the impact of Rajasa and Tamasa gunas would be evident only against the Satvika Guna. Then only, there would be the possibility of 'Atma Sakshatkaar' or Self-Enlightenment. 'Brahma Bhaava' would occur only when one were not afraid of anybody and none were afraid of him; when a person became unable to do anything against anybody either by speech, thinking or action, then only Brahma Bhava became evident. When jealousy, or desire or greed were abolished then only 'Brahmananda' or bliss was experienced; when one distinguishes what was seen and heard then only a comparison would be possible and then only there could be a question of treating the situations discreetly. Unless 'Duhkha' (sorrow) and 'Sukha' (happiness) were experienced, where was the question of eqanimity! Similarly, comparisons would be possible between blame-praise, iron-gold, cold-heat, Artha (wealth)-Anartha (poverty), likes-dislikes and life-death; how could otherwise be possible to achieve Brahma-Bhava! King Janaka further said that Suka Muni had all the qualifications to accomplish Moksha, excepting the lack of awareness of the surroundings and the 'Loukya'or worldly wisdom which too was essential to recognise Brahma Gyan; that could be understood only when illumination and darkness were clearly differentiated and that would be possible when Ashrama Dharma was practised and control of 'Indrivas' was secured just as water drops on Lotus leaf were in the 'Samsara' without

being affected by the leaf! As King Janaka sought to convince Suka Muni, the latter returned to his father VedaVyasa quietly with an implicit approval of following the 'Ashrama Dharma' and enter the phase of Grihasta Ashrama!

A highly delighted Veda Vyasa recited Vedas along with Suka Muni, there was a powerful sweep of wind which was recognised as a sign of Suka Muni's Divya-drishti or Celestial Vision and Veda Vyasa explained to Suka Muni about *Pravaha* or the First of the flows of Seven Vayus- the 'Prathama' or the First Wind Flow between 'Prithvi' and 'Aakash'. The second Vayu, viz. Aavaha would get created by the interaction of the 'Rasa-Matras' of Akaash and Vidyut (Sky and Lightening) which created thunders making huge sounds. Jeemutas would get created by the absorption of Sea water by Grahas or Planets like Sun and Moon. The Jeemutas would get converted as *Parjanyas* which in turn produce the third Vayu called *Uduh* and the latter would get interacted with massive clouds carrying collossal rain. The fourth Vayu Samvaha got created by hitting mountains. The high speed of the wind would uproot huge trees hitting 'pralaya kaala' type of clouds called *Blaahak* and the extremely swift and frightening fifth Vaya called *Vivah*, as a result of which Celestial waters would rain torrentially in the upper worlds; that sixth Vayu would be created further known as Parivaha; this Vayu was considered as a highly Tatvika. The seventh and final Vayu called Paravaha was indeed the Prana Vayu at the termination of life. These seven Vayus represent the Sapta Marudganas, who were born of Devi Diti. The Paravaha Vayu was so powerful that it could even shake Himalaya Mountains. This was stated to be the 'Nishwas' or the exhaling of Bhagavan Vishnu and whenever the pace of Vishnu Nishwas increased, then there would be hurricanes on Earth! After Suka Muni obtained Divya drishti, Veda Vyasa described the Seven Forms of Vayu as a result of which, Suka Deva's divya drishti was bestowed and Vyasa left Suka Muni to continue Swadhyayana of Vedas.

Meanwhile, Maharshi **Sanat Kumara** arrived and provided his Instruction to Suka Deva about Tatwas and Moksha Sadhana. Maharshi prefaced his Upadesha stating that there was no better 'Netra' (Vision) than 'Vidya' or Learning; no better Truth than Tapasya or Meditation; no worse Sorrow than Desire; no better happiness than 'Tyaga' or Sacrifice. He said: *Nityam krodhattapo rakshochhriyam rakshochha matsaraat, Vidyaam Maanaavamaana –bhyaamaatmaanam tu pramaadatah/ Aanrushyamsyam paroh Dharmah Kshamaa cha paramam balam, Atmajnaanam parm jnaanam Satyam hi Paramam hitam/* (Human Beings should shield against anger with Tapas /meditation and against the feelings of 'Maana' (praises) and 'Avamaana' (insults) with 'Vidya' (wisdom). Reversal of the mind-set of vindictiveness is by itself the highest Dharma. Forgiveness and tolerance are the greatest strength. Self-Realisation is the supreme Knowledge; and Truthfulness is the best tool of Action. Constant strife for acquisition/ possession is against the principle of a 'Pandita' or a 'Vidwan' whose basic trait is abandonment and detachment. Indifference leads to Self-Control, which leads to peace of mind and contentment; a feeling of satisfaction leads to happiness which is truly devoid of pulls and pressures of life and paves the route to 'Mukti'!

After obtaining the instructions of Veda Vyasa and Sanaka-Sanandana brothers, Suka Deva reached the top of Kailasha and after purifying himself externally and internally, commenced Yoga by Dharana and Samadhi, and gradually flew from the mountain-peaks to Vayu Mandal to various Lokas of Yaksha, Gandharva, Swarga, and Satya, before visioning Bhagavan Vishnu whom he eulogized in ecstasy as follows:

'Shantam prasanna vadanam peeta kousheya vaasasam, Shankha chakragadaa Padmairmurti-madbhvibhu rupaasitam/ Vaksthalasthyaa Lakshmyaa Kausthubhena viraajitam, Kati Sutra Brahma sutra katakaangad bhushitam/ Bhraajatkirita valayam Manirnupura shobhitam, Dadarsha siddhinkaraih sevyamaana maharnisham/ Tam drushta bhakti bhaavena trushtaava Madhusudanam, Namestey Vaasu Devaaya Sarva lokaika saakshiney/ Jagadbeeja swarupaaya Purnaaya nibhrutaatmaney, Harye Vaasukisthaya Shweta dwipa nivaashiney/ Hamsaaya Matsya rupaaya

Varaaha tanu dhaariney, Nrisimhaaya Dhruyejyaja Sankhya yogeshwaraaya cha/ Chatuh Sanaaya Kurmaaya Prithavey Swasukhaatmaney, Nabhoyaya Jagaddhaatrey Vidhaatrenta karaayacha/ Bhargavendraaya Raamaaya Raaghavaaya Paraayacha, Krishnaaya Veda Kartrecha Buddha Kalki swarupiney/ Chaturvyuhaaya Vedyaya Dhyeyaya Parama -atmaney, Nara Narayanaakhyaya Shipiyishtaaya Vishnayey/ Rutadhaamney Vidhaamnecha Suparnaya Swarochishey, Rubhayey Suvrutaakhyaya Sudhaanney chajitaya cha/ Vishwarupaaya Vishwaaya Srishthisthityantakaariney, Yagnaaya Yagna bhoktrey cha Sthavishtaayaana verthiney/ Aditya Soma netraaya Sahaojo balaaya cha, Eejyaaya Sakshineyjaaya Bahu seershonghri baahayey/ Shrishaaya Shriniyasaaya Bakta Vashya sharinginey, Ashtaprakruthyadhishaaya Brahmanenanta Shaktaye/ Brihadaaranya Vedyaaya Hrishikeshaaya Vedhasey, Pundarika Nibhakshaya Kshetrajnaaya vibhasiney/ Govindaya Jagat Karthrey Jagannadhaya Yoginey, Styaaya Satya sandhaaya Vaikuntha yachutaayacha/ Adhokshjaaya Dharmaya Vamanaya Tridhaatavey, Ghrutaarchishey Vishnavey tenantaaya Kapilaaya cha/ Virinchiye Trikakrudey Rukyajussamarupiney, Eka Shringaya cha Suchishravasey Shaastrayonaye, Vrishakapaya Ridraaya Prabhavey Vishwakarmaney, Bhurbhuvah Swarupaya Daithagney Nirgunaayacha, Namaste paahi maameeha Sharanagatayatsala/.(My salutations to you Vasudeva, the unique substantiation of the entire Universe; the 'Bija Swarupa' or the Form of the Seed responsible for Creation; the Complete, Steady and Ever-lasting Supreme Soul; and the inimitabe occupant of Sweta Dwipa resting in 'Yoga Nidra' on the Vasuki Serpent's huge couch. You are the Forms of Hamsa, Matsya, Vaaraaha, Vaamana, and Nrisimha, as also the target of devotion by Dhruva. You are the epitome of Sankhya and Yoga disciplines; the reflections of Sanaka Brothers who were born with the Mission of prmoting Virtue. You were the Creator, Preserver and final Destroyer of the whole 'Srishti'. You are the image of Nabhi Putra Rishabha Deva. The Avatars of Parashu Rama, Shri Rama, Sri Krishna, Veda Vyasa, Buddha and Kalki Deva are your own to vindicate Dharma and devastate the Evil. You excel as Balabhadra, Pradyuna and Aniruddha as also like Nara Narayana and Sipivisht - the Most Intelligent. You are the Yagna, its Karta'and 'Bhokta and 'Sthula' and 'Sukshma' or the biggest and tiniest! Surya and Chandra are Your Eyes. You are the Ashta Prakritis viz. Bhumi, Jala, Agni, Vayu, Akasash, Mind, Buddhi, and Ahamkar (Ego); Brahma, the unending Shaktis and Parameshwara. You are the Kshetrajna, Govinda, Jagat Karta, Jagannatha, Yogi, Satya, Satya Pratigna, Vaikuntha, Achyuta, Adhokshaja, Dharma, Tridhatu, Tejopunja and RukYajur, Sama Vedas. You are the Forms of Bhurloka, Bhuvarloka and Swarloka. You are Nitya, Niranjana, Avyaya, and Akshara; Ishwara! I am under your protection!). Bhagavan Vishnu was happy with Shuka Muni's steadfast devotion and blessed him to attain 'Siddhis' and facilities of movement all over the Universe like Vayu Deva and Surya Deva: he also instructed Suka Muni to go back to Veda Vyasa for further 'Adhyana' of Shastras and seek his further guidance till the final call to him from the mortal life.

# Shiva Darshan- 'Pati', 'Pashu', 'Paasha' and 'Prapti'

Maharshi Sanatkumara described 'Bhaagavata Tantra' to Brahmarshi Narada to realise the Supreme Energy named Bhagavan through the route of 'Shiva Darshana'. In the context of Shaiva Maha Tantra, there are three 'Padaarthas' (Elements) viz. Pashupati, Pashu and Paasha. The 'Sadhanas' (tools) are four-folded viz. Vidya (Learning), Kriya (Action), Yoga and Charcha (Deliberation). Till such time that human beings are unable to shed ignorance and illusion, they continue to be called 'Pashus' or Animals with the instincts of 'Pashutwa' which is tantamount to 'Daitya Bhava' or of devilish features. The word 'Paasha' denotes 'bandhana' or chains /shackles. These are of five types, viz. 'Malaja', 'Karmaja', 'Maayeya' or Mayaajanya, 'Tirodhana Shaktija' and 'Binduja'. Malaja and Karmaja Paashas are due to dormant forces hiding the natural inclinations or Swabhaavika tendencies. The Mayeya bandhanas are due to the illusory forces which cover up the Truth of 'Sat-Chit- Ananda' and suppressing the awareness of realities and highligting temporary attractions of woman, wine, wealth. The Tirodhana Shaktija Paasha lacks the power of reversal (Rodhaka Shakti) when human beings tend to ignore the distinction of Human Body and Atma or Inner Consciousness. Finally, 'Binduja Paasha' denotes the full awareness of the

magnificence of Sat- Chit- Ananda Swarupa.

Pashus are of three types viz. 'Vigynaakala', 'Pralayaakala' and 'Sakala'. The Vigyanakala Pashu is tied with Paashas full of 'Mala' or dirt / filth; Pralayaakala Pashu is tied with the chains of Mala and 'Maya' (Illusion) also and Sakala or Sarva Pashu is tied with the chains of Mala, Maya and Karma (Deeds). When a person recognises the Swarupa of Bhagavan and practises japa, dhyana and Sanyas or even through regular life of 'Samsara' (family life) and reduces the worldly pulls and pressures, excepting however the normal 'bandhanas' or shackles called 'Anava Mala', then that person is stated to possess 'Vignaana kala'. When the person controls the body and mind, but still possesses the Karmaja mala and Maya-held mala or 'Maayeya kala', then the person is stated to possess Pralayaakala. As the person whose 'Jeevatma' is rid of Anava mala, Mayeya mala and karmaja mala or Pashas, then the person is stated as 'Sakala'. Now, Vigyanakala Pashus are of two categories, viz. 'Samaapta Kalusha (blemish) and 'Asamaapta Kalusha'; when a Jeevatma continues to perform Karmas (deeds), then to the extent that Karma carries 'mala', that becomes Asamaapta Kalusha. But that person leaves off all Karmas, then that Jeeva is stated to possess Samapta kalusha. Such person reaches the status of 'Vidyeshwara' of eight types; Ananthaschaiva sukshmascha tathaiva cha Shivottamah, Ekanetrastathaivaika Rudraschaapi Trimurthakah/ Shri Kanthascha shikhandi cha proktaa Vidveshwara imey (Ananta, Sukshma, Shivottama, Eka Netra, Eka Rudra, Tri Murthi, Shri Kantha and Shikhandi). Asamaapti Kalusha is he whose stock of blemishes is still unfinished; the Parameswara Mantra has to be instructed to him for the purpose. 'Pralayaakala pashu'has two formats, viz. pakka paashadwaya and apakka -paashadwaya; as a Jeevatma sheds 'Mala', 'Karma' and 'Maya', then the 'Pashas' get weakened, then the Jeeva becomes qualified for 'Diksha', which is the 'Sadhana' or the facilitator of Shivatva. The ever merciful 'Parameshwara' then enters the Physique of a Guru and gives the 'Diksha' (Apprenticeship) to practise the seven 'Sadhanaas'viz. 'Kalaa', 'Kaala', 'Niyati', 'Vidya', 'Raaga', Prakriti and 'Guna' along with other Tatwas vix. Pancha Bhutas or Five Elements of Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Sky; Mana (Mind), Buddhi (Internal Feelings) and 'Ahankar' (Ego); Ten Indriyas (Physical Limbs); 'Pancha Tanmatras' or Five Sound, Form, Taste, Smell and Touch, five 'Antahkaranas' and Five Shabdas. The Mantra- Diksha for the demolition of the 'Bandhanas' would thus constitute steps forward to *Shiva Darshana*.

#### Explanation of 'Mantras', 'Matrika Nyaasas' and 'Deva Puja Vidhi'

The basic forms of Mantras are of 'Stree' (Feminine), Purusha (Masculine) and Napumsak (Eunuch). The Stree Mantras end up with 'tha' or 'swaha'; Purusha Mantras end up with 'Hum' and 'Phut'; those Mantras end up with 'Namah' are used in Napumsak Mantras. The various Mantras are utilised in the context of six 'Karmas' deeds) viz. 'Shanti' (Peaceful purposes), 'Vashya' (subjugation), 'Stambhana' (paralizing), 'Dwesha' (creating hatred), 'Ucchhanana (uprooting) and 'Marana' (death-related). Where-ever Pranavaanta (ending with the word OM) and 'maatras or 'consonants like 'repha'or 'raakaar' as also the word 'Swaahaa'are involved, these expressions are Agni-Sambandhi or related to 'Agni Karyas' such as oblations to Fire and these are for 'Sowmya' or peaceful (benevolent) purposes; the other Karmas (deeds) are invariably malefic. When the Soma sambandhi Mantras are used, these 'Agnishomatmatmak' or Fire- oblation oriented and are uttered to awaken Devas. Such Mantras are used along with control of breathing through 'Ida' and Pingala Nadis' (viz. left and right nostrils). These Mantras are never uttered while one feels sleepy or inattentive, lest they have negative impact. Also, special Mantras are not to be uttered while stopping, breaking or discontinuing. In the 'Anulomakrama' (inhaling), bindu / anuswaar is used and in 'Vilomakrama' (exhaling), 'Visarga' is used. The utterances of these Mantras bestow 'siddhis' or various accomplishments. There are several 'doshas' (deficiencies) possible in the utterances of these Mantras; for eg. they are not recited while being dull, arrogant, troubled, inattentive, dejected or feeling superior or inferior; such moods or mental complexes could be cured by Yoga, especially by 'Yonimudra Aasana Yoga, under the guidance of a Guru. After performing the Sandhya-Tarpan and preparation for Puja, a devotee would first invoke

Ganesha to ensure that no hindrances are encountered in the worship. Then, 'Maatrika Nyaasa' is taken up in connection with Vaishnava-Maatrika-Nyasa and / or Shaiva-Maatrika-Nyasa/ Gaanapatyta-Maatrika-Nyasa / Kalaa-Matrika-Nyasa. The Vaishnava-Matrika Nyasa (Aligned of Deva-Devi) is as follows: Kirti - Keshava, Kranti- Narayana, Tushti- Madhava, Pushti- Govinda, Dhriti-Vishnu, Shanti- Madhushudan, Kriya- Trivikrama, Daya-Vamana, Megha-Shridhara, Harsha-Hrishikesha, Shraddha- Padmanabha, Lajja-Damodara, Lakshmi- Vasudeva, Sarasvati-Sankarshana, Preeti-Pradyumna, Rati- Aniruddha, Jaya-Chakri, Durga- Gadi, Prabha- Sharangi, Satya- Khadgi, Chanda- Shankhi, Vani- Hali, Vilasini- Musali, Vijaya-Shuli, Viraja-Paashi, Ashtangi- Vishwa, Vinada-Mukunda, Sunanda-Nandaja, Smriti-Nandi, Vriddhi- Nara, Samruddhi-Narakajit, Shuddhi-Hari, Buddhi-Krishna, Bhuti- satya, Mukti- Saawat, Kshama-Shouri, Ramaa-Shura, Uma-Shiva, Kledini- Bhudhara, Klinna-Vishva Murti, Vasudha-Vaikuntha, Vasuda-Purushottama, Para-Bali, Parayana-Balaanuja, Sukshma-Bala, Sandhya- Vrusha hanta, Pragna-Vrisha, Prabha- Hamsa, Nishaa-Varaaha, Dhar- Vimala, and Vidyut-Nrisimha. The Nyasa would be followed by 'Vishnu Dhyana' by reciting Om 'Hreem' / Shaktih, 'Shreem'/ 'Shaktih', 'Kleem'/ Kaama; the Nyasa of Shakti and Vishnu should be done with the alphabet words 'Aa' with the latter's forehead; ( for eg. touch the forehead saying: Om Hrem kleem am kleem shreem hreem Keshava Kirthibhaam namah -lalatey sprarshayaami) 'Aaa' with face; 'E' and 'Ee'with His Eyes; 'Vu' and 'Vuu' with His hands; 'Ru' and 'Ruu'with His nose; 'Lu' and 'Luu' with His cheeks; 'Ye' and 'Yey' with His lips; 'O'and 'Auv'with upper and nether teeth; 'Am' with the tongue-origin; 'Aha' with the neck; right hand with 'Ka' varga and 'Cha' varga with lefthand; 'ta' varga and 'tha' varga with the Lord's feet; 'Pa' and 'Pha' with his belly sides; 'ba' for His posterior and 'bha' for navel; 'ma' for His heart; 'Ya', 'Ra', 'La', 'Va', 'Sa', 'Sha' and 'Saa' for the Sapta Dhatus viz. Rasa (lymph), Rakta (blood), Maamsa (Muscles), Medha (fat), Asthi ( bones), Majja (bone-marrow) and Shukra (Semen); the word 'ha' with 'Praana'(life), 'Lla' with Atma (Soul) and 'Ksha' with Krodha (anger); this is how the Lord's Physical parts are aligned with each of the alphabet letters (in Sanskrit). This is the procedure of aligning with the body parts of Naravana. 'Shiva-

Maatrika Nyasa as follows: The devotee's nyasa would be as per the idenified Matrikas and Shiva Murthis: Purnodari-Shri Kanthesha, Viraja-Anantesha, Shaalmali- Sukshmakeshah; Leelakshi and Trimurtesha, Vartulaakshi and Mahesha, and Deergha kona and Artheesha. (The procedure of the Nyasa is to recite 'Hu sow Am' Shri Kanthesha Purnodaribhyam namah, Hu sow Am Ananteshaya viraabhyam namah Mukha vrutey namah). The further Nyasa would be as follows: Deerghamukhi-Bhaara bhuteesha, Gomukhi-Tirthisha, Deergha Jihva-Sthaanvisha, Kundodari-Haresha, Urthvakeshi-Jhantesha, Vikritaswa- Bhautikesha, Jwaalamukhi -Sadyojatesha, Ulkaamukhi-Anugrahesha, Aastha-Akrura, Vidya-Mahasena, Maha Kali-Krodhesha, Sarasvati-Chandesha, Siddha Gauri- Panchaantakesha, Trilokya Vidya-Shivottamesha, Mantra Shakti-Eka Rudresha, Kaamathi-Kurmesha, Bhuta Mata- Ekanetresha, Lambodari- Chaturvaktresha, Draavini-Ajesha, Nagari-Sarvesha, Khechari-Somesha, Maryada-Langalesha, Rupini-Darukesha and Virini-Artha naaresha. Kakodari and Umakanta, Putana and Aashaadheesha, Bhadra Kaali and Dandeesha, Yogini and Atreesha, Shikhandini and Meenesha, Tajani and Meshesha, Kaala Raatri and Lohitesha, Kubjani and Shikheesha, Kapardini and Chhalagandesha, Vajra and Dwirandesha, Jaya and Mahabalesha, Sumukheshwari and Balesha, Revati and Bhujangesha, Maadhwi and Pinaakesha, Vaaruni and Khandeesha, Vayavi and Vakesha, Vidarini and Sweteshwaresha, Sahaja and Bhrigeesha, Lakshmi and Lakuleesha, Vyapini and Shiveha and Maha Maya and Samvartakesha are the other examples of the Nyasa beteween Matrikas and Isha. The Nyasa is of Shri Kantha Matrika and Dakshina Murti Rishi, Gayatri as Chhanda, and Arthanaar-eswara as Devata and Viniyoga as Sampurna Manoratha Praapti or fulfillment of all desires of the devotee concerned. The Anga Nyaasa would be: Ha saam hridayaya namah, ha seem sirasey swaha, ha suum shikhaayai voushat, ha saim kavachaaya hum, ha sou netra trayaya voushat and ha saah astraaya phut/. After the Nyasas, a devotee should picturise Bhagavan Shiva like a Bandhooka pushpa and as a Golden Murti with his hands bestowing boons, Akshamala, Ankusha, and 'Paasha'; with a half-shaped Chandra, three eyes and all the Devas immersed in Bhakti surrounding Him. Once Shiva Shakti is visualised and meditated, then Ganesha-Maatrika Nyasa is performed as follows with 'Hree as the various Rupas of Ganesha on one hand with 'Shri'as Matrikas on the other by reciting: Ga am Vighneshabhyaam namah- Lalaatey, Ga am Vighnarajashri bhuam namah etc. The Matrika-Ganesha combinations are as follows: Pushti-Vinayaka, Shanti-Shiyottama, Swasti-Vighnakrit, Sarasvati- Vighna harta, Swaha-Gananatha, Sumedha-Ekadanta, Kaanti-Dwidanta, Kamini-Gajamukha, Manohini-Niranjana, Nati- Kapardi, Parvati- Deergha Jihva, Jwalini- Shankha karna, Nanda- Vrisha dwaja, Sureshi- Gananayaka, Kamarupini-Gajendra, Uma-Surpakarna, Tejovati- Virochana, Sati-Lambodara, Vighneshi- Manananda, Surupini-Chaturmurti, Kaamada-Sada Shiva, Mada Jihva-Amoda, Bhuti- Durmukha, Bhaotaki-Sumukha, Smita-Pramoda, Ramaa-Eka Paada, Maharshi-Dwijihwa, Jambhini-Sura, Vikarna-Vira, Bhrukuti-Shanmukha, Lajja-Varada, Deerghona-Vaamadevesha, Dhanurdhari- Vakratunda, Yamin-Dwiranda, Raatri-Senaani, Graamani-Kamandha, Shashiprabha-Matta, Lolanetra-Mattha, Chanchala-Matthavaaha, Deepti-Jati, Subhaga-Mundi, Durbhaga-Khandi, ShivaVarenya, Bhaga-Vrishaketana, Bhagini-Bhaktapriya, Bhogini-Ganesha, Subhaga-Mehghanaada, Kaala raatri-Vyapi and Kaalika-Ganesha. The invocation is as follows: 'Ganesha Maatrikagana is Rishih, Nichhidrud Gayatri is Chhanda, 'Shakti sahit Ganeswara is Devata, and six-deergha (long) Swaraa Yukta Ganesha Bija' viz. Gaam, Geem, Guum, Gaim, Gaum, Gahah'. Dhyana of Ganesha would then be performed visualising Him with four hands with 'Paasha', 'Ankura', 'Abhaya', and 'Varas' (boons), besides three eyes, along with his wife Siddhi seated on his lap.

<u>Deva Puja vidhi:</u> Maharshi Sanat Kumara then described to Brahmarshi Narada the procedure of worship. Having set up the Puja Region with a Trikona / Chatur kona Mandala with 'jala prokshana', a devotee would recite the Mantras viz. *Mam Vahni mandalaaya dasha kalaatmaney ...Devataarghya paatraasanaaya namah; Arkamandalaya Dwadashaka -atmaney Devaarghya paatraaya namah; Om Somamandalaaya Shodasha Kalaatmaney

Devaarghyaamritaya namah etc invoking the ten Kalaas of Vahni mandala, twelve Kalaas of Surya Mandala, sixteen kalaas of Chandramandala etc. The devotee also would invoke the holy rivers of Ganga, Yamuna etc. and purify the waters by appropriate 'Mudras' or finger-designs like Dhenu Mudra, Chakra Mudra, Matsya Mudra etc. He would recite: <i>Om Atma tatwaatmaney namah, Om Vidya tatwaatmaney namah, Shiva tatwa-atmaney namaha*; then perform <u>Avaahana</u> (Welcome) of the 'Ishta Devata' or the Personalised Deity present in the form of a 'Pratima' (Idol) or Shalagrama or Linga with 'Pushpanjali' (flowers) as follows:

Atma samstha majam shuddam twa maham Parameswara, Aranyamiva havyaamsham Murtaava avahyaamyaham/ Taveyam hi Mahaa murtistasyaam twam savargam Prabho, Bhaktasneha mamaakrishtam deepavas tathapayaamyaham/ Sarvaantaryaaminey Deva Sarva beejamayam shubham, Swaatmasthaaya param Shuddha maanasam kalpamaam –yaham/ Ananyaa tava Devesha Murthi shaktiriyam Prabho, Saamnidhyam kuru tasyaam twam Bhaktaanugraha kaaraka/ Ajnaanaaduta mathaatvaada vaikalyatsaadhanasya cha, Yadya purna bhavet kalpam tathaapyabhi mukho bhava/ Drushaaa peeyusha varshinya purayan Yajnavishtirey, Murtivaa Yajna sampurtyai sthito bhava Maheswara/ Abhakta vaangmanas-chashthuh shrota duraayati dyutey, Swatejah panchareynaashu Veshtito Bhava Sarvatah/ Yasya darshanamicchanti Devah swabheeshta siddaye, Tasmai tey Parameshaaya Swaagatam Swaagatamchamey/ Krutaarthonugraheetosmi saphalam jeevitam mama, Aagato Deva Deveshaha sukhaagati midam punah/ (Parameswara! You exist by yourself devoid of birth and as an embodiment of supreme transparency and astuteness. Just as a powerful fire is dormant in a whirlpool, you are concealed and all-pervasive; may I hail you to be present here. This is a magnificent form of yours that I imagine in this Light with faith and devotion. Deva! as you are full in my inner-consciousness, I seek to vision you as the Omni-Present, Pure and Propitious Form and beseech you to be seated and pardon all my blemishes in the worship to you arising out of ignorance, mischance and carelessness. Maheswara! Do shower your nectar-like looks on me instantly. May your radiance expand and expel the darkness around persons like me in our mind, speech, sight, and hearing. Here are our welcome salutations to you to kindly respond to our prayers and trust.). Paadyam: Yadbhakti lesha samparkaat Paramaananda sambhavah, Tasmai tey charanaabjaaya Paadyam Shuddhhaaya kalpyatey (May I offer 'Paadya'/water to wash your pure and lotus-like feet, since the tiniest and insignificant spot of my devotion comes into contact with your ocean-like response of satisfaction for me!) Arghya: Tapatraya haram Divyam Paramaananda lakshanam, Tapatraya vinirmukthyai tawaarghya kalpayamyaham/ (Paramananda Swarupa Deva! May I offer 'Arghya'/ water to you as a part of my service to you and eradicate my 'Tapatrayas' or Adhyatmika, Aadhi -bhoutika and Aadhi Daivika 'taapas' or three-fold miseries arising out of body, mind and providence). Aachamaneeya: Vedaanaamapi Vedaaya Devaanaam Devamaatmaney, Aachaamam kalpataameesha Shuddhaanaam Shuddha hetavey/ (May I proffer 'Aachamaneeya'/ water to you as a emblem of your kind acknowledgment to my seva / service to you; indeed You are the embodiment of Vedas and their unique knowledge, the matchless of all Devas and the symbol of Sanctity and Purity. Madhuparka: Sarva kaalushya heenaaya Paripurna Sukhaatmaney, Madhupakamidam Deva kalpayaami praseedamey: (You are completely devoid of impurities and imperfections and the icon of contentment; may I tender 'Madhuparka' (Mix of honey, ghee, curd and butter) for your satisfaction.) Punaraachamaneeya: Ucchishtopya shuchirvaapi yasya smarana maatratah, Shuddhima –apnoti tasmai tey punara achamaneeyakam/ (As even a person of impurities and blunders could acquire spotlessness by merely taking your name, Parameswara! kindly reinforce my request with this repeat 'Achamana'). Sneh (Thaila/Oil): Sneham gruhaana Snehena Loka Natha Mahaashaya, Sarva Lokeshu Shuddhaatman dadaami Snehamuttamam/ (Lokanatha! You are indeed highly broad-minded and merciful and the whole world is full of your grace and elegance; may I propose this Oil for a friendly massage, before a holy bath to you.) Snaan/ Sacred Bath: Paramaananda bhodhaabdha nimagnija Murtayey, Saangopaanga -midam Snaanam Kalpayaamyaha meesha tey/ (Ishwara! Your natural Swarup (Form) is immaculate and ever-happy always floating in deep Seas of untold depth; is indeed a 'Braahma Snaana' needed or required; but; for my own satisfaction however, I propose a full bodied Snaan to you.) Abhisheka: Sahasram vaa Shatam vaapi yathaa Shaktyadarena cha, Gandha pushpaadi kaireesha manunachabhishinchayey/ (Eshwara! Give me an opportunity to perform 'Abhisheka' (Bathing) as per my capacity along with pushpaas and sandalwood paste; as per Mantras may I perform the <u>Vastra:</u> Maya chitra patacchitranija Abhisheka some thousand times / hundred times. gruhyoru tejasey, Niraavarana Vignaana vaasastey kalpmaamyaham/ (Niravruttha Vigyana Prarameswara! You seek to camouflage your extreme radiance by covering it with colourful clothes; may I offer you clothes for our satisfaction!). Uttareeya: Yamaashritya Mahamaya Jagatsammohini sadaa, Tasmai tey Parameshaya kalpayaamyutthareeyakam/ (As Bhagayati Maha Maya brings the whole world under a spell, may I present an outer garment with respect; Note: Uttareeya should be of red colour while worshipping Duraga Devi, Surya Deva or Ganesha, but in respect of Vishnu, it should be of yellow colour and to Shiva of white colour). Yagnopaveeta: Yasya Shakti trayenedam sapreetaakhilam jagat, Yagna sutraaya tasmai tey Yagna sutram prakalpaey/ (Bhagavan! You satisfy and regulate the entire Universe with the three kinds of 'Shaktis' viz. Satvika, Rajasika and Tamasika and thus are the Yagnasutra rupa! May I hence dedicate the Sacred Thread to you symbolically!). Bhushan: Swabhaava sundaraangaaya nana shaktyashrayaya tey, Bhushanaai vichitraani kalpayaamyaraarchita/ (Deva! You possess natural beauty and grace as also all kinds of Shaktis; it is my privilege to dedicate ornaments for my Gandha: Paramaananda Sourabhya paripurna digantaram, satisfaction). Grihaana parmam gandham kripaya Parameswara/ (Parameswara! You fill up the Universe with the all-pervading fragrance by your presence; kindly accept this 'Gandha'-Sadal wood paste-as a symbol)! Pushpa: Tureeya vana sambhootam nana guna manoharam, Amanda sourabham

Pushpam Gruhyataamida muktamam/ (Prabho! You are the Creator of flowers which possess the qualities beyond all the three Avasthas of Jaagrut, Swapna and Sushupti viz. Tureeya! As a representation of flowers, may I offer a few flowers for my happiness! Note: Ketaki, Kutaja, Bandhuka, Naga kesara, jawa, and Malati are not to be offered to Shankara Deva; Matulunga or Vijoura neebu) and Tagara are never offered to Surya; Durva, Aaka, Madara and Palasha flowers as well as Tamala, Palasha, Tulasi, Avla and Durva leaves are not offered to Durga Devi; Tulasi must be avoided in the worship of Ganesha. Deva Puja may be done by Kamal, Dauna, Maruva, Kusha, Vishnukranta, Paan, Durva, Apamarg, Anar, Avla and Agastya leaves are approved; similarly, plantains, bair, Avla, Tamarind, Bijoura, Mangoes, Anar, Jambeer, Jaamun, and katahal fruits are approved). Dhup: Vanaspati rasam Divyam gandhadhyam sumanoraham, Aanghreyam Deva Devesha Dhupam Bhaktya gruhaanamey/ (Parameswara! I submit the aromatic Vanaspati 'Agar'at your service as a sign of my devotion; please accept and bless me). Deepa: Suprakaasham Maha Deepam Sarvadaa Timiraapaham, Ghrutavarti samaa yuktam gruhaana mama satkrutam/ (Bhagavan! Please accept this 'Deepa'-light-which is lit by ghee-soaked 'varti' with bhakti and discard darkness all around and usher in illumination). Naivedya: Annam chaturvidham Swaadu Rasaih Shadbhih samanvitam, Bhaktya grihaana mey Deva Naivedyam tushtidam sadaa/ (Deva! I am serving this 'Naivedya'offering of 'Swadishta Bhojan'-with extreme devotion by way of tasty 'Anna', along with accompanying items made of 'Shadrasas' (sweet, hot, bitter, salty, sour and astringent / like pomegranate); Kindly accept the Naivedya and provide me contenment). Tambula: Nagavallidalam shreshtham puga khaadira churnakam, Karpuradi sugandhaadhyam yaddattam tada gruhaanamey/ (Prabhu! please accept a good 'Taambul'/ betel leaves along with betel nut powder, churnam, camphor and other scented material, cloves etc is being offered as a digestive after a meal and bless me). After the worship as above, a devotee would perform 'Avarana' Puja/ 'Bhuta Bali Arpana', 'Ashtanga Pranaam' or Eight-folded Greetings by both the hands, both the feet, both the knees, chest, head, eyes, mind and mouth, followed by 'Panchanga Pranaam'or up to the first five greetings as above and 'Parikramas'/ 'Pradakshinas' (circumambulations) as prescribed viz. to Vishnu four times, Bhagavan Shankara by half, Devi Durga once, to Surya Deva seven times and to Ganesha three times. Thereafter, the devotee would render 'Brahmaarpana Mantra'as: Om itah purvaprana buddhi dehadharmaadhikaarato jaagrat swapna sushupyavasthaasu manasaa hastaabhyaam padabhyaamudarena sishnena yatsrutam yadyuktam yadkrutam tatsarva Brahmaarpanam bhavatu swaahaa/ Maam madeeyam cha sakalam vishnavey tey samarpaye Om tatsat/ (With this, I dedicate my self as also all my deeds in the service of Bhgavan Vishnu, along with my life, thought and physique when I am awaken, or in dreams or during deep slumber; by my mind, speech, hands, feet, stomach and creative organ as also by way of what I think, speak and perform; my entirety belongs to Brahma and return the same to Him in His service). The 'Kshama-Prathana' or Prayer for Forgiveness is recited as follows: Agnaadwaa pramaadaadya vaikalyat saadhanaasya cha, Yanuunamitiriktam vaa tatsarvam kshantumarhasi/ Dravya heenam,kriyaa heenam Mantra heenam mayaanyatha, krutam yattat kshamaswesha kripayaa twam Dayaanidhey/ Yanmayaa kriyatey karma Jaagratswapna sushuptishu, Tat sarvamthaavaki puja bhuyad bhrutyai cha mey Prabho/Bhumou skhalita paadaanaam Bhumirevaavalambanam, Twayi jaataapara -adhaanaam twameva sharanam Prabho/ Anyadhaa sharanam naasti twameva sharanam mama, Tasmaat kaarunya bhaavena khamaswa Parameshwara/ Aparaadha sahasraani kruyanteraharnisham maya, Daasoyamiti maam matwaa khamaswa jagataam patey/ Awaahanam na jaanaami na jaanaami visarjanam, Pujaam chaiva na jaanaami twam patih Parameshwara/ (Bhagavan!whatever deeds are executed by me either under instruction, or by chance or by design have mostly been full of shortcomings; kindly pardon these deeds, Oh, Merciful! Those deeds made by me with restrictions of money, faithful action, Mantras and prescribed procedures be kndly condoned; I might have done deeds either fully awaken, or half-asleep or in slumber but all these deeds be kindly converted as dutiful worship and bring in auspiciousness; just as the wrong steps taken on Earth have to be

borne by Earth alone, each and every blunder committed by human beings need to be pardoned by Bhagavan Himself! There is none else to forgive and I therefore approach you alone for protection; the shortcomings in my deeds through day or night be instantly forgiven as I am your servant. I do not realise how to commence or terminate worship and as such you only have to support me and my actions). The Procedure of 'Visarjana'or ending of Puja is to offer flowers by reciting the Mamtra: *Yacchha yacchha param sthaanam Jagadeesha Jaganmaya, Yatra Brahmaadayo Deva jaananticha Sadaashivah*/ Thereafter, the devotee would sip the idol's 'Charanaamrita' saying: *Akaalamrutyuharanam SarvavVyaadhi vinaashakam, Sarva paapa kshayakaram Vishnu paadodakamm Shubham*/

### 'Vratas' on specific days for special purposes

Maharshi Sanatana enumerated various 'Vratas' (religious rites) to invoke specific Deities on particular days in each month through out the year for special purposes. On the Pratipada day of Chaitra month Shukla 'Paksha', Shouri Vrata and Vidya Vrata are scheduled, while on the same day of Shravana Shukla fortnight, Rotaka Vrata is performed for Goddess Lakshmi. Mahattama Vrata is observed in Bhadrapada Shukla, Ashoka Vrata and Navarathra Vrata are important on Ashvin Shukla and Dhana Vrata in Marga Sirsha. On *Dwiteeya* day, Netra Vrata is held in Vaishakha Shukla, Bhaskara Vrata in Jyeshtha Shukla, Jagannatha-Balarama-Subhadra Vrata in Aashaadha Sukla and Yama Dwiteeya Vrata in Kartika Shukla. Akshaya Vrata, Rambha Vrata, Swarna Gauri Vrata and Brihat Gauri Vrata are performed on the *Triteeya* day in Vaishakha, Jyeshtha, Shravana, and Ashvin Shukla Pakshas respectively. One of the most significant Vratas is held on Bhadrapada Krishna Chaturthi viz. Ganesha Chaturthi. Twenty specified Leaves are to be utilised for the Puja on this day by reciting the very popular Mantras coordinating Ganasha's names and specific Leaves viz. Sumukhaayanamah Shami patram pujayami, Ganaadheeshaya namah bhangaraiyaka patram pujayaami, Uma putraya namah bilwa patram pujayami, Gajamukhaaya namah Durvadalam pujayaami, Lambodarayanamah ber param pujayami, Harasunavey namah Dattura patram pujayai, Surpakanthayanamah tulasi dalam pujayami, Vakra tundaaya namah semaka patram pujayami, Grahagrajaayanamah Apaamarga patram pujayami, Ekadantaayanamah Banabhantaa patram pujayami, Herambaayanamah Sindura patram pujayami, Chaturhotreynamah Tejapatrm pujayami and Sarvewarayanamah Agasthya patram pujayaami; This puja is then followed by the Shodasha Upachaaras and so on. On the *Panchami* 'Tithis', Matsya Vrata is held in Chaitra Shukla, Naga Vrata in Vaishakha Shukla Paksha, Anna Vrata in Shravana Krishna Paksha, Upanga Lalita Vrata in Aswin Shukla, and Jaya Vrata in Kartika Shukla. On the Shashthi days, Kumara Vrata is performed in Chaitra Shukla, Skanda Vrata in Ashaadha Sukla, Lalita Vrata in Bhadra Krishna Paksha, and Chandana Shashti Vrata in Bhadrapada Shukla in the name of Devi. Saptami is the day for Surya Deva Vratas on Chaitra Shukla, Vaishakha Shukla, Jyeshtha Shukla, Aashada Shukla, and Sharvana Shukla; Shakha (Mitra) Saptami in Kartika Shukla, Abhaya Vrata in Pousha Shukla, and Achala Vrata (Ratha Saptami) in Magha Shukla are significant. Ashtami is an important 'Tithi'; Chaitra Shukla Ashtami is stated to be the birthday of Devi Bhavani and as such Mahashtami is a highly significant day. Similarly Jveshta Krishna Paksha Ashtami is earmaked for Trilochana Puja, Ashadha /Shravana Shukla Ashtamis are also meant for Turmeric Puja and Dashaphal or Ten Fruits Vrata in favour of Devi.

<u>Krishna Janmashtami</u> in Shravana Krishna Paksha is a very essential day for Krishna Puja when day long fasting is observed and the ten Tulasi leaf- worship is performed by reciting Krishnaya Namah, Vishnavey Namah, Anantaaya namah, Govindaya Namah Garudadhwajaaya Namah, Daamodaraaya namah, Hrishi keshaya namah, Pama naabhaya namah, Haraye Namah, and Prahavey Namah. The Puja Vidhana would be as per the previous chapter. Aswin Suddha Ashtami is observed as the famed *Durgashtami* destroying Mahishasura during the Dussera Navaratras commencing from the Prathama day of the month. *Shri Rama <u>Navami</u> Vrata* in Chaitra Shukla Paksha is observed as a fast day for self-purification followed by the Puja as described erelier.

During Vaishakha month both the Pakshas are earmarked for UmaVrata on the Navami day; but observed most importantly as the popular *Maha-Navami* during Aswin Shukla Paksha worshipping Devi Parvati. Bhadrapada Shukla Navami is known as Nanda Navami to worship Devi Durga and Kartika Shukla Namvami is Akshaya Navami when a devotee should perform 'Tarpana' to Devas, Rishis and Pitras.

regards Dashami Tithi, Chaitra Shukla is stated to be a day which Dharma Raja is fond of and after fasting till the evening, worship of the Deity with flowers, fruits, 'Gandha' etc. should be observed and at the end of the Vrata, bhojan and dakshina is to be provided to fourteen Brahmanas. Jyeshtha Shukla Dashami is the day of 'Gangavataran' and is reckoned as 'Dasahara' or destroyer of Ten Sins when Ganga Snaan is highly recommended; this is the day when ten yogas coincided viz. Jyeshtha Maasa, Shuka Paksha, Hasta Nakshatra, Budha day, Dashami Tithi, 'Gara' karana, Ananda Yoga, Vyatipaata, Kanya Rashi's Chandra and Vrisha Raasi Surya. Shravana Shukla Dashami is marked for Shankara Puja when Nakta Vrata, Japa, Brahmana Bhojana and suvarna daana are commended. Bhadrapada Shukla Dashami is to observe Dashavatara Vrata to worship the Ten Incarnations of Vishnu viz. Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Nrisimha, Trivikrama /Vamana, Parashu Rama, Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki by day-long fasting and Brahmana Bhojana etc. Ashwayuja Shukla Dashami is the much-celebrated Vijaya Dashami when the Dussehra Festival of Nava Rathras get terminated to mark the killing of Mahishasura by Devi Durga as also to symbolise the Ramleela celebration as Shri Rama killed Ravana and brought back Devi Sita from Lanka. Margasirsha Shukla Dashami is the Arogya Vrata day when ten Brahmanas are to be treated with bhojan and dakshina, while ten Vishwa devas viz. Kratu, Daksha, Vasu, Satya, Kaala, Kaama, Muni, Guru, Vipra, and Rama are to be worshipped. Magha Sukla Dashami is the Day for Angira Vrata to meditate ten Angira Devas, viz. Atma, Vayu, Manah, Daksha, Mada, Praana, Barhishmaan, Gavishtha, Dutta and Satya, where as Phalguna Shukla Dashami, fourteen Yama Devas are worshipped viz, Yama, Dharma Raja, Mrityu, Antaka, Vaivaswata, Kaala, Sarva Bhuta Kshaya, Aoudumbara, Dadhna, Neela, Parameshthi, Vrikodara, Chitra and Chitragupta.

Ekadashi has a special significance among all the Tithis as the Shukla and Krishna Paksha Ekadashis are invariably observed with Upavaasa, Japa, Homa, Pradakshina, Stotra Paatha, Dandavat- Pranama and Ratri-Jaagaranas followed by Dwadashi's Brahmana Bhojanas and dakshinas. Chaitra Shukla Ekadashi is called 'Kamada' or the Fullfiller of Purusharthas and Sindestroyer. Vaishakha Shula Ekadashi is known as 'Mohini'and Krishna Ekadashi is known as 'Varuthini' when Purushottama and Madhusudhana are worshipped. Jyeshtha Krishna Ekadashi is called 'Apara' to worship Trivikrama, whereas the Jyeshtha Shukla is 'Nirjala' which is observed with fasting without water from dawn to dusk, and thereafter treat Brahmanas with Bhojan. Ashadha Krishna Ekadashi is called 'Yogini'and is observed with day-night fast / puja and bhojan to Brahmanas on the following Dwadashi. Ashadha Shukla is 'Shayani' Ekadashi, Shravana Krishna is 'Kamika' Ekadashi, Shravana Shukla is 'Putrada' Ekadashi, Bhadrapada Krishna is 'Aja' Ekadashi, Bhadrapada Shukla is 'Padma' Ekadashi, Aswin Shukla is 'Papankusha' Ekadashi, Aswin Krishna is 'Indira' Ekadashi, Karik Krishna is 'Rama' Ekadashi, Kartik Shukla is 'Pabodhini', Margasirsha Krishna is 'Utpanna' Ekadashi, Margasirsha Shukla is 'Moksha da' Ekadashi, Pousha Krishna is 'Saphala', Pousha Shukla is 'Saphala', Magha Krishna is 'Shat Tila' Ekadashi observed with full penance including Snaana, Daana, Tarpana, Havan, Puja, fast unto Dwadashi Brahmana Bhojan and dakshina. Like-wise, Eakadashis are performed on Magha Shukla as Jaya, Phalguna Krishna as Vijaya, 'Aamalki' on Phaluna Shukla and 'Papamochini'on Chaitra Krishna.

As regards <u>Dwadashis</u>, details of 'Vrata Pujas' worshipping Vishnu Rupas viz. Keshava, Narayana, Madhava, etc.have been described from Marhasirsha to Kartika Months (Shukla Pakshas) along with the Puja-Vidhana. Following is gist of Vratas as follows):

'Madana Vrata' is perfomed on Chaitra Shukla Dwadashi to dedicate it to Kaama Rupi Shri Hari. On this very day, 'Bhartru Dwadashi' is also observed by worshipping Lakshmi and Vishnu too. Similarly, Vratas aiming at various forms/ names of Vishnu are observed on the Dwadashis herebelow: Vaishakha Shukla/ Madhava, Jyeshtha Shukla/ Trivikaram, Shravana Shukla/ Shridhara, Bhadrapada Shukla/Vamana, and Aswin Shukla/Padmanabha. The Kartika Krishna Vrata called 'Govatsa Dwadashi Vrata'is addressed to Mother Cow reciting the Mantra: Ksheerodarnava Sambhootey Suraasura namaskrutey, Sarvadeva mayey Devi Sarva devailankrutey/ Maatarmaatargavaam Maatagruheenaarghyam namostutey/ (Mother! Gomata! You manifested from the Ocean of Milk, ornamented by all Devas, worshipped by Devas and Danavas alike; kindly accept this 'Arghya' followed by Puja and 'Nivedana'. On this day of Govatsa Dwadashi, devotees should avoid oil-fried items, Cow-milk, curd, ghee etc. On Margasirsha Shukla Dwadashi, 'Sadhya Vrata' is performed by assuming the Twelve Sadhya Ganaas, Viz. Manobhava, Praana, Nara, Apaana, Veeryavan, Chiti, Haya, Naya, Hamsa, Narayana, Vibhu and Prabhu. The Ganaas are invoked into a rice spreading and worshipped, after which request Lord Narayana to be pleased. On this very day, a 'Dwadasha -aditya' Vrata be also performed by doing Puja to Dhata, Mitra, Aryama, Pusha, Shakra, Amsha, Varuna, Bhaga, Twashta, Viviswaan, Savita and Vishnu.

<u>Trayodashi</u> Tithis are well-known for 'Maha Vaaruni Vrata' in Chaitra Krishna paksha, if possibly coinciding with Saturdays/ Shatabhisha Nakshatra and if lucky futher along with a bath in River Ganga. On Jyeshtha Shuka Trayodasi, a Vrata for 'Dourbhagya Shamana' (pacifying misfortune) is performed with the Puja of Mandara, Karaveera and Arka flowers to Narayana, while 'Goraatra Vrata' is observed on Bhadrapada Shukla Trayodashi by performing 'Pradakshinas' and giving away charity to Veda Pandit. The Pradakshina should accompany the recitation of: *Gavo mamaagratah santu gaavo may santu pustatah, Gaavo mey paasrvatah santu Gavaam Madhey vasaamyaham*/ (Cow is ahead of me, behind me, by my side and I reside among Cows!). On Ashwin Shukla Trayodashi, a three-night long 'Ashok Vrata' is performed by continously praying to Shakara Maha Deva kept under an Ashoka Tree; the person who performs the worship gives away a Pratima as daan, along with dakshina to Brahmanas.

'Nrisimha Vrata' is well known on Vaishkha Shukla *Chaturdashi*, when a devotee requires to keep day-long fast and worships the Deity with 'shodasho-pacharas' and recites the Kshama Prarthana Mantra again and again: Taptahaataka keshaanta Jalatpaavaka lochana, Vajraadi nakha sparsha Divya Simha Namostutey/ (Divya Simha! Your mane is shining like molten gold and eyes are glowing like fire balls; the slightest touch of your diamond-strong nails are excruciating; my salutations to you!). After the Puja, the devotee should sleep on bare earth, with full control of body parts. The Vrata is to be performed a few years to secure high contentment and fulfillment of earthly desires as also salvation after life's termination. On this very date of Vaishakha Shukla Chaturdashi, Omkareshwar Linga Vrata is to be observed for demolition of all past sins. On Jyeshtha Shukla Chaturdashi, 'Rudra Vrata'is to be performed for securing unimaginable results by observing 'Panchagni Yogic Tapasya'. Bhadrapada Shukla Chaturdashi is earmarked for executing Ananta Vrata, while Kartika Shukla Chaturdashi, observance of Pashupat Vrata has far reaching impact. However the most outstanding Vrata of the day/night is stated to be on Shiva Raatri on Phalguna Krishna Chaturdashi, when Nirjala Upavas, Bilwa patra puja, high concentration, Nightlong Jaagaran, Stotra-Paath, three-hourly Abhisheka and detailed Puja and japa, etc. purifies a devotee with fulfillment and Shiva Darshan.

On <u>Purnimas</u>, Anna-daana would please Chandra Deva in Chaitra month and any kind of charities on Vaishaka purnima would have multiplier-effect; Dharmaraja Vrata on the latter Purnima would please him with Go-Daan, Swarna Daan and Bhojan Daan. 'Vata Savitri' Vrata would certainly please Devi Savitri who conquered Lord Yama for the sake of her husband with the prayer of a devotee by reciting: Jagat pujye Jaganmatah Savitri pati devatey, patya sahaviyogam mey vatasthey kuru tey namah/ (Jaganmata Savitri, You are worshippable to the entire Universe as you

are the unique Pativrata. You reside in the Vata Vriksha and as such, I pray to the Vata Tree; do bless me to ensure that I am never separated from my husband). Any woman who prays to Savitri and worships her and treats virtuous women with food and gifts would never lose her husband till she dies herself. Shravana Purnima is the day of *Upa Karma of Vedas*', when Yajurvedi Brahmanas should perform Tarpana to Devas, Rishis and Pitras; the Rishis whom Tarpana are to be offered would be of one's own 'Shakha'. Rigvedis on Chaturdashi day of Shravana month and Sama Vedis on Bhadrapada Hasta Star should observe 'Raksha Vidhana'. 'Uma Maheswara Vrata is scheduled on Bhadrapada Purnima, which requires total abstinence, Upavas on the previous and on the day proper, Jaagaran on the previous night and fast till the dusk time of the day, Pujas on the previous night, on the day and night proper would be compulsory as per shodasopacharas as described in the previous pages of this write-up. This Vrata is expected to be performed for fifteen years, whereafter the 'Udyapan' function should be concluded with full formalities of Mantras, homas, and celerbrations. Shakra Vrata is also scheduled on the same day of Bhadrapada Purnima addressed to Indra Deva for 'Dhana-Dhanya Vriddhi' or all round prosperity. 'Kartika Purnima' Vrata is intended to attain/retain Brahmatva in the next birth as also to demolish enemies and the Deity to be worshipped is Kartika Deva. On this very day of Kartika Purnima at the Pradosha Time, organisation of 'Tripurotsava' and Deepa Daana are considered propitious; display of illuminations, especially in the vicinity of a river or a water-body would help light up 'krimi-keetas', flies, mosquitos, trees, water, etc and would enable 'Punarjanmas' (rebirths) as human beings since the upgradation of such 'Praanis' would indeed be a welcome step for such 'praanis'.

As regards, the *Amavasya Vratas*, Sanatana Kumara explained to Narada Maharshi that Chaitra and Vaishakha Amavasyas were extremely significant since these days were very dear to Pitras for their Puja, Shraddha by way of offering 'Pindas' (cooked rice) prepared by the 'paarana vidhi', Brahmana Bhojana, especially 'daanas' of cows etc. In Jyeshtha month Brahma Savitri Vrata was stated to be imperative on Amavasya. In Ashaadha, Shravana, and Bhadrapada months, Amavasyas are essential for Pitru shraddas, Daanas, homas, and Deva Pujas. On Ashwin Amavasya, it would be good to perform Shraadha Tarpan to Pitaras in River Ganga or more ideally at Gaya. On Kartika Amavasya 'Deepa daan' given in a temple, or home, near a river, a garden, go-shaala or at a public Place is commendable; on this very day, Lakshmi Puja would be beneficial. Organising Brahmana Bhojan on a Margasirsha Amavasya or better still performing Shraddha on that day would be useful. In fact, Pitru Shraaddhas on Pousha, Magha and Phalguna Amavasyas would be effective too.

### Special implication of Ekadashi Vrata-the legend of King Rukmangada

As the 'Purvi Bhag' of Narada Purana was concluded in the form of Questions of Narada Maharshi and Replies from Sanaka Kumara brothers, the narration by Suta Muni to the Sages headed by Shounaka Muni was successfully terminated. Then Maharshi Vasishtha took over the narration of 'Uttari Bhag' of the Purana, as was stated by Maharshi Narada-the author of the Purana. Maharshi Vasishtha underlined the special connotation of Ekadashi Vrata to King Mandhata of Ikshavaku Clan and the ancestor of Lord Shi Rama. As Ekadashi was stated to be the Special Day of Vishnu, observance of 'Upavasa', 'Puja' and 'Vrata' on this day ought to be a pre-requisite to qualify the abolition of all the sins of a devotee. In fact, the advantage of performing the Vrata in full faith and high dedication as prescribed would secure the fruits of executing several Ashwamedha and Rajasuya Yagas, besides avoiding Yama Darshana! It is neither the Sacred Ganga, Gaya, Kashi, Pushkar, Kurukshetra, Narmada, Devika, Yamuna and Chandrabhaga that are stated to be more momentous than the Vrata. To signify the import of the Vrata, the Story of King Rukmangada was mentioned; he was in the habit of publicising through announcements on elephant tops the fact that the specific day was that of Ekadashi Vrata and all the citizens must observe fast, Puja, and penances as presribed. The annoucement was to alert that all the citizens in the age groups between eight and eighty five years ought to observe the fast and puja on that day and whosoever ate food

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

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

## 'Yugala Sahasranama' of Radha-Krishna

Once, Brahmarshi Narada approached Bhagavan Maha Deva to endow him with Shri Krishna Parama Tatwa and the latter commenced the Mantra: *Gopijana vallabha charanaachharanam prapadye:* Bhagavan stated that this Mantra was of Surabhi Rishi, Gayatri was Chhanda, and Bhagavan Shri Krishna was the relevant Devata. He also said: 'Prapadyosmi' or May I offer respects. For this Mantra, there was no need to suggest 'Viniyoga' or application as also 'Anga

Nyasa' or alignment with body parts. Only the Mantra is to be recited and Bhagavan would instantly be with the reciter. After securing the Mantra from the Guru and practise it with full faith, without thinking much about the fulfillment of desires in the present time and of what is in store after life; after all, the joys and sorrows in the current life are dependent of the previous deeds and the future course is decided by Bhavavan. One has to take shelter from Bhagavan and worship Him. However: Gurovajnaam Saadhunam nindaam bhedam Harey Harou, Veda Nindaam Harernaama balaat paapa sameepatpapa sameehanam/ Artha vaadam Hareynmagni Paakhandam naama samgrahey, Alasey naastike chaiva Hari naamopa Harimaamopadeshinam/ Naama Vismaranam chaapi Naamyaamaadaramey va cha, Santyajeydam duratho Vatsa Doshaaneythaansudaaranan/ (Do not try to slander the Guru, never offend Sadhu or the Virtuous, never differentiate Shiva and Vishnu, never resort to malign Vedas, never act against those who take the name of Bhagavan, never criticise those who give spiritual discourses, never spread rumours against devotees, convince and counsel 'nastiks' or atheists, facilitate those who forget or ignore the existence of Bhagavan-these are the Ten Principles that should be followed always). One should have the faith that Krishna's friends, parents, beloved, and followers exist forever and get into the mental-frame while reciting the 'Jugal Sahasra naamaas', stated Shiva to Narada:

1)Devakinandana: Provider of joy to Devaki; 2) Shouri: Surasena's progeny; 3) Vasudeva: Son of Vasudeva; 4) Balanuja: Younger brother of Balarama; 5) Gadaagraja (Elder brother of Gada/Mace); 6) Kamsamoha ( He who mesmerised Kamsa); 7) Kam sevaka mohanah: (He who mesmorised the followers of Kamsa); 8) Bhinnargala (eliminator of all obstacles); 9) Bhinnaloha ( Breaker of metallic chains as in the case of his imprisoned father);10) Pitruvaahnah:( Rides over as Vasudeva kept the new born Krishna on his head through River Yamuna); 11) Pitrustutah (Praised by his father at the time of his birth); 12) Matrustutah (eulogized by his mother at his birth); 13) Shivadhyeyah (worshipped by Shiva); 14) Jamuna-jalabhedanah (He who smashed the flow of River Yamuna); 15) Vrajavaasi (He who resided in Vraja-bhumi); 16) Vrajaanandi (Who charmed the Vraja); 17) Nanda baala (The son of Nanda); 18) Dayanidhi (The Ocean of Mercy); 19) Leela baalah (The Miracle-child); 20) Padma netrah (the Lotus-eyed); 21) Gokulothsavah (The cause of Festivals at Gokula); 22 ) Ishwarah ( Capable of any deeds); 23) Gopikanandah (The cause of joy for Gopikas); 24) Krishnah (Who attracts instant attention); 25) Gopaanandah (the epitome of happiness for Gopas); 26) Sataangatih (the destination of devotees); 27) Vaka praanaharah (the killer of Vakaasura); 28) Vishnuh (The all-pervader); 29) Vakamukti pradah (Provider of salvation to Bakaasura); 30) Harih (Destroyer of sins, ignorance and misery); 31) Baladolaashaya -shahayah (He who rests in the hoods of Sesha Nag, the Avatar of Balarama); 32) Shyamalah (the bluecoloured); 33) Sarva Sundarah (The embodiment of beauty); 34) Padmanabhah (from whose navel sprouted the lotus); 35) Hrishikeshah (The controller and provocator of physical limbs); 36) Kreeda manuja baalakah (the funster in the form of a boy); 37) Leela-vidhvastwa shakatah (the destroyer of Shakatasura); 38) Vedamantra -abhishechitah (He who is bathed in Veda mantras); 39) Yashodanandanah (The joy of mother Yashoda); 40) Kantah (The Form of Radiance); 41) Munikoti nishevitah (Worshipped by crores of Munis); 42) Nithya Madhuvana vaasi (the aboder of Madhu vana); 43) Vaikunthah (The Chief of Vaikuntha); 44) Sambhavah (The Origin of Everything); 45) Kratuh (Yagna Swarupa); 46) Ramapatih (Lakshmipati); 47) Yadupatih (The Chief of Yadavas); 48) Murarih (The demolisher of Murari Daitya); 49) Madhusudanah ( the killer of Madhu Daitya); 50) Madhavah ( Belonged to Madhu Kula of Yadu Vamsha); 51) Maanahari ( Destroyer of ego and self-image); 52) Shripati (the husband of Lakshmi); 53) Bhudharah (The holder of the weight of Earth); 54) Prabhuh (The Super Lord); 55) Brihadvana maha leelah (The performer of great miracles); 56) Nandasuunuh (The illustrious son of Nanda); 57) Mahasasah ( He who sits on the seat of mighty Sesha serpent); 58) Trunavarta pranahari ( the executor of Trunavarta daitya); 59) Yashodavismayapradah (Who stunned Yashoda with his miracles); 60) Trailokyavakra (who visions the happenings of the Tri-Lokas by his face); 61) Padmaakshah (Has eyes like fully opened lotus); 62) Padma hastah (ornamented with lotus-hands); 63) Priyankarah

(Brings joy to everybody); 64) Brahnamah (The benefactor of Brahmanas); 65) Dharmagopta (The saviour of Virtue); 66) Bhupatih (The Master of Bhudevi); 67) Shridharah (The retainer of Lakshmi on his physique); 68) Swaraat (Self Illuminated); 69) Ajadhyakshah (The Master of Brahma); 70) Shivakdhyakshah (The Master of Shiva); 71) Dharma -dhyakshaha (The Master of Dharma); 72) Maheshwarah (Parameswara); 73) Vedanta vedvah (He who could be visualised by Vedas alone); 74) Brahmasthitah (Resides in Brahma Tatwa); 75) Prajapatih (Master of the whole humanity); 76) Amoghadhruk (All- visioned); 77) Gopikaraavalambi (who dances by holding the hands of Gopis); 78) Gopabalaka supriyah (The beloved of Gopas); 79) Balaanuyayi (Who copies the actions of Balarama); 80) Balavan (Full of Super Strength); 81) Shridaama priya ( the great friend of Shridaama); 82) Atmavan (The Controller of Mind and Soul); 83) Gopigrihaangana ratih (The player in the homes and interiors of Gopis); 84) Bhadrah (The embodiment of propitiousness); 85) Sushlokamandalah (Brings in piety owing to his name and fame); 86) Navaneetaharah (The famed butter-thief); 87) Baalah (always child-like); 88) Navaneeta priyashanah (whose staple food is butter); 89) Balabrindi (always in the company of children); 90) Markavrindi (Playful with monkey-like children); 91) Chakitakshah ( always looks with surprised eyes); 92) Paalitah ( Runs away being afraid of mother's call); 93) Yashodarjitah (fearful of Yashoda's curses); 94) Kampi ( shivers with the fear of his mother); 95) Mayarudita shobhanah (Looks splendid with false and (held by mother by strings); 97) Aprameyatma (Has childish cries); 96) Damodarah immesurable Form); 98) Dayaluh (Most merciful); 99) Bhaktavatsalah (Fond of devotees); 100) Ulukhaley sabandha (tied strong to a mortar-by his mother); 101) Namna shira (down-headed or submissive); 102) Gopikadrayitah (falsely repentant due to complaints from Gopis to his mother); 103) Vriksha bhangi (the demolisher of Yamalarjuna Trees while tied a rice-pounder by his mother); 104) Shokabhangi (self-safe but frightened others with cries); 105) Dhanadatmaja Kubera's sons of their curse by a Sage to turn into trees); 106) Devarshi mokshanah (Relieved vachanashlaaghi (Considerate of Narada's statements); 107) Bhakta vaatsalya sagarah (An ocean of encouragement to devotees); 108) Vrajakolaahalakarah (keeps Vraja's residents extremely busy with his mystification); 109) Vrajaananda vivardhanah (Enhancer of the joys of Vraja's residents); 110) Gopaatma (The soul of Gopas); 111) Prerakah (the booster of actions, mind and feelings); 112) Saakshi (The unique proof of actions world-wide); 113) Vrindavana nivasakrith (The famed resident of Brindavana); 114) Vatsa paalahah (the care-taker of Govatsas); 115) Vatsapatih (Safety provider of the young cows), 116) Gopadaraka mandanah (The benefactor of the society of gopabaalas); 117) Balakreedah (Involved in normal child-plays); 118) Balaratih ( the endearer of Gopabalaas); 119) Balakah ( of the form of a boy); 120) Kanakaangadi (the wearer of golden 'bhuja keertis' or hand-ornaments); 121) Pitambarah (Dressed in silk robes); 122) Hemamalahari (the wearer of golden neck laces); 123) Manimukta vibhushanah (ornamented by gems and pearls); 124) waisted with bells and wristed with metal rounds; 125) Sutri (with cottonthreaded wrists and Yagnopaveeta); 126) Nupuri (with ornamented feet); 127) Mudrikaanvita ( finger-ringed); 128) Vatsasura pratidhwamsi ( the killer of Vatsasura); 129) Vakasuranaashanah ( the terminator of Vakasura); 130) Aghasura vinaashi (the demolisher of Aghasura); 131) Vinidrikritabalakah (The reviver of the fained children due to the poison of Kaliya serpent); 132) Adyah (The Original Cause); 133) Atmapradah (Provider of his soulful to his dear devotees); 134) Sangi (the keeper of company to his companions); 135) Yamunateera bhojanah (The eater of food on the banks of River Yamuna along with his friends); 136) Gopaala mandali madhyaha ( the central figure of Gopalaas); 137) Sarva gopala bhushanah (The jewel of all Gopalas); 138) Kritahastatalagraasah (carrier of plate with food in his hands); 139) Vyanjanaashrita shaakhikah ( the arranger of food-vessels on tree branches); 140) Kritabaahu shringa yashthih (keeps a whip and stick in hands); 141) Grunjaalankrita kanthakah (ornamented with grinjali mala around his neck); 142) Mayura pincha mukutah ( sports peacock feathers on his headgear); 143) Vanamaali vibhushitah (decorated with vanamali); 144) Gairikaachitrita vipunah (Expert in drawing pictures with red chalk on his body); 145) Navamedhavapuh ( with body colour as fresh cloud); 146) Smarah (by far the most attractive form of Kamadeva); 147) Kotikandarpa lavanyah (as attractive as of a crore Kamadevas); 148) Lasanmakara kundalah (Wearing luminous ear rings of crocodile shape); 149) Aajaanu -baahuh ( with hands as long as the knees); 150) Bhagavan (Composite with five kinds of Aishwarya viz. Prosperity, Dharma (Virtue), 'Yash' (fame); 'Shri; (wealth); Gyana (Knowledge) and 'Vairagya' (detachment); 151) Nidra rahita lochanah (devoid of sleep); 152) Koti saagara gaambhiryah (As complex as a crore oceans); 153) Kalakaalaha (He is the Supreme Kaala Swarupa); 154) Sada Shivah (the eternally auspicious Bhagavan); 155) Virinchi mohana vapuh (Even Brahma netted by his illusion); 156) Gopavatsa -vapurdharah (He who takes the forms of Gopas and calves); 157) Brahmandakoti janakah (The Creator of crores of Universes); 158) Brahma moha vinashakah (The demolisher of Brahma's illusions); 159) Brahma (He himself takes the form of Brahma); 160) Brahmeditah (Extolled by Brahma); 161) Swami (the Supreme of everybody / everything); 162) Shakradarpadi nashanah ( The eliminator of Indra's egotism); 163) Giri pujopadeshta (He who showed the procedure of worshipping Govardhan mouatain); 164) Dhruta Govardhanachalah (The elevator of Govardhana Mountain); 165) Purandareditah (Praised by Indra Deva); 166) Pujyah (revered by one and all); 167) Kamadhuprapujitah (adulated by Kamadhenu); 168) Sarva Tirthaabhishiktah (Enabled Surabhi to perform 'Abhishkas' by the Sacred waters of all the Tirthas on the Seat of Indra); 169) Govindah (Famed as Govinda since he was the Indra of all cows ('Go-matas'); 170) Goparakshakah (safety-provider to cows); 171) Kaaliyaarti-(The subduer of Kaaliya serpent); 172) Krurah (cruel punisher of the vicious); 173) Nagapatniratah (exalted by Nagapatnis); 174) Virat (Virat Purusha / The most maximised Being); 175) Dhenukaarih ( the enemy of Dhenukaasura); 176) Pralambhaari ( Destroyer of Pralambhasura in the form of Balabhadra); 177) Vrishaasura vimardanah ( the exterminator of Arishtasura who appeared in the form of a huge bull); 178) Mayasuratmaja dhwamsi ( the annihilator of Vyomaasura who was the son of Mayasura); 179) Keshi kantha vidarakah (the slicer of Keshi demon's head); 180) Gopa gopta (The saviour of Gopas); 181) Daavaagni parishoshakah (the desroyer of Daavaagni or the Gigantic Fire); 182) Gopakanya vastra haari (The appropriator of the clothes of Gopikas while they were bathing);183) Gopa Kanya varapradah (The boon provider to the Gopika maids); 184) Yajnapatyanna bhoji (the consumer of Anna bhojan of the wives of those who did the Yagnas); 185) Muni- maanaapa harah (He clipped the ego of those brahmanas who claimed as Munis; 186) Jalesha mana mardhanah ( the tamer of Varunadeva's ego); 187) Nanda gopala jeevanah ( saviour of Nandagopala from Vidyadhara who came in the form of a huge serpent 'Ajagara'); 188) Gandharva shapa mokta (The saviour of the Gandharva (Vidyadhara) from his earlier curse); 189) Shankhachooda shiroharah ( He sliced the head of the Yaksha called Chooda); 190) Vamshivati (Miracle maker near the Vamshivata/ the Vamshi tree); 191) Venuvaadi (the great flutist); 192) Gopichinta -paharakah (Reliever of the sorrows of Gopikas); 193) Sarva gopta (the liberator of one and all); 194) Samahvaanah (Addressed by all to save them); 195) Sarva Gopi manorathah (He who is the desire of all Gopis); 196) Vyangya dharma pravakta (preacher of Dhrama in a satirical manner);197) Gopimandala mohanah (Mesmeriser of Gopikas in groups); 198) Rasakreeda rasaa swaadi (The enjoyer of the taste of Rasa- dance's juice); 199) Rasika (The experiencer of the 'Rasa'); 200) Radhika Praana -natha (Shri Radha's beloved / life's breath); 201) Kishori prana nadha (Kishori's life-breathing); 202) Vrisha bhanu sutaapriyah (Vrisha hanu nandini's beloved); 203) Sarva Gopi Janaanandi (The bliss of all the Gopijana); 204) Gopijana Vimohanah (The enchanter 'par excellence' of the Gopikas'); 205) Gopikageeta charitah (The sacred songs sung by the Gopika singers about the stories of Krishna); 206) Gopi nartana laalasah (He who enjoys the dances of Gopikas with relish); 207) Gopiskandhashrita karah (He who ambles along with his hands on their shoulders); 208) Gopi kuchambana chumbana priya (He who savors the kisses of Gopika's chest); 209) Gopika marjita mukhah (He who takes delight in wiping the sweet touches of Gopikas of his tender face by their silk 'anchals' / upper robes); 210) Gopi vyanjana veejitah (He who loves the experience of fanning by Gopikas as he is lying and resting); 211) Gopika kesha samskaari (Who goes into raptures while fondly caressing the softness of the hairs of Gopikas); 212) Gopika pushpa samstarah (He who loves to play games with flowers on the Gopikas); 213) Gopika -hridayalambi (He provides refuge to the hearts of Gopikas; 214)

Gopiyahanatatparah (He is ready to carry Radha on his shoulders); 215) Gopika mada haari (demolishes the self-image of Gopikas); 216) Gopika paramaarjitah (The fruit of the 'Punya'earned hard by Gopikas); 217) Gopika kruta salleelah (He whose memorable deeds are copied by Gopikas after the 'Rasaleelas'); 218) Gopikasamsmrutapriyah (The beloved of Gopikas who keep on floating in the fabulous memories of his); 219) Gopika vanditapada (The sacred feet which are sought after by Gopikas); 220) Gopikaa vashavartanah (He who is in the control of Gopikas); 221) Radhaaparaajitah (Conceded defeat from Radha); 222) Shrimaan (Epitome of prosperity); 223) Nikunjosuvihara vaan (He who performs playful deeds in the gardens of Brindavan); 224) Kunja priyah (He loves the gardens); 225) Kunjavaasi (The resident of the Gardens); 226) Vrindavana vikaashanah (He illuminates Bridavana); 227) Yamuna -jalasiktaangah (He had his body bathed by Yamuna waters); 228) Yamunasoukhya dayakah (He provides bliss to River Yamuna); 229) Rashistambhanah (Stops the movement of Moon on the night of Raasaleela); 230)Shurah (He is the archtype of courage); 231) Kaami (Always anxious to encounter with his Bhaktas); 232) Kamavimohanah (He who enthralls Kamadeva with his 'leelas'); 233) Kaamaadya (The Original Cause of Kamadeva); 234) Kama nathah (He is the Supremo of Kama / desire); 235) Kamamaanasa bhedanah (Capable of breaking the heart of Kamadeva himself); 236) Kamadah (The Provider of Kama or yearning); 237) Kamarupah (Assumes the Form of Kama /Craving); 238) Kamini kamasanchayah ( Amasses the love of Kaminis); 239) Nityakreedah ( Ever-ready to get absorbed in playful games); 240) Mahaleelah (The Supreme Player of Miracles); 241) Sarvah (Sarwa Swarpa or assume any Form whatever); 242) Sarva gatah (All-pervading); 243) Paramaatma (The Supreme Soul); 244) Paradhesha (Parameshwara); 245) Sarva karana karanah (The Cause of any or every cause); 246) Griheeta Naradavachaah (Concedes to whatever Brahmarshi Narada advises); 247) Akrura parichintitah ( He who gave weightage to the counsel of Akrura); 248) Akruravandita padah (The feet that were worshipped by Akrura step by srep; 249) Gopikaa tosha kaarakah (Mollifies the feelings of frustration arising of out his absence among Gopikas); 250) Akruravakya sangraahi (Concedes the view-points of Akrura); 251) Mathurayaasa karanah (The reason for which the inhabitants of Mathura prefer to stay there); 252) Akrura tapa shamanah (He relieves Akrura's sorrows); 253) Rajakaayuh pranaashanah (shortens the life of Mathura's washerman due to his refusal of cleaning Krishna / Balarama's clothes under Kasa's influence of Kamsa); 254) Mathuraananda daayi (Provider of joy to the residents of Mathura); 255) Kamsa vastra vilunthanah (He who took away Kamsa's clothes due to an altercation with the washerman of Kamsa); 256) Kamsa vastra paridhanah (He sported Kamsa's clothes); 257) Gopavastra pradayikah (Donor of clothes to Gopas); 258) Sudama griha gaami (Visitor to the residence of Sudama Mali); 259) Sudama paripujitah (Worshipped by Sudama Mali); 260) Tantuvaayaka sapreetah (Bleesed the tailor); 261) Kubjachandana lepanah (Applied the chandana paste prepared by Kubja on his own limbs); 262) Kubjaarupapradah (Blessed beautiful Form to Kubja); 263) Vijnah (embodiment of knowledge); 264) Mukundah (The provider of Moksha); 265) Vishtira shravaah (Has far-reaching fame and wide-ranging hearing capacity); 266) Sarvajnah (The All-Knowing); 267) Mathuraaloki (Visited around Mathuranagar); 268) Sarvalokaabhinandanah (obtained showers of praises and accolades from one and all of the Public); 269) Kripakataaksha darshi (Visions every body with empathy and compassion); 270) Daityarih (The enemy of Daityas); 271) Devapalakah (The defender of Devas); 272) Sarva duhkha prashamanah (Reliever of all kinds of sorrows); 273) Dhanurbhangi (The smasher of Dhanush / the Mighty Bow); 274) Mahotsavah (The Cause of Great Celebration); 275) Kuvalaya peeda hantah (The killer of the haughty Elephant called Kuvalayapeedana); 276) Dantahskandhah (The parader of the ill-famed elephant's tusks on his shoulders); 277) Balaagrani (Always follows Balarama and keeps himself behind); 278) Kalparupadharah (Dresses according to the persons being met); 279) Dhiraha (Has supreme courage); 280) Divya vastraanu lepanah (Wears divya vastra and 'anga -raaga' (body-lepana); 281) Mallarupa (Sports the Form of a fearful wrestler in the sports arena of King Kamsa); 282) Mahakaala (Takes the profile of Death in the presence of Kamsa); 283) Kamarupi (Takes over various Forms as needs of time demanded); 284) Balaanvita (possesses endless energy and prowess); 285) Kamsa trasaharah

(encountered a highly scared Kamsa); 286) Bhimah (Kamsa was mortally afraid of Krishna); 287) Mrushtikantah (In the form of Balabhadra, the fist-power was deadly to Kamsa); 288) Kamsaha (Krishna-the slaughter for Kamsa); 289) Chanuraghna (the destroyer of Chanura, the great wresler); 290) Bhayahara (the slasher of timidity), 291) Shalaarih (the killer of King Shalya); 292) Toshaalantakah (the destroyer of Toshaalka): 293) Vaikuntha -yaasi (As Vishnu, Krishna was residing at Vaikuntha); 294) Kamsaarih (Krishna, who destroyed his enemy Kamsa), 295) Sarva dushta nishudanah (The mighty killer of all his deadly enemies); 296) Deva dundhibinirghoshi (The reason why Devas sounded at Kamas's death); 297) Pitru shoka nivaarinah (Krishna avenged and pacified the parents); 298) Yadavendrah (The Chief of Yadu Vamsha); 299) Sataam naathah (The rescuer of Satpurushas), 300) Yadavaari pramadanah (The destroyer of the opponents of Yadavas); 301) Shouri shoka vinashi (The demolisher of Vasudeva's distress); 302) Devaki tapa naashanah ( The terminator of Devaki's misery); 303) Ugrasena Paritraata (The redeemer of Ugrasena's despair); 304) Ugrasenaabhi pujitah ( adored by Ugrasena); 305) Ugrasenaabhisheki (He was responsible to make Ugrasena as King); 306) Ugrasena daya para (Secured gratitude from Ugrasena); 307) Sarva Saantwata saakshi (responsible for the revival of Yadu yamsha); 308) Yaduvamsha abhinandana (brought elation to all in the Yadu vamsha); 309) Sarva Maathura ( Achieved the veneration of all residents of Mathura Nagar); 310) Karunah (The samsevvah merciful); 311) Bhakta bandhavah (the kith and kin to all devotees); 312) Sarvagopala dhanadah (Provider of wealth to all Gopas); 313) Gopi Gopaala laalasah (He who genuinely enjoys mixing with Gopas and Gopikas); 314) Shouri dattopaveethi (Vasudeva had the privilege of performing 'Upanayana' samskaara to him (Krishna); 315) Ugrasena dayaakarah ( benevolent to Ugrasena); 316) Guru Bhakta (with devotion to Guru Sandipani); 317) Brahmachari (Krishna practised strict Brahmacharya while in Gurukul); 318) Nigama -adhyaney ratah (He was Veda Paarayana); 319) Sankarshana sahaadhyaayi (He was a co-student to Balarama); 320) Sudama suhrut (Sudama was a dear Brahmana co-student); 321) Vidyanidhih (the great store-house of Vidya / education); 322) Kalaa koshah (Complete treasure-house of Kalas / Arts); 323) Mruta putra pradah (Brought back to life the Guru's son after death); 324) Chakri (The holder of Sudarshan Chakra); 325) Paanchajani (Paancha -iani the conchshell in his hands); 326) Sarva Naaraki mochanah (Provider of salvation to all who stayed in Narakas/hells); 327) Yamarchita (Worshipped by Yama Deva); 328) Parah (The Highest); 329) Devah (Dhriti maan/He who has singular forbearance and forgiveness); 330) Naamocchara vashah (Controlled by repetitive naama japa); 331) Achyutah (The Indestructible); 332) Kubjavilasi (The rectifier of Kubja's handicapped form); 333) Subhagah (Extremely fortunate); 334) Deena bandhu (The relative of the helpess); 335) Anupama (The unparaleled); 336) Akrura griha gopta (The defender of Akrura's home); 337) Pratijna Paalakah (The Administer of Vows); 338) Shubhah (The Form of Auspiciousness); 339) Jarasandhajayi (Defeated Jarasandha by seventeen times); 340) Vidwan (Omniscient); 341) Yavanantah (witnessed the end of Kalayavana); 342) Dwijaashrayah (The shelter of Brahmanas); 343) Muchukundapriyakarah (Well-wisher of Muchukunda); 344) Jarasandha palayatih (Spared Jarasandha eighteen times); 345) Dwarakaa -janakah (The creator of Dwarakapuri); 346) Gudhah (Paramatma hidden in the form of a human being); 347) Brahmanyah (The devotee of Brahmanya); 348) Satya -sangarah (He swears by Truth); 349) Leeladharah (The miracle man) 350) Priyakarah ( Responsible for alround happiness); 351) Vishwakarma (Performer of several universally benificient deeds); 352) Yashapradah (Provider of Fame); 353) Rukmini priya sandeshah (Despatcher of love-message to Devi Rukmini); 354) Rukmi shoka vivardhanah (adds to of Rukmi's grief); 355) Chaidya shokalayah (augmentor of Sishupala's distress); 356) Shreshthah (Exemplary human being); 357) Dushta rajanya nashanah (The desroyer of evil-minded Kings); 358) Rukmi vairupya karanah (disgraced Rukmi with head-shaving); 359) Rukmini vachaney ratah (makes sure of following Rukmini's wishes); 360) Balabhadravachograahi (implicitly follows Balabhadra's feelings); 361) Mukta Rukmi (Left Rukmi alive instead of killing him); 362) Janaadrana (fulfiller of Bhakta's ishes); 363) Rumini praana nathah (Rukmini's heart throb); 364) Satyabhama patih (Satyabhama's beloved); 365) Swayam Bhakta pakshi (Takes the sides of

Bhaktas on his own); 366) Bhakti yashah (Fully won over by Bhaktas); 367) Akrura mani dayakah (the donor of Shamantaka mani to Akrura); 368) Shatadhanva praanahaari (Eliminator of Shatadhanva's life); 369)Ruksharaja sutaapriyah (The beloved of Jambavati, the daughter of Jambavaan); 370) Satrajitat -tanayaa kantah (the dear wife of Satrajita's daughter- Satyabhama); 371) Mitravida -apaharakah (The stealer of Mitravinda): 372) Satyapatih (Husband of Nagnajit's daughter Satya); 373) Lakshmanaajita (won over Lakshmana in a'Swayamvara'); 374) Pujya (worthy of worship); 375) Bhadra Priyankara (endears Bhadra); 376) Narakaasura ghaati (destroyer of Narakaasura); 377) Leelaakanyaa -harah ( took away sixteen thousand virgin girls as his wives for fun); 378) Jayee (the Victorious); 379) Murari (terminator of Murari daitya); 380) Madaneshah (Controller of Manmadha); 381) Dharitri duhkha naashanah (got rid of Bhu Devi's anguish); 382) Vainateyi (The Master of Garuda Deva); 383) Swargagaami (Visited Swarga to fetch Parijata flower); 384) Adityaah kundala pradah (Gave away ear-rings to Aditi); 385) Indrarchita (worshipped by Indra); 386) Ramaakaantah (the belived of Lakshmi); 387) Vajri bharyaa prapujitah (Worshipped by Sachi Devi, the wife of Indra); 388) Paarijaataapahaari (appropriated Parijaata tree); 389) Shakra maanaapahaarakah (razed to ground the ego of Indra); 390) Pradyumna janakah (the father of Pradyumna); 391) Sambatatah (father of Samba); 392) Bahusutah (father of innumerable sons); 393) Vidhuh (Of Visahnu Swarup); 394) Gargaacharyah (Made Gargaacharya as his desciple); 395) Satyagatih (Attainable by Truth alone); 396) Dharmaadharah (Dharma as his support); 397) Dharaadharah (The sustainer of Prithvi); 398) Dwaraamandanah (Dwaraka illuminated by him); 399) Shlokyah (worthy of reputation); 400) Sushlokah (praiseworthy by way of Stanzas); 401) Nigamaalayah ( the Store of Vedas); 402) Poundraka praanahaari (The slayer of fake Vasudava); 403) Kashiraajashiro harih (The slicer of the fake Kashi's head); 404) Avaishnava vipradaahi (those Brahmanas who tried to bring disrepute to Yadu vamshaites were burnt off); 405) Sudakshina bhayavah (Frightened Kashi Raja's son Sudakshina into submission): 406) Jarasandhavidari (enabled Bhimasena to tear off Jarasandha); 407) Dharmanandana yagna krit ( facilitated the successful completion of Dharma Raja's Yagna); 408) Sishupalashiracchedi (The smasher of Sishupala's head); 409) Dantravaktra vishashanah (killed Dantavaktra); 410) Vidhurathantakah (the obliterator of Vidhurantaka); 411) Shrishah (The Swami of Devi Lakshmi); 412) Shridaha (The Provider of Prosperity); 413) Dwivida nashanah (The killer of Dwivida Vaanara as by Balabhadra); 414) Rukmini maana haari (eliminated Rukmini's self-image); 415) Rukmini maana vardhanah (Enhanced Devi Rukmini's pride); 416) Devarshi shaapaharta (Saved Narada from his curse); 417) Draupadi vaakya paalakah (Draupadi's statements made true); 418) Durvaasobhaya haari (Removed Muni Durvasa's fright); 419) Paanchaali smaranaagatah (Instantly appeared at Draupadi's call of desperation); 420) Paartha dutah (the personal emissary) of Kunti's sons; 421) Partha Mantri (Adviser of Kunti Putras); 422) Partha duhkougha naashanah (The destroyer of Pandava's miseries); 423) Partha maanaapahari (Ensured Pandava's self-respect); 424) Parthajeevana dayikah (Provider of life to Pandavas); 425) Panchali Vastra daata (Prevented Panchali's dishonour / disrobing and bestowed unlimited clothing to her); 426) Vishwapalaka palakah (Provides protection to Devas who guard the world); 427) Shwetashwa sarathi (the Charioteer to Arjuna's white horses); 428) Satyah (Satya Swarupa); 429) Satya sadhyaha (Possible to attain Him only through Truth); 430) Bhayapahah (Overcomes fright only by devotion); 431) Satyasandhah (Truth alone succeeds); 432 ) Satyaratih (Engrossed in Truth); 433) Satya Priyah (Endeared by Truth); 434) Udaradhih (Liberal-minded); 435) Mahasena -jayi (Even defeated Karikeya as he fought on Banasura's side.); 436) Shiva sainya vinashanah ( Shivashena was destroyed by him); 437) Banasura bhujachhetta (cut-off the hands of Banasura); 438) Banasura baahuvarapradah (gave the boon of restoring the four hands of Banasura); 439) Tarkshya maanapahari (wiped out Garuda's ego); 440) Tarkshya tejo vivardhanah (Garuda's radiance enhanced by him); 441) Rama swarupadhari (assumed Shri Rama's Form); 442) Satyabhamaa mudaayahah (Provided joy to Satyabhama); 443) Ratnakara jala kreeda (enjoyed swimming in the Sea); 444) Vrajaleela pradarshakah (granted the vision of Vraja leelas to devotees); 445) Swapratijnaa paridhwamsi (did not mind breaking his own vow to enable Bhishma's vow); 446)

Bhishmaajnaa paripalakah (Followed Bhishma's instruction); 447) Viraayudha harah (stole away the brave men's Astras and Shastras); 448) Kaalah (Kaala Swarupa); 449) Kaalikeshah (The Master of Kaali); 450) Mahabalah (Maha Shaktiman); 451) Barbarika shirohaari (chopped the head of Barbarika); 452) Barbarika shirapradah (restored the head of Bararika); 453) Dharma putra iavee (enabled Dhara Raja to be victorious); 454) Shura Duryodhana madaantakah ( the destroyer of Duryodhana's arrogance); 455) Gopikapreeti nirbandha nitya kreedah ( succumbs to the pressure of Gopikas and always resorts to playful activities); 456) Vrajeswarah (the Master of Vraja); 457) Radhaakundaratih (loves to Play in Radha's waterbody); 458) Dhanyah (worthy of gratitude); 459) Sadaandola samaashritah (enjoys swings on the Swings); 460) Sada madhu vanaanandi (Always joyful time in the Madhu Gardens); 461) Sada vrindaavani priyah (Loves to enjoy in Vridaavana); 462) Ashoka vana nannaddhah (always ready to play in Ashoka Vana); 463) Sada tilaka sangatah (With 'tilaka' on his forehead); 464) Govardhana ratih (Ready to play on Govardhana Mountain); 465) Sadaa Gokula Vallabhah (Ready for Gokula and cow-herds); 466) Bhaandira vata samvaasi (Lives in the Bhaandira vata often); 467) Nityam Vamshi vata sthitah (Likes to stay on at Vamshivata); 468) Nanda graama kritaavaasah (resident of Nandagraam); 469) Vrisha Bhaanugriha priyah (Likes to visit Vrisha Bhanu's Place); 470) Griheeta kaamini rupa (likes to sport the form of Kamini); 471) Nityam raasa vilaasa krit (Takes pleasure in performing Raasa leelas always); 472) Vallavijana samgopta (Provides security to Gopikaas); 473) Vallavee jana vallabhah (The beloved of Gopikas); 474) Devasharma kripa karta (showers kindness on Deva Sharma); 475) Kalpapaada prasamstitah (takes pleasure under the Kalpa Vriksha); 476) Shilanugandha nilayah (Resides in the palace of perfumed stones); 477) Padachari (enjoys walking by foot); 478) Ghanachhavih (Has the cloud-like bluish colour); 479) Atasee kusumaprakyha (Has the body colour of Tisi flower); 480) Sadaa Lakshmi kripakarah (constantly shows extreme kindness to Lakshmi); 481) Tripuraari priyakarah (endears Maha Deva); 482) Ugra Dhanwa (carries a fearful bow); 483) Aparaajitah (Invincible); 484) Shaddhura naashanah (destroys Shaddhura); 485) Nikumbha praana haarakah (The eliminator of Daithya Nikumbha); 486) Vajra naabha puradhvamsi (devastated Vajra naabha pura); 487) Poundraka prana harakah ( Poundraka's demolisher); 488) Bahulashwa preeti karta (Liked Mithila's King Bahulashwa); 489) Dwija varya priyankarah (Liked Shruta Deva, the Bhakta Brahmana);490) Shiva sankata haari ( eliminates problems for Shiva); 491) Vrikaasura vinaashanah (Krishna-the killer of Vrikasura); 492) Bhrigu satkara kaari (Bhrigu received honour from Krishna); 493) Shiva saatvikada praadata (provider of 'Satvikata' to Shiva); 494) Gokarna pujakah (worshipped at Gokarna); 495) Samba kushti vidhvamsah karanah (eradicated the leprosy disease of Samba); 496) Veda stutah (Eulogised by Vedas); 497) Veda vetta (Vedajna); 498) Yadu vamsha varthanah ( the Promoter of Yadu Vamsha); 499) Yadu vamsha Vinaashi (The termintor of Yadu vamsha); 500) Uddhavodhhara kaarakaha (endowed with Salvation to Uddhava); 501) Radha ('Aaraadhya Shakti' of Shri Krishna); 502) Raadhika ('Vrisha Bhanu Putri'); 503) Aanandaa (The Highest Form of Bliss); 504) Vrishabhanuja (The daughter of Vrisha Bhanu Gopa); 505) Brindavaneshwai (Bridavana's Queen); 506) Punya (Punyamayi / Devi of Propitious -ness); 507) Krishna maanasa haarini (The 'chitchor' or the Thief of Krishna's heart); 508) Pragalbha (Essence of radiance, courage, fearlessness and kindness); 509) Chatura (Versatile); 510) Kama (Epitome of Love); 511) Kamini (darling of Shri Krishna); 512) Harimohini (adored by Bhagavan); 513) Lalitha (Most gorgeous); 514) Madhura (sweet and rapturous); 515) Maadhwi (ecstatic); 516) Kishori (Lastingly youthful); 517) Kanaka Prabha (lustrous like gold); 518) Jita Chandra (wins over Moon God in pleasantness); 519) Jita mriga (wobbly-eyed surpassing that of a deer); 520) Jita Simha (of a waist that puts a lion to shame); 521) Jita dwipa (of the leisurely and relaxed walk of an elephant which disgraces that of Radha); 522) Jita Rambha (of better perfection than of Rambha in terms of physical features and voluptuousness); 523) Jita pika ( of such squashy and soft voice that humiliates that of a cuckoo); 524) Govinda hridayodbhaya (Manifested from the heart of Govinda); 525) Jita vimba (the redness of her lips is far superior to that of Vimba fruit); 526) Jita Shuka (The nose of a parrot is put to awkwardness compared to that of Radha's); 527) Jita Padma (Even Devi Lakshmi is put to

embarrassment as compared to the unique elegance of Devi Radha's); 528) Kumarika (Ever Youthful); 529) Shri Krishnaakarshana (Radha had that magnetic charm that readily vanquished Shri Krishna); 530) Devi (Divya Swarupa / of Celestial Form); 531) Nitya yugma Swarupini (She has an everlasting double personality of Radha and Krishna); 532) Nityam Viharini (Playfully wild and non-stop); 533) Kanta (The most beloved favourite of Nandana Vana); 534) Rasika (Sips the juice of love); 535) Krishna Vallabha (the darling of Krishna); 536) Aamodini (Readily adored by Krishna); 537) Modavati (The symbol of enchantment); 538) Nandanadana bhushitha (Ornamented by Krishna with sixteen Shringaras viz. embriodered dress, flowers, kajal or Eyetex, 'bindi' or decorative red-spot on forehead, 'Maantika' or ornament on head- hair central parting, nose ring, ear rings, necklaces, armlets, designed 'mehendi' on hands and feet, bangles / bracelets, eight hand finger rings, waist band, anklets, fragrances and 'Sindoor'); 539) Divyaabara (wearer of Divya Vastra or Celestial Dress); 540) Divya haara (She who wears divinely garlands / necklaces); 541) Muktaamani vibhushita (ornamented with pearl necklace); 542) Kunji priya (fond of the shrubs of Bridavana gardens); 543) Kunja vaasa (likes to live in the big shrubs); 544) Kunjanayaka nayika (The heroine of Krishna kunjas); 545) Charurupa (the most attractive form of Radha); 546) Charu vaktra (the most charming face); 547) Charu Hemangada (Beautiful golden armlets); 548) Shubha (The most propitious); 549 (Shri Krishna Venu Sangeeta (The famed flute music of Shri Krishna); 550) Murali harini (Robbed of his flute for fun); 551) Shiva (The auspicious); 552) Bhadra (the fortunate); 553) Bhagavati (The symbol of Purity); 554) Shanta (The essence of Peace); 555) Kumuda (The all pervasive Form of Happiness); 556) Sundari (The Prettiest); 557) Priya (The beloved of Krishna); 558) Krishnakreeda (She who is playful with Krishna); 559) Krishna rathih (intensely unified in love with Krishna); 560) Shri Krishna sahacharini (Krishna's close companion moving about with him always); 561) Vamshivata priya sthaana (Vamshi vata as their amorous spot); 562) Yugmayugma swarupini (Duel-personality of Radha and Krishna); 563) Bhandira Vaasini (Stays in Bhandira Vana); 564) Shubhra (Faircoloured); 565) Gopinaadha priya (The beloved of Gopikas); 566) Sakhi (The close pal of Shri Krishna); 567) Shrutinih shwasitah (Manifested by the exhaling of Vedas); 568) Divya (Of Celestial Form); 569) Govindarasa dayani (She provides sweet juice of love to Govinda);570) Shri Krishna praarthani (desirous of Shri Krishna alone); 571) Ishana (Ishwari); 572) Mahananda pradayani (bestower of great bliss); 573) Vaikuntha jana samsevya (worthy of worship by the residents of Vaikuntha); 574) Koti Lakshmi sukhavaha (Provider of such happiness as would exceed that of crores of Lakshmis); 575) Koti kandarpa lavanya (loveliness comparable to crores of Manmadhas); 576) Ratikoti rati prada (provider of such delight as from crores of Rati Devis; 577) Bhaktigrahna (attainable only by high devotion); 578) Bhakti Rupa (personification of devotion); 579)Lavanya sarasi (Lake-like of charisma); 580) Uma (Yoga Maya); 581) Brahma Rudraadi samradhya (worshipped by Brahma and Rudra); 582) Nityam koutulahaanvita (with persistent desire to learn); 583) Nitya leela (Always playful); 584) Nitya kama (anxious to unite with Krishna); 585) Nitya shringara bhushita (constantly amorous); 586) Nitya vridavana rasa (continuously fond of the joy of Vrindavana); 587) Nitya Nandanandana Samyukta (craves for the company of Krishna always); 588) Gopika-mandali yukta (surrounded by the circles of Gopikas); 589) Nitya Gopala sangatha (Ready to keep the company of Gopala); 590) Gorasa kshepini (The sprayer of Gorasa); 591) Shura (embodied with great bravery); 592) Saananda (full of cheerfulness); 593) Anandadayani (Provider of joy); 594) Maha leela prakrushta (worthy of the great romantic adventures); 595) Naagari (Highly cultured); 596) Nagacharini (freely roams over Govardhana Mountain); 597) Nityamaghurnita (in search of Krishna always); 598) Purna (Complete with excellent features); 599) Kasturi tilakaanvita (Adorned by 'kasturi tilaka' on her forehead); 600) Padma (Lakshmi Swarupa); 601) Shyama (The alluring); 602) Mrigakshi (with fluid eyes as of a deer); 603) Siddha Swarupa (The Profile of Stability); 604)Rasaavaha (Full of Krishna's juice of love); 605) Kotichandraanana (Her face as appealing and shiny as crores of Moons); 606) Gauri (white and radiant); 607) Kotikokila suswara (Has the sweet voice of crores of 'Koels'); 608) Sheela soundarya nilaya ( of outstanding beauty and character); 609) Nanda nandana

laalita (receives enormous attention from Shri Krishna); 610) Ashoka vana samvasi (The illustrious resident of Ashokvana); 611) Bhandivana sangatha (accessible at Bhandi vana); 612) Kalpadruma talaa vishta (Seated under the cool shade of Kalpa tree); 613) Krishna (Krishna Swarupa); 614) Vishwa (Vishwa Swarupa); 615) Haripriya (Lover of Hari); 616) Ajaagamya (Unreachable even to Brahma); 617) Bhayaagamya (inaccessible even to Bhaya); 618) Goyadhanakritalaya (Resident of Govardhana Mountain); 619) Yamuna teera nilaya ( stays on at the banks of River Yamuna ); 620) Shashvat Govinda japshini (Endlessly chanting the name of Govida); 621) Shaswata -maanavati (Eternally respectful); 622) Snigdha (Snehamayi); 623) Shri Krishna parivandita (esteemed by Shri Krishna); 624) Krishna stuta (As eulogised by Krishna); 625) Krishna vrataa (Krishna-centric); 626 ) Shri Krishna hridayalaya (Resident of Krishna's heart); 627) Devadruma phala (Fulfiller of all desires like Kalpa Vriksha); 628) Sevya (worthy of worship) 629) Vrindavana Rasaalaya (Immersed in the juice of Vrindavana) 630 )Koti tirtha mayi (Of Koti Tirtha Swarupa ); 631) Satya (Satya Swarupa); 632) Koti Tirtha Phala prada (Provider of the fruits of Koti Teertha); 633) Koti yoga sudushpraapya (Unattainable by koti yogasadhanas); 634) Koti Yagna -duraashraya ( not possible to access even by koti yagnas); 635) Manasa (The famed 'Manasa'); 636) Shashilekha ( Chandra kala in the form of Shri Krishna); 637) Shri koti subhaga (As propitious as crores of Lakshmi); 638) Anagha (Devoid of sins); 639) Koti mukta sukha (As happy as possessing crores of Muktatmaas); 640) Sowmya ( of extremely pleasant nature); 641) Lakshmi koti vilasini (As jovial as crores of Lakshmis); 642) Tilottama (Extremely attractive since she sports a sesame-seed like 'bindu' on her forehead); 643) Trikaalastha (She exists in the past, present and future); 644) Trikalajna (She has the knowledge of the three tenses); 645) Adhishtari (The 'Swamini' or the Leader); 646) Trivedajna (Proficient in the Three Vedas); 647) Tri lokajna (She is fully conversant with the happenings in all the Three Lokas); 648) Tureeyanta nivaasini (She exists in 'Jagriti'or fully conscious, 'Swapna' or dreams as well as blissful states); 649) Durgaaraadhya (worshipped by Devi Durga); 650) Ramaaraadhya (Worshipped by Lakshmi); 651) Vishwaaraadhya (worshipped by the entire Universe); 652) Chidaatmika (Chetana Swarupa); 653) Devaraadhya (worshipped by Devas); 654) Paraaraadhya (The Supreme Parama Devi); 655) Brahmaaraadhya (worshipped by Brahma); 656) Paramaatmika (Paramaatma Swarupa); 657) Shiyaaraadhya (worthy of worship by Bhagavan Shiva); 658) Premaaraadhya (worthy of achievement through love and dedication); 659) Bhaktaadaadhya (Devi attainable by bhakti / devotion); 660) Rasatmika (Rasa Swarupa); 661) Krishna -praanaarpani (Dedicated her life to Krishna); 662) Bhama (The Ideal); 663) Shuddha prema vilasini (manifested by pure and spiritual love); 664) Krishnaaraadhya (She is the Araadhya (Bhakti alone could accomplish her); 666) Bhakta brinda Devi); 665) Bhakti Saadhyaa nishevita (worshipped by groups of devotees); 667) Vishvaadhara (The Great support of the Universe); 668) Kripadhara (The sustainer of kindness); 669) Jeevaadhara (The prop to all Beings); 670) Ati nayika (The Supreme of Nayikas / Leaders); 671) Shuddha Premamayi (The pristine form of Love/adoration); 672) Lazza (Modesty/humility); 673) Nitya Siddha (Swayam Siddha wiithout effort); 674) Shiromani (The topmost); 675) Divya Rupa (of the Celestial Profile); 676) Divya bhoga (Celestial pleasures); 677) Divya Vesha (of Celestial costumes); 678) Mudaanvita (blissful); 679) Divyangana vrinda saaraa (The essence of all celestial women groups); 680) Nitya nutana youvana (of fresh and innovative youth); 681) Parabrahmaavrita (Encircled by Parabrahma Tatwa); 682) Dhyeya (Highly worthy of meditation); 683) Maha Rupa (of the Highest Form); 684) Mahojjwala (The pinnacle form of Radiance); 685) Koti Surya Prabha (The dazzle of crores of Surya Devas); 686) Kotichandra bimbadhika chhavi (The reflecion of crores of Chandra bimbas); ( of Her sweet and soft-natured talk); 688) Aadya ( The Adi Devi); 689) 687) Komalamrita vaak Vedaadya ( of the Originating Swarupa of Vedas); 690) Veda durlabha (Beyond the reach of Vedas); 691) Krishnaasakta (Delighted in Krishna Tatwa); 692) Krishna Bhakta (Those devotees replete with Krishna's consciousness) 693) Chandraavali nishevita (worshipped by her companion named Chandraavali); 694) Kala shodasa sampurna (Complete with Sixteen 'Kalas') [The Sixteen 'Kalas' are ruled by Nitya Devis viz. Tripura Sundari, Kameswari, Bhagamalini, Nitya Klinnaa, Bherunda, Vahnivaasini, Maha Vaireshwari, Roudri, Twarita, Kula Sundari, Nitya, Neela Pataaka,

Vijaya., Swarna Mangala, Jwalaa Malini, and Chhidrupal; 695) Krshna dehaadra dhaarini (She occupies half of His Physique); 696) Krishna buddhi (She dedicated her complete mental faculties); 697) Krishna saara (She gave away her enirety); 698) Krishna rupa viharini (She moves about with Krishna's totality); 699) Krishna kantaa (The topmost beloved of Krishna); 700) Krishna dhanaa (She has the conviction of Krishna's belonging his complete prosperity including physical, mental and spirtual resources); 701) Krishnamohana kaarini (Allures Kishna with her limitless love); 702) Krishnaa dhrishti (concentrated vision on Krishna); 703) Krishna gotra (has Krishna's gothra itself); 704) Krishna Devi (Krishna's target of worship); 705) Kuloduha (The best of the Kula); 706) Sarvabhuta sthitaatma (The Super Soul spread all over the Beings); 707) Sarvaloka namaskruta (venerated by all lokas); 708) Krishna daatri (makes possible to all deserving devotees to attain Krishna); 709) Premadhaatri (helps produce devotion among various persons on Krishna); 710) Swarna gaatri (of golden physique); 711) Manorama (Gives joy to Krishna); 712) Naga dhaatri (She creates the Devatas in charge of mountains; 713) Yashodaatri (Provider of name and fame); 714) Maha Devi (The highest Goddess); 715) Shubhankari (bestower of propitiousness); 716) Shri Sesha Deva Janani (The Creator of Lakshmi, Sesha Nag and Devatas); 717) Avataaranagana prasuh (The Creator of Incarnations); 718) Utpalangka( wears the sign of blue lotus on her hands and feet); 719) Aravindaanga (Has the Symbol of Lotus); 720) Praasaadangka (Has the icon of a Temple); 721) Adviteeyaka (None like her in Creation); 722) Rathaangaa (Has temple as her pictogram); 723) Kunchanjaanga (has the symptom of Elephant ) 724) Kundalaangka pada stitha (on her feet the indication is a kundali); 725) Chhatraanga (umbrella as her logo); 726) Vidyudanga (diamond as the emblem);727) Pushpamaalaangkita (a flower garland as her representation); 728) Dandaagka ('Dhanda' or the sacred stick as her insignia); 729) Mukutanga (headgear as her crest); 730) Purna Chandra (glowing like a full moon); 731) Shukaangkita ( paarrot like her signage); 732) Krishnaahaara paaka (she is engaged in the kitchen as though Krishna is arriving for his food); 733) Vrindaakunja vihaarini (moves about freely in Vrindavani gardens); 734) Krishna prabodhanakati (She wakes up Krishna from sleep); 735) Krishna sesha bhoianakari (She loves to eat the left-over of Krishna's food as 'Prasada); 736) Padmakesara madhya -sthaa) (She is seated in the midst of the filaments of lotus flower); 737) Sangeeta agama vedini (versatile in the Sangeeta Shastra); 738) Koti kalpaanta bhu bhringa (terminates crores of 'Kalpas' by her mere eye-brow frowns); 739) Apraapta Pralaya (Never affected by 'Pralayas'); 740) Achyuta (undiminishable); 741) Sarva Satva nidhi (embodiment of Satva Guna); 742) Padma shankhaadi nidhi sevita ( worshipped by the everlasting funds of Lotuses, conchshells etc.); Animaadi gunaishwarya (Replete with Siddhis like 'Anima') [well-known Ashta Siddhis are: Anima (reduction of body size to an atom); Mahima (expansion of size to infinity); Garima ( turning body heavy to any weight); Laghima (turning body weightless); Praapti (gaining access anywhere); Praakaamya (realisation of desires); Inaavaa (securing complete command) and Vaseetwa (gaining control of person / thing)] 743) Deva brinda vimohini ( capacity to control Deva groups); 745) Sarvaanandaprada (Provider of happiness to one and all); 746) Sarvaa (Sarva Swarupa); 747) Suvarna latikaakritih (she has the form of a lean golden creeper); 748) Krishnaabhisaara sanketa (Krishna waiting to meet her at a designated spot ); 749) Malini (decorated with a flower garland); 750) Nritya pandita (Connoisseur of dance); 751) Gopisindhu sakaashaapya (Krishna attainable among the groups of Gopikas); 752) Gopa mandapa shobhini ( Lights up the platform of Vrisha bhanu Gopa by her presence); 753) Shri Krishna preetida (she bestows Krishna's love to others); 754) Bheeta (she is terrified of loneliness by Krishna's absence); 755) Pratyanga pulakaa -schita (Her each body limb is overjoyed with his presence); 756) Shri Krishnaalingana rataa (She yearns for Shri Krishna's embraces); 757) Govinda virahaakshamaa ( His separation is unbearable for her); 758) Anantaguna sampanna ( Possessive of endless Gunas / features); 759) Krishna kirtana laalasaa (infatuated with lyrics about Krishna); 760) Bijatrayamayi -murti (She is the Swarupa of the Bija / seed Mantras viz. Shreem, Hreem and Kleem); 761) Krishnaanugraha vaanchhini (She longs for Krishna's kindness); 762) Vimalaadi nishevya (Radha is worshipped by her companions like Vimala and Utkarshini); 763)

Lalitaardyarchita (She is worshipped by Devi Lalita and other friends); 764) Sati (Highly virtuous and noble Devi); 765) Padma vrinda sthita (She is present among groups of Lotuses); 766) Hrishta (She is ever joyous); 767) Tripuraa pari sevitaa (She is adulated by Tripura Devi); 768) Brindaavatya -archita (She is venerated by Brindaavati); 769) Shraddha (She is the personification of fortitude); 770) Duriava (She is beyond Intellect); 771) Bhakta Vallabha (She is the beloved of devotees); 772) Durlabha (Diffcult of achievement); 773) Sandra soukhyaatma (Solid Form of Comfort and contentent); 774) Shreyo hetuh (The cause of happiness); 775) Subhogada (The provider of auspiciousness); 776) Saaranga (Like the thirsty bird 'Chaataki', Radha too thirsty of love for Krishna); 777) Sharada (Sarasvati Swarupa); 778) Bodha (Full of 'Jnaana'); 779) Sadbridavana chaarini (moves about all over the Sacred Brindavana); 780) Brahma -anandaa (of the pious Form of Brahmaananda); 781) Chidaananda (Chidaa -nanda mayi); 782) Dhyaanaananda (Engaged in the joyful meditation of Krishna); 783) Artha maatrika ( of the Form of Arthamaatrikaas); 784) Gandharvaa (Expert in Gaandharva Vidya); 785) Suratajna (Proficient in Surata kalaas); 786) Govinda praana sangamaa ( as though both Govinda and Radha have the same life); 787) Krishnaanga bhushanaa (She ornaments the body of Krishna); 788) Rathna bhushana ( She decorates her body with jewels); 789) Swarna bhushita (wears exquisite gold jewellery); 790) Shri Krishna hridayaa vaasaa (She stays in the temple heart of Shri Krishna); 791) Muktaakanaka naasika (puts on pearl-gold nose-screws); 792) Sadratna kankanaayuta (has superb gold jewellery bangles on her hands); 793) Shrimaaneela giristha (delighted to stay on Neela Giri); 794) Swarna nupura sampanna (garnished her feet with golden anklets); 795) Swarna kinkini mandita ( embellished 'Karadhanis' or handwear full of gold); 796) Asesha raasa kutuka (most anxious and restless to play 'raasa' with Krishna); 797) Rabhoruh (has plantain tree like thighs); 798) Tanu madhyama (of thin waist); 799) Parakritih (holds unique body-profile); 800) Paraananda( has supreme figure of bliss); 801) Paraswarga vihaarini (She has great mobility to visit worlds like Goloka on tours); 802) Prasuna kabari (adorns hair bun with flower garlands); 803) Chitra (beautifies in various ways); 804) Maha Sundara Sundari (The most outstanding beauty among beauties); 805) Kaishora vayasa (the ever teen-aged); 806)Bala (Child-like, yet, mature); 807) Pramadaakula shekhara (The most charming of the dynasty); 808) Krishnaadharaa sudhaawaada ( The taster of the nectar of Krishna's lips); 809) Shyama prema vinodini (the ardently romantic lovepartner of Krishna); 810) Shikhi pincha lasat chuda (dressed with peacock feathers on her hairdress); 811) Swarna champaka bhushita (adorned her with golden champa flower); 812) Kumkumaalakta kasturi mandita (excels with the shine of red Kasturi and saffron); 813) Aparaajita (invincible); 814 ) Hema haaraanvita (decorated with golden necklace); 815) Pushpa haaraadhya (beautified with fragrant flower garlands); 816) Rasavati (full of the juice of love); 817) Maadhurya madhura (the sweetest due to the sweets); 818) Padma (famed by the name of Padma); 819) Padma -hasta ( wears a lotus by her hand); 820) Suvishruta ( popular and admired); 821)Bhru bhangaa bhanga kodanda kataaksha rasa shara sandhini (She applies kindness on the arrows of prayers to Krishna as released by the bowlike movements of frowns and defrowns of her eye-brows); 822) Seshadeva shirahstha (She manifests as Devi Prithvi on the hoods of Sesha Deva); 823) Nitya sthala vihaarini (Constantly visits the usual Places of her tours); 824) Kaarunya jala madhyastha (Seated in the midst of waters of kindness); 825) Nityamattha (ever intoxicated with the love of Krishna); 826) Adhirohini (She is the means of achieving heights to salvation); 827) Ahshta bhashavati (Expert in Eight languages); 828) Ashta Nayikas (The eight companions of Radha stated to be Swaadheena Bhatrika, Khanditha, Abhsaarika, Vipra labdha, Kalahantaritha, Vasaksajja, Proshtith Bhatrika, and Virahol-khanditha); 829) Lakshanaanvita (Possessive of the righteous features); 830) Suneethijna (The byword of high morals); 831) Shrutijna (The personification of 'Shrutis' or Vedas); 832) Sarvajna (The Omniscient); 833) Duhkhahaarini (The destroyer of sorrows); 834)Rajoguneswari (Embodiment of Rajoguna); 835) Saracchandra nibhaanana (She is likened to the attractive visage of the Moon in Sharat month of autumn season/Sept-Nov); 836) Ketaki kusumaabhaasan ( bright like the Kataki flower); 837) Sadaa Sindhu vanasthita (She moves about in Sindhu garden always); 838) Hemapushpaadhika karaa (Has the

graceful hands far superior to golden flowers); 839) Pancha Shakti mayi(Replete with the mystic powers of Pancha Shaktis responsible for Creation, Sustenance, Dissolution, Concealment and Bestowment); 840) Hita (The Provider of Counsel and Guidance); 841) Stanakumbhi (The highchested); 842) Naraadhya (Ever-Present with Purushottama); 843) Kshinaapunya 844) Yashasvini (Abounding with reputation); 845) Vairaaja Surya janani (Mother of the most radiant Sun God who lights up the entire Universe); 846) Shreesha (The Life-Partner Lakshmi); 847) Bhuvana Mohini (The hypnotizer of the Three Worlds); 848) Maha Shobha (The quintessence of brilliance); 849) Maha Maya (The Great Illusion); 850) Maha Kanti (The Supreme Radiance); 851) Maha Smritih (The epitome of Memory Power); 852) Maha Moha (The Great Enchantress); 853) Maha Vidya (The Highest knowledge of attaining Krishna); 854) Maha Kirthi ( The all-pervading fame); 855) Maha Rati (The personification of yearning); 856) Maha Dhairya (Unparalelled Courage); 857) Maha Veerya (The Most Valiant); 858) Maha Shakti (The Mightiest Power); 859) Maha Dyutih (The most lustrous); 860) Maha Gauri (The Fairest in Complexion); 861) Maha Sampat (Unimaginably wealthist); 862) Maha Bhogavilasini (The Ultimate in extravagance); 863) Samaya (The most opportune and well-timed); 864) Bhaktida (The bestower of Bhakti); 865) Ashoka (Totally devoid of angst); 866) Vatsalyarasa dayini (The enormous source of encouragement and support); 867) Suhruda bhakti prada ( Pro-active provider of Bhakti to the (The most translucent); 869) Madhurya rasa varshini (The virtue-minded); 868) Swachha downpour of sweet charm); 870) Bhaava Bhakti prada (The motivator of Bhaava Bhakti or the abstract notion of devotion suggestive of 'Eko Paramatma' or the Unique Destination); 871) Shuddha Prema Bhakti vidhayani (Stimulator of Pure Bhakti, unsullied by worldly desires); 872) Gopa Rama (The Entertainer of Gopas); 873) Abhirama (The depository of Beauty and Grace); 874) Kreedaarama (engrossed in idyllic games); 875) Parameswari (The Supreme Energy); 876) Nitya Rama (The Permanent); 877) Atmaa Rama (The Soulful of Engrossement); 878) Krishnaaraama (total consciouness and involvement in Krishna); 879) Rameshwari (The Alternate Manifestation of Lakshmi); 880) Eakaaneka jagat vyaapta (The Unique and Singular but discernible in multitude Forms); 881) Vishwa leelaa prakaashini (perceptible in universal illusions); 882) Saraswateesha (The superior Form of Devi Saraswati; 883) Durgesha (Another embodiment of Devi Durga), 884) Jagadisha (An alternative materialization of the Universe); 885) Jagadvidhih (The Architect of the World); 886) Vishnu vamsha nivaasa (Resident of Vishnuvamsha); 887) Vishnu vamsha samudbhava (born of Vishnuvamsha); 888) Vishnu Vamshastuta (She was complemented by the co-members of the Vishnuvamsha); 889) Kartri (equipped with the Power of independent mastery of actions); 890) Sadaa Vishnu vamshaavani (Engaged in the security of Vishnu vamsha always); 891) Aaraamastha (Happy in resting in the Gardens); 892) Vanastha (Residing in Brindavana); 893) Suryaputryavagaahini (Delighted in bathing Yamuna, the daughter of Surya Deva); 894) Preethistha (Ever-evident in the Form of adoration); 895) Nitya yantrastha ( set up in the Outline of 'Yantra'); 896) Golokastha (Exists in Goloka);897) Vibhutida (Provider of affluence); 898) Swaanubhutistha (She is maretialised in her own experiences); 899) Avyakta ( Invisible); 900) Sarvaloka nivasini (She is spread all over the Worlds); 901) Amrita (Eternal); 902) Adbhuta (mysterious/ Illusory); (903) Shrimanaarayana samirita ( She is eulogised by Narayana and Lakshmi) 904) Akshara (The Everlasting); 905) Kutastha (Orientation of Paramatma): 906) Maha Purushasambhaya (She presents to Rishis in myriad forms); 907) Aoudaarya bhaya saadhya (achieved by her sympathetic devotion); 908) Sthula sukshmaati rupini (irrespective of huge or atomic dimensions but lasting spiritual delight); 909) Sirisha pushpa mridula (softest and most delicate like a sirisha flower); 910) Gangeya mukura prabha (transparent like River Ganga or of a mirror); 911) Neelotpalajithaakshi ( her beautiful eyes decorated with eye-tex excel far better than the glow of Neelkamal); 912) Sadrathna kabaraanvita (her hair tresses ornamented by gems); 913) Prema paryanka nilaya (she rests comfortably on her lovely bed); 914) Tejo-mandala madhyagaa (she is in the center of a brilliant circle of dazzle); 915 ) Krishaanga gopanaabhedaa (She seeks to hide the physique of Krishna by sporting several Rupas); 916) Leelaavarana nayika (She plays the principal role in assuming playful acts of mischief); 917) Sudhaasindhu samullaasa

(she whips and whisks the milk-like ocean of love with unlimited excitement and exuberance); 918) Amrita syanda vidhayani (sprays showers of Nectar on Krishna); 919) Krishnachitta (dedicates her full consciousness to Paramatma); 920) Raasa chitta (concentrates whole-heartedly in the Raasa dance for the delight of Krishna); 921) Prema chitta (focusses her full attention on her love for Krishna); 922) Haripriya (the most beloved of Hari); 923) Achintana guna graamaa (possesses the distressless features of Achyuta); 924) Krishna leela (the repository of Krishna's playful activities); 925) Malaaapaha ( cleanses the dirt of mind and sinful attitudes) 926) Raasa sindhu shashanka (Krishna Raasa like the ocean with shimmering form of full-moon); 927) Raasamandala mandini (She is the cynosure of Raasa leelas); 928) Natavrataa (the store house of courtesy); 929) Srihareechha sumurthi (represents Krishna's wish-list); 930) Surayandita (worshipped by Devas); 931) Gopichudamani (the head-worn ornament of all Gopikas; 932) Gopi ganedhya (extolled by Gopika groups); 933) Virajaadhika (held in higher esteem than by Goloka Shakti called Viraja); 934) Gopapreshtha (the darling of Krishna); 935) Gopakanya (daughter of Vrishabhanu Gopa); 936) Gopanaari (The Gopa maid); 937) Sugopika (the ideal Gopika); 938) Gopadhaama (The happy resident of Goloka); 939) Sudaamaaba (treats Sudaama as her mother); 940) Gopaali (Gopi); 941) Gopa mohini (intoxicated with Krishna's love); 942) Gopabhusha (Gopala considered as her nicest ornament); 943) Krishna bhusha (she is the adorner of Krishna's ornaments); 944) Shri brindavana chandrika (Krishna, the Full Moon of Brindavana); 945) Veenaadighoshanirata (engrossed in playing 'veena' and other musical instruments); 946) Raasotsava vikaasini (Brightens the Festival of Raasaas); 947) Krishnacheshta (She enjoys imitating Krishna's playful roles); 948) Aparijnaata ( not possible to recognise others easily); 949) Koti kandarpa mohini (capable of enchanting koti Kamadevas); 950) Shri Krishna guna gaanaadyah (engrossed in singing lyrics in praise of Krisha); 951) Devasundari mohini (Her beauty attracts all Deva Sundaris); 952) Krishna -chandra manognaa (She is fully conversant with the feelings of Krishna); 953) Krishnadeva Sahodari (Born to Devi Yashoda as Yoga Maya); 954) Krishnaabhilaashini (highly desirous of meeting Krishna); 955) Krishna premaanugraha vaanchhini (ever-eager to crave for Krihna's love and kindness); 956) Kshema (The Form of high security); 957) Mathuraalaapa (seeks to exchange sweet dialogues with Krishna); 958) Bhruvomaya (makes expressions of eyebrows); 959) Subhadrika (of highly propitious Form); 960) Prakritih (She represents the soothing powers of Krishna); 961) Paramaananda (of the Form of Supreme Happiness); 962) Neepadrumatalasthita (She likes to stand under a Kadamba tree); 963) Kripaakataaksha (Expressive of mercy to her devotees through her benign looks); 964) Vimbeshti (Her red lips are likened to Vimba fruit); 965) Rambha (called as Rambha since generally indicative of beauty, but far prettier otherwise); 966) Charu nitambini (charmingly buttocked); 967) Smarakelinidhana (The storehouse of Love escapades); 968) Gandatatanka mandita (cheeks ornamented by ear-rings); 969) Hemadri kantiruchira (Magnificent Radha Devi comparable to the golden mountain of Meru emitting rays of lustre); 970) Premaadhya (full up with Love); 971) Madamanthara (Slow-stepped due to excessive passion); 972) Krishna Chinta (Conscious of Krishna); 973) Prema -chinta (Krishna's charisma); 974) Ratichinta (obsessed with Krishna rati); 975) Krishnada (fulfiller of Krishna prapti); 976) Raasa chitta (possessed with Raasa); 977) bhava chitta (alongwith Prema bhava; 978) Shuddha chitta (Pure hearted); 979) Maha Rasa (climaxed Rass); 980) Krishnadrishti thriti yuga (unable to bear a second equalling a Yuga); 981) Drishti pakshma vinindini (controlling sleepless seconds of aching eyes awaiting Krishna); 982) Kandarpa janani (Radha the mother of Manmadha); 983) Mukhya (The Chief); 984) Vaikuntha -gatidayani (Provider of Mukti); 985) Raas bhava (manifested by Raasa); 986) Priyaaslishta (Embraced by Krishna); 987) Preshtha (Krishna's darling); 988) Prathama nayika (Prime Lover) 989) Shuddhaashuddha Swarupa; 990) Sudhadehini (Like a mother); 991) Shri Rama (As gorgeous as Lakshmi); 992) Rasamanjari; 993) Suprabhava (Well-featured); 994) Shubhaachaara (Noble tradition); 995) Swarnadi Narmadaambika (Mother of Ganga and Narmad); 996) Gomatichandrabhaagedhya (Praised by Gomati and Chandrabhaga ) 997) Sarayu Tamraparni suh (She presents Sarayu and Tamraparni Rivers); 998) Nishkalanaka charitra (blemishless); 999) Nirguna (Featureless) and 1000) Niranjana (Nirmala Swarupa).

# Over-view of 'Ashtaadasa' (eighteen) Puranas

Brahma 'Maanasa Putra' Maharshi Marichi approached Lord Brahma to describe the 'beeja' (seed), 'lakshana' (characteristic), 'pramaana' (means of knowledge / contents), 'vakta' (Acharya) and 'shrota' (the Listener) of the main line Puranas which provide the knowledge of the 'Charaachara Jagat' or the moveable and immoveable Universe. Among all the 'Kalpas', there actually was stated to be one Single Purana comprising one hundred crore 'Shlokas' (stanzas) with the 'Four Purusharthas' of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Mokshas as the 'bijas'; but Bhagavan Vishnu created Vyasa Muni in each Yugas and the latter in turn condensed the Single Purana with only four lakh Shlokas and distributed it among Eighteen Puranas with varied number of Shlokas among these. In fact, it is stated that the Single Mother Purana continues to be in position in the Deva Lokas. The four-lakh shlokas are sub-divided among the Eighteen Puranas viz. Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, Vishnu Purana, Vayu Purana, Bhagavat Purana, Narada Purana, Markandya Purana, Agni Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Brahma Vaivartha Purana, Linga Purana, Varaaha Purana, Skanda Purana, Vamana Purana, Kurma Purana, Matsya Purana, Garuda Purana and Brahmaanda Purana.

Mahatma Vyas first produced **Brahma Purana** with the underlying message of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha and ten thousand 'Shlokas'. This Purana described about the creation of Devatas, Asuras and Prajapatis like Daksha; about the 'Vamsa' (clan) of Bhagayan Surya; the incarnation of Lord Vishnu viz. Shri Rama and of the Epic of Ramayana; about Chandra Vamsa and of another incarnation of Vishnu viz. Shri Krishna; description of 'Sapta Dwipas' as also of 'Bhugola', the higher lokas and of the Lower Lokas of 'Pataala'; about the activities in 'Narakas'; Daksha Yagna and Parvati's wedding with Maha Deva. In the 'Uttara Bhaaga' of the Purana, 'Tirtha Yatras' were detailed with special reference to Purushotthama Kshetra; 'Ashrama Dharmas' were highlighted and Principles of 'Vaishnava Dharma', Yoga / Shankhya Siddhanta, and 'Brahmavaada Digdarshana' were explained. The Purana's 'Vakta' was Suta Maha Muni and the 'Shrota'was Shaunaka Muni. Its 'pramana' and 'lakshanas'are of 'Bhoga' (Worldly Pulls and Pressures) while the principal objective is 'Moksha'. Even reading or listening to the 'Anukramanika' or the Contents of the Purana would result in the control of 'Indrivas' or physical and internal organs, while its reading or hearing of it on a Vaishakha Purnima by honouring a Brahmana with Bhojan, and charities especially of a cow and gold ornament would assure attainment of Brahma loka.

Padma Purana has five 'khandas' symbolising 'Panchendriyas' wherein Maharshi Pulastya delineated to Bhishma the details in 'Srishti Khanda' of Creation of Brahma as well as by Brahma of Eight Vasus, Eleven Rudras, Twelve Adityas, Forty Nine Maruganas, Fourteen Manus, Sapta Rishis and Pitras and so on besides of Pushkara and other Tirthas, Brahma Yagna, Veda paath lakshanas, Pitraas and Shraaddha Vidhana. In 'Bhumi Khanda', Pitru Bhakti and the illustration of Shiva Sharma were cited; Vritrraasura vadha; Prudhu / Vena and Sunita's tales, the interesting examples of Nahuha, Yayati, Chyavana Muni and Parrot Kunjal, Significancre of Tirthas etc. too were covered. 'Swarga Khanda', was about Tirtha Yatras especially to the neighbouring places of Narmada, Kurukshetra, Kalindi, and Kashi, In 'Patalala Khand', the highlights were of Ramayana and Krishaayana, while Bhagavad Gita Mahatmya and of the rest of Avataaraas of Vishnu were vividly depicted in 'Uttara Khanda'. Veneration of a Brahmana on a Jyeshtha Purnima with Bhojan and daanaas bestows the fruits of reading, hearing and meditating of Padma Purana.

Vishnu Purana comprising twenty three thousand 'Shlokas' is considered as a demolisher of past and present sins. The naarator of the Purana was Shakti Nandan Muni Parashara and the 'Shrota' was Maharshi Maitraya. In the 'Poorva Bhaaga', six major 'Amshas' or aspects were covered of which the First Amsha concerned with 'Adi karana Sarga (Primary Creation), 'Devotpatthi', 'Samudra Madhana', narratives of Dhruva, Pruthu, Praachatesa, and Prahlada. The Second 'Amsha' described the account of Priyavrata who demarcated the Earth into Sapta Dwipas; depiction of the under-sea worlds of Pataala etc. as also of Seven Swargas; the movements of 'Grahas' Planets),

'Bharata charitra', 'Mukti Marga Nidarshana' etc. The third Amsha referred to Manyantyaras, importance of Karma kanda, Shraddhas etc. Portrayal of Surya vamsha and Chandra Vamsha Kings was attempted in the fourth Amsha. In the Fifth Amsha, vivid accounts were given on Shri Krishna's childhood 'leelaas', youthful acts of 'Dushta Sikshana' and 'Sishta Rakshana', his weddings, overnight transfer of the residents of Mathura to Dwarakaa etc. A picture of Kali Yuga, four kinds of Pralayas and Gyanopadesha of Brahma Tatwa were the underscores of the Sixth Amsha. In the 'Uttara Bhaga' of Vishnu Purana, Suta Maha Muni gave narrations to Shounaka Muni concerning various chronicles on Dharma titled 'Vishnu Dharmottaraas' such as Punya Vratas, Yama-Niyamas, Dharma Shastra, Artha Shastra, Vedanta, Jyotisha, Vamsha Varna Prakarana, Stotras, Mantras and all other 'Sadhanas' (means). This Vishnu Purana tries to cover all significant 'Siddhantas' of Shastras which Veda Vyasa considered fit for attaining Moksha. Those who read or hear the Vishnu Purana with reverence and earnestness would both secure the 'Ihika' or Worldly and 'Amushmika' or Other Worldy desires most certainly. If a devotee would write down or get it transcribed by others and donate a cow to a Vishnu Bhakta Brahmana on a Purnima of Ashadha Month would be readily qualified for Vishnu Loka after the end of his/her life!Even a mere perusal of the Contents of Vishnu Purana would help with encouraging results.

With twenty four thousand Shlokas scripted into it by Vayu Deva himself, the Vayu Purana yields the fruits of propitiousness by its reading, or having it read. Comprising two parts of 'Poorva' and 'Uttara', the Purana gives an effective delineation of the means of obtaining Salvation. In the Poorva Bhagaa, the features of Sarga (Creation) are vividly expressed, besides the descriptions of the different 'Manvantaras' and Kingships especially of Gayasura and of his extermination. The significance of 'Masaas' has been discussed, declaring that the month of 'Maagha' as the best. 'Daana Dharmas' and 'Raja Dharmas' have been dilated at length. Also, narrations about Prithvi, Pataal, Dishas and Aakaash have been made in some detail in the Poorva Bhaaga. The Uttara Bhaaga of the Vayu Purana contains 'Shiva Samhita' and is fully depictive of the Sacred River of Narmada and surroundings. It is stated that this River was materialised from Bhagavan Shiva's Body and was the confluence of Brahma and Vishnu too. It is further stated that the northern bank of Narmada comprised the devotees of Rudra and the southern bank of the River by Vishnu Bhakas. From the famed Omkareshwara Kshetra towards the west leading to the Sea, there are as many as thirty five 'Sangamas' of which eleven are positioned on the nothern bank and twenty three on the southern bank; the thirtyfifth sangam is said to be at the Maha Sangam of Narmada and the Sea. In fact, there are as many as four hundred Tirthas on either side of the banks including those at the Sangamas, although there really were stated to have existed sixty crore and odd dotting along the River lines! Those who write the Vayu Purana in full and donate a cow alongwith jaggery on Sravana Purnima to a Vedic Brahmana and his family would reside in Rudra Loka during the ensuing fourteen Indratvas.

Brahma Deva informed Maricha Maha Muni about the excellence of **Shrimad Bhagavata Purana** which had eighteen thousand Shlokas and assured that it was like a 'Kalpa Vriksha' with twelve branches represented by each 'Skanda' or Chapter. Veda Vyasa was the author of the Purana and 'shrotas' or listeners were several. The Opening Skanda, as reported by Suta Maha Muni to a congregation headed by Shounaka Muni, dealt with King Parithkshit's request to Suka Muni, the illustrious son of Veda Vyasa, to preach as much knowledge of Dharma and awareness of the Supreme Power as possible within a week's time since the King was cursed by Samika Rishi's son that Parikshit would die within a week due to snake bite; the King did the indescretion of hanging a dead serpent around the neck of the Muni who was in Tapasya. The second Skanda explained the concept of the Gross and Minute manifestations of Paramatma, the analysis of 'Maha Tatwas'- the Causes of 'Srishti' (Creation). The third Skanda described the dialogues between Vidura of Maha Bharata fame and Maharshi Maitreya about the procedure of Creation by Brahma as well as of Kapila Maharshi's narrative of Sankhya Yoga. The fourth Skanda depicted the process of 'Visarga' (Secondary Creation) and referred to the Stories of Devi Sati and Daksha Yagna, of

Dhruva, King Prutha all in the context of Manus and Prajapatis and happenings during these timeframes. The fifth Skanda covered the history of Prajapati Priyavrata and progeny, demarcation of Sapta Dwipas, description of Planets and Narakas etc. The sixth Skanda covered the Story of the illustrious Brahmana called Ajamila, Daksha Prajapati's creation, the termination of Vritrasura and creation of Marudganas. Prahlada charitra and varnashrama dharma as also the'dos' and don't's by way of 'Karma' were discussed in the seventh Skanda. Gajendra Moksha, Samudra mathana, King Bali and his control through Vishnu's Avatara as Vamana and Matsyavatara were described in the Ashtama Skanda. The Ninth Skanda dealt with Surya vamsha and Chandra vamsha Kings. The Tenth and Eleventh Skandas depicted the totality of Krishna's Avatar covering the Bala Leelas, escapades of Youth, extermination of Adharma and revival of Dharma, Happenings at Dwaraka, his extraordinary role on Bharata Battle, Prabhasa Kshetra, Udbhava Geeta and the end of Yadu Vamsha. The final and the Twelfth Skanda described the accounts of subsequent Kings, the end of Parikshit, Markandeya Tapasya, the magnificence of Surya Deva and winding up by Suta Maha Muni by the aspects of Moksha prapti. Those desirous of higher achievements of Bhakti would do well by organising Maha Bhagavata 'Pathana'/ 'Pravachana' and 'Shravana' by a virtuous Brahmana on Bhadrapada Purnima and perform 'Puja'to the Vakta along with Suvarna Daana/ Vastra daana.

Narada Purana comprised twenty five thousand Shlokas based on Brihad Kalpa Katha. Narrated by Suta Maha Muni to Shounaka Muni, the Purana was basically conceived by Brahmarshi Narada himself but preached by Sanaka Brothers to Narada. The earlier part of the Purana dealt with 'Pravritti Dharma' and the second part was devoted to 'Moksha Dharma'. Sanandana described at length the Six Vedangaas as Moksha Sadhanas and about the illustration of Suka Deva in this context. The Third Part gave 'Upadeshas' to Narada by Sanat Kumara about 'Pashu paasha vimoksha' and Mantras concerning major Deities, Diksha, Puja procedures, Stotras etc. The fourth Part provided details of tithi-wise and Maasa-wise Vratas as also an Index of 'Ashtadasha Puranas'. The 'Uttara Bhaga' of the Purana gave details of Ekadasha Vratas, Vasishtha-Mandhata Samvada, King Rukmanga and Mohini, curse to Mohini, her revival and her exposure to Tirtha Yatras. Sincere study and 'shravana' of the Purana on Ashwin Purnima followed by Puja to a Brahmana with daanas of seven cows, clothing and so on would surely pave the way to Salvation.

Markandeya Purana has nine thousand Shlokas and the various 'Dharma Sandehas' or doubts related to the practice of Virtue-oriented Principles raised by the Sage Jaimini to Mahatma Markandeya were referred by the latter to Holy Birds, who were the sons of Sage Vipulaswan viz. Sukrish and Thumbaru in their past life; the Muni cursed the sons to turn as birds as they refused his instruction to be eaten by Indra who appeared as a bird and demanded human flesh at the Muni's Yagna. Sage Jaimini's doubts were cleared by the Holy Birds as to why Devi Draupadi consented to marry all the Pandava brothers, why Bala Rama had to atone for the sin of 'Brahmahatya' and why were the defenceless sons of Draupadi killed by Ashvatthaama, the learned son of Dronaacharya. Having been satisfied by the replies of the Birds, Sage Jaimini sought to be enlightened by several other topics related to the exemplary Harischandra who stood firm to follow Dharma and Satya; the rivalry of Sages Vasishtha and Vishwamitra resulting in mutual curses to become birds; the story of the better enlightened 'Jatismara' Sumati with the knowledge of previous birth than his father Mahamati and the son's 'pravachana' or teachings about the aftermath of life, its recyclings, classification of hells and their experiences; retributions and rewards of human deeds; the great examples of Kaushiki and Anasuya as Pativratas; the Story of Dattatreya and Kartaveeryarjuna; King Alarka and Queen Mother Madalasa, Yoga Siddhis, the Accounts of Fourteen Manus; Devi Mahatmya and Surya Deva Mahatmya/ Surya Vamsha headlights. Those who read, hear and annotate the Purana and pay reverences to a virtuous Brahmana on a Kartika Purnami day by gifting a golden 'Pratima' with an enbossed elephant would qualify Shiva Loka.

Agni Purana was addressed by Agni Deva himself to Sage Vasishta through fifteen thousand Shlokas describing Ishaana-Kalpa. It provided an account of 'Dashavataras' at length followed by Agni Karyas, Mantras, DikshaVidhanas and Abhishekas. Then the details of Mandala Lakshanas, Devalaya vidhi, Shalagrama puja, Deva Pratishtha, Bhugola and Khagola Varnana, Shatkarmas, Yantra, Mantra, Shat prakara Nyasa, Koti homa vidhi, shraaddha vidhi, Griha Yagnas, Shrouta Smaarta Karmas; Maasa-Tithi- Vaara-Nakhatra Vratas; Sandhya / Gayatri Vandana; Rajyabhisheka vidhi; Swapna/ Shakuna phalas; various Shant Mantras and Procedures; Dhanur vidya, Ayurveda, Yoga and Vedangas like Vyakarana, Chhandas, Sahitya, Jyotisha etc. Agni Purana Vachana, Pathana, Manana and Lekhana-hearing, reading, cogitating, and writing- on Margasirsha Purnima and daana of 'pratimaas'/ idols of golden lotus and cow with tilas would yield the 'Punya'to secure fulfillment of desires in 'Iham' or the on-going life and 'Param' / Swarga Prapti thereafter.

Bhavishya Purana which contained fourteen thousand Shlokas was originally recited by Brahma to Narada to Veda Vyasa to his disciple Sage Sumantu. The Purana is divided into five Parts viz. 'Brahma Parva', 'Vaishnava Parva', 'Shaiva Parva', 'Soura Parva'and 'Prati Sarga Parva'. The highlights of the Purana are Sacred Rites, Varnashrama Dharmas, Vratas including Ganesh Chaturthi, Naga Panchami, Skanda Shashthi, Ratha Saptami, Suryoraadhana, Agni Homa vidhi, over-view of Yugas, Satya Narayana Vrata; the advent of Jesus Christ and Prophet Muhammad, Revival efforts of Hindu Dharma, Shankara and Ramanuja Acharyas, Mughal Empire, Victoria and British Rule and finally various Vratas in prevalence. Veneration to the Purana is best done by reading, writing and Pravachana on Pousha Purnima and paying respects to learned Brahmanas along with daanas of gold ornaments, clothing and bhojan.

Brahma Vaivarta Purana scripted by Veda Vyasa consisted of eighteen thousand Shlokas and divided into four 'Khandaas' viz. Brahma Khanda, Prakriti Khanda, Ganesha Khanda and Shri Krishna Khanda; it underlined the identity of Shiva and Vishnu. In fact Narada prayed to Bhagavan Saavarni and the fact of one-ness of Shiva and Vishnu was over-emphasised. Addressing the congregation of Munis, Suta Maha Muni commenced with 'Srishti Varnana', Origin of Vishnu from the body of Shri Krishna, background of Radha, Gopas and Gopikas, and Creation of animate and inanimate beings. In Prakriti Khanda, the Mahatmyas of Devis Durga, Radha, Lakshmi and Sarasvati were given; besides narrations of and Savitri Satyavan, Surabhi, Swaha and Sudha, Surata, Ganga Mahatmya, Ramayana and worship of Lakshmi. In Ganesha Khanda, the supremacy of Ganesha was extolled at length, besides covering the accounts of Jamadagni, Parashurama, and Kartaveeryarjuna. Shri Krishna Khanda was totally devoted to Krishna's childhood leelaas, his youth and romantic accounts, his adventures in destroying evil forces and saving the virtuous, his key role on the context of Maha Bharata etc. This Sacred Purana is highly worthy of reading, concising, writing and worshipping especially on Magha Puranami. Charity to a Vidwan by way of Pratyaksha Godaan would grant the donor with Brahmaloka praapti and cotentment as long as one lived on Earth.

Highlighting Bhagavan Shiva's extraordinary magnificence, **Linga Purana** was written by Veda Vyasa but as conceived by Maha Deva Himself with some eleven thousand 'shlokas'. At the commencement of the Purana, Creation of Universe was depicted followed by 'yogaakhyaan' and 'kalpaakyaan'. 'Linga pradurbhaav' (emergence of Linga) and procedure of worship was explained later on. Subsequently, the Story of Muni Dadhichi, exposition of 'Yuga Dharma', description of 'Bhuvana kosha' or the World, as also details of Surya Vamsha and Chandra Vamsha were scripted. This was followed by the depiction of 'Linga Pratishtha'or formal set-up of Linga with Mantras as also the discussion of 'Pashu-paasha vimokshana' or salvation of human bondage. The topics of Shiva Vrata, 'Sadaachara', 'prayaschitta'and 'Shrishaila' Temple visit were also covered. The destruction Andhakasura and Jalandhara were described as also the 'Avataras' of Vishnu as Varaha and Nrisimha. The devastation of 'Daksha Yajna', the blazing of Manmadha and the wedding of Shiva and Parvati were covered. The sacred 'Shiva Sahasrtanaamaas'were rendered,

besides description of Ganesha Mahatmya and Shiva Tandava. In the Uttariya Bhaga, the Vishnu and Shiva Mahatmyas were given. Then followed the coverages of Snaana, Yaaga, daana, Shraaddha and Shiva Puja 'Mahimas'. Pratishthaapana mantras, Aghora kirtana, Vajresdwara Maha Vidya, Gayatri Mahima, Triambika Mahatmya and such other topics too got extensive coverage. Those Shiva Bhaktas who would read, reproduce, reflect and render the most auspicious Linga Purana on any day but most certainly on Phalguna Purnima day would certainly yield considerable returns. If these deeds are accompanied by charity of 'tila dhenu' (cow) either as a Pratima or better still in a live form would definetely accomplish 'Shiva Sayujya'.

Varaha Purana scripted by Veda Vyasa with twenty four thousand stanzas divided into two Parts and was dominted by high Vishnu-consciousness. Initiated with a conversation between Bhagavan Varaha and Devi Prithvi, the Purana covered the exemplary devotion displayed by Kings Priyavrata, Ashwasira, and Vasuas well as Sages like Raibhya and Gomukh. After 'Shraddha' Kalpa, accounts of concerned Deities governing specified days were described for instance Agni on Pratipada, Aswini Kumars on Dwitiya, Devi Gauri on Triteeya, Ganesha on Chaturthi, Naga Devatas on Panchami, Kartikeya on Shashthi, Surya Deva on Saptami, Ashta Matrikas on Ashtami, Durga on Navami, 'Dasa Dishas' on Dashami, Dwadasi on Vishnu and ten incarnations, Dharma Purusha on Trayodasi, Chaturdasi on Rudra Deva, Amavasya on Pitaras, and Moon on Purnima. Then various 'Vratas', 'Daanas', and Tirtha Yatras/ Punya Khestras were discussed in the Purana. The portrayal of Bhu Devi's rescue from the clutches of demon Hiranyaksha by Varaha Murti, which indeed was the main Subject matter of the Purana, was described very effectively. The Purana was indeed the Kalpa Vriksha of Vratas and Tirtha Yatras aside from 'Daana Mahimas'. Its veneration on Chaitra Purnima with its reading, writing, and memorising contents, along with 'daana' of a golden 'Garuda' should help secure Vaikuntha to Bhaktas.

The largest and one of the most popular of Puranas which was dominated by Bhagavan Shiva viz. the **Skanda Purana** also called as Kartika Purana has eighty one thousand Shlokas, divided by Veda Vyasa into Seven 'Khandas'viz. Maheswara Khanda, Vishnu Khanda, Brahma Khanda, Kasi Khanda, Avantya Khanda, Nagara Khanda and Prabhasa Khanda. A bird's eye-view of the entire Purana includes Kedara Mahatmya, Daksha Yagna, Shiva Linga Puja, Samudra Mathana, Shiva-Parvati's wedding, birth of Skandha, carnage of Tarakasura, Panchalinga Sthapana, Appearance of Maha Kaal, significance of various Tirthas like Arunaachala, Venkataachala, Purushottama Kshetra, Badari Kshetra; of the months of Kartika, Margashira and Vaishakha; and of the Mahatmya of Ayodhya, Rameswara, and Dharmaranya, Kashi, Avanti, Prabhhasa and Dwaraka; Shiva Mantra-Shiva Ratri-Shiva Pradosha and Shiva Kavacha etc. Perhaps the best coverage of Tirthas all over Bharat was attempted in Skanda Purana. Those who reproduce the entire Skanda Purana as scripted by Veda Vyasa and gift it to a deserving Vedic Pandita along a golden 'Trishul'(Trident) on a Magha Purnima day should indeed be blessed with 'Shivaloka prapti'.

Containing ten thousand 'Shlokas' **Vamana Purana** was originally conceived by Maharshi Pulasthya and advised Narada about it and the latter passed it on to Veda Vyasa, while Vyasa imparted it to his disciple Romaharshana with the instruction of reciting it at the congregation of Munis at Naimisharanya headed by Maha Muni Shaunaka. This Purana has two Parts; the former Part opened with the coverage of slitting Brahma's fifth head, Kapala mochana and destruction of Daksha Yagna. The subsequent contents included 'Madana Dahana', Prahlada-Narayana battle, the big conflict of Devas and Danavas, the Story of Sukeshi and Surya, Kaamya Vrata, Durga Charitra, Tapati Charitra, Kurukshetra, the birth of Parvati, the wedding of Tapati, the Stories of Gauri, Kaushiki, Kumara, and Jabala; Siva's battle with and killing of Andhakasura and former's request to Shiva to provide him with full-fledged *Ganatwa*; birth of Marudganaas; the tales of King Bali, Lakshmi, Trivikrama etc. In the 'Uttara Bhaaga', there are four 'Samhitas' pertaining to Maaheswari, Bhagavati, Souri, and Jnaneswari. In the Maaheswari Samhita, there was a vivid description of Shri Krishna and his devotees. In the Bhagavati Samhita, Jagadamba's delineation

was provided, while in the Souri Samhita, Bhagavan Surya's Mahatmya was explained from the view point of destruction of sins. In the Ganeswari Samhita, there were the significant explanations about the extraordinary powers of Ganesha and Bhagavan Shankara. Reproduction of the text of Vamana Purana during 'Sharat kaala' and perform 'ghrita dhenu'daana would redeem 'Pitras' from 'narakas' to Swarga and the devotee himself would reach 'Vishnupada' after his end of life.

Kurma Purana with seventeen thousand 'Shlokas' divided into four Samhitas was essentially a Vishnu dominated 'Grandha' of great significance. Brahma introduced this Purana to Maharshi Marichi about several Principles of Virtue targetting the attainment of the Four Purusharthas of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. In the 'Poorva Bhaaga' of the Purana there were covrages of Bhagavan Kurma and Maharshi's conversation, Varnaashrama Principles, Creation of Universe, outline of the method of 'Kaala Sankhya, Shankara Charitra, Parvati Sahasra naama, Yoga, Bhrigu Vamsha, Creation of Swayamshu Manu and lineage, Dahsha Yagna and its destruction, Daksha Srishti, Muni Kashyapa and progeny, Atri Vamsha, Shri Krishna-Markandeya Samvad (conversation), Vyasa-Pandava Samvad, Yuga dharmas, Mahatmya of Kasi and Prayaga, and the effectiveness of 'Vaidika Shaakhaa' or the Following of Veda practioners. In the 'Uttara Bhaaga' of the Purana, there were the Ishwariya Gita and Vyasa-Gita, and Instructions on Dharmic Principles. This was followed by 'Brahma Samhita' covering 'Prati Sarga' or Universal Destuction and Renewal. In 'Bhagavati Samhita', there are five Parts, the first four Parts being devoted to the four Varnas of Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudras and their respective duties; the fifth Varna viz. of 'sankara' or mixed origin was also prescribed of duties by following so that the persons concerned might be shifted to higher levels in future births. The third Samhita called 'Souri Samhita' which teaches 'Shat-karma bodha' and the Fourth one entitled 'Vaishnavi Samhita' is a Guide to accomplishing 'Moksha'. This Purana is an excellent exposition of the established Principles of Dharma and a comprehensive Guide to the pure and devout Hindus seeking 'Uttama Gati' or the most appropriate Route to Salvation. This Sacred Purana is best read, heard and written on a day of Solar Movement from Southern direction to Northern (Uttaraayana day) or vice versa called Dakshinaayana and give away charity of a golden 'Kurma' to a Vedic Brahmana.

Matsya Purana again scripted by Veda Vyasa over fourteen thousand 'Shlokas' commenced with the discussion between Matsya Deva and Manu, and continued with description of Brahmanda (Universe), Creation of Brahma, Devas, Asuras; emergence of Marud Ganaas, Manvantaras, King Pruthu, Creation of Surya and Vaivaswata Muni, Pitru Vamsha, Shraadhha kaal, creation of Soma and his vamsha, King Yayati, Kaartaveeryaarjuna, Bhrigu's curse, Vishnu's ten incarnations, Praise of Puru Vamsha, Hutaashana Vamsha, Nakshatra Vrata, Purusha Vrata, Martandashayana Vrata, Kishnaashtami Vrata, Ananata Triteeya Vrata etc. besides Graha Shanti, Shiva Chaturdahi, Sarva Phala tyaaga, Sankrasti Snaan, Shashthi Vrata Mahatmya, Snaana Vidhi, Antariksha gamana, Dhruva Mahima, Shreshtha Pitara Mahima, Shiva-Parvati wedding, Kartika's birth, Tarakaasura's extermination, the Story of Nrisimha, Vaaranasi / Narmada Mahatmya, Vaastu Vidya, Deva Mandira Nirmaana, future Kings etc. This highly virtuous Purana is conducive to excellent health, extension of life, securing fame and name, and fulfillment of wishes. Pathana, Shravana, Lekhana, Manana and Kirtana of this Purana as well as daana of a golden Pratima of Matsya to an erudite Brahmana also with Go-daana at 'Vishuva Yoga' would result in 'Vishnu dhaama praati'.

Garuda Purana was Vishnu Deva's sermon to Mahatma Garuda, as conveyed by Brahma to Maharshi Marichi and it contained nineteen thousand 'Shlokas'. At the beginning of the Purana in the 'Purva Bhaaga', there was brief introduction of 'Srishti'and was followed by the Puja of Surya Deva and other Deities, Diksha Vidhi or procedure of assuming Diksha or disciplined way of life; Shraadda Puja, Nava Vyuha Puja, Vaishnava Panjara, Yogaadhyaaya, Vishnu Sahasra naama kirtana, Vishnu Dhyaana, Surya Puja, Mrityunjaya Puja, Maalaa Mantra, Gopala Puja, Trailokya mohana Shridhara Puja, Vishnu-Archa, Pancha Tatwaarcha, Deva Puja, Sandhyopaasana, Durgaarchana, Maheswara Puja, Sarva Deva Pratishtha, Ashtaanga Yoga, Daanadharma,

Praayaschitta vidhi, Naraka varnana, Jyotisha, Saamudrika Shastra, Swara Jnaana, Nutana Ratna pariksha, Tirtha Mahaatmya, Gaya Mahatmya, Pitaropaakhyaana, Varna Dharma, Ashrama, Preta shuddhi, Niti Shastra, Vratha katha (story), Surya/Chandra Vamsha, Shrihari Avataara katha, Ramayana, Hari Vamsa, Bhaaraataakhyana, Ayurveda, Chikitsa, Dravyaguna, Roga naashakaVishnu Kavacha, Garuda Kavacha, Traipura Mantra, Prashna chudaamani, Vyakarana, Chhanda, Tarpana, Bali Vaishva Deva, Sandhya, Paarvana Karma, Nitya Shaaddha, Sapindana, Dharmasaara, Praayaschittha (atonement of sins), karma phala, Yogashastra, Vishnu Bhakti, Nrisimha Stotra, Vishnvarchana stotra, Vedanta / Saankhya siddhanta, Brahma Gyana, Atmaananda, and Geetaasaara. The Uttara Khanda starts off with Preta Kalpa varnana. Asked about Dharma, Bhagavan Vishnu explained about the route to 'Urthwa lokas' or the higher destinations and the performance well defined acts of Virtue including Shodasa Shraaddhas, 'daanaas'etc. Then were scripted the route to Yamaloka, the wreched experiences on way, 'Preta's' features, 'sapindikarana', 'pretatwa mukti', the erstwhile deeds of help rescuing the Preta from various torments, Yama loka varnana, determination of sins or good deeds, effectiveness of follow-up deeds by progeny performing the rites after the death under reference, Madhya shodasda shraaddha, proactive deeds to enable 'swarga prapti' of the deceased, 'sutaka dina sankhya' or the number of 'Asuchi' depending on the relationship to the deceased, Narayana bali karma, Vrishotsarga Mahatmya, Nishidha karma tyaga, criteria for Swarga Prapti, etc. The Purana also gives accounts of the seven under worlds, five upper worlds as also of Brahmanda Charitra, Pralayas, ever-repetitive cycles of birth and deaths etc. Reading, writing, hearing, thinking and imagining of post-life experiences of the contents of Purana during 'Vishuva' Yoga time along with charity of a golden swan to a Brahmana would help reduce the severity of sins.

**Brahmanda Purana** with twelve thousand 'Shlokas' has four Parts titled 'Prakriya paada', 'Anushanga paada', 'Upodghata paada, and 'Upa samhaara paada'. The first two Paadaas are considered as 'Purvi Bhaga' and the latter two as 'Uttari Paada'. The Prakriya paada narrrates Instructions on Duties, description of 'Naimisha' or the popular Forest Place of the Congregation of Rishis, Creation of Hiranyagarbha, formation of Lokas, etc. The Second Part gives a picture of Kalpas and Manvantaras, Lokagyana, Creation of human beings, Creation by Rudra, Rishi Sarga, Agni Vijaya, Kaala sadbhaava, Priyavrata's vamsha, Prithvi's length and breadh, Bharata Varsha, Sapta Dwipas, the under-world of seven regions like Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Rasatala, Patala etc; Bhurbhuvah like upper Lokas, details of Grahas (Planets) and their features, Adityavyuha's description, Devagraha anukeertana, the incident of how Shiva became 'Neela Kantha', Amavasya varnana, Yuga tatwa, Yana pravartana, features of human beings as per Yugas, Rishi pravara varnan, Swayambhu Manu's details, the chronicle of the rest of Manus, etc. In the 'Upodghaata Paada', there are the detyails of Sapta Rishis, Prajapatis, Marudganaas, Kashyapa's progeny, Rishi Vamsha, Pitru Kalpa, Shraadha Kalpa, emergence of Vaiwaswata Muni, the lineage of Manus, Ikshvaku Vamsha, Atri Vamsha, Amaavasu Vamsha, the tale of Yayati, Yadu Vamsa, Kaartaveerya, Parashu Rama, Vrishni Vamsha, Sagara charitra, Krishnaavataara, Bali Vamsha, and depiction of future Kings on the Earth. In the Uttara Bhaaga of the Brahmaanda Purana, there are descriptions of Upasamhaara Paada including 'Pralaya' (The Great Dissolution), Time measurements, account of Fourteen 'Bhuvanas'/ worlds, sins and the resultant hells, practice of virtue and attainment of 'Shiva dhaam'.

Who should read Puranas! Lord Brahma told Maharshi Marichi that basically Bhagavan Vishnu bestowed a Single Purana to him which was of the volume of crores of Shlokas; Brahma passed on to Vasishtha Maharshi who in turn gave away to Parasara Muni and the latter pronounced it aloud and Vayu Deva carried it to Veda Vyasa. Vyasa selected only four lakh stanzas and disrtibuted these among Eighteen Puranas. These were sketched for 'Loka Kalyan' and even these highly abridged versions are apparently tough to digest. It is believed that a person who could read, hear, reproduce, annotate and assimilate all the Eighteen Puranas in full as written by Veda Vyas should have no rebirth into this 'Samsara' once again. Besides, this kind of ideal person, should practise the

Sacred Principles enunciated among them. In any case, the contents of any or all Puranas should not be preached to a 'daambhik' (vainglorious), 'Paapaachari' (sinful), unbearable of Devas, Gurus and the Virtuous and to 'shath' (stubborn) persons. Only those who are self-controlled, matured, good-featured and God-fearing should be specially invited and inspired to inculcate interest in the Puranas and their contents.

### Narada Purana Phala Shruti

Narada Purana is considered as a Guide to Shastras and is best read or heard in Shivaalayaas, Vishnu Mandirs, other Temples, Gatherings of Devotees, Punya Kshetras, Tirthas, Holy River banks, Fasting days, Vratas, Jaagarans, Yagnas and so on. In this Purana, descriptions were made about 'Punya Karyas' or Deeds of Propitiousness, fruits of Meditation, 'Upavasaas' etc. References were made to Mantras; Vedangas like Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Chhandas, and Jyotisha. Details of Month-wise Dwadashi Vratas, Tithi-wise Vratas in each 'Maasa' especially Ekadashi Vrata Mahima were given. 'Daana Mahatmya' was given as an essential under-current of the Purana. Just as Ganga is the best of Rivers, Pushkar is the best of Sarovaras, Kasi is the best of Sacred Places, Meru is the best of Mouantains, Narayana is the best of Trimurtis as sin-destroyers, Satya is the best of Yugas, Sama Veda is the best of Sama Veda, cow is the best of animals, Brahmana is the best of Varnas, 'Anna and Jal' are the best forms of charities, Margasirsha is the best of Months, Lion is the best of animals, Humans are the best of species, Peepal is the best of trees, Prahlad is the best of Daityas, face is the best of physical limbs, Ucchhaishrava is the best of horses, Vasant is the best of Seasons, Sesha is the best of Serpents, Aryama is the best of Pitaras, Dhanush is the best of Astras, Pavaka is the best of Vasus, Vishnu is the best of Dwadasha Adityas, Indra is the best of Devas, Kapi is the best of Siddhas, Brihaspati is the best of Purohitas, Arjun is the best of Pandavas, Hanuman is the best of Bhaktas, Kusha is the best of grasses, Chitraratha is the best of Gandharvas, lotus is the best of flowers, Urvashi is the best of Apsaras and gold is the best of metals, Narada Purana is stated to be the best of Puranas, since this is the best means of attaining the four Purushaarthas viz. Dharma, Artha, Kaama and Mokshas. Whether it is a Bhakta of Ganesha, an Upasaka of Surya Deva, a Vishnu Bhakta, an Upasika of Shakti, or a Shiva Bhakta, Narada Purana has universal appeal and interest. Whether a Purusha or a Stree, sincere reading or hearing of the Purana would fulfil their very desires and remove those very hurdles that they wish to. This outstanding Purana ensures that illnesses never bother the bhaktas, fears never reach their boundaries, nor defeats in life never allow them to occur. On the other hand, this Purana facilitates virtue, fulfilllent of desires, growth in career, achievement of name and fame, provision of good health, mental satisfaction, social status, all round victory and the boon of excellent health. Those who read the 'Yugala Sahasra naama Stotra of Radha-Krishna' with patience and devotion would be free from the worst possible sins; their mental strength would get enhanced and the conciousness of Paramatma versus Prakriti would elevate the devotee to higher levels of their interaction.

The 'Phala Shruti' of Narada Purana shall certainly inculcate the awareness of that Supreme Shakti which creates the Universe with Rajo Guna, preserves it with Satwa Guna and terminates it with Tamo Guna; of that Super Soul to whose heights of yogis or Siddhas or Maharshis or Lokapalas or Devas could not reach their Celestial Visions; and of that Indesructible, Infinite and Incandescent Paramatma. Shivam Shaiva vadantyenam pradhanam Sankyha vedinah, Yoginah Purusham Vipraah karma Meemaamsakaa janaah/ Vibhum Vaiseshikaadyascha chichhintam Shakti chintakaah, Brahmaadviteeyam tatdwandey naanaa rupa kriyaaspadam/ (I salute that Unique Paramatma whom Shivopaasakas call as Shiva; 'Saakyha vettaas'address him as Pradhana; Yogis call as Purusha; Meemaamsakas meditate as 'Karma' or means of Attainment; 'Vaiseshika' followers consider as 'Adya Shakti' and various others meditate in different 'Rupas' and 'Kriyas' as Adviteeya Brahma.)

# ESSENCE OF NILAMATA PURANA

### ESSENCE OF NILAMATHA PURANA

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### ESSENCE OF NILAMATHA PURANA

OM SHRI GANESHAYA NAMAH SHRI SARASWATI OM BHAGAVATEY VAASUDEVAYA NAMAH / SHRINIVAASAM HARIM DEVAM VARADAM PARAMESHWARAM TRAILOKYANATHAM GOVINDAM PRANAMAAMYAAKSHARA-MAVYAYAM/

King Janamejaya, a Pandava descendant and the son of Parikshith, enquired of SageVaishampayana, the disciple of Veda Vyasa as to why Kashmira, an integral and illustrious part of Bharata, did not participate in the Maha Bharata Battle. The Sage replied that the then King of Kashmira named Gonanda took the side of King Jarasandha in the latter's war with Yadavas and Balarama of Yadavas killed Gonanda. The successor of Gonanda named Damodara decided to take revenge and fought with Shri Krishna of Yadavas at Gandhara in a 'Swayamvara' where a bride could choose her husband and Krishna killed Damodara; yet, out of consideration for Damodara's pregnant wife, Krishna himself coronated Yashovati as the Queen of Kashmira till the birth of Bala Gonanda, who at the time of Bharata Battle could not take sides of either Pandavas or Kauravas.

### Close Association of Kashmira and Devi Sati

Most importantly, the main reason was that Kashmira and Devi Uma were of mutual interest and regard. In fact, Kashmira was originally the 'Sati Sarovara', since converted as a valley:

YAIVA DEVI UMA SAIVA KASMIRAA NRUPASATTHMA, AASEET SARAH PURNAJALAM SURAMYAM SUMNOHARAM/ KALPAARAMBHA PRABHRUTI YAT PURAA MANVANTARAANI SHAT, ASMIN MANVANTARYE VISHYAM SUMANOHARARAM / (Muni Vaishampayana confirmed that Bhagavati Uma / Sati was Kashmira herself as manifested as a huge waterbody eversince the beginning of the present Kalpa for the last six Manvantaras). The valley was well-known for its Natural Beauty and Bounty as of excellent fertility of rice crops, wide range of trees, fruits, flowers and vegetables. The population of Kashmira was highly virtuous: the Brahmanas were adept in their own meditation, Yagjna Karmas and Veda-Vedangas always; the Kshatriyas were valiant, well trained in warfare and capable of battle skills possessive of excellent armoury and armaments; the Vaishyas or the Business Class were accomplished in trading and retailing; while the Shudras were hardworking and honest. The Kasmira Society was orderly and hard working, religious and God-Believing, and possessive of social values of justice and devotion. Kashmira was spotted with several Temples, Sacred Rivers, Tirthas of popular belief, Hermitages and Yogashrams, ringing with Veda Shravanas; at the same time of the sounds of armoury and war-training camps, besides the busy market places with bargain sales, retailing Trade Fairs and abundant merchandise. It was a land of faith and fear of God, of gardens and wilderness of forests, and in short a vibrant and virtuous land of pristine beauty and sacredness. There is a River Goddess, most popularly called Vitasta, flowing down the mountain of Himalayas, fulfilling the desires and aspirations of devotees while on the banks of the River were a sizeable existence of Nagas with their own customs, beliefs, rituals and social values.

Origin of Sati desha (Kashmira) and of Nagas

About the origin of the Kasmira Region in Bharat Desha, Sage Brihadashwa explained to King (Bala) Gonanda that at the end of each Manvantara, there was complete destruction of the Universe by Mahadeva who spread himself all over as water. 'Satidevi swayam kaaley tasminnotwam karoti vai, Manurbhavishyamstasmimstu sarva beejaani Maayaya, Tadaa sthaapayetey Raajamstaam cha naavam Jagadguruh/ Matsya rupadharo Vishnum shringey krutwaapakarshati/ (As Sati Devi herself assumed the Form of a Ship, the future Manu, Vaivaswata, collected all Seeds for subsequent germination and deposited these on the Ship by virtue of 'Maya'(Illusion) while Bhagavan Vishnu assuming the Incarnation of 'Matsya' dragged the Ship by the grit of his horn). The Ship was tied to a mountain-peak called 'Noubandhana'. Nou-dehena Sati Devi Bhumirbhavati Parthiva, Tasyaam thu Bhumou bhavati Sarastu vimalodakam / Shadyojanaayatam ramyam tadardhena cha vistrutam, Satideshamiti kyhatam Devikreedam manoharam/ (Devi Sati who assumed the Form of the Ship converted herself as Bhu Devi; the latter materialised an awe-inspiring Lake with excellent and pure water known as Sati Desha of six yojanas of length and three yojanas of width which was the joyous Playground of Devas!

Having described the origin of Kashmira, Sage Brihadashwa traced the origin of Nagas who were prime residents of Kashmira: At the beginning of Vaivaswata Manvantara, Daksha Prajapati married off thirteen of his illustrious daughters to Muni Kashyapa who was the son of Maharshi Marichi. Among these daughters, Aditi gave birth to Devas, Diti to Daityas, Danayusa to Vritra, Surabhi to Bhadras, Khas to Yakshas and Raakshasas, Ira to Airaavatas, Prava to 'Gayanas', Muni to Apsaras, Kala to Kala Kalpas and Kalakaayaas, Danu to Daanavas, Krodha to ten daughters of the same nature, **Kadru to Nagas** and Vinata to Garuda the Carrier of Vishnu Deva and Aruna the charioteer of Surya Deva. Kadru was extremely jealous of Devi Vinata and somehow desired to put her down. Kadru picked up an argument that the Celestial Horse Ucchhaiswara was black in her body colour and Vinata stated that the horse was white in her complexion. There was a bet beween the two sisters that whoever won would be another's slave and Vinata lost it since Kadru persuaded her sons to paint Ucchhaisvya black. Garuda brought 'Somarasa' from Indra to relieve his mother from the slavery to Kadru; Garuda secured a boon from Indra too that as a revenge on Kadru's cruelty against his mother Vinata, he could kill and eat the Nagas. On behalf of the race of Nagas, the Elder of Nagas viz. Vaasuki approached **Janardana** and extolled him as follows:

'Namastestu Shaaranga Gadaaaasipaano, Namamstestu tey Danava naashanaaya/ Namastestu tey Padmaja Samstutaaya, Namastestu tey Lokahitey rataaya/ Namastestu tey Vaasava Nandanaaya, Namastestutey Bhaktavarapradaaya/ Namastestutey Satpada darshanaaya, Unnidra neela nalinadyuti chaaruvarnam/ Samtapta haatakanibey vasaney vasaanam, Ksheerodaka kanyaarpita paada padmam/ Devam Prapannosmyanagham Varenyam, Param Puraanam Paramam Sanaatanam/ Tamaadi devam Pranatosmi Bhaktyaa, Phanaavalii ratna Sahasraarchitrey Seshasya bhogey Vimaley viseshye/ Lokasya sarvaasya tu chintayaanah shubhaashubham raksha Mamaadyadeva, Khagapatirati chandabheema vego/ Mama Kulamaashu vinaashayatyananta, Kuru Munivara samstutaadya rakshaam/ Pavana balam vinivaarsva taaksharyam/(My greetings to you Deva Janaardana with your hands armed with Sharanga / Bow and arrows, Gada/ Mace and Asi / Sword; the destroyer of Daanavas; the One whom Brahma the lotus-born commends to; who is ever engaged in the deeds helpful to the Worlds; who seeks to provide happiness to Indra; who bestows boons to the devotees; who guides the path of righteousness and virtue; who rests his lotus like feet on the lap of 'Samudra Kanya' wearing clothes of molten gold's illumination and possessive of blue lotus body colour and who relaxes on the thousand hoods lit up with the varied hues of the precious gems of Maha Sesha but engrossed in the thoughts to provide relief and protection to the Tri Lokas! Adi Deva! The most powerful Garuda appears to destroy my entire 'Vamsha' of Nagas with his speed and might; do grant the race security and protection to ensure our existence!) Bhagavan Vishnu then assured Vasuki that Garuda or any of his clan would neither attack nor hurt Nagas in Sati Dehsa any more.

### Vishnu killedJalodbhava asKashyapa arranged Naga-Manava cooperation

In course of time, there appeared a Daitya Chief called Sangraha, a warroir of great prowess who got infatuated with Devi Sachi, the wife of Indra; he was unable to control and dropped his virility in a big waterbody. Eventually, Indra killed the Asura and from the latter's semen there emerged a demon that the Nagas nurtured and named him as **Jalodbhava**. The Asura prayed to Brahma Deva who granted him invincibility in waterwith exceptional might. But he harassed and killed human beings of various regions around the HugeLake likeDarvabhisara, Gandhara, Juhundara, Bahirgiri, Antargiri as also Sakas, Khasas, Tanganas and Mandavas. There was an exodus of people ('Maadraas') from these and surrounding Places to far off Regions which had nearly got vacated. As the above tragedy took place when 'Maadraas' fled away due to their fright of Demon Jadodbhava, Prajapati Kashyapa undertook a long Tirtha Yatra to several Places in Bharata Varsha to Pushkara, Prayaga, Kurukshetra, Naimisa, Hayasirsha (Pitra desha), Karantaka, Panchanda, Kalanjana, Gokarna, Kedara, Shaligrama, Prabhasa, Varanasi, Godavari, Kaveri, and so on. The highly virtuous King Nila of Nagas of serpent origin then met Kashyapa at the holy Place of Kanakhala and requested him that since he had already toured many Tirthas in the West and Southern Parts of Bharata Varsha, he might please consider to visit the holy Places in the Northern parts too like Vipasa, River Devahrada, Harahariswara, Kaalika -ashrama; Iravati around which there were as many as six thousand Holy Tirthas like Revati, Kumbhavasunda, River Devika, River Vishwamitra and so on.. Also Kashyapa Muni might please give the honour to Madraas as also pay reverences to Devi Uma popular in the area as Devika, especially at Rudra Tirtha, Durga Dwara, Koti Tirtha, Kaamaakhya, Ambujaanana, Suvarnabindu to visit the Temples of Hara and Skanda. Also there was the most Sacred River Chandrabhaga and Shankhamardala Tirtha, besides the Temples of Guhyeshwara, Shatamukha, Istikapatha, and Kadambesha. Chandrabhaga was considered as Sacred as Varanasi and was worshipped especially on Magha Shuddha Trayodashi. Prajapati Kashyapa consented to visit all these Places in the company of King Nila; he crossed Rivers Yamuna and Saraswati, visited Sanniti, performed Shraaddha at the time of Solar Eclipse at Chakra Tirtha and visited Vishnupaada and Amaraparvata. Subsequently the Prajapati toured the Region of Maadraas and found those places deserted when the King Nila narrated the havoc created by Jalodhbhava who killed innumerable residents of Maadra Desha. The Prajapati felt extremely hurt at the mayhem that Jalodhbhava created; he recalled Brahma mentally and entered the Brahma Sabha along with King Nila to convey the problems created by the Demon. Brahma agreed that all the Deities would meet at the Naubandhana Mountain peak to face the difficulties faced by Nagas and as Keshava heard this he alighted Garuda at once, while Rudra arrived there by his bull, Brahma by his Hamsa (Swan) Vahana, Kashyapa by his yogic power; King Nila and Sage Brihadashwa by clouds, all other Deities too assembled including Indra, Yama, Agni, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera, Nirruti, Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, Vishvadevas, Maruts, Maharshis, Gandharvas, Vidyadharas, Yakshas, all the Devis concerned. All the Oceans and Rivers too arrived at the NaubandhanaPeak: Ganga by crocodile, Yamuna by tortoise, Shataadru by bull, Sarasvati by buffalo, River Vipasa by horse, Iravati by elephant, Chandrabhaga and Sinshu by lions, Sarayu on deer, Narmada by peacock, Godavari by sheep, Gandaki by crane, Kaveri by camel, Krishnaveni by clouds etc. All the Deities reached on the Naubandhana peaks-Rudra on the top peak, Vishnu on the Southern peak, Brahma on the Northen peak and the rest of Devas on the last peak. Vishnu commanded Ananta to break open Himalayas with his plough (Ananta being Balarama in Dwapara Yuga) and absorbed the entire water in the Lake where the Asuras were residing along with Jalodbhava. The Asura King plunged the Universe into pitch darknessbut Rudra held Surya and Chandrama in his hands and brought back light to the Universe. Then Vishnu had a fierce battle with the Asura who with varying 'Rupas' (forms) fought with his full force by throwing huge trees and mountains with all the magical Shaktis that Brahma endowed him with. After all the powers of Jalodbhava's Maya was no match against Vishnu Maya and the demon was felled like a crumbling tree and the greatest menace that faced the Nagas was vanquished for ever! The respective peaks of

NaubandanaMountain were named after Tri Murtis where their own Ashrams / Cottages were constructed in ther own names. Other Devas too constructed likewise.

It was at that time as the celebrations of Jalodbhava's death, there was a big Conference convened by Prajapati Kashyapa where Tri Murtis, Devas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Sages, Nagas, Piscachas etc.were all present. Kashyapa proposed that the Land be allotted to human beings and **Nagas**and both should coexist. There was asevere protest from some quarters of Nagas that human beings should not be awarded the land under reference either on share basis or otherwise. As his for

]mula of sharing was not passed through, Kashyapa was visibly angry and retorted that Nagas might as well share then the land with **Piscachas** if human beings were not acceptable to Nagas! As Kashyapa's formula was not acceptable to some of Nagas, he explained thatthere was a piece of five-yojana wide Land in the Region freed from Jalodbhava's deathand there was a huge concentration of some five crore Piscachas in that area, where Nikumbha was appointed as their King by Kubera of Yakshas. Normally, Nikumbha who was good and brave King would visit the area once in six months every Chaitra Month and destroy several of the evil Piscachas and thus there would be some peace to Nagas. Meanwhile, Nagas would have to share their stay with 'Manavas' (human beings) during that period only. In other words, Manavas would shift to Kashmira Plains to take up to farming during the Summer Season to raise crops and earn their livelihood for the year and like Gypsies return to Kashmira valley during the next six months of Winter Season again. Moreover, Kashyapa decided that Nikumbha should stay in the area yearlong along with his army-support instead of six months a year to ensure safety of Nagas. Further, Vishnu assured that this stipulation would be for a period of four Yugas and there would not be any sharing with piscachas later on as the latter would get weakened and extinct with the passage of time. Thusthe virtuous King Nila countered the dissenting voices of Nagasand finally endorsed Prajapati's formula of sharing the new Desha, since named **Kashmira**: Kah Prajaapatiruddhishtah Kashyapascha Prajapatih, Teynedam nirmitam Desham Kashmiraakyham bhavishyati/Kam vaari halinaa yasmaddeshaadasmaadapakruta, Kashmiraakhyam tapopyasya lokey naama bhavishyati/ (As the word 'Ka' denotes Kashyapa Prajapati, as also the word 'Ksha' or drench out or exhaust water from Rasatala by Balarama, the Halayudhaby the hit of his 'hala'/plough; thus the new Region would be called Kashmira).

### Origin of River Vitasta and several other SacredRivers in Kashmira

Kashmira represented Devi Uma who was worshipped at Vriddha Tirtha as Vishoka;the River Vitasta named after Devi Lakshmi; the Sacred Place calledBhogavati of Vasuki the Head of Nagas; River Trikoti signifying Aditi the mother of Devas; Harshapatha River after Sachi Devithe wife of Indra as encouraged by Kashyapa; River Chandavati as Devi Diti as suggested by Kashyapa; Yamuna as part of Vitasta River, and River Karshini of Devi Sati's Amsha who was the wife of Hara Deva.

King Gonanda asked Guru Brihadashva as to how all the Rivers viz. Sati, Sachi, Ganga, Aditi, Diti, Yamuna and Karshini agreed. Aditi, Diti, Sachi, Yamuna and Ganga readily agreed but Sati Devi kept quiet; Kashyapa prayed to Maha Deva who requested Sati to help Kashyapa. Devi Sati told the Prajapati that the entire Desha was of her own body which was Sacred but Kashyapa replied that some human beings had the tendency of Piscachas and there would be a need for absolving them of the sins. Then Devi Sati asked Hara Deva to break the mountain with his Shula to enable the emergence of a River at the Rasatala that would flow up the route of Balarama's plough engraving it up to Sindhu River; Maha Devahimself named the new River as 'Vitasta' but she saw sinners likethe killers of Brahmanas and others and thus disappeared earlier two three times and did not get materialised. Then Kashyapa prayed to

the Holy River as follows: Namastestu tey Parvataraja kaney, Namastestu Tubhyamarshivaryajushtey/
Namesestu tubhyam Harasangalabdha pavitra bhaavey varadey Vareney supunyatoye Surayoshitaabhis chakreeda maanaabhi rupeta theerey /Devadwijaadyaiva rupaguuhyamaaney susheeta toye vimaley
Vishokey, Yeshaam hi bheetya prapaalayasi twam twad darshanaada Devi vimuktapaapaah/ Vrittaa
naraastey gatasarva paapaah twaam bhaasayantah prabhayaa mahatyaa, Saptaarchi dagdhasya yathaa
shuchitwam twaddarshanaad Devi shuchitvam/ Sarvam Pavitram bhavateeha taddhat paapam
Maheshaai kuru prasaadam, Papaanaam paavanaarthaaya praarthitaasi Mahanadi/ Tasmaat paavaya
paapaani maa pranashaam vrajaashugey/(My greetings to you Parvataraja Putri, Devi Parvati,
worshipped by Maharshis, the provider of boons and the beloved of Hara Deva; you are a personification
of purity and happiness; sacred and coolness sought after Brahmanas for washing contamination and dirt
and burning their sins off.Do give us your appearance with free flow, Mahanadi! The Holy River Vitasta
then responded to Kashypa and replied that she might not help great sinners of 'Maha Patakaas' or the
inexcusable sins and that only Lakshmi the consort of Vishnu who could destrory sins of any
magnitudeeven far better than Aditi, Diti and Ganga.

The Prajapati who was bent on purifying the Kashmira Desha extolled Devi Lakshmi as the illustrious daughter of Samudra Deva, saying that she was not only the prime river of Kashmira but also of the Amsha of Uma; the Unparalelled River of the worst forms of crimes and indulgences ever; the inseparable better half of Keshava and thather water was likened to the sweetness of Amrit and Milk! Bhagavan Govinda asked Lakshmi to hurry up as Devi Vitasta was fast arriving at the Ashram of Dhaumya Muni as the holy combine of Sati, Trikoti, Harshapada, Chandravati and Sindhu /Ganga and Vitasta /Yamuna. Out of veneration for Kashyapa, Ganga's daughter Tapana too joined the Union, reflecting the auspiciousness as superior as of Prayaga!

# Chandradeva helped formalisation of Naga-Manava co-existence in Kashmira (An Outline of Pancha Raatra Vrata Vidhi included)

When Prajapati Kashyapa provided the formula of co-exitence between Nagas and 'Manavas', Bhagavan Vishnu prophesied that after four yugas, Piscachas would get weakened. At the end of the stipulated time frame, the descendantof Kashypa named Chandradeva arrived at Kashmirabut was harassed by a few piscachas all the same. He managed to escape from the troubles of Piscachas, reached the Palace of King Nila, met him and requested him to let human beings co-exist with Nagas for good, while the earlier stipulation was that Manavas would arrive at Kashmira only for six months on Chaitra Pournamiand after the agricultural opertations collect grains and leave the place thereafter. The King of Nagas agreed to this proposal and allowed Manavas to live in Kashmira for ever; that was in line with Vishnu's earlier prophesy / instruction. Formal understanding of King Nila and of King Virodayawas finally arrived at in the presence of Chandradeva that places of worship, residence, market places etc. would be constructed like Temples, Sacred Places, houses etc. for common use; within six months in Asviyuja month, the menace of Piscachas was got rid of too, as their Chief Nikumbha decided to leave Kashmira and shift to the Sea of Sand for ever.

To mark the historic occasion on **Kartika Amavasya/ Dipaavali**the entire Kashmira was spruced up, residences were painted, day-longfast was observed on the previous day till next day; morning pujas were performed to Ganesha, Rudra, Parvati, Skanda and Nandi besides Surya Deva; homams were performed to all these Deities; pujas were performed to cows, sheep and other domestic animals; and after day long worship and penance there were to be night-long festivities with men, women and children wearing new

clothes, eating excellent vegetarian food and break out for musical extranvagaza and gay abandon through out the night. In fact every day in the fortnight till Purnima, there should be devotion during the day and physical joy and contentment for men and women in all possible ways in the night! *Raatrow deepascha daatavyomaasamekam bahugruhaat, Yaavatkartikamaasasy Poushaamaaseem Dwijotthama/ Esha tu Kaumudi naama titthih kaaryaa Shivapradaa, Tatah Pakshey vyatitotu kartavyaa Sukhashuptik/*(A nightlong 'Deepa' should be lit to signify the Celebrations outside one' own house for one month till the night of 'Krittika' month when intensive celebrations would be observed in the name of 'Kaumudi' or the Provider of Joy and thereafter in the second half of the month would be 'Sukha Suptika' or comfortable sleep).

As the pujas and festivities would go hand in hand for a few days, an Idol of Narayana in Yoga Nidra as 'Seshashaayee' (who lies on the cozy bed of Sesha the Huge Serpent with his hand underneath his head while his feet were on the laps of Devi Lakshmi)made out of silver, or stone or metalin an earlier month by installed on **Ekadashi**, the eleventh day of 'shukla paksha' or the bright fortnight of **Kartika** month. There ought be a fast that day and night, and observe 'Jaagarana' or night long wake-up with Kirtanas, Bhajans or vocal recitals, instrumental music recitals, Brahma ghoshas, Purana Shravanas, Pushpa-Dhupa-Naivedyas-all signifying the Superiority of 'Bhagavan':

Ekaadashaayaam tu kartavyam raathrow jaagaranam tathaa, Geetai nritthaistathaa vaadyai Brahmaghoshaistathaiva cha/ Veenaapataha shabdaishcha Puraanaanamcha vaachanaih, Pushpadhupa pradaanaischa naivedhairvividhaistatha/

On the next morning, the Idol should be given a holy wash as per **Pancharaatra vidhi'** (or Five Night Puja) with 'Panchagavyas' or the Five bye-products of cows viz. milk, curd, butter, urine and dung, besides honey. At the time of bathing, the Image should be applied with pulses powders viz. 'masura churnam', 'maasha churnam'; 'amalakani' fruit pulp, 'Kaleyakam', 'tagaram' powder,' 'Siddharthakam' /white mustard powder, 'bijapurakam' / pulp of citrus fruit, medicinal herbs and scents, kusa grass, clay from river beds burrowed by 'hasti danta'/ elephant tusk or 'Vrishabha shringa'/ bull horn etc.After the formal 'Abhisheka'/ bathing along with Veda Mantras, the Pratima is applied by yellow 'gorochana', is dressed up, decorated and ornamented.

Then the formal worship was performed with the various services including jaati pushpa flowers, dhupam, deepam in earthen pots and Naivedya of 'Paramaanna' or cooked rice with boiled milk. Performance of 'havans' or oblations to Agni by ghee would be an integral part of the Pancharatha Puja, which would be followed by honouring 'Bhagavatas' (Guests) and also Brahmanas attending the worship program by way of 'Dhana' and Dhanyas (Grains and cash), Vastra (clothing), Bhushana (gold and jewellery), 'Pashu' (cows), and 'Vaahana' (horses and elephants) and by way of 'Bhojana'. On the following days of the Pancha Ratras, besides the performance of the usual pujas, there must be social gatherings like 'Malla Yuddhas' (wrestlings) and 'Bhattadhis' or those who are professionals in praising the King and so on; during these the 'Kartas' or the main devotees needed to observe abstinence of food or at the most exist by milk. On the Puraamasi they should have strict fasting and on sighting the moon, perform worship of Kritthikas, Kartikeya, Khadga, Varuna, Hutasana / Agni, with Pushpa malas, Gandha, Dhupa, Bhakshyas, Paramaannas, fruits, vegetables, sugarcane products etc.as also 'deepas'/ earthen lamps. Then a white bull should be given away in charity to a Brahmana and the belief is that the devotee(s) concerned would accomplish Swarga for as many years as the number of hairs on the body of the bull. After the Puja of Vishnu at the end, the devotee might then have a glass of milk before concluding the Pancha Ratra Fast finally. The Kartas are advised to sleep on the ground and observe

complete abstinence. If Danavas, Daityas, Yakshas and Rakshasas perform the Pancha Ratra Puja, they must observe refraining of meat-eating.

### Worship of various Deities on select occasions in Kashmira Desha

King Nila further portrayed a digest of Pujas in vogue in Kashmira Desha to Chandradeva, the descendant of Prajapati Kashyapa. It was on the *Pournamaasi of Krittika* month that the illustrious Prajapati Kashyapa made possible the formation of Kashmira Desha and thus the celebrations were appropriate; everybody concerned should commemorate and rejoice the occasion by wearing new and colourful dresses, enjoy music, eat scrumptiousmeal and get pleasure from excellent drinks. On Margasira Pourmami, worship of Moon is performed by white flowers, white clothes as also fruits, white salt, lamps andgrains; Pujas are done to Brahmanas; and to women whose husbands and sons are alive. Brahmana women with husbands alive, as also to one's own sisters, father's sisters; and wives of friends should also be given red clothes and gifts at these celebrations. In fact, *all women should worship* Full Moon for improving physical beauty and charm as also family contentment and wealth. Also when the first snowfall falls in the Kashmira Valleyor at the beginnning of the Hemanta ans Sishira Seasons, all concerned should perform worship to Himalaya Deva with 'Baka Pushpa'/ Grandiflora, 'Guggulam'/incense smokeand 'Kulmaasha bhojanam' (cooked barley) and to Brahmanas. In fact, these occasions are celebrated with music, dance and songs; at snow falls, wine should be served be enjoyed!

Shraaddhas: Pousha Krishnaashtameem kaaryam Shraaddham shaakai dwijotthamam, Maagha Krishaashtati maamseyh Phalgunaasya sitaahtameem/ Tripupaih kaarayed –shraaddham nityameva samaahitah, Navameeshu cha taasweva streenaam shaaddham tu kaarayet/ Shraaddham krutwaa prayatnena Brahmachaari vasennishaam, Pournaamaasi tu Poushasya Pushyayuktaa yadey bhavet/( The format of 'Shraddhas' is prescribed as follows: on Pousha Krishnaashtami, they are to be executed with vegetables; on Magha Krishnashtami with meat, and on Shukla Ashtami of Phalguna month with 'Tripupais' or flour cakes; on the corresponding days of the 'maasas and pakshaas', Shraaddhaas are to be performed for women. After performing Shraddhaa, the 'Karta' of the Shraaddha should pass the night practising Brahmacharya; on the full moon night of 'Pousha Maasa', he should apply mustard powder and ghee and after taking bath should perform puja by using the purified water in vessels to Narayanam tathaa Shakram Somam Pushya Brihaspati (Narayana, Shakra / Indra, Soma, Pushya and Brihaspati) by offering 'Pushpa maalas'/flower garlands, 'Naivedyaas' etc. by chanting appropriate Mantras to the relevant Deities afore-mentioned. Thereafter, the Brahmanas should be honoured with 'Dakshinaas'/ Cash and grains. Successful execution of 'shraaddhaas' with devotion and faith on the above lines should provide 'Dhana Dhaanyata' and 'Paapanaasshanam'/ wealth and foodgrains and demolition of sins.

At the time of auspicious time of 'Uttaraayana' when the course of Surya Deva turns into the Northern Direction, a devotee of Madhusudana should smear the Pratima of Hari or Hara with ghee and worship the Pratima for three months to obtain boons for victory over enemies and excellent health of body and mind. The worship should conclude for three months to secure best results and Brahmanas should be given happiness out of gifts like adequate feed material to cows etc. On Krishna Dwadashi of Pousha Month, devotees should observe fasting and celibacy and offer 'Tilodakas' or sesame seeds and water to Pitras followed by Naivedyam.

King Nila informed Chandravadana that on *Pousha Chaturdashi*after bathing in any of the Sacred Rivers like, Vitasta or Vishoka or Chandravati or Harshapatha or Trikoti or Sindhu or Kanakavahini or any other River / waterbodyoffering clean water should worship various **Deities of Destruction**: *Yamasya Dharmaraajaaya Mrityavey Chantakaayacha, Vaiwasvataaya Kaalaaya Sarva Praanaharaayacha*/ (Viz. **Yama**, Dharmaraja, Mritu, Antaka, Vaivastvata, Kaala and the destroyer of one and all); these Deities should be bathed and worshipped by each name with Pushpa, Dhupa, Gandha, and cooked rice with pulses as Naivedya. By appeasing these Deities, the devotees would get rid of their 'Mahapatakas' or irredeemable sins.

On Magha Shudda Chaturthii, **Devi Uma** is to be worshipped: Uma sampujanam kaaryam tasyaam Sowbhaagyameepsunaa, Deepaannamaalya dhupaishchaapyadrakena gudennacha/ Kusumbha lavanaabhyaam cha kumkumaanjana kangkataih, Kunda pushpaih samaanaathah prayatnaadapi Kaashyapa Pujyaascha subhagaastratra yoshitastu Pativrataah/ (Devi Uma should be worshipped by all those seek 'Sowbhagya'/ propitiousness and prosperity with 'Deepas', 'Anna', 'Pushpa-maalaas', 'Dhupa', Ginger, Jaggery, 'Kusumbhha', 'Lavana' or salt, 'Kumkuma' or Saffron, 'Kunda Pushpa' etc.). Also 'Pativratas' devoted to their husbands should be also worshipped as they too are of the reflection of Devi Uma!Similar 'pujas' are to be performed on Shuddha Chaturthis of Aswiyuja and Jeyshtha months too.

To mark the birth of Raghunandana Shri Rama in the twenty fourth Treta Yuga, King Nila informed Chandradeva that a three day long **Shri Rama Navami** / **Sita Rama Festival** was traditionally celebrated on *Chaitra Shuddha Navami*, when the highlight was the worship of Devi Sita. The Mini-Festival was observed by inviting all the relatives of the maternal and paternal to arrive the Devotee's house on 'Ashtami'day itself that would be a day ahead who along with Brahmanas would be treated by a special delicacy called 'Cheru' or a kind of mix of boiled milk and grains, besides other items of sumptuous food. On the Navami day, Devi Sita / Devi Karshini is worshipped formally with various services like Dhupa, Deepa, Pushpa, Vastra and Naivedyas in a formal manner with the chanting of relevant Mantras: thus Navami would be the Certral Day of the Puja when a great 'Bhojan' would be hosted by the 'Kartas' and appropriate gifts are distributed among Brahmanas, relatives and friends. During these three days, especially the last or Dashami day, there would be memorable experience of music - dance extravaganza. In fact, the eleventh day coinciding Ekadashi, there would be a spill over of the Festival when Shri Hari would be worshipped.

Following the Festival described by King Nila as above, **Maheswara Puja** was observed on *Chaitra Krishna Chaturdashi* signifying austerities, devotion, fasting and 'Jaagaranas' or night-watch. The devotees of Shiva observing fasting, snaana / bath and dedication would unveil the woollen cover of the Linga and perform 'Lingaabhisheka' with Rudra Mantras and decorate it: *Sampujya gandhamaalyaadi raktavasrtaanulepanaih*, *Naivedyairvidhai Brahman vahnibrahmanatarpyoh/ Bhaktya raatrou tatah kaaryam nrittageethaih prajaagaram*, *Shrotavyaah Shiva dharmaascha pradurbhaavaascha tatkrutaah/* (After the Linga was venerated with Gandha, flower garlands, blood red clothing, smearing of 'Anulepanas', Naivedya of a variety of eats, performance of Agni homa and satisfing Brahmanas, the devotees should be awake with devotional singing and dancing, besides listening to 'Shiva Dharmas' and 'Avataras'). Sincere worship on these lines would be provided a firm position in Rudraloka and even secure command of Shivaganaas.

### Phalguna Shukla Paksha Festival

A Festival was celebrated in Kashmira during the first half of the PhalgunaMonth.By the evening of the first day, the whole of Kashmira would come alive with decorations and illuminations all over, new clothes, new ornaments, good food with sweets / savouries etc and all the persons experienced joy and satisfaction irrespective of their social standing. By the evening, earthen lamps would be lit up and kept on ice slabs near houses, temples, markets etc. After a day long fast, the nights would be devoted to Celebrations by way of excellent meals, good wine and drinks, night long dances and music enjoyed by men, women and children. The next day as also on the other days of the Festival, gifts are given to Brahmanas, family members, relatives, friends, craftsmen, service providers to one's own homes etc.On the Pournima night, pujas would be performed to Chandra Deva and Aryama / Surya Deva followed by night-long sessions of group singings and dances, merry-making and intoxications.

These festivities would in fact continue till the fifth of the Krishna Paksha of the month, as that day signified the first menstruation of Kashmira Kanya. For the next three days, there would be no offerings of flowers, incense, scent materials and even milk. On the eighth day of the Krishna Phalguni, Kashmira would be bathed, worn new dresses and ornaments and provided healthy food along with special preparations of cow's milk and triangular-shaped preparation of rice called 'mudga' which should be distributed to one and all while the sonorous instrument of 'Tantri' would be played to indicate that the Kanya was getting ready with decorations.But this special function would be performed only by women; however men would organise Agni homas to propitiate the Kashmira Kanya. There would be 'Daanaas'/donations and good meals to Brahmanas and close relatives and friends in this connection.

As this phase of Kashmira Kanya would be over, that would be the time for Kashmira's conception to bear a child and that propitious time would be the symbolic commencement of sowing seeds on Earth by way of preparation of the crops. The specific time and day of the initiation of farming should be fixed by the astrologers: Diney Daivajna nirdhushtey Kshetram krutwaa krutwaasuhudbhutah sahrudhrutah, Pujyayet Pruthivem Deveem Goyugam Surabhim hayam/ Baladevam Mahadevam Vamadevam Diwaakaram, Aoushadheesham Nishaanaatham Parjaneyindro Prachetasam/ Ramam Salakshmanaam Seetaam Sesham cha Dharanidharam, Brahmaanaam Kashyapa Vahnim Vaayum Gaganameyvacha/ Maalyergandhaistathaa dhupai naivedyascha pruthak pruthak, Vahni Sampujanam kaaryam tatho Brahmana Pujanam/ (The specific time and day for Bhumi Puja might be determined by 'Daivajnas'/ astrologers; worship of Bhu Devi, Cows, Surabhi, horses, Baladeva, Mahadeva, Vamadeva, Diwakara, Aoushadheswara, Chandra Deva, Parjaya Deva, Indra Deva, Prachetaas, Shri Rama, Sulakshana, Devi Sita, Sesha Deva, Brahmanas, Kashyapa Prajapati, Agni, Vayu, Gagana / Sky, etc. might be performed with Pushpa maalaas, Gandha, and Naivedya. There after, Agni Puja and Brahmana Puja should be done.) After the Pujas, the first hit of the plough with the seed would be celebrated in the presence of the family members, amid Vedic hymns and prayers. The Festival would conclude with the rejoicings of the families concerned.

# 'Maha Shanti' in'Chaitra Shukla Paksha' and worship to various Devas

Chaitra Shukla samaarambhey prathamehani Kaashyapa, Pitaamasya kartavyaa tadaa puja vichakshanaih/Pushpair naanaa vidhair gandhair vastraalankaara dhupanaih, Hutaashapujanai Brahman Braahmanaanaancha tarpanaih, Tasminnevaahni kartavyaa Mahaashanti Dwijotthama/ (King Nila addressed Chandradeva the descendant of Kashyapa Prajapati as follows: On the first day of Chaitra Shukla Paksha, Pitamaha Brahma ought to be worshipped with Pushpas, various Gandhas, Vastraalankara

and Dhupas andAgni homaas, besides providing contentment to Brahmanas; on the same day, Maha Shanti Ceremony should be performed too as would be the duty of the Prosperous persons intending to further their wealth. On the same day again, there would be a duty to perform puja to 'Kaala' or Time, since the calculations of Time commenced from that day). It was again on that day; Brahma Deva initiated the process of creating human beings at the Sun-rise. It was on the same day, one should worship Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara; for securing Graha Shanti, pujas should be done to 'Nava Grahas' as also to Nakshatras. Other denominations of Time like Kalpas, Manvantaras, Yugas, Samvatsaraas, Uttara and Dakshina 'Ayanas'; Shat Ritus or Six Seasons; 'Dwadasha Maasaas' or Twelve Months; Pakshas of Shukla and Krishna; weeks; days; hours; Muhurtas, Rashisand so on too need to be worshipped. The Fourteen Manus including the Seven Past ones viz. Swayambhu, Swarochisha, Uttama, Tamasa, Raivata and Chakshusa; the current Manu Vaivaswata; and the future Manus viz. Arkasavarni, Brahma Savarni, Bhadresa, Daksha Savarni, Rouchya and Bhautya need be worshipped.

Worship of Maharshis would be an important part of the Pujas on this historic day of Chaitra Shukla Prathama: *Marichimatrayaangeerasou Pulastyam Pulaham Kratum, Bhrigum Sanatkumaram cha Sanakam cha Sanandanam/ Dharmam Varishtham Satyam cha Kaamaarthou cha Hutaashanam, Vasu Rudraamllokapalaamllokaaloka nivaasinah/ Sudaamanaa Shankhapaadam Ketumantam tathaivacha, Tathaa Hiranyaromaanaam Dikpaalaamscha pujayet/* (Worship should also be performed to Marichi, Atreya, Angeerasa, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Bhrigu, Sanatkumara, Sanaka, Sanandana, Dharma, Vasishtha, Kaama, Artha, Hutashana, Vasus, Rudras, Lokapalakas, Lokaaloka Nivaasis, Sudama, Shankha paada, Ketumaan, Hiranyaroma, and Dikpalakas).Besides Indra, puja should also be done to Daksha Prajapati's daughters viz. Sati, Khyati, Smriti, Swaha, Anasuya, Swadha, Preeti, Kshama, Sambhuti, Sannati, Arundhati, Keerti, Lakshmi, Dhriti, Medha, Tushti, Shraddha, Kriya, Mati, Buddhi, Lajja, Vasu, Shanti, Pushti, Siddhi, Rati, Arundhati, Vasudhashi, Lamba, Bhanu, Meruvati, Sankalpa, Muhurta, Saadhyaa, Vishwa, Kaashyapa, Aditi, Diti, Danu, Kaalaa, Danaayu, Simhika, Muni, Kadru, Krodha, Ira, Praava, Vinata, Surabhi, Khasha, Bhrigaashva, Pujya, Suprabha and Jaya.

On this auspicious occasion, reverences be paid to Bahuputra and his two wives, Arishtanemi and his four wives, Ruddhi, Vriddhi, Nidra, Dhanesha, Nadakubara, Shankhapadma, Nidhi, Pujya, Bhadrakaali and Saraswati; Vedas, Upavedas, Vedangas and all the Places of 'Vidya'; Nagas, Yakshas, Piscachas, Guruda Deva and Aruna Deva. A comprehensive Puja must also be performed to **Sapta Dwipas** viz. Jambu, Shaaka, Kusha, Krouncha, Shalmali, Gomeda, Pushkara; **Sapta Samudras** viz. Lavana, Ksheera, Aaajya, Dadhi, Maraada, Sura and Udaka (Salt, Milk, Ghee, Curd, Butter, Wine and Water respectively); Uttara, Kuru, Punya, Ramya, Hairavatastha, Bhadraashva, Ketumala, Varsha, Ilavrita, Harivarsha, Kimpurusha, Varsha and BharataVarsha; the 'Nava Bhaagaas' (Nine Branches) of Bharata Varsha viz. Indradyumna, Kasheruman, Tamavarna, Gabhastimaan, Nagadwipa, Sowmya, Gandharva, Vaaruna and Maanava dwipa, surrounded by three Seas; Seven Patala lokas viz. Rukmabhouma, Shilabhouma, Pataaala, Nilamritthika, Raktabhouma, Shweta, and Krishnakshiti; as also Kaalaagni Rudra, Seha, Varaha and Hari.

King Nila suggested to Chandra Deva: *Bhurbhuvahswarmahaschaiva Janascha Tapasaa saha*, *Satyalokastathaa lokaah Pujaneeyaahj Dwijottama/ Prithivyaapastathaa Tejah Pavanaambarameyvacha*, *Manobuddhitathaatmaanaavyaktam Purusham tathaa/* (**Sapta Loka**s viz. Bhu, Bhuva, Swah, Maha, Jana, Tapah and Satya should be worshipped, besides the 'Pancha Bhutas' viz. Prithvi, Water, Radiance, Air and Sky; most significantly, veneration of Heart, Mind, Soul, and the Ever Unknown Purusha / Paramatma.). Adulation should then be extended to the **Great Mountains** like Himalayas, Hemakuta, Nishadha, Nila Parvata, Sweta, Shrigamaaan, Meru, Maalyavaan, Gandhamaadana, Maanasarovara, Mahendra, Malaya, Sahyadri, Shaktimaan, Rukshavaan, Vindhya, Paariyatra, and Kailasa; to **Great Rivers** of Bharata Desha like the Sapta Nadis viz. Bhagirathi, Pavani, Hlaadini, Hardini, Sita, Vankshu,

Sindhu, besides Maanada, Suprabha, Kaanchanaakshi, Vishala, Maanasaahlada, Sarasvati, Sumeru, Pushkara Tirtha, and Vitasta; and Devis like Shachi, Vanaspati, Gouri, Dhumrorna, Ruchrakriti, Sinivali, Kuhu, Raaka, Anumati, Ayati, Niyati, Pragna, Mati, Vela and Dhaarini. Dhata, Vidhata, Sapta Chhandas, Iravata, Surabhi, Shravasa, Dhanvantari, Dhruva, Vnayaka, Kumara, Vishaakha, Maruds, Grahas, and Rishis like Baalaakhilya, Kashyapa and Narada would also have to be adulated.

The other significant Deities to be adored would include: **Dwadashaadityas** viz. Dhata, Mitra, Aryama, Pusha, Shakra, Varuna, Bhaga, Twashta, Vivaswan, Savita, and Vishnu; Ashta Vasus viz. Dhara, Dhruva, Bhoja, Apa, Anila, Anala, Pratyusha, Prabhasa, and Vasava; Ekaadasha Rudraas viz. Angaaraka, Nirruti, Ghosha, Ajaikapaad, Abhirbudhna, Dhumaketu, Dhwaja, Vaahana, Mrityu, Kapaali and Kankana; Dasha Vishwadevas viz. Kratu, Daksha, Vasu, Satya, Kaala, Kaama, Dhwani, Kuru, Vaak and Danuja; two Ashwinaas viz. Nasatya and Nasra; Dwadasha Bhrigus viz. Bhuvana, Bhavana, Sujanya, Sujana, Tyaaja, Suva, Murtha, Daksha, Vaya, Bandhuka, Prasava and Vyaya; Dwadasha Saadhyaas viz. Manas, Mada, Prashna, Nara, Pala, Diti, Haya, Naya, Hamsa, Narayana, Vishnu and Prabhu; Ekona Panchaashat Marutas viz. Ekajyoti, Divya Jyoti, Jyoti, Ekachakra, Trichakra, Rutajit, Satyajit, Sushena, Senajit, Agnimitra, Arimitra, Prabhumitra, Aparaajita, Ruta, Rutavaan, Dharta, Nidharta, Varuna, Dhruya, Vidhaarana, Devadeva, Idriksha, Adriksha, Ihadrik, Amitaashana, Krutina, Prasakrud, Daksha, Samara, Dhata, Ugra, Dhanu, Bhasma, Abhiyukta, Sadaasaha, Dyuti, Vasuratha, Adrushya, Vaama, Kaamajayaand Virat. The others to be respected on the occasion should include Vishwakarma, the Sarvashilpa Prakavartaka or the Chief of Architects and Engineers along with his 'Aayudhas' (weapons), 'Vahanas' (chariots), 'Chhatra' (Umbrella), 'Aasana' (Seat), and his Insignia / symbol of 'Dhundhubhi' (Drum) along with 'gandha maalyaanu -lepana' and 'dhupadeepa naivedyas'; as also to Grahas, Nagas, 'Maasaas' and 'Varshas'. Omkarapurvakam Brahman Ghrutaakshatayavai sthilaih, Taan pruthak prudhaguddishya deyaa Vipreshyu Dakshinaa, Brahmanaa bhojaneeyaascha suhrutsambhandi baandhavaah/ Viseshavaccha bhoktavyamKaaryamchamadutsuvam, Pujaneeya Dwijasreshthaa tathaa Jyotishakaa Dwijaah/(Agni-Homas should be performed wih ghee, 'yavaas'/ barley and 'tilaas'/sesame seeds with the reverberation of 'Omkaara' Mantraand Brahmanaas are respected with Dakshinas with reference to separate Deites, grand meals are organised to Brahmanas / Jyotisha Panditaas, relatives and friends). Kathitoyam Mahashaantih Sarvaaghavinisudani, Sarvotpaata shamaniKaliduhkha pranaashani/ Ayushpradaa pushtikari dhanasoubhagya vardhini, Vyaadhi shatru prashamani Rajyaraashtra vivardhini/ Mangalyaacha Pavitraacha Lokaadwaya sukhaavaha, Chaitramaasaarambhey ye mayaabhihitaatayaa/ (Such is the procedure of 'Maha Shanti'which demolishes sins / wrongdoings, appeases malevolent forces, obliterates dreadful dreams of 'Kalikaala', bestows longevity and wealth, annihilates enemies, provides happiness and auspiciousness to the Naga Desha as a whole).

On the fifth day of Chaitra Shukla Panchami, Nagas celebrated**Shri Panchami**; in fact, Lakshmi puja was an on-going affair throught one's life to sustain and develop prosperity and to Vishnu for Salvation. **Skanda Shashti** was performed with great veneration by Nagas: *Skandasya tatra kartavyaa pujaa maalaih sugandbhibhih, Gandhaalankaara vaasaamsi kukkutam cha nivedanayet/ Ghantaamajam kreedanakam naivedyam cha manoharam, Dhruveyam Chaitra Shashthicha paritoshaastu kaamatah, Yah karoti gruhey tasya virogah sarva baalakaah/* (Puja on Shukla Shasthi to Skanda Deva comprised flower garlands, fragrances, decorations, bells and toys, and sacrifices of cock and goat for Naivedya; those homes where pujas were performed likewise would never experience any diseases, especially to children). **Bhadra Kaali** was worshipped traditionally on **Chaitra Shukla Navami** for 'Karya Siddhi' or attainment of all auspicious deeds, while pujas were performed to 'Ishta' Devatas or the 'Home Deities' normally as well as to Agni and Brahmanaas on **Ekadashis.**On the **Dwadashi** day, Bhagavan Vaasudeva was worshipped by day long fasting and formal puja by the evening. On Chaitra Shukla **Trayodashi**, Nagas had the unique tradition of worshipping 'Manmadha' or the Deity of Love.

Husbands stored pitchersful of scented waterwith flowers and fragrant grasses kept over the previous night before the Idol of 'Kama Devata'who was neatly dressed up, decorated and ornamented for worship. The next morning on Trayodashithe husbands bathe the wives and thereafter perform formal puja together to Manmatha andRati Devi to secure firm and everlasting love and affection for ever mutually.

# 'Piscacha' puja during 'Chaitra Krishna Paksha' and importance of 'Ira' flowers

Chaitreymaasi sitey pakshey pancha dashayaam Dwijottama, Yoddhum yaati Nikumbhastu pishaachana vaalukarnavey/ Tasmaatteshaamtu maddhyaahney aikalasya grihey grihey/ Pujaakarya prayatnena yathaavat tannibodhamey,Pishaacham mrinmayam krutwaa kaamkshyam cha Dwijasattama/ Gandhamaalyaistathaa vastrailankaarai prapujayet, Bhakshaicha lopikaapupairmaamsaaih paanaistathaivacha/ Ayurvidhairvividhaakaaraih chaatropaanahayashthibhih, Nribhih shushkanna sampurney sthaayi bhakshya yutey tathaa/ Kuddaalapitakey chobhey tathaa tasya nivedayat/

(Nikumbha, the Chief of Piscachas would traditionally fight and punish malevolent Piscachas in 'vaalukaarnava' or SandSeas / Deserts and thus all Nagas would worship the Piscacha Chief who overcame and controlled the Evil Piscachas. Even by the mid-day of Chaitra Pournami, every household would prepare Images of Piscachas in clay or tree leaves or cloth in any other material, decorate the Idols of Nikumbha with flowers, leaves, grass etc. and arrange symbolic ornamentation of umbrellas, sticks and footwear. By way of 'Naivedya' varieties of sweets, snacks, wine, meat and dry fruitsare offered. As the Pournami evening fell, the Brahmanas who would oversee the worship would be disposed off and take to songs and instrumental music by the typical Kashmira 'Tantri Vadyaas' or stringed musical instruments; they would form groups of the singing parties to climb hill tops and descend down to common places for enjoying grand feasts of wine and meat.

Chaitra Krishna Paksha was also significant of the blossoming of 'Ira' flowers. Ira naamaapsaraah purvam shaptaa Shakrena Kaashyapa, Vishwaavasoh sampprayuktaa Suropasthaana varjitaa/ Sthaavaratvamanu praaptaa Himavayachalottamey, Bahudhaa saa vibhaktyaangi Nikumbho nirgatey bahih/ Yadaajaataa Iraadevi Iraa pushpopa shobhitaa, Iraavaatey tatho gatvaa naariputra ganaanvitah/ Suvaasaah swanulipata -angah suchittaha susumaahitah, Iraasampujanam kuryaat pushparnnairvichakshanaah/(Indra cursed an Apsara named 'Ira', an associate of Sage Vishvaavasu and having banished from Swarga destined her to turn into a mountain flower called by the same name. Even as Nikumbha vanished, the body of the Apsara got re-figured as trees, flowers and gardens as a vast family and the flowers were materialised with unique flavor, form and fragrance. The Ira Devi should be worshipped with various other flowers and Naivedyas of a variety of 'Bhakashya bhojyaas' should be offered along with 'Deepas'). During visits to Ira gardens, one should certainly carry special items for eating satisfaction. Ira flowers are highly appropriate for adorning 'dwijas', respectable women, friends, relatives, especially when embellishing their hairs in darnedform with red-coloured threads. Wearing the charming and aromatic flowers, enjoying a drink extracted from the juice of Ira flowers, and imbibing the joy of music and dance simultaneously would be an experience of a life time. Worship of Kesava with thousand Ira flowers would open up gates of heavens. Ira pujatey RudramBrahmaanam Shashinam Ravim, Shubhaam kareeshineem Durgaam Sarwaastushyanti Devataah/ (Pujas performed with Ila flowers to Rudra, Brahma, Shashi, Shubha, Karishini, Durga and all other venerated Devatas would indeed please them all). King Nila affirmed that all Nagas were obsessed with Ira flowers and as for himself personally, he had a passion for them.

### Worship of Gautama Buddha as also of Brahmanas on Vaishakha Purnima

Vishnudevo Jagannaatho Brahman praaptey Kalou yugey, Ashtaavamsattamey bhaavi Buddhi naama Jagadguruh/Pushya yuktey Nishaanaathey Vaishaakhey Maasi Kaashyapa/ (Kashyapa!Bhagavan Vishnu, the Lord of the Universe, would be born in the Twenty Eighth Kali Yuga as Buddha the Universal Instructoron Purnima in Vaishakha Month in Pushya Nakshatra). The procedure of worship was described as follows: On the Tritiya of Shukla Vaishakha itself, devotees should take baths, observe fast by eating 'Yava' and perform Japam, Homam, Shraaddh, and Daanam; follow the same procedure on the following day too. On the day next, an Idol of Gautama Budhha should be given a bath with the waters of a Sacred River along with 'Sarvoushadhas, 'Sarva Ratnas', and 'Sarva Gandhas'-a variety of medicinal herbs, gems and perfume materials as per 'Sakya' procedure; food offerings to the Idol as Naivedya be made as per the prescribed manner; 'Sakya Viharaas' should be cleaned up; the 'Chetyaas' or the Temple Areas be spruced up and decorated with paintings; a long festival be celebrated with music, song and dance; Buddhist Mendicants should be respected with new dresses called 'Chivadas', books, food items and gifts. Dinatrayam chakartavyam Naivedyam Vidhivad Dwija! Pushpa Vastraadi Pujaa cha daamam deenajanasyacha/ Pourna--maaseem thu sampraapya Vaikhaasasya Dwijottama, Madhuyuktaisthilaih kaaryam tadaa Brahmanapujanam/ Tilaih snaanam tilaihi homam Tilaih shraaddham tathaiva cha, Maatraadaanam tu kartavyam depa daanam suraalaey/(Thiswould be a Three Day Responsibility of Naivedya, Puja to Buddha, flowers, clothes, and charity, especially to the Poor as well as Brahmana Puja, tila snaanam, tila homam, tila shraaddham, and Deepa daanam). This Proceduremight be continued till the end of the Vaishakha Month.On Vaishakha Purnami again, Brahmana Puja was scheduled: Vaishakhyaam Pournama –astaantu Brahmanaan Sapta Panchavaa, Kshoudra yuktesthalaih krishnairarchayedan thavaitaraih/ Preeyataam Dharmaraageti yadaa manasi vartathey, Yaavajjeevam krutam paapam tatkshanaadeva nashyati/ (On the Vaishakha Purnami, seven or five Brahmanas be engaged for worship with black or other 'tilas' and honey; at the very thought of Yama Dharma Raja, the life-long acquisition of sins would get dissolved).

# **Worships of Deities coinciding with Month-Star Unions (Constellations)**

Ashaadha maasey sampraapyam Swati yogam tathaa Dwija, Vayu sampujanam kaaryam Gandhairmaalyai Dwijotthama/ Bhurinaa Paramaannecha saktunaa vividhenicha, Sumanobhirvichitraischa Kusumescha tathaa paraih/(VayuDeva should be worshipped in Ashadha month in union with Swati with Gandha and Pushpa maalas, 'Paramaanna' or Rice cooked in milk along with dry cashew and other dried fruit-nuts; apart from flowers of variegated colours). At the time of Dakshinayana when the movement and course of Surya Deva changes downward to Southern direction, the Deity should be worshipped commecing from Solar Snaanaas and Surya Puja, besides charities to Brahmanas a range of material: Saktan Gorasa saammisraan Brahmanebhyah pradaapayet, Himam cha sharkaram chaiva shaakam harithatham tathaa, Chhatro -paanaha maalyaadi Dakshinaayanaavasarey (milk-mixed grains, ice, sugar, green vegetables, Chhatra, footwear, and containers with cold water at the Dakshinayana).

At the **Rohini-Ashadha Purnima Union**, Prajapati Kashyapa, the founder of Kashmira should be worshipped as affirmed by King Nila to Chandra Deva; Kashyapa should be revered with 'Gandhamaalya Naivedyas' besides 'Sa-Vatsaka Go-daana' (charity of Cow with calf) to an accomplished Brahmana. In fact, the time of the constellation of Rohini with Chandra was always considered as an extremely significant and auspicious time, when devotees should take bath at the confluence of Rivers Vitasta and Sindhu and recite / listen to renderings of Sama Veda and purify themselves as the Rohini constellation was in the vicinity of Shravana Month and it was on the Krishnaastami day during the Rohini Star that Janaardana descended as the incarnation of Shri Krishna: *Shraavanaayaam samateetaayaam yaa syaat Krishna Ashtami*, *Tasyaamutpadyatey Devo Maanushyo Madhusudana/ Bhaara avataaranaartham hi* 

tasyaantu Dwijasattama, Ashtavimshev tu sampraaptey Dwaparaantey cha nah shrutam/ Tatraahani tu kartavyam tasmaatkaala -attadaa param, Pujanam Devadevasya Devuaaschaiva yathaa vidhi/ Devaki cha Yashodaacha tathaa pujey Dwijotthama/ Gandhairmaalyairstathaa Bhakshairyava godhuma sambhavaaih, Sagorasairbhakshya bhojjaih phalaischa vividharstathaa/( It was learnt from 'Dwijotthamaas'that Madhusudana was born in human form as an 'Avatara' on the Krishnaashtami day of Shraavana month to unburden the evil forces on Earth by the end of Dwapara Yuga; accordingly, the devotees should formally worship Devis Devaki and Yashoda as prescribed by way of Gandha, Pushpamaalaas, Bhakshyas made of Yava (Barley) and Godhuma (Wheat), milk products, 'Bhakshya bhojyaas', fruits and so on). After performing the Puja, the devotees would rejoice the Jamsashtami as a memorable festival through out the night with music, song and dance and the next full day by sporting new dresses, meeting relatives and friends and eating sweets, savouries and lot of butter and sugarcane. Pitra Constellation with Amavasya of Shraavana Month, 'Shraaddhas' and 'Tarpanas' should be duly executed to the Pitras who included Subhashitas, Barhishads, Agnishvaatthas, Kravyadas, Upahutas, Ajyapas, Sukalinas, and other Pitruganas; they should be worshipped with lot of veneration by way of offering flowers, prescribed food material, Tila seeds and Gandhas. Their satisfaction would bestow boons for the fulfillment of the devotee's desires.

In the Shukla Paksha of Bhadrapada Month, Sachi Devi the consort of Mahendra was worshipped and so wasMahendra along with his 'Ganas. Reverences to Nagas were to be paid during this period; Shraddhas should be performed to those fallen in battles preferably on the Trayodashi of the Krishna Paksha of the month. On the fourteenth day of the Paksha, there should be a puja of Ayudhas (weapons) in the night at a Durga Temple; this should be performed by the descendants of Kashyapa who should be well versed with 'Shalihotra' performances, besides knowledge of astronomy and Kalpa Sutras related to Atharva Veda; this function was called 'Niranjana'. As Surya enters Kanya Rasi, Sage Agastya should be venerated with flowers, grains, pots of water, cows, bulls, cooked rice and fruits; the thousand-hooded Ananta Deva and 'Dikpalakaas' with 'Dhupamaalyaalepana' and cooked rice with jaggery; and Varuna Deva was so worshipped too. On sixth of day of Ashvauja, pujas would be performed to Goddess Ashokika by men, women, 'Kanyas' and children freshly bathed and decorated with vermillion along with services of Dhupa-Deepa-Pushpa-Naivedyas, while singing, dancing and rejoicing with great devotion to the Deity.

Celebrating the Birth Day of the Sacred**River Vitasta** on the Trayodashi of Shukla Ashvauja, a week long Festival was traditionally observed-three days before and three days later. *Pujaneeya Vitastaa syaattathaa tam dinasaptakam, Gandhairmaalyaih sanai vedyairdeepa daanaaih sushobhanaih/ Pataakaabhirvichitraabhee rakta sutraih sa kankanaih, Phalaischa vividhairBrahman vahni brahmana tarpanaih/*(River Vitasta should be worshipped for seven days with 'Gandhamaalyaas', 'Naivedyas', different kinds of 'Pataakaas'/ flags, 'Rakta Sutras'/ red threads, 'Kankanaas'/ wrist-wears, a variety of fruits, oblations to Agni and tarpanas to Devas to make Brahmanas happy). Devotees were advised to observe fasting on Dwadashi day and pray to Narayana; if there were to be a constellation of Budha on that day there would be a double benefit, especially when a person observed 'Snaanam', 'Daanam', 'Japam' and 'Shraaddha'.

Proktavaan Dwadashagunam swayam mey Madhusudanah, Budha Shravana samyukaa Dwadashi Dwija saa yadi/ Atyanta mahati naama tasyaam Sarvamathakshayaam, Tasyaam snaatwaa Narah Samyang Nadi dwitaya Sangamey/ Phalamaapnoti yatproktam saanihatyaam Ravigrahey, Upaanahou tathaa chhatram purnakumbham tathaiva cha/ Vastra yugmam tathanaadhyam yah prayacchati vai tadaa, Seshaanaam yadi chet kartaa Shwetadwipey mahiyatey/(As Madhusudana himself asserted, Budha and Shravana constellation on Dwadashi would yield the benefit twelve times higher once the above sacrifices were performed; if there were to be a Solar Eclipse on top of it on that day and charities were effected of 'chhatram', 'purna kumbham', a pair of clothes and 'Bhojan' after taking bath, then that person would be esteemed in 'Swetadwipa'!At the constellation of Chandra and Swati during the first half of Ashvauja, oblations to Agni with appropriate Mantras should be addressed to Vayu, Varuna, Surya, Indra, Vishnu,

Vishwa Devas and to Agni too. In the same period Chandra-Shakra combination, prayers should be made in favour of horses and elephants, while Pujas to Bhadrakaali would help artisans.

# Procedure of Koti Homa by the King of Kashmira

Samvatsarasyaatha kaaryo Lakshahomo Maheekshitaa, Kotihomastathaa kaatya Eka yeva Dwijottama/ Tayorvidhaanam vigneyam Kalpeshvaathaadharvaneshu cha/ (Every year, the King has to perform Laksha Homa / Koti Homa as per the procedure stated in the Kalpa Sutras of Atharva Veda) and as per interpretations of Priests, Vedajnaas and senior Brahmanas. The King would be given a Royal Bath, the Chief Priest would take fast and offer oblations to Agni Deva as addressed to Vishnu, Shakra, Savita, Brahma, Rudra, Varuna etc. The entire Kingdom, especially the Capital where the Function was organised, would be decorated with colourful 'Pataakaas' / flags and 'Dhwajas' / banners; the 'Raja Margas' (Main Roads) are cleaned up and washed; all the Officials, renowned citizens and important guests would turn out in their best attires; the King would be given further baths with 'Panchagayvas'/ five bye- products of cows by Gana Nayakas with pots of Earth, silver, gold or other metals as also water of Sacred Rivers; the citizens wear their best dresses, badges, decoratives, and fragrances; the King would then pay reverences to Brahmanas and important personalities like Ministers, officials, Nagas and then go out in a procession to meet common citizens. Then the King should undertake a pilgrimage to various Temples across the Kashmira Mandala, by observing patience, courtesy and daily pujas as instructed by the Chief Priest. Before launching the annual Yatra, the King should worship Vinayaka on the first day by offering sweets to the Deity, on the second day worship, on the second day to 'Nava Grahas', to Gandharvas on the third day, fourth day to Piscachaas, fifth day to local Nagas, Brahmanas on the sixth, and on the seventh day to the deprived and vulnerable sections of th Soceity. Thereafter, the pilgrimages would be taken up to the Temples of Vinayaka, Lakshmi, Skanda Kumara, Surya, Mahadeva, Shakra, Dhanada, Chandra over a span of a fortnight; the Yatras would also include the abodes of a number of illustrious Nagas.

### Some Details of Naga Chiefs and origin of 'Maha Padma Sarovara'

In this connection, Sage Brihadashwa gave a long list of the famous Nagasto King Gonanda as conveyed by Maharshi Vaishampayana to King Janamejaya: He said that **King Nila** was the most popular and virtuous who lived in the Region as the Destiny Maker of Nagas and the Originator of Kashmira.

There then would follow the long list of Vasuki, Upatakshaka, Kambala, Ashwatara, Karkotaka, Dhananjaya, Helapatra, Ananta, Nandopananda, Kulika, Swetashankha, Palaasa, Helihala, Shankha paala, Chandana, Nandana, Neela, Mahaanila, Vatika, Sandsika, two Padmas, two Maha Padmas, two Kaalaas, two Kacchaapaas, two Samudras, two Gajaas, two Takshakaas, Hastikarna, Hastis, Vamanas, Varahas, Kupana, Paniya, Anika, Kankaaksa, Kalinkaaka, Arjuna, Pundirika, Dhanda, Khadaa, Sapala, Khericha, Lahura, Ledira, Ledina, Kheda, Jayanta, Sudama, Sarashwa, Praduymna, Andhika, Sambu, Salva, Agarasukha, Nilasura, Anishta, Sumukha, Veda, Khadgapucchha, Vibhishana, Priya Swami, Kumara, Kalapa, Puraanaka, Aapada, Vali, Vibhuti, Kalanajara, Krita, Treta, Dwapara, Sama, Ananda, Jayananda, Trisirsha, Jatila, Gandha, Soma, Gargya, Mahodara, Makara, Makaraaksha, Shatrughna, Rama, Lashmana, Mahadeva, Karkara, Karavata, Varaghosha, Sumangala, Shambharta, Karahala, Dhaumya, Galava, Ukola, Sukhola, Vahnirupa, Kalusha, Kripana, Kutaka, Hari, Shalabhaand countless other Naga Chiefs.

Having narrated the names of lakhs of Naga Chiefs, Sage Brihadashwa stated that it would just not be possible to count neither the names nor the numbers of the next generations of the Naga Chiefs who settled in Kashmira over the passage of time of hundreds of years, but one fact was clear that the descendants of the Original Chief King Nila imbibed his qualities of bestowing boons to humanity and were followers of the unparalleled Vasuki Deva.

The Sage further described to King Gonanda that Nagas lived in peace for generations; while Naga Bindusara was the Guardian of the Eastern direction of Kashmira, Naga Shrimadhaka of South, while

Naga Uttara Maanasa was the Sentinel of the Northern direction, despite the threat of Tarkshya (Garuda). As Garuda Deva lifted and killed lakhs and lakhs of Nagas, Lord Vishnu prevented this havoc by instructing Garuda and eversince then peace prevailed in favour of Nagas.

Meanwhile Naga Chief **Sadangula** got into the vicious habit of lifting away several women and killed them inspite of King Nila's instructions not to harm human beings; the King banished Sadangula out of his Placeand replaced him with another Naga Chief Maha Padma and allotted that area; Sadangula was allotted an area in Chandrapura of King Viswagaswa where there was a lesser threat to women. But Durvasa Muni visited the Place of Sadangula as a mad person in disguise and as he did not receive proper reception cursed the Place to turn in into a huge lake. Maha Padma Naga sent by King Nila approached King Viswagaswa to allot a place in Chandrapura for the family of Sadangula and the Lake since converted by the curse of Durvasa was called since then as **Maha Padma Lake**, which was one yojana wide and another yojana long, which had no crocodiles and was cool and charming, near by which a beautiful Nagar called Vishwagaswapura.

## **Quick account of Sacred Places in Kashmira**

King Gonanda desired to hear of a brief account from Sage Brihadashwa of various Sacred Places in Kashmira and the latter obliged Gonanda as follows commencing from **Shri Ganesha:** *Vinayakam tu Gangeyam nistrutam Vardhanadrumaat, Twam drushtwaa Sarvakalyaaneem siddhimaapnoti Maanavah/Yadhaavidhim kaamyavaram tasya Dakshinaapaschimey, Deshetu kroshamaatrena drushtwaa kaaryaani saadhayet/Bhurjaswaami Hidimbesho Lovaarah Shri Vinaayakah/ Utankesho Guhaavaasi Bhimeshah Soumukhastathaa, Bhadreaswaro Mahaasyascha Mahaashana gaveshano/ Poulastyo Girivaasicha Jayeswara Mahehwarou, Ekaikamebhyo drushtvaa tu Ganesham Susamaahitah/ Karyasiddhimavaapnoti Puraayam Phalamupaashnutey/ (On merely viewing the Idol of Vinayaka, the son of Devi Ganga who descended from 'Vardhanadruma' mountain, any human being would attain all kinds of propitiousness and 'Siddhis'. One's darshan of 'Kaamyavara' Vinayaka in a Temple hardly a 'krosha' of a distance would bestow fulfillment of wishes. Attainment of Karya Siddhi or success in one's endeavours would be certainly possible by worshipping Ganesha by any name like Bhurjaswami, Hidimbesha, Lovaara, Shri Vinayaka, Utankesha, Guhaavaasi, Bheemesha, Sowmukha, Bhadreaswara, Mahaasya, Mahashana Gaveshana, Poulastya, Girivaasi, Jayeshwaraand Maheshwara).* 

The Idol of **Skanda**set up Pulastya Munishould be seen after taking bathin 'Paatra Kunda'to secure 'Punya' of 'Go-daana' in charity; the Deity is also called: Maalivana, Gautamesha, Vishwaamitreshwara, Shounaasika, Vasishthesha, Maakharesha, Sureswara, Skandeshwara, Vishaakhesha and Poulastyapara. **Indra:** *Pulastyanirmitam Shakram Bharadwajakritam tathaa, Kaashyapam kaarnavamaaha Satyam Vaasishtham cha Shatakrutam/ Drushtwa Swargamaapoti Gosahsra phalam labhet/* (Viewing the Pratima of Shakra who performed hundred 'Kratus' as set up by Sages Pulastya, Bharadwaaja, Kashyapa, Kaanva, Agastya and Vasistha would yield the benefit of securing Swargam as alsoof the charity of a thousand of cows).

Worshipping the Idol of **Agni** as installed by Maharshi Angirasa would secure the 'phala' of accomplishing 'Diwa' (Heaven): *Agneraangirasam drushtwaa Pratimaam praapruyaad divam*/

Yama Dharma Raja: Thaijasey tu narah snaatwaa drushtwaa pretaadhipam Yamam, Swargalokamavaapnoti tila dhenu phalam bhavet/ Snaatwaa tu Pushkarey drushtwaa Surya sutam tathaa, Sarva paapa vinirmuktah Swargalokey maheeyatey/ (Paying reverence to Yama Dharmaja, the Head of Pretas, after taking bath in the River Thaijasa would yield Swarga and the fruits of charity of

'Tilaas' and 'Dhenu'. Also 'Pushkara Tirtha Snaana' and homage to Surya Putra would result in the destruction of sins and ascent to heavens). The Idols of Yama, Sutankesha and the Chief of Pretas which were installed by Vasishtha Muni in Kashmira are better viewed during the nights after worshipping Virupaksha Deva for demolishing human fears of Rakshasaas as also of sins. Veneration of Idols of Varuna and King Bali Bali installed by Pulastya in a Temple near Maha Padma Sarovara-in the northern part of 'MansaLake', would kill diseases and 'kilbishaas' or wrongdoings besides fetching 'Go-daana phala'. Viewing the Idol of **Dhaneshwara** adjacent toGod Vitastaksha, as installed by Agastyawould assure prosperity and riches.

Sage Brihadashwa listed out innumerable other Pratimas all over Kashmira Region of Bharata Desha and their worship installed by Maharshis and past Kings; for instance Sashanka would give access to Chandra loka, Manibhadra would provide wealth, Kama Deva blesses with physical satisfaction while various other Deities like Kapilanjali, Sureshwari, Bhadreshwari, Goutameshi, Kala seela, Udyogeshwari, Gavaski, Chandika, Durga, Gauri, Suvijaya, Brahma- chaarini, Chakreswari and so on would all fulfill one's own desires and ambition. **Idols of Surya Deva:** *Kartaveeryaarjuna Swaamim drushtwaa tam cha Divakaram, Maartandam Kashyapa Swamim Vishwagashwakitam Ravim/ Suchandresham Suchakresham Surabheeswaminam Ravim, Drushtvaikaikamathai tebhyo Hayadaava phalam labhet/*(On viewing the Forms of Kartaviryarjuna Swami or of Divakara, Kashyapa Swami or of Martanda, Vishwageshwa or of Ravi, and such others like Suchandresha, Suchakresha and Surabhi Swami Ravi, the person concerned would achieve the 'Punya' of 'Ashva daana'. **Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara Swarupas:** Sage Brihadashwa elaborated to King

Gonanda about the strong presence of Tri Murtis in Kashmira Region as follows: Brahmaanam varadam drushtwaa Shailarupa dharam swayam, Vishnu Swamim Hara Swamim Kashapa Swaminam tathaa/ Drushtwaitaan Swargamaampnoti Bhumi paala Pitaamahaan, Chakraswami sameepastham Haram drushtwaa Sudarshanam/ Swayambhuvam Vahnikrutam tathaa vai Pingaleswaram, Bindunaadeswaram Devam Devam Bhadreshwaram tathaa/ Chandreshwaram Sajyejeshtham Vaakakhilyeshwaram Harim, Keshavesham samesham cha Dhoumyesham Varuneshvaram/ Chakreshwaram Suchandresham Kashyapesham vilohitam, Kaamesham Savaasishthesham Bhutesham saganeshwaram/ Suryeshwaram Maha Raja Bhasmesham Vimaleshwaram, Drushtaikaikamathaitebhyo muchatey Sarva kalbishaih/ Himachalesham Shankhesham Devam Vaivartileshvaram, Maha Nandeshwaram Shambhum Varadam Kashyapeshwaram/Rajeshwaram Nrisimhesham Bhavesham Dhanadeshwaram, Sadaa Sannihito Rajan Devo Bhuteshvaro Harih/(King Gonanda! The all merciful Brahma Deva assumed the Form of a Mountain and presented himself as Vishnu Swami, Hara Swami and Kashyapa Swami. All those who could visualise the various manifestations would indeed be relieved of their sins, crimes and transgressions. Some of such Sacred Murtis include the following: Sadarshana Hara nearby a Place called Chakra Swami; Swayambhuva as installed by Vahni Deva/Agni; Pingaleshwara, Bindunaadeshwara, Bhadreshwara Deva, Chandreshwara together with Jyeshthesha; Vaalakhilyeshwara, Hari, Keshavesha, Samesha, Dhaumesha, Varuneshwara, Chakreshwara along with Suchandresha, Kashyapesha, Vilohita, Kamesha with Vasishthesha; Bhutesha together with Ganeshwara; Suryeshwara, Bhashmesha with Vimaleshwara, Himalayesha, Shankhesha Deva, Vaivishweshwara, Maha Nandeswara, Shubha, Varada, Kashyapeshwara, Rajeshwara, Nrisimhesha, Bhavesha, Dhanadeshwara! King Gonanda! These and innumerable other manifestations of Bhuteshwara Hari are always ever-present in the Kashmira Region of Bharata Varsha)!

Kashmira Raja! May Nandeshwarawho is always present with Maha Deva as an inseparable Entity provide the best of blessings to the Kashmiras as he too is ever compassionate and forgiving as Maha Deva himself!

### 'Nandyopaakhyaana': Nandeshwara born in human form and backto Maha Deva

King Gonanda enquired of Sage Brihadashwa about the background of Nandeshwara. A Brahmana named Shilaada performed severe Tapasya on NandiMountain to Maheshwara by eating nothing else but 'Shilaachurana' (rock powder) for hundred years seeking a boon to secure a highly virtuous son. Maha Deva was pleased and granted the boon, while Nandi desired to be born as a human being provided that he should go through the process of normal human birth. Maha Deva was pleased with Nandi's offer andsaid that in any case Sage Bhrigu gave a curse to Nandithat owing to an indescrition of his at the Shiva-Parvati wedding, he was destined to a human birth. Nandi was materialised from the cool rays of Chandra Deva as a child and the highly elated Shailada pampered the child and performed all the ceremonies of childhood. As Nandi grew and revealed that he would have to go back to Maha Deva soon, Shailaada was shatteredand became uncontrollable. Nandi then did Tapasya to Maha Deva for hundred years on the Mountain of Himalayas on one of the peaks called Haramukuta, where there was a lake called Kalodaka. Meanwhile Shilaada prayed to Devi Parvati to please allow Maha Deva to respond to Nandi's tapasya and performed Yagna on Mountain tops. Maha Deva proceeded towards the Haramukuta but as the route was rough and rocky, the bull by which he and Parvati were travelling could not proceed further and healone without Parvati or bulltook to a circuitous route on foot and on way crossed Shatadru, Vipasu, Iravati and Chandrabhaga, Vishnupada and the confluence of Vitasta and Sindhuto finally reach the Bharata Mountain. He took considerable time to ascend the peak, even as the Mountain grew higher and higher; the exasperated and exhausted Maha Devagrew up in his body stature and stamped his foot on the mountain's head since when the mountain was known as Mundaprastha. The mountain could not bear the hit of Parameshwara, came out in human form and sought pardon of the Deva. A water body emerged out of the stamping of the foot and was called Kripani Tirtha, subsequently known as Apsara Tirtha as that was the swimming pool of Apsaras. Then Parama Shiva was enchanted by the most charming Place called 'Brahmasara Tirtha' and could not resist the temptation of swimming in it and converted himself as a Swan! The bird broke the Mountain and saw for Himself the Sacred Place where Shailaada was performing Yagna to please Parvati and him self to extend the human life of Nandeswara. As the Swansaw the Sacred Places of Vatika and Sandika where the Yagna was being organised, it also witnessed the Kapila Tirtha.Lord Brahma saw Parameshwara in the Form of a Swan and prostrated before him. As Shakra was there too along with a group of Devas, he saw Brahma there and knelt down and prayed to him thus: Namastey Devadevesha Jagatkaranakaarana, Trailokyanatha Sarvajna Sarveswara Namostutey/ Twattonyam naiva pashyaami Jagatyatmin hi kaaranam, Twayaa Sarvamidam vyaptam Trailokyam sacharaacharam/ Srashtaa twamasya Sarvasya Samhartaa Paalakastathaa, Yadonmeelayasey netrey Trailokyasyodbhavastadaa/ Bhavateeha Jannatha yadaa cha Swapishey Vibho, Tadaitakhilam Sarvam Trailokyam tu pranashyati/Bhumidhrutaa Dharayatitwyedam sacharaacharam, Twayaa dhrutaa dhaarayanti tathaiyaapokilam jagat/ Twattejasaa jagat saryam yahnidhaarayati Prabho, Twattejasaa tathaa Vaayurbhaayayat –sakhilam Jagat/ Shabdayonim tathaakaasham Jagat dhaarayatey Prabho, Veeryena tey Mahaabhaagatwam cha proktastathaaparah/ Twam Buddhistwam tathaivaatmaa Sarvasyaasya prakeertitah, Avyaktah Purushaschaiva Rajahstatvam tathaa tamah/ Indriyaaneendriyaarthascha Bhutatanmantra sanjakah, Jnaataa Jneyam tathaa Kshetram Kshetrajnah Parame -swarah/ Dhyaataa Dhyeyam tathaa Dhyaanam Yagnaani vividhaanicha/ Sarvameytatwamey vaikastatwattah kimapuram Prabho/ Yannatosi Mahabhaga yetanmey Samshayo Mahaan/(Namastey, Deva Deva, You are the Prime Motivation of the Motives and the Chief Cause of the Causes; you are the Head of the Three Lokas, the All-Knowing Sarveshwara; there could not be any other reason than yourself in the entire Srishti and are also the Omni-Pervading; You are the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer too; as your eyes are open, the Worlds are born and alive and as you have the proverbial forty winks, the Worlds vanish too; as Earth holds the weight of all the Moving and Non-moving Entities of Creation, while Earthis upheld by water but who else is the holder of water and every thing else! You are

the radiance that Agni carries all over the Universe and You are the Energy that Wind carries all over; You are the 'Shabda'/ Soundthat Akasha (Sky) carries all over; You are the 'Buddhi'or the Intelligenceand 'Atma' or the Soulas also the UnknownPurusha Swarupa being the fountain-head of the three 'Gunas' or Satwa-Rajasika and Tamasika Characteristics; You constitute the Physical Limbs and their end-sensations-as in respect of tongue and speech, ears and hearing, eyes and vision etc.; You are the 'Bhuta' or composition of Gross Elementsand 'Tanmatras' / their Concentrated Reactions; You are the 'Jnaata' or the 'Obtainer' and the 'Jneya' or that which is 'Obtainable'; The 'Kshetra' or the Physiqueand the 'Kshetrajna' the Soul / Inner Consciousness'; 'Dhyata' or the Thinker, the 'Dhyeum' or the Thought, and the 'Dhyanam' or Thinking. Maha Bhaga! Is there else in 'Existence' beyond you!).

As Shakra prayed to Brahma as above, Brahma replied that Maha Deva himself was before him in the Form of a Swan and alerted him to lead the Devas present too to join Shakra to pay tributes to Maha Deva directly and Indra paid homage as follows: Namastey Deva Devesha Mayaavrutajagatraya, Yajamaano Mahi swam chathoyaagneendurka Vaayaah/ Tanavastey Vinirdishtaa yaabhyarvyaptamJagatriam, Braahmeem tanum tathaasthaaya Raajaseem twam Jagadguro/ Lokaansrujaasi Bhutaatmamstava Kaaryam na vidyetey, Paorusheem tanumaasthyaaya Saatwikeem twam Maheswara/ Paalayasyakhilam Deva thrailokyam saakshiybat sthitah, Kaalaakhyaam taamaseem krutwaa jagat samhaarasey tathaa/ Vrisha rupa dharo Dharmo vaahanatwamupaagatah, Vaamaardham dayitaakaayam Brahmachari bhavo dhavaan/ Namah Shashaanka lekhaanka jataabhaara Maheshwara, Gangaataranga nirdhuta jataabhaara namostutey/ Tripuraarey Namastestu Namastvandhaka ghaatiney, Shulaagra bhinna daityaamsha rudhiraadra namostutey/ Kapaala maaliney tubhyam Parvatidayitaayacha, Ugraayudhaaya Bhimaaya Bhimaayudha dharaayacha/ Urdhwa Lingaaya Sheeghraaya Krathaaya Kratanaayacha, Maangalyaaya Varenyaya Mahaa Hamsaaya meedhushey/ Bheemaakshaaya Bhusundaaya Vyaala Yagnopapeetiney, Kshamaswa mama Devesha yan mayaasi na Pujitah/ TavaivaMayaya purvam mohitena Jagatprabho, Prasannosi dhruvam yena jnaatosi vai mayaa/ Suprasaadodi Devesha pranatosmi Maheshwara/(Our obeisances to you Deva Devesha who has spread out 'Maya' or Illusion all over the Three Worlds: the Pancha Bhutas viz. Prithivi, Water, Radiance, Wind power, Sun, Moon and Sky are all the ramifications of Your 'Swarupa' or Form extended all over; You assumed the Brahmi Shakti of 'Rajasa' facilitating Creating, Satvika Shakti to administer and uphold the worldsas a Unique Witness and finally by taking the 'Kala Swarupa' perform 'Jagat Samhara' or demolition of the Universe; Dharma Swarupa! You take over the Form of a Bulland as an 'Ardha Naareswara' and as a 'Brahmachari' perform the killing of Daityaas with ease and without effort; Our greetings to you, Shashakadhara, Maheshewara, Jatadhaari wet with the waves of River Gangaworn on your head; You were the devastator of Tripurasura and Andhaka; You look dreadful as the killer of Daityas with their bodies strewn on top of your 'Shula' with their gushing blood; the 'Kapaala Maaliney' / wears garlands of Skulls around neck; 'Ugraayudhaya' / Carrier of Fearful Weapons; Bhimaaya / Bhima Shankara Linga; 'Urthwa Lingaya'; 'Sheeghraaya'/ The Speediest; Krathaaya, 'Krathanaaya'Mangalyaya' / The Most Auspicious; 'Varenyaaya' or the Most Excellent and Distinguished; 'Maha Hamsaaya' / the Outstanding and Unique Swan; 'Bhusundaaya' / like the Great Yogi /Trikala Gyani and renowned Master of Pranayama who built a Mountain like Nest on Kalpa Vrikshka on Meru; and 'Vyala Yagnopaveeta'/ wearing a serpent as his Sacred Thread.By so saying, Indra sought Hara Prabhu as he was overcome by a severe Maya / Illusion and could not recognize Maha Deva as the Great Swan).

As Indra's eulogy was over, Maha Deva discarded his Form as a Swan and as Brahma, Indra and Devatas too were present along with Devi Parvati and the Great Bull reached there by nowwent to Kalodaka where the Yagna was being performed and further proceeded the Place whereNandi was performing his Tapasya. Nandi was weak and was almost dead. Having revived him, Maha Deva gave back Nandi's past birth's memory that he was a 'Pratihaari' (Gate Keeper) of Kailasha, that as Brahmana Shilaada's penance and Bhrigu Maharshi's Shaapa to Nandi coincided, the latter took to a human form and did

penance to seek extension of life to please his father Shilada who had attained salvation herebefore. Maha Deva then blessed Nandi:

Ganeswaratwamaasaadya mayaa saha nivatsyasey/ Asmaad Yojana maatrena Purvey bhaagey Gano mama, Twayaa saartham navatsyaami Bhutwaa Bhuteswaro Harah/ Tava Nandina pratishthaanam Vasishtho Bhagavan Rishih, Kartaa Desho shubhey tasmin mama chaapyuta Bhutaley/ Sannidhaanam karishyaamastatra nityam vayam Dwija, Purvotpannah sa Jyeshthesha-statra Lingo mama Dwija/ Tatraapi Sannidhaanam tey Nityam Vijnaatumarhasi, Rishikoti Sahasraani madbhaktyaa vaa Dwijottama/ Tatra samsnaapayanti sma Jyeshthesham tey sadaiva tu, Brahman Divyena toyenashubheynnottara maanasaat/ Teshaam tapah prabaavena Bhaktya cha mama Paarshada, Sodarasya cha Naagastha sthaanamuttara maanasah/Swayam praapto Mahaabhaaa tatra ramsyasi nityashah, Yashmaaddeshaattadhaa yaati Dakshinena Mahaanadi/ Hiranyayani puraaya jalaa naamnaa Kanaka vaahini, Jyeshthesho vasati bhutairvasa praakaamyatey Dwija/

(Maha Deva blessed Nandi to secure a significant status among 'Shiva Ganaas' and stay about a Yojana away to the East of that Place where he himself would be present at Hara Bhuteshwara in the Form of **Jyeshthesha Linga** and Sage Vasishthawould install Nandi as also of himself in his presence. He also assured Nandi that both he and Jyeshthesha would reside at that Place together always in his 'Sannidhi' and thatMaha Deva's devotees of 'Rishi Koti' would perform 'Abhishekas' with the Sacred Waters of the Lake ' **Uttara Maanasa'**. Nandi prostrated before Maha Deva and the latter himself accompanied Nandito reachUttaraMaanasaLake-where Sodara Naga resided- flowing from 'Hiranayani'/ 'Kanakavaahini' atop the peak of 'Haramukuti' mountain).

## The Legend of Kapateshwara in Kashmira

In the distant past, thousands of Rishis used to swarm the banks of Drushdyuti Tirtha near Kurukshetra with a strong belief that penances performed at the Tirtha would bless them with the Darshan (Appearance) of Rudra Deva. There was a dream which one of the highly respected Rishis got revealed that bathing in a Sarovara followed by sincere prayers in the large residing complex of Nagas in Kashmira would help enable Rudra Darshan and also facilitate attainment of Rudrahood; a word went round among those who were present and there was a bee-line of devotees to the specified Lake in the large predomimently Naga Area in Kashmira. But to the surprise of the devotee visitors, there was no water in the Saroyara at all and there were huge logs of wood covering it up. A few distinguished and exceptional devotees who tried to move the heavy logs were able however to discover water underneath and as they sprinkled the drops of water on themselves succeeded to accomplish 'Rudratwa'. But the majority of thr devotees returned back with so success. One ardent Brahmana named Gaura Parashara was highly dejected that there was no water in the Sarovara but persisted to continue in his penance for long time with unswerved faith and devotion. Finally, Maha Deva appeared in the disguise of an elderly Naga and asked the Brahmana as to why he was spoiling his health and torturing his body with continued penance. The Brahmana replied that he would rather die than give up his meditation. After his initial test of the Brahmana's determination, Maha Deva revealed his identity. Guara Parashara was no doubt elated extremely at the Shiva Darshanabut was still disappointed that he could not achieve 'Rudratwa' yet! Maha Deva replied: Drakshyanti ye Janaah sarvey kaashta rupam samaasthitam, Kadaachida Dwija Shaardula Sarva kaalaantu no Dwija/ Ayam cha satatam Nandee kaashtha rupee Gano mama, Darshanam daasyatey Nrinaam tadanugrahakaamyayaa/Tena drushtwaacha yaasyanti swasharirena Rudrataam, Kapatenacha dasyaami naranaam darshanam yadaa/Tadaa sanjgnaamavaapyaami Kapateswara ituta, Thoyasya bahileebhayo Deshosmin Brahmanottama/ Darshanasya madeeyasya purvarupam bhavishyati, Ityetat kathitam thubhyam Kapateshwara sambhavam/ (Brahmana! Those

faithful devotees who desire to vision me could do so even in wood if not always. My 'Gana' Nandi would be always perceivable in wooden forms too. Once a devotee could glimpseNandi, he should be able to secure Rudratva and I am there too in disguise as Kapateshwara; indeed there is plenty of water in Kashmira, even if camouflaged under wood!)

## Vishnu Swarupas in Kashmira

King Gonanda desired to know from Sage Brihadashwa about the dwelling places of Bhagavan Vishnu in the Kashmira Region. Viewing the figure of Chakradhaari Hari Pundarikakshawould bestow 'Dasha Dhenu Phala' or the value of charity of ten cows. A close look at the Pratima of Narasimha would grant the fruit of performing an Ashwamedha Yagna; the visionof Vishnu's manifestations of Vasishtha, Kadru, Devi Vinata and Guatama would secure the 'Punya' of performing 'Agnishtoma'; Nrisimha Deva's another Rupa in the form of Maha Padma Sarovara too would fetch the same blessing as of Agnishtoma. Devam Shakrakrutam drushtwa Varunena tathaa krutam, Brahmanaacha Dhaneyshena Yamena cha Harenacha/ Diwaakarena Somena Vahninaa Pavanena cha, Kashyapenaatha Bhriganaa Pulastyena tathaatrinaa/ (Sighting the Vishnu Pratimas installed by Sakra, Varuna, Brahma, Dhanesha, Yama Deva, Maha Deva, Diwakara, Soma, Agni Deva, Pavana, Kashyapa, Bhrigu, Pulastya and Atri would all yield the benefit of 'Dasha Godaanaas' / ten cows in each case). Also, Vishnu Rupa darshana in various forms installed near MeruMountain such as Bhurjaswami, Mahaswami, Shata- shringa, Gadadhara, Bhriguswami, Janardana, Taittireyeshwara, Dandakaswami, Ramaswami etc. besides Sapta Rishis near Sumuthaand several other Vishnu Idols would fetch 'Godaana Phala'. The Vishnu Image installed by the illustrious Pruthu Chakravarti of Magadha was stated to secure the advantage of performing 'Pundarika Yagna'

## Parashurama, his annihilation of Kshatriyas and his connection with Kashmira

In the context of describing Bhagavan Vishnu's images in Kashmira, King Gonanda wondered as to why the Vishnu's Idol installed by Bhrigu Maharshi in his Ashram on the Mountain named Gridhrakuta was transferred nearby his Ashram by Parashurama for veneration. The reason was not far to seek since Parashurama avenged the murder of his father Maharshi Bhrigu by the noted King Kartaveeryarjuna of Haihaya Clan of Kshatriyas in particularas also of Kshatriyas in general for their oppression of their Subjects and more specifilally of Brahmanas in specific; Bhargava Rama attacked Kshtriyas in as many as twenty battles with their Kings and kinsmen and destroyed them on mass-scale to ensure that there were hardly any traces of the then much hated Kshatriyas left in Bharata Varsha. A few remnants of Kshatriyas fled away to the safe haven of Kashmira on the banks of Rivers Madhumati and Rajanirmala and even from those Places, Parashurama hunted and eradicated them like Rudra Deva himself with his own hands full of their blood. It was in that frame of ferocious and vengeful mind, that he transferred the Idol of Keshava from the hermitage of his father Bhrigu to his own 'Ashram'. Then he undertook a trip to Kurukshetra to convey his revenge against the acts of cruelty that Kshatriyas perpetrated to his father and forefathers. But he had a vision that his forefathers were so merciful that they desired him to desist from further acts of violence and atone his actions of vindictiveness and take up a Tirtha Yatra (pilgrimage) to Holy Kshetras: Tena paapena tey Putra shareeram kalmashamyadaa, Tasmaad vrajaswa Tirthaani Paananaartha mihaat –manah/ Bhavishyaasi yathaavan twam Shuddha dehascha putrakah, Naapaishyati hi tey taavat karebhyoh rudhiram drudham/ Yadaa karau virudharau Putra tawa Bhavishyatah, Tadaa twam nirmaleebhutah tapah kuru yathaa sukham/ (Since your physique has absorbed several sins in the killings, you need to undertake Tirtha Yatraas as your hands are still sullied with blood; there after, you should perform penance with clean heart and soul). Rama then left for several Sacred Places, reached

Gridhrakuta in Kashmira, bathed at the confluence of Rivers Saraswai and Sudha, did 'Tapasya' at Partheswara, moved on to the River Punyoda originating from Brahmasara which was renamed as Ramahrada after him, proceeded further to the Residence of Ananta Deva a Chief of Nagas, installed an Idol of Saranga and rested there at the 'Ashramaswami'after a hectic activity of pilgrimages. He then had a luminous vision of Madhusudana which was as follows: *Tushaarachaya sankaasam Swetaambhara vibhushitam, Mukutenaarka varneyna kundalaschaiva viraajitam/ Chaturbhujam Chaturbaahum Chaturvedaashrayaanvitam, Shariradhaaribhih Shaastreyrudeerita jayaviswanam/ Tam drushtwaa pranato Raajasamtushtaava Madhusudanam/(The vision of Madhusudana resembled a mass of frost, robed in white, embellished with a Sun-coloured 'kireeta' (coronet), ear rings of rare brightness, four faced, four armed and as an embodiment of four Vedas carrying powerful weaponssmeared with the blood of enemies along with joyful shouts of victory). On viewing the Unique Revelation, Parashurama extolled Madhusudana as follows:* 

Namastey Deva Devesha pranataarti vinaashana, Chaturmurti Mahamurti Chaturveda Mahaabhuja/ Govinda Pundarikaaksha Varaahaadya Namostutey, Damshtrogrodbhuta Bhubhaaga Samchurnita shilocchaya/ Twam Sadaiva Varaahosi yenedam dhyaaryatey Jagat, Karajaagravinirbhinna Hiranyakash purasey/ Namastubhyam Nrisimhaaya Jwaalaa maalaa kulatmaney, Trivikramaaya Devaaya Namastey Vijigeeshavey/ Somabhushita vaktraaya Namoswashirasey Prabho, Twam Deva Sarva Devaanaamparaagatih/ Twam Deva Sarvadevaanaam Duhkhitaanaam paraa gatih, Indriaayaaneendrayarthaascha Maha bhutaani yaanicha/ Mano Budhistathaivaatmaa Avyaktam Purushodbhavam, Satvam Rajastamaschaiva Brahma Vishnu Maheswarah/ Twayaa Sarvamidam Vyaaptam Trailokyam sacaraacharam, Twayaa vinaa na Pashyaami kinchideva Jagattraey/ Twattesjasaa Maya Deva nihataah Kshatriyaah Bhuvih, Koti samkhyascha nihataah Saimhikhya Mahabalaah/ Sookshmaatisukshmascha Devesha Mahadbhdyopi mahattarah, Ksheerodakanyaadayita Kamarupa Namostutey/ Kaamakaamada Kaamaaripujitaagha vinaashana, Chaturbhih satatam vaktrey Padmajanmaabhi samstuta/ Kaamoham tey karishyaami Jagatkaarana kaarana, Stuta Trailokya naathesha Sarvathaiva Namostutey/ Namah Paarsveshu tey Deva Namastey Sarvatah Prabho. Parvateshu Samudreshu Lokeshu Gaganey tathaa/ Namastestu Namastestu Sarvatraiva Namostutey, Yevam Stutastu Ramena Ramamaah Janardanah/ Rama Rama Mahabaaho Varam Varaya Suvrata, Veeryena tapasaa Deva Stotrenaanena Suvrata/Paritushtosmi tey Vatsa yathaa naanyasya kasyachit/(Namaste Deva Deva! You are the demolisher of the miseries of those who seek your protection; you are the Four Faced, the Unique Faced, the Embodiment of Four Vedas and the Mighty Armed; you are Govinda, Pundarikaaksha, and Varaha Deva who lifted the entire Bhumi by the sheer grit of your jaws; you are the most fierce Nrisimha Deva who assumed a matchless Man-Lion Form and tore off with your iron nails the most muscular chest of the Hiranyakashipu Daitya who tormented the Three Lokas as the repulsive symbol of cruelty and violence; you are the Vamana Deva who as a Brahmana boy sought an 'insignificant' charity of mere three feet from the famed King Bali and expanded your Physique to occupy the whole Universe comprising the Upper Lokas, Earth and the Underworlds; the Hagreeva Deva with Soma adorned in his mouth who killed Madhu Kaitabha Demons and restored Vedas stolen by them from Brahma; you constitute the corporeal limbs and their end-uses; the Exterior senses; Inner faculties and the heart and soul of the all the Beings in Creation; the Pancha Bhutas of Earth, Water, Radiance, Wind and the Sky; the Satwa-Raja and Tamas Gunas or the basic features of the Beings; the all-pervading, the all knowing, and the all-mighty; and the minuscule-yet the massive; and indeed the most Incomprehensible and the Form less couched in Maya or the huge Illusion. Deva Deva! Your are the Lakshmi Swarupa, Kama Swarupa; the Root, ramification and the exterminator of Kama / Desire; the Basis of the Bases; the Mountains, Oceans, Lokas, and the Sky and the Vara /boon and the Varaya the Boon Provider). It was on these lines that Parasurama extolled and as Janardana was pleased with the gallantry, atonement and the commendation of his Admirer, the latter's request to shift Vishnu's Idol installed by his father Sage Bhrigu at Parasurama's own 'Ashram' from the top of Gridhrakuta Mountain.

#### Tirtha Yatras in Kashmira and their rewards

King Gonanda requested Sage Brihadwasha to narrate an account of Sacred Tirthas in the Kashmira Desha as well as the fruits of visiting them. Brihadashwa commenced the narration by an ascent to Grudhrakuta Mountain after a bath in the converging point of the Rivers Vitasta and Madhumati, which would accord a reward of giving away thousand cows in charity and 'Swarga Prapti' after life. Bathing in the River Kumunari followed by ascent on IndranilaMountain would accrue similar 'Punya'. One would achieve the reward of performing 'Vahnishtoma' by a darshan of Bhagavan Chakresha installed by Sage Sandilya on the banks of River Madhumati after taking a formal bath at the Krishna-Vitista 'Samyoga' (confluence). Further, Shandilya Madhumatyoschya snaato yah Sangamey Narah Sarva paapavinurmuktah Swarhalokam sa gacchati/ ('Snaana' at the confluence of Shandilya and Madhumati would demolish the sins of persons concerned). Darshana of the Deity Rajavaamsa Hari at Rajovinirnmalawould be another firm sure step for sin-demolition. Vision of GouriShankaraMountainPeak and darshan of Durga Devi soon after her so-called first monthly period should bless a person with access to ChandraLoka. Interestingly, even during the Krishna Paksha or the dark period of a month, the Kashmira Region would normally be bright! Separate 'snaanas'in the two Rivers Telala and Bhurjala would fetch those persons the advantage of 'Shata Go-daana' while bathing at the confluence would carry the benefit of performing Vajapeya Yagna. The meeting point of these two rivers with Madhumati Nadi would yield the advantage of Gaja daana and also of appreciation from Rudra loka. Bathing in the River of Uttara Manasa bestows the 'Gosahasra daana phala'. Haramunda Sarovara Snaana provides the benefit of ten cows being given in charity, while climbing the Haraminda hill would equal to 'Rajasuya yagna phala'. 'Ganga-Manasa Sangama Snaana' too would accrue similar result. Bathing in Agastya Tirtha which was built by 'Vaalakhilyas' would secure the 'Teja'or Radiance of Maharshis. Then Kalodakam Nandikundam Shankham Chakram Gadaam tathaa, Padmam Sa Kapila Tirtham Tirthou Vaatikashandikou/Tirthamapsaraam punyam Brahmanah Parameshtinah, Kripaani tirthamaasadya pratekam Goshtam labhet/( Visits to the Tirthas viz. Kalodakam, Nandikutam, Shankham, Chakram Gada, Padmam, Kapila Tirtham as also Vatika and Shandika, the enchanting 'Apsara Tirtha', Brahma Tirtha and Kripani Tirtha would all attract 'Goshata Daana' at each of the above Places.Brahmano Yaga bhumischa tatra puraya Mahipatey, Shakra Tirtham Deva TirthamTirtham Brahmana kundika/ Drushtvaaikaikeyam yaitebhoy Goshatasya phalam labhet, Hamsadwaram cha Sangamya Swargamaapnotyasamshayam/ (At the Brahma Yaga Bhumi, there are Tirthas viz. Shakra Tirtha, Deva Tirtha, Brahmana kundika and by visiting either of these would award the 'Punya' of charity of hundred cows' while Hamsadwara Sangama would grant achieving Swarga loka). On reaching the Starting Point of River Sindhu, one is stated to have executed Rajasuya Yagna, while one would have performed the Poundarika Yagna if the person concerned bathed in 'Bindusarasa'. There are other Rivers of sanctity viz. Chitrapatha, Mriganandana and Mriga and purification in any of these is stated to equal the value of bathing in Rivers like Godavari, Vaitarani, Mandakini, Chandra bhaga and Gomati viz. charity of hundred cows, burning off sins and Swarga prapti. Chitrakuta was the most hallowed Mountain where Devi Uma and Maha Deva were wedded and the popular belief was: Tatraanulepanam Divyam yena liptatanunnnarah, Surupahbhaagi bhavati subhajas -chaiva jaayatey/ (A heavenly ointment was available there and its application was endowed excellent physical charm and beauty). Brihadashwa informed the King further: Pada Gavya sarastatra Panchagavyasarah prudhak, Tatraanye Pancha Bhupaala Punyam Taila Saras-tatha/ Udvurtana Sarah Punyam Punyam chaapyatasisarah, Siddharthaka Sarastatra tathaamalakavaarinah/ Madhuparka Sarah Punyam Punyamrushnodakam tathaa, Ekamekamayai tebhyo drushtwaa Swarlokamaapnuyaat/ (Besides Gavyasara and Panchagavyasara, five consecratedLakes were popular viz. Tailasara, Udurtanasara, Apyatasisara, Siddhadhakasara, Amalakayaarina and Madhuparkasara as also Madhuparkasara and Ushnodaka. Any one of these would assure access to Swargaloka). Proceeding further up the ChitrakutaMountain, one could sight the Saptarishi Tirtha which would bestow fulfillment of all desires. Another significant Tirtha was Vishnupada which was 'Kramasara' too as Vishnu stalked his steps over the worlds by foot and

Brahma himself was stated to have performed Veda Yagnas; this Tirtha ensured that there no remnants of sins left in favour of the pilgrim concerned. Bathing in the River Koundinya which emerged from the mouth of Kramasara Lake was as powerful as executing a Pundarika Yagna while the River Kshira gave the benefit of 'Shata Go Daana', but the 'Snaana'at the meeting point of both these Rivers would gain Sahasra Go Daana'.

'Snaanas' at River Vishoka and its confluence with Koudini would result in Devasathva and Vajapeya Yagnas while those at Vriddha Tirtha-the abode of Vasuki the Chief of Serpents and at Devasara would bestow the fruits of 'Gosava' and 'Devaloka prapti'. Similarly bathings at 'Agni Tirtha' would fetch Agni Loka; Vinataaswami and Kadruswami Lakeswith hundred Go-daanas each; Sandhya Pushkarini (Swarga Prapti); Brahmakunda and Nilakunda (Ananta Punya); Vinashana Tirtha (Vajapeya Yagna); Vitasamajjana (thousand cows); Chaturvedi Tirtha (gift of daughter's wedding); Confluence of Vitasta and Dhyanadharini (Vajapeya); Harshapatha (gold); Deva Tirtha (securing a son); Triloki (famein Trilokas); Kapoteswara (attainment of Rudra Loka); Pundarika Tirtha (Pundarika Yagna); charity at the confluence at Vitasta and Dhyanadharini (unending Punya till next fourteen Indras);Katha Tirtha (ten cows); Auojasa Tirtha (Vajapeya Yagna); Shaila prastha and Vaiswana Tirthas (instant wealth); Kama Tirtha ( immediate realization of desires); Apsara Tirtha (attractiveness and charm); Tirthas of Rishikulyta, Deva Kulya, Ashwa Tirtha, Prabhasa, Varuna, Vahni Tirtha, Chandra Tirtha, Naga Tirtha, Chakra Tirtha and Vamana (godaana Phala); Nanda Tirtha, Skanda Tirtha, and Sureshwara ('Mahima' from Swarga); Pandava Tirtha (successful fulfillment of Pancha Yagna responsibilities of each house holder); Ucchaisha Tirtha (Recognition in Rudraloka); Ramaahlada Tirtha (lot of gold); Sindhu-Kanakavasini Sangama (Rajasuya Yagna); River Pavana and Rajobindu Vinirmala (Pundarikan Yagna); Lake Manasa on Ashadha Purnima (Agnishtoma); Meeting Place of Lake Maha Padma and River Hiranya (Ashvamedha); Bahurupa (appreciation from Vishnu loka); and Tirthas of Shatashringa, Vaishravana, Bhujaswami as also of Vasus, Rudras, Sadhyaas, Maruts, Bhrigus and Angiras (Ten Go-Daanaas).

Highlighting the significance of River Vitasta, Brihadashwa informed about thetrilateral confluence of Palasha-Shilama and Vitasta, bathing at that Place would fetch the fruit of 'Shata Godaana' (hundred cows). Palaashaacha Shilaamaacha Vitastaam yatra gacchati, Gosavasya phalam tatra prateykam kathitam pura/ Nadi Kularaaneecha swamujjatey Vithastathaa tatra Snaathswaa Kulam sheeghram puneetey Maanavottamah/ (Instant body purification would be assured to the entire family and 'Kula' or it's Sect by a thrust into the Sacred waters where the hallowed Vitasta met River Kularani). Taking baths at the Separate Meeting Points of Pushkara-renowned for the frequent visits of Sapta Rishis- and of Vaaraaha Tirthas with the Holy River of Vitasta would earn 'Atiratra and Agnishtoma Phala'in the former case as also 'Vishnuloka prapti' and 'Kuloddharana'in respect of the latter caserespectively. Snaanas at the area where Tirtha 'Narayana Sthaana' and River Vitasta met should also bestow the same results as in the previous case.Referring to the River Mahuri, Sage Brihadashwa said that Maahuri tu Nadi Punya Mathuraiva viseshatah / Maahuri River is as significant as Mathura; its tributaries are all the Sacred Rivers like Shatanila, Shamaala, Vimalodaka, Rahula, Shrimaadhya, the second Mahanadi Shuddhaa, Samula and Surasa; holy dips in the 'Sanagamas' of these Rivers with Mahuriwould fetch 'Dasha Go-Daana Mahima', while bathing in another nearby Tirtha called Anantawould gladden the hearts of Nagas. Similar 'Punya' of Go-danaaswould accrue to those devotees taking plunges in Bindu Nadeshwara Tirtha, Soma Tirtha, Tungesha Tirtha Kshetra, Utankaswami, Rama Tirtha, Bhrigu Tirtha, and AngirasaTirtha.

In conclusion, Sage Brihadashwa gave a vivid description to King Gonanda of the Illustrious Kashmira, its Origin, people of virtue, its significance and innumerable Sanctified Places dotted all over; Oh King! all the Rivers, Lakes and Mountains in Kashmira are indeed most sacrosanct and hallowed; the Sacred 'Pratimas' / Figurative Representations of Deities installed by Maharshis or Respected Personalities of Fame in Kashmira were unique icons highly worthy of veneration; all the Tirthas and Rivers which were recognised by all Nagas as hallowed symbols of Purity and Virtue; 'Punya Snaanaas'in these Tirthas and Rivers are indeed worthy of hundreds of Gold and Ornaments, especially the bathings of the Holiest

Vitasta and its various Tributaries; this Outstanding River of Kashmira would relieve all kinds of sins-except of course the worst 'Mahapatakas'- and added to such abolition of sins would bestow further the boons of performing 'Agnishtomas'! Sacred Baths before sun rise especially on the 'Shukla Trayodashis' in winter with Goroja ointment applied on one's heads would demolish all sins, fulfillment of all desires, Yagna Phalas, and 'Moksha Prapti', possibly through out the year. After bathing with sincerity and devotion, one should offer 'Naivedya' of cooked rice and pulses with ghee to the Holy River and provide the 'Prashaad' to Brahmanas and this act of veneration would indeed result in unimaginalble 'fruits'. Such acts of devotion must be performed at the Holy Places along the River Vitasta at the Spots like the Ashramas of Vitastaakhya, Dhoumesha, Vitasta- Sindhu and several of such confluences.

#### Phala Shruti' of Nilamata Purana

The virtuous Brihadashwa concluded his narration of Nilamata Purana to King Gonanda as follows: *Kashmirakaanaam Tirthaanaam phalam tey Kathitam mayaa, Sakalam Nila Vaakyamcha Gamishyaami Sukhi bhava/ Idam dhaaryam prayatnena yanmayaabhitam tava, Shrutvaitata phalamaapnoti Dasha Godaanaam Narah/* (The unfolding of facts as described above by King Nila concerning Tirthas in Kashmira and the rewards in visiting them should make one delighted; retention of these details in memory with some effort would indeed yield the remuneration of charity of ten cows).

While winding up the recounting of Nilamatha Purana, King Janamejaya specifically asked Maharshi Vaishampayana about the Mahatmya of River Vitasta. The Maharshi replied that Devi Daakshaayani / Sati Devi the better half of Maha Deva was herself a sacred manifestation of Kashmira: Harasya dayitaa Bhaaryaa Sati Daakshaayani shubhaa, Saivomaa kathitaa Rajan praapotey Vaivaswatentarey/ Himadra tanayaa saiva Yamunaa paapanaashani, Manvantaraantey saivokthaa nourgarishtha Jagattraye/ Kashmiraa kathitaa Devi Vitastaa saiva nimnagaa, Pataalaadyutthitaa Devee Shulaghaatita Taranginee/( Devi Katyayani the wife of Hara was Sati Devi at the end of Vaivaswantaraa and was also the River Yamuna which sprang from Patala loka by the hit of Skanda's Sula; that was the River Vitasta identified with Sati Devi herself). River Vitasta was considered as Sacred and Sin-demolishing as River Ganga; in fact Bhagiratatha brought the River from the Heavens to purify the bones of the dead 'Sagara Putras', where as Vitasta did not have any such eventuality but purified the persons of all their blemishes. All those who drank the holy waters of Vitasta were all destined to ascend to Swagraloka where they would be treated to drink Somarasa. While Devas were satisfied with the oblations that were made at the Yagnas on the banks of the holy Vitasta, Pitras were contented with the 'Shraadhas' and 'Tarpanas' and Brahmanas with 'Mrishtaanna bhojana' along with Dakshinas. Nagas, Rivers, Maharshis, Brahmanas, persons of all other 'Varnas', Devas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Apsaras and Rakshasaas and so on approach the Great Vitasta for their own reasons and most sigificantly to wash their body, heart and soul! Further the various prominent Rivers approach The Most Hallowed Vitasta: Sindhurtrikoti cha tathaa Vishoka Punyaa Nadi Harshapathaa Shivaa chaiva, Punyaa Sukhaa Chandravati Sugandhaa Punyodaka kilbisha nashani cha/ Kulaaranih Paapaharaacha Krishna Nadi Supunyaa Madhumatyaathaapi, Nadi Paroshani cha tatthaatra Punyaa Praayanti Diyyaa yaradaam Vitastaam/ Gangaa Nadi Shambhujataakalaapey Chandrena Devena tathaa vibhinna, Proktaa Nrilokey NripaChandrabhaagaa aayaati punyaam vitataam Vitastaam/ (All the great Rivers like Sindhu, Trikoti, Vishoka, Harshapatha, Sukha, Chandravati, Sugandha, Punyodaka, Kulakarni, Krishna, Madhumati, Paroshini, Chandrabhaga, which is the alternate Rupa of Ganga, do all move towards the Unique and Immortal Vitasta River) and so do all Tirthas, Sarovaras, Nadis, 'Tadakas' and Wells; all others concerned mentioned above approach the Celestial River to maximise their 'Punya', especially on Bhadrapada Shukla Trayodashi.

Shrutwaa Vitasta Mahaatmyam muchyatey sarvakilbishaih, Shrutwaa Nilamatam Sarvam Dasha Dhenu phalam labhet/(Paying sincere attention to 'Vitasta Mahamya' would indeed destroy all sins and transgressions. But closely following the proceedings of Nilamata Purana should grant the additional worth of 'Dasha Go-Daana').

## ESSENCE OF PADMA PURANA

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Shri Vishnu Sahasranamaavali

Shri Rama Shata Namaavali

## **ESSENCE OF PADMA PURANA**

Namasye Sarva Lokaanaam Vishwasya Jagathpatim, Yayimankurutey bhaavam Srishti rupam pradhaanavit/ Loka krullokattva jneyoga maasthaya yogavit, Asrujasatsarva bhutaanishtha varaani charaanicha, Tamamjim Vishwa karmaanaam chitpatim Loka saakshinam, Puraanaakhyaana jijnasurvajaami sharanam vibhum/

(My salutations to Sacchinaananda Parameswara who is the Supreme Scripter of Srishti Rupa, the Proactive Visualizer and Designer of the Universe and the Creator of 'Chaarachara' Lokas).

At the behest of Maharshi Veda Vyas, his illustrious disciple Lomaharsha addressed the holy gathering of Rishis headed by Suta Maha Muni at 'Naimisharanya'to portray the Padma Purana comprising Five Khandas (Branches) viz. Srishti Khanda, Bhumi Khanda, Swarga Khanda, Patala Khanda and Uttara Khanda. As Padma (Lotus) got sprouted from Bhagavan Vishnu's navel, Brahma surfaced. Bhagavan Vishnu narrated the Contents of the Purana to Brahma Deva and the latter conveyed the details to Maharshi Marichi; Brahma also passed it on to Sage Pulastya and Bhishma of Pandavas learnt it from Pulastya at Gangadwar (Haridwar) and that was how the posterity came to learn of the Padma Purana down the ages.

## 'Bhagavaaneka Eva Janardana'! - The Unique and the Timeless Unknown

At the foremost, Brahma got materialised from a Golden Egg which was full of water; outside the water was 'Tejas' or Extraordinary Radiance; 'Vayu' the Source of Life, which in turn was enveloped by 'Akash' (the Sky). The resultant interaction was 'Ahamkar' (the Great Ego or the Temperament or the Natural Dispostion or the Image). The 'Maha Tatva' led to the Creation of Three Kinds of mind-based 'Ahamkaras'viz. Vaikarik (Satvik), Taijasika (Rajasika) and Bhutaadi Rupa (Tamasika). The Tri Gunas created Five 'Karmendriyas' and Five 'Jnanendriyas'; Five Elements of Prithvi, Jala, Tejas, Vayu, and Akash are also taken into count by the Maha Tatva. Tanmatras of Shabda, Sparsha, Rupa, Rasa and Gandha are the Jnanedriyas and the corresponding Karmendriyas viz. ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose. Bhagavan Vishnu in the form Brahma assumed 'Rajo Guna' and made the latter take up the task of Creation in theoretical and concrete forms alike ranging from Moving Objects like Devas to Danavas, human beings, animals, birds and reptiles to Immoveables like mountains, oceans, rivers, flora and fauna; the Lord Narayana embodied Satya Guna to preserve what all was created and Rudra symbolized Tamo Guna assumed the spirit of 'Samhara'. At each of the termination points of Kalpas, Maha Vishnu rests on water over a self-generated Sesha Nag's bed and after his 'Yoga Nidra' (Meditative Slumber) reassumes the forms of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara once again. Thus, Bhagavan Janardana carries on with the Eternal Tasks of 'Srishti', 'Paalan' and 'Samhar'. He is the 'Avinashi' (Indestructible) Paramatma: Srishtisthithaynta Kaaranaad Brahma Vishnu Shivaatmakah, sa sanjnaam yaati Bhagavaaneka yeva Janardanah!

Concept of Time and 'Brahma Srishti' (Creation by Brahma)

Pulastya Maha Muni affirmed to Bhishma that Brahma was Narayana Himself and that in reality he was Eternal. But in a formal sense it was stated that Brahma was 'created' and in that normally recognised manner Brahma had hundred years of age; apparently, the concept of Time would have to have a basis and that was why Brahma's age was determined notionally as of hundred Brahma Years; in other words, 'Para' or the first half was over and his present age has entered the 'Paraartha', the second half (viz. Fifty first year). This was how, the concept of Time emerged. Every fifteen 'Nimeshas' constitute one 'Kaashtha'; thirty Kashthas one one 'Kala'; thirty Kalas make one 'Muhurtha'; thirty Muhurtas make one day/night, thirty day/nights make on 'Maasa'; (half Maasa makes one 'Paksha'), six Maasas make one 'Ayana' and two Ayanas-Dakshinayana and Uttarayana- make one 'Year'. Dakshinayana is a night for Devas and Uttarayana their day. One hundred human years make one day-night of Devas. Twelve thousand Deva Years make four Yugas viz, Satya Yuga, Treta Yuja, Dwapara Yuga and Kali Yuga and these four Yugas make one Maha Yuga which is Brahma's one day! Satya Yuga comprises 4800 DevaYears including 'Sandhya mana' of 400 years and 'Sandhyamsha maana of additional 400 years; Treta Yuga comprises 3600 Deva Years including 600 years of 'Sandhya/ Sandhyamsha mana'each; Dwapara Yuga of 2400 years including 200 years of 'Sandhya/ Sandhyamsha mana'each and Kali Yuga of 1000 years including 100 years each of Sandhya / Sandhyamsha manas. Deva Years are 360 times more than human years. For instance, the duration of Kali Yuga in human year terms is 432,000 years; Dwapara's is 864000; Treta Yuga's is12, 96,000 and of Satya Yuga is 17, 28,000 years; all the Yugas totalling 432, 00, 00,000 (432 million) make one Chaturyuga and that constitutes one Brahma Day! In one day of Brahma there are fourteen Manvantaras and each Manvantara has 8, 51,000 of Deva Years. There are two kalpas on one day-night of Brahma. At the end of the previous Kalpa, Brahma felt fresh from the previous night and found that Prithvi was submerged in water while Bhagavan Varaha Deva entered into water and Prithvi prayed to him; in response, Varahadeva emanated a 'Ghur Ghur' sound which was like the reverberation of Sama Veda, lifted up Prithvi from Rasala loka by the might of his horns, Devas rained fragrant flowers from the sky, Rishis went into rapturous tributes to Vishnu's incarnated Varaha Rupa; and Brahma implored the latter to allow him recommence Srishti with his blessings as also to preserve and administer the Creation that he would so generate even as the Lord gracefully replied to say: 'Tathastu!' (So be it!).

Brahma's first Srishti being Maha Tatva, the creation of Tanmatras was known as Bhuta Sarga or the Second Srishti; Vaikarika or Satvika Ahankara was the third Srishti of Indriyas or Aindriya Sarga; the Fourth Srishti is the Mukyha Sarga related to Mountains, Forests and other Sthaavara Srishti; the fifth Srishti relates to Pashu-Pakshi (Animals and Birds); the seventh Srishti was called Deva sarga or Urthva faced and was of Devas; and Seventh Srishti was of Manava Sarga; the Eighth was of Anugraha Sarga which could be of Satvika or Tamasic nature and finally the Ninth Srishti called the Kaumara Sarga which could be of Prakrita or Vaikrita Marg.

Depending on the carry forward of one's own balance of 'Papa-Punya' of the previous time-frame preceding the Pralaya, placement of lives was commenced by Brahma in the New Age. Arising out of his 'Manasika Samkalpa' (Mind born Proposal), Brahma created various species including Devas, Asuras, Pitaras and human beings. From his thighs, the evil Asuras emerged and as per his free will various birds were created. From his stomach surfaced cows, his shoulders the wolves; his face created horses, elephants, asses, nilgais, deer, camels, etc.each species multiplying several others. Brahma's body hairs created fruits, roots and foodgrains. From his right extreme face, Brahma created, Gayatri Chhandah, Rig Veda, Tivritstoma, Rathantara, Agnihoshtha yagna; from South-faced he created Yajur Veda, Tristhub Chandas, Panchadasha stoma, Brihatsaama, etc; Sama Veda, Jagati Chhanda, Saptadashastoma, 'Vairupa' etc; from the Western face; Brahma created Ekavimshatstoma, Atharva Veda, Aptoryama, Anushthup chhanda, and Vairaja from the Uttaravarti Mukha. Miscellaneous 'Pranis' were created from any of the limbs of Brahma. To sum up thus at the beginning of the Kalpa, Prajapati Brahma created Devas, Asuras, Pitaras and human beings as also of Yakshas, Pishachas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Siddhas, Kinnaras, Raakshasaas, Lions, Birds, Animals and Reptiles.

Focussing attention on human beings now, Bhishma asked the highlights of Varnashrama Vidhi and Pulastya Muni explained that Brahma created Brahmanas from the face, Kshatriyas from 'Vakshasthali' (chest), Vaishyas from thighs; and Shudras from the feet. These four Varnas are the important constituents of 'Yagnas'; Devas are satisfied wirh their respective portions of 'Havis' (oblations) to Agni and being pleased with the Yagnas, Devas bestow good rains and good crops which leads to material prosperity. The hearts and hands of every body tend to be clean and social customs and virtuous living would go hand in hand. Prajapati decided the duties of the Four Varnas, depending on the professions that human beings tended to follow like Brahmanas performing Yagnas, Vratas, Temple Tasks, and enabling various religious deeds of Virtue in favour of the members of three other Varnas etc.; Kshatriyas discharging the responsibilities of Kingship, Administration, Security against external enemies, collection of taxes and maintenance of Internal Law and Order; Vaishyas performing business, farming, trading and all matters involving finance, provision of materials to others by allowing reasonable profits for the services given etc. and Shudras supporting the members of the Three Varnas in the discharge of duties being undertaken by them.

Brahma materialised the above various kinds of Creations by applying his mental faculties but was not quite satisfied as the next generations so created were not adequate to fill in the universe; therefore he created Sages like Bhrigu, Pulaha, Kratu, Angira, Marichi, Daksha, Atri and Vasishtha, in addition to the four 'Manasa Putras' viz. Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanat Kumaras. As not all these sons were interested in family lives, Brahma created Rudra from his forehead and decided that half of the body be a woman; thus Eleven Rudras got materialised along with as many Rudranis who had a variety of Rupas ranging from 'Sowmya' (composure), 'Krura' (unkindness), 'Shanta' (peacefulness), 'Shyama' (darkness), 'Gaura' (wheatish) and such other colours. Further on, Brahma created Swayambhu Manu and the latter's wife Shatarupa; the Manu couple gave birth to sons Priyavrata and Uttanapada and daughters Prasuti (married to Daksha) and Akruti (married to Ruchi Prajapati). To Prasuti and Daksha were born twenty four daughters, thirteen of whom were Shraddha, Lakshmi, Dhruti, Pushti, Tushti, Megha, Kriya, Buddhi, Lajja, Vapu, Shanti, Sidhi, and Kirthi (all these thirteen were married to Dharma); eleven more daughters were Khyati, Sati, Sambhuti, Smriti, Preeti, Kshama, Sannati, Anasuya, Urja, Swaha and Swadha; they were wedded respectively to Bhrigu, Shiva, Marichi, Angira, Pusasthya, Kratu, Atri, Vasishtha, Agni and Pitras. The sons of Daksha's daughters were Kamak by Shraddha, Darpa to Lakshmi, Niyam to Dhriti, Santhosh to Tushti, Lobha to Pushti, Shruta to Megha; Danda, Vinay and Naya to Kriya, Bodha to Buddhi, Vinay to Lajja, Vyavasayak to Vapu, Kshema to Shanti, Sukha to Siddhi, and Yash to Kirti.These were all the sons of Dharma. Kaam and Nandi gave birth to Harsha, the grand son of Dharma. Bhrigu and Khyati gave birth to Devi Lakshmi who was Lord Narayana's wife. Bhagavan Rudra accepted Sati as his wife (Daksha's daughter) but Devi Sati sacrificed her life pursuant to Daksha's Yagna to which Rudra was uninvited but Sati insisted in attending it; she felt highly insulted by her father Daksha who also offended Rudra Deva and Rudra eventually destroyed Daksha Yagna.

# Creation of Eight Vasus, Eleven Rudras, Twelve Adityas, Forty nine Marudganas, and Fourteen Manus

The initial lot of 'Prajavarga' was created by 'Sankalpa' (Thought), 'Darshana' (Vision) and 'Sparsha' (Touch).But, the process of creation adopted by the aforesaid methodology was not quick enough as Daksha Pajapati initiated man-woman body contact by which means the process of Srishti became faster and more definitive; by adopting this technique, his wife 'Veerini' gave birth to ten Dharmas, thirteen Kashyapas, twenty seven Chadramas, four Agnishtomikaas, two 'Bhrigu Putras', two Kushashvas and

two Maharshi 'Angeeras'. The broadening the family base took place henceforth. Dharma's wives were Arundhati, Vasu, Jaami, Lamba, Bhanu, Marutvati, Sankalpa, Muhurta, Sandhya, and Vishwa. Devas were born as follows: Vishwa begot Vishwadeva; Sandhya -naamak Devatas were born of Sandhya; Marutvati gave birth to Marut Devas; Vasu begot 'Ashta Vasus'; Bhanu gave birth to Bhanu; Muhurtamani Devas were born to Muhurta Devi; from Lamba was born Ghosh; Jaami gave birth to Nagavidhi Kanya; from Arundhati were born all the 'Praanis' on Earth and Sankalpas were born Sankalpa. These Devas were spread over and illuminated. The Ashta Vasus were Aapa, Dhruva, Soma, Dhara, Anila, Anala, Prathyusha, and Prabhasa. Aapa had four sons viz. Shanta, Vaitanda, Saamba and Muni Babhru and these are 'Yajna Rakshaka Adhikaaris' or the Security Officials of Yajnas. Dhruva's son was called Kaal and Soma's son was Varcha; Dhara's sons were Dravina and Havyavaaha; Anil's putras were Praana, Ramana and Sharira. Anal had several sons and were like Agni; they were born of 'Sarkhandhis' (sea shore grass); significant ones of these were Shaakha, Upashaakha and Naigameya. As 'Krittikas' as well as Agni were responsible in the birth of Skanda Deva, he is also known as Kartikeya. Prathysha's son was Devala Muni and Vishwakarma Prajapati was the son of Prabhasa and the Architect and Builder of Devas. Ekadasha Rudras viz. Ajaikapaada, Ahirbhudhnya, Virupaaksdha, Raivata, Hara, Bahurupa, Thraimbaka, Saavitra, Jayanta, Pinaki, and Aparajita are the Chiefs of Rudra ganas numbering eighty four crore Ganas, each wearing Trishuls. Kashyapa's progeny from his wives Aditi, Diti, Danu, Arishta, Surasa, Surabhi, Vinata, Taamna, Krodhavasha, Ira, Kadru, Khasa and Muni was in multitudes. During the present Vaivaswata Manvantara, there are Twelve Adityas Adityas viz. Indra, Dhata, Bhaga, Twashta, Mitra, Varuna, Aryama, Viviswan, Savita, Pusha, Amshuman and Vishnu. These Aditya's were born to Kashyap and Aditi.

Pulastya Maharshi then continued to describe to Bhishma the origin of Danavas born of Kashyapa and Diti viz. Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyaksha. Hiranyakashipu had four sons-Ayushmaan, Shibi, Vaashkali and Virochan. The last mentioned had an illustrious son called Bali who had in turn hundred sons of whom Banasura was a mighty warrior with expertise in 'Astras' or the Science of Archery. Maha Shiva was so satisfied with Banasura's Tapasya the he agreed to reside in the Asura's Nagari. Shiva bestowed the title of Mahakaal to Banasura who was Shiva's companion. Hiranyaksha had four sons, viz. Uluk, Shakuni, Bhutasantaapan and Maha Bheem, who among them produced twenty seven crore Danavas in their generations. Danu had from Kashyap hundred sons who were virtuous and mighty, important among them being Viprachit, Swarbhanu, Maya, Vrishaparva, and Vaishwanara; Mandodari was born to Maya; Vaiswanara's daughter named Puloma gave birth to Paoloma and Kalakeya who created havoc among in the world on securing Brahma's boons of invincibility and was finally killed by Arjuna of Maha Bharatha. Viprachit married Simhika and their son Rahu is the famous Planet who was stated to have tasted 'Amrit' and became deathless like Devas. Tamra was among the wives of Sage Kashyap who had six daughters who all gave birth to various birds viz. Shuki who created Shuka or parrots and Ullu or owls; Shaini created the birds of the same name; Bhasi created 'Krr' named bird; Grudhri created Grudhra or Kite; Sumrughni created Kabutar or Doves; Shuchi created Hamsa, Saras, Karanda and Plava birds. Devi Vinati who was the religiously inclined wife of Kashyap created two celebrated sons viz. Garuda the 'Pakshi Raja'who was the Carrier of Maha Vishnu and Aruna the Carrier of Surya Deva. Vinati also gave birth to Saudamini who appears on the Sky occasionally as a fleeting lightning. Aruna had two sons viz. Sampaati and Jataayu. Surasa, another daughter of Kashyap and Diti, gave birth to thousands of serpents; but Kadru observed a noble Vrata and begot thousand-hooded Nagas of whom twenty six famous ones were Sesha, Vasuki, Karkotaka, Shankha, Itavata, Kambal, Dhananjaya, Mahanila, Padma, Ashwatara, Takshak, Ilapatra, Maha Padma, Dhritarashtra, Balahaka, Shankhapala, Nahusha, Ramana, Panini, Kapila, Durmukha and Patanjalimukha. Not many of the Nagas survived since Janamejaya the last reputed Pandava avenged Parikshit-his father's- untimely death in the Sarpa Yagna and thousands of poisonous snakes perished in the fire-pit. Surabhi with the Amsa of Kashyap created Aprasas, the beautiful celestial damsels. Arishta gave birth to Kinnaras and Gandharvas. Ira Devi created trees, creepers, grass and the like, while Khasa gave birth to crores of Rakshasas and Yakshas.

Sage Pulastya continued to delineate the process of further Creation to Bhishma. As innumerable Daityas were killed in the series of Deva-Danava battles, especially at the time of 'Samudra-Manthan' (Churning of the Ocean) and 'Amrita Prapti' (Emergence of Amrita), Devi Diti was mentally shattered and performed severe Tapasya on the banks of River Sarasvati to Surya Deva with the singular objective of killing Indra and Devas. Kashyap assured that her objective should be fulfilled and that she should observe regulations such as reside in a Tapovana, take ample care of her 'Garbha', observe single meal a day, never go near a tree, never enter water nor a house/ shadow, keep calm, never hear bad news nor quarrel, never be overjoyed, keep engaged in propitious acts, and so on. As her confinement stage was nearing, Indra entered Diti's garbha when she was asleep and cut the embrio of the boy about to be born into seven pieces, with each piece being cut into seven further pieces thus making a lot of forty nine pieces. As these pieces started crying, Indra tried to console the, saying :'ma rudah' (do not cry); Indra realised that Devi Diti was blessed due to the power of a Vrata that she was asked by Kashyap to perform; he apologised for his heinous act of entering her womb and cutting fortynine pieces of the baby, named the forty nine boys as Marudganas, elevated their status of Devas and made them eligible for sharing the 'Havis' or the 'Yagna Phal' and with veneration gave all the facilities due to Devas; and flew them across to Swargaloka along with Diti Devi, the Daitya Mata. Having described the Adi Sarga (Creation) and Pratisarga (Reabsorption), Sage Pulastya provided an overview of Manvavantaras to King Bhishma. Swayambhu, Swarochisha, Uouttama, Tamasa, Raivata and Chakshusa were the earlier six Manus and the on-going Seventh Manyantara is of Vaivaswata. During this period the Sapta Rishis are Atri, Vasishtha, Kashyapa, Gautama, Bharadwaja, Vishwamitra and Jamadagni. The future Manus are scheduled to be Sanavarnya, Rouchya, Bhoutya, Meru Savarnya, Ribhu, Veetadhama and Vishvaksena, thus totalling fourteen Manus.

#### 'Pitras' and Shraddha Vidhana' in brief

In Swarga loka, there are seven kinds of 'Pitaras', three 'Murti Rahit'or without Form and four 'Murti maan' (with Form)-all of them being 'Tejaswis' or highly illuminated. The Formless Pitruganas are the progeny of Vairaja Prajapati called as Vairaja Pitruganas and Devaganas perform Yagnas to them. There are some lokas famed as Somalokas, where Sage Kashyap's putra Pitruganas reside. Devatas always demonstrate devotion to them. Agnishpatha Pituganas reside there only. There is another 'Vibhraaj' named loka in Swarga, where Bahirshad sanjyak Pitruganas reside. In these Lokas, there are thousands of Peacock Formed Aeroplanes and 'Sankalpamaya' (thought-based) Tree yielding fruits as per wishes and Pitaras in these Lokas, who too perform Shraadhas to their ancestors, are knowledgable about Spiritual Matters and enjoy full contentment of existence. In another Loka called Martanda those Pitragans of Marichi Garbha stay. Angira Muni Putras reside in Havishman loka; those who perform Shraddhas in Tirthas are entitled in Pitru loka. Some Pitaras could stay in Kamadugdha loka as per their wishes. Similarly, Pitras who were the desendents of Sages Kardama, Pulaha, Kulaha, Bhrigu; Bharadwaja etc. are also comfortably accommodated in other Pitralokas. Beyond Brahma loka is the Sumanasa loka where Pitras called Somapas reside who also partake in the task of Srishti and often visit Manasarovar. Those Vidyavans who tend to satisfy Pitras with Shraddha Daan by pronouncing the word 'Swadha' and perform 'havans' are expected to be highly fortunate! Procedurally, those who perform rites facing the Dakshina direction, with Yagnopaveeta in 'Apasavya' or wearing it on right shoulder, using Tarpana's with Black Til and water and recite the Swadha Mantra by giving away ghee in the Fire-pit are stated to be the 'dhanyas' or the blessed ones. The material liked in the fire oblations are Kusha grass, 'udat dal' (black gram), 'saathi dhan' rice, cow milk, honey, 'sawa', 'jow', Moong (Green gram), Sugarcane and white flowers are the most liked material for Pitras. On the other hand the following materials be avoided viz. Masoor dal, matar, Rajamash, kulthi, kamal, bilwa, Madara, Dhatura, Paaribhatraat, Rushak, Goat milk, Mahuva etc. By pleasing the Pitras, the devotees concerned secure physical strength, good health,

good progeny and Swarga Prapti. 'Havishyamaana Sanjnak' Surya Deva who is the Chief of the Shraddhhas is stated to bestow immediate fruits for the 'homa karyas' so performed.

In fact, daily shraaddhas with 'Anna' (cooked rice), water or milk and fruits/ mulas (sprouts) are highly recommended. There are three kinds of Shraddhas viz. Nitya (regular), Naimittika (Occasional) and Kaamya (aiming at a purpose). Nitya Shradda need not be elaborate with formal 'Arghya Pradana' and 'Avahana' viz Offering formal Achamana and Welcome with the contents of Mantras. This may be construed as 'Adaiva' or targetted to a specific deity. But on 'Parva dinas' or special days, Parvana Shraddha is to be performed but those who undertake this Shraddha need to possess the requisite qualifications such as Vedajna, Mantra-Japa performer, Purana Vidwan, Pitru bhakta, etc. In fact, one should take pains to engage in such shraddhas. On the other hand, certain persons should be avioded such as Patitas (immoral), Napumsak (Impotent), diseased and manipulative. The invited Brahmanas for the Shraddhas are stated to assume the Sacred Form of Vayu Deva and usher the Pitras as the Brahmanas so seated. The 'Pindadaan Vedika' or the Platform to arrange the 'Pindas' of the three generation Pitras be kept ready before hand. The various material required for the Ceremony such as Jalapatra, Kamsya patra, Prokshana, Samidha, Kusha, Tilapatra, Clean Vastra, Gandha, Dhupa, chandana etc. be arranged towards the Southern side at a place purified with cow dung and urine, while Yagnopaveet should be on the right shoulder. In fact, the golden rule is that all actions related to and meant for the Three Generation Pitras of the deceased father/grand father/great grand father or deceased mother/ paternal grand mother/ paternal great grand mother, should be performed with Yagnopaveet on the right shoulder; actions related to Pitras or Rishis should accompany the Yagnopaveet around the neck as a Mala (garland); and all the actions related to the invocation of Devas and 'Punya Karyas' should accompany the Yagnopaveet in the normal wearing condition viz.on the left shoulder. At the outset, the 'Kartha' or the Performer(s) of Shraddha are required to settle down on a 'darbhayukta Asana' Seat with darbha underneath and formally perform 'Achamana' with 'mantrochharana' or recitation of mantra. Normally, two Brahmanas are appointed one to represent Vaishwadeva and another for Pitras, in addition to the Chief Conductor. The Vaishva deva is formally set in the Fire-Pit and Agni, Soma and other deities are satisfied with ghee, Anna or cooked rice etc. The Anna Sesha (remainder) after the 'homa' may be converted as small 'Pindas' and given away to Brahmanas one by one along with til and water. The main Pindas are then placed on the Pinda Vedika in a row, representing the Three Generations of the Departed Souls, dressed with Kushas, tilas and water, worshipped with chandana, Dhupa and Naivedya, lift them up as gestures of daan on the ground from the Vedika along with mantras. The Pindaas are then consumed by cows, or goats, or Agni or are left in running waters; some times the wife of the householder or the Karta desirous of securing progeny might consume the middle pinda representing the grandfather along with appropriate mantra 'Aadhhatta Pitaro Garbham' etc. Then the Brahmanas are satisfied with wholesome meals, dakshina and Vastram; Pitru tarpanas are formally performed by the Karta and thereafter the Karta and the family take the 'Pitru sesha'. The normal expectation is that neither the Brahmanas engaged, nor the Karta have another meal on the same day; resist from sleeping after the Ceremony during the day and observe abstinence, silence, etc.

## Highlights of Surya Vamsha and Chandra Vamsha

Sage Kashyap and Devi Aditi gave birth to Vaivaswan and the latter had three wives viz. Sanjna, Raajni and Prabha. Raajni was blessed with Raivat and Prabha with Prabhat. Sanjna the daughter of Vishwakarma begot Vaivaswat Manu as also Yama and Yamuna. Since Sanjna could not bear the heat and illumination of Surya deva (Vaivaswan), she created from her body another woman exactly like her named Devi Chhaya and demanded her to serve her husband and also bring up her children as her own. Chhaya gave birth to Saavarna Manu and in course of time to Shaneswara, besides two daughters Tapati and Vishti. The famed Yama went on tapasya on the banks of the holy Pushkarini and being pleased with

the devotion, Lord Brahma conferred the status of Lokapalaka as also the boons of becoming the Ruler of Pitruloka and the Authority of Deciding Dharma and Adharma in the World. Chhaya Putra Shaneswara also performed Tapasya and got the boon of becoming a Planet. Yamuna and Tapati were converted as Holy Rivers. Vishti had a frightening Form and was in the position of Kala Swarupa. Vaiwasvata Manu had ten sons, viz. Ila, Ikshvaaku, Kushanaabha, Arishta, Dhrushta, Narishyant, Karusha, Mahabali Sharyati, Prushaghna and Naabhaga. By dint of relentless Tapasya, Vaivaswata secured the boon from Brahma of becoming the Supreme Administrator of Prithvi of high virtue and Fortune and thus he became the First Manu Ever! Ila also became ambitious and wandered several places and by mistake entered the 'Sharavana' Garden, little knowing that who ever entered the Sharavana would instantly turn into a woman as per the instructions of Parameswara where Shiva Deva was alone with Devi Parvati. Even outside the Sharavana, Ila as a woman was attracted to Budha, the son of Chandra (Moon). Ila's brother Ikshvaku was worried about the disappearance of Ila and having realised the fact that any male entering the Sharavana would be converted as a female and that Ila also would have been converted like wise. Ihshvaku prayed to Shiva and as directed Ihshvaku announced Ashvamedha Yagna so that Ila as a female could be identified since the brave Ila would be definitely attracted to the Ashvamedha Yagna and the challenge of holding the horse. Indeed the Plan of Ikshvaku worked well and Ila was identified as the 'wife' of Budha, the son of Chandra. The female Ila became a Kimpurush for six months and as a woman for six months as per the boon of Shiva. As a Kimpurush, Ila also known as Sudyumna gave birth to three sons Utkal, Gaya and Haritashwa and they became the Kings of Utkal (Orissa), Gaya, and Haritashwa or Kuru.

Ikshvaku became the King of Madhyadesha who begot hundred sons half of whom ruled the northern side of Meru and the others the Southern side. Kakustha was the eldest son of Ikshvaku and in that lineage was born Yuvanashwa and his great grandson was the famed Kuvalashva who killed the notorious demon Dundhumara. It was in this lineage that the illustrious Mandhata who was the Chakravarti of the Universe.In his lineage were the famous Purukutsa, Muchukunda, Harischandra, Dilip, Bhagiratha who brought the Sacred Ganga to Earth, Nabhaga, Ambarisha, Raghu, Dasaratha and the Incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Epic Hero Shri Rama who killed Ravanasura and his able brothers Bharata, Lakshmana and Shatrughna; the Surya Vamsha of the clan of Ikshvaku was further extended by Kusha and Lava.

Once Brahma instructed Maharshi Atri to contibute in the task of Creation; to invoke extraordinary Shakti for the purpose of Creation, Atri performed 'Anutar' Tapasya which would have been performed by anyone in the past. From the Maharshi's eyes trickled drops of tears that illuminated the whole World. Those tears got collected in his stomach and were materialised in his Garbha; the Maharshi discarded the Garbha and Brahma gave a unique form of a Youthful Male; He named the Youth as Chandra Deva. Rishis, Devatas, Gandharvas and Apsaras eulogised Chandra as Brahma declared him as the Master of Aoushadhis (Medicines) and the Leader of Brahmanas. In course of time, Daksha Prajapati dedicated twenty seven daughters of his as Chandra's wives. Chandra worshipped for long in favour of Shri Narayana and requested him to enable to perform Rajasuya Yagna in Indraloka, that all the Deities should appear in person and accept the 'Yagnabhagas' and that Maha Shiva should please ensure the success of the Function. Shri Narayana accepted the proposal and attended it in person. Bhagavan Srihari himself became the Brayhma of the Yagna, Atri attended as the 'Hota', Sage Bhrigu was the 'Adhvaryu' and Brahma the 'Udgaata'. The Yagna was memorably successful and Chandra turned out to be very prosperous and the Chief of Sapta Lokas. Chandra gave birth to Budha and Brahma bestowed a planetary position among the Nava Grahas like Chandra himself. Budha and Ila produced Dharmatma Pururava who performed over hundred Ashwamedha Yagnas and was blessed as Lokeswara and the Conqueror of Sapta Dwipas; he defeated several demons like Keshi and became the Emperor of the Universe. Apsara Urvashi got attracted to him and begot eight sons, viz. Ayu, Dhrudhayu, Vashyayu, Vritthimaan, Vasu, Divijat and Subahu. Ayu's sons were Nahush, Vriddha Sharma, Raji, Dambha and Vipaapma. Nahush had seven sons viz. Yayi, Yayati, Samyati, Udbhava, Para, Viyati and Vidyasaati. Yati took to vanaprastha

even early in life. Yayati had two wives viz. Sharmishtha the daughter of Danavaraj Vrishaparva and Devayani the daughter of Shukracharya. Devayani begot Yadu and Turvasu, while Sharmishtha had Druyhu, Anu and Puru. The bright stars of Yadu Vamsa were Bhagavan Shri Krishna and Balaram who had considerably reduced the heavy weights of evil on Earth and assisted by Pandavas destroyed Kaurava Vamsa whose misfortunes were tied up the the Four Villians of Maha Bharata viz. the notorius Duryodhana, Dussashana, Karna and Shakuni. It was among the descendants of Yayati that the famed Kaartaveeryarjuna the thousand handed, noble and valiant Chakravarti who ruled Sapta Dwipas for eighty five thousand years; the great desciple of Mahatma Dattatreya and an epitome of Dharma; the memorable figure who humbled the Epic Villian Ravanasura, but finally destroyed by the Vishnu Avatar Parasurama.

In their previous births, Devaki and Vasudeva did relentless Tapasya to beget Lord Vishnu; Devaki was Aditi and Vasudeva was Sage Kashyap. Similarly, Nandagopal was Vasu Drona and Yashoda was Dhara and their Tapasya too bore fruit as they were eye witnesses of Kishana's childhood escapades. Of the sixteen thousand and eight wives of Krishna, the foremost Rukmini gave birth to Pradyumna, Charudeshna, Sucharu, Charubhadra, Charuka and Charuhasa. Satyabhama's sons were Bhanu, Bheemaratha, Kshana, Rohita etc. Jambavati putra was Samba; Mitravandi had three sons; likewise Krishna had thousands of sons! Whoever reads or hears the Legend of Krishna Deva, especially his birth, Leelas and Promotion of Dharma would certainly get rid of sins of the present and the past. Krishnasya Janmaabhyudayam yah keertiyati nityashaha, Krishnotiva naro nithyam Sarva paapaaih pramuchyatey/

## Significance of Pushkara Tirtha and 'Muni Ashramas' in the vicinity

Materialised from Bhagavan Vishnu's navel, a Lotus stem sprouted and on top of the lotus was seated Brahma; Pushkar Tirth is stated to be the personification of the Lotus top. Brahma decided to perform an unprecedented Maha Yagna on the banks of Pushkara Tirtha, which was situated not far from Chandra River and Saraswati River. The inhabitants of the Pushkar from times immemorial were Brahma Bhaktas in various disciplines of Bhakti like Manasa, Vaachika and Kayaka formats as also of Loukika, Vaidika and Adhyatmika methods. Manasa Bhakti seeking to hold Buddhi by way of 'Dhyana' (meditation) and 'Dharana' (sustenance) was very dear to Brahma Deva. Mantra Japa and Veda Paatha known as Vaachika Bhakti were equally dear to Brahma Deva. Kayaka Bhakti encompasses performance of Vratas underlining mental restraints and physical Controls, Upavasas (fastings), 'Niyamas' or the Strict Regime of Regulations, Sacrifices, etc. Brahma Deva liked this kind of Bhakti also as it involved difficult means of penance. Brahma liked Ritualistic Bhakti in a typically Loukika manner by worshipping him with milk, Deepa and Dhupa, Kusha, water, chandana, ornaments, precious metals and stones, nrithya, Vaadhya, Sangeeta, Naivedya of Bhakshya, Bhojya and such other food specialities. Brahma is also pleased with Vaidika Bhakti by way of Veda 'Pathana' (recitation), Manana (Cogitation) and Shravana (Listening) and Agni-Sambandhi Karyas. Adyatmika Bhakti of Saankhyaja or Yogika methods viz. Saankya Shastra based on Tatva Gyana ;or Yoga Practice of Yama, Niyama, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana and Samadhi are yet other methods of seeking Brahma. Thus Bhaktas observing one form of Bhakti or another with the underlining touchstones of sincerity and total dedication are all dear to Brahma, be it a man, woman, or of any Varnas or species!

When Brahma commenced the Maha Yagna, all the Saptarishis bent down their heads to Brahma's feet; twelve Adityas, Eleven Rudras, two Ashvani Kumars, Eight Vasus, Forty Seven Marudganas were all present in reverence. Maha Nagas like Vasuki, Tarkshya, Arishtanemi, Garuda, Aruna and Vinati Kumars were there too.Daitya, Danava and Rakshasas were in full atteandance. Maha Narayana Himself was present and requested Brahma to initiate the proceedings.Maha Deva too arrived at the right time.

Danavas assured the Tri Murthis that during the Yagna, there would not be any bickerings with Devas! Brahma was particularly happy to hear the declaration. Meanwhile, whoever witnessed one's own reflection in the sacred waters of Pushkarini looked quite handsome and the Sages stated that Pushkarini Tirtha was 'Mukha Darshan Tirtha'. After taking bath in the Tirtha, the 'Tapasvis' performed Agni Karyas and proclaimed that the Sarovar was the 'Sreshtha Pushkar'. As Brahmanas received a number of gifts at the Yagna, quite a few of them desired to take bath in Saraswati River; many of them stayed on the banks of the River where Swadhyaya Mantras resounded. In the Pushkara Tirtha, the River Sarasvati surged in Five 'Dharas' (Streams) viz. Subrabha, Kanchana, Praachi, Nanda and Vishaal. In the Yagna of Brahma, Brahmanas fulfilled every wish of theirs including those which were subdued in the corners of their hearts and minds. As Sarasvati arrived at the Yagna Region, the happiness of Brahmanas and others was maximum; when Devas were present, Gandahravas sang and Apsaras danced, then the atmosphere was sublime! A srong belief till date is that whoever dies at the banks of the River in the Pushkar Tirtha would have no birth again. Whoever performed Suvarna Daana with Sesame seeds and water was as good as Meru Parvata Daana itself! Again Shraddhas performed at the Pushkar Tirtha tantamount to attainment of salvation by twenty one previous generations. This Tirtha is in fact the most beloved one to Pitras as Pindapradaan would yield complete Satisfaction to them. It is further believed that bathing in the evening/nights in the Pushkar and giving away 'daan', bestowed lasting happiness and contentment. After the Yagna by Brahma, River Saraswati disappeared in its full form and travelled west ward into the Sea, but reappeared as River Nanda.

While describing the 'Mahatmya' of Pushkar Kshetra, Sage Pulastya explained that there were three parts viz. Jyeshtha Pushkar, Madhyama Pushkar and Kanishtha Pushkar. Pushkar Tirtha was full of countless Rishis spread over a large area of two and half Yojanas of length and half Yojana of width. Even a single entry into the Tirtha bestows the result of performing Rajasuya and Ashwamedha Yagnas. On Chaitra Shukla Chaturdasi, it is believed that Brahma, Devas, Maharshis and Siddhas as well as Pitras descend from their respective Regions. Worship of Devasvas and Pitras by way of Tarpanas and Pujas on this day, especially at Jyeshtha Pushkara would prove highly fruitful. In fact, during the Pratahkal, Madhyahna and Sayamkaal on any day, the belief is that ten thousand crores of Devas especially, Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, Saandhyas, Marudganas, Gandharvas, and Apasaras turn out here. Even a sincere and purified thought in mind to travel to Pushkar could vanish. sins, and staying there for as many days as possible would yield proportionate fruits. Organising bhojans at Pushkar as charity would result in immense and far reaching returns. Bathing at Brahma Pushkar Sarovar Tirtha and worship at Adi Varaha Temple as well as at the unique Brahma Temple are to provide enormous advantages, especially on Kartika Purnima days.

## Agastya Muni dries up the Ocean and enables to destroy the demon Kalakeya

In the vicinity of Pushkar Tirtha were 'Ashramas' of illustrious Mararshis like Agastya. A highly vily and valiant Danava named Kalakeya was in battle with Devas for many years and he kept another mighty Danava called Vritrasura as a shield in between him and Devas. With folded hands, Devas approached Brahma to get rid of Vritrasura as well as Kalakeya. Brahma suggested that Vritrasura was invincible due to unprecedented boons given by Parameswara and the only way out was to approach Sage Dadheechi and beg him for his back-bone which could materialize a mighty 'Vajrayudha' which alone could destroy Vritrasura. Devas prayed to Sage Dadheechi and keeping in view the holy task of killing Vritrasura, the Sage agreed to sacrifice his backbone and hence his life.

Devas approached Vishvakarma to create Vajrayudha. A fierce battle between Vritrasura backed by Kalakeya on the one hand and Indra armed with Vajrayudha as well as the full force of Devas followed. Vritrasura made such frightening screams that went shivers to Earth, the 'Dishas' (Directions), the

Antariksha (Sky) and the Planets, Indra utilised the newly made Vajrayudha and felled down the huge body of Vritrasura to the ground. The demoralised 'Asuras' ran helter-skelter with a phenomenon called Vristrasura and finally took shelter in the deep Ocean. Kalakeya too hid in the Ocean and over a period of time, reformulated the Danavas who resorted to nightwarfare and nocturnal killings of lakhs of human beings in sleep and once again threatened the balance of power between the Davanvas and Devas. Indra and Devas approached Lord Vishnu and implored him to save them, the humanity as also the four kinds of 'Srishti'viz. 'Andajas' or those born of Eggs, 'Svedajas' or those born of body sweat, 'Jarayuja' or those born of womb, and 'Udbhuja' or born of germination. Lord Vishnu told the Devas that the most dangerous Asura Kalakeyi along with his huge numbers of Danavas who concealed themselves in the deep waters of the Ocean were gradually killing all kinds of species mentioned above in the nights and the only way of exposing the Danavas in very large numbers would be to completely dry up the Oceans by taking out the water; Vishnu further declared that the only Sage who was powerful enough to dry up the Oceans was Mahatma Agastya, the son of Mitravaruna. Devas then approached Agastya Muni and prayed to him that in the past too, the Muni was kind enough to have averted crises for saving the very existence of the Universe in highly critical situations like when Nahusha occupied the chair of Indra on highly temporary basis and created embarrassment and havoc in the worlds and punished him subsequently; and when Vindhyachala grew up in height compared with Meru Mountain obstructing the passage of Surya and subdued Vindhya by asking him to bend in reverence and not allowing to stand up till date. Devas made to instant request to Agastya Muni to drink up the water of the Ocean exposing Kalakeya and followers so that they were trapped and destroyed at once by Devas. The dried up Ocean was refilled by another despatch of Ganga by a repeat performance by Bhagiratha.

## 'Saptarshis' censure Self-indulgence and accept 'Daanaas' for essentials only

Pulastya described to Bhishma about the pulls and pressures that normally overtake human actions and reactions and clarified that even Rishis, let alone virtuous Brahmanas some times become victims of greed and Self-indulgence and this repulsive tendency needed to be condemned at all costs. In the past, several distinguished Rishis including Atri, Vasishtha, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Angira, Goutama, Sumati, Sumukha, Viswamitra, Sthulashira, Samvarta, Pratirdana, Raibhya, Brihaspati, Cyavana, Kashyapa, Bhrigu, Duryasa, Jamadagni, Markandeya, Gaalaya, Ushaana, Bharadwaja, Yayakrita, Kanya, Sthulaaksha, Makaraaksha, Medhatithi, Narada, Parvata, Swaandhi, Trunaambu, Shabala, Dhoumya, Shatananda, Akrutavrana, Parashurama, Ashtaka and Krishna -dwaipayana arrived at Pushkara Tirtha along with families including sons and disciples and with decisive self-control and regulations practised Tapasya. Saptarshis among these Rishis were also visiting the Holy Tirtha very often and practised Vedic ways of life as though to subtly guide and encourage other Rishis. Once a terrible famine broke up and the world as a whole and the various Kings were concerned that the Rishis were affected badly and as such started pampering the Rishis overtly with Dhana, Dhanya, Ghrita-Dugdha, and various edibles, cows, gold, Ratnas etc. With this generosity, the Rishis were annoyed since frugal existence was the hall-mark of Brahmanas, Sanyasis, and Rishis. They reacted sharply and asserted that ten Kasayis or meat-cutters were better than one Chakri / Kumhara or oil dealer; ten chakris were better than a wine-dealer; ten wine dealers were better than a Veshya or a Prostitute; and ten Prostitutes were better than a King! Thus when Brahmanas accepting the charity of a King out of greed would surely suffer Tamishra-like hells! Sage Atri affirmed that material well-being in this World would provide semblance of temporary happiness but those who desired permanent bliss after life should never mistake the shadows to reality. Sage Vasishtha stated in no uncertain terms that storing Tapasya would anytime be better than 'Dhana Sanjnaya' or storing money, for no human being could ever assert happiness from possessions since the relative term of 'Sangraha' was as limitless as a deep pit! Sage Kashyap opined that 'Dhana Sampatti' or possession of Wealth would lead to 'Moha' or infatuation which was a distinct route to 'Naraka' and that the two words of possession and abstinence are two poles of great distance where there could be no middle paths, since

that kind of equilibrium would be always a myth. Equally false was a feeling that 'Dhana' helped furtherance of 'Dharma'. Bharadwaj Muni stated that even when a human being lost teeth and hairs were fallen, the desire of possession would last till death and that unless the creeper of 'Trishna' (greed) was uprooted periodically, it germinated again and again. Similar views were also expressed by other Saptarshis who visited Pushkara Tirtha.

But the fact was that the famine which broke at the Pushkara Tirtha was a reality and sufferings that entailed the famine were practical. Hunger was such a leveller that its impact was far-reaching affecting the parents, wife, children and relatives; there could be consideration for the Guests, Gurus, Pitras and not even to Devatas! Thus there could never be a substitute for 'Anna' or Food. Universal existence depended on Anna, be it for Pitras, Devatas, Daithyas, Yakshas, Rakshasas, Kinnaras, human beings or Piscachas. Anna was the root cause for Tapa, Satya, Japa, Homa, Dhyana, Yoga, and Salvation. Anna was the life, physical power, and mental acumen. Thus 'Anna Daan' would indeed be the greatest task of nobility. Indeed this kind of life giving Daan has utmost importance but has to be tempered with 'Indriya Samyama' (Physical Control) and 'Manonigraha' (Mental Restraint); if acceptance of Daana without 'Dama' (Self-control) and 'Niyama' (Regulation). Thus Daana was an integral component of Dama and Yama and thus only such kind of Daana of essentials like 'Anna' or bare minimum needs which are worthy of acceptance without transgressing the limits of 'Dama' and 'Niyama' but certainly not the material possessions that the Saptarshis detested and disapproved otherwise without passing the tests of morality bordering on self-indulgence or intemperance! In fact acceptance of Daana with strings attached, for the sheer 'show' or publicity to the donor and the receiver, for the purpose of possession, and without regard to Restraints and Regulative Mechanisms should be considered as a sin that would need to be detested and avoided at any cost!

## Markandeya attains 'Deerghaayu' and enables Shri Rama's vision of 'Aviyoga'

Maharshi Bhrigu's grandson and the son of Mrikund, Markandeya came of five years of age, when a Siddha came to his house and releaved that he was destined to live only for another six months and a few more days. Sage Mrikund was alarmed at this revelation and so did the boy's mother and grandfather Brighu. Sage Mrikund hastened to perform the boy's 'Upanayan Samskar'and asked the boy to greet each and every Sage that passed by thereafter. Gradually, the six months were over and Markandeya saw Sapta Rishis roaming nearby and even unknowingly greeted and fell on the feet of the Rishis. The Saptarshis blessed the boy one by one and each one of them said: 'Ayushman bhava Sowmya!' Then the Saptarshis realised that they had all blessed the boy with long life where as Brahma's clear-cut insruction was that the boy was destined to die soon! The Saptarshis took the boy to Para Brahma and the latter too blessed the boy who fell on the feet with 'Chiraayu bhava'! Saptarshis were surprised when Para Brahma too blessed the boy like-wise; Brahma reaffirmed that the boy Markandeya would live as long as he himself would! Saptarshis brought the boy back to his father and left. The father was overjoyed and said that the boy was so fortunate to have not only met Brahma but secured the latter's blessings of longevity and great fame and asked him to proceed to Pushkar Tirtha to worship Brahma in his temple. Accordingly the young Markandeya settled at Pushkar eversince and practised Tapasya even from his childhood. Visitors to Pushkar do make it a point till date to bathe and worship at the Markandeya Ghat for favour of securing longevity and good health.

When Lord Shri Rama, Devi Sita and Lakshmana visited Chitrakut Mountain during the 'Vanavasa' or Forest life of Fourteen Years and met Sage Atri to enquire of a Holy Place where the 'Viyoga Duhkha' or the sorrow of absence of his beloved relatives would be alleviated, Sage Atri recommended to visit the

hermitage of the illustrious Markandeya who would be able to direct them to a Place called 'Avivoga' near by on the banks of the Sacred Pushkar Tirtha which was built by Lord Brahma himself! There were two mountains named Maryada Parvat and Yagna Parvat and in between there were three Kundas viz. Jyeshtha Pushkara, Madhyama Pushkara and Kanishtha Pushkara. Accordingly Rama and the followers visited Markandeya and directed them to Aviyoga where one could witness not only departed soul of Dasaratha and immediate ancestors but also those who were alive then and were being missed! Shri Rama immediately remembered not only Dasaratha but the mothers, brothers and 'Ayodhya puri vaasis' or the inhabitants of Ayodhya who were all being missed. Shri Rama was excited to secure the vision of 'Aviyogas' and in his sleep at the last 'Prahara' or during the small hours of early morning had clear vision of all the persons being missed. But since Dasaratha who died was also visible, Markandeya advised to perform Shraaddha to Dasaratha and said that along with him, Jamadagni, Bharadwaj, Lomesha, Devarata and Shameeka would be the best possible Bhoktas! Shri Rama was further excited at the prospect of performing Shradda to Dashratha and two generations behind and detailed Laksmana to fetch excellent fruits from the forest. Sita cooked the Pradhana Vastu in the Shraddha viz. 'Lisodey' and 'Ambali' as Pinda Daan, Thereafter, Rama decided to stay at this Sacred Pushkara Tirtha for a month and near the Maryada Mountain had the Darshan (Vision) of Trinetra Dhari Bhagavan Shiva.

## Lord Rama's Prayer to Maha Deva

Krutrasya yosya jagatah sacharaacharasya, Kartaa krutasya cha tatha sukha duhkha hetu/ Samhaara heturapi yah punarantha kaaley, thah Shankarah Sharanamidam sharanam vrajaami/ (I seek shelter from Shankara, who is the Creator of all Beings that are mobile and immobile; who maintains the Beings with sorrows and joys and at the end terminates the Universe)

Yah Yogino vigata moha tamoRajaska, Bhaktaika taana manaso vinivrittha kaamaah/ Dhyaayanti nischaladhiyomita divya bhaavah, tam Shankaram Sharanadam Sharanam vrajaami/ (I seek protection from Shankara the Supreme Yogi Purusha, whose heart and mind are devoid of desires emerging from Rajo Guna and Tamo Guna; whose complete attention is concentrated with meditation; whose mind is in a perfect position of poise and Equilibrium; and whose thinking process is none else but to bestow goodness to the totality of the Universe).

Yaschendu khand amamalam vilasan mukham badudhwa sadaa priyatamaam shirasaa vibharti, Yachhardhadehamadadaad Giriraaja putrai tam Shankaram sharanadam sharanam vrajaami/ (I take refuge from Shankara who has tied up the resplendent and cool Chandra in His 'Jatajuut'which also wore the the Sacred Ganga on his head and who gave away half of his Body to 'Giriraja putri' Devi Parvati.)

Yosyam Sakrud vimala chaaru vilolatoyaam, Gangaam Mahormi vishamaam Gaganaat Patanteem/Murdhaadadey srajamiva pratilola pushpaam, tam Shankaram Sharanadam Sharanam vrajaami/ (I take asylum from Shankara whose holy head withstands the mighty falls of clean, beautiful and unsteady gushes of Ganga from heavens and send shivers to all concerned onlookers as also provided views of dangling flower laces around his head)

Kailasashaila shikhiram pratikamyamaanam, Kailasashringa sadrushena Dashaananena/ Yah paadapadma parivaadanamaadhanastwam Shankaram sharanadam sharanam vrajaami (I seek safety from Shankara as his lotus feet steadied the Top Mounts of Kailasa Mountain which were shaken by the Ten Headed Ravanasura out of frustration since the latter could not secure the vision of Maha Deva)

Yenaskrutopi vishayeshpapi saktabhaava, jnaanaanvaya shruta gunairapi naiva yuktah, yam samshritah sukhabhujah Purushaa bhavanti, tam Shankaram Sharanadam sharanam vrajaami (I seek indulgence from Shankara who approach him for pardon even by persons that are sinners, undue seekers of shameful delight, devoid of knowledge and of noble traits and good conduct.)

Agniprasuti Ravi koti samaana tejaah, Santraasanam vibhuda daanavasattha maanaam/ Yah Kaalakutamapibat samudreernavegam, tam Shankaram Sharanadam Sharanam vrajaami/ (I solicit safety from Shankara who is resplendent like crores of Suryas and Chandras and the saviour of the mightiest of Devas and Danavas from the 'Kalakut' 'vishajwalas' or the worst kind of deadly poisonous flames and saved the entire Universe.)

Kreedaarthameva Bhagavan Bhuvanaani Sapta naanaa nadi vihagapaadapa manditaani SaBrahmakaani vyasrujat sukrutaahitaani tam Sharkaram Sharanadam Sharanam vrajaami/ (Bhagavan Sharkara! You create innumerable Rivers, Birds, Trees and Seven Lokas headed by Brahma for your sport and also preserve the entire Srishti by your Grace; to You I salute and pay worshipful homage).

Yasakhilam Jagadidam vashavarti nityam, yoshthabhireva tanubhirbhuvanaani Jhaduttey, Yah kaaranam sumahataamapi kaaranaama, tam Shankaram Sharanam vrajaami (My salutation to Shankara who commands the entire Universe including the Eight Entities including Pancha Bhutas as also Surya, Chandra and Yama, besides being the Karana-Tatvaas of Maha Karana or the Causes of the Great Cause!)

Ye twam Surottama Gurum Purushaa vimudhaa, Jaananti nasya Jagatah Sacharaa —charasya, Ishwaryamaana nigamaanushyena/Paschaathey yatanaam twanubhavantya vishuddhichitthaah/ (Maha Deva! Those impure hearted persons who take pride in their wealth, egotism and so-called knowledge and not realise who Jagadguru/ the Greatest Master really is shall regret after Mrityu and on reaching Naraka, but then too late!)

## Maha Pralaya, Vishnu kills Madhu Kaitabha and Creation of Brahma again

After the end of twelve thousand divine years or one Chatur Yuga, Brahma's one day was completed and there was Maha Pralaya. Maha Muni Markandeya was the sole witness of Maha Vishnu lying on the top of a 'Bargadi' tree branch as a toddler while swimming in a huge sheet of deep water and the Lord accosted the Sage by his name and the surprised Markandeya wondered who the toddler was! The boy replied that he was the 'Purana Purusha' who bestowed long life to the Sage. Maha Vishnu affirmed that He was the Virat Paramatma with thousands of heads, hands and feet; that He was ageless; that He was the Creator, Preserver and Annihilator; that He was the Devas, Danavas, Prajapatis, Maha Tatvas, Pancha bhutas, the Present / Past and Future; the Dharma / Artha / Moksha Rupa; the Karanam, Kaaranam and Karta or the Act / Action / and the Actor! The Sage Markandeya was overwhelmed with what he saw, heard and felt as Narayana Himself provided the blissful vision! Then the Golden Lotus sprouted from the Maha Vishnu's navel and Lord Brahma was found with his Pancha Mukhas on the top of the Lotus surface, getting readied to script Universal Creation. Meanwhile two demons brothers called Madhu and Kaitabha approached Brahma and asked him as to who was he, why was he intiating the act of Creation and who authorised him to do so.Brahma replied that the Supreme Master of the Universe was Maha Vishnu from whose navel the Golden Lotus got sprouted. The demon brothers approached Vishnu, greeted him and asked for the boon of invincibility even while Vishnu enquired as to how they escaped death during the Maha Pralaya! The demon brothers reiterated their desire that they could be killed at a place where there was none killed earlier. As if their desire was granted, Vishnu expanded his thighs, bent them down and killed them. Brahma resorted to Tapasya and since he felt lonely, created his better half from his body and continued to create Ten Prajapatis and five 'Kanyas'viz. Lakshmi, Saadhya, Viswesha, Devi and Sarasvati. Then he created Surabhi followed by Eleven Rudras. Surabhi gave birth to cows, Yagna and Devatas as also 'Hamsa' (Swan) and 'Aushodhis' including 'Anna' (food). Lakshmi and Dharma gave birth to Soma and Sadhya gave birth to Devatas called Sadhyas viz. Bhava, Prabhava, Krushaaswa, Suvaha, Aruna, Varuna, Viswamitra, Chala, Dhruva, Havishman, Tanuja, Vidhana, Abhimata, Vatsara, Bhuti, Sarvaasuranishudana, Suparvi, Brihatkanta and Mahalokanamaskruta. Vasu Devi created Vasusanjnak Devatas who followed Indra. Vishva Devas were born to Vishvesha and

Dharma and these were Mahabahu Daksha, King Pushkar, Chakshusa Manu, Mahoraga, Vishwanuga, Vasu, Bala, Nishkala, Rurudra and Parama Kantimaan Bhaskara. Marutwati gave birth to Marudganas viz. Agni, Chakshu, Jyoti, Saavitra, Mitra, Amara, Sharavrishta, Suvarsha, Mahabhuja Viraja, Raja, Viswayu, Sumati, Ashvagandha, Chitra Rashmi, Nishidha, Atmavidhi, Chaaritra, Padamaatraga, Brihat, Bahudrupa and Vishnusanabhiga. Aditi and Kashyapa gave birth to Twelve Adityas.

## Birth of Tarakasura, Shiva's wedding with Parvati and Kartikeya kills Tarakasura

Sage Kashyap blessed his wife Diti to give birth to a great warrior 'Vajranga' who like a diamond was unbreakable and indestructible. Diti desired to avenge the killing of several Asuras in the past by Indra and asked Vajranga to defeat and bring down Indra

imprisoned in person; on doing so, Diti put Indra to shame and released him saying that his subduing was worse than his death. Meanwhile, Vajranga did severe Tapasya to Brahma and the latter created Varangi as the wife of Vajranga. Brahma gave a boon to the pair that a Maha Shaktivaan called Tarakasura would be born after being retained for thousand years in confinement. There were harsh earthquakes and seauprisings when the Asura was born and the parents were filled with wild joy and excitement. As the boy attained youth, he turned out to be a frightening demon and developed friendship with other Asuras like Kujambha and Mahisha. Eventually, he reached a Pariyatra Mountain to perform Tapasya without food for hundred years, for another hundred years by consuming only dried leaves and for additional years by drinking water only. Brahma was pleased and gave a boon of invincibility except for a child of seven days of age, to be born of Shiva. After securing the boon from Brahma, Tarakasura raised a huge army of ten crore well-versed and trained soldiers along with the armies of renowned Asuras like Mahisha, Kunjara, Megha, Kaalanemi, Nimi, Manthana, Jambhaka and Sumbha. As Tarakaura declared war with Indra and Devas, Indra commissioned Vayu Deva as an emissary as per the advice of Deva Guru Brishaspati, but the mission failed and so did the proverbial Four ways of 'Rajaniti' or the Art of Politics viz. Sama (War-Counselling), Daana (luring by gifts), Bheda or by using the dividing politics of the opponents and Associates and finlally 'danda' or actual war. Yamaraja was the Senapati, the Commander sitting over his Vahana Buffalo; Indra sat on his Durjayta ratha (chariot) with Malini as his driver; and all other Devas like Agni, Vayu, Varuna, Kubera, Chandra and Aditya, besides Ashvini Kumars, Marudganas, Sandhyaganas, Yakshas, Gandharvas etc. But Tarakasura was too powerful to Devas whose soldiers were badly bruised and ran without direction. Indra and Devas approached Brahma and he replied that none excepting a seven day son of Shiva and Devi Parvati, called 'Kartikeya' could kill Tarakasura and none else in the world.

At this juncture, Indra prayed to Sage Narada to advise further plan in the context of the birth of Kartikerya. The Sage designed a route-map of action, first to approach Himavanta and his wife Mena as also Parvati to prepare them to wed Mahadeva; to secure access to Mahadeva for his consent to let Parvati assist the former in his daily Pujas and approach Kama Deva and Rati Devi to stealthly despatch 'Pushpa Baanas' or Amorous Arrows of Love in favour of Parvati while she was in service to Mahadeva. But the Plan did not quite succeed as Mahadeva's eyes searched for Kama Deva and burnt him off with his third eye. As Devi Rati prayed to Maha Deva, the latter assured that Kama Deva would soon be created again as 'Ananga' or devoid of Physique. As Devi Parvati was shaken by the news of Kama Deva's turning into ashes, she decided to take to Tapasya; her father Himavan addressed the daughter to say: 'U' 'Ma' meaning 'Don't do so'! But still she left to such a Place to perform rigorous Tapasya where even Devas did not desire to visit and was so inaccessible at the heights of Himalayas. As the Plan as scripted by Narada Muni was not yet in place, Indra prayed to 'Sapta Rishis' to intervene. The Rishis tested her unambiguous decision to perform the severe Tapasya by arguing with her that she was bent on marrying

Maha Deva and none else; in fact she became angry with the Rishis that she reacted sharply against them and even condemned them to suggest any other name as her spouse excepting Shiva Deva. Sapta Rishis approached Maha Deva, underlined Parvati's strong mental make up to wed only Maha Deva and emphasised the angle of 'Loka Kalyan' or the Universal Cause of destroying Tarakasura which could be accomplished only through the wedding with Parvati. Taking the consent of Maha Deva, Saptarishis negotiated the transaction of the holy wedding of Shiva and Parvati successfully and smoothly. At the appointed Muhurtha, the Greatest, the Most Auspicious and Most Unique Wedding of Shiva Parvati was celebrated in which Vishnu and Brahma along with Lakshmi and Vani took active part and so did Indra, Devas, Dikpalakas, the Planets along with their spouses; Yakshas, Danavas, Kimpurushas, Pramathaganas and Piscachas were all thrilled; Gandharvas sang tuneful songs, Apsaras danced away to their glories and Maharshis and Muniganas chanted Vedas and Hymns. Such an event was neither commemorated in the Yugas that preceded nor followed.

As Devi Parvati and Shiva were enjoying their post-wedding life in beautiful gardens and Sarovars, one fine morning Parvati desired to take her bath and sought to clean up her body dirt after applying scented oils and made an idol of a handsome boy whose head resembled that of an elephant. Shiva played with that idol of a boy for a while and threw it in Ganga who was Parvati's companion. Ganga brought the idol back from the flow and interestingly the boy became real with life and Devas called him as Gajanana and worshipped him; Brahma gave Gajanana the authority to head Ganas and was called as Ganapati or Ganadhyaksha eversince. Equally fascinating was the incident of Devi Parvati having planted an Ashoka Tree out of sport with Shiva. In a light moment, Indra, Brihaspati, Devas and Maharshis asked Parvati as to what kind of fruit would emerge from the tree and Parvati was extremely delighted with the query. She replied that if any thoughtful human being where there was inadequate water supply at a Place would dig up a Well, then that person would attain Swarga for as many years as the drops of that Well! She further said that if ten such wells were dug up, the 'Punya' would be ten times more; if ten bigger water bodies were dug up the 'Punya' would be tenfolded more; if ten Sarovars were dug up the resultant fruits would be tenfold more; ten Sarovars would equal the donation of a Kanya (virgin) and such ten donations would equalise one Vriksha (Tree)! Brihaspati, Devas and Rishis were stunned with the reply that Parvati gave and returned to their respective places thinking deep about what Devi Parvati stated!

For a number of years, Shiva and Parvati were in a joyful mood after their marriage and there was little news for Indras and Devas about the possible arrival of Kartikeya who alone could terminate Tatakasura. Agni Deva took the form of a parrot and entered the Palace of Shiva and Parvati who found that Parvati was enjoying a bath in a Sarovar playing with lotus flowers and Lord Shiva was resting in his bed. She found six Krittikas in the Sarovar and told them that she was desirous of seeing the water drops inside the lotus bulbs; the Kritthikas replied in fun that they would show the water drops provided they allow them also to share the joy of a child in her 'garbha'! The Krittikas further said that they should allow them too to own the child as their own as much as that of Devi Parvati and she agreed to the mutual deal; Krittikas showed the water drops inside the lotus bulb and drank them. As soon as she drank the water drops, there emerged a handsome and healthy boy from Devi Parvati's right abdomen with Sun-like luster and a powerful Physique wearing a 'Shula' and 'Ankush' in both of his hands. He was called 'Kumar' as many entities claimed parentage maily of course by Lord Shiva and Devi Parvati but also the Krittikas and even Agni. The boy had six brilliant faces and was popularly called by several names viz. Vishakha, Shanmukha, Skanda, Shadaanana and Kartikeya. Brahma, Vishnu, Indra and various Devas gifted the Child several valuable souvenirs like Chandan, Malas, Dhup, Toys, Umbrellas, and Bhushans and instantly appointed him as the Senapati or the Commander-in-Chief of Devas. Lord Vishnu presented several 'Ayudhas' or Arms; Kubera provided ten lakh of Yaksha Sena; Agni gave his Tej (Radiance) and Vayu provided speed as his 'Vahan' (Chariot). Kumar desired to ascertain as to what he could do for them and in one voice they wanted the demon Tarakasura to be killed and Kumar assured saying: So be

it! Inspired by what Skanda Deva guaranteed, Indra sent an emissary to Tarakasura saying that soon Indra and Devas would arrive to destroy the demon and his followers. Danavas wondered that an additional Shakti must have joined the Deva Sena as otherwise they would not dare send a messenger alerting them to come prapared for a battle! Tarakasura remembered Brahma's boon to him with the qualification of the risk of his death in the hands of a boy! Even Kalanemi and other Daityas had creepy feelings about the might of the stranger who joined the Deva Sena. As Tarakasura saw finally saw the so-called additional Shakti, he laughed away and made fun of the baby boy; he said that Devas did great injustice in projecting him ahead of them so that they could conveniently run away if need be! Kumar replied that there was no need to make fun of us since in a battle of 'Shastras', there was the brain power that was important but not the brute force; moreso, one did not require a huge serpent to kill an opponent but even a tiny snake could finish off the enemy by a small bite of poison! Bala Surya was always difficult to look at and never underestimate a boy! Even as Kumar's reply was over, the Asura threw a musala but the reply by way of a mighty Chakra from Kumar was instantaneous. The Daitya threw a metallic Bhindipal which Kumar stopped merely by one of his hands. Kartikeya targetted a ferocious mace which made ear-blowing sound and the demon was hardly able to escape its impact. The demon then realised that this boy was not an ordinary kid and one had to be tough with him; he used a very powerful Shastra which was undone by Kartikeya instantly. Then Kartikeya came into his form and massacred thousands of demons and the socalled mighty demons like Kalanemi could hardly defend themselves and ran away to save their skins. As a last resort, Tarakasura hit Kumar's vahana of Peacock and going wild with this act, Kumara finally used the 'Nirmal Shakti' in his hands and threw it with force and speed and the Shakti dazzled the demon's vision; he tried his best but could not evade it since it flew behind wherever he went and ultimately pierced into his heart as the mountain-like Tarakasura fell making a thud, like a cloud-burst and the handful soldiers of the huge army of Davanas left behind alive ran for their lives. Devas went into a state of ecstacy with loud shouts and battle-cries of relief showering fragrant flowers all around, Gandharvas sang earsplitting songs of victory, Apsaras danced with gay abandon and the whole Universe wore a memorable look of unprecedented carnival. Vishnu and Brahma were highly satisfied that finally Dharma an Nyaya were vindicated by Kumara. Maha Deva and Devi Parvati seated on Nandi with Ganesha and Kartikeya flew across to Kailasa Mountain witnessing festivities all along the route!

Devas affirmed that whosoever read, or heard or analysed the Story of Kartikeya would be blessed; his life-span would increase, would become healthy, popular, and contented in life without unfufilled desires and at the end of Life would qualify for Salvation.

#### Ideal features of Brahmanas and significance of 'Gavatri Mantra'

Janmana Brahmano jneyaha Samskarai Dwija Ucchatey, Vidyaya yaati Vipratvam

Thribhih Shrotria lakshanam/ Vidyaputho Mantraputho Veda putasthayaiva cha, Tirtha-Snaanadibhirmedhyo Viprah Pujyatamah smrutah/Narayane sadaa bhaktah shuddhantah karanastatha, Jitendriyo Jitahkrodhah samamah Sarvajaneshu cha/ Gurudevaatiye bhaktah pitroh shusrushaney ratah, Paradaarey manoyasya kadaachitraiva modatey/ Puranakathako nityam Dharmaakhyaanasya santatih, Asatyaiva darshaatrithya -mashvamedhaadijah phalam/(A Brahmana boy is a Brahmana by birth; by virtue of 'samskara' or Training / Practice, he is known as a 'Dwija' and by virtue of 'Vidya' or education of Scriptures, he is called a 'Vipra'. Thus the three features of a 'Shrotriya' or a Complete Brahmana are 'Janma' (birth), 'Samskara' (tradition and training) and 'Vidya' (Knowledge). A Brahmana becomes worthy of worship once he is purified with 'Tirtha Snanas' or bathing at holy Places and is fortified with Vidya, Mantra and Vedas. The 'darshan' or seeing of a complete Brahmana yields fruits of performing Ashwamedha Yagna etc. once he always maintains devotion of Bhagavan Narayana; his conscience is clear and clean of petty matters; his feelings are uniformly balanced for one and all; his bhakti is transparent and uniform to Gurus, Devatas and Atithis; his dedication and service is constant for his

parents; his views and reactions are unblemished for women and transient desires and emotions; and his mind and speech are always engaged in and cogitative about Puranas and Matters of Spiritualism!)

Lord Brahma himself was stated to have described an ideal Brahmana as above to Devarshi Narada as quoted by Sage Pulastya to Bhishma. Lord Brahma also stated that a Brahmana was he who could treat a friend or foe with equal feelings of kindness; who could behave all human beings in an impartial and unbiased manner; who would never resort to thieving any object or money even if available in a free jungle; who would be completely devoid of desires, annoyances, mean mindedness, excessive possessions, jealousy, and anger; who is not controlled by 'Indriyas' or physical properties; and who would recite Yajur Veda and other Scriptures with their meanings, and the Twenty Four Lettered Tripada Gayatri! Lord Brahma further declared that even mere the conversation by a person with a Brahmana as described above would lead him to 'Uttama Gati' or noble path, provided that person observed daily 'snaan' and Brahmana Puja, and practice of Noble 'Vratas' and consuption of Ganga water.

Narada enquired of Lord Brahma about the features, the special import of each 'Akshar' or Letter of Gayatri Mantra and the 'Kukshi'-'Charan'and 'Gotra' of the Stanza. The Gayatri Mantra's Chhanda (Prosody or Poetic Structure) is called 'Gayatri' and ruling Devata is 'Savita'. Gayatri Devi's 'Varna' or colour is 'Shukla' (White); her face is of 'Agni' (Fire) and her Rishi is Viswamitra. Lord Brahma is Gayatri's 'Mastak' (head); her 'Shikha' or the Head-hair is Rudra; her heart is of Lord Vishnu. She is the dominating Deity of 'Upanayana Karma' or the Task of Wearing the Holy Thread which qualifies a person to recite Gayatri Mantra. Devi Gayatri was born into 'Saankhyaana Gotra'. Three Lokas are her Charanas or feet. Prithvi (Earth) lies in Gayatri's 'Kukshi' or in her stomach. One aligns each letter of the Gayatri Mantra totalling twenty four to the parts of a human body from the feet to head and the process of alignment of the body part and each of the letterrs of the Mantra is called Nyasa. A Brahmana performing the Nyasa or alignment of the Letters of the Mantra with the concerned body part is stated to have attained Brahma Loka; to realise or to be aware of the meaning and significance of each letter of the Mantra would lead to 'Vishnu Sayujya' or accomplishment of Oneness with Vishnu. Gayatri's second distinct Form comprises an Eighteen Lettered Yajur Mantra viz: Om Agneyrwaakpumsi Yajurvedina jushta Somam piba Swaha/ The Mantra commences with the word 'Agni' and ends up with the word 'Swaha'. One has to recite this Mantra hundred times while standing in water. The power of this Mantra is such that the recitation dissolves crores of Sins including even the 'Maha Patakas' like 'Brahma Hatya'. The same procedure is to be followed by reciting Vishnu Mantra, Maheswara Maha Mantra, Devi Mantra, Surya Mantra, Ganesha Mantra and so on. The Brahmanas who practise the Mantra recitals on these lines need to be given special 'Danaas' and the donors of the Daanaas achieve 'Akshya Punya' or Undiminishing Punya. Those Brahmanas who are 'Swadhyaya parayanas' or self-taught and at the same time teach others, recite for the benefit of others and also let others read for every body's benefit are as good as Vishnu. Practising Gayatri Mantra by the 'Nyas' or alignment of each word and body part, understand the purport and meaning of each word and perform 'Pranayama' concurrently bestows 'Brahmapada prapti'.

The next significant question posed by Sage Narada to Lord Brahma related to the Form or Swarupa of Pranayama, the concerned Deity relevant to each Word of Gayatri and the body part alignable with the specific letter of the Gayatri Mantra. The process of Pranayama comprises 1) 'Puraka Kriya' or the filling up the body with Prana Vayu (the wind of Life) from bottom to heart or mix up with 'Apana' Vayu from the bottom with the Prana Vayu inhaled into the heart; 2) 'Kumbhak Kriya' or stopping the breath; 3) 'Rechaka Kriya' or exhale by slowly removing the Vayu till one could hold. This cycle of inhaling fully out, stopping the breath with no air inside the body, exhaling slowly by removing the air till the dead-end is called Pranayama simultaneously reciting Gayatri Mantra each time fully. This Pranayama clears breathing and lung congestion, slashes cold and cough, improves the status of hearing, eases the digestive system and greatly enhances memory and concentration.

Now, Brahma detailed each relevant Deity in respect of each of the Twenty Four Letters of the Gayatri Mantra as follows: Agni, Vayu, Surya, Viyat (Akash), Yamaraja, Varun, Brihaspati, Parjanya, Indra, Gandharva, Pusha, Mitra, Twashta, Vasu, Marudganas, Soma, Angira, Vishwa Deva, Ashvini Kumars, Pragapati, Sampurna Devata, Rudra, Brahma and Shri Vishnu. The letter-to-letter seriatum of Deities represented in the Gayatri Mantra thus provided the 'Vangmaya'/ 'Vani Vishaya' or the cross-referencing of the Letter-Deity implication. As regards the 'Nyasa' of the Aksharas of the Gayatri Mantra versus Body Limbs, the explanation is as follows: 'Tat'-touch the thumbs of the feet; 'Sa'-Gulpha (ankles); 'Vi'-the two pindaliyas (calves); 'thu'-ghutnas (Knees); 'Var'-jangha (lap); 'Re'-Terminal Part; 'Nya'-'Andakosha; 'M'-'Kati bhagas'( thighs); 'Bha'-Nabhi Mandala; 'orgo'-Udaram; 'Dey'-both the breasts; 'Va'- Hridaya; 'Sya'-both the hands; 'Dhee'-face; 'Ma'-taalu; 'hi'-top of Nasika( nose); 'Dhi'-both the eyes; 'Yo'- both bahus (hands); 'Yo'- Lalaat; 'Nah'-Muhka's Purvabhaaga; 'Pra'-'Dakshna bhaag; 'Cho'-Paschima bhaaga; 'da'-Mukha's Uttara Bhaga; 'Yaat'-Mastak (head). By performing the Nyasa as above, all the 'Aksharas'or the Letters are thus aligned to Brahma-Vishnu and Maheswara.

Another kind of Nyasa for the Sandhya-Kaalas is as follows:

Om Bhuriti Hridaye-Om Bhuvah Shirasi-Om Swaha Shikhayai-Om Tatsaviuvarenyamithi Kalebarey-Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Netrayoh-Om Dhiyoyonaha prachodayaatiti Karayoh-Om Apo jyotee rasomritam Brahma Bhurbhuvah swarom/

The above Vyahruti and Twelve Omkaaraas along with Gayatri Mantra be performed at Sandhya Timings while touching water (Jala sparsha) followed by Pranayama Kriya thrice; then should follow the Gayatri Mantra Japa for as many times as possible. Then should follow 'Punah-Nyasa' or Repeat Nyasa as follows: Om Bhuh Padaabhyaam and touch the feet; Om Bhuvah Jaanubhyaam and touch both 'ghutane' (knees); Om Swahah Katyaam and touch kati bhaaga' (thighs); Om Mahah Naabhou and touch Nabhistaan (navel); Om Janah Hridaye and touch Hridaya; Om Tapah Karaye and touch both the hands; Om Satyam and touch Lalaatey (Forehead) and finally recite the entire Mantra and touch the Shikha (tuft).

Lord Brahma affirmed to Narada as follows: Chatur Vedaascha Gayatri pura vai tulithaa maya, Chatur Vedaat Paraa Gurvi Gayatri Mokshada Smrita/ Dashabhirjanma janitam shateyna cha puraakrutam, Tri Yugam tu Sahasrena Gayatri hanthi kilbisham/ (I had in the past placed the Four Vedas and Gayatri on a Sensitive Balance and at that time Gayatri weighed heavier compared to the Four Vedas since Gayatri was certainly towards the path of Salvation. Gayatri Mantra Japa for ten times destroys the sins of the current birth, hundred times clears the sins of the previous birth and the Japa thousand times demolishes the sins of three Yugas!)

Those who perform Gayatri Japa in the morning and evening by rotating the Sacred Rudraksha Mala shall indeed reap the fruits of the Four Vedas. Contrarily, a Brahmana who is not aware of the Gayatri Mantra is worse than a Shudra and has no credential to perform Pitru Karyas, Shraddhas, and Daanas. Their visits to Tirthas, dips in Holy Rivers and performances of any kind of Propitious Tasks are treated as negative, like a fragrant and charming flower sprouting in a slushy and rotten cess-pool!

Significance of 'Rudrakshas' and 'Tulasi'

In a congregation of Brahmansas, Veda Vyas explained the significance of 'Rudrakshas', their origin and methodology of wearing them. A person wearing a Rudraksha Mala with Brahma-grandhis and performs Japa-Daana-Stotra-Mantra-Deva Puja or any other propitious Task is stated to have executed the best possible worship ever. In Satya Yuga of the yore, a fearful Danava named Tripura had Brahma Deva's boons of invincibility against Devas and harassed them besides all virtuous human beings, Sages and other species. When Devas approached Maha Deva and described the atrocities perpetrated

by the Asura, Shiva got perturbed and pulled out his powerful 'Aajagava' Dhanush and despatched his 'Vikaraal' named arrow and from his Divya Drishti (Celestial Vision) tracked Tripura down after extensive battle and killed him finally. In this tedious task, Maha Deva sweated profusely and the skin moisture of Maha Deva got materialised as a huge Tree of Rudrakshas (Eyes of Rudra). As Kartikeya asked Maha Deva about the

significance of the Seeds of the Tree, the latter described that wearing a mala (garland) of Rudrakshas bestowed auspiciousness and acted like a shield against diseases, poverty, unhappiness, and discontentment in life. Those who wear Rudrakshas would immediately assume the personality of confidence, equanimity and maturity. If one wore Rudraksha on his head and died, the person concerned would immediately break the cycle of rebirths and secure salvation.

['Eka Mukhi' symbolises Shiva and its Ruling Planet is Surya recommended to wear on Mondays for power, wealth and fame to ward off heart diseases and its Mantra is stated to be 'Om Namah Shivaaya Om Hreem Namah'; 'Dwi Mukhi' symbolises 'Ardha Naare -eswara' or Shiva and Parvati with Moon as the Ruling Planet recommended to wear on Mondays for mental peace and mystic powers and its Mantra is 'Om Namah'; 'Tri Mukhi' symbolises Agni and the Ruling Planet is Mars, recommended for wearing on Mondays for Physical Health, Knowledge and Divine Powers and its Mantra is: Om Kleem Namah/ Om Namah Shivaaya Namah; 'Chatur Mukhi' Rudraksha symbolises Brahma and the Ruling Planet is Mercury best worn on Mondays for curing paralysis, nervous tension and mental diseases and its Mantra is: Om Hreem Namah; the 'Pancha Mukhi' symbolises Rudra and the Ruling Planet is Jupiter affecting Liver, Kidneys, diabetes and obesity, meant for elimination of enemies and the Mantra is: Om Hreem Namah- it is stated that apart from the wearing of Ekamukhi, Pancha Mukhi is also rated high for wearing; The 'Shashtya Mukhi' symbolises Kartikeya and the Ruling Planet is Venus (Shukra) meant for attaining Concentration, Confidence, Success and Family life and for the benefit for reproductive organs while the relevant Mantra is Om Hreem Hroom; Maha Lakshmi symbolises the 'Sapta Mukhi' and the Ruling Planet is Saturn meant to cure muscular pain and impotence which is to be borne with red thread as the desired objectives are prosperity and well being and the relevant Mantra is Om Huum Namaha; the 'Ashta Mukhi' Rudraksha symbolises Ganesha and the Ruling Planet is Rahu aiming at concentration and business tactics normally preferred by Vaishyas and sought to set right lung disorder and skin problem and the Mantra is Om Ganeshaya Namhah; the 'Nava Mukhi' Rudraksha symbolises Durga and the Planetary Head is Kethu, bestowing courage, destruction of enemies and capacity to strike back and is meant for relief body pains and lung-bowel disoders, relevant Mantra being Om Hreem Hum Namah; the 'Dasa Mukhi'Rudraksha worn on Sundays represents Maha Vishnu symbolising Ten Avataras, pacifying all the ill-effects of Nine Planets and destroying Evil Spirits like Piscachas, Goblins, Thieves etc.the relevant Mantra being Shri Narayaneya Shri Vaishnavey Namah; Like the Eka Mukhi and the Pancha Mukhi, the Ekadasha Mukhi Rudraksha is also reckoned very potent and useful representing Ekadasha Rudras (also stated alternatively as symbolising Hanuman) bestowing knowledge, Yoga and devotion as also procecting neuro-physiology if worn on Mondays by reciting the Mantra viz. Om Shri Rudraaya Namah; the 'Dwadasha Mukhi' Rudraksha symbolising 'Dwadasha Adityas' with Surya as the Ruling Planet bestows Kingships, Leadership, courage and self-confidence, granting excellent health and great success in Life; Wearing the 'Trayodasha Mukhi' Rudraksha symbolising Indra and Kamadeva with Venus as the Ruling Planet provides unmistakable pleasures of life and even hypnotic powers and a 'Chaturdasha Mukhi' Rudraksha which is stated to be a rarity is of the class or standing of Eka Mukhi,

Pancha Mukhi and Ekadasha Mukhi and represents Maha Deva Himself with Saturn as the Ruling Planet and providing the most contented Life in 'Iham' (the Present) and 'Param' (After-Life) as it has to be worn by reciting the Mantra: Om Namah Sivaaya. It is said that close contact zg of Rudrakshas with body parts like head, neck, heart, and hands protect the persons with medical values from depression, stress, diabetes, cancer, heart / blood related diseases!]

Veda Vyas told the congregation of Sages that Bhagavan Maha Deva described the benefits of Tulasi Tree (Holi Basil) to Kartikeya as it is highly auspicious, desire-fulfilling, very dear to Bhagavan Vishnu and hence called 'Vaishnavi'; in fact, Vishnu considers Tulasi on par with even Lakshmi and far above the ranking of all other leaves and flowers. Daily worship to Bhagavan Vishnu with Tulasi leaves is considered as effective and propitious than even Daana, Homa, Yagnya and Vratas. Needless to say that Tulasi Puja to Bhagavan Vishnu bestows brightness, happiness, luxury items, fame, Lakshmi, noble ancestry, good wife and children, wealth, health, 'Gyan', Vigyan, Veda and Vedanga, Shastra, Purana, Tantra and Samhitas. Keeping a Tulasi Garden nearby is as effective and easy as keeping Lord Shri Krishna Himself and thus retaining Devi Lakshmi, Brahma and all other Devas. Thus a short-cut method is worshipping Tulasi to be able to keep all the Deities happy. As a corollary, Pretahs, Piscachas, Kushmandas, Brahma rakshasas, Bhutas and Rakshasas are nowhere in the vicinity and so would be far away from sins, fears, diseases and wants. In Kali Yuga, one effective way is to perform Tulasi Puja, Kirtana, Dhyana, Dharana and other means of worship to dry out and burn off all kinds of Sins and consolidate the path of reaching Swarga and Moksha.

Bhagavan Shankara stated: Pujaney kirtaney dhyaney ropaney dharaney Kalou, Tulasi dahatey paapam Swraga moksham dadaaticha/ Upadesham dadeydasyaah swayamaacharatey punah, sa yaati Paramam Staanam Madhavasya niketanam/ Lord Vishnu further said that in all those tasks which were dear to him like Yagnas, Vratas etc. worship with even with one Tulasi leaf enhances the value of such tasks. Further, those who worship Tulasi attain the same fruits of worshipping Gurus, Brahmanas, Devatas and Tirthas. If one retains a leaf of Tulasi while dying has a path leading upwards to heavens. Those who worship Tulasi regularly and sincerely would not have to take 'Punarjanma' (another birth)!

Mere 'Namocchharana' or taking the name of Tulasi frightens Asuras but pleases Vishnu immensely; blessed are those in Kali Yuga who perform puja of 'Shaligramas' or Replicas of Maha Vishnu with Tulasi. What could Yama Raja say to Tulasi: Tulasyamrita janmaasi sadaa twam Keshava Priyey! Keshavaartha chinomi twaam Varadaa bhava shobhaney/ Twadanga sambhavairnityam pujayaami yathaa Harim, Tatha kuru Pavitrangam Kalou mala vinaashini/ (Tulasi! You are born from Amrita and are the beloved of Kehava always. I select excellent leaves from your Tree for the puja of Bhagavan. Do become the provider of boons from this Puja and enable it in a manner that it pleases Bhagavan Keshava. Mother Tulasi! Only you could clean up the mess of Kali Yug and provide a sense of direction to absolve me of my sins).

[Tulasi leaves yield a volatile oil called eugenol possessing anti bacterial properties which are anti-microbial, anti-inflammarory and expectorant promoting maximum

respiratory assistance].

After concluding the Srishti Khanda of Padma Purana, Suta Maha Muni proceeded with the depiction of Bhumi Khanda to the Congregation of Sages at Naimisharanya, taking the shelter of Bhagavan Narayana: Yam Sarva Devam Parameswaram hi nishkevalam Jnaanamayam pradhaanam, Vadanti Narayanadi Siddhvim Siddheswaram tam sharanam Prapadye (I salute and seek protection of Bhagavan Shriman

Narayana who is stated to be of an Omni-Form, Parameswara, Unique and Jnaanamaya and the Adi Siddheswara of Siddhas).

#### 'Pitru Bhakti' leads Shiva Sharma's devoted sons to 'Vishnu dhaam'

In Bhumi Khanda, the Concept of Pitru Bhakti was defined and described in good detail. On the banks of the Western Ocean of Bharat in Dwaraka, there was a Veda-Shastra Vidwan called Shiva Sharma who had five Sons named Yagna Sharma, Veda Sharma, Dharma Sharma, Vishnu Sharma and Soma Sharma, all with good knowledge of Scriptures and great devotees of their father. Shiva Sharma decided to examine the 'Pitru Bhakti' of their sons and by the play of 'Maya' (Illusion) that he created declared that his wife died and asked his eldest son Yagna Sharma to cut the body of his mother into pieces and throw away; the son did exactly as was told by his father. Shiva Sharma asked his second son to convince another (illusory) woman whom he liked as it would be difficult for him to carry on without a wife. Veda Sharma approached the woman but she said that his father was old and diseased and that she would rather like to marry the son instead. Veda Sharma told her that it was unfair for her to talk like that and that he was prepared to do any thing if she married his father. The illusory woman demanded that she should then be able to vision Indra and other Devas. Veda Sharma was able to do so by the power of his Tapasya. The woman appreciated the achievement and sent away the Devas but she then demanded that Veda Sharma should cut off his head with his own hands and gift it to her! The illustrious son did so and the 'Maya Stree' showed the slain head to the father and the rest of his sons. Shiva Sharma then handed over the head of Veda Sharma to the third son Dharma Sharma and asked him to revive the life of Veda Sharma. Dharma Sharma invoked Dharma Raja and said that if only he did unswerving service to his Guru and had unparalelled Pitru Bhakti his elder brother's life be revived. Dharma Raja was immensely pleased and not only agreed to revive the life of Veda Sharma but also agreed to give any other boon to him; Dharma Sharma desired that his Pitru Bhakti be enhanced further, that his Dharma (Virtue) be intensified and that he should attain 'Moksha' after his life. Then Shiva Sharma desired to test the fourth son Vishnu Sharma and that indeed was tougher further; he desired that the son should approach Indra Deva and bring 'Amrit' for all the family members! As Vishnu Sharma left for Indra Loka, Lord Indra was aware of the intention and commissioned Menaka to attract him; Vishnu Sharma was indeed aware of her intentions and asked her not to waste his time with her traditional tactics as he was not like Sage Vishwamitra to yield to her infatuations. As Menaka failed in her mission, Indra kept on placing obstructions in the way of Vishnu Sharma, the latter was infuriated and declared that he would kick down Indra and if needed, create another Indra! Indra was frightened and tendered apology as also accompanied the son to the father, handed over a pot of Amrit and told Shiva Sharma that there could ever be a son like Vishnu Sharma and that there were such

an unbelievable example of Pitru Bhakti in the family as one son was overshadowing another in their display of unparalelled devotion to the father! Meanwhile, the mother of the five sons re-appeared and expressed her enormous pleasure to have secured a husband like Shiva Sharma and the sons who proved their worth by their exemplary devotion to their father. The father who felt proud of their sons gave the four of them the boon of achieving 'Goloka / Vishnu loka dham' even as Lord Vishnu appeared before them to accompany the four-some; Shiva Sharma told the fifth son Soma Sharma that he and his wife would proceed to visit 'Tirthas' while Soma Sharma would have to protect the Amrit pot meanwhile. Soma Sharma guarded the Amrita Kumbha so sincerely that he did not leave it even for a minute and after ten years the parents returned highly diseased, ematiated, skinny with leprosy and fully spotted all over the bodies; the untouchable condition of the parents was also display of 'Maya', but the son performed the kind of service with grit and determination that no son could have ever done, as he cleaned the blood and pus from the body-cracks, tidied the 'Mala-Mutras' or the body rejects and without sleep or rest, looked after the parents that Devas on heavens were stunned! The parents refused to accept the Amrit, they

refused to accept it, as curing of the leprosy was against the principle of natural justice, as they were destined to suffer.But, when the parents could not suffer beyond limits, they relented and finally asked for the Amrita Kumbha but Soma Sharma found to his utter surprise that the Kumbha was empty! Unnerved by this misfortune, Soma Sharma looked to Heavens and challenged fate that if he had truly and most faithfully served his parents with devotion all these years and that he controlled his 'Indriyas' of physique and mind with the greatest and unfailing commitment, then the Amrita Kumbha should be full up at once; indeed the Kumbha was full. The parents assured that the 'Kushthu'disease was fake and the empty Kumbha was an illusion sothat his Pitru Bhakti had to be vindicated. Being extremely happy and contented that the last son Soma Sharma like his earlier brothers too passed the test of Pitru Bhakti, the proud parents blessed him and left for Vishnu Loka.

As Soma Sharma and his wife Sumana could not beget a son, Soma Sharma approached Maharshi Vasishta for guidance. Vasishtha told that Soma Sharma that in his earlier life, the latter was a Shudra and a miser and did not want to spend any amount even on the day of his departed father's death anniversary. The Shudra amassed considerable wealth but never did he perform any charity or any Punya Karya; he did not even enjoy any happiness excepting the joy of possession. He was suspicious even of his sons and at the some of his death no body knew where the wealth was deposited. But while alive, the Sudra did one single good task in his long life viz. of hosting a Vishnu Bhakta at his home and that day happened to be Ashadha Shukla Dwadashi and that was how he was born as a Brahmana in the current birth. Vasistha further advised that he would secure an excellent son by worshipping Vishnu Deva. As Soma Sharma was performing 'japa' (meditation) Saadhvi Sumana too served her husband with devotion. But there were many distractions like the appearances of big black snakes of poison, elephants, tigers, and even piscachas. However, Soma Sharma never got unnerved. One day a lion tried to hurt the Brahmana and then also he held on with the meditation more intensely than ever by chanting 'Narasimha Stotra'. That was the time when Bhagavan Vishnu granted his vision in his full form with four hands armed with Shankha, Chakra, Gada and Saranga with an extremely charming face with a smile. Soma Sharma was overpowered with ecstacy and eulogised him for long time till his heart's content. When Bhagayan Vishnu was pleased with Soma Sharma's 'Tapasya', he asked the Brahmana for boons and the Brahmana desired that he should secure a son who should be a distinguished Vishnu Bhakta, a highly erudite and virtuous example of his 'Vamsa' and a person of universal fame. In course of time, a boy of radiance and intelligence was born named Suvrata. Even from childhood, the boy visioned Bhagavan Narasimha in every part of the Universe, be it the Sky, Earth, Mountains, Forests, Water, Stones, all human beings, animals, birds and so on! As he grew he was completely immersed in 'Vishnu Dhyana', singing Vishnu Hymns, publicising the greatness of Vishnu and dedicating each and every action of his to Vishnu. Pashyatyevam vadantyevam Janannatham Janaardanam, sa dhyaayatey tameykam hi Vishvanaatham Parameswaram/ Truney Kaashthey cha paashaaney sushkey saandryem hi Keshavam, Pashyatyevam sa Dharmaatmaa Govindam Kamalekshanam/ Akaashey Bhumimadhye tu Parvateshu Vaneshu cha, Jaley Sthaley cha Paashaaney Jeeveshucha Mahamatih/ Nrisimham pashyatey Viprah Suvratah Sumanaasutah/ As Sumana, the mother of Suvrata called the son for food, he used to reply: Mother! I am extremely full in my stomach with the Amrit like Vishnu Dhyan; I have come into the fold of Bhagavan, while eating, wearing clothes, sitting, sleeping, and dedicating every act to Janardana Himself! Dhyayanti Devah satatam Muraarim yasyanga madhye Sakalam nivishtam, Yogeshwaram Paapavisaashanamcha bhajey sharanyam Madhusudanaakhyam/ In course of time, Suvrata commenced full-fledged Tapasya and eventually after many years of intense dedication, Lord Vishnu was pleased to give His 'darshan' (appearance), when Suvrata was overwhelmed with bliss and praised saying: Samsarasagaramateeva gabheera paaram, Duhkhormibhirvividha mohamayaistarangaih/ Sampurnamasti nijadosha gunaistu praaptam, tasmaat samuddhara Janaardana maam sudeenam/ (Janardana! This Ocean of Samsara is inexplicably deep and most difficult to swim across; this is full of high tides of sorrow and infatuations. I am intensely helpless and ensnarled with my own limitations of sins and distesses. Could you my Lord!

Save me from here!). Suvrata sought the boon of lifting him up along with his parents and wife with their own bodies to Vishnu dhaam!

## King Vena misdirected and redeemed- both Vena and Pruthu of lofty virtue

Prajapati Anga of Atri Vamsha, a defender of Dharma (Virtue) and an erudite scholar of Shastras was married to Sunitha who also was a follower of virtue and tradition. They were blessed with a son of high virtue called Vena, who on becoming a King, came under the evil influence of a Jain Muni who followed a Devata called 'Arhan' followed a vicious and immoral way of life and used to preach his 'Praja' (Subjects) not to perform Homas and Yagnas, nor indulge in charities, Vratas and Tirtha Yatras. In fact, he declared that he was Vishnu, Rudra, Brahma, Indra and Devas. The Rishis and Brahmanas were highly upset and undertook a huge procession to the King saying that a King was expected to guide and enforce Dharma, Nyaya (Justice) and discipline but instead Vena Kumar was getting self-opinionated by the day. The King shouted angrily that he was Dharma, Nyaya and Punya himself and that he could destroy Earth, throw it under water and break open the skies, if need be! The Rishis and Common men of the Kingdom forced their way to the King, surrounded him, forcibly overpowered and battered him. They screamed and asked him: 'Nishida' or 'sit down' and since then called him 'Nishida!' They rubbed his left thigh with force and out emerged streams of evil Beings like Nishadas, Kirathas, Bheels, Nahalakas, Bhramars, Pulinds and Mlecchas and Rishis were relieved that the King was relieved of sinners from his body. Then they rubbed the King's right hand forcibly and initially came out profuse sweat but later on materialised a 'Maha Purush'-a Unique Personality-who was magnificent like 'Twelve Adityas', with a natural Headgear of rare jewels and brilliant diamond ear-rings, armoured with Dhanush (Bow) and Divya Banas (Arrows) and a 'Kavacha' (Body Shield)! The congregation of Rishis named him King Pruthu and many called him 'Rajaraja'. Amidst recitations of Vedas, Rishis performed 'Abhisheka' or 'Mangala Snaana' (Sacred Bathing) and Lord Brahma Himself descended to witness the Celebrations and blessed him to herald a Golden Era where the Kingdom was full of propitiousness and Virtue but devoid of 'Akals' (Famines), diseases, untimely deaths, robberies and discontentment anywhere: na durbhiksham na cha Vyadhirnakaala maranam Nrinaam, Sarvey sukhena jeevanti lokaa Dharma paraayanaah! /

In the past, when Praja or common persons saved 'Anna Beej' (Dhanya/ Crop Seeds), Prithvi finished the seeds and there was fufore since the seeds stored as security for the future were unavailable. King Pruthu became angry since the Praja was upset and pulled out his bow and arrows and ran behind the Prithvi who took the form of a Cow and ran to Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra but they did not come to her rescue and finally approached King Pruthu himself. Prithvi in the form of a Cow said that she was a woman and would not do any good to punish her but Pruthu replied that since Prithvi transgressed her limits of decency by destroying the seeds and since it was the responsibility of saving the Praja, he as the King would have to punish her. Prithvi then compromised and conceded her mistake and agreed to give away the seeds back so that crops were revived again; but Prithvi made a request to Pruthu to level the mountain tops which also could be harnessed for developing crops and instantly did so; in this context when there was interaction between Earth which was earlier called 'Medini' and King Pruthu, Earth was eversince called as Prithvi! Since then when Prithvi was controlled and regulated by the efforts of King Pruthu, there were plentiful crops and the resultant prosperity, health and contentment; also plenty of mountain top levelling done by King Pruthu facilitated Gandharvas to sing sonorous songs and Apsaras to dance in praise of the Creator!

Before marriage, Sunita used to generally assist her father Mrityu and spend a carefree life in the company of her friends. Once she visited a forest and found a Gandarva Kumar called Sushankha and

started teasing him while he was in Tapasya. In fact, she repeated the routine of teasing him and even beating him on his back; he admonished her and went away. Sunita confessed to her father as to how she behaved badly with the Gandharva boy and how he controlled his anger. Presuming that her father did not reply as a kind of semi-approval of her action, Sunita repeated her mischief with the Gangarva boy once again and the latter this time gave a 'shaap' (Curse); he said that whenever she would get married she would give birth to a notorious and misdirected boy who would harass the world as an evil King! This time Sunita really got frightened and reported the entire happening again to father Mrityu. As advised by her father, Sunita did highly repentant and severe Tapasya to Vishnu. While moving about along with her companions, Apsara Rambha found Sunita performing Tapasya and got the full background of Gandharva boy's curse from Sunita's friends. She advised Sunita not to worry much as Lord Srihari whom she was meditating sincerely was indeed kind and would certainly find a way out from the mess that she got into. She further said that there were indeed certain dormant qualities in Sunita's family background of Mrityu Deva which should be promoted and nurtured further instead of brooding over what happened: such noble qualities were Rupa (Good Feature), Shiela (Character), Satya (Truth), 'Aryata' / 'Sadachara' (Good and noble Tradition), Dharma (Virtue), Satitva (Gentle feminity), Dhrudhata (Strength of Mind), Sahasa (Moral courage), Mangalagaan (Ability to sing auspitious songs), Kavya kushalata (cleverness of action), 'Kamabhavaka Aadhikya' (excessive feelings of passion) and Ability of Sweet Conversation. Having said this, Rambha bestowed 'Vidyabala' (strength of knowledge. Thus boosting Sunita's morale, Rambha enabled Sunita's meeting with Atri Putra (Anga) and Sunita and performed 'Gaandharva Vivaha'. As far as Anga was concerned, he performed Tapasya to Vishnu and secured a boon of begetting a son of the qualities of Indra and was looking for a suitable wife like Sunita, as recommended by Rambha. Thus an excellent boy was born, who was named Vena.

## 'Daanas'and 'Tirtha Yatras'-Grihastas to perform 'Punya karyas' together

On becoming a King, Vena was intially an exemplary King of high virtue. But in course of time, one unclad, broad-chested and Kamandal dhari Jain Muni arrived in Vena's court and brain-washed him in a belief that had no role for Yajan- Yaajan-Vedadhaayan Tapasya-Dana-Swadha /Shraadha-Swaha / Agnihotra or homa. Saptarshis tried their best to rescue from the evil grip of the misleading belief of 'Arhan'. Thus the Rishis and the majority of the wise and God-fearing masses churned the body of Vena and cleansed it as described earlier and installed Pruthu as the King. Vena was sent on Tirtha Yatras and performed Tapasya and Lord Vishnu appeared and got him back on the moral track to refresh in his memory of the values of what were vehemently opposed by him earlier, especially of Tirtha Yatras and charities. Bhagavan Vishnu Himself extolled the supremacy of Daan and advised King Vena to perform Daan as the sure destroyer of sins and promoter of fame and happiness. Vishnu affirmed that He would readily reward whoever gave charity with a clean heart to a well-deserving Brahmana of foodgrains, clothes, Gold, Bhumi, Cows, Cash and such other gifts. Bhagavan further described that there were four kinds of Danaas, viz. Nithya, Naimitthika, Kaamya and Praaya. Nitya Daana is in the form of Anna (food), fruits and flowers, Vastra (Clothes), Taamboola, Abhshana (Jewellery), Gold and such other items after worshipping Devas and Pitras. Naimitthika daanas are performed on Amavasyas, Pournamis, Ekadashis, Samkranti days or when Sun's directon changes towards Uttarayana; Pournamis of Magha, Ashadha, Vaishakha and Kartika months; Somavati Amavasya, Aswin Krishna Trayodasi, Pitru Tithi etc. and these are effective and highly propitiating. Kaamya Daanaas are in the context of Vratas, Deva Pujas, weddings, Jaata karmas, Upanayanas, Temple Pujas, Bhu-sthapana karyas or Earth breaking tasks of housing, wells, Sarovars etc. all targetted for the success of the desired tasks. Other types of Danaas of Praya nature are oriented to 'Mrityu' and targetted to provide to Peace to departed Souls in 'Paralokas'.

Describing the significance of Tirtha Yatras to King Vena, Bhagavan Vishnu emphasised River Ganga as the most sacred, besides other Rivers like Sarasvati, Narmada, Yamuna, Taapi (Tapati), Charmanvati,

Sarayu, Ghaghra, Vena, Kaveri, Kapila, Vishaala, Godavari, Tungabhadra, Bhimarathi, Vedika, Krishaanga, and so on. In fact, there are countless such Tirthas dotting the Punya Bhumi of Bharat in which Snaana and Daana karmas yield excellent results and all such Tirthas are called n fact, there are countless such Tirthas dotting the Punya Bhumi of Bharat in which Snaana and Daana karmas yield excellent results and all such Tirthas are called Vishnu Tirthas. In fact, Tirthas are every where like Sarovars of Manasa status, Mountains like Meru, Himalayas and Vindhya; Yagna Bhumis, Agnihotra Homa Places, Shraddha Bhumis, Deva Mandirs, Homa Shalas, Vaidika Swadhyaaya Mandirs, Goshaalas, residences of Somayaaji Brahmanas, where Pita and Mata live, where Puranas are recited and heard, where Veda Shravana is heard, where Guru lives and each and every Place of Worship!

Another important aspect which Bhagavan Vishnu emphasised was that for a Grihasta, any daan given or a Tirtha Yatra performed, it would be compulsory for both husband and wife to execute together since a husband is the right portion of a wife and a wife is the left part of a husband. Shastras underlined the fact that a husband was the Tirtha to a wife and vice versa. Any daana- punya, Yagna-homa, Snaana-Puja, Tirtha Yatra or another sacred task performed by a Grihasta with his woman seated on the left side would be counter-productive and a sheer waste! Bhartrum prasaadaascha sarvam labhatey naatra samsayaha, Vidyamaaney yada kaantey Anya dharma karotiya/ nishphalam jaayatey tasyaaha pumshali parikathyatey! (A person while her life partner is alive and seeks to perform any kind of Dharma Karya is said to be a Vyabhicharini).

#### Dialogue of Yayati and Matali about Creation, Human Existence and Papa-Punyas

Sage Narada was impressed with the success of the Kingship of eighty five thousand years of Yayati who was the son of King Nahusha of Soma Vamsha; the latter was a glorious and incomparable King who organised hundred Yagnas as an exemplary proponent of Daana-Tirtha -Veda and Dharma way of life and became Indra, the Chief of Devas. (In fact, Nahusha would have continued with the status of Indra but for an indiscretion of desiring Devi Sachi of the erstwhile Indra who abandoned 'Indratva' temporarily, owing to the fright of committing 'Brahma hatya' as he killed Vritrasura). Such was the magnificence of King Yayati who like his father was equally illustrious having performed one hundred Yagnas to his credit. After his visit to King Yayati, Sage Narada visited Lord Indra and liberally extolled the virtues of King Yayati. Indra became apprehensive of his own throne and commissioned Matali, the driver of Indra to bring Yayati to Swarga after assigning Kingship to one of his four sons and enjoy his stay in Swarga. King Yayati wondered as to why Indra specially sent Matali to him! He told Matali that even as his life continued, what could be the reason behind the liberal offer by Indra. Matali said that sooner than later the 'deha' (human body) would have to be abandoned since the body and the eternal soul were distinct and before the 'Pancha Bhutas' commence to fail the body into 'Vriddhhapya' (Old age), it would be wise that Yayati accepted the offer of Indra. Yayati argued that just as the existing body became of age, a new body would get created and that too would become decadent. Thus this cycle of life and death, rebirth and death again would be repetitive. Be it during the course of human existence or after attaining Swarga, any 'Praani'could never be really happy!

In this connection, Matali explained how different types of birth are envisaged and what kinds of difficulties were encountered from birth through one's life till the end and so on. Depending on the 'Karma' of a 'Praani', births are decided as 'Udbhija' (sprouted from Earth like grass, vegetables etc.), 'Swedaja' (Krumi, Keeta and Flies), 'Andaja' (Birds, Fish etc. born out of eggs) and 'Jarayuja' (Animals, human beings etc. born out of physical bodies). As a result of interaction of Pancha Bhutas viz. Earth, Fire, Water, Wind and Sky, 'Anna' or food gets materialised as six varieties viz. Bhakshya, Bhojya, Peya,

lehya, Choshya and Khadya. Anna has twelve end results viz. Paaka( the cooked), Rasa (liquids), Mala or body reject, Rakta or blood, Roma (body hairs), 'Maamsa' or meat, kesha or head hairs, Snaayu or sinews, Mazza (marrow), haddi or bones, 'Vasa' and 'Veerya' (sperm). The male Veerya and the female 'Raza' during the period of union would take an amorphous shape within five nights; within a month's time are created neck, head, shoulders, back bone and stomach; within two months hands, feet, wrist, waist and the entire body; within three months body nerves; within four months fingers; within five months face, nose, ears; six months teeth gums and tongue; within seven months the terminl organs and within eight months the rest of the body's other interior and exterior parts. The 'Jeeva' feels locked in the mother's womb and for the entire period of nine months going through such painful and hellish experiences by 'Jatharagni', blood, excreta etc.and craves for freedom to get out. The Jeeva possesses consciousness with the realisation of the Karmas of previous births and swears never ever to repeat the past sins. After delivery, the 'Praani' continues the journey of life through the phases of Baalya (Childhood), Kaumaara or the formative stage, the Youvana or the Youthful stage, Garhasthya, Vaanaprastha and finally Varthakya, but is engrossed in the pleasures and pains, the craving for education and wealth, livelihood, fame, Samsara, and various ramifications of the 'Arishadvargas'. In the process a Praani is subjected to emotions, passions, sentiments, joys, sorrows, pains, fleeting experiences of happiness, contentment, mournings, distresses, and so on, some of which are of temporary nature and some of lasting impact. Among these phases of life, the Praani commits mistakes, indiscretions, and sins with or without awareness on the one hand and tasks of Dharmic nature, good deeds, charities etc.on the other.

King Yayati enquired that in life human beings tended to commit several atrocities and as to what would be the end-results of such actions. Matali's reply was that whenever a person criticised Vedas or Veda Sadachari (Exponent of Vedas) and ill treated the noble and the virtuous, he was stated to be a 'Paataka' or a Sinner. Those who abused parents, ill treated brothers and sisters and behaved with close relatives was also called a Paataka. When a Shraddha was performed by a person and if a brother in law or son in law staying nearby was not invited then that person was considered a Paataka. When several Brahmanas attended a function and favourtism were to be followed, then that person was called a Paataka. Those who resorted to Guru Ninda, ill treatment of the poor, the diseased, the elderly and the disabled were all called Paatakas. Fault-finding and talking lightheartedly in a hurting manner about women, friends, relatives and children is a pataka. Brahmana hatya, robbing gold, drinking wine, sleeping with Guru's wife and keeping company with such sinners are stated to be 'Maha Paatakas'. Accosting a poor Brahmana mendicant with a view to giving charity and turning him away on some pretext; taking in teasing or insulting manner to a poor but well read Vidwan; and seeking to converse with a Veda Pundit in a haughty manner to display one's own knowledge and showing him down are all considered to be on par with Brahma-hatya Paatakas. If a person is thirsty and hungry and out of negligence or upmanship does not relieve that affected person that action is considered as a Maha Paataka. Seeking to usurp wealth / Bhumi / any other material or possessions rightfully belonging to others, especially women, disabled, children and ignorant / illiterate is considered as a blatant Brahma- Ghaati Paataka. Providing wrong evidences, hurting helpless animals, defacing or worse still destroying Temples, Religious Places, Tirthas, Public Utility places like water bodies, gardens, choultries etc. are all treated as Paatakas. Thieving other's possessions like women, cows, land, jewellery, clothing, Dhanya, Karpura, Kasturi or other scented material is a Paataka too. Any ill-justified misbehaviour with women, children, helpless and the poor is also considered as Paataka; all Paatakas are richly deserving of retribution and payback.

Ten means of Punyas are stated to be Ahimsa (non-violence), Kshama (Forgiveness), Satya (Truthfulness), Lazza (Modesty), Shraddha (Patience), Indriya Samyam (Self-Control), Daan (Charity), Yagna (Sacred Rituals), Dhyaana (Meditation) and Gyan

(Knowledge). Eight types of main Charity are of Anna, Jala, Horse (Vahana), Cow, Vastra, Shayya (cot / bed), Sutha (Cotton / fibre), and Asana (Seat). Anna daana is stated to acount for half of all kinds of daana. Jala daan is of next best importance. Together, these two account for the best part of Daanaas. Among the Punyas, meditation and Gyan occupy pre-eminent position. The World of Devas is of 'Vishwas' or of faith, conviction and belief. Those who possess trust and devotion in Maha Deva Shiva by way of Dhyana, Kirtana, Bhajana, Prayer, Japa, Yoga, and such means of Approach to that Sat-Chit-Ananda, attain Shivaloka. Similarly, those who possess reliance and conviction in Chakradhari Narayana utilising the Vaishnava Approach by way of dedication, meditation, belief in Dualism of Bhagavan and a devotee and mutual equation between the two Entities have 'Bhakti' as the vehicle of drawing them together.

Shaivam cha Vaishnavam lokameka rupam Narotthama, Dwayoschaapyantaram naasti Eka rupam Mahatmanoh/ Shivaaya Vishnu Rupaaya Vishnavey Shiva Rupiney, Shivasya hridayey Vishnur Vishnosha hridaye Shivah/Eka murthirstrayo Deva Brahma Vishnu Maheswarah, Trayaanaamantaram naasti guna bhedah prakeertitah/

(Nara Sreshtha! Shri Shiva and Bhgavan Shri Vishnu are just the same and there is no difference in them; my greetings to Shri Vishnu rupa dhaari and Shri Shiva Rupa dhaari; Shri Vishnu's heart is in the heart of Shri Shiva; The Three Entities of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are identical, excepting the emphasis of the Tri Gunas viz. Satva, Rajo and Tamo gunas.)

### King Yayati discards Indra's offer to Swarga and prefers Vishnu Dhaam'

Yayati thus discarded Matali's offer of going to Swarga as proposed by Matali; instead he would prefer targetting Vishnu loka. Yayati said: Vidyamaanehi samsaarey Krishna -naamani Mahoushadhey, Maanavaa maranam yaanti paapavyaadhi prapeeditaah/ Na pibanti mahaa muddhaah Krishna naama rasaayanam/ (The name of Shri Krishna is the best possible medicine; it is absurd that even as this unique medicine is available, human beings continue to be victims of sins and diseases and reach 'Mrityu' (death); how stupid are they not to savor Krishna-Rasayana? Bhagavan's Puja, Dhyaan, Niyam, Satyabhashan and Daana would certainly cleanse a human body of blemishes and sins and as such there was no question of accepting Indra's offer to visit Indraloka, affirmed Yayati to Matali. After Matali had left for Indraloka, Yayati called his Officials and instructed them to spread the message of Vaishnav Dharma far and wide in his Kingdom among all irrespective of Varnashrama. The message stated: Raja Yayati has brought 'Amrit' for every body's consumption; the Amrit is of Vaishnay Dharma: Shri Keshavam klesha harim varenyamaananda rupam paramarthamevya, Naamaamritam dosha haram tu Raajnaa Aaneetamatraiva pibuntu lokaah/ Shri Padma naabham Kamalekshanamcha Aadhaara rupam jagataam Mahesham/ Paapaaham Vyaadhivinaasha rupa maananda -dam Daanava Daitya naashanam/ Yagnaga Rupam cha Rathaangapaanim Punyaakaram Soukhyamantarupam/ Visvaadhi vaasam Vimalam Viraamam ramaabhidhaanam Ramanam Muraarim/ Aditya Rupam tamasaam vinaasham Chandra prakaasham Mala Pankajaanaam/ Sashankha paanim Madhusudanaakhyam tam Shrinivaasam Sagunam Suresham/ Naamaamritam doshaharam su punyamadhhtya yo Mahava Vishnu Bhaktaha, Prabhaata kaley niyatho Mahaatma sa yati muktim na hi kaaranamcha/ (Bhagavan Keshava is the 'Paraartha Tatva' which demolishes the difficulties of one and all; He is Sarva Sreshtha and Ananda Rupa; his naama-amrita purifies all kinds of imperfections; King Yayati has made this Amrit easily accessible and all the persons in the Kingdom could take it as much as possible. A beautiful lotus got materialised from Vishnu's navel and his eyes were like sparkles; these were the firm holds of the entire Universe, signifying Parameswara destroying sins, providing happiness and blowing up Daityas and Danavas. His Swarupa is endless, eternal and all-pervading; He is famous by the name of Rama Nama; He is the antagonist of Mura and the destroyer of darkness; He is Aditya Rupa and Lakshmi Niwasa, or the seat of prosperity; whosoever takes his sacred name by the morning and evening would most certainly attain Moksha!). As the entire

population of Yayati's Kingdom followed the Great Principles of Vishnu Worship in full and unreservd form, there was propitiousness all around; there were no 'Tapa Trayas' viz. Adhi Bhautika (Natural Calamities), Adhyatmika (Physical / mental / psychological /internal) and Adhi Daivika (on account of Grahas, Spirits, or exta-sensory nature); no untimely deaths; no discontenment and no interaction of 'Arishad Vargas'!

By witnessing the unique popularity of King Yayati all over the Universe and also becoming jealous of his youthful vigour to continue as the King by the grace of Lord Vishnu whose Vishnu Tatva was vehemently popularised all over, Indra desired to weaken Yayati psychologically and bring him to disrepute. He instructed Kama Deva and Devi Rati to enact a Drama along with Gandharvas in which Yayati would get passionate by the beauty of the actress; Yayati fainted during the course of the Drama and Kamadeva entered the body of Yayati and got him old. As Yayati got infatuated with the daughter of Kama Deva couples viz. Ashrubindumati, the latter stipulated the terms of wedding that Yayati's earlier wives Sharmishtha and Devayani should be abandoned and that Yayati should regain his youth. Taru and Yadu the two sons of Sharmishtha refused to take over Yayati's old age in lieu of their youth but Devayani's son Puru agreed readily. Yayati enjoyed his youth for twenty five thousand years and as a token of gratitude made Puru the King.

# Sage Chyavan's encounter with Parrot Kunjal (Vishnu Shata naama included)

Sage Chyavan of Bhargava Vamsha undertook an extensive 'Tirtha Yatra' (religious tour) visiting Sacred Places of Worship nearby the Holy Rivers Narmada, Sarasvati and Godavari. He reached Omkareshwar Tirtha and having taken bath and worship, rested under a tree on the banks of the Tirtha; he overheard the conversation of a Parrot named Kunjal with its sons viz. Ujjwal, Samujjwal, Vijjval and Kapinjal. The Sage learnt from the conversation of Kunjal and sons that they were ardent devotees and that Kunjal was a highly enlightened bird. By the evening there was a family union of the parrots for food and rest in their nest over the tree, under which the Sage sat. As Kunjal desired to recite Stories to them, the elder son Ujjwal asked the father to explain about Gyan (Enlightenment), followed by Dhyaan (meditation), Vratas (Conducted Worships), Punya (The fruits of Good Works) and hundred names of Bhagavan. About Gyan, Kunjal explained that there was a State of Bliss called Kaivalya or Moksha which was a Unique Form of Extreme Happiness devoid of 'Duhkha' or Sorrow, unreachable by normal vision or feeling. The Bird said: Yatha deepo nivaasastho nischalo Vaayuvarjitah, Prajjvalan-naashayet sarvamandhakaaram mahaamatye/ taddosha viheenatma bhavatyeva niraashraah/ (Such Kaivalya State of Gyaanatma which is spotless, steady and holdless is like a lustrous mass of Lamp which wipes out darkness around). That luminosity is the stable origin of Universal Existence called 'Atma' or the Super Soul which has no friend or enemy, no pleasure nor grief and no attachment nor greed. The Soul is devoid of senses, feelings, impulses and reactions. The awareness of that Singular Super Soul is Gyana. Now Dhyana is the meditation of that Super Soul known by countless names and epithets and is in either 'Niraakara' Form or 'Akaara' Form. 'Nirakara Dhyana' is possible only to Yogis who could visualise the Abstract Form through the Vision of Gyana. The 'Sakara Rupa' assumes Human Form with recognisable limbs; for instance Bhagavan Vishnu is easily identified with four arms with Shankhu, Chakra, Gada and Saranga with golden head gear and silk dress etc.and facilitates Dhayana. Vratas are formatted worships as per the Deity targetted, the specific day as scheduled according to Maasa- Paksha- Tithi- Vaara- Nakshatra and as configured. For instance Vratas like Jaya, Vijaya, Papanashini, Jayanti, and Manoraksha Vratas are executed on Ekadashi / Dwadashi days; there are also regular Vratas like Krishnashtami which are of repetitive nature. There are innumerable Vratas observed all over Bharat as per specified formats and each one of these has far reaching impact in diminishing the burden of sins and improving the 'Punya' Accounts.

The Holy Parrot Kunjal then narrated the **Vishnu Shatanaama Stotra** as follows:

Om asya Shri Vishnu Shata naama Stotrasyasya Bhrahma Rishishiranushthabhah Chhanadah Pranavo Devataa Sarva Kaamika Samsaddhayai Mokshardhayai cha Japey vinigogah/: Namaamyaham Hrishikesham Keshavam Madhusudhanam, Sudanam Sarvadaityanaam Narayanamayamyam/ Jayantam Vijayam Krishnamanantam Vaamanam tatha, Vishnum Vishveswaram Punyam Vishvaatmaanam Suraarchitam/ Anagham Twaghahateeram Naarasimham Shirayah Priyam, Shripatim Shridharam Shreedam Shrinivaasam Mahodayam/ Shri Ramam Madhavam Moksham Kshamaarupam Janaadnanam, Sarvignam Sarva Vetthaaram Sarvesham Sarvadayikam/

Harim Muraarim Govindam Padmanaabham Prajaaptim, Anandam Gyaana sampannam Gyaanadam Gyaana -daayakam/ Achytam Sabalam Chandra Vaktram Vyaaptaparaavaram, Yogeswaram Jagadyonim Brahma Rupam Maheswaram/ Mukundam chaapi Vaikunthamekarupam Kavim Dhruvam, Vasudevam Maha Devam Brahmanyam Brahmana Priyam/ Go priyam Gohitam Yagnam Yagyaangam Yagnavardhanam, Yaginasyaapi Subhktaaram Veda Vedanga paaragam/Vedainam Veda rupam tam Vidyaavaasam Sureswaram, Pratyaksham cha Maha Hamsam Sharangapaanim Puraatanam/Pushkaram Pushkaraaksham cha Vaaraaham Dharaneedharam, Pradyumnam Kaamapaalam cha Vyasadhyaatam Maheswaram/ Sarva Soukhyam Maha Soukhyam Samkhyam cha Purushotthamam, Yoga Rupam Maha Jnaanam Yogeeshamajitam Priyam/ Asuraarim Lokanaatham Padmahastam Gadaadharam, Guhaavaasam Sarvayaasam Punyayaasam Mahajanam/ Vrindaanaatham Brihatkaayam Paavanam Paapa naashanam, Gopinaatham Gopasakham Gopaalam Goganaashrayam/ Paraatmaanam Paadheesham Kapilam Kaarya maanusham, Namaami Nikhilam Nityam Maovaakkaya karmabhih/ Naamnaam shatenaapi tu Punyakartaa yah Stouti Krishnam Manasa sthirena, sa yaati lokam Madhusudanasya vihaaya doshaniha Punyabhutah/ Naamnaam shatam Maha Punyam Sarva paataka shodhanam, Ananya manasaa Dhyaayejjapetbhyaana samanvitah/Nityamevam narah Punyam Gangaasnaana phalam labhet, tasmaat Susthiro Bhutvaa Samaahitamanaa japet/ (Hrishikeshaha or The Chief of Indriyas or the Physique; Keshava; Madhusudana or the Killer of Daitya Madhu; Narayana; Anamaya or devoid of diseases and sorrows; Javanta; Vijava; Krishna, Ananta; Vaamana; Vishnu; Visweswara; Punya; Vishvaatma; Suraarchita or worshipped by Devas; Anagha or Sinless; Aghaharta or the destroyer of sins; Narasimha; Sri Priya or the beloved of Lakshmi; Sripati; Sridhara; Shreeda or the provider of Lakshmi; Sreenivaasa; Mahodaya or the Great Provider of Abhudaya or Progress; Shri Rama; Maadhava; Moksha; Kshamarupa or the Provider of forgiveness; Janaadrana; Sarvajna; Sara Vettaa; Sarveswara; Sarva dayaka; Hari; Muraari; Goinda Padmanaabha; Prajapati; Ananda; Jnaanasampanna; Jnaanada or the Provider of Jnaana; Jnaan daayaa; Achyuta or he who does not diminish; Sabala; Chandravakra or he who has a face like Chandra; Vyaptaparaavar or all pervasive; Yogeswara; Jagadyoni or the Place of Creation; Brahmarupa; Maheswara; Mukunda; Vaikuntha; Ekarupa; Kavi; Dhruva; Vasudeva, Mahadeva; Brahmana Brahmana Priya; Gopa Priya; Go hita; Yagna; Yagnaanga; Yagna Vardhan; Yaga Bhokta; Veda Vedanga Parayana; Vedagna; Veda Rupa; Vidyavaasa, Sureswara; Prakyasha or directly visible; Maha Hamsa; Shankhapaani; Puraatana; Pushkara; Pushkaraaksha; Vaaraahi; Dharaneedhara; Pradyumna; Kaamapaala; Vyasanandhyat; Maheswara; Sarva Soukhya; Maha Soukhya; Sankhya; Prushotthama; Yoga Rupa; Maha Gyaana; Yogeswara; Ajita; Priya, Asurari; Lokanatha; Padmaasta; Gadaadhara; Guhaavasa, Sarvavaasa; Punyayasa; Mahaajana; Bridanatha; Brihatkaayya; Paayan; Paapanaashana; Gopinatha; Gopasakhah; Gopaala, Go Granaaswara, Paratmi; Paradheesha; Kapila; and Karya Manusha or he who assumes a human form as per the exigency! I adore the Sarva Swarupa Parameswara daily in my mind, Vaak or mouthful, and action; whosoever reads with clean heart and sincerity the aforementioned hundred and odd names of Paramatma Narayana would be rid of sins and finally reaches Vishnu loka. Daily japa of the Vishnu Shatanaamaavali attains Ganga snaana phala). The Namaavali is best recited after Snaanas in Kartika / Magha month mornings or at the time of Brahmana Bhojan on Shraddha Days for attaining Siddhis.

After describing the importance of Jnaana, Dhyana, Vrata, Punya and Vishnu Shata —naamavali to the elder son Ujjvala, the Parrot Kunjala gave 'Upadesh' (Preaching) to the second son Vijjwala that whatever 'Karma' or Action was performed in one's current birth would determine the resultant fruit-be it 'Punya' or 'Paapa'. Karma being performed today decided the 'Dhukha' or 'Sukha' on the next day. Whether a Devata, or a human being, an animal or bird, an insect or a grass root would have to follow the principle of sow now and reap later and there was no exception at all in the Lord's Creation! The mix of actions done in the previous births, viz. the 'Sanchaya' or what was stored in many of the earlier births and the 'Prarabdha' or the cumulative Karmas already classified and sealed and the Karma of what was being performed instantly would decide on the course of actions ahead in future and there would indeed be no escape from it; but the timing of the reaped harvest-be it sweet or sour; the intensity of the result and manner in which the Punya or Paapa was mixed to yield retribution or reward would be a matter of detail. The pattern of adjustment or the shuffle of 'Karmas' and 'Phalas' would be subject to the framework of Good or Bad Actions being taken now.

Having prefaced the 'Upadesh' Kunjal narrated to the son Vijjwal about the account of King Subahu of Chola Desha and his Brahmana 'Purohit' (Priest) called Jaimini. The King enquired from Jaimini as to which path of virtue would be comparatively superior between the alternatives of Daana and Tapasya. Pat came the reply that there was no better medium of virtue in the World than 'Daana', since charity was an outcome of one's materialistic gain and normally parting of one's earnings would be difficult. (On the other hand Tapasya was secondary in importance compared to Charity and was a subjective matter and the gain of Tapsya was not transferable like in the case of charity.) There could be several kinds of charity but Anna Daan is considered to be ideal; Anna daan coupled with Jala daan given in charity every day, if possible with nice conversation to the receiver without ego or superiority feeling would be the best possible Daana. Anna Daan is like Prana Daan and hence the best option.

Impressed with the reply given by Jaimini, King Subahu asked him to describe the blatant sinners as distinct from those virtuous who were bound to Swarga. One who rejects Brahmanatva due to greed would go to hell. One who is a Nastik (Atheist), a breaker of Virtue, a Dambhik / self-conceited person, an ungrateful being, a persistent liar, a money usurper, a nagging complainant, a habitual liar, a spoiler of Public Utilities like Gardens, water-bodies, choultries, Temples and transport; a tormentor of parents, women, children, Gurus, helpless persons, patients and animals and such other examples of vicious persons would march straight to various Narakas. On the other hand those fine examples of human beings who observe Satya, Daan, Tapasya, Gyan, Dhyan and Swadhyaya; worship Devas, Gurus, Parents, Brahmanas, Sadhus, Atithis (Guests) and Elders; give respect for women and co-human beings; and consideration for the helpless, animals and children and perform positive actions with clean conscience are bound to Swarga. Parrot Kunjal thus narrated the story of Subahu and Jaimini.Inspired by the Upadesha, King Subahu decided to follow Dharmik Karyas, aviod the apparent pitfalls besides executing worship of Bhagavan Vasudeva by means of Yagnas, Daanas, Tirtha Yatras and so on and accomplished Vishnu Loka finally.

Another son of Kunjal, Kapinjal, informed that when the latter flew once in search of food on the banks of Ganga, he found an interesting scene of a woman shedding tears out of which were emerging lotuses of unparalalled beauty and fragrance. Kunjal explained that once King Nahush killed a demon named 'Hund' and as a follow up the demon's son Vihund killed the Minister and Senapati. Also, he harassed Indra, Devas and Brahmanas. Lord Vishnu decided to kill Vihund by assuming the form of a charming woman performing Tapasya. As Vihund was tempted with the woman called Maya, she agreed to marry the demon provided he worshipped Lord Shiva with seven thousand lotuses which would be available from 'Kamod'. As the demon was searching for Kamod 'Tree', Daitya Guru Shukracharya explained that the lotuses were not from a Tree but from a woman called Kamod at 'Gangadwar' (Haridwar).

Shukracharya said that at the time of 'Samudra Mathana' four 'Kanyas' or unmarried girls emerged viz. Lakshmi, Vaaruni, Kamoda and Jyeshtha Devi. When ever Devi Kamoda became ecstatic shedding tears, excellent lotuses emerged with which to worship Lord Shiva or Lord Vishnu. But, Bhagavan Vishnu asked Sage Narada to mislead the Daitya not to visit Kamod Nagar since Vishnu and Devas resided there but instead secure the lotuses from Ganga Pravah (flow). Thus misled successfully by Narada, the Daitya continued to perform puja to Maha Deva by the fake lotuses from the flow which were not genuine but from the sorrowful tears of Maya Devi sitting on the banks of Ganga, instead of the flowers born out of the ecstatic joy of the original Kamoda in the Kamoda Nagar! Devi Parvati became angry that the demon had been worshipping with the fake lotuses born out of sorrow but not by the genuine lotuses of Kamoda Devi. Parvati made a 'humkar' at the insult caused to Maha Deva by wrongful worship and instantly the demon died.

### Sacred Parrot Kunjal's previous birth account

Sage Chyavan was highly impressed with the fund of knowledge that the Parrot Kunjal possessed and asked the bird as to its background. In its previous birth, the bird was the progeny of a scholar of Vedas named Vidyadhar and the latter had three sons viz. Vasu Sharma, Naama Sharma and Dharma Sharma. The elder two sons were good students of Vedas but Dharma Sharma was unintelligent and ignorant. The father was concerned about the third son and exhorted him to try his best to learn; he said: Vidya praapyatey soukhyam yashah keertistathatula, Jnaanam Swargah Sumokshascha tasmadvidyaam prasadhayah (Vidya provides happiness, good name and fame; it also bestows Knowledge, Swaraga and Moksha). But unfortunately Dharma Sharma continued to be dim-witted and brainless. When he was sad about his stupidity sitting in a Temple, the boy was approached by a Sidhha who blessed him to become an excellent 'Vidyavan' on par with his elder brothers. The father was delighted at the transformation of Dharma Sharma who did Vedadhyana and various noble tasks that other Brahmana boys carried out. One day, he came across a hunter selling parrots and since Dharma Sharma evinced interest in a particular parrot which talked and sang nice, an elderly gentleman gifted it out of benevolence. In course of time, Dharma Sharma grew so fond of the bird that one day a cat killed it and he lost his mental balance once again and eventually died. At the time of one's death, the feelings that were intense influenced the kind of rebirth that a person would have; the praani would have the same type of feelings, form, physique, courage and features in the ensuing birth too: Maraney yaadrusho bhaavah praaninam parijaayatey/ taadrushaah syustu satvaastey tadrupastatparaakramah, tatgunaastattatva rupaascha baavabhutaa bhavantih/ That was how, the parrot inherited the intellect, mental sharpness and even the awareness of the past, presence and future!

Sage Chyavan was thus enlightened by the Parrot Kunjal and considered the parrot as the Guru of the Sage in knowing several aspects of Tatwa Gyaan, especially in the context of Tirtha Yatras in which the Sage was engaged in.

#### **Broad Geographical delineation of Bharata Varsha**

In Swarga Khanda, the panoramic view of Mountains, Rivers, Regions, Cities and Punya Kshetras of Bharata Varsha defied description. This ancient land produced illustrious Kings known for virtue and values of nobility such as Vaivaswata Manu, Pruthu, Ikshvaku, Yayati, Ambarisha, Mandhata, Nahusha, Muchukunda, Rishabha, Pururava, Nriga, Kushika, Gaadhi, Soma, Dilipa and so on. Seven Kula Parvatas (Mountains) are the well known the land marks viz.Mahendra, Malaya, Sahya, Shaktiman, Rikshayan,

Vindhya and Paari yatra, besides thousands of surrounding mountains of repute dotting the length and breadth of Bharata.

The famous Rivers of Bharat are countless including Ganga, Sindhu, Saraswati, Godavari, Narmada, Baahuda, Shadyu (Satlaj), Chandra bhaga, Yamuna, Drishaduti, Vipasha, Vetravati, Krishna, Veni, Iravati, Payoshni, Devika, Vedasmriti, Vedashira, Tridiva, Karishini, Chitravaha, Trisena, Gomati, Chandana, Kaushki (Kosi), Naachita, Rohitaarani, Rahasya, Shatakumbha, Sarayu, Charmanvati, Hastisoma, Disha, Sharavati, Bheemarathi, Kaveri, Baaluka, Tapi, Nivara, Mahita, Suprayoga, Pavitra, Krishnala, Vaajini, Purumalini, Purvabhirama, Veera, Maalavati, Papaharini, Palashini, Mahendra, Patalavati, Asikri, Kushavira, Marutva, Spravara, Mena, Hora, Ghritavati, Anushni, Sevya, Kaapi, Sadaaveera, Adhrushya, Kushachira,Rathachitra, Jyotiratha, Vishvamitra, Kapijjala, Upendra, Bahula, Vainandi, Pinjala, Vena, Thungavega, Mahanadi, Vidisha, Krishnavega, Taamra, Kapila, Dhenu, Sakama, Vedaswa, Havihstrava, Mahapatha, Kshipra, Bhaaradwaji, Kaurnaki, Shona, Chandrama, Antasshila, Brahmamedhya, Paroksha, Rohi, Jambunadi (Jammu), Sunasa, Tapasa, Saamaanya, Varuna, Asi, Neela, Ghritikari, Maanavi, Vrishabha and Bhasha.

Janapadaas or Provinces include Kuru, Paanchaala, Shaalva, Maatreya, Jaangala, Surasena, Pulinda, Sougandha, Chedi, Matsya, Bhoja, Sindhu, Dasharna, Mekala, Utkala, Koshala, Yugandhara, Madra, Kalinga, Aparakashi, Jathara, Kukkura, Kunti, Avanti, Aparakunti, Pundru, Goparashtra, Maharashtra, Malava, Magadha, Videha, Anga, Vanga, Surashtra, Kekaya, Maheya, Aanarta, Kuntala, Kukundaka, Kashmira, Sindhusouveera, Gandhara, etc. In the Dakshina (southern) Bharata, the Jaanapadas include Dravida, Malavara (Kerala), Praachya, Mushika, Balmushika, Karnataka, Kishkindha, Kuntala, Chola Kona, Manivaalava, Vindhya, Vidarbha, etc. Mleccha sthanas in North include Yavana (Yunaani), Kambhoja, Pulastya, Huna, Parasika (Iran), etc.

## Over-view of prominent 'Tirthas' in Bharata Varsha

The entire Bharata Varsha is laced with several Tirthas, mostly to cater to the devotional feelings of persons at Places situated nearby as also to attract quite a few devotees from far off Places depending on the intensity of their Bhakti and the pull of such Tirthas owing to their reputation. Tirthas are the abodes of Rishis. It is strongly believed that Devas made frequent expeditions and Lord Brahma stayed there for long duratons. In fact, only those whose physical abilities are in order, or are disciplined, non-egoistic, performers of Vratas, truthful, determined and highly devotional would reap maximum advantage rather than the run of the mill crowds without aim or purpose. For example, those visiting Pushkara Tirtha ought to observe a strict regimen of Snaana-Deva Puja-Pitra Shraaddha-Agni Karyas- Daana- Dhyana-Tapsya and total dedication, and then only the real fruits are reaped, including transfers to Brahma Loka! Casual visits to the Tirtha are of academic interest to merely publicise that they have too registered a trip! Any marginal return of Tirtha Visits of informal nature is peripheral.

It is said that the best route to Tirthaas is to commence the Yatra from Jambu Marg, observe single meal for five nights and worship Bhagavan Vishnu with austerity. From Jambu Marg to Tundulikashram to Agastyashram where three nights are to be spent fasting and performing Deva Puja and Pitra Puja which would give Agnishtom Yagna Phala. Further on visit Kanyashram Tirtha for worshipping Devi Lakshmi and proceed to Yayati Patana Sthan and perform 'Parikrama'; this entire package would bestow the fruit of executing Ashvamedha Yagna. Continuing the austerity of moderate food, one should carry on visiting Mahaakala Tirtha at Ujjain, to worship Mahaa Kala Linga by 'Abhisheka' with milk followed by the sacred Snaana at Koti Tirtha. There after one should continue the Yatra at Umapati Tirtha at Bhadravati Sthaan. The worship at these Tirthas would fetch the Punya of Godaan and joining Shivaganas. Deva Puja and Pitru Tarpan at Holy Narmada provide the fruits of Agnishtoma Yagna and automatic demolisher of

sins. It is said that even the vision of Narmada River is as good as snaanas at Sarasvati and Yamuna for seven days each and a mere 'sparsha' (touch) of Ganga River. Narmada is said to be a highly Sacred River in Three Lokas, where Devatas, Asuras, Gandharvas, Rishis and others attain siddhis by performing Tapasya on its banks. Sage Narada told Yudhihtara of Pandavas that after taking 'Vidhivat' (formal) snaana in Narmada and spending even one night's stay on its banks would demolish hundred 'peedas' or serious impediments of severe nature. Those who perform formal 'Pinda daan' with Veda Mantras at 'Janeswar Tirtha' would satisfy Pitras till 'Maha Pralaya Kaal'. On the four sides of 'Amarakanta Parvata' are set up Koti Rudras; if a devotee were to take a sacred 'Snanaa' (Bathing) and worship with flowers and chandana to as many Rudra Lingas as possible, the Koti Rudra Bhagavan would be extremely pleased most certainly and without doubt. On the western side of the Amarakanta Mountain, there is a Presence of Bhagavan Maheswara and worship of this Idol would provide salvation to seven previous generations! In fact, there are some sixty crore and sixty lakh Tirthas around all the four sides of Amarakanta Mountain and those who stay there for good time by observing Brahmacharya with full control of Indriyas devoid of violence and falsity would indeed be blessed by Maha Deva. River Kapila in the Southern part of the Mountain, is highly sacred and propitious and worship of innumerable Tirthas around fetch funds of Punya; River Vishalyakarana is another holy entity which tears down sins instantly and wrecks all traces of unhappiness in life! Snaana- Dhyana-Puja-Tarpana-Shraaddha-Daana- Dakshina at the time of Surya Grahana or Chandra Grahana (Solar / Lunar Eclipses) at Narmada or Kapila / Vishalyakarana would bestow ten-time more of Punya along with Pundareeka Yagna Phal. Finally, Snaana- worship at Jwaleswara Maha Deva Temple provides Swarga and death at this Tirtha would free the soul from the cycle of births and deaths! The Narmada-Kaveri Sangam, like Ganga-Yamuna Sangam, is another holy spot where Snaana, worship of Devas/Pitras and Yagna Karyas are performed to accomplish superior levels of 'Mahatmya'.

Among the various Tirthas on the Narmada banks are Panneswar where Devas come down to bathe; Garjan (Indrajit) which fulfills ambitions and enterprise; Brahmaavart where Lord Brahma bestows Gyan and Creative Power; Angaareshwar where one worships Bhagavan Rudra for 'Rudra Loka Praapti'; Kundaleshwar where Shankara and Devi Parvati take frequent sojourns; Pippaleswar for the benefit of Rudra loka nivasa; Vimaleswar to purify soul and if dead tavel to Rudra Loka; and Pushkarini Tirtha for eligibility of half of Indra's throne. Devatas and Gandharvas greet the Sacred Nirmada thus: 'Namah Punya jaley Aadye namah Saagaragaamini, Namostu tey Rishiganaih Shankara dehaanih srutey/ Namostutey Dharma bhrutey varaananey Namostutey Deva ganaika vanditey, Namostutey Sarva Pavitra Paavaney Namostutey Sarvajatprasupujitey'

(Punyajala Narmada! You are among the leading Rivers and my greetings to you. You are the one worshipped by Rishis as materialised by Mahadeva; you are the preserver of Dharma and Devas bend their heads down to your feet. You have the power of purifying each and every material and are worshipped by everybody.) If any Brahmana recites this Stotra would become a Veda Vidwan; a Kshatriya would attain victory in battles; a Vaishya gains profits in business, and a Shudra achieves 'Uttama Gati' (higher status). Apart from the above, many other Tirthas are distributed on either the banks of the Sacred Narmada such as Shulabhadra, Bhimeswar, Narmadeswar, Adityaswar, Mallikeswara, Varuneswara, Neerajeswara, Koteswara, Vamaneswara, Vateswara, Bhimeswara, Nandi Tirtha, Vyasa Tirtha, Erandi Tirtha, Suvarna Tilaka, Skanda Tirtha, Sarva Tirtha, Shakra Tirtha, and so on.

Having heard about the Tirthas on the banks of River Narmada from Devarshi Narada, King Yudhishtara became enthusiastic to learn about the other important Tirthas in Bharata Varsha. He evinced interest for instance in the magnificence of Sage Vasishtha's Ashram on Arbuda Mountain (who was the son of Himalaya) where a single night stay bestowed the Punya of daana of thousand cows. Likewise, one should visit Pinga Tirtha where the fruit of charity of hundred cows was received. One should also visit Prabhas Kshetra where Agni Deva stayed always and would be qualified for the Punya of 'Manava Agnishtoma' and 'Atirathra Yagna'. Further one should witness the Sangam of River Sarasvati and the

Sea on the western Bharata, where also the 'phala' of charity of one thousand cows would be reaped. Stay of three nights and simultaneous performance of Pitru Tatpanas at Varuna Tirtha would award Ashwamedha Yagna phal. Vara daana Tirtha was also stated to endow Sahasra Go Daana Phala. Visit to Dwarakapuri could not be missed as even now 'Mudras' or reproductions of Trishul on Lotus Leaves are visioned there. Snaana- Rudra Puja- Pradakshina at Shankha kantheswara Tirtha would grant ten Ashwamedha Phal and remission of sins for the entire life. Even mere reaching Vasudhara Tirtha would provide the fruit of the Horse-Sacrifice while Tarpana to Pitras would benefit far further. Not far from here were Vasu Tirtha immensely liked by the Ashta Vasus as also Brahma Tunga Tirtha for pleasing Lord Brahma by worship and Renuka Tirtha for purifying of conscience. In the near vicinity were Pancha Nada Tirtha, Bhima Tirtha and Giri Kunja Tirtha. In Kashmira Pradesha the Tirthas are Vitasta Tirtha, Malada Tirtha, Dirgha Satra Tirtha, Shashayana Tirtha (reputed for Snaanas in River Saraswati on Kartika Pournimas), Kumarakoti Tirtha, Rudra koti Tirtha and the most renowned Sangama Tirtha for bathing in the River Saraswati for destroying life-long sins. In Kurukshetra, Narada's recommendation was for a month-long stay, where Bhagavan Vishnu was stated to have been very receptive to the desires of his devotees, where there was a Place known as 'Satata Sthan' or Place Forever quite appropriately. The popular Tirthas in Kurukshetra included Shalvikini, Panchanada, Soma Tirtha, Kruta Shoucha, Pampa, Varaha Tirtha, Kaaya shodhana, Lokoddhhara, Kapila and Go-Bhavana. Even if the air-borne dust of Kurukshetra got deposited in the skin pores of a Pilgrim, sins of the traveller in the region evaporate away into thin air; this was what Sage Narada affirmed! From Kurukshetra, Narada desired to visit Brahmavarta and gradually reach Kasishwara to get rid of sins, proceed to Sheetavana and Swarnalomapanayana.It was recommended that one should preferably enter Pundarika Tirtha on Shukla Paksha Dashami and after reaching Trivishtap Tirtha, take bath in the River Vaitarini to wash off sins and worship Bhagavan Shankara. Thereafter, a devotee should visit Paanikhyat Tirtha and Mishrikha Tirtha. It was stated that Maharshi Veda Vyas sought to unite the Tirthas around and hence the name was Mishrika. There was Runantak Kuup where Til daan be performed and two very significant Tirthas named Ahan and Sudina Tirthas where Snaanas bestow the blessings of Surya Deva. Snaanas and Pujas at Koti Tirtha would enable charity of thousand cows. Kapalamochana Tirtha on the banks of the Holy River Sarasvati and the highly popular Pruthudak Tirtha for worshipping Devas and Pitras were two holy spots with unbelievable power. The belief had been that there would be no 'Punarjanma' after worship at these two Tirthas! At the Samgam (Confluence) of Rivers Saraswati and Aruna, a three-night stay at the world renowned Tirtha would relieve sins of seven generations including Brahma hatya. From there, two Tirthas called Shathasahastra and Sasahastra are reputed too as visits and Pujas endow the Punya of donating a thousand cows. Snaans and Worships at Renuka Tirtha, Panchayat Tirtha and Sthanuvata Tirtha were all highly significant, before a devotee reached Sannihita Tirtha where sacred snaanas during Solar Eclipses are stated to equate those at all the Tirthas, Jalasayas, Kupas and Mandirs. Naimisharanya,-stated to be the most significant Knowledge Center and the unique Meeting Point of Rishis and their deliberations signifying the contents of all the Holy Puranas and Scriptures addressed by Veda Vyasa, Maha Muni Sutha, Sage Shounaka and others-was the famed Region where the Kali Kala Chakra could not enter and kept the age-old Sancity of earlier Yugas in tact. From Kurukshetra to Dharma Tirtha where Yama Dharma Raja performed penance of thousands of years, folowed by a visit to Kalaapa Vana, Suvarna Tirtha and Sougandhika Vana is stated to be a great experience since the sins of seven generations would get evaporated. Pilgrimage to Gangadwar (Haridwar), Koti Tirtha Snaan and worship at Sapta Ganga, Tri Ganga and Shakravarta Tirthas would fetch the fruits of performing Pundarika Yagna and Sahasra Go The most important 'Yatra' as commended by Narada Muni related to Kalindi Tirtha. The Devarshi asserted that the 'Punya' earned from the pilgrimage to Pushkar, Kutukshetra, Bhahmaavarta, Pruthudak, Avamukta Kshetra (Kashi) and Suvarna Tirtha could be equated to that of Yamuna Snaan! Bathing in Yamuna with or without 'Sakaama' or 'Nishkama' ie with or without objective was certain like what a 'Kama dhenu'or 'Chintamani' (desire-fulfillers) would impart instantly. Those bathing in Kalindi waters irrespective of their 'Varnas' or castes would become handsome, healthy and strong and what was more, they would be highly blessed. Narada Muni said that in Satya Yuga, persons are liberated by means of Penance and Tapas; in Treta Yuga by Gyan, in Dwapara

Yuga by Yagnas, and in Kali Yuga by giving away 'Daanas', but Kalindi Kanya or Devi Yamuna surpassed these limitations since even a worshipful 'Snaana' would be enough to liberate the person concerned in the present Yuga. In this connection, Sage Narada gave the illustration of a Vaishya called Hemakundal who amassed riches, although by fair means, but did not beget children for long. He followed a highly virtuous life of Deva Puja, giving away donations, Atithi-Satkar (Respects to Guests) and such other 'Punya Karyas'. As a result, he was blessed with two sons, but both of them squandered money and out of helplessness, the Vaishya retired into forests. The sons Shrikundal and Vikundal squandered the hard earned and honest money oh the father and became victims of wine, women and gambling. They died early due to vices almost simultanenously. Yamadootas took away the two brothers to Yamaloka where the elder son was sent to Rourava Naraka while the second son was sent to Swarga. This happened so, even though both the sons did same kind of vicious deeds but the second son took only two dips in River Yamuna; the first 'snaan' liberated his sins and the second dip granted him Swarga! As the Yamadootas conveyed to Vikundal that it might be possible to transfer his elder brother also to Swarga, there was perhaps a possibility to do so if only the Punya of the younger brother could be donated to his elder brother, then the younger decided to do so; by this transfer, the elder brother no doubt was able to reach Swarga, but in view of the self-less sacrifice of the younger one in the process of donation so liberally given away to the elder brother, he too was given a berth in Swarga!

Devarshi Narada described then the magnitude of Kashipura to Yudhishtara. Bhagavan Shiva and Devi Parvati adorned the Throne atop the mount of Meru Parvat once and the latter desired to know as to how his devotees could vision the Bhagavan without experiencing too many insurmountable obstacles. Parama Shiva then gave away the secret that Kashipura was the unique Place of his residence where his devotees could observe the requisite regulations of Dharma and vision him instantly. Kashipura thus came to be known as the Avimukta Kshetra which had been dear to him; whatever endeavours that human beings could perform at Varanasi by way of Daana-Japa-Homa-Yagna-Tapasya-Dhyana-Adyayana and Gyan would all be everlasting. The past sins of all the Beings stored for thousands of births would vanish even while entering Kashipura. This would be applicable to Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras, Varnasankaras or of mixed varnas, women, Mlecchhas, Chandalas, animals, birds and worms and ants. Yatra saakshan Mahadevo dehaantey Swayameeshwarah, Vyachashtey taarakam Brahma tatraivahyavi muktakey/ Vaaranaasthaa chaasya madhye Vaaranaasipuri, tatraiva samshitam Tatvam nithyamevam vimuktakam/ Varanasyam param sthanam na bhutam na bhavishyati, Yatra Narayano Devo Mahadevo Diviswarah/ Mahapathakino Devi ye tebhyaha paapakruttamaah, Vaaraanaseem samaasaadhya tey yaanti paramaam gatim/ Tasmanmumukshurniyato vasudvai maranaantakam, Vaaranasyam Maha Devaajnaanam labdhwa vimuchyatey/ ( To those who were about to die in the Avimukta Kshetra, Bhagavan himself would preach the Taraka Brahma Mantra. The Sacred Place called Varanasi in between the two Rivers of 'Varana' and 'Asi' is full of 'Nitya Vimukta Tatwa' or the Philosophy of Permanance and Liberation. There was never a Place like Varanasi nor ever be where Bhagavan Narayana and Deveswara resided with luminosity. A Great Sinner or even a worse example like him would qualify for liberation as soon as he entered Varanasi. That was the reason why 'Mumukshus' or those desirous of achieving liberation desired to reside in Kasi with self-control and dedication till their termination and prompt Bhagavan Shiva himself to bestow 'Gyan' and 'Mukti'to them). Narada asserted that just as Purushotthama Narayana was the superior among Devas, and Maha Deva was the utmost among Ishwaras, Kashipura was the most significant among the Tirthas. This was why people of high understanding longed with the cherished hope of living and if possible die at Varanasi.

At Varanasi, there is a popular Shiva Linga called Kapardeswar, where devotees perform Pujas and Pitru Tarpans; in fact, they should stay there for six months to achieve 'Yoga Siddhi'. Also, taking baths at Pischacha Mochana Kund nearby the Temple and carrying on with Pujas to Kapardeshwar would result in demolition of 'Maha Patakas' like 'Brahma hatya'. In the days of yore, a Tapaswi Brahmana named Shankhakarna performed Puja, 'Rudra Paath'and 'Pranava Japa'; he decided to worship Kapardeswara

always till the end of his life's journey accordingly. One day Shankhakarna visioned a hungry Piscacha nearby and when asked by the Brahmana, the Piscacha narrated that in his last birth he was a prosperous Brahmana with a large family, but did not heed to perform pujas to Devas, Cows and Guests nor did any worthy task. The Picsacha asked Shankhakarna to suggest a way out for getting rid of his existing status. The latter asked the Piscacha to take the Sacred Name of Kapardewara and immediately jump into the Kund nearby the Temple and the Piscacha died while swimming. The Brahmana was happy that the Piscacha was relieved and he prayed to Kapardeswar as follows: 'Bhagavan'! You wear 'Jata-jut' (twisted and coarse hair on head and face) and known as 'Kapardi'; you are 'Paratpar', saviour, unique, Purana Purusha, Yogeswaa, and 'Agni Rupa', mounted on the Sacred Nandiswar; I take refuge in you; You are 'Ru' or the Distancer of Sorrows thus known as Rudra; you extend all over the Sky, Brahma Swarupa! I seek your protection; you possess thousand feet, eyes, heads and Forms; you are incomprehensible even to Vedas; You are 'Lingarahit' or beyond understanding as a man or a woman; 'Aloka Shunya', Swayam Prakash' or Auto-illuminated; You are 'hara' or the eliminator of obstacles; 'Bheda Shunya' or 'Adviteeya' (Exclusive)'! I seek your fortification! By so saying, Shankhakarna fell down the Earth while reciting 'Pranava Mantra' and integrated into 'Shivaswarpa' which was Eternal and Blissful.

From Varanasi to Gaya, Narada suggested the course to perform Pinda Daana at the Vata Vriksha named Akshaya vat and after taking bath at Maha Nadi, execute Tarpanas to Devas and Pitras. This would firm up 'Kulodhaara' or purify the 'Kula Vamsa'. Thereafter pay visits to Brahmaranya, Dhenuka Tirtha, Grudhnavati (for Bhasma Snaan), Udaya Parvat (for Darshan of Savitri and to render 'Sandhyopaasana' to obtain the benefit of rendering Gayatri Mantra for Twelve Years), Yonivaasa (to aviod the nine-month Garbhavaasa), Phalgu River Snaana, Dharma Pushti Yatra, Mani Naga tirtha, Brahmarshi Gautami Vana, Ahalya Kunda Snaana, Gandaki Nadi atra, Maheswari Dhara, Narayana Sthaana (where Brahma, Devas, Rishis, Twelve Adityas, Eight Vasus, and Eleven Rudras worship Janaardana), Shaaligrama Tirtha (where a Well contained the waters from Four Oceans), Jatismara Tirtha, Vateswara, Patakanashini Koushiki, (Kosi Nadi), Champakaranya, Koushala Nadi, Kaala Tirtha (where charity of Twelve Bulls was exexcised), Sona-Jyotirathi Sangam, Pushpavati Snaan, Mahendra Parvat, Matanga Kshetra, and finally Gokarna Tirtha.

Sage Narada made a special mention of Prayaga as one of the most Sacred Tirthas of Bharata Varsha where Brahma and Narayana were both ready to bestow their blessings to mankind. This is also the unique 'Sangam' (Confluence) Point of two illustrious Rivers of Bharata viz. Ganga and Yamuna. It was stated that the Region between these two glorious Rivers constituted the middle portions of Prithvi. Prayag's name, if heard, or sung was worthy of prostration. Being the Yagna Bhumi of Devatas, the Sangama Snaana is known as the most outstanding experience witnessed ever by Devas. Even a small 'Danaa' at Prayaga is stated to have a snow-balling effect to assume manifold times. The saying was that one should perfom Tapasya at Pushkara, Daan on a Mahalaya day, and Upavas (fasting) at Bhrugu-tunga. Mere Snaanas at Pushkar, Kurukshetra and Ganga would register freedom of sins for seven generations in the previous births and seven generations ahead. The moment that a person touched his or her backbone in Ganga, that person's details would get recorded. Where ever Ganga flows, all the Regions and Tapovanas on the River Banks are known as Siddha Kshetras. If a person were unable to actually visit Prayaga and experience the Sangama Snaana, atleast even mental desire would yield Punya. Also, Punya begets Punya and those who possess strong faith would certainly fulfill their desires to take up the pilgrimage.Qualifying further the 'Mahatmya' of Prayaga, Suta Maha Muni narrated the illustration of Yudhishtara; he experienced untold misery that the icon of Kuru Vamsa like Bhishma, Gurus like Drona and Kripacharya, First Cousins, Karna and countless close relatives were all mercilessly killed and could not overcome the grief yet, quite after the passage of time. As though in response to the predicament of Yudhishtara, Mahatma Markandeya visited Yudhishtara. He assured that what Yudhishtara and other Pandavas had done was not only a duty of a Kshatriya, but also a grand vindication of Dharma and justice vis-a-vis the vicious and highly sinful actions perpetrated by Kauravas; the Elders and some of the

Virtuous personalities who sided the wrongdoings had to suffer too in the bargain. Having fully justified the actions of Pandavas and assuaged the personal feelings of Yudhishtara, Mahatma Markandeya recomended Tirtha Yatra to Prajapati Kshetra starting from Prayaga to Pratishthanapura. Lord Brahma and Devatas were in complete charge of this memorable Tirtha. Vishnu and Maheswara too protect Prayaga and the adjoining Region with vehemence. A three-night stay fasting at Prayaga, especially after bathing, Pinda daana and charity of cows, gold and Bhumi would readily bestow the fruits of Ashwamedha Yagna and more than that great mental peace to have killed so many enemies at the Maha Bharata Battle, assured Markandeya. Any person performing Panchagni Sewa between at the Sangam area of Ganga and Yamuna would never have physical disabilities and diseases, besides Swargawas in as many years as hairs on the body. A death at Prayaga would secure relief from the cycle of further lives and deaths. Accordingly, Panadavas did the 'Sevas' at Prayaga and several Tirthas around by way of daily Snaanas, liberal Daanas, fastings, Pinda Daanas, Keshava Pujas and so on.

## 'Mahima' of Bhagavan's 'Kirtanas', 'Bhajans' and 'Stutis'

Having learnt the highlights of the Sacred Tirthas in Bharata Varsha, the Rishis asked one pertinent question to Suta Maha Muni: Yeteshaam khalu Tirthaanaam Sevanaadhyat phalam bhavet, Sarveshaam kila kruttvaikam karma keva cha lahyatey, Yetathro bruhi Sarvagna karmaivam yadi vartatey/ (Is there one good altervative task which might replace the fruits of performing various Tirtha Yatras? Maha Muni Suta! Do kindly enlighten us if there is such a possibility.) Maha Muni replied that in Shastras various 'Sat Karmas' or Noble Tasks were no doubt prescribed for Brahmanas, but one unique Karma was available open to one and all:

Hari bhaktih krutaa yena manasaa karmanaa gira, jitam tena jitameva na samshayah/ (Who ever exercises devotion to Sri Hari by way of 'man-vaani and kriya'/ manasa, vaachaa, karmana or mind, voice, and action would have the ultimate victory without doubt; in other words, 'bhajan' involving thinking, singing and playing cymbals all targetted to Narayana would be the unique way of bhakti). This kind of 'Aradhana' and recital of 'Hari Mantra' would indeed devastate the sinful Piscachas and Evil Spirits instantly.

One single and most devoutful 'Padakshina' or circumambulation of the 'Pratima' or idol of Bhagavan Srihari would equate the fruits of Tirtha Yatras. One sincere 'darshan' (View) of Srihari's idol is stated to fetch the 'Sarava Tirtha Phala' or the fruits of visiting all the Tirthas and one Vishnu naama japa is as sacred as Sarva Mantra Japa or the recital of all the possible Mantras. One mere but hearty Tulasi leaf offered to and glorified by Vishnu Idol could frighten away the scaring face of Yama Raja. Once Sri Krishna's Pratima is greeted with high dedication should consume the breast-milk of a mother once again as there would be no repeat birth to that person again. Even a Chandala or a Mleccha would get become worthy of consideration or even greetings if that person is saturated in the service and worship of Srihari's feet. If that were the case of a Chandala, why ask about the example of a Brahmana or a Rajarshi as he would indeed never experience 'Garbhavaasa' or pregnancy difficulties once again.

Those devotees who recite the names of Bhagavan in high pitch and dance in ecstacy assume the example of purity and clarity of Ganga water. If a Bhakta of proven merit were met, or touched or conversed to with by any person with similar impulses, then the latter would qualify for redemption of the worst kind of sins. As a devotee performs Pradakshina of the Idol of Srihari by clapping, playing instrumental music and songs / hymns in commendation of Srihari, the sonorous music and voice would chase away hefty sins by such claps, music and song. Even the sight or hearings of persons who preach or read the Essence of Puranas and Scriptures ought to clear the conscience of such viewers or listeners. Indeed there was no doubt that the expression of very name of Sri Krishna was the most potent and pious 'Parama Tirtha' than all the Sacred Tirthas put together. That was why Munis, Siddhaas and Yogis had ever visualised any

Tirtha better than Lord Krishna Himself. Those who consumed the Prasad of Sri Krishna or kept the 'Nirmaalya' on their heads are akin to Sri Krishna Himself and would be rid of the fear or grief of facing Yama Raja. Those who visualised Lord Sri Krishna and Bhagavan Maha Deva in a similar manner would be free from the schackles of Samsara again.

However, those who do not consider Hari and Hara in the same manner but consider them as distinct entities would indeed get trapped in Naraka and not counted as Bhaktas! (Yesamaanam prapashyanti Harim vai Devataantaram, tey yaanti Narakam Ghoraatra taamstu ganayedhwarih). Whether it is a Pandita or a Murkha (Ignorant), Brahmana or a Chandala, once Bhagavan endeared him, He would assume the responsibility if only that person were to be an unflinching devotee. 'Nama kirtana' is one of the easiest ways of pleasing Bhagavan as the hard work involved is minimal but returns are immense; this is why critics wonder whether this route is so easy and such arguers fall preys into hells again and again. What is significant is faith and dedication that pays; Bhagavan prefers those who perform Naama-Japa with trust and conviction and gives a secondaty seat to the 'Pujaris' of His Temple! 'Hari-naama' is the 'Vajrayudha' to break the hard mountain of Samsara into pieces!

Taameva dhanyavaakhyatou yau tu puja karou karou, Uttamaangamutthamaangam thadhharou namra meva yat (Those are the worthy hands which are put to use in the Puja and Bhajan of Narayana and indeed those are the noble heads which automatically bend down at the thought of Narayana); Saa jihvaa ya Harim stouti tanmanastatpadaanugam, taani lomaani chochyantey yaani tatraamni chyostthitam/ Kurvanti tacchha netraambu yadacyuta prasangatah/ (It is that tongue which is the best as it readily softens into Stutis of Narayana; it is that heart which readily melts at the name of Narayana; the feet which rise at the very thought of reverence to Narayana and the eyes which instantly fill up with moisture when one discusses about the compassionate ways of helping out a devotee.)

Alas! How unfortunate are those persons who neglect the easy way of performing 'bhajan' and recital of Sri Hari's name in the quest of temporary attractions and anxiety to earn evermore. How unfortunate that a person craves for a feminine touch and is engaged in futile discussions about women instead of learning the ways and means of accomplishing Mukti. How unfortunate in running after unwanted, momentary and endless attractions of life instead of controlling senses and thoughts!)

Jihvam labdhvaapi lokesmin krishna naama japetrahi, Labdhvaapi Mukti sopaanam helayaiva chyavanti tey/ (Those who possess a tongue do not perform Sri Krishna naama japa;they do have a ladder to attain Mukti but tend to fail in scaling it and fall down invariably).

Tasmadyatnena vai Vishnum Karmayogena Maanavah/ Karmayogaarchito Vishnuh Praseedatyeva naanyathaa, Tirthaadapyadhikam Tirtha Vishnorbhajana muchyatey/ (This is why; human beings ought to make earnest endeavours to observe Karma Yoga and engage themselves in Vishnu Aradhana. Bhagavan Vishnu is pleased by Karma Yoga only and not otherwise. Indeed Vishnu bhajan is far superior to Tirtha Yatras even!)

#### Shri Rama's departure from Lanka, his coronation & Ramarajya

In Patala Khanda of Padma Purana, Bhagavan Sesha Nag briefly recalled the Events to Maharshi Vasyayan about the activities of Lord Shri Rama, the Epic Hero of Ramayana, after the killing the infamous Ravanasura at Lanka providing great relief to Indra and Devas, Rishis and the virtuous as also the entire humanity. While narrating the Events, Sesha Nag was in a trance as the spell of Shri Rama was so intense that the Illustrious Serpent, whose bed Bhagavan Vishnu- the incarnation Shri Rama- rested on. Lord Rama bestowed the Kingship of Lanka to Vibhishana, the younger brother of the slain Ravana and

sat on Pushpaka Viman along with Devi Sita, Lakshman, Hanuman, Sugriva and various other stalvarts who fought in the Battle with Ravana. Even as the Pushpaka Viman took off from Lanka to Ayodhya, there were showers of scented flowers and reverberating sounds of 'Dundubhis' (drums) from the skies by Devas and on the entire route on Earth there were loud recitals of Veda Mantras by Rishis and Brahmanas signifying the 'Vijaya Yatra' or the Victorious Return to Ayodhya. Raghunandan Rama showed to Sita some glimpses of Places like the Rama Setu by which Vanara Sena or the Monkey Brigade crossed the Ocean, Kishkindha where he met Sugriva and Hanuman, and the spots where he and Lakshmana searched for Sita. The Pushpak Viman approached Nandigram, where all these years of 'Rama Vanavas' King Bharat was ruling Ayodhya on behalf of Shri Rama by decorating the latter's footwear on the Throne, Hanuman was asked to fly earlier and inform Bharata. As the Vimana touched the ground, there was a high moment of emotional meeting of Rama and Bharata. As advance notice was sent, the entire City of Ayodyha prepared itself with festivities and colourful receptions with joyous singing and ecstatic dances to welcome the Maryada Purusha Shri Rama, Maha Sadhvi Sita, the illustrious brothers Lakshmana and Bharata. With the Pushpak Viman descending down, the entire population of Ayodhyapuri went rapturous rendering high-pitched slogans viz.: Victory to Shri Rama, Victory to Devi Sita, Victory to Lakshmana and Victory to Raja Bharata. Dressed in their best attires befitting the euphoric moments of bliss, the 'Puravasis' had no bounds of joy in welcoming the Hero and his Parivar emerging from the Viman. The high tides of humanity who suppressed their emotions during his absence of for fourteen long years were surcharged with passions and inexplicable hilarity. Shri Rama first entered Devi Kaikeya's Chambers and after prostrating before her asked her if there were any other wishes of hers yet unfulfilled! She stooped her head down in shame and could not utter one word out of remorse and anguish. From there, Shri Rama accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana visited Devi Sumitra and Shatrughna and postrated to her too; she expressed overflowing grief and relief and profusely thanked Rama for his highest consideration for her son Lakshmana. Further on both Rama and Sita entered the Chamber of Devi Kaushalya who swooned first for some time and after recovery embraced the son and daughter-in-law and declared that Sadhvi Sita was the finest example of womanhood for ever! After all the euphoria subsided, Bharat called the Ministers, Astrologers and Maharshi Vasishtha to decide on the time and date of Shri Rama Pattabhishekam (Coronation). The Historic Celebration of 'Rama Rajabhisheka' was a landmark in Treta Yuga attended by Lord Brahma, Devas, Maharshis and the highly satisfied 'Praja, and heralded the highly famed Rama Rajya. As Rama was seated as its Head on the Naksha (Atlas) of 'Sapta Lokas' of Prithvi, all the Devas, Daityas, Nagas, Yakshas, Asuras, and of course the entire humanity were performing their respective duties with devotion and care as per established regulations of Dharma (Virtue), Nyaya (Justice), Law and Order, and Social Security. Sadhus and Sages were happy as never before, none resorted to foul means of any kind, women folk had no difficulties and they too observed the regulations as Pativratas; Sacred Activities like Yagnas, Vratas, Punya Karyas, Tirtha Yatras, Daanas, Dhyanas, and Veda Pathanas were in full swing. In response to Rama's appeals Daityas, Maha Sarpas and other Power Joints of the Rajya, none dared to follow the ways of the Evil. To Devas too Shri Ram made requests not to impose any 'Adhi Daivika' based problems such as natural disasters like Earth quakes, floods and droughts or excessive rains or 'Akaala Maranas' or premature deaths. The Praja in Rama Rajya were instrtucted to observe the 'Varnaashrama Vidhana', perform useful tasks like construction of wells, Sarovars, Temples, Choultries, Udyanavanas or Public Gardens, Pashu Palana or raising cattle, farming and such useful engagements rather than indulge in unhealthy and antisocial activities such as thieving, pilfering, causing hurt to others, amassing money and squandering for foul tasks, prostitution, betting, racing, drinking and yielding to immoral activities. As Shri Rama was an ideal Institution of 'Sishta Rakshaka' (Protector of Virtue and Justice) and 'Dushta Sikshaka' (Punisher of the Evil), the normal Praja (General Public) proved to be a darling King owing to his suave and benevolent treatment and as a severe chastiser and Task Master of wrong doings.

As a petty minded Washerman in the Rama Rajya scandalised Sadhvi Sita once that after all she stayed in Ravana's Lanka for long enough and was not above suspicion concerning her character, Maryada Purusha Shri Rama abandoned her so as to set an example to his Praja. This was the time when Rama intensified

the strictness of his administration in the Kingdom. Sesha Nag narrated to Vatsyayana that Agastya Maha Muni visited Rama once and in the course of exchange of views, Rama desired to know from Agastya about Ravana's background, who was the Villian-in-Chief of Ramayana forcing Rama to wage a battle with the Demon for kidnapping Devi Sita. Agastya Muni informed Shri Rama that Lord Brahma's son was Pulastya and the latter's son was Vishwayaka with two wives viz. Mandakini and Kaikasi. Mandakini begot Kubera who by virtue of his Tapsya became the Chief of Yakshas and a Pushpak Viman. Ravan, Kumbhakarna and Vibhishana were the sons of Kaikasi. Kubera performed sincere and strict Tapasya and achieved the position of a 'Loka Palaka' and possessed a Vimana too; he was coming and going to meet his parents by the Vimana. Kaikasi was jealous of Mandakini and so were Ravana and Kumbhakarna against Kubera. This prompted Ravana brothers to peform Tapasya, although Vibhishana did the meditation for noble reasons. Lord Brahma was pleased with Ravana's Tapasya and blessed him to become the King of a large Kingdom and made him superior to Devas; as a result Devas fled from Swarga. Ravana occupied Lanka too and forcibly took away Kubera's Viman. Although Ravana and Kumbhakarna were Brahmanas, they took to the habits of Rakshasas, while they suffered Vibhishana who was virtuous and devoted. But as the evil actions of Rayana and Kumbhakarna were reaching a point of no return, Devas and Indra reached Brahma for help and along with Rudra they all approached Lord Vishnu. The latter declared (by way of an Akaasha vaani or the Voice of Skies) that soon a high merited King of Ayodhya of Surya Vamsa of the clan of 'Ikshvaaku'named Dasaratha would beget four sons from three wives viz. Rama to the eldest wife Kousalya, Lakshmana and Shatrughna to Sumitra and Bharata to Kaikeyi. The declaration also stated that Rama and Lakshmana would completely destroy Ravana and Kumbhakarna as well as their offsping and instal Vibhishana as the King of Lanka in a completely new set up following Dharma and Justice. The Akashavaani further said that several Devatas would be born as 'Vaanaras' or monkeys and bears. This was the retrospect of the demolition of Ravana, Kumbhakarna and others of the Clan.

Having learnt of the family background of Ravana and others from Maharshi Agastya, Rama felt extremely remorseful that he had perpetrated 'Brahma hatya'since Ravana was from Brahmana vamsa which was the like the unique tree bearing the various branches of Vedas and Shastras. Agastya told Rama that he was the incarnation of Vishnu who was the Kartha (Originator), Palak (Preserver) and Samharak (Destroyer) and Devi Sita was Maha Vidya Herself and the extreme evil exercised by Ravana gave relief to the world and as such what Rama did was laudable but not regretful. However if there was the least feeling of regret, he might as well perform Aswamedha Yagna as the famous King Manu, Sagara, Marut and Nahusha's son Yayati had in the past and attained 'Parama Pada'. Thus the inspiration to perform the Yagna came forth from Agastya Muni.

As a first step, a suitable, sturdy and steady horse was selected with excellent features. Then under the supervision of Vasishtha Muni, the Kingdom's Chief Rishi, Shri Rama tilled a four vojana wide and long bhumi on Sarayu River banks with a golden plough; selected a suitable Yagna Vedika (Platform) with the required number of Mandapas and Agni Kundas decorated with jewels; invited Maharshis and Tapasvis of high standing like Narada, Asita, Parvat, Kapila, Jaatukarnya, Angira, Aashtishena, Atri, Goutami, Haarita, Yagnavalkya, and Sarvat; constructed suitable Ashramas for the Invitee Rishis and disciples; Conferences were held to decide on the format, procedure and daily programing; prescribed do's and don'ts of physical, moral and spiritual content; 'niyamas and nigrahas' (norms and restrictions) etc. Lakhsmana brought the Yagnashwa at the appointed time, formal Pujas were performed by Brahmanas and 'Suvasini' Women; the Surya Vamsa flag of Victory was hoisted on the horse; a gold sheet was hung around the horse-neck with an Inscription saying that the horse belonged to Shri Rama and whosoever stopped it would be severely punished; Shatrughna was made over-all in charge of the huge armed Sena (Army), elephants, horses, chariots and carts leading the Yagnashwa; Pushkala the son of Bharata was made in charge of the rear side of the 'Ashwa': Bhakta Hanuman headed the entourage and at the most propitious Muhurta the Yagna Horse was released, along with the recitals of Veda Mantras and 'Mangala Vadyas'amid big shouts of Victory to Shri Rama Chandra. The Procession with the Yagnashva in the lead moved on with instruction from Shri Rama that the course of the Ashwa should not be conducted as the

horse would move freely. The first halt was at the Avicchtra Nagari where there was a noted Temple of Devi Kamakshi who appeared before King Samuda performing Tapasya and gave the boon of invincibility; she also asked the King to offer his entire Kingdom and riches to Shatrughna as he would pass through the Nagari along with the horse of Ashvamedha Yagna to be conducted Shri Rama of Surya Vamsha and the killer of Ravanasura. Accordingly, Shatrughna was given all kinds of honours by King Samuda. After a three day halt, the King made his son a 'Samanta Raja' of Ayodhya and moved on along with Shatrughna and Pushkala.

As the Yagnashwa moved on nearing the Ashram of Sage Chyavana and Devi Sukanya, Pradhan Mantri Sumati who was in the entourage of Shatrughna explained their episode: The son of Sage Bhrigu named Chyavan was engaged in very rigorous Tapasya when King Sharyati was performing 'snaan' in the River Narmada and Tarpana to Devas and Pitras; the Princess Sukanya along with her companions was moving about in a forest on the banks of Narmada. Out of fun, Sukanya nearing a bush pierced with a piece of wood into perhaps a couple of glittering worms, but got alarmed when blood spilt out and there were trebles of Earth and lightenings. She ran and informed her father who was resting on the river banks about the incident. The King went up to the bush and found to his horror that Sunanya did not pierce the lighting worms but the eyes of a Sage engrossed in Tapasya, causing him to blindness. The King apologised profusely and offered his teen age daughter to the sick and aged Sage in wedding as a compensation. The daughter Sukanya served the Sage with sincerity and once the two Asvini Kumar Brothers who were passing by were impressed with her 'Pativartya' (seva to husband) and gave her the boons of eye sight to her husband as also youth and charm. In gratitude, the Sage Chyavan, by virtue of his Tapasya, gave the boon to Ashwini Kumars to secure sips of 'Somarasa' (the Celestial Drink) denied to them hitherto as also fulfledged Devatva with eligibility for enjoying 'havis' or the fruit of Yagnas. Lord Indra was furious at these boons to Asvini Kumars and raised his hand to punish them all but the Sage Chyavan in turn held Indra's hand tight and Indra had no option to gtant the boons to Ashvini Kumars! While Mantri Sumati narrated the Story of the Sacred Couple of Sage Chyavan and Devi Sukanya, the 'Sacrifice Horse', Shatrughna and the entire entourage reached the Ashram, worshipped them and requested them to visit the Place of the Rama Yagna, as Hanuman carried the Chyavana couple to Rama Chandra and the Place of the Maha Yagna in progress.

As the Yagnashva moved ahead, Pradhana Mantri Sumati told Sharughna that they were about to reach Neelachala and the Sacred Temple of Bhagavan Purushottama with four arms on the Mountain top. They reached Ratnaathata Nagar where King Vimal who became extremely excited and organised refreshments to the entire entourage. He also made a symbolic dedication of is Kingdom to Shri Rama and gave away valuable gifts to Shatrughna and others. King Vimal narrated an unsual story about the incidents which happened in the past about the Neelachala Mountain. He quoted a Brahmana visiting the Neelachala Mountain and found outside the Purushottama Temple there were a few Tirtha Yatris who possessed four hands armed with Gada, Chakra, Saranga and a lotus. Similarly a Kirata (Hunter) saw spectacls of a few children with 'Chaturbhjas' armed likewise with glittering robes! When the children were asked by the Kirata, they said that a few morsels of Maha Prasada which fell on the ground were eaten, they came out with the Chaturbhujas!

From Neelachala, the Yagnashva halted at Chakranga Nagar ruled by King Subahu, where Prince Daman felt that the manner the Ashwamegha was publicised all over the World smacked of pride and ego and ordered his Senapati to keep his army ready to fight. On behalf of Shatrughna, Raja Pratapagna shouted that the Yagnaashva disappeared and Prince Daman replied that he had kept the horse and if possible might get it back after a fight! A battle ensued and Raja Pratapagna was defeated by Daman. Shatrughna wondered as to who was this imp of a Raja Kumar called Daman who did considerable damage to elephants, horses and chariots and felled on ground the capable Raja Pratappagna wounded with blood! Price Pushkala the son of Bharata was so angry that he swore to control or kill Daman. A fierce battle took place and finally Pushkala defeated Daman Kumar whose body was profusely bleeding and his horse took back to the Court of King Subahu. The King, his brother Suketu who was a master of Gada Yudhha

(Battle of Maces) and Subahu's son Chitranga an expert of Battle Designs had all appeared together and designed a 'Krouncha Vyuha'; the entire strength of the sea-like army of Subahu was mobilised and put Shatrughna on red alert. The most powerful warriors of Subahu were kept at the tactical head position and sides of the 'Krouncha Pakshi's war design. Subahu was in desperate and distressed condition as his son was bleeding with wounds on death bed; revenge was the watchword of Subahu's entire army. Shatrughna knew the seriousness of the situation as a minor scuffle restricted to Daman and Pushkala had snow-balled into a full-fledged battle with military offensives and complicated battle designs. He addressed the Shri Rama Sena and exhorted its warriors that the situation was such that had to be faced with alertness, valour and brain power to be able to break the Krouncha Vyuha. Raja Lakshminidhi the son of King Janaka took a vow that he would face Suketu and destroy the Vyuha designed by the latter in no time. There was a one-to-one battle as both were equally worked up and it continued for long time with ups and downs. The warriors then took to 'Gada-Yuddha' (mace-war) and it prolonged for long time; finally, Lakshminidhi was able to overpower Suketu and there were shouts of relief resounded while both the parties appreciated with each other. In the battle that continued, Pushkala killed Chitranga. Subahu was extremely upset with the killings of his brother and son and became most desperate to kill thousands of warriors, elephants, horses and foot-soldiers and finally challenged Shatrughna. Hanuman who was providing cover to Shatrughna as he was in the defensive position and received showers of arrows of King Subahu which hurt Hanuman. The highly enraged Hanuman kicked King Subahu on his chest by his powerful feet and grounded him. It was in a stage of stupor, the King witnessed a vision when Brahma and Devatas were eulogizing Shri Rama as an Avatar of Vishnu. Having realised his folly, he made desperate shouts to Daman, Suketu and Vichitra saying that Shri Rama was none else but Bhagavan Vishnu and the battle should end forthwith. There after he apologised to Shatrughna for what all had happened, performed 'Atmarpana' (Surrender) and returned the Yagnashva with honour.

As the Yagnashva moved on for a few days, suddenly there emerged a frightful darkness since close friends of the deceased Rayanasura, two Rakshasas of Patalaloka named Vidyunmali and Ugradamshtra wanted to avenge Ravana's death and luckily for them an opportunity came on its own with the launch of the Yagna and to trap the Rama Sena by hiding the Yagnashwa. The Rakshasa Brothers succeeded in hiding the horse. Bharat Kumar Pushkal made a deadly declaration that if he did not return with the Yagashwa, then he should be deemed a fictitious devotee of Shri Rama. Hanuman too took a similar vow. Other warriors too took vows and Shatrugna was not far behind. Meanwhile the Rakshasa Brothers shouted: where is Rama; we want to kill him and take revenge! Vidyunmali straightaway targetted Pushkala and threw a 'Shakti' on his chest, while Pushkala rained arrows on the Rakshasa and the latter's chest was pierced through as lot of blood flowed out from his heart and Vidyunmali fell on the ground unconscious. Reacting to this sharply, Ugradamshtra threw a red-hot Trishul from the Demon's viman on Pushkal's heart and the latter fell unconscious inside his chariot. Hanuman witnessed that Bharat Kumar Pushkal was in risk and instantly expanded his body to pull down the Rakshasa occupants of the Viman, especially Ugradamshtra and hurled a hot Trishul on the Rakshasa, who in turn used his Maya to bring in a complete cover of darkness in which it was difficult to perceive who was a companion and who was an opponent. Witnessing these fast developments, Shatrughna took the name of Shri Rama and slashed the Cover of Maya that Ugradamshtra brought in by one arrow and with another quick arrow of Sammohanastra on the battle field. By yet another arrow, he brought down the Viman from where Ugradamshtra was fighting. The demon used 'Paashupatastra' againt Shatrughna and the latter had no option but to utilise 'Narayanastra' to balance the former. Meanwhile a recovered Vidyunmali was about to toss a Trishul on Shatrughna but a smart Shatrughna hacked the hand of Vidyunmali with an arrow and simultaneously flinged another arrow to pitch down the demon's head. Soon after in quick action, Shatrughan also hurled a 'kripan' (Small knife) on Ugradamshtra and killed that demon brother too.

As the Yagnyashva ambled along towards the banks of River Narmada, Prime Minister Sumati suggested to Shatrughna a quick visit to the Ashram of Muni Aranyaka. When the Muni was informed by Sumati that an Ashwamedha Yagna was being performed, the Sage replied that those foolish persons who were wasting their time and energy in performing Yagnas and Vratas during the short life span should be

advised to best utilise their time to Shri Rama 'Smarana' (Memory) as Shri Rama was itself an Yagna, a Vrata, a Puja, a Maha Mantra, Veda and Shastra. Then Suman introduced Shatrughna, Bharat Kumar, Hanuman and others and the Sage was thrilled to see them all and re-emphasised that there was no other Deity like Shri Rama and no there bhajan better than his. Shatrughna then arranged Muni Aranyaka's visit to Ayodhya and the Muni after meeting Shri Rama in person felt so satisfied that he did not wish for anything else in life and by the grace of Shri Rama left for Vishnu loka!

The Yagnashva reached the beautiful and properous Devapura at Vindhyas where even building walls were made of precious stones and the King Veeramani was an extraordinary devotee of Bhagavan Shiva. The elder Prince Rukmanga arrested the Yagnashwa and brought it to the Capital but since he came to know that the horse belonged to Shri Rama in connection with a Yagna, the King was hesitant to approve the action. Nor Shiva, who was prayed to by the King; the latter said that since the the action was already taken, it would not be in tune with Kshatriya Dharma to take a retreat step. By way of assurance, Shiva too resolved to fight with Lord Rama, since Shiva as a devotee of Sri Rama had as much responsibility to the King who also was a great devotee of Shiva. Thus a vicious circle got into motion. Meanwhile, Brahmarshi Narada alerted all concerned ie. Shatrughan, Shri Rama, the King Veeramani and the typical 'Kalaha Priya' readied the armies of both Sharughna and the King. Raja Veeamamari called his Senatpati and got an excellent army ready and Sharughna advised Rama's army to get readied too. The opening duel was of Rukmanga and Pushkal. Rukmanga recited a Mantra and the chariot of Pushkala commenced 'Bhubhraman' (circling fastly). With difficulty the Rath was stopped but the enraged Pushkala recited a return Mantra which made Rukmanga's chariot fly right up to the Surya mandal where it got burnt and fell down but Rukmanga was thrown out unconscious. King Veeramani was alarmed with fury approaching Pushkala and as a chain reaction Hanuman sought to reach Pushkala for

rescue but Pushkala became over confident and prevented Hanuman and asked the latter to help Shatrughna instead. There was a one-to-one battle between Pushkala and Veeramani and by using a mighty arrow in the name of Shri Rama made Veeramani unconscious. Surprisingly, Bhagavan Shiva himself entered the battle field at this juncture as King Veeramani the unique devotee of Shiva fell unconscious! Shiva instructed Veerabhadra to help Veeramani and Nandi to control Hanuman. Thus Veerabhadra killed Pushkala, Shiva Himself made Shatrughna unconscious; at the same time appreciated Hanuman's valour. Hanuman addressed Bhagavan Shiva saying that quite often, Shiva was confirming his devotion to Vishnu and his Avatar Shri Rama, but it was surprising that this time he was fighting against Shri Rama! Hanuman replied that King Veeramani was a great devotee of his and it was a 'Maryada' or Courtesy to defend a devotee just as Rama too would defend his devotees likewise! Basically both were two entities of the Paramatma! Then Hanuman asked Bhagavan Shankara for granting boons to let all the persons who died in this battle be resuscitated. Shri Rama made his presence at the battle field when Shiva prostrated; Shatrughna, Hanuman and all the rest were highly surprised and the persons who were declared dead in the battle came back alive and all were happpy. Shri Rama then explained to one and all that the Dharma of Deities was to safeguard the interests of their Bhaktas and what Shiva did in defending King Veeramani and his side was the best that he had done; that his heart was full of Shiva and vice-versa and those thought other wise would be dispatched to Kumbhapaka Naraka! Those who were Shiva's devotees were Shri Rama's beloved Bhaktas and those who were Shiva followers were Vishnu's devotees too.

Sesha Nag described to Sage Vatsayan that as the Sacrificial Horse reached the precincts of Valmiki Ashram, Shi Rama's sons Lava and Kusha -who were unaware that Rama was their father as Devi Sita staying in Valmiki Ashram under the care of the Sage's care did not inform the twin boys of the relationship as they were born in the Ashram after Rama abandoned Sita-reacted sharply against the inscription on the Golden Plate hung around the Yagnashva; they tied the horse and brought it inside the Ashram. The soldiers accompanying the horse ignored the two boys who tied the horse out of child play and started untying the horse and instantly, the hands of the soldiers were severed as they ran to Shatrughna to inform the incident. Understandably, Shatrughna grew angry but felt that the boys who did

this might not be ordinary but might have perhaps been Devatas at the behest of Indra! Thus he ordered his Senapati Kaalajit to quickly alert the Army for a full-fledged battle. In the battle that ensued between the Senapati and Lava Kumara, the Senatapti was killed and there was allround 'hahakar' (frieghtened shouts) from the Army. Shatrughna asked Pushkal to take a big Army and proceed against the boy Lava. Pushkal said to Lava that he would be gifted a chariot so that both might fight on equal terms; as a reply, Lava destroyed Pushkal's chariot instantly and asked Pushkal now grounded was heckled by Lava on 'equal terms'! In the battle that followed Pushkal rained arrows on Lava and in response despatched a cobra like poisonous arrow aimed at Pushkal's chest and the latter fell flat on the ground. Hanuman who was nearby took the body of Pushkala to Shatrughna who instructed Hanuman to kill Lava mercilessly. The highly charged Hanuman hurled huge trees and boulders and Lava cut them to pieces as a sport. By the severity and swiftness with which poisonous arrows were flinged at Hanuman, the latter could not control himself even as the gigantic body that he assumed fell flat on the ground! The highly puzzled Shatrughna wondered as to who these two boys were who felled the Most Valiant Hanuman himself! As he drove the Golden Chariot towards the boys, he felt that their resemblance with Shri Ram was so striking that he asked them as to who they were and what their parentage was. The boys gave a stiff reply that it was not essential to know such details since their horse was captured by them and let him try if he could retrieve it. In the course of the battle, Shatrughna was stunned and stumbled as he had to quickly change his bows that were broken and the chariots that were destroyed and was finally knock down with unconsciousness. As Shatrughna was hit, Raja Surath and others surrounded and resorted to 'Adharma Yuddha' or unjust battle and caused Lava to hurt into unconsciousness. As the news of Lava's state was informed, Devi Sita was informed and Kusha hurried to the warfront and instantly faced Shatrughna who by now got revived and nodoubt knew that Kusha and Lava were twins and the sons of Shri Rama, but the most furious Kush had was on attack with the 'Narayana Astra' hurled on Shatrughna but this powerful arrow was turned ineffective. In reply, Shatrughna took a vow in the name of Shri Rama and rleased an arrow but the desperate Kusha took the vow on his Mother Devi Sita and retaliated. Shatrughna fell unconscious again. Sugreeva took over the position of Commander in Chief and fought with Kusha as also with Lava who recovered again by then. Sugreeva too fell down and Lava and Kusha tied both Sugreeva and Hanuman and carried them to Devi Sita who was aghast to witness the Maha Viras in that condition. The boys relented to her instruction to release them but as per Kshatriya Dharma they would have to return to the Battle Field. On releasing both Hanuman and Sugreeva, Devi Sita came to know that Shatrughna was lying unconscious. Devi Sita then remembered Shri Rama and addressed Surya Deva that if she were to be a true Pativrata, Shatrughna should be revived and not only that who ever lost their lives in the Battle should be also revived! Indeed her wish was fullfilled and all was well. As per Sita's instruction, Lava and Kusha released the Yagyashva and the entire entourage headed by Shatrugna returned to Ayodhya after the successful Victory tour of Yagyashva and all the defeated Kings who clashed with Rama Sena were paraded before Shri Rama. But Shri Rama was more curious to learn more about the valour of Lava and Kusha. He was keen on Devi Sita's return to Ayodhya and despatched Lakshmana to bring her back, but she refused to return. She agreed however to send Lava and Kusha after Sage Valmiki trained the boys to sing a ballad before Shri Rama and others. The boy's sang the entire Ramayana since the birth of Shri Rama and brothers, including Sita's abandon; Lakshmana leaving her to her fate; her rescue by Maharshi Valmiki her 'Agnatavasa' delivery of the twin brothers; the Sage's excellent training of the boys in warfare and Kshatriya Dharmas, knowledge of Adminstration and of Kingship; Shri Rama's popularity with Sages, citizens, and each and every being as Maryada Purusha; Sage Vishwamitra's insistence to safeguard his Yagna and the killing of Demoness Tataki and Subahu; Sita's Swayamvara; Kaikeyee's desire to Bharata's becoming the Heir Apparent and Ram's Vanavasi; killing of notorious Rakshasas, Sita's 'Apaharana' (kidnap) by Ravana; Rama's befriending with Sugreeva and Hanuman; Hanuman's trip to Lanka to trace Sita; the crossing of the Ocean; the killing of Ravana and the entire clan, Vibheeshana becoming the Lanka King; the Rama Rajya; Rama abandoning Devi Sita on the basis of a Secret Report of a washerman's allegation about Devi Sita's character notwithstanding Sita's pregnancy; and Rama performing Ashvamedha Yagna. Shri Rama was overwhelmed with emotions at the ballad sung by the twins, his pride to have secured such illustrious

twins and the remorse to have abandoned Sadhvi Sita. Already, Sage Valmiki arrived to attend the Ashvamedha Yagna as a respected Guest of Honour at Ayodhya. He narrated how Devi Sita was fortunately seen by him in the forest that Lakshmana abandoned her; her transfer to his Ashram and her continuous grief, the birth of Lava and Kusha, his upbringing with considerable training in Dhanur Veda, Fine Arts, and what all was required by an ideal Kshatriya and a King including the nuances of Administration, Yoga and Siddhis and an exemplary human being worthy of the sons of a Maryada Purusha. Valmiki further stated that he visited Varuna Deva, Agni Deva and other Lokapalakas who had unanimously referred to Devi Sita's purity and piety as a Maha Pativrata Sadhvi born into this world; a ready proof of her 'Shuddhata' and highest devotion to Shri Rama was the coming back alive of lakhs of dead persons at the various battles en route the travel of the Yagnashva, since she wished so! Having heard what all Maharshi Valmiki stated in Public and in the midst of the most recognised and pious Sages-in-Chief soon after the Great Singing of Ramayana by Lava and Kusha, Shri Rama asked Lakshman to visit Valmiki Ashram and invite Devi Sita to Ayodhya, in the context of the Victory Celebrations as also the Sacred and Historic Termination of Ashvamedha Yagna. As Lakshmana reached the Ashram and requested Devi Sita, she asked him as to how could she return to Ayodhya having been humiliated and discarded with baseless allegations. Lakshman narrated most convincingly as to what all happened at Ayodhya, how the Twins sang Ramayana and the spontaneous reactions and glorious comments about Devi Sita from the Maharshis, Devas and Loka Palakas (as reported by Sage Valmiki). He prostrated before her and requested her to visit Ayodhya. The Ashvamedha Yagna concluded with the display of the pride of Surya Vamsha, the unreserved gaiety of the Praja of Rama Rajya, the relentless recitals of Veda Mantras by the Maharshis, the blessings of Brahma and Maha Deva; the showers of flowers from the heavens by Indra, Loka Palakas, Pancha Bhutas and Devas; the joyous singing of Gandarvas and the celestial dances of Apsaras. Most interestingly, even by the touch of Shri Rama the Yagnashva (Sacrificial Horse) turned into a human being redeemed after the touch, since Sage Durvasa cursed the person in the past and when sincerely apologised gave the boon of Rama's sacred touch.

Sesha Nag assured Sage Vatsayana that whoever heard or read the proceedings of Shri Rama's Ashvamedha Yagna would get rid off Maha Patakas, secure prosperity, excellent health, and contentment in life; even a chandala or athiest would attain 'Parama Pada'!

### Sita's 'Paramadhaam and termination of Rama Avatar

After the successful completion of Ashvamedha Yagna, Shri Rama continued his normal routine of observing celibacy and administration. Shatrughna killed Lavanaura and ruled Madhurapuri; Bharat administered both the banks of River Sindhu and controlled Gandharvas; Lakshman conquered Madra desha, installed his sons as the Kings and returned to Rama for providing service to him. Shri Rama did Ashvamedha Yanga, after installing a Golden Pratima of Sita; in fact he performed several Yagnas in the same manner. Sage Valmiki exhorted Rama about Sita's spotlessness and piousness time and again and Shri Rama finally opined that indeed he was fully aware of her chastity and purity but since the allegation came from the Praja (Public), Sita should prove her innocence before the people. Sita then declared in a huge Sabha that if she performed puja to any body else excepting Shri Ram in her mind, thought, tongue or action then my mother Bhu Devi might take her into her mother's fold. Immediately, there was an Earth-quake and Sita entered into a huge cleavage. Bhu Devi herself lifted Sita into her belly and the great Garuda, the Carrier of Lord Vishnu, lifted her from Rasatala to Vishnu loka as seated on a Golden Throne. After Sita's disappearance, Shri Rama ruled for eleven thousand years. One day, an old Tapasvi came to see Shri Ram and told him that none should enter his Chamber while he was giving an important message from Lord Brahma in secrecy. Shri Rama called Lakshmana and instructed that none should be allowed to enter as long as he was conversing with the Tapasvi and otherwise that person should be punishable with death. Lakshman himself stood at the door and ensured that none would disturb. The

Tapasvi conveyed that since the death of Rayana, Kumbhakarna and other demons Rama was to live for eleven thousand years and that it was time for Rama to leave Earth and return to Vaikuntha. While this secret conversation was going on, Durvasa Maharshi arrived and wished to meet Shri Rama, but Lakshmana declined entry stating that a representative of Brahma was in an important conversation and that he could not see Shri Rama then. Durvasa grew angry and threatened Lakshmana with a severe curse if he did not permit entry. As there was no other alternative between Rama's instruction and Durvasa's threat of curse, Lakshman entered River Sarayu, taking his original Swarupa of Ananta Naga with thousand hoods. After the meeting with Kaala Deva in the form of the old Tapasvi, Rama realised that Lakshman also having gone, it was time for him also to terminate his 'Avatar'; he established Kusha in Kushavati Kingdom and Lava in Dwaravati as their Kings. Taking a hint from Shri Rama, Vibishana, Sugriva, Jambavan, Hanuman, Neela, Nala, Sushena and Nishada Raja Guha arrived. Shatrughna performed the coronatation of his sons at Ayodhya. The rest of them said that they would not like to stay back on Earth in the abscence of Rama even for a moment. But Rama asked Vibhishana to continue in power at Lanka for long time and instructed Hanuman to continue on Earth forever to sustain the message of Shi Rama. The rest of them accompanied Shri Rama into the Sacred Sarayu River. Bharat, Shatrughna, and all the citizens of Ayodhya along with their wives, Mantris, Servants, Vedikas, Brahmanas, the nearby animals, birds, and all other Beings who accompanied Shri Rama never looked back. As Shri Rama went deep into the River, Lord Brahma, Devas, Rishis and all Celestial Beings extolled Raghunatha even as He took the Huge Form of Maha Vishnu with his four hands along with Bharata as Shankha, Shatrughna as Chakra, as also Gada with Sri Devi and Bhu Devi beside Him.

## Quick retrospective of Rama's episode till Ravana's extermination

Swayambhu Manu preformed Tapasya to Lord Vishnu for thousand years and when the

latter appeared, Manu desired that he would like to have Vishnu as his son. The Lord

agreed and said that in fact as a part of the task of Preservation of 'Dharma' (Virtue), he would like to appear on Earth from time to time as and when Dharma was threatened and

Evil Forces gathered momentum; he said: Paritranaaya Sadhunaam Vinaasaaya cha

Dushkrutaam, Dharma samsthaapanaarthaaya sambhavaami yuge yugey! (I shall no

Doubt take human birth to revive Dharma and punish Evil from time to time). As

promised by Vishnu, Swayambhu was born in Raghukula as King Dasaratha and became

the father of Shri Rama in Treta Yuga, as Vasudeva in Yadava Kula in DwaparaYuga and one thousand Divya Years hence as Brahmana Harigupta in Samhal Village in Kali

Yuga. The two brothers Hirankaksha and Hiranyakashipu of the Satya Yuga were born

as Ravana and Kumbhakarna in Treta Yuga. Muni Pulastya's son was Muni Vishvava

and the latter's wife was Kaikashi; Ravana and Kumbhakarna were born to Vishvava and Kaikeshi. Kaikeshi also gave birth to Surpanakha and later on to the virtuous devotee of Narayana, Vibhishana. Ravana brothers performed severe Tapasya and secured boons of

invincibility from Devas, Danavas and Rakshasas and harassed Devad who fled from

Swarga and prayed to Vishnu who assured that he would soon be born to King Dasaratha as Rama and demolish the entire race of Ravana; Vishnu also asked Devas to assume the births of 'Vanaras' and assist in this holy task. In the Surya Vamsa, Vaivasvata Muni

begot King Ikshvaku and Dasaratha was born to Ikshvaku. Devi Koushalya was born to

the King of Koushalya and was wedded to King Dasaratha at Ayodhya on the banks of River Sarayu. Dasaratha also married Sumitra and Kaikeyi. He became a powerful yet righteous King with Sage Vasishtha as the Raja Guru and performed the Putra-Kameshthi Yagna. From the 'Agni Kunda' at the eventful Yagna, Maha Vishnu Him self Gave Darshan to Dasaratha and assured that he would soon be born to him to save the Devoted and kill the Evil. He handed over a'Kheer Patra' to the three Devis; Kaushalya and Kaikeyi took half each and gave half of their portions to Sumitra; thus the eldest boy was born to Kaushalya, Bharat was born to Kaikeyi and Lakshmana and Shatrughna were born to Sumitra. Sage Vasishtha named the eldest as 'Shri Rama' since that was the 'Swataha Siddha' name as he was the husband of Sri Devi and the equivalent of Vishnu's Sahasranaamaas, providing salvation to the devotees and since his birth was in Chaitra month dear to Vishnu. (Shriyah kamalayaasiyya ramaneya Maha Prabhu Tasmaachhari

-Rama ithyasya naamaa siddham puratanam/ Sahasranaamnaam shrishasyatulyam mukti pradam nrunaam, Vishnumaasi samutpanno Vishnurityabhidheeyatey). As the boys grew up, Rama and Lakshmana was one pair and Bharata and Shatrughna was another. In the meantime, Bhagavati Lakshmi was materialized as King Janaka found her while digging Earth in Yagna by a plough top called 'sita' and thus named Sita and most endearingy brought up as his own daughter. Sage Vishvamitra derised that Rama and Lakshmana should protect one Yagna being organized by him on the banks of Ganga, sine there were always threats of Rakshasas to destroy Yagnas by pouring blood and such other foul material. Very reluctantly, Dasaratha allowed to let them go to protect the Yagna which apparently served many purposes as subtly planned by the Sage: one to let the World

Realize that Rama a mere teen-ager was of Vishnu 'Amsa' and introduced Rama to the Rakshasas that they should better beware; Vishwamitra could teach the nuances of

Shastra-Astra Vidya to the brothers; to afford an exposure to Rama at Sita Swayamvara among the great Kings of the day including a warning to Ravanasura that the Avatar of Vishnu had arrived; and also to consummate the Sacred Wedding of Rama and Sita. As

visualised the Sage, all these and many other events took place: the killing of Rakshasi Tadaki and the Rakshasa called Subahu as also the use of 'Vayavyastra' to sweep away demon Maricha to a far off place so that he would have to float again at a later date to assume the role of 'Maya Golden Deer' before Devi's abduction by Ravanasura; the liberation of Devi Ahalya by giving her normal form from a stone due to Sage Gautami-her husband's curse; the smash of Shiva Dhanush; the wedding of Rama and Sita apart, Lakshmana was married to Urmila, Bharat to Mandvi, and Shatrughna with Shrutikirti; the rupture of Parasurama's ego by the shatter of Vaishnava Dhanush and his exit from the active life into the Ashram of Nara-Narayana.

Even as the City of Ayodhya was going in euphoria with preparations of Shri Rama's becoming the Yuva Raja (the Heir Apparent) of the Kingdom, Devi Kaikeyi declared her intention known that Rama should proceed for a fourteen year long spell of 'Vana Vasa'

(forest life) and Bharata to become the Heir Apparent; this was in the light of a boon that Dasaratha gave to Kaikeyi as she saved him on a war front and she reserved to deman it at this juncture. Bharat was out of station at his maternal uncle's place and did not know about the demand; Devi Sita insisted accompanying Rama and so did Lakshmana; Dasaratha was in a swoon, followed by death; the entire population of the Kingdom was crest-fallen; Bharata insisted on Rama's return but on the latter's refusal took Rama's footwear kept on the Throne which was worshipped daily and he became a temporary Administrator on

behalf of King Rama. Rama, Sita and Lakshmana the reached the mountain of Chitrakoot for a brief stay at the Ashram of Bharadwaja, further on to the Ashram of Atri Muni where the Muni's wife Devi Anasuya enlightened the regulations of a 'Pativrata' anf finally entered the Dandakaranya where they stayed for long with Munis visiting their 'Panchavati' (a thatched cottage). One frightful day, demoness Surpanakha, the sister of Ravana and Kumbhakarna, arrived at the Parnashala and proposed to Rama.

Lakshmana cut off her ears and nose and as retaliation two Rakshasas attacked Rama

and Lakshmana and the latter killed the domons. Surpanakha approached Ravana who planned the arrtaction of the golden deer disguised as Maricha. Sita was tempted to secure the deer and Rama alone chased the Maya Mriga and killed the demon while

the latter shouted loudly the name of Rama to mislead Sita and Lakshmana so that Lakshmana would leave Sita and Ravana could enter the scene. Lakshmana drew a line around Panchavati with Mantras and asked Sita not to go beyond the line. Ravana arrived as a Muni and asked for alms and Sita wanted him to enter the line but Ravana did not and insisted Sita to come out. As soon as she came out, Ravana appeared in his original form and abducted her by his Pushpak Viman. As Sita was sobbing loudly, the giant bird Jatayu, who was a friend of Dasaratha, made desperate attempts to stop Ravana's Viman but the mighty Ravana slashed the bird's wings as it fell down in a faint. As Rama and Lakshmana did not find Sita on their return, they frantically searched and the dying Jatayu conveyed that Sita was abducted by Ravana. Having performed obsequies to Jatayu, Rama and Lakshmana reached the Ashram of Devi Shabari a unique devotee of Shri Rama and treated the brothers with fruits and Rama gave her the boon of Vishnu Sayujya. Hanuman met Rama and Lakshmana and assured all kinds of assistance to Rama in finding Sita and eventually to destroy Ravana and his clan. He introduced the fugitive King of Kishkindha named Sugriva, raised confidence to Sugriva in killing his valiant brother Vaali who occupied his throne and after reoccupying his throne sent Hanuman to Lanka in search of Sita. The mighty Hanuman crossed the ocean and spotted Sita in Ashoka Vatika sobbing under an Ashoka tree. Hanuman convinced Sita as a devotee of Rama by showing Rama's ring and assured her that very soon Rama and Lakshmana would reach Lanka with a huge Vanara Sena (Monkey brigade), kill Ravana and his entire followers and relieve her of bondage. Hanuman created havoc in the Ashoka vatika by killing all the security personnel, five Senapatis, seven sons of Ravana's Ministers, and a son of Ravana. Indrajit the elder son of Ravana who also was a reputed warrior having defeated Indra and specialized in wars on the clouds thus securing the epithet of 'Meghanadha' encountered Hanuman who feigned Indrajit's control; Hanuman was face to face with Ravana in the latter's court and allowed himself to let his tail burn which was extended endlessly and destroyed a large part of Ravana's City as a warning to him that soon Rama and Lakshmana would arrive at Lanka to destroy Ravana and his entire tribe. On return to Kishkintha, Hanuman conveyed Rama and others about Sita's bondage. Rama, Lakshmana and the mammoth Vanara Sena under Sugriva's leadership arrived on the sea coast to reach Lanka on the other side of the Ocean. Rama prayed to Samudra Deva (the Deity of the Ocean) to reduce the force of the violent tides and when Samudra Deva did not relent was even ready to punish the Deity. Samudra Deva the facilitated the construction of Rama Setu or the Bridge in the name of Rama across the Ocean; huge boulders were thrown into the Ocean with the name of Rama inscribed and the boulders floated enabling the construction of the Bridge.Meanwhile the younger brother of Ravana called Vibhishana, a staunch devotee of Lord Vishnu approached Rama for refuge and soon became a confidant of Rama about matters related to Ravana and his associates. Having crossed the Rama Setu, the gigantic and mighty Monkey Brigade commenced furious battle with the gallant Rakshasas. Indrajit who was a highly renowned warrior fought and killed thousands of Vanaras and succeeded in tying Rama and Lakshmana with 'Nagaastra', when Garuda the Carrier of Vishnu appeared and the snakes withered away. Meanwhile Kumbhakarna, another brother of Ravana who had a giant figure fought recklessly killing tens of thousands of Rama Sena, but finally fell down to the torrential rain-like arrows of Shri Rama. Indrajit attacked Lakshmana and made the latter unconscious when Hanuman brought Sanjeevini Mountain with medicinal shrubs got Lakshmana revived; in the fierce

battle that followed, Rama and Lakshmana destroyed Indrajit. In the meantime, Ravana desired to perform an 'Abhicharatmika'

(Evil-oriented) Yagna out of desperation for Victory, but a few brave Vanaras got scent of it and destroyed the Yagna. Then Ravana rode into the battle with his entire army of massive strength comprising elephants, horses, chariots and infantry and massacred Vanaras. Indra sent his Divya Ratha (Divine Chariot) to Shri Rama with Matangi as the Charioteer and the Greatest Battle of Treta Yuga was fought for seven days and nights, even as all the Devas headed by Indra, besides Brahma and Rudra, watched the Grand Spectacle of Rama-Ravana Yuddha! Rama had systematically smashed Ravana's ten heads, but the destroyed heads were sprouting again and again and Ravana was thundering world shaking shrieks to show Rama's helplessness. Lord Shiva gave a boon to Ravana to let the smashed heads were revived again and again. Finally, Rama pulled up his most powerful 'Brahmastra' to destroy a stock of 'Ambrosia'in his belly (as hinted by Vibhishana) and crushed his chest which pierced through Earth and crashed into Rasatala into the nether world. Instantly, Devas who were visioning the proceedings from the Skies went into ecstasy showering rain of scented flowers on Rama; Indra, Brahma and Rudra were relieved; Gandharvas and Kinneras sang tuneful of lyrics of the Lord; Apsaras danced with immense joy; Sanaka and Sanandana brothers who gave a curse to Jaya and Vijaya the Dwarapaalakas of Vaikuntha as they were obstructed entry to vision Vishnu were satisfied that out of three births the first human birth was completed; Maharshis and Siddhas recited Vedas and Scriptures as also hymns extolling Shri Rama.

Rama then appointed Vibhishana as the King of Lanka and blessed him and his progeny to rule till the next Pralaya!

Thereafter Devi Sita was directed to prove her 'Pativratya' (Purity) by entering into an 'Agni Kunda' since she stayed away for long time in Lanka before a huge gathering of spectators; even Devas, Brahma and Rudra witnessed the scene, let alone Rakshasas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, human beings etc. Agni Devata himself brought back from the Agni Kunda and declared Devi Sita as an ever Pure, Chaste, Blameless and a peerless epitome of Pativratya.

Besides installing Vibhishana as the King, Indra and Devas too were bestowed with their lost glories denied to them for long due to the much-hated Ravana and his clan. The precious possessions of Swarga like Pushpaka Vimana of Kubera Deva were restored to the respective Devas.

Accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana as well as Hanuman, Sugriva, Vibhishana, Vanara Yoddhas (Warriors) including Jambavanta, Nala, Neela, Subhaga, Sharabha, Sushena, and all the survivors among Vanara Sena crossed the Rama Setu, proceeded to the site of 'Shiva Linga Pratishthana' at Rameshwara and further on to Ayodhya to join the celebrations of Victory and Rajabhisheka.

On return an anxious Ayodhya awaited the 'Maryada Purusha', the Epic Hero and the Most Significant Avatara of Treta Yuga, proving once again that Lord Vishnu would assume human birth again and again as and when Dharma was in jeopardy and Adharma tended to take an upper hand in the Universe.

## 'Krishna Leelas' at 'Vraja', Mathura, Dwaraka and Kurukshetra

Vasudeva of Yadu Vamsa was married to Devaki, the daughter of King Ugrasena, who was dethroned by his son Kamsa who was vicious, inhuman and sadistic. Even at the time of the wedding of Vasudeva and Devaki, there was an 'Akashavani' (Voice from the Sky) addressing Kamsa that Devaki's eighth son would kill him. While trying to kill Devaki at once, Vasudeva advised that she was after all she was his

sister and could be imprisoned along with him and that the eighth son could be killed. Kamsa then imprisoned the couple as also Ugrasena, his father. Meanwhile, Bhu Devi approached Lord Brahma and showed her great concern about the presence rapidly growing 'Adharma' in the form of Rakshasas and Evil Forces in the form of human beings like Kamsa, Jarasandha, Pralamba, Dhenuka and Sishupala and that she was no longer bear the brunt of the heavy weight. Brahma was convinced and came up to Narayana who agreed to take his 'Avatar' as Krishna; he suggested that Bhagavati Maya should plant Hiranyaksha's six sons from Rasatala into Devaki's garbha one after another, the seventh son would be of the 'Amsa' (Semi-Avatar) of Anantha Sesha Naga who should be drawn from Devaki's garbha to that of her co-wife Rohini's garbha and the eighth son would be Bhagavan himself. Devi Maya should be born to Nandagopa and Yashoda as a replacement to Bhagavan. Kamsa killed the six boys of Hiranyaksha, the seventh boy was drawn from Devaki's garbha and planted into that of Rohini; as the child was drawn (Sankarshana) from one garbha to another Balarama was by that name too. The replaced boy from Rohini's garbha to that of Devaki was also killed by Kamsa. As the time for the eighth delivery arrived, Kamsa was extra-cautious to grab the child as soon as he would be born and tightened the security of the prison. Just at midnight on Shravana Krishna Ashtami, there was a cover of Maya when Lord Narayana gave the vision to Vasudeva and Devaki with his four hands armed with Shankha, Chakra, Gada and Saranga; the prison gates were opened and the entire security system was illusioned; Bhagavan briefed the Couple of the course of action of quietly transferring Bhagavan to Nanda and Yashoda across River Yamuna in a basket kept on Vasudeva's head as protected by Adi Sesha ensuring that the heavy rain would not trouble neither Bhagavan nor Vasudeva; the same cover of Maya was active at Gokula Village too and the swapping of children was a success. In the place of Bhagavan, Vasudeva brought Devi Maya from Yashoda's bed and kept in Devaki's bed. The cover of Maya was lifted, the prison gates were duly closed and the Gate Keepers were active again. Kamsa sought to throw the child in the previous manner against a boulder, but the eight-armed Bhagavati Maya flew off into the sky and warned Kamsa that Bhagavan was since born and growing elsewhere and that his death was not far off! A few days later, the sons of Vasudeva were named as Balarama son of Rohini and Krishna the son of Devaki / Yashoda; Balarama was also known as Sankarshana, Rohineya, Balabhadra, Maha Bala and Rama, while Krishna was named Shridhara, Shrikara, Shri Krishna, Ananta, Jagatpati, Vaasudeva and Hrishikesha. The highly worried Kamsa took pains to locate Krishna and despatched the demoness Putana to Yashoda's house in the form of a beautiful young woman who tricked Yashoda who let Putana into the house and sought to give milk from poisoned breasts. Krishna bit her nipples so violently that she died instantly taking her original for of a Rakshasi. The entire village was horrified and much more so were the couple Nandagopa and Yashoda. Another incident took place when both Balaram and Krishna were of a crawling stage they were attacked by a Rakshasa in the form of a chicken and Krishna snipped the bird's head and after death the original form of the demon frightened the entire village. As the brothers grew they were inseparable and became naughty day by day, having collected friends of the same age group; the mischievous boys played pranks including stealing butter and teasing young girls.

There were several complaints from the neighbourhood and Yashoda tied up Krishna to a heavy grinding stone to two adjacent Arjuna Trees with strong strings and went away on her household chores. Fairly soon, the boy rolled over the grinder and both the trees came down crashing and two Gandharvas appeared and thanked him for releasing them of their curse from a Maharshi; meanwhile Yashoda and neighbours rushed to the spot to witness the havoc and as Krishna put on an innocent face, she untied the strings as a result of which there was a scar on his belly which gave him the name of Damodara.

As weird incidents were happening, Nandagopa and Yashoda shifted their home to Brindavan on the banks of River Yamuna.

Both Krishna and Balarama grew up gradually and along with their associate Gopas looked after the grazing cows during the day. While playing a ball game, the ball fell in a rotten pond known as 'Kalindi Kund'which was forbidden by one and all as there were many cases of killings of human beings and animals like cows entering into it or even on its banks, since there was a family of huge and highly

poisonous serpents living it. But Krishna entered into it despite heavy protests and the friends at play with the ball conveyed the information to the parents and by word of mouth the entire village got collected on the banks. The highly distressed and desperate Nandagopa wanted to enter the Kund and was stopped with difficulty. There was considerable suspense as to what was happening inside the Kund and suddenly Krishna emerged on the powerful hoods of the Kalia serpent holding its tail and dancing away with smiles. Krishna ordered Kalia to leave the Kund at once along with its family and instructed Garud (Kite) the Carrier of Vishnu to let Kalia and family move out of the Kund and provide safe passage to reach the Sea without problem.

There were also other instances of other Rakshasas under the request of Kamsa to somehow destroy Krishna and Balarama. There was the instance of Dhenukasura who joined the group of Cows and attempted to harm the brothers but got killed; a Sakatasura who raised a huge sand storm and sought to lift up the boys but got killed again; another Asura named Pralamba appeared in the disguise of a Gopa and sought to play a game of carrying his load on Balarama's back and the latter threw him up on to the high sky as he fell down dead; yet another Asura named Arishta who was a bull and whose strength increased manifold during the 'Asura Sandhya' suddenly rushed to Krishna but the latter held the Asura by his powerful horns which were pulled up from his head and got killed. The demon Keshi who had the form of a horse tried to hurt Krishna by his powerful feet but Krishna gave a whack on the horse's head and it died at once.

Lord Indra was angry that Bhagavan Krishna discontinued Indra Yagna by the residents of Vraja but instead resorted to the Puja of Govardhana Mountain. There were heavy rains non-stop for several days and nights and the entire Vraja was submerged putting to tremendous ordeal. Krishna uprooted the mountain and lifted it by his little finger providing excellent relief to the population of Vraja Bhumi and taught a lesson to Indra. The latter's self-image was subdued and came down to apologise and extolled his Leelas, eversince he assumed the 'Avatara'. The kind Krishna excused Indra's indiscretion.

Sage Narada arrived at Mathura and described the various escapades of Krishna to Kamsa including the killings of various Rakshasas, Kalindi Mardana (punishment), lifting of Govarthana Mountain and so on to Kamsa who was already confused about his future. As though he was hastening his own end, he planned that both Balarama and Krishna be invited to Mathura under the pretext of Dhanush Yagna and sent Akrura to personally ensure their coming; his plan was that mighty wrestlers, horses and elephants should be utilized and somehow get rid of them for ever. On arrival at Mathura, the Krishna-Balarama brothers walked along on the main road leading to the Dhanush Yagna Area. On way Krishna encountered a woman called Kubja who was disfigured by birth and straightened her so that not only she became normal but also looked very beautiful and smart. Near the Yagna area, Krishna picked up the Dhanush and playfully broke it; Kamsa heard the big sound of the Dhanush and came to know that this was one of the points that Kamsa had in mind to frighten Krishna! Next morning at the Rajmahal, Kamsa planned for a huge rouge elephant called Kuvalapeeda at the entrance with the intention of killing Balaram and Krishna, but they removed its tusks and knocked it down as though it was a goat kid! Then the brothers were to fight with Malla, Chanura and Mushtika wrestlers; all the spectators felt that it was unfair to pit the wrestlers against the boys. But the so-called invincible wrestlers were humbled and killed one after another. Many more wrestlers in the waiting fled away. Kamsa could not tolerate the situation

and jumped from his throne into the wrestler pit to fight them with his sword; indeed Krishna and Balarama did not take much time to subdue and kill him. As soon as they killed Kamsa, they approached the prison to free Vasudeva and Devaki, knelt down to touch their feet with sincere devotion when the latter melted away with affection kissing their heads with pride even as Devatas sounded war drums along with showers of flowers from the sky, released their grand father Ugrasena who was restored as the King of Mathura, greeted with veneration the Elders of the Yadu clan especially Akrura, and endeared the public who were in rapture shouting victory slogans.

In course of time, Vasudeva performed 'Upanayana Samskar' (Initiation of Gayatri Japa) to Balarama and Shri Krishna and subsequently met their Guru Samdipani to give 'Guru Dakshina'. Meanwhile, King Jarasandha of Magadha who was the father-in-law of Kamsa came to know of the latter's death and attacked Mathura with a huge army surrounding the City. Krishna recalled Daruka, the Sarathi of his Sugreevapushpak which was fully armed with Shankha, Chakra, Gada and various Astra-Shastras with Garud as the insignia on the Flag atop the Chariot. Bhagavan Krishna assumed his four arms and Balarama accompanied with his Halayudha as Apara Rudra. The two brothers massacred the Akshouhinistrong Sena of Jarasandha and held the latter as a hostage by Balarama but Krishna asked his brother not to kill Jarasandha who was still not destined to die yet!

The humiliated Jarasandha approached Kalayavana the Mlecchha King who surrounded Mathura with a sea-like army well-versed in war technology. Concerned about the safety of the citizens of Mathura, Krishna requested Bhu Devi for a three Yojana land on the western Sea shore and materialized a well planned and ideally located City of Dwaraka with best-furnished and comfortable homes; the entire population of Mathura got transferred overnight in their sleep and was awe-struck with the miracle. Having shifted the public of Mathura to their heavenly residences, Krishna and Balarama re-appeared at Mathura where there was none excepting themselves. Having fought a little, the intelligent Krishna gave an impression of a reverse-run to Kalayavana who chased the former into a mountain cave where Rajarshi Muchukunda was in long slumber from the previous Yuga. In that darkness Yavana mistook Muchukunda for Krishna and kicked him and Muchukunda's red angry eyes opened and burnt Kalayavana into a heap of ash! Rajarshi Muchukunda recognized Bhagavan Shi Krishna and eulogized him and secured 'Vishnu Paramapada' from the Lord. Realising that Kalayavana was dead, his huge army went helter-skelter but the re-humiliated Jarasandha continued sporadic attacks on Dwaraka without success. Meanwhile, Sudharma the son of Vishwakarma the Architect of Devas constructed a fabulous Conference Hall in the Court of King Ugrasena at Dwaraka where the citizens lived with pride and contentment.

Eventually, Balarama was wedded to Revati the daughter of King Raivata of Ikshvaku Vamsa. Shri Krishna had a soft corner for Rukmini the pious daughter of the King of Vidarbha Bhishmak who had the 'Amsa' of Devi Maha Lakshmi and she too was inclined on Krishna, but her brother Rukmi was bent on her wedding with Sishupala of Cheda Vamsha; Sishupala and Dantavaktra were the two vicious persons destined to take birth in Dwapara Yuga while their predecessors in Treta Yuga were Ravana and Kumbhakarna and Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakashipu in Satya Yuga. As Rukmini's wedding was planned with Sishupala with the active support of Rukmi despite her protest, Rukmini despatched a confidential Purohita of Vidarbha Court to Krishna and Balarama suggesting a plan of her elopement at the 'Muhurta' of the wedding with Sishupala. Jarasandha, Dantavaktra and other Kings and associates of Sishupala attended

the wedding even along with their armies nearby, lest Krishna and Balarama might create some trouble. Krishna and Balarama too attended by invitation by Daruka and his chariot. Soon after a traditional worship of Bhagavati before the wedding, Rukmini entered the Hall of the Wedding and in a swift pick-up Krishna carried away Rukmini by the chariot of Daruka, while Balarama restrained the armies of Sishupala, Jarasandha and associate Kings. Rukmi took a vow that he would not enter Vidarbha without defeating Krishna and along with Rukmini. In a fight with Krishna, a humiliated Rukmi was tied up to the former's chariot and released on way after shaving him at the request of Rukmini who said that the head-shave was worse than death to a Kshatriya warrior. Indeed, Rukmi never returned to his Kingdom, but the Vidrabha King did 'Kanyadaan' at an auspicious time to Shri Krishna in the presence of elders like Vasudeva, Nanda, Ugrasena, Akrura, and Balabhadra along with Devaki, Yashoda, Revati, Rohini and others, when Devas sounded dundhubhis (drums) and showered flowers.

Lord Krishna's second wife was Devi Satyabhama-of the Amsa of Bhu Devi- the daughter of Satrajit who secured a 'Shamantaka Mani' from Surya Deva which yielded eight maunds (38 kg per maund) of gold daily! Krishna found Prasena the brother of Satrajit wearing the jewel and desired to wear it but was declined. Later on he sported the 'Mani'when he was on a hunting spree and unfortunately got killed by a lion, which took fancy to the Mani and carried it. Jambavan the bear- and an active associate of Shri Rama of the earlier Yuga-killed the lion and took the 'Mani'to his cave. Shatrajit alleged that Krishna must have killed his brother to take away the Mani. Desirous of disproving the allegation, Krishna traced the deadbody of Prasena and following the footsteps of a lion and of a bear entered the cave of Jambavan and fought the latter for many days; finally Jambavan realized that Krishna was Rama himself, apologized to him and not only returned the Shamantika but also requested Krishna to accept his daughter Jambavati in wedding. Shatrajit was profusely apologetic for the baseless allegation that he made against Krishna and offered not only the Shamantaka Mani but also his daughter Satyabhama in wedding. The unnecessary blame that Krishna was subjected to was due to the fact that he did not worship Ganesha on Bhadrapada Shukla Paksha Chaturthi as it was strongly believed by the Public of all Varnas ought to observe the Vinayaka Vrata that day formally and reverentially!

Besides Rukmini, Satyabhama and Jambavati, Lord Krishna was married to Surya Kanya Kalindi; Mitravinda the daughter of Vindanuvindi in a Swayamvara by restraining seven bulls tied to a single chain and accepting Prize money besides the bride; Devi Nagnajiti, Sulakshana and Susheela. Satyabhama accompanied Krishna to kill the most dreaded Narakasura by Garuda as also killed the demon by herself when Krishna fainted in the battle; all the belongings of Devas including the earrings of Deva Mata Aditi, the Ucchhaiswarya horse, the Iravata elephant and Mani Parvata were returned. Also thousand Kanyas imprisoned by Narakasura who were the daughters of the defeated Kings fell madly in love with Bhagavan Krishna and he accepted these brides also as his wives thus making the total of of sixteen thousand and eight wives including the eight principal 'Patranis' mentioned above! In all he had a crore sons!

Being aware of Jarasandha's long-standing hatred of Shri Krishna eversince Kamsa's death, Krishna called Bhima and Arjuna and suggested that all the three of them should assume the forms of Brahmanas to gain entry into the Court of Jarasandha and challenge him into a duel with any of the three of his choice. Jarasandha selected Bhima and fought for twenty seven days without any tangible result. Ultimately, Krishna picked up a twig from the ground, broke it in two halves and threw the two halves far away from each other in upside positions. Bhima got the hint, threw Jarasandha down to the ground, held his legs and split his body into two, threw away the two halves of Jarasandha from each other in upside down positions so that they might not join again. That was thus the end of Jarasandha, one of the most frightful evil forces on Earth. He was difficult to kill except by trick since his birth was complicated too: King Brihadratha of Magadha had two dutiful wives but did not obtain progeny. A Sage gifted one ripe mango fruit to the King and asked him to give to one of his wives considered dearer by him. Since the King felt that both his wives were equally dear to him, he cut the fruit into two halves and gave to the wives. After nine months, the queens delivered half piece each of a boy and they discarded both the pieces in a jungle. A demoness called Jara kept the pieces of flesh in a

pot. Meanwhile, the two pieces got joined and a boy was crying loudly from the pot. Jara gave the child to the King and that was Jara+Sandha.

At the time of Rajasuya Yagna performed by Pandavas at Indraprastha, Yudhishtara took Bhishma's advice to declare Shri Krishna as the Chief Guest and initiated the task of honouring Vaasudava. Sishupala who was also present objected to confer the honour to Krishna. The former was his arch-enemy who desired to marry Rukmini. He was the son of King Damaghosha of Chedi and Sutadeva, sister of Vasudeva, thus Krishna's cousin. He was born ugly with three eyes and four arms. A celestial voice said that whosoever would keep the boy on his lap would kill him too. Krishna promised his sister that he

would tolerate hundred mistakes of the child and terminate him thereafter. Krishna waited patiently for the hundredth accusation and got his head snipped by his chakra.

As soon as he learnt of his great friend Sishupal's death was known, Dantavaktra reached Mathura on hearing that Shri Krishna left Indraprastha for Mathura. With seething anger against him, he chased Krishna to avenge his friend's sad demise. On the banks of River Yamuna, there was a fierce duel of maces and Krishna over powered Dantavaktra and dropped him dead on the ground, thus ending the three birth episode of Hiranya Brothers, Ravana Kumbhakarnas and Sishupala Dantavaktras as a result of the curse of Sanaka brothers to Jaya and Vijaya the doormen of Vaikuntha covering four 'Avataras' of Vishnu as Varaha Deva, Nrisimha Deva, Shri Rama and Shri Krishna.

After Dantavaktra's assassination, Bhagavan Krishna crossed Yamuna to visit the Vraja Bhumi where he displayed endless 'Leelas' terminating endless number of Rakshasas, subduing the poisonous and arrogant Kalia serpent, suppressing the self-image of Indra by lifting Govardhana, relieving the curse of Gandharvas as Arjuna Trees, enjoining the pranks of friends to steal butter, teasing Gopikas and enrapturing them with Rasa Leelas, enriching the wisdom of elder villagers, and most of all spell-binding the parents with pure love and ecstasy! The Vrajavaasis reflected their own innermost feelings as soon as Krishna and Balarama reached there, some with awe, some with friendship, many of them with affection and respect, a few with sheer bliss but none with arrogance, or jealousy or fear! Nandagopa and Yashoda were speechless with overflowing tears emerging from their heart and soul; the elders were in a daze; their contemporaries were full of sweet memories and the Gopikas had feelings of Bhakti and Nirvana. Even the cows, other animals, birds and worms were all reminiscent of the Lord's playful activities at the Vraja. Bhagavan was kind enough to bless them all from Nandagopa and Yashoda downward to attain salvation!

In the context of the Great Battle of Kurukshetra, Bhagavan Krishna's role was indeed unique and unparalleled. Following the vicious and nasty game of chess between Yudhishtara and Shakuni-the wicked brother of Gandhari the wife of the blind King Dhritarashtra and the uncle of Kaurava sons headed by Duryodhana-Pandavas had to serve twelve years of 'Aranya vaasa' (forest life) and one year of 'Agnaata vaasa' (life in-cognito). Pandavas deputed Shi Krishna to request the 'Dushta Chatushtaya' (the ill-famed and vicious foursome of Duryodhana, Dussasana, Karna and Shakuni) to allot at least five townships for the Five Pandavas but the deft Krishna failed in the peace negotiations and Maha Bharata Battle became inevitable. Lord Krishna opted to be the Sarathi (charioteer) of Arjuna who would not take up arms but was the unfailing guiding star and supreme Advisor of Pandavas at each and every stage of the Battle involving eleven 'Akshouhinis' of Kauravas and seven Akshouhinis of Pandavas over a period of eighteen long days of the historic event of Dwapara Yuga! He provided courage and conviction to Arjuna to kill cousins, uncles, Gurus, grand fathers, relatives and life-long associates by a long Sermon of Bhagavad Gita stating that He (Bhagavan) was the 'Karanam-Kaaranam-Karta' (The Action-The Act-The Actor) and that Arjuna and the like of him involved in the Battle were just the pawns on the Chess Board; he made 'Sikhandi' the eunuch stand before Bhishma-the Grand Father figure- so that the latter would cease to fight and Arjuna could pierce arrows into him; he named an elephant as Aswatthama the same name of Guru Drona's son and when the latter stopped fighting rained arrows and killed him; he advised Arjuna to kill Karna when his chariot fell in a ditch and he lost his memory of the Arrow Mantras; he advised Duryodhana not to disrobe fully when Gandhari could make his body invincible and the vulnerable thighs were broken by Bhima as they did not secure the powerful shield of her vision; he saved Bhima in anticipation of pushing an iron replica of Bhima before Dhritarashtra which was embraced and squeezed into pulp and so on!

The end of Yadu Vamsha happened as a result of Kanva Mahashri's curse. When a few of Yadava Kumars were playful on Narmada River banks, Samba a son of Jambavati was dressed like a pregnant woman and asked the Maharshi whether she would beget a boy or a girl, he gave a reply that she would give birth to a 'musal' (a mace) and further said angrily that you all in the Vamsa would be killed by it! The frightened Yadu youth conveyed this to Krishna. Samba did deliver a musala after a surgery and Krishna got the musala into powder and still one metallic rod of the size of a little finger remained which was thrown into the sea water. The rod was devoured by a fish which was caught by a fisherman and he used it as an arrow top. The powder germinated into big grass stems. All the Yadavas started abusing each other suddenly and using the grass stalks which came up on the sea coast killed each other. Krishna Bhagavan was resting under a tree shade and a hunter mistaking the Lord's crossed leg as a deer shot at it with the arrow- top fixed with the finger like musala part there on hurting him badly. Krishna recalled Daruka with his chariot and asked Arjuna to be brought at once; on the latter's arrival, the Lord instructed Arjuna to bring the eight 'Patranis' from Dwaraka and also intimate Vasudeva, Ugrasena, Balarama, Akrura and all other Yadu elders to resort to 'Atmaarpana'; the Devis too did the same and all other remaining men and women followed suit.

Whosoever reads or hears or thinks of Shri Krishna's memorable episodes shall be bestowed with multiple blessings as per the usual wish-list viz.: any desire or objective to be realized; even insurmountable difficulties to be overcome; small or big wishes in the course of daily chores to be fulfilled; success and victory of any task taken up to be accomplished; opponents or enemies to be vanquished; sins of any magnitude which are known or unnoticed to be pardoned; small or significant achievements secured by a person to be recognised in contemporary and subsequent societies; predicaments of physical, mental or psychological nature to be dissolved at once; quality of life to be guaranteed; final end to life to be peaceful without problems to the Self and persons around; and finally salvation to be secured.

<u>Kimatra buhunoktena Sarva kaama phalaspruhah, Krishnaaya nama iteyvam mantramuccharayed</u> <u>Budhhah/</u>

Krishnaaya Vaasudevaaya Haraye Paramatmaney, Pranatakleshanaashaaya Govindaaya Namo Namah/

(Is there an over-emphasis needed to assure that those desirous of fulfilling wishes should recite **Krishnaya namah** Mantra; Salutations to Krishna, Vaasudeva, Hara (Destroyer of Sins), Paramaatma (Resider of every heart), Pranatajana kasha naashaaya (Remover of the difficulties of devotees) and Govinda!)

#### Shrimad Bhagavat Gita 'Mahatmya'

As Bhagavan Vishnu was in 'Yoga Nidra' (Yogic Slumber) on Sesha Nag in the midst of Ksheera Sagara (Ocean of Milk) stating that he was meditating Bhagavan Maheswara, Devi Maha Lakshmi wondered as to why did Vishnu assert that he was Paramatma himself and none else! Did he not ask Arjuna in no uncertain terms that he should fight without hesitation and dedicate all actions and results to Him, since He was the Cause, the Causation and the Causer! Fully endorsing what Devi Lakshmi said, Bhagavan defined that out of the Eighteen 'Adhyayas' (Chapters) of Bhagavad Gita, five Adhyayas constituted five of his Faces, ten Adhyayas were his ten hands, one Adhyaya was his belly and two were his two feet. He further gave the illustration of Susharma and said that intelligent people like him who read an Adhyaya of Gita a day or half of it or a quarter, or atleast a stanza, would certainly secure Mukti. Susharma was no

doubt a Brahmana by birth but was a chronic sinner; he did neither dhyana nor japa, neither homa nor 'Atithi Satkar' or Puja of Guests; on the contrary he was a drunkard, meat eater and a regular womanizer. One day he died of a snake bite. After experiencing retribution in various 'Narakas', he was born as a bull and served under an oil-extractor for seven to eight years and died out of hard work and exhaustion. A few persons contributed prayers for the animal's salvation and among them was a 'veshya' (prostitute) who donated some 'Punya' on her account. In the rebirth the bull became a pious Brahmana in the same village as a 'Jyatismara' with the gift of memory of the past birth. He met the Veshya and enquired as to which Punya that she donated at the death of the bull. She said that she bought a parrot which used to mutter some lines of a stanza always although she did not guess what was it but surely that muttering had highly soothing effect. The Brahmana asked the Parrot and the latter said that she was earlier in an Ashram in a cage where a Rishi was teaching something to his desciples and it learnt it but a hunter stole the bird and sold to the Veshya. The Rishi conveyed that he taught the *First Chapter of Gita!* That was the Punya which the Veshya acquired from the parrot's muttering that was learnt at the Ashram. Such was the Mahtmya of the First Chapter.

Bhagavan Vishnu then explained to Devi Lakshmi the significance of the Second Chapter of Gita. A Veda Pandit Deva Sharma of Purandarapura in Dakshina Bharat was anxious to learn and attain 'Tatwa Gyan' and came across a visiting Mahatma about his desire. The Mahatma directed Deva Sharma to a Goat Keeper called Mitravan at Sowpur in a forest seated on a rock on the banks of a river bed nearby. Mitravan narrated one of his experiences about a tiger approaching a helpless goat; all other goats fled away but this one waited as though it welcomed the tiger to eat him up. The tiger hesitated and asked the goat as to why he had the courage to stand firmly but did not run. The goat questioned as to why the tiger did not pounce on her! The tiger replied that her hunger subsided suddenly. Both the tiger and the goat met a Mahatma in the forest and he asked them to approach a Vanara Raja (Monkey). The Vanara Raja replied that there was a highly religious Brahmana named Sukarma who meditated in a Shiva Temple not far off for long time. When Sukarma was asked, he said that one Maha Purush appeared in the Temple and Sukarma requested him to teach him Tatwa Gvan. The Maha Purush asked Sukarma to read an inscription on a rock nearby the Temple from the Second Chapter of Gita emphasizing the importance of 'Abhyasa' or Practice. Having said this, the Maha Purush disappeared. The Second Chapter states: Karmaneyvaadhi kaarastey maa phaleshu kadaachana, maa karmaphala heturbhuh maa tey sangostva karmani/

(Partha! You have freedom only to perform your duty. The rest is not relevant to you. But You should perform the 'Karma' without expecting the fruits). Bhagavan defined a Tatva Gyani as follows: *Duhkheshvanu dvignamanaah Sukheshu vigataspruhah, Veeta raga bhayakrodhah Sthidheermuniruchyatey* (A Stitha-Pragna or a Tatwa Gyani is he who is least disturbed when there is unhappiness and difficulty and gets elated when there are reasons to be delighted; if one could practise equanimity without desire, fear or anger, that only is the feature of Tatwa Gyan (Sthita Pragnyatwa). Thus the chain of Deva Sharma-the Mahatma-Mitravan the Goat Keeper-the Tiger and the Goat-the Vanara Raja-Sukarma and the Maha Purush revealed the Message of Tatwa Gyan which simply stated that one should practice one's own duty and Tatwa Gyan would unfold itself!

Describing the Mahatmya of the *Third Chapter of Gita* titled Karma Yoga, Bhagavan cited the example of a Brahmana named Jada who practiced the profession of a 'Vaishya' or of business. He amassed wealth from this line but became a victim of vices. He desired to earn more and travelled to a far off city. On way he halted for the night and slept off under a tree in a village. A gang of robbers looted and killed him and he turned to be a 'Pretaatma' (goblin) and resided on the same tree. Jada's son was a dutiful Brahmana and followed the duties of a Brahmana. As he was concerned of his father's where abouts, the son asked a friend of his father and he conveyed that the latter was looted and killed on way in a village under a tree.

Being highly saddened by the news, he proceeded to Varanasi to perform the obsequies of his father and coincidentally halted under the tree of the same village where his father also halted for an overnight stay and got killed by the gang of robbers. Before he desired to sleep, the son recited the Third Chapter of Gita; his father who was also on the same tree as a Preta appeared before the son, and while boarding an air-plane to Vaikuntha since he was redeemed as a result of the recital of the Third Chapter of Gita, he asked his brothers also to revert to the Brahmana Varna at once and observe the duties concerned and more importantly recide the Third Chapter. Since Jada's son was also visiting Varanasi anyway as planned by him, the son should invoke the forefathers of the Vamsa by reciting the Karma Yoga or the Third Chapter of Gita so that they too would realize Salvation. The principal message of the Third Chapter sressed: *Shreyan swadharmo vigunah pardharmatswanushthaat, Swadharmey nidhanam shreyah Para Dharmo bhayaapah/* (Even if one feels that the 'Dharma' or duty of somebody else's is attractive, one must observe one's own Dharma since 'Para Dharma'

or Dharma of others is worse than death). Another significant instruction given by Krishna to Arjuna in this Chapter stated: *Mayi sarvaani karmaani sanyasyadhyatma chetasa, niraaseermamo bhutwa yudhyasya vigata jwarah*/ (Partha! I create all actions and hence perform your duty targetting me and leaving results to me and fight).

As the son followed his father's instruction in letter and spirit and all the forefathers flew to Vaikuntha by air-planes, Yama Dharma Raja was concerned that several ancestors were leaving away to Vaikuntha from Narakas as per the directive of Vishnu dootas and thus double-checked from Lord Vishnu and the latter endorsed the instructions. As Yama Raja enquired of Vishnu whether there were further instructions to him, the latter replied that he should better perform Yama Raja's own Swadhrma!

Bhagavan Vishnu narrated to Devi Lakshmi the illustration of Mahatma Bharat worshipping at Vishwanatha Temple of Varanasi on the banks of Ganga, while signifying the Mahatmya of the *Fourth Chapter* of Gita. One day, he desired to rest under the shade if two bilva trees which were located side by side with a gap of five-six feet. Bharat kept his head at the bottom of one bilva and placed his feet at the bottom of another tree and recited the Fourth Chapter and after a while left for his home. Even as he was leaving, he found that the trees were fast drying up and when he reached home he found two 'Kanyas' (young girls) at his house. The Kanyas thanked Bharat profusely and said that were relieved of a curse by a Tapasvi named Satyatapa that they received at a curse at a Kshetra called 'Chhinna Paapa' (Relieved of Sins) on the banks of River Godavari. The two Kanyas were two 'Apsaras' bathing half nude seeking to entice the Tapasvi at the behest of Lord Indra since the latter felt a threat to his Throne at Swarga, whereas the Tapasvi's desire was to attain 'Jeevan Mukti' or Mukti while he was alive; hence the curse that the Apsaras should turn as trees at Varanasi on the banks of Ganga. When the Apsaras pleaded for mercy, the Tapasvi agreed to get their original forms when a Mahatma called Bharat would one day rest under the trees reciting the contents of Gyana Yoga in the Fourth Chapter of Gita titled Jnaana Yoga. The redeemed Apsaras took up to thr regular recitation of the Fourth Chapter of Gita

Incidentally, it was in this this Adhyaya titled 'Jnaana Yoga' that Lord Krishna declared: *Yadaa yadaahi Dharmasya glaanir bhavat Bharata! Abhyuddhhaana madharmasya sadaatmaanam srijaamyaham/ Paritraanaaya Saadhunaam vinashaya cha dushkirtman* 

Dharma Samsthaapanaarthaaya Samshavami Yuge Yuge (Arjuna! As and when Dharma is affected adversely and Adharma prevails, I shall take the 'Avataras' (incarnation) to vindicate the cause of the Virtuous and destroy the Forces of the Evil!)

Underlining the magnitude of the *Fifth Chapter* of Bhagavad Gita, Lord Vishnu told Lakshmi example of a Brahmana named Pingala of Madra Desha, ignoring his responsibilities as a Brahmana but built up expertise in music and dance and eventually achieved reputation in the profession as also proximity to the King as his favourite. He married a woman of low caste called Pingali alias Aruna. One night, being

jealous of Pinala, Aruna killed him in his sleep. He suffered in Narakas and was born eventually as a vulture and afer her death due to pox, Aruna was reborn as a parrot. Being aware of the memory of previous life, the vulture saw the parrot and tore it apart as the latter was dropped in a pond. A hunter spread a net and the vulture was entangled and died as he threw the vulture's body too fell in the same water body as the parrot fell. Suprisingly, both the birds achieved salvation! They asked Yama Dharma Raja as to what was the reason for both the sinners of equal guilt to head for Swarga since Pingala left the duties of a Brahmana and had loose morals while Aruna killed Pingala! Dharma Raja explained that their dead bodies fell in the same water body leading to a River on the banks of which was a pious Brahmana always reciting the Fifth Chapter of Karma Sanyasa Yoga in Gita!

Bhagavan Vishnu narrated to Devi Lakshmi the value of Sixth Chapter of Gita entitled Jnana Yoga and described the virtue, fame and high charitable disposition of the King Janashruti. Even Devas made flying trips as 'Hamsas' (Swans) to his Kingdom on the banks of River Godavari with Pratishthanapuri as its Capital to appreciate the noble deeds being executed by the King. Once the King while strolling on the top of the Palace overheard the remarks of flying Hamsas that the King's greatness and virtue were nearing even those of Mahatma Reik's who was residing at Manikeswar on the top of Himalaya Mountains beyond the Kashmira Region. The King immediately decided to visit Manikeswara at the Temple of Bhagavan Chandrasekhara where Mahatma Reiki stayed. On way from the Pratishthanapuri, the King along with his big entourage passed through several important Tirthas and worshipped Kasi Vishwanath, Gadadhar at Gaya, Shri Krishna at Mathura near Kalindi (Yamuna) and on to Kashmirapuri where he stopped over at the Manikeshwara Temple of Bhagavan Shiva. At the main Dwara of the Temple, the King spotted a beggar-like Sadhu stationed on an empty cart under a big tree. The King's Sarathi (charioteer) introduced the King to the Mahatma who made kind enquiries about the various charities, constructon of temples, water bodies and public gardens as also Yagnas and Vratas that the King was responsible for. Then the King sought to donate several chariot-full of gifts of Dhana (money)-Dhanya (foodgrains), Cattle, Jewellwery and clothes. The Mahatma became suddenly furious and shouted on the King in white anger: 'Arre Shudra! You think you can buy me with these gifts? Has not somebody told you about me? Take these away and get lost!' The King was dazed at this sudden spurt of the Mahatma's rage and was afraid that he might not give a 'shaap' (curse) to him. The King profusely apologized and fell on his feet shivering with fear and shame. After the Mahatma cooled down, he conveyed to the King that he always recited the Sixth Chapter of Gita on 'Jnaana Yoga': Yadaa hi nendriyaartheshu na karmaswanu- shajjetey/ Sarva sankalpa sanyaasee yogaarudhasta dochatey (A Saadhaka or Yogi would become ripe only 'Indiras'-body parts of external and internal nature- and their desires are left out, Karmas or duties are too avoided subduing the feelings of the giver or the taker and the totality of the 'You' or 'I' is avoided then only one becomes a Yogi).

Somewhat on the lines of the Brahmana Jada in the Third Chapter earlier, Shankhakarna too followed the Vaishya profession, became extremely rich and desired to marry for the fourth time and proceeded to a neighbouring village. But on way, he was bitten by a serpent and died and was born again as a serpent. He came in the dreams of his sons as a serpent and conveyed that he did crores of cash and jewellery at such and such a shrub in the backyard of their home. Next morning, the brothers dug up at the location as per the dream, but a serpent appeared, desired to ascertain their identity and said that they should recite the *Seventh Chapter of Gita* titled Vigyan Yoga at once. To their utter surprise, the serpent took the form of their father, handed over huge reserve of gold and jewellery to the sons and boarded a Viman destined to Vishnu Loka. The sons were all virtuous, performed Yagnas, charities and such other noble tasks as digging up wells, water bodies and construction of choultries, rest houses etc. for public benefit. Most importantly however was the recitation of the Seventh Chapter of Gita and attained Vishnu Loka! The essence of this Chapter was stated by Bhagavan to Arjuna as follows:

Beejam mam Sarva bhutaanaam viddhih Parthah Sanatanam, buddhirbuddhimatamasmi Tejastejasvinamaham/ Balam balavataam chaham kamaraga vivarjitam, Dharmaa virudho bhuteshu kaamosmi Bharatarshabha/ (Partha! Do realize that the timeless seed responsible for germinating the entire Creaion is me; I am the Intelligence to the intelligent; Radiance to the radiant, Physical Power to the powerful etc. I am also the desire and hatred; virtue to the virtuous, vice to the vicious and so on!).

About the 'Mahatyma' of the 'Ashtama Adhyaya', Lord Vishnu gave the example to Devi Lakshmi of Bhava Sharma who lived in Amardakapura in Dakshina Bharat. Being a Brahmana by birth, he married a 'Veshya' and was a meat-eater, wine drinker and a debauche. Once he and his wife were drunk dead and became huge 'Tada Vrikshas'

(Palm Trees). Another Brahmana couple called Kushibal and Kumati were wrong examples of deceipt, greed, and anger. Kushibal used to accept 'daanaas' of horses and 'Kaala Purusha Pratimas' and were also involved in base tantras. This couple died and turned out to be 'Brahma Rakashasas' and made the 'Tada Vrikshas'as their abode. Once a Vedavedya Brahmana came to rest under the trees, when the Rakshasa couple appeared and asked as to how they could get rid of their Rakshasatva and obtain 'Mukti'. The Brahmana said: 'Brahma Vidya's Upadesha' or teaching, 'Adhyatmika TatwaVichara' or the Awareness of Inner Consciousness and Karma Vidhi Gyana or the Knoweldge of performing Karmas / deeds are the three factors which could redeem them! Then the Brahma Rakshasi got confused and said: Kim tat Brahma! Kimadhyantakam! Kim Karma! (Who is this Brahma? What is this Adhyatma? And which is this Karma?) As soon as the Brahma Rakshasi muttered these words, a miracle happened and the Brahma Rakshasa couple attained 'Mukti' and so did the Palm Trees/ Bhava sharma couple! These were the opening lines of the Eighth Chapter of Bhagavad Gita entitled Akshara Brahma Yoga and hence the miracle! The further lines of the stanza stated: Adhi Bhutam cha kim proktam Adhi Daivam ki muchyatey/ (What is Adhi Bhutam? What is Adhi Daivam?) To this question of Arjuna, Bhagavan Krishna's reply was: Aksharam Brahma Param Swabhaavodhyaatma muchyatey, Bhuta bhaavodbhava karo virangah karma sanjnitah) (Arjuna! The Supreme and Indestructible Soul is Brahma; His nature is Adhyatmika, Adhi Bhautika and Adhi Daivika)!

The significance of the Ninth Chapter of Gita was explained by the instance of a goat being given as a sacrifice at a Yagnya by a Brahmana named Madhava who resided at Mahismati Nagar on the banks of River Narmada. The goat talked suddenly in raised human voice to the surprise of the 'Ritviks' performing the Yagna as also the audience and said that the Yagna was of no avail since it was certain that human beings would have to be born again, their old age and death were inevitable; the goat also said:'Look at my fate; you are going to kill me now!' Then the onlookers enquired of the goat as to who was it in its earlier birth? The goat replied that he was a Brahmana who desired to perform a sacrifice of a goat kid to appease Devi Chandika, as his son was extremely ill; but Devi Chandika was furious to kill a goat kid to save a child and cursed the Brahmana to become a goat; thus said the goat to the Ritviks and others at the Yagna. It further narrated that in Kurukshetra, a King named Chandra Sharma gave a Kala Purusha Pratima as a 'daan' in connection with a Solar Eclipse and from the Pratima a Chandala couple surfaced about to devour both the King and the Brahmana but the Brahmana was quick in reciting the Ninth Chapter of Gita titled 'Raja Vidya Raja Guhya Yoga' of Gita and the Chandala couple named 'Paapa' (Sin) and 'Ninda' (Blame) disappeared. Bhagavan in this Chapter says: Ananyaschintanaamto maam ye janaah paryupaasatey, Teshaam nithyaabhi yuktaanaam yogakshemam vahaamyaham (Those who always think and meditate of me always, I look after them and assure them of their welfare)! Eversince then, the King always recited and reflected of the contents of the Adhyaya and eventually The goat which narrated the incident of Chandra Sharma was released to freedom.

Bhagavan Shankara gave the example to Devi Parvati of Brahmana Dhirabuddhi residing in Kashipura who was an unparalleled 'Vedarupi' (the form of Vedas) who could readily vision 'Atma Tatwa; it was widely believed that Bhagavan Shankara always held on to Dhirabuddhi's hand, run along with him and

care for him wherever the Brahmana moved with affection and consideration. What indeed was the kind of Tapa- Homa-Dhyana that Dhirabuddhi performed to deserve this unique treatment that Bhagavan took such concern about him! Once when Bhagavan sat on the mount of Kailash, one Hamsa (Swan) fell at His feet and narrated that it fell with a thud down while flying above in a Sarovar in Saurashtra; the usually white swan got blackened. The Swan told Bhagavan that a lotus shub with five beautiful flowers was responsible for this incident; it said that as soon as it flew across the shrub it released sixty five bees when it actually fell and thus its form got black. The Lotus Shrub was in its third previous birth a Brahmana house wife called Sarojavadana, who no doubt was a Pativrata but was attracted too much to a Myna Bird in a cage in their home and was unmindful of her husband's callings as she was immersed in play with the bird; the husband got furious and cursed her to become a Myna bird. The cursed Myna was brought up by a Muni Kanya where the Muni regularly recided the 'Vibhuti Yoga Adhyaya' which was the *Tenth* Chapter of Gita and she learnt the contents fully; in her next birth, the Myna bird was born as an Apsara. Sage Durvasa was performing Tapasya on the banks of a Sarowara when the Apsara was bathing and out of fury, Sage Durvasa cursed the Apsara to become a Lotus shrub which was crossed by the Swan and became black in its form. Such was the power of Vibhuti Yoga (the Tenth Chapter) in which Lord Krishna told Arjuna that all kinds of 'Vibhutis'/ manifestations were his own like radiance, Shaktis, Virtue, Meditation, prosperity and victory. The Vibhutis would include the Swan crossing the lotus shrub was out of ignorance; Brahmani Sarojanavadana's attraction to the Mynah Bird; her husband's anger causing the creation of another Mynah; the cursed Mynah's learning of the 'Dashama Adhyaya' from the Muni; her becoming an Apsara, Sage Durva's curse out of anger crating a lotus shrub, Dhirabuddhi's Vision of Atma Tatva and Parameswara's great affection for Dhirabuddhi!

There would be thousands of instances that would signify the Eleventh Chapter of Gita regarding 'Vishva Sandarshana Yoga' and Bhagavan Shiva described only one to Devi Parvati. In Meghankara Nagar on the banks of River Pranita, there was a Parama Bhakta of Vasudeva called Sunandana Muni who undertook a Kshetra Yatra and on way had to halt over a night in a village. The Village head noboubt welcomed the Muni but said that there was a Rakshasa in the village with whom there was an understanding not to kill any villager but might eat up any stranger who did not specify by the Village head; but the Rakshasa ate up the Village head's son himself by mistake. Sunandana Muni asked the Village head as to how this Rakshasa came to this Village. The background was that there was a Brahmana in the village engaged in farming and used to look after his own farm in the nights. A huge vulture chased a traveller staying overnight in the village near the Brahmana farmer's farm; as the traveller shouted for help since he fell in a ditch and could not pull up by himself, the Brahmana Farmer though could give a helping hand to save the traveller but did not bother. An infuriated Tapasvi cursed the Brahmana Farmer to become a Rakshasa in the village. When the latter begged for mercy, he diluted the cusre saying that if any Buddhiman recited the Eleventh Chapter of Gita and also explain its meaning to the Rakshasa then the latter could be liberated from the Rakshasatva. On knowing the background, Sunandana Muni recited and explained the contents of the Adhyaya to the Rakshasa and latter was liberated. Not only that, all the men and women who were killed by the Rakshasa including Village head boy son were lifted up by a Viman to Vishnu loka. The Chapter stated: Anaadi madhyantamananta veeryam, Ananta baahum Sashi Surya netram/ Pasyaami twaam deepta hutaasa vaktram, Swatejasa vishwamidam tapantam/ (I am enabling you the Vision of the Supreme Form who has no beginning or end; whose might is unlimited; who has innumerable hands; who possesses Surya and Chandra as his eyes; who has a fiery and radiant face like Agni and who has a

powerful and red-hot scorching Form.)

One of the major highlights of Bhagavad Gita was the Bhakti Yoga (*Twelfth Chapter*) explained by Shri Krishna to Arjuna as was narrated by Bhagavan Shiva to Devi Parvati. In Kolhapuri of south-west of

Bharata Varsha, the most reputed Maha Lakshmi Temple had been fulfilling the desires of Bhaktas for centuries. A young Prince came into the Temple and prayed to her very earnestly as follows: 'Mother! You are the Icchaa Shakti, Jnaana Shakti, and Kriya Shakti all rolled into One Swarupa; You are the Nishkala, Nirmoha, Nitya, Niraakaara, Niranjana, Antarahita, Antahkarana, and Niramaya; You are the Shatchakra Bhedini, Anahata Dhwani, Bindu, Naada and Kalaa; You are Para, Pashyanti, Madhya and Vaikhari; Brahmi, Vaishnavi, and Maaheswari, Vaaraahi, Naarasimhi, Iaindri, Kaumari, Chandika, Savitri and so on. Maha Lakshmi was pleased with the euologies and asked the Prince of his desire. He told her that his father King Brihadhratha had half-done an Ashwamedha Yagna and died, that although the horse returned successfully after Vijaya Yatra (Victory Travel) it had suddenly disappeared and that his prayer was to secure the missing horse and bless him to complete the Yagna. Bhagavati Lakshmi directed the Prince to approach Siddha Samadhi Muni at the entrance of the Temple and the needful would be done. Siddha Samadhi was approached and the Prince was astonished to vision a few Devatas responsible for the theft of the Yagnashwa at the behest of Indra! He pulled them up and commanded that the horse should be in its original position at once. The Prince was so impressed that he was emboldened to request the Siddha Samadhi to revive his dead father since his body was still in oil at the Yagnashala. The Muni smiled and and asked the Prince to take him to the Yagnashaala. Having reached there, the Muni sprinkled 'Mantrajal' and the King emerged afresh from the oil and completed the Yagna successfully. When asked as to how the Muni could miracles to reprimand Devatas to secure the missing horse and also revive the King to life, the Muni's cool reply was that the powers attained was due to the constant recitation and dedication to the Bhakti Yoga (Twelfth Chapter) of Bhagavad Gita alone and nothing else!

#### The Sacred Book states:

Yo na hrushyati na dveshti na shochati na kaamkshati, Shubhaashubha parityagee bhakti maanyassa me priyah/ (A devotee who is free from likings and dislikings as also from happiness and unhappiness, and who dedicates all my deeds to me totally is my favourite);

Etu Dharmyamritamidam yathoktam paryupaasatey, Shraddhadhaana matparaah bhaktaastheva mey priyah/ (Those devotees who keep unreserved faith in me and observe Dharma as I prescribe are my most beloved ones).

Describing the Mahatmya of the Thirteenth Chapter of Gita titled 'Kshetra Kshetragna Yoga', Maha Deva told Devi Parvati that on the banks of River Tungabhadra in the Southern part of Bharata Varsha, there was a popular Kshetra called Harihara Nagar where Vedic Brahmana Hari Dikshith lived. His wife named Kuvaacha was however a characterless slut. Looking for a male companion one night, she treaded into a forest and faced a tiger. The tiger felt that if the woman was of morality then she would not kill her but otherwise she certainly would. As the tiger killed the woman, she landed in several Narakas like Rourava and was reborn as a Chandalini. As she grew, she became a victim of diseases and reached a Temple of Jambhaka Devi where a Brahmana always recited the thirteenth chapter of Gita; the purport of the Adhyaya was to distinguish the Kshetra and Kshetrajna. Steeped into the world of vice, the soul of Kuvaacha had in the past gone through Narakas as an iron rod went through white heat. Also as a Chandalini with diseases in the current life, she underwent difficult times due to diseases and continued ill-health; thus she realized Kshetra Gyana from Devi Jambhaka Temple when the Brahmana explained the meaning of the Chapter verse by verse and she finally reached Vishnu dhama! *Idam Shareeram* Kounteyah Kshetramityabhi dheeyatey, Etadyo vethhi tam praahuhu Kshetrajna iti tadvidah/ (Kounteya! This body is known as the Kshetra; by inference, those who realize this truth that if one does honest effort, the Kshetra could lead to 'Ishvara Praapti'). Kshetrajnam chaapi mam viddhi Sarva kshetreshu Bharata! Kshetra Kshetrajna yorjnaanam yatthad jnaanammatam mama/ (Arjuna! Do realize that I am the Kshetrajna; the real Jnaana is the awareness of the Kshetra and Kshetrajna)!

The *Fourteenth Chapter of Gita*-Gunatraya Yoga-highlighted the 'Bhava bandhana Vimochana' (Relief from the shackles of Samsara) and gave the illustration of the King of Simhala Dwipa viz. Vikrama

Betala, who went on a hunting spree on horses showing the way in a forest chasing a few hares. The hares crossed a breach which the dogs could not cross easily and there was a peaceful Ashram of Muni Vatsa who along with his disciples always recited the 'Gunatraya Vibhaga Yoga' of Gita. One of the disciples of the Muni cleaned up his feet with water before entering the Prayer Hall of the Ashram where the recitation was practiced. The sand and water mix became muddy and the hares fell in the slush; as soon as the hares fell in the slush, they were lifted by a Vimana bound for Vishnuloka thanks to the Mahatmya of the recitation of the Adhyaya. Meanwhile the chasing dogs arrived and having fallen in the slush they too were airlifted in the form of Gandharvas. The King Vikrama reached the Ashram and the Prayer Hall and asked the Muni for the reason that the hares and horses went to higher lokas. The Muni explained that there was a Brahmana called Keshava and his wife Vilobhana were both vily; the Brahmana killed the wife and was turned as dogs and the wife was born as hares. Both of these thus were beneficiaries of the Recitation of the Fourteenth Chapter of Gita. The message of the Adhyaya was given by Krishna as follows: Gunaanetaanateetya treen dehi deha samudbhayaan, Janmamrityu jaraa duhkhaihi vimuktomrita masnutey/ (Once the three gunas of Satva, Rajasa and Tamasa which are responsible for the ration of old age and death, then the Beings break away from the chains of Samsara and attain Salvation.). Maam cha yopyabhichaarena Bhakti yogena sevatey, sa gunaan

Smateethyaitaan Brahma bhuyaya kalpatey/ (He who worships me with unreserved devotion would cross the barriers of the three Gunaas of Satva, Rajas and Tamas and would become eligble to step int the 'Parama Brahma Sthiti'or Highest Salvation!)

Maha Deva cited the example to Devi Parvati of an arrogant and uncontrollable elephant named Arimardan belonging to King Khangabahu of Saurashtra in Gujarat, while signifying the *Sixteenth Chapter of Gita* titled 'Daivasura Sampad Vibhaga Yoga'. A number of elephant tamers from the neighbouring Kingdoms lande to control Arimardana, not only to secure hefty Prizes of high value but also name and fame but to no avail. Heavy iron rods, piercing tridents and such other weapons were used but despite streams of blood flowing from the body, the animal was getting further wilder. One Brahmana arrived at the scene and touched the elephant with affection and everybody was taken aback since it was not even allowing touching it earlier. Queried as to how the miracle happened, the Brahmana that he attained Siddhis due to the relentless recital of the Sixteenth Chapter of Gita. The King then ordered that the elephant be freed and move about freely on the streets of the Nagar and even children used to play with it for fun!

Dambho darpohi maanascha krodhatparaarushya meyvacha, Agnaanam chabhi jaatasya Partha! Sampadaaasurim/ (Partha! Ignorance, arrogance, pretentiousness, egotism, anger and self-image are all natural phenomena of Asuras). Trividham narakasyedam dwaaram naasana maatmanah, Kaamah krodhastatha lobhah tasmadetatrayam tyajet/ (The three enemies of human beings viz. Kama (desire), Krodha (fury) and Lobha (avarice) are the destroyers of one's own Soul and are the Entry Points of Naraka; that is why the intelligent persons avoid these). The ignorance of the elephant misdirected him and taming was accomplished by affection, peacefulness, humility and character.

The Seventeenth Chapter of Bhagavad Gita viz. Shraddhatraya Vaibhava Yoga was illustrated by the Story of King Khangabahu of Simhala Dwipa, his servant Dussahana and their elephant. Once Dussahana drove the elephant in a race, made it run too fast by poking it by an 'Ankusha'and out of annoyance the animal dropped Dussahana dead. The servant in his next birth was born as an elephant and was born in the same Royal Court. The new elephant (Dusshahana) was gifted by the King to a Poet who in turn sold it to the King of Malwa for a god price. But on reaching Malwa, the elephant took suddenly ill and lied down without food and water. Many experts treated the elephant but to no avail. Medicines, charities and prayers did not help but finally a Brahmana recited the Senventeenth Chapter of Gita and the elephant got recovered and slowly stood up only to collapse and die. The Brahmana who recited the Chapter explained that the dead elephant

in his earlier birth he was servant Dusshana and as a result of the holy recitation he attaned Moksha. King of Malwa continued the reading of the Seventeenth Chapter and attained Sayujya there after. *Satvaanu rupa sarvaswa shraddhaa bhavati Bharata*, *Shraddha mayoyam purusho yoyacchhadrassa evam sah*/ (Arjuna! The features and ways of life are normally shaped in every human being by his own 'swabhhava' or personal traits).

The Eighteenth and last Chapter of Gita named Moksha Sanyasa Yoga contained the quintessence of Vedas and Shastras signifying the termination of Samsara Bandha or the schackles of Life. It is the destroyer of 'Arishadvargas' of Kama, Krodha, Moha, Mada, Lobha and Matsarya; the final goal of Siddha Purushas; the Rest-Home of Indra and Devas; and the High Point of Entertainment of Sanaka, Sandanda, Sanatana and Sanat Kumaras. Sincere recitation of this Grand and Concluding Chapter of Gita constitutes sure steps forward to Moksha or complete break-away from the endless cycle of life! When Lord Indra was enjoying a dance and music programme of Rambha and other Deva Kanyas, a group of 'Vishnu dootas' arrived in Swarga and announced the arrival of a new Indra soon! Indra wondered whether the incumbent Indra performed Hundred Yagnas successfully; constructed lakhs of water bodies; planted crores of trees for the joy of the travelers; organized countless 'Anna daanas' and charities etc. like he did. He reached Bhagavan Vishnu lying in 'Yoga Nidra'on 'Ksheera Sagara' (the Ocean of Milk) and asked him in an agitated tone as to why his 'Indratva' was at stake! Smilingly, Lord Vishnureplied that the Indra-Elect was a consistent reciter of the Eighteenth Chapter of Gita and that he too could retain his position by performing the same. Indra visited the Kalikagram on the banks of River Godavari by taking the form of a Brahmana and having been so impressed by what he observed there, felt that the position of Indra was none too significant to that of Indra-elect but surely deserved Vishnu Sayujya!

Who ever heard or recited even the Mahatmya of Bhagavad Gita would be entitled to 'Yagna Phala' or the Fruits of Performing Yagna.

The Supreme Message of the Final Chapter-and indeed of entire Gita-is summed up as:

Sarva Karmanyapi sadaa kurvaano madvyapaashrayah, Matprasaadaadavaapnoti Shasvatam Padamavyayam/ (Do accomplish the everlasting and indestructible 'Parama pada' by performing the needful 'Karmas' and keeping complete faith in me).

# Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Nrisimha, Vamana and Parasurama 'Avataras'

An 'Avatara' (Incarnation) is like the lighting of a lamp from another lamp; like-wise, Bhagavan is a manifestation of same Bhagavan suited to specific purpose and particular end-use. Among such Avatars of Vishnu, the first well-known manifestation of **Matsya** which retrieved the Sacred Vedas stolen from Brahma by Makarasura, the son of Kashyapa Muni by Diti, one of his four wives besides Aditi, Kadru and Vineeta; Diti's other sons included Hayagriva, Hiranyaksha, Hiranya kashipu, Jamba, Maya etc. Makarasura dived deep into the depths of 'Maha Sagara' (The Great Ocean) along with the Vedas and other Scriptures, in the absence of which the entire order of 'Samsara' (Universe) was totally affected: there were no 'Chatur Varnas'; no Yagnas, Swadhaayas, Vashatkara and the Sacred Rites thus upsetting the Equilibrium of Universal Traditions and Religious / Spiritual Practices. This led to the inevitable Avatara as the Preserver of the Universal Order. By assuming the form of a huge Fish, Vishnu entered the Ocean, killed Makarasura and recovered Vedas and Dharma.

Following a curse given by Maharshi Durvasa, son of Sage Atri, to Indra as the latter ignored the Maharshi while passing by an elephant, Devi Lakshmi in the form of Rajya Lakshmi, deserted Indra Loka and the magnificence of Swarga vanished. As Devas, Indra and Brahma approached Vishnu, Narayana

suggested that one way to recall Rajya Lakshmi to Swarga would be to resort to a massive churning of the Ocean involving not only Devas but also Danavas, Rakshasas, Gandhtavas and Yakshas. The temptation to Danavas etc. should be to obtain 'Amrit' although there might be several other products of lesser consequence that might emerge as deftly conveyed to the Danavas. The arrangement of the 'Samudra Mathana' was that Manthara Mountain was to be set as the

churning rod, Maha Sarpa Vasuki was the string with which to tie up the Mountain and Bhagavan himself as balancing Shakti as the Avatar of **Kurma** (Tortoise) to ensure that

the Meru Mountain would be made stable and steady. As the churning started, innumerable of the proud Danavas who opted for the head of thousand faced Vasuki out of pride got perished due to the poisonous flames where as Devas were at the tail end. Eventally, a massive 'Halahala' or the sky-rocketing poisonous flames engulfed the Universee and by the grace of Three Names of Lord Vishnu viz. Om Achyutaya Namah, Om Anantaya Namah and Om Govindaya Namah, Bhagavan Shankara gulped the blue poisonous flames in his throat thus giving him the epithet of Neela Kantha. By the power of the three names of Vishnu, there would never be any hardship faced: Achyutaananta Govinda iti naamatrayam Maha Mantram hareh/ yo japetpriyato Bhaktaayaa Pranavaadhyam namontakam/ Tasya Mrityu bhayam naasti visharogaagnijam mahat/ Naamatrayam Maha Mantramjapedyam prayatatmavaan/ Kaala Mrityu bhayam chaapi tasya naasti kimanyatah (Whoever recites the Three Names viz. Om Achyutaaya, Om Anantaaya, and Om Govindaaya sincerely and with dedication, none of the poisonous diseases or Agnibased frights/deaths would affect)! As the churning continued, Maha Lakshmi's elder sister Daridra Devi appeared and was directed to stay in the homes of guarrels, Adharmas, violences and sins as also in the residences where residents of such homes in both the 'Sandhya' timings. As the further churning made progress, there emerged Varuni Devi, Nagaraja Ananta, GarudaPatni, Apsaras, Gandhavas, Iravata, Ucchaaishrava Ashwa, Dhanvantari, Parijaata Tree, Surabhi, Maha Lakhsmi, Chandra and Devi Tulasi. All the Devas and Brahma requested Maha Lakshmi to be seated on Maha Vishnu's Lotus-like Heart where the whole World would worship on Ekadashi and Dwadashi days. Devas and Brahma eulogized Kurma Rupa Vishnu and requested him to provide shield to Sesha Nag and 'Diggajaas' or the Four Directional Elephants as also Bhu Devi all reting on the permanent Avatar of Maha Kurma. While the primary reason in the Kurma Avatar was the resurgence of Maha Lakshmi and her manifestation of Rajya Lakshmi who disappeared in Swaraga pursuant to Durvasa's curse to Indra Deva, another major fall-out of 'Ksheera Sagara Mathana' was the emergence of 'Amrit' meant for Devas, which again was distributed by Devi Mohini, another manifestation of Vishnu.

As Hiranyaakasha, the mighty son of Devi Diti pulled up Bhu Devi and dragged her into the depths of the Ocean down deep into the netherland of Rasatala, Lord Vishnu assumed the incarnation of **Maha Varaha** and killed him. Devi Prithvi heaved a great sigh of relief and prayed to Him saying that he was her rediscovery, her mighty 'Adhara' or the Hold, his unique rescuer and without her existence was unreal. Since Devi Prithvi was about to sink but for his timely mercy, she was popularly called Madhavi or the Lord as Madhava. Siince Maha Varaha roared as an acknowledgement of her 'Stuti', the resultant sounds were heard as Sama Veda and he lifted the Earth by his horns in one single 'go' and leapt up from Rasatala to restore her back into her original position when Devas showered flowers and Maharshis recited Vedas, describing the Lord's playful deeds. They said that the distance between the Underworld, Prithi and Sky was the only comprehensible Place that one's imagination knew as spread over by Him, but the Unknown still remained a great mystery or Maya! Even as Maha Varaha placed Bhu Devi as a mammoth ship on the endless water, Bhagavan made divisions of Sapta Dwipas and materialized the four Lokas afresh viz. Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, Swarloka and Maharloka and Lord Brahma resumed his task of Creation.

As Hiranyaaksha was killed, his brother Hiranyakashipu reached Meru Giri and did ruthless Tapasya for thousand 'Deva' years and pleased Parama Shiva with the Panchakshari Mantra 'Om Namah Shivaaya' and secured the very exhaustive boon of victory over 'Mrityu' (death) from Devatas, Asuras, Human Beings, Gandharvas, Nagas, Rakshasas, Animals, Birds, Reptiles, Siddhas, Yakshas, Vidyadharas, and Kinnaras, Diseases and 'Astra-Shastras'. Armed by the all comprehensive boon, Hiranyakashipu had truly turned to be the Over-Lord of the whole Universe keeping all the Lokas under his control, commanding Devas and even 'Pancha Bhutas'. He had declared that he should be worshipped in Temples and Yagnas be performed in his name! In course of time, he was blessed with a son named Prahlada and as the latter came of the tender age of a boy was sent to Gurukula where all the glories of Danavas were taught. But Prahlada was a staunch Vaishnava with supreme dedication to Narayana. When he returned from his early spell of Gurukula to his father, he stunned the latter when he was all praise for Vishnu and affirmed that Vishnu was the unique driving force of Universal Existence and that he was the Eternal, Timeless, Indestructible, All-Pervading, Omni Potent and Omni-scient Paramatma. Hiranyakashipu was in great rage that his opponent Vishnu who killed his brother Hiranyaksha was being praised in his presence and was about to kill the boy's Guru; Prahlada confirmed that his Guru tried his very best to divert him from Narayana to his own father as the Supreme but failed and thus the Guru was spared. Then Hiranyakashipu himself sought to tutor the boy by cajoling him, endearing him, self-praising his own achievements and so on. He utilized the Sama (Advice and Mild reproach), Bheda (seeking to divide Vishnu as an Evil Force and himself as an Almighty), Daana (gifts of whatever nature on Earth or elsewhere) and even 'Danda' by way of punishment. But, Prahlada never ever relented and continued to extol the virtues of Vishnu. As his father lost all his patience, he resorted to measures of deadly nature and Prahlada's conviction too got redoubled. The paternal care and affection of Hiranya -kashipu were totally replaced by hatred, vengeance and retaliation for his son who turned out to be his sworn enemy; he exposed him to poisonous snakes which gave him the kiss of death but Prahlada survived while extolling Narayana; he threw him into the cages of tigers which ate up his limbs but still the Parama Bhakta survived singing hymns of Govinda; he got the tender boy crushed under elephants but still the matchless follower of Madhusudana survived praising the Leelas of Keshava; he threw him from high mountain tops but still the most trusted devotee survived rejoicing the ecstasy of Madhava's glories! Finally, Hiranyakashipu got on to his wits' end; he said that if Vishnu were 'Sarva Vyapi' (All Pervasive), he asked Prahlada to show that Narayana any where, say in that Pillar and broke it with his mace, or otherwise he would most certainly stop Prahlada's breathing. As though there were earth quakes and storms, there emerged the most fearful Man-Lion, Narasimha, who had half-body as a giant-like Lion roaring in a manner that the whole World trembled and the other half like a colossal human being as a personification of 'Mrityu' with mighty thighs and legs; the Strange Creation which was neither human nor leonine lifted the massive body of the Danava on his thighs and tore him into pieces with sharp nails and hefty hands, rejoicing the drink of the victim's blood and eating chunks of his meat! No doubt, Devatas were overjoyed at the death of the Danava but were terrified to vision the unusual form of Nrisimha and prayed to him to cool down; they prayed to Devi Lakshmi to pacify the Lord who made efforts to pacify his anger; Prahlada who too was in shock was declared the King to revive Dharma again.

As the grandson of King Prahlada, the illustrious Danava King Bali (son of Virochana), was born as a devout Vaishnava and 'Dharmajna' but at the same time as an enormous warrior who defeated Devas and Marudganas and controlled the Three Lokas. But in King Bali's regime, his 'Praja' (the Public) was extremely happy when Lord Varuna gave optimal rains, Devi Prithvi yielded excellent crops, cows gave maximum milk, and there was alround Prosperity and Peace. As King Bali was a highly dedicated to Srihari, the usual bitterness among the Pubic and the Establishment was absent and the values of 'Dharma' and 'Nyaya' (Virtue and Justice) in the Society were intact. But Lord Indra was dislodged from his throne and so were the various Devas. Sage Kashyapa and Devi Aditi prayed to Shrihari and requested to do justice to Devas and Indra as King Bali used 'Maya' to worship Vishnu and at the same time kept Indra and Devas aloof from Swarga cleverly and keeping the best of all the Three worlds with him! Kashyapa thus requested Vishnu to be born to the former and Aditi and by resorting the same kind of

Maya, bestow his Throne and Indratwa to to Indra! Bhagavan agreed to be born to Aditi and Kashyapa as **Vamana Avatar.** As Vamana grew up as a Brahmachari, he learnt Vedas and other Scriptures and sporting 'Mriga Charma' (Skin of a Deer), Danda (Stick) and wooden footwear appeared at the Yagna being performed by King Bali and asked for a mere three feet of land as Bhu daan (charity of Land). Daithya Guru Shukracharya warned that this short man Vamana was a fake and was Bhagavan Vishnu himself. King Bali stated that if the Brahmachari was Vishnu himself, which other greater fortune there could be! Vamana then assumed a sky-high proportion of body and measured one foot as the entire Prithvi with land, Samudra, Parvat, Dwip, etc totalling fifty koti Yojanas (13-16 kilo mtr. perYojana); by way of the 'Dwiteeya Pada' (second foot space), Vamana Deva counted the Nakshtras, Grahas (Planets), Devalokas, Brahmaloka etc. But the second foot still fell short of the required size of the second foot. Brahma had the opportunity of Vishnu's 'Maha Vishwa Darshan'. As there was no space for the third foot, Vishnu Deva pushed Bali's head down to Rasatala and made him the King of Danavas, Nagas and water-based Beings till the end of the Kalpa!

Maharshi Jamadagni of Bhrugu Vamsha did Tapsya and pleased Surabhi the Celestial Cow and was extremely contented as the Holy Cow fulfilled all his desires and enjoyed a contented life. He married Devi Renuka and performed a Putra Kaameshti Yagna and was blessed with the son named **Parashu Rama.** After his 'Upanayana Samskara' and Gayatri Upadesha, he performed rigorous Tapasya, pleased Kashyapa who taught the Avinashi Mantra *Om Namo Narayanaya Namah* and performed Yagnas, Daanaas etc.

One day, Haihaya King Kartavirya happened to visit the Ashram of Jagadagni and was impressed with Surabhi as the Cow that could fulfil all desires and wished to take it away by force. Surabhi killed the King's army and reverted back to Swargaloka. The King grew angry and killed Jamadagni. There Parashurama secured from Lord Vishnu, a 'Parashu' (axe), Vaishnava Dhanush and Shastra-Astras and instructed him to lessen the weight on Earth of highly crazy and egoistic Kshatriyas by killing them. On return to the Ashram, he found his father killed by Kartaviryarjuna and rushed to the latter's Kingdom, killed him, and went all out on a spree of killing Kshatriayas to completely uproot their clans (except Ikshvaku Vamsa as per his mother's request). As Shi Rama pulled down Shiva Dhanush, Parashu Rama surfaced again and challenged Rama to break Vaishnava Dhanush and when Rama did it, retired to the Ashram of Nara-Narayana thereafter.

# 'Phala Shruti' of Padma Purana

Padma Purana occupies ba high position among the 'Ashtadasha' (Eighteen) Puranas. It represents Bhagavan Vishnu's 'Hridaya Pankajam' or the Lotus-like Heart and is considered as an Authority of 'Shri Vaishnavas', although the Purana takes pain to underline that all manifestations of the Supreme Being are one and the same. The Purana says: Shorascha Shaiva Ganesha Vaishnavaaha Shakti Pujakaah, maameva Praaptu vantih varshaapi Saagaram tathaa, Ekoham panchadha jaataah trudeya naamahikila/ Devadattho Yatha kaschit putraadyahvana naamaamabhih/ (Devotees of Surya, Shiva, Ganesha, Vishnu and Shakti reach me only like rain water flows into the Seas; basically, I am the same manifesting in the above Forms for fun; like a Devadutta addresses his father or children with different names)! Srishthisthyanta karanaad Brahma Vishnu Shiv-atmikah, sa sanjnaam yati Bhaagaaneka eva Janardana! (The Unique Bhagawan is manifested in all the Forms of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva to perform the Tasks of Creation, Preservation and Annihilation!)

Pathana-Shravana-Manana (Reading-Listening-and Thinking) of Padma Purana is stated to assure Peace of Mind, Happiness, Contentment, Good Health, Longevity, Fame and Fulfillment. Even mere possession of the Purana affords security against diseases, thieves, evil spirits, enemies, cruel animals, poisonous

creatures, and all kinds of natural calamities. The Purana provides a shield against the Adhi Bhoutika, Adhi Daivika and Adhyatmika aberrations. Padma Purana Shravana, as a part of Vratas, Punya Karyas / auspicious deeds like weddings, Upanayanas, launch of construction and other activities, Griha Praveshaas, Temple Buildings, Anna Samaaraathanaas, Yagnas, Tirtha Yatras as also Namakaranas, Aksharaabhyas, etc.shall certainly intensify the fruits of Punya! Digestion of the Contents of the Purana would indeed be a firm and long step forward to Moksha.

#### Shri Vishnu Sahasra Naama Stotra

Asya Shri Vishnornaama Sahasra Stotrasya Shri Maha Deva Rishih, Anushthup Chhandahah, Paramaatma Devata, Hreem Beejam, Shrih Shaktih, Kleem Keelakam, Chaturvarga Dharmaarthaartha Kaama Mokshaarthey Japee Viniyogah/

Om Vaasudevaaya Vidmahey, Mahha Hamsaaya dhimahi, Tanno Vishnuh Prachodayat/

Anganyaasa Karanyaasa Vidhi purva yada pathet, Tatphalam Kotigunanti bhavatyeva na samshayah/

ANGANYASA: Shri Vaasudeva Param Bhrahmeyti Hridayam Mula Praritiriti Shirah/ Mahaa Varaah iti Shikha/ Suryavamshadwaja iti Kavacham/ Brahmaadi kaamya lalitya Jagadaashcharya shaishava iti netram/ Paarthaartha khanditaasesha ityastram Namo Naraayanayeti nyasam Sarvatra kaarayet/ Om Namo Naraayanaaya Purushaaya Mahaatmaney, Vishuddha Sattvaaya Mahaa Hamsaaya Dhimahi, tanno Devah parachodayaat/

Kleem Krishnaaya vidmahey, Heem Raamaaya Dhimahey tanno Devah prachodayaat/

Sham Narasimhaaya vidmahey, Shri Kanthaaya dhimahey, tanno Vishunuh prachodayaat/

Om Vaasu Devaaya vidmahey, Devaki sutaaya dhimahey, tannah Krishnah prachodayaat/

Om hraam, hreem, hruum, hrauim, hroaum, hrah, kleem Krishnaaya Govindaaya, Gopeejana vallabhaya namah swaha/

Iti Mantra samucchaarya yajed vaa Vishnumakhayam, Shrinivaasah Jagannadhah tatah stotram pattheth sudheeh/

Om Vaasudevah param Brahma Paramaatma Paraatparah/

Paramdhaaa Paramjyotih Param Tatwam Param Padam / Param Shivah Paro dheyah Param Jnaanam Para Gatih/ Paramaarthah Parasshreshtha Paraanandah Parodayah, Parovyaktatparam Vyoma Paramaarthih Pareshwarah/ Niraamayo Nirvikaaro Nirvikalpo Nirlepo Nirvaghnah/ Nirguno Nishkalankonantobhyayochintyochalochintyah, Ateendriyomitotparo Nityoneehovyayokshayah/ Sarvajnah Sarvagah Sarvadah Sarva bhaavanah, Sarvashaastaa Sarva saakshee Pujyah Sarvasya Sarvadruk/ Sarva Shaktih Sarva saarah Sarvaatmaa Sarvato mukhah, Sarva Vaasah Sarva Rupah Sarvaadih Sarvadukhahaa/ Sarvaarthah Sarvatobhadrah Sarva kaarana kaaranam, Sarvatishiyatah Sarvaadhyakshah Sarveshvareshvarah/ Shadvamshako Maha Vishnurmahaaguhyo Mahaa Vibhuh, Nityodito Nitya yukto Nityaanandah Sanaatanah/ Mayaapatihryogapatih Kaivalyrapatatmabhuh, Janma mrityu jaraateetah Kaalaateeto Bhavaatigah! Purnah Satyah Shuddha Buddha swarupo Nityachinmayah, Yogapriya Yoga gamyo bhaya bandhaikamochakah/ Purana Purushah Prataykchaitanyah Purushottamah, Vedanta Vedyo Durjayastaapatra vivarjitah/ Brahmavidyaashrayonaghah Swaprakaashah Swayam Prabhuh, Saropaaya Udaaseenah Pravavah Sarvatah Samah/ Sarvaanavadyo Dushpraayah –stureeyahstamasah parah, Kutasthah Sarvasamshilashto Vaangamnogocharaatigah/ Samkarshanah Sarvaharah Kaalah Sarva bhayankarah, Annulyanghayah Chitragatih MahaaRudrah Duraasadah/ Mulaprakritraanandaha Pradyumno Vishwamohanah, Mahaamaayo Vishwa beejam Parashaktih Sukhouakabhuh/ Sarvakaamyoantaleelah Sarvabhuta vashankarah, Aniruddhah Sarvajeevo

Hrisheekesho Manh Patih/ Nirupaadhiprio Hamsoksharah Sarvaniyojakah, Brahma praaneshwarah sarvabhutabhrit Dehanayakah/ Kshetrajnah Prakritiswami Purusho Viswasutradhruk, Antaryaami Tridhaamantahsaakshi Nirguna Eswarah/ Yogigamyah Padmanaabhah Seshashaayee Shriyah Patih, Shri Shivopasya paaaambojo Nityashreeh Shriniketanah/ Nitya vakshasthala Shrih Shrinidhih Shrihoro Harih, Vashyashih Nischala Shrido Vishnuh Ksheeraabhi mandirah/ Kaustubhodbhaasitoraksah Maadhavo Jagadaatihaa, Shrivatsa vakshaa Nisseeemakalyanaguna bhaajanam/ Peetaambaro Jagannatho Jagatraataa Jagatpitaa, Jagatbandhurjagatsrashtaa Jagaddhvaata Jagannidhih/ Jagadekasphuradveeryo Naamhavaadi Jaganmayah Sarvasiddhaarthah Sarvaranjitah/ Sarvameghodyamo Brahma Rudraadyatkrushta chetanah, Shambhoh Pitaamaho Brahmapitaa Sharaadyadheeswarah/

Sarva Devapriyah Sarvadeva murtiranuttamah, Sarva Devaika sharanam Sarvadevaika devata/ Yainabhrugyagna phalado Yagnesho Yagna bhaayanah, Yagnatraataa Yagnapumaan Vanamaali Dwijapriyah/ Dwijaikamaanado Viprakula Devosuraantakah, Sarvadushtaantakruh Sarva sajjanaanda paalakah/ Saptalokaika jatharah Saptalokaika mandanah, Srishtisthityanta krut Chakri Sharangadhanyaa Gadaadharah/ Shankhabhrunnandaki Padma paani garuda yaahanah, Anirdeshyavapuh Sarava Pujya Triloka paavanah/Anantakirtih Nisseema Pourushah Saramangalah, Suryakoti prateekaasho Yaakoti duraasadah/ Kandarpakoti laavanyo Durgakotyarimardanah, Samudrakoti gambheerah Tirthakoti samaahvayah/ Brahmakoti jagatsrashta Vaayukoti maaha balah, Koteendindu jagadaanandi Shambhukoti Maheshwarah/ Kuberakoti Lakshmivaan Shakrakoti vilaasavaan, Himatkoti nishkampaha Koti Brahmaanda Vigrahah/ Kotyashwamegha paapaghnah Yagna koti samaarchanah, Sudhhakoti Swasthya hetuh Kamadhuhkoti kaamadah/ Brahmavidyakoti rupah Shipivishtah Shuchishrayaah, Vishyambharah Teerthapaadah Punyashrayana keertanah/ Adi Devo Jagajjaitro Mukundah Kaalanemiha, Vaikunthonanta maahaatmyo Maha yogeswa -rotsavah/ Nitya trupto Lasadbhaavo Nisshankho Narakaantakah, Deenaanaathaika sharanam Vishvaika Vyasanaapahah/ Jagat kripaakshamah Nityam Kripaluhu Sajjanaashrayah, Yogeswarah Sadodeeranah Vridhi Kshaya vivarjitah/ Adhikshajo Vishwaretaah Prajaapati shataadhipah, Shakra Brahmaarchita padah Shambhu Brahmordhya dhaamagah/ Surya Somekshanh Vishwa bhokta Sarvasya paaragah, Jagatsetuh Dharmasetudharah Vishwa dhurandharah/Nirmamokhila lokeshah Nissangah

Adbhuta Bhogavaan Vashya maayah Vasya Viswaha Vishvaksenah Surottamah/ Sarva Shreyapatih Divya Anarghya Bhushana Bhushitah, Sarva Lakshana Lakshanah Sarva daityendra darpaha/ Samasta Deva Sarvaswam Sarva Daivata nayakah, Samasta Deva Kavacham Sarva Deva Shiromanih/ Samasta Devata Durgah Prapannashani panjarah, Samastabhayahannama Bhagavan Vishtarashravaah/Vibhuh Sarvahitodarkah Hataarih Swargatipradah, Sarva Daivata jeevesho Brahmanaadi niyojakah/ Brahma Shambhu Paraardhaayuhu Brahmajyeshthah Sishuswaraat, Virat Bhakti paraadheenah Stutyah Stotraartha saadhakah/ Paraartha kartaa Krutyajnah Krutya sadonjhitah, Sadaanandah Sadaabhadrah Sadaa Shantah Sadaa Shaivah/ Sada Priyah Sadaa Tushtah Sadaa Pushtaha Sadaarchitah, Sadaa Putah Paananaagnayah Veda gruhnnah Vrishaakapih/ Sahara naama Triyugah Chaturmurtih Chatur Bhujah, Bhuta Bhavya Bhavannathah Maha Purusha Purvajah/ Naaraayano manjukeshah Sarvayoga vinihssrutah Veda Saarah Yajna saarah Saama saarah Taponidhih/ Sandhya sreshthah Puraanarshih Nishthaa Shanti Paraayanam, Shivah Trishulavidhvansi Shri Kanthaika Varapradah/ Narah Krishnah Harih Dharmanandanah Dharmajeevanah Adi Kartaa Sarva Satyah Sarva Streeratna darpaha/Trikaala jita Kandarpah Urvashisruk Muniswarah Adyah Kavih Hayagrivah Sarva Vaageswareswarah/ Sarva Deva mayo Brahma Guruh Vaageeswaripatih, Ananta Vidya Prabhavah Mulaavidya vinaashakah/ Saarvajnadah Namajjadya naashakah Madhu -sudanah, Aneka mantra kotishah Shabda Brahmaika paaragah/ Adi Vidwan Veda Karta Vedaatma Shruti Saagarah, Brahmaartha Vedaapaharanah Sarva Vignaana Janmabhuh/ Vidyaaraajah Jnaana murthih Jnaana Sindhuh, Akhanda dheeh, Matsya Devah Maha Shringah Jagajjeevahinna dhruk/ Leelaa vyaptha akhilambhodhih Rigvedaadi pravartakah, Adi Kurmah Ahilaadhaarah Trineekruta jagadbharah/ Amareekrita Devoughah Peeyushotpati kaaranam, Atmaadhaarah Dharaadhaarah Yagnaangah Dharani dharah/ Hiranyakshaharah Prithivipatih Shraaddhadi kalpakah, Samasta Pitru bheetighnah Samasta Pitru Jeevanam/ Havyakavyaika bhuk Havya kavaika phala daayakah, Romaantarleena jaladhih Kshobhitaasesha Saagarah/ Mahaa Varaah

Yagnaghna dhwasakah Yaagnikaashrayah, Shri Nrisimhah Divya Simhah Sarvaanishthaartha duhkhaha/ Eka Virah Adbhutabalah Yantra mantraika bhanjanah,

Brahmaadi dusshah jyotih Yugaantaagnyati bhishanah/ Koti vajradhinakhah Jagadyuprekshya murtidhruk, Matruchakra pramadhanah Maha Matru Ganeshwarah/ Achintyamogha Viryadhyah Samastaasuradhasmarah, Hiranyakashipuchhedi Kaalah Sankarshanipatih/ Kritantavahanah Sadyah Samasta bhayanaashanah, Sarva Vighnaatakah Sarva Siddhidaha Sarva purakah/ Samasta paataka dhwamsi Siddhi Mantradhikaahvyah, Bhairaveshah Haartighnah Kaalakoti duraasadah/ Daitya – garbhastraavinama Sphutidad Brahmaanda garjitah, Smrutamaatraakhila traataa Adbhuta rupah Maha Harih/ Brahmacharyashirah pindi Dikpaalah Ardhhanga Bhushanah, Dwadashaarka shirodaamaa Rudrasirshaika nupurah/ Yoginigrasta girijaatraata Bhairavatarjakah Virachakreswarah Atyugrah Yamaarih Kaalasamvarah/ Krodheswarah Rudra chandiparivaraadi dushtabhuk, Sarvaakshobhyah Mrityu Mrityuh Kaala Mrityu nivartakah/ Asaadhya sarva rogahnah sarvadurgahasoumyakrit, Ganeshakoti darpaghnah Dussaha seshagotraha/ Deva Danava durdarshah Jagadbhayadabhishakah, Samasta durgatitraataa Jagadbhakshak bhakshakah/ Ugreshah Ambaramaarjarah KaalaMushaka Bhakshakah, Anantaayudha dordandi Nrisimhah Veerabhadrajit/ Yogini chakra guhyo shah Shakraaripu maamsa bhuk, Rudro Naraayano Mesharupashankara vaahanah/ Mesharupa Shivatraata Dushta Shakti sahasrabhuk, Tulasivallabho Veero Vaamaa charaakhileshtadah/ Maha Shivah Shivaarudhah Bhairavaika kappala dhruk, Jjillichakreshwarah Shakra divya mohanah rupadah/ Gauri sowbhaagyado Mayanidhih

Mayabhayaapahah, Brahma tejo mayah Brahmashrimayah Trayeemayah/ Subrahmanyo Balidwamsi Vaamanah Aditi duhkhaha, Upendro Nripati Vishnuh Kashyapaanda mandanah/ Bali swaarajyadah Sarva Deva vipannadah Achytah, Urukramah Tirtha paadah Tripadastha Trivikramah/ Vyoma paadah swapaadambhah Pavitratajagatrayah, Brahmeshadyabhivandyaangrih Dyuta Dharmaa Ahidhaavanah/ Achityadbhuta vistaaro Vishva vriksho Mahabalah, Rahu murthaa paraanchita Bhrigu patni shiroharah/ Paapaastrastah Sadaa Punyah Daityashaanitya khandakah, Puritaakhila Devaashah Vishvarthaikaavataara krit/ Swamaaya nitya guptaatmaa Sadaa Bhakta chintaamanih, Varadah Kaartaveeryadi raja raajyapradah Anaghah/ Vishwashlyaaghyah Amitaachaarah Dattatreyah Muneeshwarah, Parashaktisadaa slishtah Yogaananda sadonmadah/ Samastendraari Teyjohat Paramaamrita Padmapah, Anasuya ratna garbham Bhoga moksha sukha pradah/ Jamadagni kulaatityah Renukaadbhuta shakti dhruk, Matru hathyadi nirlepah Skandajit vipra raajyadah/ Sarvakshatraantakrut Vira darpaha Kaarta viryajit, Saptadwipavati daata Shivaarchaka yashah pradah/ Bheemah Parashu Raamascha Shivaachaaryaika vishwabhuh, Shivaakhila Jnaana koshah Bhishmaachaaryah Agni Devaah/ Dronaachaarya Guruh Vishwa jaitra Dhanwa Kritaantajit, Adviteeya tapo murthih Brahmacharyaika dakshinah/ Manusreshthah Sataam Setuh Mahiyaan Vrishabhah Virat, Adi Rajah Kshiti Pitah Sarva Ratnaika doha krut/ Prithuh Janmaadyeka dakshah Geeh Shri Kartika swayamvritah, Jagadvrithipradah Chakravarti Sreshthah Advayastradhruk/ Sanakaadi muni praapya bhavatbhakti vardhanah, Varnaashramaadi Dharmaanaam Kartha Vakta Prayartakah/ Suryayamsha dwajah Ramah Raghayah Sadgunaarnavah, Kaakusthah Vira rajyaaryah Rajadharma dhurandharah/ Nityaswasthyaashrayah Sarvabhadra graahi Shubhaikadhrukh, Nara Ratnam Ratnagarbhah Dharmaadhyakshah Maha Nidhih/ Sarvashreshthaashrayah Sarva Shastraaastragrama viryavan, Jagadishah Daasharathih Sarva ratnaashrayo Nripah/ Samasta Dharmasuh Sarvadharma drashta khilaartihaa, Ateendro Jnana Vijnaana paaradrashta Kshamaambudhih/ Sarva prakrushtah Shishteshtah Harshashokadyanakulah, Pitra ajnaatyakta saamraajyah sampannoda nirbhayah/ Guhaadeshaarpithaishwaryah Shivasparthaajataadharah, Chitrakutaapta ratnaadrih Jagadeesho Vaneycharah/ Yadheshtaamogha sarvaastrah Devendra tanayaakshiha, Brahmendraadinathaisheekah Maarichaghnah Viraadhaha/ Brahma shaapa hataasesha dankakaranya paavanah, Chaturdasha sahasrogara kshoghnaika sharaika dhruk/ Kharaarih Trishirohanta Dushanaghnah Janaardanah, Jataayushognigatidah Agastya sarvasya mantrarat/ Leeladhanushkotyapaasta Dundhubhyasthita Mahachalah, Saptataala vyadhaakrishta dhwasta paataala Danavah/ Sugriva raajyadah Aheenamanasaiva abhayapradah, Hanumadrudra mukhyeshah Samastakapi dehabhrit/ Sanaaga daitya baanaaika vyakulikrita Saagarah, Samlecchakoti

baanaika sushka nirdagdha saagarah/ Samudraadbhuta purvaika bandha setuh yashonidhih, Asaadhya saadhakah Lankaasamulotsaada Dakshinah/ Varadrupta jagachhalya Poulatsya kula kruntanah, Ravanaghnah Prahatscchit Kumbhakarnabhit Ugraha/ Ravanaika shirascchetta Nisshankaindraika rajyadah, Swaraaswargatwa vicchedi Devendraanindrataaharah/ Rakshodevatvahrut Dharmaadharmavighnah Purushthutah, Natimaatra dashasyarih Dutta Rajya Vibhishanah/ Sudhavrishtimritaasesha swasainyojjivanaika krut, Deva Brahmana naamaika dhata Sarvaamararchitah/ Brahma Surya Rudraadi vrindaarpita Sati priyah, Ayodhyaakhila Rajaagraganya Sarvabhuta Manoharah/ Swamyatulya kripaadandah Heenotkrushtaika Satpriyah, Shvyapakshyaadi nyaaya darsha Heenaarthathika Sadhakah/

Vadhavyaajanuchita krittarakah Akhila tulya krit, Pavitrayaadhikya muktaatmaa Priyantakah Smaraarijit/ Saakshaat Kusha Lava chhandraavitah Aparajitah, Kossalendrah Veera baahuh Satyardhatyakta sodarah/ Sharasandhaana nirdhuat dharani mandalah Jayah, Brahmaadi kaamasaamnidhya sanaathi krita Daivatah/ Brahmalokaapta chaanadaaladya sesha praani saarthakah, Swarneeta gardhabhaswadi chirayodhyaavanaika krit/Ramo Dwiteeya Soumitrah Lakshmanah Prahatendra jit, Vishnu Bhaktah Sa Raamaanghni paduka rajya nivirttih/ Bharatah Asankhya Gandharva kotighnah Lavanatmakah, Shatrugnah Vaidyarat Ayurvedagabhoushadhipatih/ Nityamritakarah Dhanvantari Yagno jagahharah, Suryarighnah Suraajeevah Dakshineshah Dwijapriyah/ Chhinna murthaapadesharkah Seshaanga sthaapitaamarah, Vishwarthaa Seshakrit Rahu shira chheetthaa Akshataakutih/ Vaajapeyaadinaamaagnih Veda dharma paraayanah, Sweta dwipa patih Sankhapraneta Sarva Siddhivirat/Vishwa Prakaashita Jnaana Yoga moha tamisraha, Devahyutatmajah Sidhah Kapilah Kardama –atmajah/ Yogaswami Dhyana bhanga sagraatmaja bhasmakrit, Dharmah Vrishendrah Surabhipatih Shaddhaatma bhaavitah/ Shambhuh Tripuradaahaika sthairya Vishvaradhoduhah, Bhakta Shambhugitah Daityaamrita vaapeesamastapah / Maha Pralaya Vishvaika nilayah Akhila Naagarat, Sesha Devah Sahasraakshah Sahasraasya Shirobhujah/ Phanaamani kanikarayojitaachhaambuda Kshitih, Kaalaagn Rudra Janako Mushalastro Halaayudhah/ Neelaambaro Vaaruneeshah Manovaakkaaya doshah, Asantosha drishti maatrapaati thaika Dashaanah/Bilasamyamanah Ghorah Rouhineyah Pralambaha, Mushtikaghnaha Dwividah Kalinikarshanah Balah/ Ravati Ramanah Purva Bhakti kheda achyuta agrajah, Devaki Vasudevahya Kashipaaditi nandanah/ Vaarshneyah Satvataam Shreshtha Shourih Yadukuleswarah Naraaktitih Param Brahma Savyasaachi Varapradah/ Brahmadikaamya laalitya Jagadaaschrya Shashavah, Putanathah Shakatabhit Yamalaarjuna bhanjakah/ Vaataasuraarih Keshagnah Dhenukaarih Gaveeswarah, Damodarah Gopadevah Yashodaananda dayakah/ Kaaleeya Mardanah Sarva Gopa Gopijanapriyah, Leelaagovardhana dharo Govindo Gokulotsavah/

Arishtamathanah Kamonmattha Gopi Vimuktidah, Sadyah Kuvalayaapeeda ghaati Chanura mardanah/Kamsaarih Ugrasenaadi rajya vyapaaristaamarah, Sudharnagkita Bhulokah Jaraasandha balaantakah/Tyakta bhagna Jaraasandhah Bhimasena Yashah pradah, Samdipani mritaapadya data Kaalaantakaadijit/Samasta naaraka traata Sarva Bhupati koti jitah, Rukminiramano Rukmishasano Narakaantakah/Samasta Sundarikantho Muraari Garudhadhwajah, Eakaaki Jita Rudraarka Marudyakhileswarah/

Devendra darpah Kalpa drumaanjali bhutalah, Banabahu sharsrachhit Nandyadi ganakotijit/ Leelajita Mahadevah Maha Devaika pujitah, Indraatharjuna Nirbhanga jayadah Pandavaikadhruk/ Kashiraja shiracchhetta Rudrashaktaika mardanah, Visweshwara Pasaadaadhyah Kashirajasutardanah/ Shambhu pratignaa vidhvamsi Kashinirdardhanayakah, Kashisharana kotighnah Lokashikashaa dwijaarchakah/ Shiva teevra tapo vashyah Puraashiva Varapradah, Shankaraika pratishthaadhruk Swayam Shashanka pujakah/ Shivakanyavrata patih Krishna rupa Shivaariha, Mahalakshmi vapur Gauritraata Vaidala Vritraha/ Swadhaama Muchukundaika nishkaala Yavaneshta krit, Yamuna patih Aneetaparileena dwijaatmah/ Shri Daamarangka Bhaktaartha bhumya -neeteyendriya vaibhavah, Duvrutta Sishupaalaika Muktido Dwarakeshwarah/ Aachandaaladika praapya Dwarakaa nidhi kotikrit, Akrurodhbhava Mukhaika Bhaktah Swacchanda Muktidah/ Sabaala stree kreedaamrita vaapi kritaarnavah, Brahmaastra

dagdha garbhasta Pareekshijjeevana krit/ Parileena dwiha sutaanetaa Arjuna mada –apahaha, Goodha mudra krita grasta Bhishmadyaakhila Kauravah/ Yadaartha khanditaa sesha Divyastra Partha moha hrit, Garbha shaapacchala dhwasta Yadavorvibhiraapah/ Jaraavyadhaari gatidah smrita maatraakhileshtadah, Kaama devo Ratipatih Manmadhah Shambaraantakah/ Anangah Jita Gourishah Ratikantah Sadepsitah, Pushpeshuh Vishwa Vijayi Smarah Kameshvari Priyah/ Ushapatih Vishwaketuh Vishwatriptah Adhi Puurushah, Chaturatma Chaturvyuhah Chaturyuga vidhaayakah/ Chaturvedaika Vishwaatma Sarvotkrushtamsha kotisuuh, Asshramaatma Puranarshih Vyasah Shaakhaa Sahasra krit/ Maha Bharaa Nirmata Kaveendro Baadarayanah, Krishna Dwaipayanah Sarva Purushartha bodhakah/ Vedantakartaa Brahmaikavyanjakah Puru Vamsha krit, Buddhah Jnaana jitaa sesha Deva Devi Jagatpriyah/ Niraayudhah Jagajjaitrah Shri Dhanah Dushta mohanah, Daitya Veda Bahishkarta Vedaartha Shuti gopakah/ Shouddhhodanih Drushta Dishtah Sukahdah Sadasampattih, Yayaa yogyaakhila kripah Sarva shunyokhileshtadah/ Chatuhkoti pruthak Tatwa Prgnaapaar amitheshwararh, Paakhanda vedamaargeshah Paakhanda shruti gopakah/ Kalki Vishnuh Yashah putrah Kalikaala vilopakah, Samasta mlecchha dushtaghnah Sarvashishtah Dwijaatikrit/ Satya pravartakah Devadwija deergha Kshudhaapaha, Ashwayaaraadih Ekanta Prithyi durgati naashanah/ Sadyah Kshamaanta Lakshmi krita Nashtanih Sesha Dharmavit, Ananta Swarna Yaagaika hema purnaakhiladwijah/ Asaadhyaika jagatechhastaa Vishva bandhah Jayadhwajah, Atmatatwaadhipah Kartu shreyshtho vidhirumaapatih/ Bhatru shreshthah Prajeshaagrayah Marichih Janakaagrani, Kashyapah Devaraat Indrah Prahlaadah Daityarat Shahi/ Nakshatreshah Ravistejah Shreshthah Shurah Kaviswarah,

Maharshirat Bhriguh Vishnuh Adityeshah Baliswarat/ Vaayuh Vahnih Shuchishreshthah Shankaro Rudraraat Guruh, Vidwattamah Chitrarathah Gandharvaagrayah Aksharotthamah/ Varnaadih Agrayastree Gauri Shakatyagraya Shrih Naradah Devarshirat Pandavaagrayah Arjunah Vaadah Pravaadarat/ Pavanah Pavaneshaanah Varunah Yaadasaampatih Gangaa Tirthottamah Dyutam Chhalakaagrayam Varaushadham/ Annam Sudarshanah Astraagyam Praharanottamam, Ucchhaishravah Vaajiraajah Iravatah Ibeshwarah/ Arundhati Eka Patneeshah Ashwatthah Asesha Vriksharaat, Adhyatma Vidyaa Vidyaagrayah Pranavah Cchhaandsaam varah/ Meruh Giripatih Maargah Maasaagrayah Kaal sattamah, Dinaadhyatmaa Purva siddhah Kapilah Saama Vedarat/ Taaksharyah Khagendrah Rutvagnayah Vasantah Kalpapaadapah, Daatru shresthah aamadhenuh Aartighnaagrayah Suhyuttamah/ Chintaamanih Gurushreshthah Maataa Hitamayah Pitah, Simhah Mrigendrah Naagendrah Vaasukih Nrivarah Nripah/ Varneshah Braahmanah Chetah Karanaagraya Namo Namah, ItyetadVasudevasya Vishnornaama sahasrakam/ (Padma Purana, Uttarahanda)

(Vishnu Sahasra naama Stotram is a sure means of 'Paapa Vimochana'. It clears all difficulties; enhances quality of Life; keeps conscience clean; fulfills desires; keeps away poverty, diseases, and natural disasters; secures from thieves, snakes, cruel animals and evil spirits; brings in recognition and name; accords the Punya of Yagna, Tapa, Daana, Vrata and Tirtha Yatras; and finally acts as a unique ladder to Salvation)

Naasti Vishnoh Paramdhama Naasti Vishnoh Param Tapah, Naasti Vishnoh Paro Dharma Naasti Mantro Hyavaishnavah/ Naasi Vishno Param Satyam Naasti Vishnoh Paro Japah, Naasti Vishnoh Param Dhyanam Naasti Vishnoh Param Gatih/ Kim tasya Bahurbhi Mantraih Shastraih kim Bahu vistaraih, Vajapeya Sahastrairva Bhakriryasya Jannardaney/

Sarva Tirthamayo Vishnuh Sarva Shastramayah Prabhuh, Sarva Kratumayo Vishnuh Satyam Satyam vadaamyaham/

(There is no better 'Parama Dhama' than Vishnu, no better 'Tapas' than Vishnu, no better 'Dharma' than Vishnu, no better Mantra than Vishnu, no better Truth than Vishnu, no better 'Japa' than Vishnu, no better 'Dhyana' than Vishnu, no better 'Gati' or route than Vishnu! Are there many other Mantras, Shastras, Vajapeyas, Tirthas or Kratus? In the final analysis, it is all about Vishnu, Vishnu and Vishnu alone!)

### Further continued

#### Shri Rama Shata Naamaavali

Om Shri Ramo Ramachandrascha Rama Bhadrascha Shashwatah/ Rajivalochanah Shriman Rajendro Raghupungavah// Janakivallabho Jaitro Jitamitro Janaardanah/ Vishwamitra Priyo Daantah Sharanaagatatataparah// Baali pramathano Vaagmi Satyavak Satya Vikramah/ Satyavrato Vrataphalah Sadaa Hanumadaashraya// Kausaleya Kharadhwamsi Viraadha vadha Panditah/ Vibhishana paritraataa Dashagriva shiroharah//

Saptataala prabhetaacha Harakodandakhandanah/ Jamadagnya Mahadarpa dalanastaada –kantakrit// Vedantaparo Vedaatmaa Bhavabandhaika bheshajah/ Dushana Trishirorischa Trimurtirstrigunastraayi// Trivikramastrilokatmaa Punya chaaritra kirtanah/Triloka rakshako Dhanvi Dandakaaranyavaasa krit// Ahalyaa paavanaschaiva Pitru Bhato Varapradah/ Jitendriyo Jitakrodho Jitilaabho Jagat Guruh//Ruksha Vaanara Sanghaati Chitrakuta Samaashrayah/ Jayantatraana varadah Sumitra Putra Sevitah// Sarva Devaadhi Devascha Mrita Vaanarajeevanah/ Mayaa Maaricha hanta cha Maha Bhaho Maha Bhujah// Sarva deva stutah Soumyo Brahmanyo Munisattamah/ Maha Yogi Mahodaarah Sugriva Sthitar Raajatah// Sampurnadhika phalah Smruta Sarvaaghanaashanah/ Adi Purusho Maha Purushah Paramah Purushastatha//Punyadayo Mahasarah Purana Purushotthamah/ Smita Vaktro Mitabhaashi Purvabhaashi cha Raghavah// Anantaguna gambhiro Dhirodatta gunottarah/ Mayamanusha chaaritro Maha Devaabhi pujitah// Setu krujjita vaarishah Sarva Tirthamayo Harih/ Shyamaanga Sundarah Shurah Peetavaasaa Dhanurdharah// Sarva Yagnaadhipo Yagno Jaraamarana varjitah/ Shivalinga Pratishthaata Sarvaagha ganavarjitah//Paramaatma Param Brahma Sacchhidaananda vigrahah/ Param Jyotih Param Dhama Paraakaashah Paraatparh// Pareshaha Paaragah Paarah Saryabhutaatmakah Shivah/ Iti Shri Rama chandrashya Naamaamashtotthatam Shatam/ Guhya Guhyantaram Devi tava snehat prakeertitam//

Raghunathaaya nathaaya Sitaayah Pataye Namah/	
(Padma Purana-Uttara Khanda)	

Ramaya Ramabhadraya Ramachandraya Vedhasey

#### **ESSENCE OF SIVA PURANA**

CONTENTS:; 'Panchakrityas' (Five Duties) of Main Deities prescribed by Siva-;; 'Yashya Nisvasitam Vedah' (Who exhaled Vedas?)-Super Energy creates Vishnu; Trinity's Consorts and their Ages; Brahma creates Rudra and Universe; Bhagavan Siva decided to reside at Kailash nearby Kubera's abode -; Links of Devis Sandhya- Arundhati- Sati and Girija-; Sati Devi's wedding to Rudra Deva-; Destruction of Daksha Yagna by Virabhadra-; Devi Parvati's wedding with Bhagavan Siva-; The birth of Kartikeya and the end of Tarakasura-; Anecdotes of Kartikeya and Ganesha-; Series of Siva's victories over Demons-; Lord Siva's ten incarnations corresponding to those of Shakti-; Trinity blesses Sage Atri and Anasuya with triplets-; Many other incarnations of Lord Siva-; Description of 'Dwadasha (Twelve) Jyotirlingas'-; Upa Lingas-; 'Siva Sahasranamas' (Thousand Names of Siva)-; 'Phala Sruti' of Sivasahasranama Stotra-; Some Illustrious Devotees to Siva and Special Austerities in Worship-; Observance of Maha Sivarathri and its significance-; Steps towards Salvation-; Siva Gyan – Its Import and the Course-; Lord Krishna approaches Sage Upamanu for Siva 'Darshan'-;

## **Preface**

'Yaacchiva Puranam hi Paramam Sastram uttamam / Siva Rupam Kshitau Jneya Seva- niyam cha Sarvatha / Pathanaat chhravanaadasya Bhaktimannarasathamah / Sadyah Siva paada praptim snabhatey Sarva Sadhanaat'. (This Siva Purana is a highly commended Scripture. Consider it as Lord Siva's own manifestation on Earth and observe devotion to it always. Those who read or hear the Purana shall be blessed instantly and shall attain Siva loka).

In a congregation of Sages at the Holy Forest of 'Naimisharanya' headed by Sage Saunaka, Suta Maha Muni (the Sage-in-Chief) described the fruits of 'Pathanam' (reading), 'Sravanam' (hearing) and 'Mananam' (cogitating) of Siva Purana. He declared that only a person who had the blessings of previous births on account of past fruitful deeds could become associated with the Holy Purana; similarly those who aspire to acquire the blessings of Bhagavan Siva in future too could be associated with the Purana. Siva Purana has an open and easy access, irrespective of any consideration to one all and Bhagavan Siva, who had a history of easy and quick award of boons is pleased with small services like reciting even half of a Stanza of the Purana- let alone reading the entire Purana for the best results. Bhagavan Siva would readily absolve even the meanest sins of varying descriptions if only a human being resolves to purify oneself with truthfulness and dedication till the final stage of one's life. Asked by Sage Saunaka, Suta Muni informed that Bhagavan Siva Himself authored the Purana originally and Maharshi Veda Vyasa sought the permission of Sanatkumar for the benefit of posterity and Vyasa's disciple Romaharshana (alternatively Lomaharshana) recited this Great 'Kalpataru' or the Boon yielding Celestial Tree) to wash off the perennial sins of 'Kali Yuga'. Siva Purana contains Six 'Samhitas' (Volumes) entitled Vidyesvara Samhita, Rudra Samhita, Shata Rudra Samhita, Koti Samhita, Uma Samhita, Kailasa Samhita and Vayavaya Samhita; each of these Samhitas is divided into chapters and even a condensed version duly read would yield fruitful outcome.

'Adyanta mangalam-ajata Samaana bhaavam-aryam tam-Esham-Ajaram-Atma Devam / Panchananam Pancha Vinoda Sheelam Sambhaavaye manasi Shankaram-Ambikesham'

(Let the Purana be evenly spread with propitiousness from the beginning till the end with heartfelt prayers soliciting the benevolence of the Birthless, Five Faced, Five-sported, and Shankara Deva united with Ambika.) –Veda Vyasa prefacing Sri Siva Purana.

# Bhagavan Siva describes Super Force as a Unified Entity of Trimurthis

At the very beginning of the Universe, manifestation of Lord Vishnu afloat on an endless water surface was in Yoga Nidra (a state of Yogic Slumber) and from His navel sprouted a Lotus stem on top of which

was lying Brahma. The latter wondered who He was and tried to ascertain the center of the Lotus and the its root for hundreds of years but in vain. There came a Celestial Voice commanding Brahma to perform 'Tapasya' and finally, there appeared Lord Vishnu and sought to endear the former as His own creation. But Brahma did not acknowledge Vishnu as a senior but defied and even fought with Him. Meanwhile an 'Analstambha' (a Pillar of Fire) representing Lord Siva appeared and both Brahma and Vishnu agreed to discover the colossal Fiery Pillar's height and depth ahead of the other as a challenge to determine their mutual superiority; Brahma took the form of Swan and flew high while Vishnu sported the form of a boar and travelled down the massive 'Linga' to find out the depth. Brahma while travelling up and up caught hold of a 'Ketaki' flower falling from above and made the flower lie to announce that Brahma had discovered the top of the Pillar and provide evidence in His favour to Vishnu. Bhagavan Siva Himself appeared and displayed His anger on Brahma and the Ketaki flower. At the same time He was pleased with Vishnu for His truthfulness; Vishnu even admitted that Brahma was greater on the basis of the wrong claim and the misleading evidence of the Ketaki flower. Siva thus accorded the same status to Vishnu but punished Brahma by slicing one of his erstwhile five heads looking upward; He also cursed Brahma as ineligible for future worship by the Universe. As Brahma entreated Bhagavan Siva, the latter obliged Brahma as the Presiding Deity at 'Yajnas' (Sacrifices). He banned Ketaki flower for pujas (Worship), but on its repentance approved of the flower at Pujas to Vishnu. As all this drama happened on this specific night and all concerned prayed to Bhagavan Siva for His Benevolence; the night had been observed as 'Siva Ratri' ever since. That was the first time that Bhagavan Siva assumed the Linga form (a cylindrical column) for worship. He affirmed that whoever worshipped Him that night (Chaturdasi night of Magha Month in the Krishna Paksha) and the following day would be blessed with the boon of a year long of worship to Him and would even be pleased better than His affection for His Son Karthikeya!

# 'Panchakrityas' (Five Duties) of Main Deities prescribed by Siva

Bhagavan Siva advised Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra would all be of the same status. They are essentially of the manifestations of His origin. They would carry out 'Panchakritya' or Five Duties viz. 'Srishti' (Creation), 'Sthithi' (Preservation) and 'Laya' (Destruction), 'Tirobhav' (Concealment and Revival) and 'Anugraha' (Providing Salvation). Srishti would be performed by Brahma, Sthithi by Vishnu, and Laya by Rudra; the fourth task, viz. Tirobhav would be performed by Mahesa, who would be yet His fourth manifestation and finally the most significant task of Anugraha would be the exclusive dispensation by Himself. After defining the first four duties as 'Sarga' (Nature), Bhagavan Siva taught the Mantra OM as the combined power of Himself and Shakti and the extraordinary potency of the recitation of the Mantra.

# The Mighty Power of Omkara and Panchakshari Mantras

Bhagavan Siva affirmed: Omkaro mammukhajjaagney pradhamam matprabhodhakah /

Vachakoyamaham vaachyo mantroyam hi madaatmakah/ tadananusmaranam nityam mamanusmaranam bhavet.

(The word Omkaram emerged from Me first; whoever recites this Mantra always is on My own track); 'A' kara uttarapurvam' u' karah Paschima -ananat / 'M'karo dakshina mukhaad bindhuh pranamukhastatha / nado madhya mukha devam panchadhasau vijrumbhitah / (The letter 'A' represents My Northward Face, 'U' represents the Westward, 'M' stands for Southern Face, the 'Bindu' connecting the three words A-U-M is the Middle Faced Deva and the Fifth Face is over-awing.) A Singular Deity is thus manifest as 'Omikakshara' or as Siva Sakti that is all-pervasive and omni-potent. Bhagavan Siva declared that continuous recitation of the Mantra Raja 'OM' summing up all the Vedas and Scriptures and

representative of His Five Faces is a definite means of Happiness during one's life time and Salvation thereafter. Omkara Mantra, thus originated from the root letters of Akara, Ukara, Makara, Bindu and Nada (Sound) or 'Panchakshari'is the saviour Mantra gifted to Humanity which could be recited as Om Sivaya namaha or the Siva Panchakshari as the Deergha Mantra or Gross Mantra or simply as 'Hrasva' Mantra in the word OM. In any case, the Triumvirate viz. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesa are amply displayed in the three letters A, U and M and together with the fuller 'Panchakshari' the complete display of Bindu and Nada, the fuller demonstration of Siva Skati becomes prominent. Also, the Most Potent word of OM has to be certainly used before any recitation of Vedas or Mantras as an unavoidable Starter! By chanting Pranava Mantra nine crore times, it is said that one secures the power of controlling the 'Pancha Bhutas' or the Five elements of Nature and even breaks the basic eight bondages of life viz. the 'Panchatanmatras' (five sensory reactions of touch, smell, sound, taste and appearance) as also control Nature, Intelligence and Ego.

## **Worship method of Siva Lingas**

Bhagavan Siva advocated the methodology of worshipping Siva Linga, which could be made of mud, rock or metal and be either 'Chara' (mobile) Linga or 'Sthira' (fixed) Linga as per convenience. A movable Linga, which can be carried to places if needed, should have a breadth of twelve times of the thickness of a hand finger of the concerned devotee and twenty five times the thickness of the finger of the height and should have a pedastal always. The Linga should be consecrated by continuously reciting the Mantra 'Om Namah Sivaya' during the construction and consecration times. It is said that worship of the Linga at midnight time is considered preferable. Recitation of the above Mantra five crore times is considered highly fruitful. Worship along with 'Shodasopacharas' or sixteen kinds of Services is to be performed. [The Services are: 'Asana' or Seating, 'Padyam' water for washing the Deity's feet, 'Arghya' or water for sipping, 'Snana' or Body wash, 'Anulepana' smearing the Deity's Body with Ash, Gandham etc.; 'Dhupam' or Inscense, 'Dipam' offering lights with oil-soaked cotton vicks, 'Naivedyam' or offering Food and fruits, 'Tambula' or betel leaves and nuts, 'Paneeya' offer of Ganges water / coconut water, 'Vastram' or clothing, 'Alankaram' or ornamentation by holy leaves of Bilva, flowers etc; 'Gandham' or Sandal paste, 'Achamaniya' Ganga water for sipping and 'Arati' or camphor lighting and finally the most important 'Mantra Pushpa' or Vedic Chanting and Stotras as well as Vedic Hymns of 'Namakam' and Chamakam'/ 'Mahanyasam'.] The worships are commended specially on the banks of Holy Rivers like Ganga, Sindhu or Sarasvati or at the Temples on the banks of any other Rivers like, Yamuna, Narmada, Godavari, Kaveri, and so on. Worship at Sacred Places like Badari, Kedar, Kasi and at other Dvadasa Linga Kshetras is highly recommended. On Sundays such worships are notably recommended for Siva Pujas, while Mondays are significant for Durga, Tuesdays for Kartikeya, Wednesdays for Vishnu, Thursdays for Lord Yama, Fridays for Brahma and Saturdays for Indra and other Planetary Heads. While Siva Linga Pujas performed at the Puja-designated places in one's residence are nodoubt significant, such worships at Cow-sheds are ten times more beneficial; the Pujas conducted in Temples in the precincts of Tulasi (Basil plant) are ten times more fruitful; further ten times more beneficial with multiplier effect at Sea shores, mountain tops, and so on. But the best worship is with 'Bahyantara Suchi' or Physical and inner purity! The most auspicious timings for the Worship of Siva Lingas are the days coinciding Surya Sankranti, 'Tula' and 'Mesha' Sankrantis, as also Lunar and Solar Eclipse days. In the normal course, Siva Linga Pujas are best performed during the 'Magha' month and on every Krishna Chaturdasi days. On every day of Kartik Month, a full fledged worship along with Agni Homas are specifically fruitful for ensuring excellent health, particularly related to long standing diseases? Most importantly, regular Siva Linga Pujas on every Sundays would bless the devotees with Happiness in their life times and Salvation thereafter!

Major kinds of 'Siva Lingas' are Syayambhu Linga, Bindu Linga, Pratishtha Linga, Chara Linga, and Guru Linga. Again, there are Lingas of Gross Nature, devotion of which is meant for fulfillment of Material desires and also Subtle Lingas aiming at Spiritual Bliss and Salvation. The Parthiva Lingas are however the most commended, especially suited for Kali Yuga just as Ganges is the best of the Rivers, Kashi is the best place of pilgrimage and Omkara is the best Mantra. Getting clean in physique and mind. wearing Rudraksha mala by neck and Bhasma on forehead, chanting names of Siva like Hara, Mahadeva, Soolapani, Pinakadhrik, Pasupati and Mahesa, the Parthiva Linga is immersed in a river or a water body, or placed on a pedestal in a forest area or a mountain. One should keep on reciting Siva Panchakshari, viz. 'Om Namaha Sivaya' and perform worship as prescribed in the Scriptures. Starting from Ganesh Puja and Planetary Heads, Devi Bhagavati and the Ultimate Deity of Siva, the worship is best performed facing North, along with the Sixteen Services with high devotion and commitment for fulfillment of desires ranging from good health, longevity, wealth and 'nishkama moksha'. The service of bilva puja, 'abhisheka' (Vedic bath of milk, coconut water and finally of ash or bhasma and so on along with 'Naivedya' are an integral part of the worship. More specifically, each service be designated by addressing the Lord as follows: Om Namah Sivaya- Prokshana (sprinkling of water) on various Puja materials; Om Namah Rudraya-Kshetra Suddhi (Purification of surroundings); Om Namah Nilagreevaya-Panchamrita prokshanam (sprinkling of mixture of milk, curd, sugar, honey, fruit); Om Mahesaya Namah-Asanam (Seating); Om Paramesvaraya Namah- 'Nyasam' or identification of self with by Paramesvara by offering the entirety to Him; Om namah Visvarupaya-Padyam or water for cleaning His feet; recitation of Rudra Gayatri [ Om Bhur Bhuvah Svaha Om Tatpurushaya Vidmahe Maha Devaya Dheemahi Tanno Rudrah prachodayaat]; Om Ghrishnaya Namah- Uttareeyam (clothing); Om Parthaya Namah-Bilva Patra Puja; Om Kapardineya Namah-Dhupam (incense sticks); Om Jyeshthaya Namah-Dadhyanna or curd rice Naivedyam; Om Rudraya Namah-Phalam or fruits; Om Vrajaya Namah-'Sakalam' or every thing; Om Hiranya Garbhaya Namah- Dakshina or Present to the Pandit performing the worship; Om Devasya Namah- 'Abhishekam'; Om Sambho namah- 'Neerajanam' or Aarathi; Om Parama Sivaya Namah-' Sashtanga Namaskara' and offerings of Siva Mudras]. Keeping in mind the Five Faced Bhagavan with the names of Sadyojata, Vamadeva, Aghora, Tatpurusha and Esana, one concludes the worship by reciting: Bhayaya, Bhayanasakaya, Mahadeyaya, Dhimahi / Ugraya, Ugranasaya, Sarvaaya, Sashi Mouliney!

While performing the Worship to Siva Lingas, significance is attached of applying 'Bhasmas' or wearing 'Rudrakshas'. 'Maha Bhasmas' are to be applied only after securing the burnt cow dung cakes in 'Agneya Bhasmas' (homams) or in the course of 'Yagnas' while reciting 'Mantras' and only the former varietyis used for 'Tripundras' invariably by Brahmanas and 'Svalpa Bhasmas' could be used by others with devotion. Rudrakshas are available in a wide variety from the trees which in the days of yore sprouted from the tears of Siva Bhagavan- which eventually became large water bodies when He concentrated with wide eyes open for several years to create a powerful weapon known as 'Aghora' to destroy a Demon called Tripurasura. This special tree yielded beads which are the Rudrakshas now worn by devotees for excellent results, depending on the number of cuts on the bead-faces and the corresponding Devatas giving away boons the desired virtues or results. Eka Mukhi Rudraksha is considered as Bhagavan Siva Himself providing the greatest boons of destroying even the worst sins including 'Maha Patakas' (Eka vaktram Sivah Sakshat Vimukti Phala pradam). Two-Faced Rudraksha is represented by Deva and Devi; the Three Faced one bestows all kinds of 'Vidyas'; The Four Faced one is Brahma; the Fifth Faced is Rudra; the Sixth is Kartikeya; the Seventh is Manmadha; eighth is Bhairava; ninth is Durga, Ten-Faced is Janardana; Eleventh is Paramesvari; Twelfth is Aditya; Thirteenth is Visva Deva and Fourteenth is Parama Siva Himself. The Mantras that the persons wearing the Faces respectively are: Eka Mukhi: Om Hrim Namah; 2) Om Namah 3) Om Kleem Namah 4) Om Hreem Namah 5) Om Hreem Namah 6) Om Hreem Hum Namah 7) Om Hum Namah 8) Om Hreem Hum Namah 9) Om Hreem Hum Namah 10) Om Hreem Namah Namah 11) Om Hreem Hum Namah 12) Om Kraum Kshaum Roum Namah 13) Om Hreem Namah and 14) Om Namah.

### 'Yashya Nisvasitam Vedah' (Who exhaled Vedas?)-Super Energy creates Vishnu

While concluding Vidyesvara Samhita and opening Rudra Samhita, Veda Vyas described 'Srishthi Kanda' (Process of Creation) as was narrated by Suta Muni to Sages. At the stage of 'Maha Pralaya' or the Great Dissolution of Universe, there was nothing except Bhagavan Siva. He assumed His Power as Bhagavati Amba and together they created Maha Vishnu. As a child the latter enquired of the cause of His existence and Siva provided His breathing as Vedas and their full knowledge to Vishnu. He also commanded Vishnu to carry out penance, which the latter did for twelve years but could not visualize Siva and Amba again. A voice was heard that Vishnu should continue penance again. Eventually Vishnu found self lulled into yogic sleep and got floated on a huge sheet of Ocean which emerged as fountains from Bhagavan Siva's skin-pores in all directions; Vishnu was named Narayana. He created the Basic Five Elements of Earth, Fire, Sky, Wind and Water; the Thee Gunas (attributes) of Satvic, Rajas and Tamas nature, besides 'Ahamkara' or Ego; the Five Tanmathras viz. Sparsha(Touch), Sabda (sound), Rupa (Colour and Form), Rasa (taste) and Gandha (smell); the Five Jnanendriyas (Skin, Ears, Eyes, Tongue and Nose) and Five Senses viz. (Touch, Hear, See, Taste and Breath). In total, there were twenty four features thus created by Maha Vishnu. As ordained by Bhagavan Siva a Lotus Flower sprouted from Vishnu's navel in Yoga Nidra and on top of the lotus stalk there was Brahma on the top who sought to travel down the hollow stalk but failed and returned to Vishnu and fought Him to assert His superiority over Vishnu. Thus followed the Drama of 'Analstambha' appearing, the cheating by Brahma, Bhagavan Siva cutting one of the Five Heads of Brahma as a punishment, declaring Maha Vishnu as the Senior, alloting the tasks to Brahma to create, Vishnu to preserve and Rudra to Dissolve, and so on. Then emerged the Omkara Mantra - 'A' signifying Creation, 'U' for Preservation and 'M' for destruction. The sum of the word OM manifested as a Golden Egg was submerged in waters for thousands of years and when Bhagavan Siva cut the Egg into two parts, one half appeared as Earth and the other half as heaven. From Siva's physique emanated the vowels and consonants and Vishnu discovered the Forty Eight Lettered mantras from Omkara the most significant Duel Mantra Expressions viz. Tatpurushaya Vidmahe Maha Devaya Dhimahi Tanno Rudrah Prachodayat and Tatsavitur varenyam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyoyona Prachotayat. Therafter emerged the following Mantras: - The Mrutyunjaya Mantra: Om Joong sah; Hraung Hring Joong Sah and Trayambakam Yaja mahe; Namah Sivaya; the Chintamani Mantra Kshayaum; the Dakshina Murti Mantra: Om Namo Bhagavate Dakshina Murthaye Mahyam Megham Prayaccha Swaha; Tatvamasi and so on.

## Trinity's Consorts and their Ages

Bhagavan Siva demonstrated that His left half was Vishnu and His right half was Brahma who also created Rudra for the purpose of Destruction. Bhagavan Siva then revealed Bhagavati Uma as His consort or Nature or 'Maya' (The Great Illusion); Lakshmi as Lord Vishnu's Consort and Sarasvati as Brahma's Consort.Bhagavan Siva also indicated the Ages of Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra: Brahma's one day consists of four thousand eras and additionally one night comprises another four thousand eras. His age being one hundred years, Brahma's one day and night are multiplied by three hundred sixty five days. His life time is eight thousand eras multiplied by three hundred sixty five day/nights further multiplied by one hundred years! One day/night of Vishnu is one year of Brahma and the former's age is hundred years too. As regards Rudra, His one day/night is that of Vishnu's one year and Rudra's age too is of the duration of hundred years.

### **Brahma creates Rudra and Universe**

Once Bhagavan Siva made the rudimentary aspects of Srishti (Creation) like Vishnu and Brahma, carved out the responsibilities of Trinity, their Consorts and ages as also the Pranava Mantra, Five Basic Elements, The Three' Gunas', the Pancha Tanmatras, the Five Sensory Organs, and so on and disappered. Brahma created water and a Huge Egg into which Vishnu provided consciousness to the Egg and sat in. Creation proceeded further as Kailash Mountain and the Seven Worlds. Brahma being still unsatisfied at His performance, He used Tamo Guna to create all static things and four footed animals, Satvika Guna to produce Deities and, Rajas Guna to produce Human beings. Each time, Brahma accomplished a part of Creation; He was lost in penance intermittenly and thus carried on the task. With the approval of Bhagavan Siva, Lord Brahma created Rudra from His eyebrows, half of Rudra being 'Ardhanareesvara' or Half Man and Half- Woman. Rudra in turn created Rudra Ganas (all resembling Himself) and as requested by Brahma, created mortals since that was a task of annihilation meant for Rudra Himself. Brahma then created Sages Marichi from His eyes, Bhrigu from heart, Angira from head, Pulah from Vyana Vayu, Pulasthya from Udana Vayu, Vasishtha from Samana Vayu, Kratu from Apana Vayu, Atri from ear, Daksha Prajapati from Prana Vayu, Narada from lap, Kardama and Dharma from His shadows, and Manasa Putras viz. Sanaka, Sananda, Sanatana, Sanath Kumars, two halves of His body as Manu and Satarupa and they gave birth to Priyavratha and Uttanapad as sons respectively; Satarupa also gave birth to Akuti married to Sage Ruchi, Devahuti to Sage Kardama, and Daksha Prajapati to Prasuti. The various Sages and others thus created by Brahma procreated progenies and filled in the entire World eventually. For instance, Marichi's son Kashyapa who married thirteen of the sixty daughters of Daksha, had procuced several clans of the Universe including Daityas, Serpents and vicious species born of Diti and Devas from Aditi.

## Bhagavan Siva decided to reside at Kailash nearby Kubera's abode

Narada Devarshi sought explanations from Brahma as why did Bhagavan Siva decide to reside in Kailasa? Brahma explained thus: A Brahmana named Yogadutta, an expert in performing Soma Yajna, had a son Gunanidhi a Scholar but got attracted to evil ways like gambling. Yogadutta became angry and abandoned Gunanidhi and even his wife. Having become highly remorseful, Gunanidhi left his home and on one night reached a temple where Siva's devotees were observing the 'Sivaratri' fast and heard the Stories of Siva's greatness and hymns. But being hungry he sought to steal some fruits and light up a lamp which was almost dim by tearing his cloth and re-lighting it. But the devotees caught him, mistook him as a thief, thrashed him up and he died. The 'Yamabhatas' or the followers of Lord Yama arrived and planned to take away the soul of Gunanidhi; but Sivaganas were happy with Gunanidhi and took him to Sivaloka instead since he spent 'Sivaratri' fasting in a Siva temple, observed the whole night hearing Siva's stories and hymns and even lit up a lamp with his own cloth piece as a vick. In the next birth, Gunanidhi became a King of Kalinga as Dama and a staunch devotee of Siva, ordered his subjects to observe Siva Pujas and Sivaratri fasts compulsory and thus got endeared by Bhagavan. In the subsequent birth Gunanidhi/ Dama became Kubera as the King of Alkapuri. During the next Kalpa named 'Meghavahan', the same Gunanidhi of the previous births, became the King of Alkapuri as Vishravan, (the grandson of Sage Pulastya-Brahma's manasa putra) and as an unparalleled Devotee of Bhagavan Siva did penance for lakhs of years; Siva and Bhagavati Uma were pleased and appeared before Gunanidhi / Kubera / Vishravan but the radiance of their appearance blinded him and when he regained the yogic sight the devotee became instantly so possessive of Bhagavan that even Uma should not be so near to Bhagavan! Immensely pleased, Bhagavan decided to shift His residence to Kailash Mountain which was nearby Alkapuri and ordered Visvakarma to build His permanent residence there!

#### Links of Devis Sandhya- Arundhati- Sati and Girija

Lord Brahma replied to another question of Sage Narada as to how Lord Rudra a Super Yogi married Devi Sati. As a preface to the reply, Lord Brahma described a bit of His own auto-biography about His 'Manasic' (mind born) children viz. Sandhya and Manmadha. He got infatuated with Sandhya and Rudra Deva chastised Brahma, who felt bad at the reprimand and was on the look out for an opportunity to prove that Rudra Deva too should one day be a victim of passion. Lord Vishnu advised against such attempts as Rudra Deva was far above such a mind-set. Meanwhile Sandhya could not overcome the feeling of shame caused to her by Brahma and did penance for thousands of years under the tutelage of Sage Vasishtha (who disguised as a Brahmana, named Medatithi, at the instance of Lord Brahma) and prayed to Bhagavan Siva with the Potent Mantra Om Namo Shankaraya Namaha Om as also the method of worship to Bhagavan Siva. Since her prayers were not responded, she prepared herself to jump into the Agni kunda (Fire Pit) of a Yagna being then performed by Medatithi, her Guru. Rudra Deva made His vision to Sandhya and asked her for boons. She desired that none in her clan should become a victim of lust, that she should be an example of a chaste woman and that her husband should never cast an evil eye on another woman. Rudra Deva agreed to her boons and advised her to fall in the fire pit thinking of a person whom she desired as her husband in her next birth. He further blessed Sandhya that in the birth subsequent to her next birth, she would be born as Sati Devi to Daksha Prajapati and her further birth thereafter would be the daughter of Himaraja as Girija Devi Herself! Having heard Rurda Deva about His supreme blessing about the future vision, Devi Sandhya leapt into the fire pit thinking of Medathithi as her next husband; indeed Medatidhi was actually Sage Vasishtha himself! The 'Prana Vayu' or the Vital Air of Sandhya's burnt body in the fire pit was absorbed by Bhagavan Himself and the fire of the Yagna was carried to the Solar System and Sun God transformed it as Pratas Sandhya, Madhyahnika Sandhya and Sayam Sandhya or the Morning, afternoon and Evening timings of a Day. The Sages at the Yagna were awe-struck that Sandhya Devi was reborn as a girl child in the Fire pit itself, named Arundhati and when she attained of age, she was married to Sage Vasishta as the function was attended by Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesa themselves. Devi Arundhati is a unique example of chastity in the annals of History till date. [The practice of Vedic weddings continues even now and all the new couples as a part of the Rituals are shown the Star of Arundhati as an ideal example].

### Sati Devi's wedding to Rudra Deva

Brahma gave a boon to His son Manmadha or Pushpavan with the powers of turning passionate any victim with the use of 'Pancha Pushpa Banas' (Five Flowery Arrows) called Harshan, Rohan, Mohan, Soshan and Maran. The test-run was performed by Manmatha on Brahma and he got victimised in respect of Sandhya and hence the chastisement received from Rudra Deva. Brahma's ill-feeling over Rudra was still not forgotten inspite of Lord Vishnu's advice that Rudra Deva would never be disturbed by Manmadha's arrows. At this juncture, Daksha Prajapati offered his daughter, Rati Devi to wed Manmadha, which was appreciated by all concerned as the couple looked that they were made for each other. Brahma prevailed His son Daksha Prajapati to beget a daughter with Devi Bhagavati's 'Amsa' (part manifestation) and Daksha prayed to Her for thousands of years. Devi Bhagavati blessed Daksha to beget Sati Devi and that she would also be wedded to Rudra Deva. But, Sati Devi would perform penance for thousands of years and once she would be married, she would not brook insults to Rudra Deva and if anybody did so, then She would end up her existence by 'Yoga-agni'! Daksha had got already sixty daughters all married - ten to Dharma, thirteen to Kashyap, twenty seven to Moon, two to Bhutaganas, and two to Kushashva and six to Garuda. The sixty first daughter now blessed by Bhagavati was Sati Devi from Virani Devi. As Sati came of marriagable age, she had already fixed Her mind on Rudra and performed severe 'tapas'. Rudra agreed to wed Sati, Brahma proposed formally to Daksha and the marriage was executed with pomp and show. After the auspicious wedding, Sati and Rudra shifted from

Kailash to Himalayas for ten thousand Deva years and Bhagavan enlightened and exchanged views with Sati on many matters of Spiritual significance including the naunces of Yantra, Tantra and Yoga.

## Destruction of Daksha Yagna by Virabhadra

In the mean time, Daksha's jealousy towards Bhagavan gradually picked up momentum and at a 'Yagna' organised by the former, there was no place for the usually reserved 'Havis' or a major part of the Yagna in favour of Lord Siva; the seat reserved for Siva was unoccupied and Sage Dadhichi pointed out the lacuna but was ignored. Sati Devi felt that Her father made a mistake and despite the denial of Bhagavan proceeded to the Yagna to ascertain the position. Very reluctantly, Bhagavan agreed and Sati was escorted by Nandi and Rudraganas. Daksha ignored his daughter's entry and of the Rudraganas into the 'Yagna' Place. When confronted by Sati about Her husband's absence, Daksha had openly ridiculed Siva as an uncouth, ill-deserving and uncivilised personality. Devi Sati could not take the insults about Her husband and thus produced Yogic Fire and ended Herself to unite with Bhagavan. As Nandi informed Siva of the tragedy, the latter threw a few of His hairs against a mountain in a heightened rage and the energy created thus broke the mountain into two parts; one half of it produced Virabhadra and another Bhadrakali whom Siva instructed for the destruction of Daksha Yagna, Daksha and whoever else attended the Yagna too. Virabhadra appeared at the site of the Yagna instantly along with a huge army of Sivaganas including Dakini, Bhairava and Kapalini while Bhadrakali entered the Place with the nine incarnations of Bhagavati like Katatyani. As Daksha got terrified of the consequences of the situation, he took refuge at Maha Vishnu who expressed His helplessness and reprimanded Daksha for his foolishness in provoking his own daughter to take away Her life. Vishnu Himself attended the Daksha Yagna and several Devatas too. Vishnu had to fight Virabhadra and Bhagavan's party. It was rather ironical that this happened. A celestial voice confirmed that Virabhadra was invincible but meanwhile several Devas too were killed and Vishnu too desisted from the battle. Virabhadra severed Daksha's head and threw it in the 'Agnikunda' (Fire pit) and returned to Rudra Deva along with his entourage. The irony of Vishnu's fighting Virabhadra to defend Himself and the Devas many of whom were all killed and He himself had to be defensive had a background; indeed Vishnu was aware of this. A King called Kushva and Sage Dadhichi were good friends earlier but the ego (Ahamkara) of each other turned out to be mighty enemies. Kushva prayed to Vishnu and Dadhichi looked to Siva for help. Vishnu was pleased with Kushva's penance and agreed to punish Sage Dadhichi and even used Sudarshana Chakra which proved futile, as Dadhichi was fortified with several years of devotion and Sacrifice along with constant 'Japa' (meditation) of Mritunjaya Mantra under the guidance of Sukracharya. Finally, Dadhichi condoned Kushva but did not excuse Vishnu and his Deities and gave the curse that they would all be turned as ash in a fight with Siva's part-incarnation (Virabhadra). Eventually, Lord Brahma approached Maha Deva to pardon and revive the lives of Vishnu and Devas who were burnt in the battle with Virabhadra. A sobered and ever merciful Siva conceded to the prayers of Brahma that not only Vishnu be pardoned but those Devas who were burnt off in the cross fire with Virabhadra be revived but also allow a revitalized Daksha Prajapati with life by placing the Yagna's Goat-head on to Daksha's severed head thrown out by Virabhadra in the Fire pit and thus Daksha had a Goat-head thereafter. The ever grateful Daksha begged of Maha Deva for his pardon and prayed to Him with great sincerity and devotion everafter. He then performed a Yagna again with Maha Deva on the High Seat and with all the Devas to receive their blessings!

## Devi Parvati's wedding with Bhagavan Siva

Of the sixty daughters of Daksha Prajapati, Svadha was married to Pitras and gave birth to Maina, Dhanya and Kalavati. The three of them after coming of age decided to have a 'Darshan' (casual view) of

Lord Vishnu at Svethadvipa and among the visitors in- waiting were the Highly respected Sanaka Brothers but the three girls could not recognise them as they were offended and cursed them to take births on earth. Indeed the girls did not recognise them and begged of the Sages to lighten the curse. Since the girls were indeed unaware of the background of the illustrious Kumars, they blessed Maina to become the wife of King Himavantha and beget 'Jagadisvari' Herself; Dhanya would wed King Janaka and bless them with Devi Sita to wed Sri Rama; and Kalavati would marry Vrishabhan and bless Radha Devi as the special devotee cum beloved of Lord Krishna. Accordingly Maina Devi became the wife of Himavanta. Vishnu blessed the Himavanta couple with hundred virtuous sons and a daughter that the couple would indeed be proud of as She would be the Jadamba Herself! The Sons were born with wings but out of envy, Indra clipped the wings of all of them, except Minak who hid inside the Ocean as a mountain [who helped Lord Hanuman while crossing the Ocean to reach Lanka in His reconnaisance trip to find Devi Sita in the bondage of Ravana Asura.] The only daughter of Himavanta viz. Devi Parvati even from childhood became an intense devotee of Bhagavan Siva and had constant dreams of Her worship to Him in person. Both Himavanta and Queen Maina too had similar dreams regularly. Meanwhile, Bhagavan Siva like a lunatic became a restless globe trottrer after Sachi's Yogic end for several years and resettled at Himavan Mountain for severe 'Tapasya'. In the process of His meditation, He had memories of Sati and perspired and from His sweat was born Bhauma and Bhu Devi nurtured the child and eventually Bhuma became a high devotee and attained a position in the Solar System as Mangala Deva or Mars. Parvati requested her parents to seek a blessing from Siva to allow Her in His 'Seva' (Service) without disturbing Him at all. Siva did not agree but Parvati Herself emboldened to argue with Siva that She was 'Prakriti' or Nature and Siva was the Maha Purusha (Almighty), that His meditation would have speedy results if Prakriti too served Almighty's efforts as a supplement and that He could therfore agree to allow Her service to the Almighty and so on. Siva was impressed with her Spiritual knowledge and had agreed; every day Parvati used to up-keep Siva's meditation- surroundings, fetch flowers and other requirements useful for the meditation and Puja by Bhagavan.

It was at that juncture that a powerful Demon Tarakasura became a major menace to the World, especially Devas and Indra. He was the son of Vajrang, a son of Diti-wife of Kashyap, who had the deep-seated animosity against Indra in particular and Devas in general; Diti was pregnant with a wish to beget a powerful male issue who would conquer Indra and Devas and occupy heavens, since she had several of her descendants destroyed. But Indra used his mystic powers to kill the foetus which was cut into forty nine pieces and thus produced 'Marudganas'. She became pregnant again and delivered Vajrang whose son was Tarakasura, the most dreaded Demon of the date. Tarakasura was fortified with the boon from Brahma that excepting Siva's son, none else should be able to kill him in the entire Universe! Knowing of the invincibility of Takasura, there was a great desire that Siva's son must soon arrive and Devi Parvati's wedding be expedited. As advised by Brahma, a big delegation of Devas was sent to Manmadha and Rati so that their good offices were utilised to kindle desires in Siva in favour of Devi Parvati, who is already in the vicinity of Siva in meditation. Thus prompted by Devas, Manmadha used his 'Kama bana' (Arrows of Love) when Bhagavan felt a slight change in His attitude in favour of Parvati but soon recovered from His thoughts quickly and noticed that Manmadha was at work, became highly provoked and in a fit of immense fury opened His Third Eye and as a result, Manmadha was burnt as ash and indeed was a dreadful and instant action which stunned all Devas, Brahma, Vishnu, Devi Bhagavati and indeed the entire World. The 'Nirvikara' (Reaction-less) Maha Siva resumed His Tapasya as though nothing had happened, but Rati was inconsolable, Parvati was mystified and decided to take up rigorous meditation. There were group prayers by Vishnu, Brahma, Indra, their consorts and the whole lot of Devas; Bhagavan Siva got gradually cooled down a bit, as it was explained to Him that it all happened due to their own reasons of self-protection and defencelessness and narrated the matter in full. He gave the boon that in the next births, Manmadha would be born as Pradyumna to Lord Krishna and Rukmini Devi and even a few days of the child's birth, a Demon named Shambara would throw the child in the Sea and eventually kill the demon and marry Rati Devi as Mayavati. Manmadha would join 'Sivaganas' and be visible only

to Rati Devi, and she should await her rebirth in Dvapara Yuga. Parvati Devi performed severe 'tapasya' under the tutorship of Devarshi Narada and constantly carried out the 'Japa' of the Mantra 'Om Namo Sivaya Namaha' meticulously. Bhagavan did not agree to the proposal of marrying Parvati initially, but as convinced by Vishnu, Brahma and Devas conceded but ordered 'Sapta Rishis' to test Her seriouness. In course of time Bhagavan Himself appeared in the disguise of a Brahmana and tried to dissuade Her to wed a 'Bhutnath', a near 'Digambara', an uncouth and frightening entity with matted hair and serpents and ash all over His body and so on. Devi Bhagavati reacted vehemently and showed Him the door. But She felt that Her penance executed all along did not satisfy the Lord and out of desperation sought to jump into a Fire pit, when He gave the Darshan and said: 'Why do you not realise that we are the Eternal Prakriti and Maha Purusha ourselves!'

When the wedding of Siva and Parvati was announced, the entire Universe got transformed with ecstasy. Sivaganas including Nandi and Bhairav went into raptures. Devas were relieved that the menace of Tarakasura would end soon. Great Sages, Brahma and Vishnu turned highly inward-looking spiritually as their souls hit pinnacles of fulfillment. The Union of Prakrti (Maya) and Maha Purusha explained the Quintessence of Vedas and Sciptures as the Super Energy of Unknown, Everlasting, All-pervasive, Endless, Unborn nature! Bhagavan Siya was in a light disposition and played 'Leelas', especially with Parvati's parents, Maina and Himavanta. First, He disguised sporting a dress of a flippant dancer as 'Nataraj' at Maina's residence and she tried to give Him a gold chain thinking that He was an ordinary dancer. When He announced that He was Siva, both of the parents of Parvati were not only not impressed, but refused to give away their daughter in wedding to Siva. Sapta Rishis had to appear and convince about Siva. As the bride groom's party arrived the parents were under the illusion of each arriving Deity at the function as the bridegroom. And when actually Bhagavan did arrive, He sported a figure of a Bhutnath on Nandi the bull vahana with a frightening demeanor surrounded by Sivaganas, Bhutas, and Pisachas. Lord Vishnu had to intervene to say that what they saw was an illusion of Siva to test their basic faith. Devi Parvati was indeed amused with Bhagavan's pranks. The Wedding Procession included the 'Who Is Who' of the Universe: the 'Saptha Matas' (The Seven Mothers viz. Bramhi, Mahesvari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indri, and Chamunda; the full contingent of Brahma, Vishnu, Indra, Planetary Heads and Devas, Sapta Rishis, Brahma Manasa Putras, Sages, Sivaganas, Pisachas, various manifestations of Devi Bhagavati, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Kimpurushas and personified Vedas and Sciptures and so on. The Whole World was in memorable bliss and elation. Indeed on this Holy Occasion, Bhagavan recalled Manmadha too back to active life to the greatest delight of Rati Devi too.

#### The birth of Kartikeya and the end of Tarakasura

As Siva and Parvati moved on from Himavanth's Palace to Kailash and were enjoying conjugal happiness, all the Devas, Brahma and Vishnu were all disturbed by the peak- evil activities of Tarakasura and the very purpose the wedding of Siva and Bhavani appeared to take a back seat. A Divine Delegation headed by Vishnu sought permission to meet Siva to explain the grim situation and in a hurry to meet the Delegation spilt His semen on ground and Agni Deva transformed as a pigeon pecked up the drops and could not bear the inflammation. Maha Deva Himself advised the pigeon to inject the drops into a woman of immense virtue. Agni identified Six Women of Great Virtue and injected them into the pores of hairs on their bodies. They too could not bear the extreme effervescence and as directed by Himalaya relocated it into the violent flow of Ganges which carried to the bushes of reed (Sarkanda) and there appeared a Boy of mysterious radiance. Even while this sequence of events was happening, Devi Parvati was extremely furious that Her privacy was disturbed and worse still Bhagavan's semen was being wasted and in that fit of anger cursed the wives of Devas who accompanied their husbands in the delegation to become barren!

The birth of **Kartikeya** on the Lunar Calendar of the Sixth Day of the bright fortnight of Margasira Month (Krittika Nakshatra of Shashthi Tidhi of Suddha Paksha of Margasirsha Masa) brought the greatest joy to Devi Parvati and Maha Deva, unbelievable relief and sense of liberation to all Devas, and a feeling of frustration and apprehension of the Demons and followers of Takasura. Sage Visvamitra appeared at the spot and named Him as Guha, bestowed the Totality of Vedic Knowledge, endowed Him with the Title of Brahmarshi and blessed Him to lead Indra and Devas. Agni Deva gifted Him a Divine weapon 'Shakti'. Six Goddesses arrived at the scene and all of them tried to feed breast milk but the miracle Boy solved the problem of assuming Six Heads and mouths. He was thus known as Shanmukha. As He grew a year or two, He became restless and moved on to Krouncha Mountain and demonstrated His valour by crumbling it; innumerable Demons got shaken and killed. Indra tested His valour by fighting it out with the former's 'Vajraudha'; Indra hit on Kartikeya's left, right and central portions and out came three powerul entities viz. Shakh, Visakha and Naegam. In the meantime, Sivaganas located Kartikeya and brought Him to Bhagavan and Parvati, who knew no bounds of elation that He was finally home. Kartikeya was crowned as the King of Kailashpuri and various Deities gifted away their weapons and powers and was declared as the **Senapati** - Commander in Chief. Now was the time that Tarakasura was destined to be destroyed; the Deities including Brahma and Vishnu could not with stand the fury of the Demon. Finally, Tarakasura was challenged by Kartikeya, the Demon ridiculed Devas and said that they were seeking to keep a mere boy as a shield and fight behind him. But the 'wizard boy' attacked the huge 'Asura' with warm-up weapons initially and ultimately at an opportune time when the Demon was caught unawares applied the Shakti weapon deftly and hit on the Demon's chest even as the biggest menace on earth at the time breathed his last instantaneously. Kartikeya continued His battle escapades further on by hitting **Banasura** as the target from Kailasa Mountain to Kraucha Mountain as a simple feat and recalling the weapon Shakti back therafter. He set up three Siva Lingas at the Krouncha by His mystic vision viz. Kumareshwar, Pratigyeshwar and Kapileswar to please His father Bhagavan Siva. Yet another time, when a Demon **Pralamb** tried to create obstacles to Devas, especially Brihaspati and Seshanag's son Kumud who took refuge from Himself, Kartikeya repeated the miracle of destroying the Demon without even facing him.

### Anecdotes of Kartikeya and Ganesha

There were different 'Avatars' (incarnations) of Kartikeya and Ganesha in various Kalpas. In 'Sveta Varaha Kalpa', the two anecdotes about Kartikeya and Ganesha- the Illustrious Sons of Siva and Parvatiwere narrated by Lord Brahma to His Son Devarshi Narada. As both the Brothers came of marriageable age, the question arose as to who should be married first and the parents decided that whosoever could circumambulate the entire Universe first would get the choice. Kartikeya flew off by His carrier- a peacock- without even waiting for a minute, Ganesha who applied His mind and recalled what Vedas stated that a single 'Pradakshina' of one's parents would yield the fruit of 'Bhu pradakshina'. Even half way through the full circle of the World, Sage Narada intercepted Kartikeya and conveyed that Ganesha's wedding with Siddhi and Riddhi was in progress already (they were blessed with two sons Kshema and Labha eventually). Kartikeya felt cheated by the parents and retired at Krouncha Mountain and the parents brought Him back by cajoling the dear son who felt hurt! It is on this day of Kartika Pournami, Kartikeya's 'darshan' is considered as most auspicious.

The Story of Ganesha's birth is indeed popular. When Nandi was asked to bar entry into the Interior Place of Parvati as She was taking bath, Nandi no doubt prevented but Bhagavan still entered and She was not amused. She decided to create an idol of a boy which was infused with life and empowered Him to

challenge anybody with the necessary powers. The boy followed the instruction and did not allow entry even to Siva. The Pramadha ganas were asked to teach a lesson to the boy by Siva but they were defeated in no time. Siva Himself decided to force His entry but to no avail. Finally, an irritated Bhagavan snapped the boy's head and Parvati became furious and Her angry manifestations surprised Siva Himself. She insisted that the boy be brought to life forth with. Siva suggested locating anybody sleeping in the northern direction and the Sivaganas were able to trace only an elephant. The severed head of the boy was fixed with that of the elephant and He was revived. The assembly of Deities who first fought with the boy and witnessed the entire scene earlier decided that any function in the World ought to be commenced with worship of Ganesha foremost as He is the Lord of preventing impediments and of providing success. Ganesha's worship on Bhadrapada Sukla Chathurdhi is a must all over Bharatadesa as one is dreaded of becoming a victim of undeserving blames since Moon God received a curse from Ganesha that whoever saw the Moon on the particular Chaturdhi night without worshipping Him would become a sure target!

## Series of Siva's victories over Demons

Pursuant to Kartikeya's victory over Tarakasura, the three sons of the slain Demon-Tripurasuras or the three-some brothers viz. Tarkasha, Vidyunmali and Kamalaksha who performed severe meditation for a number of years to Lord Brahma and secured boons of undestroyable forts made of gold, silver and iron in the Skies, Earth and the Lower world. The Demon Brothers were highly virtuous and flawless in their ethical behaviour in general but at the same time were never forgetful of the killing of their father by Kartikeya. They had the constant grudge against the Devas and hence kept up the tempo of tormenting them frequenly. Devas complained to Brahma who took them to Siva but were referred to Vishnu instead. In a Yagna that Vishnu organised numerous Spirits with powerful weapons emerged from the Homa Kunda and they were all despatched to fight the Demon brothers but it became clear that they were indeed invincible as long as they hold themselves to virtues and religion and hence ways and means would have to be found when they ought to step into ways of argument and even vice. Thus Vishnu created a person named Arihan from His body who could produce discourses on action- oriented life based on reasoning as against the established Vedic Scriptures based on beliefs, faith and 'Karmakanda' (approved rituals); in other words, it was religion vs. skepticism. Thus the slow-poison type of atheism was gradually injected into the minds of the Demon Brothers and from them into the social fabric. Arihan congregated disciples- Rishi, Yati, Keerya and Upadhya- to spread out the non- belief principles in no time as the Demon Brothers temselves became victims of the so-called rationalism and thus the ground for the killings of the brothers was well prepared and the Deities beseeched Bhagavan to take the much awaited action of destroying the so called 'Invincible' Castles till Dharma was practised and kill the Brothers and followers. Siva prayed to Ganesha to destroy obstacles ('Vighnas') as an intial step, Viswakarma fabricated a Powerful Chariot, Devas gifted several armouries, and Lord Siva used His 'Pasupatastra' the Supreme Arrow, the unparalleled weapon. The Demon Brothers knowing fully of their fate, begged Siva to pardon them and the Most Merciful Bhagavan blessed the Brothers to join His army of 'Sivaganas' for the highly religious deeds and devotion that they performed in their lives in the past.

Bhagavan Siva's annihilating of Demon **Jalandhar** was the legend further described by Lord Brahma to Devarshi Narada. A child was born at the terminating point of River Ganges and the Ocean, known as Gangasagar. As the child was crying loud incessantly, the attention of Deities and Sages was drawn to Lord Brahma, who appeared on the spot and prophesied that he was destined to become a King of Demons known for his ferocity and could be killed only by Bhagavan Siva. The Lord named the child as Jalandhar since he had so much of energy that he hurt the neck of Brahma and the latter had tears in His eyes! The Lord entrusted the child's upbringing to the care of the Sea. Jalandhar grew and married Vrinda the daughter of Kalanemi the Demon King and eventually became the King himself. In course of time,

Jalandhar occupied Indra's seat in a battle and the latter and the Devas approached Vishnu who nodoubt subdued Jalandhar but Lakshmi Devi requested Vishnu to not only spare the Demon as She considered the latter as Her brother since both of them were associated with Samudra Deva (the Sea) but even allow Jalandhar to stay in 'Kshirasagara' along with Her! Devas were hurt but had to suffer.

Meanwhile Narada created a problem to Jalandhar that his riches and powers were not at all comparable to Lord Siva who was not only the mightiest but His Consort Parvati was the most attractive in the entire World. The Demon was tempted and asked Rahu to mediate for his possession of Parvati. Bhagavan became furious and threw out Rahu as he was only an emissary. Jalandhar was unable to overcome his obsession for Parvati and approached Her with the proposal of marrying Her. She became motionless with such a ghastly proposal and informed of this incident to Vishnu. The latter pacified Parvati by saying that He would apply the same method of approaching Jalandhar's wife Vrinda as a Brahmana and she would be also stunned in the same manner as Parvati when Jalandhar approached Her. Sometime later Vishnu impersonated like Jalandhar and pretended as her husband and on learning of the truth she ended her life while cursing Vishnu that His wife would also face a similar situation. [Indeed this did happen likewise when Ravana abducted Sita and Rama was searching for Her all over!] Jalandhar provoked the Demon Brothers Sumbh and Nisumbh to challenge Siva who reataliated almost killing them and warned them that not long later Bhagavati Herself kept the task of destroying them. Jalandhar himself entered the battle field with Bhagavan and He slit the Demon's head with a fiery 'chakra' produced from His toe! The Deities hailed Bhagavan for this memorable action and prayed to Him in great relief and gratitude. While Devas were delighted at the termination of Jalandhar, Lord Vishnu was suffering a guilt complex about the self immolation executed by Vrinda, the wife of Jalandhar. He applied the ashes of her burnt body all over His body and started performing penance. The Devas were concerned about His condition and approached Maha Siva, who in turn asked Parvati to rally the support of Lakshmi and Sarasvati in this context. The three Devis gave the seeds of three trees viz. Amla, Tulsi and Malati to the Deities and spray the seeds at the place where Vrinda immolated. The seeds manifested as plants which were forwarded to Vishnuloka as tokens of blessings to Vrinda's soul at Vaikuntha.

Sankhachooda was a powerful Demon dreaded by Devas. In his earlier birth, he was Sudama, the Chief Attendant of Lord Krishna's Rasa Mandali and a 'Jatismara' (a person who knew about his earlier birth), cursed by Devi Radha to become a Demon in the ensuing birth. Sudama he fell in love with Devi Tulasi (also a Jatismara) who was also cursed by Devi Radha for an indiscretion; happily Sankhachooda and Tulasi were united in the current birth again. Already fortified with 'Narayana Kavacha' even from his earlier life, Sankhachooda practised penance of a high order and secured boons of invincibility from Lord Brahma. He defeated Devas in fierce battles and dislodged Indra and Devas from thier thrones. Devas went into hiding and later on approached Lords Brahma, Vishnu and finally to Maha Deva with their woes. Siva despatched a Messenger Pushpadanta to warn the Demon who had the audacity inviting Siva Himself. Sivaganas were sent in the lead but to no impact. Bhadrakali was asked to battle along with Her army but again to no avail! All the Devas were involved in the fierce battle with Kartikeya and Ganesha in the lead; Mahendra was pitted against Vrishaparva, Bhaskara against Viprachitti, Agni Deva against the Demon Gokarna, Kubera against Kalakeya, Yama to Samhara, Sanesvara against Raktadhara, Eleven Rudras against Eleven Bhayankaras and so on. The Illustrious Sons of Maheswara were controlled by Maya. Lord Brahma utilised 'Brahmastra' the Powerful Arrow whose usage is executed only under exceptional circumstances and that too paled away. Lord Vishnu spread out a cover of Illusion (Maya) and approached Sankhachooda in the form of a Brahmana and asked the 'Narayana Kavacha', the most potent spiritual armoury from his body, as charity and the Demon gave it away under the influence of Maya. Vishnu also advised Lord Siva against utilising the 'Pasupatastra' for fear of collosal destruction of the Universe but gifted to Eswara a 'Trisula' (Trident) with which Siva finally devastated the dreadful Demon Sankachooda. Even as the army of the Demon ran helter-skelter in fright and self-defence, the blanket of 'Maya' of Lord Vishnu was still in operation as He assumed the Form of the Demon who

entered the Interior Chamber of Devi Tulasi who was immensely pleased that her husband returned with Victory from the battle field. Though initially rejoiced, Tulsi came to learn of Vishnu's unforgivable deceit and disguise, but Her chastity was spoilt by that time already! Not only she lost her husband but even her chastity and thus she sacrificed her life, while cursing Vishnu to turn as a Stone! Vishnu blessed Tulsi to welcome her to Vishnu loka and accepted her as one of His Consorts as also become immortal as Tulasi Tree worthy of daily worship along with 'Salagramas' or Lord Vishnu's manifestation- the Stones-as cursed by Tulasi! The spiritual and even medicinal uses of Devi Tulasi's leaves are immense and popular; the contemporary belief is that if a dying person is administered a leaf of Tulsi, preferably with Ganga water has access to Vishnu loka!

Lord Brahma also narrated the account of another Demon **Andhakasura** to Narada. When Devi Parvati was playful with Maha Deva by closing His eyes tightly, the latter perspired on His forehead and a boy of muscular strength was created whom Parvati named as Andhaka. She nurtured the boy with affection under Her personal care. As the Demon Hiranyaksha meditated for several years to seek longevity and unconquerability, Lord Siva gave the boons and also gifted Andhaka to assist the Demon as his son. Together, both Hiranaksha and Andhaka conquered the Three Worlds- the Heaven, Earth and the Nether world. Lord Vishnu had to take the form of a Boar as 'Varahavatara' to save Vedas by plunging the Scriptures into the deep Seas, destroyed Hiranyaksha and crowned Andhaka as a the King of the Nether World. In course of time, Andhaka made Tapasya to Brahma and secured a boon that none excepting his father Siva could destroy him. Empowered with the boon, he tormented Devas and became arrogant even ignoring Devi Parvati and Maha Deva Himself, let alone Vedas and Sages.

Earlier to this, Danava Guru, Sukracharya noticed that the strength of Danava Army was fast dwindling as each time a powerful Danava made attempts to occupy the Indraloka by virtue of severe 'Tapasya'or Sacrifice by pleasing Brahma or Siva, Indra and Vishnu commenced maneuverings; in the process of the big Danavas getting killed, thousands of supporting and less powerful Danavas perished, but the strength of Devas on the other hand had been intact as they had the advantage of 'Amrit' that made Devas live for ever! Therefore Sukracharya made exterme Tapasya to Lord Siva for thousand years to Lord Siva to give the boon of 'Mrita Sanjivani' Mantra (Providing the dead to come alive) to such lesser valued demons who were fodder to the Deva's Astras. Highly gladdened by the persistent penance, Lord Siva not only gave away the Mantra but also provided a berth in the Planetary Region as an Entity-the Sukra Graha or the Planet of Venus. As Andhaka's arrogance was turned into unbridled ambition and occupied the Devalokas, Maha Deva sent His Sivaganas to reprimand Andhaka. The Demon's companion called Vidhas swallowed several Deities engaged in the fight and simultaneously Sukracharya brought back to life the dead Danavas. A fiery Siva Himself appeared and devoured Sukracharya for the betrayal and misuse of His boon of Mrita Sanjivini Vidya. The Danava Guru who kept on reciting Om Namah Sivaya Mantra as a gesture of his regret, Siva released the Danava Guru from His semen. Then Siva applied His Trident to kill Andhaka but for each drop of blood, there was another Andhaka born; Maha Deva ordered Devi Chandika to suck each drop of blood and expanded her tongue for till the Demon's body was drenched out of blood. Later on Siva lifted the bloodless body of Andhaka, but the Demon prayed to Siva to admit him among the Sivaganas after death.

Lord Brahma narrated the tale of **Gajasura** too to Narada Muni. As Durga Devi destroyed Mahishasura, his son Gajasura did incredible penance to the Creator Brahma and received the advantage that none excepting a 'Jitendriya' (Controller of Senses) could kill him. He took advantage of the boon and created havoc in the Three Worlds, especially by distressing Deities, Maharshis, and Brahmanas. He coerced that he should be worshipped and none else. The cimax came when the Demon forced the devotees at Kasi to worship him and Maha Deva appeared and terminated Gajasura. While being killed the Demon realised

his sins and as a death wish entreated Siva to wear his skin on His body. As He obliged the asura, Maha Deva is praised as Gajambaradhari. The Lord ordered that at the spot of the Demon's end there must be a Siva Linga with His manifestation as Krittiveseshvar.

When Hiranaksha was killed, Diti was deeply grieved and **Nirhad Daitya**, the maternal uncle of Prahlada, decided that the root cause of all the tribulations for the Daityas were Vedas and Mantras. As Brahmanas were the performers of Yagnas and the Vedic Rites, the Demon took the form of a tiger in a forest nearby and during the course of a Yagna at Kasi which is the Center of Vedic activities, he used to kill as many Brahmanas as possible in the nights and after the success of this experiment, more Daityas followed suit.But, when several Brahmanas assembled worshipping a Siva Linga on a Sivaratri, a tiger appeared and Lord Himself gave a powerful blow and terminated the Daitya in the form of another tiger.

Yet another incident described by Brahma to Narada related to the death of two Demons named **Vidal** and **Utpal.** They too performed penance to Lord Brahma and after obtaining boons harassed the virtuous and the learned. The Deities complained to Brahma and He confirmed that the the terminl stage of theirs was closeby. The demons took the form of Sivaganas when Siva and Parvati were engrossed in a ball game. Siva indicated to Parvati about the Demons in the form of Sivaganas and the ball with which the Super Gods were playing hit hard the Demons to instant death and the ball took the shape of a Holy Sivalinga.

[Such Leelas or Playful acts by Bhagavan, as narrated by Brahma to His 'Manasa Putra' Narada, were several, each of which vindicating victory of Virtue over Evil, faith over non-belief and truth over illusion. Interestingly, there had been a pattern in the happenings as the demoniac tendency of the Evildoers was camouflaged with superficial penance and sacrifice, only with the end-objective of executing evil deeds with deliberation and design. As soon as boons are granted, the Devils tend to become arrogant, egoistic and berserk without fear or restraint. At the end, all such happenings end up as triumphs of Inner Beauty versus inherent beastliness. Another facet of the narrations is a common phenomenon of Danavas seeking boons for wrong objectives and the boon-granters like Brahma or Siva were indeed not unaware of the consequent run-up of blatant acts of injustice being perpetrated by the evil persons. But apparently the narrations are designed to teach lessons and alert the generations of posterity that despite initial results, the long run realities would assert themselves bringing out the basic fact of 'Satyameva Jayatey' or Truth Triumphs in the Long Run!]

#### Five basic incarnations of Bhagavan Siva

While narrating the contents of *Shata Rudra Samhita* of Siva Purana of Maharshi Veda Vyasa, Suta Muni addressed the congregation of Sages commencing the five major incarnations of Bhagavan Siva: Sadyojata, Vamadeva, Tatpurusha, Aghoresha and Isana.

The **Sadyojata** incarnation of Bhagavan in white colour was to bless Lord Brahma to initiate the process of 'Srishti' (Creation), looking *Westward* and the Invocation of relevance is: *Sadyojatam prapadyaami Sadyojathaayavai namo namah/ bhavey bhaveynaati bhavebhasvamaam Bhavodbhavayanamah/ From the body of Sadyojata*, four disciples were created viz. Sunad, Sunandan, Visvanandan, Upanandan. Greetings to Sadyojata Siva are: Vandeham Salalam kalankarahitam Sthonormukham paschimam.

The **Vamadeva** incarnation of Siva has red complexion, looks *Northward* in deep meditative posture and is along with four sons created from His physique viz. Viraj, Vivah, Vishok and Visvabhavan for blessing Lord Brahma to preserve and heal the objects of Creation.. Invocation to Him states: *Vamadevaya namo Jyeshthaya namah Jyeshthayanamo Rudraya namah Kalaaya namah kalavikaranaya namo* 

balavikaranaya namo balaaya namo balapramadhanaya namah Sarva bhuta damanaaya namo manonmanaaya namah. Greetings to Vamadeva are: Vandey Purna Sasaanka mandala nibham Vaktram Harasyottharam. Siva's incarnation of **Aghoresha** looks South and of blue complexion representing destructive/ regenerative energy and Invocation to Siva states: Aghorebhyo thagorebhyo ghora ghoratarebhyaha/ Sarvebhyassarva sarvebhyo namasthe astu Rudra rupebhyah. The sons of Aghora Siva are Krishna, Krishna Sikha, Krishna Mukha and Krishna Kantha dhari. Greetings to Aghora states: Vande Dakshina -meeswarasya kutila bhrubhanga Roudram Mukham. **Tatpurusha** is the Eastward incarnation of Maha Siva being of yellow complexion and of deluded or misled Purusha. Invocation to Tatpurusha states: Tat Purushaya vidmahe Maha Devaaya dhimahi tanno Rudrah Prachodayaath. Salutation to this aspect of Siva is: Vande Siddha Suraasurendra namitam Purva Mukham Sulinaha. Finally, **Easana** facing South East is Sada Siva who is Eternal, Omni Potent and Omni Present. The Prayer to Him states: Esanassarva Vidyanam Eswarassarva Bhootanam Brahmadhi patir Brahmanodhi pathir Brahma Sivemo astuh Sada Sivom!

While many Incarnations of Siva are cited, the most significant additions to the Pancha Mukhas or Five Faces of Siva are described as **Ashta Murtis** (Eight Idols) viz. Sharva, Bhava, Rudra, Ugra, Bhima, Pasupati, Isana, Maha Deva. Bhava, Rudra and Sharva represent the Five Elements of Earth, Water, Fire, Ether, Sky as also Sun, Moon, and Kshetragya or the Supreme Soul. Bhagavan Siva is Sharva and omniscient. He is Bhava or the bestower and merciful.He is Rudra the corrector or punisher, if need be. He is spread out the whole Universe and is present 'Bahyantara' or inside-out of each being thus manifested as Ugra rupa. He who fulfils the wants of every animate or inanimate being and destroys all kinds of difficulties is called Bhima. To those who are unable to pull out themselves from their worldly chains of desires, relationships, senses of earthly belongings and so on, Bhagavan manifests as Pasutpati. That Siva who is noticeable in the most radiant form of Sun on the Skies and stands evidence to every being's actions and sufferings is called Isana. Siva who provides coolness and happiness to every being as manifested in Moon is known as Maha Deva.

The **Ardhanariswar** is another significant manifestation of Bhagavan. When Lord Brahma was faced with a major limitation in the context of Creation of various species including human beings and the process of creation was extremely slow, since Brahma had to exert and create the living beings mainly in a 'Manasic' way or from various parts of His body, a celestial voice was heard that He should perform Tapasya to Bhagavan Siva. Not too late, Siva manifested in half form as Purusha and half as Prakriti. He then provided a solution to Brahma as to how the process of creation could be rapidly sped up. Devi Prakriti bestowed the knowledge of the Secret of creation as also gave away the boons to men and women to procreate. This solution had indeed greatly facilitated Lord Brahma whose task was lightened as only the guidelines of the beings to be born were still to be decided by way of fate lines and account-keeping of pluses and minuses and so on, but creation process became mechanical as the body parts of men and women came into existence eversince. Another interpretation of learned persons of course is that Paramatma is only one and has no age, time, Tatvas, Gunas or sex but is Unique and everlasing!

In the Current Seventh Manvantara comprising Four Yugas each repeating twelve times cyclically, the Sveta Varaha Kalpa which is now ongoing has manifested various Avatars of Siva; during the current First Phase of Kali Yuga, nine entries were registered and the successive 'dwars' (segments) witnessed manifestations of Lord Siva, as Sveta, Sutra, Daman, Suhotra, Kanka, Lokakshi, Jaijisatya, Dadhivahan, and Rishabhadeva. Interestingly, Veda Vyas existed in all the nine segments as Satya, Bhargava, Angira, Savita, Mrityu, Indra, Vasishtha and Sarasvat. The most reputed disciples in the corresponding segments were Lord Brahma Himself, Dundubhi, Vishoka, Sumukh, Sanak, Sudhama, Sarswat, Kapil and Parashar.

Nandikeswar is a partial expansion of Lord Siva Himself. Sage Shailada meditated to Bhagavan for several years and secured a boon for a son of unprecedented Spiritual Knowledge and therafter in a Fire Sacrifice appeared a Child with four hands and three eyes who became a prodigy of Vedic comprehension within a short span of seven years. The Sage was extremely delighted and proud. But, two Brahmanas arrived at their abode and prophesied that the child was fated to die soon. As the Sage heard the tragic news, the son was not perturbed but performed high order of penance and Bhagavan Himself appeared and blessed the boy with eternal life. He took out a garland worn by Him to let Him imbibe His powers and sprinkled water from His locks as the water flowed as Panchanad or Five Rivers. He also appointed the boy as the Chief of Sivaganas. Devi Parvati brought him up as Her own son and gave Nandiswara full freedom in the Household. Nandi wedded Suyasha, the daughter of Marut.

**Bhairav** was created from Bhagavan Siva's third eye as He decided to snip the fifth head of Brahma who annoyed the Lord for the sin of temptation with his own daughter. But the sin of removing a head of Brahma construed as 'Brahma hatya' (killing a Brahmana that too of the stature of Brahma) haunted Bhairava and he wished to atone the sin by begging alms in the skull of the dropped Head. He reached Vaikuntha and Lakshmi Devi gifted a Vidya or learning called 'Manorath' or fulfilment of one's mental wishes. Lord Siva dropped oegrass (a plant in sea akin to elephant grass) in the skull-bowl and directed Bhairava to Kasi as this sin of Brahmahatya could not enter the Temple but he went to Patalaloka intead. As Bhairava dropped the skull, he got rid of the sin for-ever. The place where the skull fell is regarded as that of 'Kapala Moksha' or Salvation of the Skull.

**Sharabheswar** is another incarnation of Maha Deva, in the curious form of a giant bird which is part-lion and part-human [depicted as a figure in the Temples of South India]. When Lord Vishnu assumed the incarnation of Narasimha (Man-Lion) and devastated the Demon Hiranyakasipu and saved Prahlada- the die-hard devotee of Vishnu, Narasimha continued His fury for a long time and various efforts including Prahlad's prayers and even Veerabhadra's intervention in the form of a mighty fight proved futile. The Giant Bird was able to control Narasimha and flew the latter away held by its beak. On way, Lord Vishnu recovered His normalcy and praised Siva for averting a universal havoc. The body of Narasimha was destroyed and its Lion's Head was worn in a garland of Sharabhevara or Lord Siva.

# Lord Siva's ten incarnations corresponding to those of Shakti

Corresponding to Ten Maha Vidyas of Shakti, Lord Siva assumed Ten Incarnations. The first Incarnation was that of Mahakal and the counterpart Maha Vidya was of Maha Kali. The next was that of Tar and the corresponding Shaki was Tara. The third incarnation of Siva was Bhuvaneswar and the complement was Bhuvaneswari while the fourth was Sodash or Sri Vidyesh and the matching Shakti was Sodashi or Sri. Parameswara's fifth Avatar was Bhairav and the balancing Shakti was Bhiravi. Chhinnamastak Siva was the counter part of Chhinnamasta in the Sixth Incarnation. Dhumavan and Dhumavati were Siva and Shakti of the Seventh while the Eighth Avatars manifested as Bhagala Mukh and Bhagalamba. Matang and Matangi are the corresponding names of Siva and Shakti in the Ninth Incarnation and finally the Avatars of Siva and Mahavidyas were Kamal and Kamala.

#### Lord Siva's 'Ekadasa Rudra' manifestations

As Daithyas were constantly distressing Devas, the latter approached Sage Kashyap. The Sage too felt quite upset with the evil actions prepetrated by the Demons and desired to secure a lasting solution to punish the Demons. He executed a rigorous 'Tapasya' to the most merciful Shankara who appeared and rewarded with a windfall that soon the tribulations by Daityas would vanish as He would bless Devi Surabhi with Eleven Expressions as Eakadasa Rudras (Eleven Rudras) to wipe out the Daithyas engaged in the tortures by the Demons. The Ekadasa Rudras were: *Kapali, Pingal, Bheem, Virupaksha, Vilohit, Shastra, Ajapaada, Ahirbudhya, Shamshu, Chand and Bhava.* A whole generation of Demons was indeed wiped out by the Grace of Maha Deva.

## Trinity blesses Sage Atri and Anasuya with triplets

Lord Brahma's 'Manasa Putra' (Mind-born son), Sage Atri performed a very powerful Sacrifice to Bhagavan Siva to bless a divinely son. The severity of the penance was such that the extreme heat from the Fire pit radiated all over the World and Devas approached Lord Brahma who along with Lord Vishnu conferred with Bhagavan Siva. They agreed with each other that they would all appear before Atri and blessed him to let Anasuya Devi (Atri's wife- a highly pious and chaste woman) conceive three boys, with the 'Amsas' (partial manifestations) of all the three; from Brahma's 'amsa' would emerge **Chandra; Dattatreya** as the manifestation of Maha Vishnu and **Durvasa** from Lord Siva. Indeed Anasuya (literally meaning Unenvious) had the unique distinction in the entire World of begetting three children with the 'amsas' of Tri Murtis!

An interesting happening was narrated by Sage Suta to the congregation of Rishis about Maharshi Durvasa: King Ambarisha was highly virtuous and pious who was in the habit of observing fasts and worship to Bhagavan on every Ekadasi (eleventh) day of a month and on the next day of Dvadasi (twelfth) day, he would break the fast only after a Brahmana or more would commence their food. It was on a Dwadasi day that along with several of his disciples, Durvasa made a sudden appearance, agreed to join for mid day meals and took away all his Sishyas for taking bath in a river nearby. Just at the nick of time when Dwadasi was nearing its end, Durvasa and disciples did not return; the King had to cut-short the fast and took one sip of water and precisely at that split second Durvasa and others arrived. Durvasa became furious that the King did not wait for him but had a sip of water already; he pulled out a lock of hair which became a flame and would have turned the King into ash but for the instantaneous appearance of 'Sudarshan Chakra' (since the King was a very high devotee of Lord Vishnu) which not only put off the fire but chased the Sage. A celestial voice was heard not to hurt the Sage as he was of part embodiment of Bhagavan Siva and that he was only testing Ambarisha. The King beseeched Durvasa's sincere pardon and so did Sudarshan Chakra too. There were many other instances when Sage Durvasa used to test the real characteristsics of illustrious personalities- apparently to enlighten the posterity - like Sri Rama who was once ordered not to be disturbed by anyone but Lakshmana had to do so since Durvasa arrived and as an atonement discarded even Lakshmana for his wrong action; when Durvasa was taking bath in Ganga naked by intention or mistake, Draupadi tore a part of her sari to cover the Sage, and he blessed her that at the time of 'Vastrapaharanam' (Draupadi's disrobing) in an open Court, the piece of cloth would come to her rescue as Dussasana tried to disrobe her; and finally saved another great embarrassment to Pandavas and Draupadi by the sudden arrival of Durvasa with many disciples while she was unable to cook so much of food for all of them, but Lord Krishna arrived and suppressed the hunger of all of them as a morsel of rice remained in the utensil and that turned to be plentiful to Durvasa and disciples!

## Many other incarnations of Lord Siva

Nandikeswara was quoted to have recounted innumerable incidents of Siva's forms. He appeared as Yakshewara to humble Devas as they became arrogant as they secured 'Amrit' after churning Ocean and asked them to cut pieces of grass and they were so mighty but they failed and realised that He was Maha Deva Himself; He incarnated as **Hanuman** when Lord Siva was infatuated with Mohini, Saptarishis carried His semen to Anjana Devi through Vayu Deva, as a child swallowed Sun God to release him only after Deities requested the child when Sun agreed to be Hanuman's teacher, joined Lord Rama as His devotee, assisted Rama to locate Sita as also destroyed Ravana along with his clan and had became immortal eversince; He assumed the form of Mahesha along with Girija since Bhairava, the door keeper of Kailasa, made Parvati unhappy causing Her to curse as mortal named Vetal who performed penance of such intensity that pleased Siva and Parvati; He embodied as **Vrishabha** (Appearance of an Ox) to enter the lower lokas (nether worlds) with the aim of punishing Vishnu's wicked sons but when they were destroyed Vishnu fought with Vrishabha not knowing the Ox-like form was of Siva's; when Vishnu prayed to Siva the latter presented Sudarsan Chakra to Vishnu. Lord Siva disguised as a Yatinath to test the depth of devotion by a Bhil couple named Ahuk and Ahuka and sought resting place overnight but even while Ahuk said that their hut was just enough for two persons, Ahuka agreed to sleep outside to let the guest sleep inside the hut, while a wild animal killed Ahuk yet Ahuka quietly tried to jump in the husband's funeral pyre when Lord Siva manifested and blessed that the couple to become Nala and Damayanti in the next birth as the Lord would appear as a 'Hamsa' (Swan) to unite them; Siva disguised as a beggar to another poor woman who was hesitating to look after an orphan boy as she had her own child too, yet advised the woman to bring up both the kids, since the orphan boy was the son of King Satyarath who was killed by enemies while the Queen went to forest along with the just born child but was killed by a crocodile in a river thus prevailing on the poor woman not to abandon the orphan and eventually found a pot of gold to her surprise; Lord Siva appeared as Sureshwara in the guise of Indra when child Upamanyu performed concentrated penance to Bhagavan to become rich as he did not have enough money to buy milk when his poor mother said that Siva could only provide money but as a result of his penance Indra appeared and not Siva which disapponted Upamanu to resume the Tapasya with far higher devotion and Siva Himself appeared; and Bhagavan's Incarnation as **Kirat** (hunter) when a forest bound boar (actually a Demon Mookasura sent by Duryodhana) killed by Arjuna and Kirata simultaneously was claimed by both ending up in a mutual fight and finally a victorious Siva was impressed by Arjuna's valour and gifted 'Pasupatastra', the most potent arrow of the World!

## Description of 'Dvadasa (Twelve) Jyotirlingas'

Kedaro Himavatprushthe Daakinyaam Bhimasankarah /Vaaranaasyam cha Viswestriumbako Gautami thatey/ Saurashtrey Sommanathasva Srisaile Mallikarjunah / Ujjainyam Maha Kala Omkare cha Amaresvarah / Vaidyanathaaschitha bhumo Nagesho Daarukaananey / Sethu bandhe cha Ramesho Ghrusneswara Siva lingo/

Avatara Dvadasakamethchhambhoh Paramatmana/

Nandiswara described the Most Celebrated Twelve Jyotirlingas of Maha Deva as follows: Kedarnath in Himalayas, Bhima Sankar in Dakinya, Viswesvara in Varanasi, Triambaka on the banks of River Gautami, Somnatha in Saurashtra, Mallikarjuna in Sri Sailam, Maha Kala in Ujjain, Amareswara at Omkara, Vaidyanatha in Chitha Bhumi, Nagesa at Daruka, Rameswara at Setu Bandhana, and Ghrishneswara. [ Kedarnath in Uttaranchal, Bhima Shankar near Pune in Maharashtra, Visveswara in Varanasi, Somnath in Gujarat, Srisailam in Andhra Pradesh, Maha Kala in Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh,

Omkara also in Madhya Pradesh, Vaidhyanath at Deogarh (Bihar), Nagesha near Dwaraka in Gujarat, Rameswara in Tamilnadu, and Ghrishneswar near Ellora Caves in Aurangabad in Maharashtra]

#### Somnath:

Prajapati Daksha married away twenty seven of his daughters to Chandra Deva (Moon) but Chandra had great infatuation for Rohini to the neglect of other wives. Daksha warned Chandra about this but to avail. Finally Daksha cursed Chandra who appealed to Lord Brahma, and in turn asked to perform Tapasya to Bhagavan Siva. Chandra observed penance at Prabhasa on the banks of River Sarasvati. On His appearance Lord Siva sorted out the problem with a compromise that the first bright fortnight of a month (Sukla Paksha) Moon would wax and the 'Krishna Paksha'Moon would wane. He also blessed Moon to be near Him and Parvati always. Being a 'Sparsha'(Touch) Jyotirlinga-Somachandra- stated to be the first in the series, it would remove away all physical ailments particularly tuberculosis and leprosy and bathing in the Water body 'Chandra kund' washes off all the sins committed by human beings. Known as Prabhat Kshetra [near Veraval in Kathiawad District of Saurashtra in Gujarat], Lord Krishna is believed to have performed his Leelas (Miracle Acts). [An ever burning light in a cave of the Temple is witnessed till date].

#### Srisailam:

Stated to be the Second in the Series of Jyotirlingas on the Sri Parvat (in Andhra Pradesh, some 230 Km. from Hyderabad) on the banks of River Krishna, Lord Siva's manifestation as Mallikarjuna along His Spouse Devi Bhramaramba is famed mythologically as the place of penance when Kartikeya was unhappy and felt cheated as Ganesha was wedded earlier despite the Agreement that whoever arrived first after full 'Bhu Pradakshina' (circumambulation of the World) would win, but Ganesha took advantage of a Provision of the Scriptures and performed a 'Pradakshina' of his parents and attained the advantage of the Pradakshina. Siva and Parvati visited the Krouncha Mountain to pacify Kartikeya but to no avail and thus moved over to the Mountain from Kailasa. As Vrishabha Deva –Siva Parvati's Carrier-did Tapasya to the Maha Devas, they appeared as Mallikarjuna and Bhramaramba at this Holy Spot. Lord Rama is said to have installed a Sahasralinga and Pandavas set up Pancha Pandava Lingas in the Temple surroundings. In a tiny hole inside the temple of Devi Bhramaramba, one could still hear the buzz of bees as the Devi assumed the form of bees all over Her Body and killed Mahishasura. Adi Shankara is reputed to have scripted his well known Work named 'Sivananda Lahari' at this Temple.

# Ujjain:

The only 'Svayambhu' (Self-born) Jyothirlinga of Lord Siva in the form of Mahakal originating 'Mantra Shakti' (Power of Mantras) from within is indeed a unique specimen among all the Jyotir- Lingas on the banks of River Kshipra. This is the only Temple of various Jyotirlingas maintained on Tantrik Principles. While Mahakaleswar faces south as a Dakshina murthi, the Idols of Ganesh, Parvati, Kartikeya and Nandi are installed on West, North, East and South respectively. Shree Yantra is perched upside down at the Ceiling of Garbha Griha where the Main Linga is situated. The Temple has five levels including an underground and on the third level is installed the idol of Nagchandreswar open for public view only on Nag Panchami days. Experience at the time of very early morning 'Bhasmabhishekhas' or the spread of ash along with the loud chanting of Mantras of the Deity and with the thrilling and reverberating sounds

of various percussion and bronze gong instruments takes one to devotional ecstasy. It is stated that the Bhasmabhishekas are performed by using the ashes of the first dead bodies of the previous day, sanctified by Mantras from the holy waters of River Kshipra. Ladies are not allowed to enter the Sanctum at the time of the Bhasmabhishekas although they could witness the proceedings on Close Circuit TVs.]The mythological background of the Temple was that there was a pious Brahmana well versed in Vedas and Scriptures had four learned sons named Devapriya, Priyamedha, Survita and Suvrata. A demon named Dushana lived nearby on a hill Ratnamala who could not tolerate the very concept of Vedas and its applications and particularly hated the Brahmana brothers. One day the Demon decided to destroy the brothers who were unfazed and continued their worship of Maha Siva. As the Demon and his cruel followers were about kill the brothers there was such a 'Hunkar' or roaring sound of Mahakal which itself took away the breath of the entire band of Danavas headed by Dushan instantly. The Brahmana brothers prayed to the Lord who appeared on the spot and implored His manifestation of 'Mahakala' to stay put for the greatest benefit of posterity and conducted daily worship from generation to generation. [Ujjain, the erstwhile Capital of Avanti, had considerable importance of India's ancient history ruled in the past by Mauryas and Guptas. Memories of King Vikramaditya still linger in the City till date. His Nine Gems of Poets especially Kalidasa who scripted famed Works like Megha Sandesam, Abhijnana Shakuntalam and so on, the other Gems being Dhanvantari, Kshapanaka, Amarasimha, Sankhu, Vetala Bhatta, Ghatakopara, Varahamihira and Vara Ruchi. Bhartruhari the step brother of King Vikramaditya became an ascetic and the Caves of Bhartruhari are on the tourist map of the City as many believe that a person entering the maze of the Caves seldom returns! Kalbharava Temple too is an interesing feature; as much of liquor poured as Naivedya (offerings) in the Deity's throat (in the form of a Dog), half of it is returned as 'Prasad'! Ujjain is one of the Seven 'Mukti Sthalas' (Salvation Places) of India, besides Ayodhya, Mathura, Haridwar, Benares, Kanchipuram and Dwaraka.]

#### **Omkareswar:**

Situated in the banks of River Narmada on the Mandhata (Shivapuri) Island formed in the shape of OM in Sanskrit, Omkareswar is one of the Jyotirlingas besides another Amareswar Linga. The Legend was that Sage Narada visited Vindhya Raja and the latter bragged that Vindya was the highest and most powerful Mountain in the entire World. Narada replied that perhaps Meru was the greatest in terms of height and might. Vindhya Raja felt jealous and executed severe 'Tapasya' and pleased Maha Siva and requested that He should always be present in the Vindhyas and establish a Linga of Bhagavan on the banks of Narmada near to Vindhya. Hence the Omkara Jyotirlinga there. Puffed by Siva's presence there, Vindhya Raja grew taller and taller to compete with Sumeru. This obstructed Sun God's routine circumambulation of the Universe and He had to return half way turning half of the Universe dark. Bhagavati asked Sage Agastya from Kasi to visit Vindhya Raja who out of veneration bent down to touch the feet of Agastya who asked Vindhya to be in that position till he returned and he never came again from the South!

#### **Kedareshwara:**

Flanked by breath taking views of snow-clad peaks of Himalayas at a height of 3585 m from Sea level on the banks of River Mandakini, Kedareswar is the highest point where Maha Deva's presence is indeed felt in the manifestation of a famed Kedareswara Jyotir Linga as spread out as a fairly large expanse of black stone with an inclined elevation in the middle portion. Being inaccessible excepting by a difficult 14km trek by foot, or horse back or 'dolis' (palanquins) carried by two or four humans from Gaurikund, the Temple is open only during end April through November since residents, let alone pilgrims, have little access to the Mountain Top Temple during heavy snowfall in the intervening period. [A helicopter service

is available now from Agastya Muni to Phata to reach Kedarnath]. The incarnations of Lord Vishnu in the form of two Sages Nara and Narayana meditated to Bhagavan Siva for several years and as the latter appeared and said that the incarnations of Vishnu Himself executed the penance without any basic reason excepting the welfare of humanity and thus agreed to manifest Himself as a Jyotir Linga at that hallowed place. Nara and Narayana are believed to have assumed their forms as hallowed mountains nearby. According to Puranas, Pandavas performed penance at the Temple and even in the opening Hall of the Temple at the entrance of the Sanctum, there are idols of Pandavas, Lord Krishna, Nandi and Veerabhadra. The belief is that Pandavas were chasing a Bull-Lord Siva Himself- and Bhima continued the chase to subdue the animal by holdindg its tail and the Pandavas attained Salvation finally from the Temple surroundings. It is also believed that Adi Shankara attained His Salvation from this Place and there is a 'Samadhi' of His behind the Temple. A distinct feature at the entrance gate of the Temple is the head of a man carved in a triagular stone as facia and a similar triangular facia is displayed in another Temple where Siva-Parvati wedding was fabled to have taken place. 'Udakmand' is mentioned in Siva Purana as a union of Seven Seas and its water is everfresh. In fact the Homa Kund of the Wedding is also visioned alive. On way to Kedar a number of Pigrimage Centers dot the route including Agastyamuni, Ukhimath, Phali-Pasalat Devi, Kalimath, and Triguni Narayan not far from Sonprayag.

#### **Bhima Shankar:**

Located some 110 km from Pune in Maharashtra State in the Ghat region of Sahyadri Hills near the head of Bhima River which merges with Krishna River too, the fifth Jyotirlinga Bhima Shankar is the appearance Maha Siva who exterminated Demon Bhima, son of Kumbhakarna (Ravan's brother). Demon Bhima on knowing from his mother Kartaki wanted to avenge the death of his father by Lord Rama, who was Maha Vishnu's incarnation and performed penance to Lord Brahma to receive boons to conquer even mighty opponents. He defeated Indra and Devas and what provoked Lord Siva most was the tormenting of a great Siva Bhakta King Kamarupeshwara insisting that the latter should pray to himself rather than Siva Linga. As the Demon was about to destroy the Sivalinga by his sword, Lord Siva appeared and destroyed the Demon and His mighty anger caused sweat which flowed as River Bhima. The Jyotirlinga thus manifested is a powerful representation of 'Ardhanariswara' in the Temple provides proof of instant fulfillment of all desires thus attracting thousands of devotees, especially on all Mondays and definitely on Sivaratri festivals. As in certain other cases like at Ujjain, the Swayambhu Jyotirlinga is set at a level lower than the normal Ground; also there is a speciality here that there is a constant flow of water from the Linga! The Bhima Shankar Temple is also associated with the killing of Demon brothers Tripurasuras along with Devi Parvati in Her manifestation as Kamalaja whose temple is also nearby the main Temple. Devi Kamalaja was worshipped by Brahma and hence She was called so. Sakini and Dakini were among those whose contribution was significant in the battle against Tripurasuras and their worship too is performed at the Temple. 'Mokshakund Tirtha', the Holy Waterbody adjacent the Bhimashankar Temple is associated with Sage Kausika. [Maratha Rulers especially Nana Phadnavis who built the Temple 'Sikhara' and Sivaji who made donations to its maintenance were intensely associated with the progress of this illustrious Temple].

While the above version of the location of Bhimashankar is convincing, Siva Purana which is relevant in the context of the current source states in Rudra Samhita: 'Dakininam Bhimashankara' while outlining the broad references of the Dwadasa Jyotirlingas; more clearly the Koti Rudra Samhita states: Bhimashankara sanjnaastu Shashtha Shambho Maha Prabho/ Avataro Maha leeloBhimasuravinashanah/ Sudakshinabhida Bhaktam Kamarupeshwaram vrisham/yoraraakshasadbhutam hatvasaram tha bhakta duhkhadam/Bhimashankara naamaa sa daakinyam samsthitaha swayam/ Jyotirlinga Siva rupena prarthesena Sankarah/ The sixth incarnation of Shambu and His 'Leela' (miracle) was the killing of

Bhimasura and saving of King Sudakshina of Kamarup whose grateful prayers resulted in the manifestation of Siva at Dakini. The belief is the Bhimashankar Temple at Bhimapur Hill near **Guwahati** in Assam is the one where the King Sudakshina was saved and the Jyotirlinga was consecrated. Sivaratris are celebrated with pomp and Show in this Temple.

Yet another version relates that the Temple of Bhimashankar Jyotirlinga at Kashipur near **Nainital** which was noted as a Dakini Country in the past is the one where the Jyotirlinga appeared. The legend in the Region was that Bhima of Pandava brothers married a Dakini woman named Hidimba and that Lord Siva appeared in that Place as a Swayambhu Jyotirlinga in that Temple area. In this Temple too, there are Idols of Bhairavanath and Devi Bhagavati as also a Temple Tank, called Sivaganga. Siva Ratri Jagarans and Worship are observed with religious fervour and devotion in this Temple too.

#### Varanasi:

Famed as the Place of Devas that was founded by Bhagavan Siva Himself, some five thousand years ago, Kasi has a hoary legend with age-old reputation worldwide. Varun and Ganga and also Ganga and Assi, flowing in differnt directions, confluence in 'Varana-Assi' or Varanasi. Euologised in several Scriptures like Rig Veda, Puranas and Epics, Varanasi was the Capital of Kasi King three thousand years ago and was reputed even by then as the capital of Religion, Education and Arts. The City covers some five kilometers of the Holy and Everflowing Ganges on its banks attracting lakhs of Pilgrims every year as the Ultimate Destination of Salvation for Hindus of all faiths and several other religions especially Buddhists and Jains. This is the Sacred Spot that Bhagavan Visveswara manifested as Avimukta Jyotir Linga in the renowned Golden Visveswara Temple. It is stated that Lord Brahma executed such severe Tapasya ( meditation) here so much that Maha Vishnu moved His head across fast in disbelief and the latter's ear ring fell at a place on the bank of the River and was since then named 'Manikarnika'. When Brahma was once chanting Vedas in praise of Siva in the form of the Jyoti Linga with the former's 'Panchamukhas' or Five Heads, some pronounciation slips rolled by and becoming furious of the chanting mistakes which changed the sense of the words, Lord Siva opened the third eye and burnt one of Brahma's heads which fell and found a permanent place in the Temple. Viswanath Temple is also considered as a 'Shakti Peetha' and it is believed that Devi Sati's ear-rings fell at the spot where Devi Visalakshi's shrine stands. Durga Temple, nick-named as Monkey Temple owing to large presence of monkeys, is considred as a shrine built originally by Durga Herself and during 'Navarathras' of Dussera festival comes fully alive and heavily crowded by devotees. Sankata Vimochana Hanuman Temple is frequently visited, especially on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The Shrine of Annapoorni is stated as the place where Devi Annapurna Herself distributed 'Anna' (Rice and so on) to devotees when there was a famine and Lord Siva Himself asked for 'Anna' in the disguise of a Beggar! There is a Neelakantha Temple with Deities of Vishnu, Avikuntha Vinayaka, Virupakshi Gauri, Saniswara and clusters of Five-some Lingas. A separate shrine dedicated to Kala Bhairava is present too in the courtyard. On the five km long banks of Ganga are situated hundreds of 'Ghats' or areas specified for many purposes like Sacrifices or Yagnas and Homams, some for bathing, or some even owned privately. For eg. 'Dasasvamedha' Ghat where Brahma performed Yagnas and even now Brahmanas perform Agni Sthomas, Homas to please Devas and so on; 'Manikarnika Ghat' where Brahama executing penance and Vishnu's earrings were lost at the disbelief of the former's strengh to do it so seriously and shook His earrings fast and lost these while Devi Parvati pretended that Her earrings were lost so that Siva would stay back to search the lost earrings forever and thus tie Him up to Kasi and such other beliefs. Besides the Manikarnika Ghat, where dead bodies are brought for the favour of cremation to attain mukti (salvation), there is the Harischandra Ghat where the Illustrious King Harischandra was posted as a slave and cremated dead bodies with the same belief of attaining salvation. It is common knowledge that the King stood for truthfulness and endured the most severe tests of life of selling off his family and Son, became a life-long slave and finally attained Salvation. There are many

orther Ghats like 'Man Mandir Ghat' near Someswara Linga Temple, Lalitha Ghat near by Pasupatinath Temple, Tulasi Ghat where Tulsidas scripted Ramayana and so on. Ranging from Kings and Queens, Foreign Plunderers, Great Saints like Adi Shankara, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Vivekananda, Dayananda, Tulasidas and GuruNanak; Educationists, Artistes, Disbelievers, Non Hindu Followers, and even modern Pandas-anybody be named and be found- are all attracted to this Memorable City for their reasons of Salvation, Religion, wordly fulfilments, mischief or mere curiosity: but Maha Deva Blesses them all whatever may be the motive!

#### Tryambakeswara:

Located thirty kilometers away frim Nasik in Maharashtra, the renowned Jyotirlinga of Lord Siva's materialization called Tryambakeswar attracts thousands of Pilgrims round the year providing boons of material and spiritual nature. The 'Punyakshetra' or the Hallowed Land is the source point of the Holy River Godavari basically owing to the Bhagiradh-like efforts of Sage Gautama and his highly pious wife Ahalya. By virtue of the Sage's penance and prayers, Lord Varuna was pleased to supply water and food grains in abundance but this boon turned out as a basis of jealousy of co-Sages and their spouses who created a cow to plunder the grains. Sage Gautama destroyed the cow, but as a result of a sin in killing the cow, the Sage-couple was banished to a hermitage on the mountain of Brahmagiri. Gautama Muni made relentless 'Tapasya' to Bhagavan Siva who endowed Gautama with the double desires of bringing River Ganga near his hermitage and also stay on its banks along with Bhagavati in the form of a Jyotirlinga.

Lord Siva granted both the wishes that Ganga was brought near Gautama's hermitage as River Godavari and His manifestation as Tryambakeswara Jyotirlinga in the vicinity of the River Godavari / Gautami. In parallel to this, another legend related to the formation of a Jyotirlinga at Brahmagiri was the interface of Lords Brahma and Vishnu vis-à-vis an appearance of a Fire Column whose height and depth could not be ascertained by both of them; Brahma's cover-up story was that he found out the height of the Column and cited a Ketaki flower as a witness. Bhagavan Siva gave a curse to Brahma that there would not be worship of the former and Brahma gave a return curse that Lord Siva would be pushed underground. Hence the manifesation of Tryambakeswara under the Brahmagiri. The Jyotirlinga is of a small size in a depression on the floor with water oozing out constantly from the top. The force of waves of the River appears to be as per the intensity of the prayers of Sage Gautama according to the conviction of devotees in the Temple! Major Tirthas (Tanks) in the Temple are named Gangadwara representing the source of Ganga (Godavari), Varaha Tirtha where Lord Vishnu had a bath in the River in Varaha Rupa

(appearance as Boar) and Kushvartha Tirtha considered as the most significant as Sage Gauthama spread across Kusha or Darbha Grass while securing the waters of Ganga. There are also other Tirthas like Gangasagara, Bilva Tirtha, Indra Tirtha, Vishwanath Tirtha, Mukund Tirtha, Prayag Tirtha, Rama Kund, Lakshmana Kund and so on. Among the Shrines are Kedarnath, Rameshwar, Gauthameshwar, Kasi Viswanatha, Jareswar, Kanchaneswar, Tribhuneswar, Venkateshwar, and Hanuman. There are daily worships at the Main Temple thrice and the nightly 'arthies' are special. On Mondays there are special 'abhishekas' and 'arthies' as also 'Parikramas'. Kartika month worships are important, especially Kartika Purnima. Gangavatarana is celebrated in the month of Magha. Simhasta Parvani is held once in twelve years.

Vaidyanath ( At Deogarh / Parli?)

The legendary background of Vaidyanath Jyotirlinga is related to Ravanasura the Epic Villain of Ramayana. The King of Lanka carried out a relentless meditation to Bhagavan Siva at Kailash Mountain for mighty supremacy and indomitability in the Three Worlds. But as Siva was still not responsive, he moved out from Kailasa to Vrikshakandhaka towards south of Kailasa. He dug up a pit and worshipped a Sivalinga even by sacrificing his ten heads, one by one and at the end Lord Siva became visible and gave away boons of supremacy as also to let a Sivalinga to carry to his Kingdom on the condition that he should reach Lanka directly without even a single halt, lest the Linga if kept down would never be pulled out! Devas became afraid that once Ravana turned unquestionable, there would be chaos in the Three Lokas and Dharma would be wiped out. Thus Devas prayed to Devi Parvati and Ganesha to somehow avert the risk of the Sivalinga to reach Lanka. Parvati appeared on way to Ravana in disguise and in collaboration with Varuna, tempted pure waters of major holy Rivers to quench Ravana's thirst. The King's stomach got bloated and he wished to stop over urgently for a relief and luckily for him, there was a lad whose assistance was sought to hold the Linga for a few moments without placing it on the Ground. By the time Ravana returned, the lad- Lord Ganesha-disappeared and the Linga was stuck to the Ground and no force applied by Ravana was a match to Bhagavan's decision. That was the Jyotirlinga of Vaidyanath who was a 'Vaidya' (Physician) and he helped to piece together the slashed heads of Ravana at the time of his sacrificing them one by one.

'Baidyanathdham' (Baba dham) at **Deogarh** (Jharkhand) is some seven km from the Jasidhi Junction on Howrah-Delhi main line. It is 220 km away from Patna. The Baidyanath Shrine attracts lakhs of pigrims from all over a year normally, but they were in millions during the entire 'Shravan' month (July-August). Several of them carry Ganges water from Sultangani to Deogarh- a distance of about hundred km-to perform 'Abhishekams' to the Jyotirlinga, and many saffron clad Sadhus carry the Ganges water by walk barefooted covering this distance! Pilgrimage to 'Babadham' is considered incomplete without visiting Basukinath Siva Temple some distance away. A well maintained Nandi Temple edging the Nandan Pahad (hill) faces a beautiful lake on one side and the Siva Temple on the other. Sivaganga is a pond very near the Main Temple, where Rayana desired to wash but since there was no water nearby, he used his fist and hit the Earth and a pond appeared. Other places of interest at Deogarh include Naulakha Mandir, Satsang Ashram of Radha Swami, Tapovan with many caves where Valmiki is said to have stayed for penance, Rikhia Ashram of Yoga, Hamira Jori where Ravana handed over the Holy Linga to Ganesh before his ablutions and Trikut Parvat with a Maha Deva Temple. Inside the huge complex of Babadham itself are situated some 22 Temples viz, Neelkantha and Parvati before Babadham and on either side a cluster of Shrines devoted to Sri Ram, Ananda Bhairavi, Ganga, Gauri Shankar, Tara, Maha Kali, Annapurna, Lakshmi Narayana, Surya Narayan, Bhavani, Sandhya, and so on.

There is a controversy about the location of Vaidyanatha Jyotirlinga at **Parli** in Maharashtra called Kantipur (Madhyarekha Vijayanti or Vijayanti), which is some 26 km from Ambejoga in the Beed District. One legend of this Temple often heard in the vicinity was that Amba Yogeshwari of Ambejoga wedded Maha Deva Vaidyanadha and the marriage party arrived late after the 'Muhurtha' (the precise time) for the wedding and Devi was waiting for long; She cursed the members of the Party to turn into stone statues. Another Story was that after the churning of Ocean for Amrit (nectar), fourteen gems emerged among which were Dhanvantari and Amrit which were hidden inside the Shivalinga, but as Demons tried to take them forcibly, huge flames came out and they had to retreat. Till date, devotees have strong faith that Amrit and Dhanvantari or disease killing medicinal flows emerge from the Abhisheka waters. Thus Lord Lingamurthi is called as Amritamurthi and Dhanvantari. In fact, all the devotees-irrespective of caste or creed-are allowed touching the Linga and performing Abhishekas by themselves. Daily Rudra Parayana Mantras are reverbrated in the entire Complex. This Sacred Temple is also believed to be the Place where Lord Vishnu as Mohini distributed Amrit to Devas, and hence is called Vijayanti. The other legend associated with the Temple is that of Ravana's carrying the Linga as described

above.Incidentally, the surrounding mountains, forests and rivers are stated to abound medicinal sources. Over the last hundred years or so, considerable construction was made around the Swayambhu Linga by way of strong walls, Enclosures, 'Mahadwara' (the Main Gate) and several other Gates, a number of windows (one of which allows morning Sunrays inside one Enclosure by means of which Sun God is worshipped), minarets, lighting and various facilities to lakhs of Visitors. This Temple is a hallowed place particularly to **Vira Shaiva Lingayats** and devotees of Lord Harihara. There is a Harihara Teertha in the vicinity. Many festivals connected with Siva, Krishna and Bhagavati are celebrated with fervour; Mondays, Fridays, Ekadasis, Chaitra Padava, Dussehras, Tripura Pournami, the entire Kartika month, Sivaratris, Sravana month and so on are observed with reverence. A Pond in the Area is associated with **Markandeya's** extraordinary devotion to embrace the Linga firmly defying Yamaraja's order of death and Bhagavan's subsequent appearance giving His blessing of immortality to the devotee. A Vateswara Temple reminds the devotees of a 'Vata' or Banyan Tree around which was the Story of **Satyavan and Savitri** over Yama's sanction of long-life to the couple.

#### Nageswara (Dwaraka / Naganath / Almora)

Nageswaraavataarasthu dasamahaparikeerthitah /Aaavirbhutah swabhaktartha dushtaanam danda sada / Hatva <u>Daruka namaanam Rakshsah Dharmaghatakum / Swabhkata Vaishwanaam cha prarakshat</u> Supriyabhidam /

Bhagavan's tenth manifestation (of Jyotirlinga) is popular in save His devotees; a Demon named Daruka who obstructed virtue was destroyed to save His devotee Vaishaya Supriya. While this was the Statement of Siva Purana's 'Koti Rudra Samhita' establishing that Nageswara Jyotirlinga was no doubt evident but there are atleast three claimants of Its Location viz. Nageswara Temple at Dwaraka, Gujarat; Naganath Temple at Aoudhya, Maharashta; and Jagasewara Temple at Almora, Uttarakhand. Happily, all are winners!The legend was that there a demon couple named Daruka and Daruki and the latter secured a grant from Devi Parvathi that wherever the Demoness went, the entire forest would accompany her. The Demons were spoiling Yagnas and all Spiritual tasks, there were protests from the harassed Brahmanas to Sage Ourva and the Sage cursed the demons and followers that they would all be destroyed on earth; the Demons had thus no alternative excepting to move into the Sea. Daruki's boon from Parvati became ineffective since the forests were all submerged in the Sea. The Demons thus restricted only in the Sea and resorted to pirating the Ships moving in the Seas and one of extremely devoted Bhakta of Lord Siva named Supriya-a Vaiasya- was thrown into a prison on the ship. Bhakta Supriya who was a staunch devotee of Lord Shiva made sincere prayers and Bhagavan appreared, killed all the Demons and released the prisoners especially Supriya. Commemorating this joyous moment, the Lord blessed that a Swayambhu Nageswara Jyorirlinga be manifested on the Sea Coast as the memorable Nageswara Jyotirlinga.

#### Dwaraka (Gujarat):

Some 18 km from Dwaraka, the Temple is situated in a large scrub landscape with a huge Siva idol beckoning outside the Holy Shrine with high Sikhara. The Sacred Linga of raw yellow stone is quite small of size (40cm high and 30cm dia) set underground of 3-4 steps in a spacious Hall of pillars; the Linga which could be touched by all Hindus. The Sivalinga is facing South and a Gomukham (Face of a Cow) is facing East. Sant Namdeva desired to sing a Bhajan while simultaneously Rudra Parayana (Recital of Rudra Hymns) was being performed and thus the Namdeo party was asked to go to the back of

the Temple and when they did so, the Lingam turned towards where the Sant was singing and as this miracle happened the Brahmans begged the Sant for forgiveness. It is said that as the Temple closes, live snakes hover with their hoods open around the Sivaliga as though they were gaurding the premises. Naganatha linga is believed to possess supreme Spiritual Powers; a Naga (serpent) is indicative of the nerves of human body. The 'Sushumna Nadi' or 'Naganatha' indicates the energy channel under the spine. The power of Kundalini which normally lies inactive in Mula Dhara Chakra or the Root Chakra at the bottom of the Vertebral Column is also known as 'Naganatha'. The snake-like Kundalini Shakti is akin to the brilliance of Soul (Lord Siva) Himself. Thus the Jyotirlinga is the symbol of Spiritual Radiance. Also the Temple of Dwarakadhish dedicated to Lord Krishna is quite popular in Dwaraka; it is some five hundreds old, remodelled and renovated from time to time. It is granite-built beautiful structure of seven stories of 51 m. height and is a tall land mark in the Township. Krishna and His entire clan shifted to Dwaraka from Mathura although the vestiges were submerged in the Arabian Sea.

## Naganath (Maharashtra):

Situated at Audha in Prabhasa Kshetra [Prabhasa Railway Station on Manmadi-Nanded Line] Naganath Jyotirlinga was referred to as follows by Adi Shankaracharya:

Yame (South) Sadanga(old name of Audh)/ Vibhushitangam vividhaischa bhoga bhogai/

Satbhakti muktipradameesa mekam /Sri Naganatham saranam prapadye /

The legend of Aunda Naganatha Temple is that during 'Aranya Vasa' (Forest life of twelve years) by Pandavas pursuant to their defeat in a Game of Dice with Kauravas lived in a hermitage and their cows taking water from a river nearby were automatically giving milk back into the same river and finding this miracle act, Bhima found that the middle part of the River was hot compared to the rest of water. Bhima with his mace broke the middle portion of the River seeking to find out as to how had this happened; there was blood gushing out and when dug up to the great surprise Pandavas discovered a Jyotirlinga full of radiance. The Story of Demons Daruka and Daruki as also of Supriya the great Devotee of Bhagavan was also ascribed to Nageswara Temple at Dwaraka in Gujarat was referred to Naganath Temple at Audh in Maharashtra also.

The architectural beauty of the Audha Temple of Prabhasa is distinctive, as was built by Pandavas originally with heavy stones and spacious corridors and halls. The Court Hall is oval shaped supported by strong pillars and the Jyotirlinga of Naganatha Deva is in a Garbhagriha which is in a small internal area. While there is no Idol of Nandi before the Main Deity, there is a separate Shrine for him behind the Main Temple. On all the four sides of the Main Temple are separate shrines dedicated to Twelve Jyotirlingas, besides Vedavyasa linga, Bhadreswara, Nilakantheswara, Ganapati, Dattatreya, Murali Manohar, and Dasavataras- totalling 108 Shiva Temples and 68 Shrines, interestingly including Mothers in law and Daughters in law! Also interestingly, there is a picturisation of a Scene depicting a sulking Devi Parvati and a pacifying Lord Siva! It is said that Aurangazeb ordered to plunder the Temple and swarms of bees drove away the soldiers.

**Jagdeswar** (**Almora**): Till date, devotees pray to Bhagavan Siva as Bal Jagdeswar as connected to a legend of the Area. In Daruka Vana, there were 'Balakhilyas' a group of Sages of dwarf size performing severe penance for years. Bhagavan Siva sought to test the depth of the Dwarf Sages and appeared as a tall, hefty and handsome personality, a 'Digambara' or completely naked, covering His body with snakes. The house wives of the Area were so attracted to the Stranger that they were not only inquisitive but got hypnotised neglecting their house chores. The Sages got frustrated and approached Devas to save the confusion. When Devas meditated Lord Siva in desperation, He manifested as a Bal Jagdeswar, who has

no Physique, Gunas (Characretistics), Tatvas, Sex, Age, Time, Distance, yet, He has all of these too! Thus materialized as a 'Swayambhu' (Self-born) Linga eversince! The Main Temple in the Complex is dedicated to Tarun Jagdeswar and the Dwarpalakas are Nandi and Skandi. The Sanctum is of two parts, the larger area being of Jagdeswara Jyotirlinga and the smaller area being of Devi Parvati. There is an 'Akhanda Jyoti' or Everlasting Lamp. The biggest Shrine in the Main Temple is dedicated to Mritunjaya or the Saviour of Death. The distinction of this Linga is that it has an opening of an Eye. Recitation of Mrutunjaya Mantra would yield immediate reliefs of troubles, health problems, mental disturbance and Spiritual solace. The Mantra is from Sukla Yajur Veda: \*Aum Trayambakam Yajamahe / Sugandhim Pushti Vardhanam / Urvarukamiva Bandhanaan / Mrityor Mokshiye Maamritaat - We pray to Lord Siva whose eyes are the Sun, Moon and Fire. May He protect us from disease, poverty, and fear and bless us with prosperity, longevity and good health. Another important Shrine in the Complex is of Pushti Bhagavati. Outside the Complex are Vinayak Kshetra, Jhanker Saim Mahadev (who was meditatated and instructed His Ganas to destroy the Demons who were disturbing His Tapasya), and Briddha Jagadeswar (in the Form of Old Jagadeswar).

#### Rameswaram:

The Temple town of Bhagavan Siva's emergence of the penutimate Jyotirlinga of Ramalingesa happens to be celebration point of Lord Rama's glorious victory over Ravana paying Rama's dutiful homage to Bhagavan. Having crossed 'Setu Bandhan' across the Sea on the triumphant return journey from Lanka en route Ayodhya, Lord Rama despatched Hanuman to visit Varanasi to pray Viswesvara and bring a replica of the Linga from Kasi for consecrating it on the Sea coast but since Hanuman could not return by the appointed auspicious time, Sita Devi improvised a Sand Linga and installed it formally amid Vedic Mantras. Hanuman was upset and wished that the Linga blessed at Kasi Viswanadha be substituted instead and tried hard to pull it out but the so called temporary Sand Linga was ever lasting, blessing millions of devotees eversince. The Kasilinga or Hanumanlinga too was installed nearby which too is worshipped by devotees. It would be appropriate therefore that worship to Rameswara or Rathnaswami be performed after the homage to the Kasilinga or Hanumanlinga. Spread over some 15 acres of land, the Temple could boast of rich architectural heritage of high Raja- Gopurams on the East (126 feet high) and the West side, massive walls, a huge Nandi (18 feet tall and 22 feet long) and a 4000 feet long Corridor with 4000 carved granite pillars on raised platforms on either side- perhaps the longest in the World.

[It is gathered that in the initial stages, the Rameswara Jyotirlinga was kept in a thatched abode till the 12<sup>th</sup> Century but royal patronage of passing centuries of the Kings of Travancore, Ramanadha -puram, Nagercoil and Pudukkotai helped improve the Temple Complex.]

There are some thiry six Teerthas (Water Springs) with considerable medicinal amd mineral properties - twenty of them being in the Temple Complex itself- most of the devotees bathing bucketfulls in all the twenty two Wells dotted all over the surroundings and walking along into the Sanctum drenched and then only perform the worship to the Jyotirlinga in queues! Festivals at the Rameswara Temple are celebrated in 'Ani' Masa (June 15- July 15) signifying Lord Rama's victory worship to Bhagavan Siva and two 'Brahmotsavas' or Annual Principal Celebrations are observed in 'Adi' and 'Masi' months as per local customs. Six worships commence from 5 am each day and Special worships are on Fridays.

[Among the experiences include a memorable journey approaching or leaving Rameswaram across the Ocean preferably by train or by a road journey over a high bridge and a commanding view of Area atop the Gandhamadan Hill where a Shrine and Rama's revered foot- prints are witnessed as also a Place in the

vicinity of the Temple a heavy mineral-laden stone floating on water, apparently due to its high phosphatic content; the stone was a sample with which Setu bridge was constructed by Vanara Sena or Monkey Brigade! ]

Other Places of interest include Dhanushkoti partly submerged into Sea owing to recent cyclonic devastation and partlly ascribed to have been destroyed by Rama (the 'Rama- Setu') by His arrows; Tiruppulani where Rama inclined as a 'Darbhasayi' (lying on a Darbha mat) soliciting Varuna Deva to facilitate smooth cross-over of the Sea to reach Lanka; Shrines of 'Nava Grahas' whom Rama prayed to remove obsctacles during the ensuing Rama-Ravana battle; Devipatnam where barren women are blessed with progeny and Jagannadha Shrine where Ravana's brother-a pious person-called Vibhishana surrendered to Rama and was made the King of Lanka later on.

#### **Ghrishneswara:**

On a mountain called Devagiri, there were a pious Brahmana named Sudharma and his wife Sudeha but she was barren and had no child. Sudeha proposed that her younger sister, Ghushma or Kusuma who was a staunch devotee of Parameswara be wedded to Sudharma. Sudharma agreed and in course of time, they had a male child due to Lord Siva's blessings. Ghushma was in the habit of daily worship by creating Sivalingas of clay and immerse them after Puja and Abhisheka in a pond nearby. Sudeha got jealous of her younger sister as she was blessed with a son. One night Sudeha killed the child out of jeaulosy and threw away the child in the same pond where the Sivalingas were immersed by her. The latter no doubt wept over the tragedy but continued her daily worship of Siva none-the-less. The dead body of the child floated in the pond where Ghushma used to immerse the lingas and there was commotion in the family and indeed in the village. Ghushma still continued her prayers to Lord Shankara who finally stood before her and desired to kill Sudhrama, but she requested not to do so out of her extreme kindness. Lord Siva brought back the child from death and also asked Ghushma for any boon and she requested Him to stay in pond and the Lord agreed to do so and hence the formation of Ghrishneswara as a Jyotirlinga. Alternative names of the Place are Ghushmeswar or Kusumeswar. This Temple is situated in the Village of Verul or Yelur where River Yala flows and is some 30 km from Aurangabad, [From Aurangabad, Ellora is 30 km, Ajanta is 106 km and Shirdi is 130 km.] The Temple Complex is quite spacious (240 X 185 feet) enclosed by strong outer walls and the Garbha griha (Sanctum) admeasuring 17 feet X 17 feet are the Jyotirlinga of Lord Ghrishnaswara and Idol of Goddess Ghrishneswari; a Nandikeswara is facing the Deities in the Court Hall of the Sanctum. It is believed that long ago, the Patel of the Village discovered a treasure in a snake pit and the amount was spent on the basic construction of the original Temple and the Holkar Royal family renovated with Dasavataras and various other carvings in red stone were addded besides a lake named Sikharashingarapur. [Ellora and Ajanta caves which are World Heritage Sites are firmed up on the Tourist map of India].

# **Upa Lingas**

While describing The Upalingas at the beginning of *Koti Rudra Samhita*, Suta Muni explained the Upalinga which emerged from Someswara linga is Antakesh where Earth and Ocean converge. The Upalinga of Srisailam's Mallikarjuna is Rudreshwar and that of Ujjain's Mahakal is Dugdheswar. Kardameswar is the Upalinga of Omkareswar while Bhuteswar is that of Kedareswar. Upalingas of Bheemashankar, Nageshwar, Rameshwar and Bhumeswar respectively. There are other significant Sivalingas like Kirtikaveshwar, Tilmandeswar, Bhukteswar, Pureswar, Siddha Nateswar, Shringeswar,

Gopeswar, Rangeswar, Rameswar, Ganeswar, Sukreswar, Chandrasekhara, Kumtinatha and Andhakeswar. A few other Upalingas are mentioned herebelow:

#### **Atrishwar Linga:**

Sage Atri and Sati Anasuya performed atonement of rigorous nature in a forest named Kamda at Chitrakuta moutain when they decided to save people from the grip of a prolonged drought for some fifty years. They did not take a morsel of food during the period of penance. Once Atri felt almost fainted because of thirst and Anasuya went in search of water; Devi Ganga appeared and offered water from a spring dug up by Anasuya into a pit which was taken by Anasuya in a 'kamandalu' for storing water and rushed it to quench Atri's thirst. It was this pit from where water sprang up and became the origin of River Mandakini. But Devi Ganga demanded the full 'Punya' (Virtue) of Anasuya in return and the latter sacrificed gladly to save the suffering people. Lord Siva was impressed as Atri conducted a Maha Yaga and appeared in the form of Atriswar Linga recognising the sacrifices of the Atri-Anasuya Couple.

# Mahabaleswara Linga:

The Holy Place Gokarna (Ear of the Cow) in Karnataka State is believed to have been formed as Earth's ear was squeezed soon after her Creation by Maha Deva Siva. Ganesa tricked Ravanasura to place down on Earth the 'Atmalinga' of Mahadeva which was secured by the latter after severe penance to the Lord. Once fixed on the Earth, it became impossible for Ravana to pull it out and in the process of pulling it forcefully by breaking it, three parts fell down and got scattered *mainly* at Gokarna and also Murudeswar, Dhareswar and Gunavanthe where too the Temples are venerated. Mahabal Linga's presence of a devotee at Gokarna, especially on the eighth or fourteenth day of 'Arudra Nakshatra' falling on a Monday destroys all sins and opens Gates of Kailasa after one's demise. It is believed that worship of Mahabal Siva on 'Magha Krishna Chaturdasi' is highly fruitful and devotees in large crowds are attracted to the Temple on this particular day. Obeisance by Puja and 'Abhisheka' by milk and Bilwa leaves at the Temple on that day is said to be a sure step towards Salvation.

# **Batuknath Linga:**

A Brahmana named Dadhichi was a relentless worshipper of Lord Siva everyday unfailingly but had to entrust the worship to one of his sons Sudarshan for some time. Sudarshan too was performing the 'Pujas' dutifully. On a 'Sivarathri' which is the most sacred night for Bhagavan too, along with his entire family kept fast and performed the Pujas. But he did the sinful union with his wife that night and even without observing physical cleanliness continued the worship on that most Sacred night. Lord Siva was furious and there were frequent hurdles in the Pujas all through the Sivaratri. Sudarshan's father realised this most unfortunate happening. Sudarshan performed the most rigourous penance possible for years and Devi Parvathi asked the Lord to pardon, absolve the sin and liberate Sudarshan. Pleased by his sincere self-punishment, the Lord manifested Himself in Batu linga and directed the devotee to worship it. [It is no doubt unconfirmed but came to light that Batuknath Temple and linga of 1.2 meters height was worshipped at Tahab Village, district Pulwama some 32 km of Srinagar, Kashmir, nearby a 40 feet square spring called Vatuksar Nag, along with a Jagnnath Bhirav Temple nearby-now under Muslim domination]. Unfortunately, it was gathered that the high linga which was worshipped in the years of

yore, was pulled out and used by Muslim women of the villages around to pound grains to split from the husk!

#### Haatkeswar Linga:

This Linga is a manifestation of Purusha-Prakriti combine. A group of Sages were observing worship to a Sivalinga very religiously at a Siva Temple in Daruka forest and a few of them including their wives visited the forest interior to locate firewood, darbha, flowers, fruits and such othe Puja material when they encountered a hefty person who was completely naked. When they questioned about his whereabouts, he did not reply. The Sages cursed the person that his phallus would fall on the ground. There was an earth quake and rumbling storm broken with loud thunders and lightning as this incident happened and such oppressive heat was produced like an inferno. The Sages ran to Lord Brahma out of fright and guilt and the latter confirmed that the Personality who gave the curse was Bhagavan Himself and no power in the Three Worlds could save them as also the very existence of the Universe was threatened. The only possible way out could be to meditate Devi Parvati and for sure she might ease the situation .The Sages prayed to Devi Parvati who manifested as a female part on the spot and the Haatkeswar Linga as well. Eversince then worship of Phallus as a manifestation of Bhagavan Siva came into vogue.

At Naimisharanya (Uttar Pradesh) near Lucknow, there is a **Rishiswar Linga**, which is worshipped by Rishis; those who were alleged murderers or who actaully committed murder but regretted having committed would be free from their troubles.

At Mishra Tirtha, there is a **Dadhikeswar Linga**, which was worshipped by Sage Dadhichi. At Devaprayaga on way to Kedareswar, **Lalitheswar Linga** is worshipped by devotees in the transit on either way up or down.

In Nayapalpuri [Khatmandu, Nepal] the very famous **Pasupathinath Linga** attracts lakhs of devotees which has the distinction of being called a 'Linga Sirsha' and the Temple doors are four-sided thus enabling four separate queues of devotees simultaneously manned by four priests. Not far from Pasupathinath Temple is **Muktinath Linga** which is worshipped for mental peace and happiness.

The formation of **Harishwar Linga** was a consequence of Lord Vishnu's worship to Bhagavan Siva by thousand lotus flowers each of these by chanting the 'Siva Sahasranamas' or Thousand Names of Siva.

During the Worship Siva was desirous of Vishnu's concentration and stole one of the lotus flowers and there was a shortage of one flower in the count. Unnerved by the lapse, Lord Vishnu gave away one of His eyes in sacrifice and completed the worship. Bhagavan Siva was thrilled and fully satisfied; He asked Vishnu for a boon and as desired, Lord Siva gifted a very powerful **Sudarsana Chakra** which is put to great use often as a last resort to annihilate powerful Demons. Besides the Chakra, Bhagavan Siva was pleased to materialize Himself as Harishwar Linga for the benefit of generations to come.

'Siva Sahasranamas' (Thousand Names of Siva)

OM Siva (The auspicious) (2) Hara (The Destroyer) (3) Mrida (Giver of Happiness) (4) Rudra (Trouble Shooter, Evil Demolisher) (5) Pushkar (Provider of Good Health), (6) Pushpalochana (Lotus-Eyed) (7) Arthagamya (Target / Fulfiller of Desires) (8) Sadachar (Sustainer of Virtue), (9) Sharva (Terminator of Humanity) (10) Shambhu (Giver of Goodness) (11) Maheswar (The Supreme) (12) Chandrapida (Head worn by Moon) (13) Chandramouli (Moon Ornamented) (13) Viswam (Universe in Totality) (14) Viswam-Bhareswar (Full Occupier of Universe) (15) Vedanta Sarva Sandoha (Essence of Vedas and Sciptures) (16) Kapali (Wearer of Skulls) (17) Nilalohita (Blue and Red Haired) (18) Dhyanadhar (Rooted in Meditation) (19) Aparicchhinna (Indestructible) (20) Gauri bharta (Husband of Gauri) (21) Ganeswara (Chief of 'Pramathaganas') (22) Ashta- murthi (Lord of Eight Representations of Universe like Sky, Air, Fire and so on) (23) Vishwamurthi (Manifestation of the entire Universe) (24) Trivarga Swarga Sadhanah (Facilitator of Dharma, Artha and Moksha or Virtue-Wealth-Salvation combine) (25) Jnana Gamya (Final Destination of Vedic Knowledge) (26) Dhritha Prajna (Strong Willed) (27) Deva Devaha (The Supreme God of Gods) (28) Trilochana (The Three Eyed or of Three Gunas (qualities), Trilokas, Tri Vedas, Triaksharas of Bimba- Akara, Vukara, Makara and Om) (29) Vamadeva (Suppressor of Evil minds and handsome personality)(30) Mahadeva (Super God) (31) Patu (Remover of Sorrows of Devotees) (32) Parivridh (Lord of the Universe) (33) Vridha (Advanced) (33) Viswarup (Universal Figure) (34) Virupaksha (Vicious-Eyed to the Evil) (35) Vaaneesh (Master of Veda Vani / Sarasvathi) (36) Suchi Sattama (Uncontaminated by Three Gunas and hence Spotless) (37) Sarvapramana Samvaadi (Guarantor of Vedas and Holy Scriptures) (38) Vrishanka (Bearer of Bull's Sign denoting War against Evil) (39) Vrishvahan (He whose Carrier as Nandi Bull) (40) Esha (Master of the Whole Universe) (41) Pinaki (He who carries Pinaki named bow/arrow) (42) Khatvanga (User of a self-limb as a weapon) (43) Chitra vesha (Dressed as per needs of occasions) (44) Chirantana (Oldest unaffected by time and changes) (45) Tamohara (Demolisher of Darkness / Ignorance) (46) Mahayogi (Most versatile in Ashtanga Yoga or all kinds of yogas) (47) Gopta (Protector by means of various illuminations) (48)Brahma (Omni Creater and Omni featured) (49) Dhurjati (Wearer of Ganga by His matted Hairs) (50) Kalakala (He keeps a track of 'Mrityu and 'Yama' or Death and Devastation) (51) Krittivasa ( Wearer of Tiger Skin) (52) Shubhaga (Most attractive and prosperous)(53) Pranavatmaka (Surfeit with the Soul of Omkara)(54) Unnadhra (Controller of human beings) (55) Purusha (Supreme Being Present all over and all times) (56) Jushya (The Most deserved by Three Means of Speech, Thought and Action) (57) Durvasa (Dressed in coarse yarn clothing or as a Sage of same name) (58) Purashasana (Destroyer of Demon Tripura) (59) Divyaudha (Possessor of most potent weapons) (60) Skandaguru (Father and Teacher of Kartikeya) (61) Parameshthi (The Ultimate) (62) Paratpara (The Supreme), Unknown and Timeless) (63) Anadi Madhya Nidhana (He who has no origin, middle or end)(64) Girisha (Lord of Mountains) (65) Girijadhava (Parvathi's husband) (66) Kuberabandhu (Relative of Yakshadhi pati-Kubera) (67) Srikantha (Possessor of Vedas in His Throat) (68) Loka- varnottama (The Greatest among Brahmaloka and other lokas) (69) Mridu (Soft natured to devotees) (70) Samadhivedya (Who has the knowledge of Samadhi in Yoga) (71) Dhanurdhari (Carrier of Bow and arrows) (72) Nilakantha (Blue Throated retaining Poisonous Flames) (73) Parasyadhi (Promoter of virtue among devotees to inculcate of happiness to others) (74) Visalaksha (The Broad Eyed) (75) Mrigavyaghra (Who is ready to assume tiger form to save deer) (76) Suresha (Supreme Lord of Devas) (77) Suryatapana (Provider of the Heat of Sun to the Wicked or Provider of Heat to the Sun God Himself) (78) Dharmadhyaksha (Chief Preserver of Virtue) (79) Kshama Kshetra (Origin of Tolerance) (80) Bhagavan (Possessor/Yielder of Six kinds of Wealth; viz. Dhana or Money, Dhanya or Granary, Dhairya or Courage, Santana or Progeny, Jaya or Victory and Vidya or Knowledge ) (81) Bhaganetrabhida (Remover of eyes of Bhaga at Daksha Prajapati's Yagna (82) Ugra (Ferocious) (83) Pasupati (Chief of Beings) (84) Tarksha (Siva in Kasyap's form) (85) Priya Bhakta (Beloved of Devotees) (86) Parandapa (Generator of High heat) (87) Daata (Giver of Boons) (88) Dayakara (Merciful) (89) Daksha (Highly Capable) (90) Kapardi (Provider of Gyan) (91) Kamashasan (Controller of Love and Destroyer of Kamadeva) (92) Smashananilaya (Resides of Burial Ground) (93) Sukshmah (infinitesimal) (94) Smashanastha (A resider of Graveyard) (95) Maheswara (Foremost Commander of Universe) (96) Loka Kartha (Creator of the Universe) (97) Mrigapathi (Protector of Animals) (98) Mahakartha (Creator of Five Elements) (99) Poshak (Sustainer)

(100) Visyaasakartha (Granter of Confidence) (101) Mahoushadhi (Huge Source of Medicines for Physical Well-being or Smasher of Worldly Bondages) (101) Somapaha (Giver of Soma or Nectar to Devas) (102) Amritaha (Self-sprung Nectar for immortality) (102) Soumyaha (Serene looking to devotees) (103) Mahateja (Unparalleled Radiance) (104) Mahadyutih (Great Illumination) (105) Tejomava (All Pervading Light) (106) Amritamava (Replete with Nectar) (107) Annamava (Food is God; 'Anna' is Brahma) (108) Sudhapati (Chief Protector of Nectar) (109) Uttara (Paramatma descends to uplift humanity) (110) Gopati (Master of Earth, Heaven, Humanity, Goddess of Learning Sarasvathi, Illumination and Water) (111) Gopta (Chief Administrator of All Species) (112) Jnana Gamya (Final Goal of Vedic Knowledge) (113) Pracheen (Siva is Unaffected by Time and hence Ageless) (114) Niti ( Dispenser of Morals to those who need) (115) Suniti (Clean Hearted) (116) Soma (Source of Medicines as He made available to Moon) (117) Soma rathah (Happy to enjoy and give Soma rasa) (118) Sukhi ( Happy by Himself and makes others Happy too) (119) Ajatashatru (He has no Challenger) (120) Alok ( Self Illuminated and Illuminating) (121) Sambhavya (Esteemed by all-Devas or Danavas) (122) Havyavahan (Reaches Havi or Oblations to Devas in the form of Fire or Agni) (123) Lokakara (Creator of the Worlds) (124) Vedakara (Populariser of Vedas like Rig, Yaju and Sama Vedas) (125) Sutrakara (Creator of Maharshis like Veda Vyasa who scripted Principles or Sutras) (126) Sanatanah (Ageless and Permanent) (127) Maharshi Kapilacharya (Siva in the form of Kapilacharya who was the Exponent of Sankhya Shastra (128) Viswadipti (The Luminosity of the Whole Universe) (129) Trilochanah (The Three Eyed or the Spring of Three Gunas of Satva, Rajas and Tamas) (130) Pinakidharanka (The Holder of Pinaki Bow) (131) Bhudeva (The Supreme in the form of readily cognizable Earth (132) Swastidah (Provider of Righteousness and Contentment) (133) Sudhih (Bestower of Supreme Enlightentment) (134) Dhatrudhama (Possessor of Superior Energy) (135) Dhamakarah (The Cause of Son's Exraordinary Brightness and Heat) (136) Sarvah (The All-Pervading) (137) Sarva Gocharah (The All-Perceiver) (138) Brahma srikah (Generator of Brahma and Vedas) (139) Viswasrikah (The Builder of the Worlds) (140) Sargah (Reflection of Self-Creation) (141) Kavih (Self-scripted or Self-Composer (142) Priyah (The Loved One) (143) Shakha (In the appearance of Rishi named Shakha) (144) Vishaka (In the Form of Kartikeya) (145) Gosakha (The Materialization of the Various Branches of Vedas) (146) Siva (The Foundation of the Entire Cosmos) (147) Bhishak (He in the Form of Dhavantari or Physician providing well being to all) (148) Anuttama (Incomparably righteous) (149) Gangaplavodak (The eternal flow of Great Ganges is poor in comparison to Him) (150) Jana tarakah (Uplifter of humanity) (151) Bhavya (Fully Propitious) (152) Pushkala (Abundant (153) Sthapti (Architect of all the Worlds) (154) Sthira (Stable and Steady) (155) Vijitatma (A Triumphant Super Soul) (156) Vishyatma (A Marvelous Soul of the Universal Happenings) (157) Vidheyatma (Excellent Soul of Submissive Worlds) (158) Bhuta Vahana Sarathy (The Driving Force to Brahma the Controller of Humanity) (159) Saganaah (He who has Pramatha Ganas always) (160) Ganakaya (Indestructible along with Pramathaganas) (161) Sakirthi (Highly Reputed) (162) Chhinnasamsayah (He whose doubts are destroyed) (163) Kamadeva (The Lord of Desires like 'Dharmarthas') (164) Kamapalah (Bestower of Fulfillments)(165) Bhasmoddhuulitha Vigrah (Of Ash laden Physique) (166) Bhasmapriyo (An Enthusiastic of Ash) (167) Bhasma saayi (Fond of lying in ash) (168) Kami (Endower of Desires)(169) Kantha (Highly Attractive)(170) Kritagama (Executor of Agamas /Vedas)(171) Samavartha (Executor of Life Cycles) (172) Anirvyuktatma (All encompassed Soul)(173) Dharma Punjah (Consummated Virtue) (174) Sadasiva (Always Propitious) (175) Akalmashah (Never Tarnished) (176) Chaturbahu (Four Armed) (177) Durayasah (Who Cannnot be kept in mind for long (178) Durasadhaha (Attainable with rigorous Tapasya or Commitment) (179) Durlabha (Achieve only with highest devotion) (180) Durgama (Reach Him only with enormous difficulty) (181) Durga (Realise with Enduring Trauma) (182) Sarva ayudha Visarada (Versatile in the art of weaponry like Sastra or physically applied and 'Astra' or Mantra Enabled ones) (183) Adhyatmika Yoga Nilayah (Expert in Yoga Practice to destroy miseries of body and mind) (184) Suthanthu (He who keeps with Him the wide World) (185) Thanthu Vardhanah (He who broadens the world) (186) Subhangah (Possessor and Provider of Propitious Body Parts) (187) Loka Saranga(Assimilator of the essence of Lokas or the Pranava/Omkara )(188) Jagadish (Controller of the 'Jagat'or the Lokas (189) Janardrana (Demolisher of the sorrows of Humans) (190) Bhasma Suddhikara (He who cleans up with

Ash) (191) Meru (Who Stays at Meru Mountain) (192) Ojasvi (Full of Ojas or Vigour / Essential Energy) (193) Suddha Vigraha (Pure Physique) (194) Asaadhyah (Not easy to realise) (195) Sadhu Sadhyah (Possible of realisation only by the Virtuous) (196) Bhritya Markata Rupa Dhrit (He who assumes the Profile of Hanuman-the Monkey God) (197) Hiranya Retha (He who is like Agni or Fire-like heat and light) (198) Paurana (He who is worthy of Brahma's proposal in Puranas to extol) (199) Ripu Jeeva Harah (He who obliterates Enemies) (200) Balah (He who enjoys Supreme Strength) (201) Maha Hrida ( He whose heart is full of eternal happiness) (202) Mahagartah (The Lord of Great Illusions) (203) Siddha Vrindara Vanditah (Saluted by Siddhas and Devas at His Threshold) (204) Vyaghra Charmambarah ( Dressed by Tiger skin) (205) Vyali (Ornamented by poisonous snakes on His Body) (206) Maha Bhutah ('Virat Purusha'or Collosal Formation of imperishable nature) (207) Maha Nidhih (Mammoth Source of Wealth of all kinds)(208) Amrithasah (Eternal Enjoyer of Nectar) (209) Amrita Vapuh (Of Indestructible Physique) (210) Ajaroparah (Immortal) (211) Panchajanyah (Siva as Agni in Five Forms as manifested in Yajnas) (212) Prabhanjanah (Siva as 'Vayu' surrounded by Illusions among mortals) (213) Panchavimsati Tatvasthah (Siva as \*Twenty five Tatvas viz. Pancha Bhutas, Pancha Tanmatras, Pancha Karmendriyas, Pancha Jnanendrias and Pancha Anthakaranas) (214) Parijata (Siva as 'Kalpavriksha' or Fulfiller of desires of devotees) (215) Paratparah (Supreme Soul) (216) Sulabha (Easy to please with sincerity of devotion) (217) Suvratah (He who guides devotees to perform simple and easy Vrathas) (218) Surah (Champion) (219) Bramha Veda Nidhi (Siva as the Sourcer of Brahma Vedas) (220) Vaangmaika Nidhi ( Origin and Endower of Speech), (221) Varnashrama Guru (Master of Four Varnas of Brahmana, Vyasya, Kshatriya and Sudras as also Four Ashramas viz. Brahmacharya, Garhasthya, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa)(222) Varni (Siva as Brahmachari or Vidyarthi) (223) Shatrujit (Conquerer of Enemies) (224) Shatru tapanah (Tormentor of Enemies) (225) Ashramah (Provider of respite to those engaged in the worldly affairs)(226) Kshapanah (Mitigate the sins of devotees) (227) Kshama (Terminator at the End);

[\* Ref. 213 above: Mahabhuthas (Earth, Water, Fire, Ether and Sky); Tanmatras (Smell, Taste, Vision, Feel and Hear; Karmendrias (Mouth, Hand, Feet, Ears, Eyes, Excretionary); Jnanendrias (Rasana, Ghrana, Chakshu, Twak and Srotra); Anthahkaranas (Ahankara, Manas, Buddhi, Prakriti and Purusha).]

(228) Jnanavan( Full of Knowledge) (229) Achaleswar ( Chief of Stable beings like Earth and Mountains) (230) Pramanika Bhutah( Creator of Godly Evidences like Sun, Moon, Stars and Air) (231) Durjeyah ( He who knows any thing instantly) (232) Suparnah ( Like a Tree with branches as Vedas) (233) Vayu Vahanah ( He who makes airflow to move) (234) Dhanurdharah ( Possessor of Pinaki) (235) Dhanur Veda ( The Originator of the Science of Bow and Arrows) (236) Guna Rasih ( Totality of Gunas or Qualities like, Vidya, Kriya, Satya, Daya, Ahimsa, Shanti, Dama, Dhyeya, Dhyana, Dhriti, Medha, Niti, Kanthi, Drishti, Lajja, Pushti Prathishtha and so on) (237) Guna Kara ( He who applies various Gunas) (238) Satyah ( Embodiment of Truth) ( 239) Satya Parah ( Practioner of Truth) (240) Dinah ( Ordinary, non-complainng and always satisfied) (241) Dharmanga (Dharma's various Limbs like Feet as Vedas, Hands like Varaha Murthi, Brahma like Face, Agni like Tongue, Hairs like Kusha Grass, Eyes like Day and Night, Ornaments like Vedanth & Srithis, Soma like Blood, and so on.) (241) Dharma Sadhanah (Practice of Dharma) (242) Anantha Drishthi (His Vision is Infinite) (243) Ananda (Blissful)

(244) Dando Damayita (Punisher of the Punishers eg. Siva could reprimand Indra or Devas) (245) Damaha ( Controller of Devas, Beings, Tatvas - like Maha Bhutas, Indriyas, Tanmatras- and so on. (246) Abhivadyo Mahamayah (Saluted by Devas, Danavas and Mahamaya too) (247) Visvakarma (Greeted by Celestial Architect Visvakarma) (247) Visarada (Revered by Devi Sarasvathi) (248) Veeta ragah (Destroyer of Desire or Hatred (249) Vinitatma (Siva softens the personality of His devotees) (250) Tapasvi (Meditator par Excellence) (251) Bhuta Bhavanah ( He provides mental development of His Devotees) (252) Uttama Vesha Dhari Pracchannah ( Siva's best dress- nudity- is half closed) (253) ( Jita Kamah Kama Devah ( Siva overwhelms desires and Kama Deva / Manmadha) (254) Ajit Priyah ( Siva is

affectionate to Lord Vishnu) (255) Kalvana Prakrithi (Gracious featured) (256) Kalpa (Root cause of entire Creation) (257) Sarvaloka Prajapathi (Sovereign of All Lokas) (258) Tapasvi (He concentrates to fulfill the wishes of His devotees) (259) Taraka (His is the Ship to let the devotees cross the rough seas of 'Samsara') (260) Sriman (Surfeit with Benevolence) (261) Pradhana Prabhu (Chief Protector) (261) Alyapah (Destructionless) (262) Loka palah (Principal Administor of Lokas) (263) Antarhita atma (Hideout of His Real Self due to Illusion) (264) Kalpadih (The Very Beginning of Kalpas) (265) Kamalekshan (His Lotus Vision seeks Goddess Lakshmi always) (266) Veda Shastrastha Tattvajnayana (Best Comprehender of Tatva Jnana of Vedas and Shastras (267) Animaya (He is Knowledge by Himself and excels in imparting it to others) (268) Chandra (Siva as Moon sourcing pleasantness to one and all) (269) Surya (Siva as the origin of Surya provides untold falicities to all Creations of the Supreme Power) (270) Sani (Siva as Saturn controlling fortunes as per His directions) (271) Ketu (Siva as Dhuma Kethu as the latter fulfills His Instructions to humanity (272) Varanga (Having perfect shaped limbs) (273) Vidruma -chhavi (Siva as Mangal or Mars with the red colour of corals) (274) Bhakti Vasya (in the control of Devotees) (275) ParaBrahma (Siva as Lord Brahma the Creator) (276) Mriga banapurna (Siva searches His devotees like an arrow of His mind searches deers)(277) Anagha (Free from all kinds of sins) (278) Adri (In the form of a Mountain) (279) Adrivasa (Resident of Kailasa Mountain) (280) Kantha (Brahma as His Charioteer) (281) Paramatma (Super Soul) (282) Jagadguru (Universal Teacher for their own Good)(283) Sarva Karmalaya (Target God for daily devotional activities of common people)(284) Tushti (Highly self-contented) (285) Mangalya (Auspicious for His devotees) (286) Mangalakritah (Of auspicious nature) (287) Maha Tapah (He who performs the Greatest Meditation to Create the Mega Universe) (288) Deergha Tapah (He executes long time meditation for Sustenance of Universe) (289) Sthavishtha (He is Gross) (290) Sthavirah (He is Ancient) (291) Dhruvah (He is most Stable) (292) Ahaha (He embodies Great Radiance) (293) Samvatsarah (He is regular like rainy seasons of each year) (294) Pramanah (Siva's existence is self-evident) (295) Paramam (Supreme) (296) Tapah (Truthful meditation) (297) Krita Tapah (Executed action of Tapasya) (298) Samvatsara Karah (Siva the player of cyclical movement of years) (299) Mantra Atyayah (He who transcends Himself through recitals of Veda Mantras) (300) Sarva Darshan (He who reveals the whole world as real) (301) Sarveswarah (Eswara to all) (302) Siddhah (Present Constantly) (303) Maha Retha (Super Virile) (304) Mahabala (Super Strong) (305) Yogi Yogya (Ideally deserving Yoga practitioner) (306) Tejo (Sourcer of High Radiance) (307) Siddhi (Ultimate Achiever) (308) Sarvaadih (Origin of Everything)

(309) Agrahya (He never accepts the sinful) (310) Vasoh (He keeps All Existing beings within Self) (311) Vasumanah (His heart is unaffected by preferences of liking or hatred) (312) Satyah (Truth as in 'Satya jnanam anantham Brahma') (313) Sarva Papa Haroharah (Obliterator of all kinds of sins) (314) Sukirthi (Full of elegant reputation) (315) Sobhana (Enriched by various attractions) (316) Sragvih (Garlanded) (317) Vedangah (He constitutes the branches of Vedas) (317) Vedavinmunih (The Sage who is an adept in Vedas) (318) Bhrajishnu (The Radiant) (319) Bhojanam (Food or Consuming Maya)

(320) Bhokta (The One who enjoys the Food) (321) Lokanatha (The Lord of the Universe) (322) Dhurandarah (Connoisseur) (323) Amritah (Un-decaying) (324) Sasvatha (Everlasing) (325) Shantah (Tranquil) (326) Banahastah (Arrow handed) (327) Pratapavan (Audacious) (328) Kamandalu dhara (Kamandalu or a Holy vessel carried by Gods with Amrit or Elixir) (329) Dhanvi (Carrier of Dhanush or Bow-Arrow Set) (330) Avanmanasa Gocharah (Impossible to comprehend by Physical or mental faculties) (331) Atindriyah (Far beyond the reach of Physical or Mental features) (332) Maha Mayah (The Great Illusion) (333) Sarvavasa (Resident of any or every abode) (334) Chatushpathah (He who prompts to four paths to His Devotees) (335) Kala-yogi (Siva as Kala Yogi cautions devotees about the the end of their lives) (336) Mahanadah (His Great Sound) (337) Mahotsaha (His enormous Enthusiasm) (338) (Mahabala) (His mighty strength and bravery) (339) Maha Buddhi (The Store of Great of Intelligence) (340) Maha Virya (The Unique Producer of the Worlds) (341) Bhuta- chari (He whose company consists of Extra Territorial Beings like Goblins) (342) Purandarah (The Executioner of Tripurasura) (343) Nisachar (The Active Trekker in dead of nights) (344) Pretachari (Moves along with Groups of 'Pretas' or the Dead Bodies) (345) Maha Shaktih (He who has Immense Might) (346) Maha Duytih (He who has

unrivalled luminosity) (347) Anirdesya Vapuh (He possesses an outstanding Physique) (348) Sriman (He who has a glow of Prosperity) (349) Sarvacharya Manogatih (He guides Various Teachers in imparting Knowledge) (350) Bahu Shrutah (Origin of several Holy Scriptures) (351) Maha Maya (The Inventor of the Great Illusion) (352) Niyatatma Dhruvah (Most controlled and disciplined Soul) (353) Ajas Tejo Dyuti Dharah (He carries Life, Might, Light and such other fantasic features)(354) Nartakah (The Illustrious 'Nata Raja' who dances and makes others dance) (355)Nritya Priyo Nithya Nrityah (He revels in dance and dances always) (356) Prakashatma (Epitome of Brilliance) (357) Prakashakah (He who distributes illumination) (358)Spasht akasharah (Distinct Word like OM) (359) Buddhah (Basis of Intellect and its instructor) (360) Samanah (Balanced) (361) Sara Samplavah ('Sadhana' or Means with which to attain Essence of Life) (362) Yugadi krithyugavartha (Siva Himself rotates the Yugas) (363) Gambhiro (Serious and Complex due to knowledge and experience) (364) Vrisha Vahanah (Nandi Bull His carrier) (365) Ishtah (The Most sought after) (366) Visishtah

(The Most Distinguished) (366) Sreshtah (The Best who is worshipped by one and all) (367) Sulabha (He who is easy of achievement) (368) Sharmah (Avatar of Sharabha) (369) Dhanuh (The Bearer of Pinakini) (370) Tirtha rupah (He assumes the forms of Vidyas or Disciplines) (371) Thirtha nama (He has the various names of Holy places) (372) Thirtha drishya (Blesses or enables of viewing various Thirthas like 'Bhagirathi') (373) Stutah (Prayed by entire World from Brahama downward) (374) Arthavah

(Bestower of the Four Purusharthas viz. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha) (375)Apanidhi (He in the form of Oceans) (376) Adhishtana (He is the King pin or Adhara of the Srishti /Creation) (377) Vijaya ( Provider of Success in life by means of devotion, 'Jnana' and 'Vairagya') (378) Durjato Jayakalavit (He who knows the timings of Daityas losing battles and the winnings of Devas) (379) Pratishthithah ( His magnitude and might are well established) (380) Pramanajnah (He has the full awareness of Pramanas or Proofs, -both direct or subtle (381) Hiranya Kavachah (His shield is golden; Vedas describe Him as 'Namo Hiranya baahavey, Hiranya varnaya, Hiranya Rupaya' and so on) (382) Harih (He is the demolisher of all kinds of sins) (383) Vimochanah (He is the reliever of the three kinds of Tapatrayas or tribulations viz. of Adi bhautika, Adhyatmika and Adi Daivika nature) (384) Sura Ganah (He assumes the traits and strengths of all the Devas (385) Vidyeshah (He is the root of all 'Vidyas' and also the bestower of the deserved ones) (386) Bindu Samsrayah (Pranava or Omkara is His own manifestation) (387) Bala Swarupah (Rudra, a child born of Brahma's fore-head) (388) Balotmattah (From His Shakti or Power were annihilated the Evil from time to time) (389) Vatarupah (Siva in the form of Vata Tree) (390) Amalonmayi (Of Clean and Pure Form) (391) Vikartha (Creator of variegated designs and forms) (392)Gahanah (The Unknowable; none could comprehend the Lord's ways of thought or action) (393) Guhah (The Concealed; none could fathom the Maya created by the Lord)(394) Karanam (The Action) (395) Kaaranam (The Cause) and (396) Kartha (The Doer) (397) Sarvabandha Vimochanah (The Liberator of all hindrances) (398) Vyavasayah (Determined to be in Sat-Chit- Ananda Position) (399) Vyavasthanah (Sets up the 'Varnashrama' format) (400) Sthanadah (Decides individual positions and duties (401) Jagdadijah (He who exists at be very beginning of the Universe) (402) Guruda (The constant destroyer of Enemies) (403) Lalithah (The most attractive and soft personality) (404) Abhedah ( He cannot assume more than one Singular Identity)(405) Bhavatatmani Samsthitha (He exists as the Innermost Soul of the bodies made by Pancha Bhutas or Five Elements) (406) Vireswarah (The Lord of the Valiant) (407) Virabhadrah (As one of the Principal 'Ganas' or Army of Lord Siva) (408) Virasana Vidhih Guru (The Master of Valiant's Posture of Seating) (409) Vira Chudamani Sirobhusha (Head-Ornament of Heroic Warrior) (410) Vettha (He is Omniscient) (411) Chidanandah (Heartily Happy) (412) Nandiswarah (Nandivahan's Lord) (413) Ajnadhara Trisuli (He whose orders are obeyed by Trisula Weapon at once) (414)Tripivishthah (In Yajnas He manifests Himself as Lord Vishnu (415) Sivalayah (He resides at all Places that are propitious) (416) Valakhilyah (He presents Himself as Rishi Valakhilya) (417) Mahachaapah ( In the form of the Grand Bow gifted away to King Janaka by Siva) (418) Trigmanshu (Siva as Sun God) (419) Badhirah (Chooses to be hard of hearing sometimes) (420) Khagah (He who thinks of Skies) (421) Abhiramah (A resting place of Yogis) (422) Susharanah

(Provider of security and refuge (423) Subrahmanya (Ideal Explainer of Vedic knowledge and its interpreters) (424) Sudha Swami (Amrit's Chief Custodian) (425) Maghavan Kaushikah (Siva as Indra) (426)Goman (As the Chief of Cows and cowherds) (427) Avasan ('Adhar' or Support of Beings who are on death bed) (428) Sarva Sadhanak (He who makes any thing posible)(429) Lalatakshah (He who keeps His Third Eve on His Forehead) (430) Viswadehah (The entire Universe is His Body) (431) Sarah (Exists even in the most trying times or at the time of annihilation of the Universe) (432) Samsara Chakra bhrit (The Holder of the Cycle of Life) (433) Amogha Danda (Giver of irretrievable punishement) (434) Madhyasthaha (Neutral) (435) Hiranah (Epitome of Radiance) (436) Brahma Varchasvi (As the sheen of Brahma) (437) Paramarthah (He who grants Salvation) (438) Paromayi (He is the origin of Outstanding Maya) (439) Shambharah (Awards propitiousness) (440) Vyaghra Lochanah (Has the frightening look of a Tiger) (441)Ruchih (Brightness) (442) Virinchih (Siva in the form of Brahma) (443) Svandhyuh: Provider of boons to Devas (444) Vachaspathi (Bestower of all kinds of 'Vidyas' in the Form of Brahma) (445) Ishanah ( Granter of all branches of 'Vidyas"; Sritis declare Him as 'Isanah Sarva Vidyanam') (445) Ahirpathih (Siva in the form of Surya or Sun) (446) Ravih (Siva as the distributor of Nava Rasas on nine Emotions drawn from the Sun-viz. Karuna or Kindness, Bhayanak or Fright, Krodha or anger, Shringara or Attractiveness, Hasya or Comedy, Raudra or Fury, Vira or heroism, Bhibhatsa or disgust and Shanta or Peace) (447) Virochanah (Siva as Agni or Fire) (448) Shastha (He who orders or is the Maker of Rules) (449) Vaivaswa Munih (Siva in the form of Sage Vaivaswa) (450) Yamah (Yama the of Son of Sun and God of Death) (451) Yukthirunnathi Kirthih (Nyayamurthi, the Famed Ashtanga Yogi Siva) (452) Sanuragah (Affectionate to Devotees) (453) Paranjayah (Victorious of Enemies) (454) Kailasapathi (The Lord of Kailasa Mountain) (455) Kranthah (Most attractive) (456) Savitha (The Creator of all Beings) (457) Ravi Lochanah (He who takes over the Eyes of Sun; it is said: 'Agnir murtha Chakshusi Chandra Suryah') (458) Visvottham ( Of the most Virtuous of the Universe) (459) Veetha Bhayaha (Devoid of any Fright)(460) Anivaritha (Unstoppable; Or none could hold Him from one's own 'Karma phal' or Fate ((461) Nithya (Timeless irrespective of the Beginning or End of the Universe) (462) Niyat Kalyanah (Decidedly auspicious) (463) Punya Sravana Kirthanah (The listener of Worthy Hymns about Siva Doorasravah (Who could hear from any distance) (465) Visvasaha (Who could the bethe World's best tolerant) (466) Dhyeah (He who is the World's best target of dedication) (467) Dussapna Nashanah (Destroyer of bad dreams) (468) Uttaranah (Who could safely ship through the Ocean of 'Sansar' or Worldly life) (469) Dushkriti nasanah (The Terminator of Evil Deeds) (470) Vikshepyah (Could be viewed only through special Vision) (471) Dussah (Cannot tolerate the Evil Forces even regretfully) (472) Abhavah (He who is Birthless) (473) Anaadi (Who has no beginning) (474) Bhurbhuva Lakshmih (He who has the knowledge of Bhur Bhuva lokas and their Lakshmis) (474 A) Kiriti (He as Arjun wearing the formal Crown) (475) Tridasadhipa

(He as the Chieftain of Devas) (476) Viswagopta (Protector of the World) (477) Vishvakartha (The Creator of the World)(478) Suvirah (The Gallant) (479) Ruchirangadah (Gorgeously limbed) (480) Jananah (He who creates all the Beings) (481) Jana janmadih (The essential cause of Creation (482) Pritiman (The Affectionate) (483) Nitiman (The Ethical) (484) Dhruvah (The Top Most) (485) Vasishthah (The Sole Surviver at the time of 'Pralay' or The Great Devasation) (486) Kashyapah (Siva as in the Form of Sage Kashyap) (487) Bhanuh (The Dazzling) (488) Bhimah (Looks frightening to the Opponent) (489) Bhima Parakramah (As a Demolisher of 'Asuras' who were adepts for the Illusions created ) (500) Pranavah (Om kara Swarup) (501) Satdyatacharah (Observer of Truthfulness and Virtuosity) (502) Mahakoshah ( He who has control over the Five Koshas or sheaths / layers viz. Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manonmaya, Vijinanamaya and Ananda maya) (503) Mahadhanah (He has the greatest prosperity) (504) Janmadhipah(The Leader of Births) (505) Mahadevah (He who surpasses all Emotions or Feelings and the manifestation of Atma Gyan or the Knowledge of the Eternal Soul) (506) Sakalagama paragah (The outstanding Expert of all Vedas), (507) Tatvam (Tat or That-Am - you, Asi – are is the literal meanings; or Aham-I, Brahma-The Super Soul, Asmi-am; or Deep seated in Brahma's position ) (508) Tatvam Brahma (Siva is as Brahma) (509) Tatvavit (He who realises the Essence of Tatva) (510) Ekatma (The Supreme Soul is unique) (511) Vibhuh (All pervading) (512) Visva bhushan ( Ornament of the World) (513) Rishih (The Knower of the Unknown; 'Vishvadhipo Rudro Maharshih' is Veda) (514) Ishvarya Janma Mrityu Jarathigah (Siva owing to His opulence is far beyond birth, death and old age) (515) Pancha Yagna samutpatthih (Generator of Five kinds of Yagnas on daily basis viz. Deva Yagna or worship to family deity; Brahma Yagna or Practice of Vedas and other Sciptures; Pitri Yagnas to enhance family values; Bhuta Yagna or the spirit of caring and sharing with others including animals and birds; and Nara Yagna providing hospitality to colleagues, neighbours, friends or any body else) (516) Visvasah (Siva the superlative of the Universe) (517) Vimalodaya (The Maker of all movable and immovable objects) (518) Anadyantha (He has no beginning nor end) (519) Vatsalah (Affectionate to one and all) (520) Bhaktaloka dhrit (The bearer of the enirety of Devotees) (521) Gayatri Vallabha (The better half of Gayatri) (522) Pranshuh(Double- brightened by Sunrays) (523) Prabhakarah (Siva as the most prominent form of early morning Sun) (524) Sishu (Likened to an infant) (525) Giriratha (Who likes to stay on Kailasha Mount) (526) Samrat (Highest Emperor) (527) Sushenah (Ahuge army of 'Ganas') (528) Surashatru

(Deva's Enemy) (528) Amogha (Sinless) (529) Arishtanemi (Provides boons to the Virtuous) (530) Kumudah (Who lightens the burden of Earth by removing the undesirable) (531) Vigatajvarah (He who is devoid of various kinds of physical ailments) (532) Svayamjyotirstanurjyothih (Self illuminated subtle luminosity; 'Nivarasuka vartanvi Peetabhavatyanupama tasyaassikhaya madhye cha Paramatma vyavasthithah' says 'Mantra Pushpam') (533) Atmajyothih (The Ever radiant Soul) (534) Achalanchalah

(Steady and stable) (534) Pingalah (He wears the Tiger skin and hence of Reddish Yellow colour of Sun rays) (535) Kapilasmashruh (He has the moustache and beard of Pingal colour) (536) Phala netrah ( Third Eye on His forehead) (537) Thrayi thanuh (His body is full of Vedas), (538) Jnana Skandhah Maha Nidhih (Giver of a Storage of Jnana to His devotees to enable them to achieve Salvation) (539) Viswa pathih (The Lord of the Universe) (540) Upaplavah (The Tormentor of the Evil) (541)Bhago Vivasvan adityah (Siva in the three forms of Bhagah, Visasvah and Adityah) (542) Yogaparah (As a Great Guide to Yogis) (543) Yogadharah (The Fountain head of Yogas) (544) Divaspathi (The Chief of Heavens) (545) Kalyana Guna namah (He has the names of auspiciousness) (546) Papah (demolisher of the sins of devotees) (547) Punya Darshanah (The Vision of Virtue's personification) (548) Udara kirthih (Of esteemed personality) (549) Udyogi (Highly industrious in the context of Creating the Universe) (550) Sadyogi (always busy in providing the means of fulfillment) (551) Sada sanmayah (Always engaged in looking after the welfare of everybody) (552) Nakshatra- mali (In the form of Sky adorable with strings of Stars) (553) Nakeshah (Head of the Skies) (554) Lokeshah (Master of the Worlds) (555) Swadhishtana Shadasrayah (Siva who is at the Seat of Vital Force) (556) Pavithrah (The Personification of Purity (557) Papaanashascha (The Annihilator of Sins) (558) Manipurah (Fulfiller of desires including gains of riches including jewellery) (559) Nabhogatih (Freely moves around the Skies)(560) Hrithpundarikamaseenah (Comfortably Seated on the lotus like hearts of Yogis) (561) Shakrah (In the Form of Lord Indra) (562) Shanthah (Blissfully Peaceful) (563) Vrishakapih (The root cause of sustaining Virtue) (564) Ushnah (Scorching due to swallowing poison the most sizzling 'Halahal'into His Throat (565) Grahapati (The

Administer of Nava Grahas (The Nine Planets) (566) Krishnah (His blue throat is visible to Krishna) (567) Samarth (Capable of doing anything) (568) Anartha Nashanah (wipe out any complexity) (569) Adharma Shatru (The Opponent of Vice) (570) Ajneya (Unknowable and Unreachable) (571) Puruhutah Purushthithah (Commended and devoted by multitude of devotees) (572) Brahma Garbhah (Retainer of Vedas in His Belly) (573) Brihad Garbhah (He holds the entire Brahmanda in His abdomen) (574) Dharma Dhenuh (He is likened to the Sacred Cow Dharma Devatha) (575) Dhana -gamah (Who ushers in Opulence) (576) Jagadishtuh (Well Wisher of the whole World) (577) Sugatah (Immersed in noble thoughts and actions) (578) Kumarah (Siva in the shape of Lord Senapathi) (579) Kushkagam (Provider of Happiness and Satisfaction)

(580) Hiranya Varnah (Of Golden Colour) (581) Nana bhuta ratha (He takes fancy to Bhutas and Piscachas) (582) Dhwanih (Assumes the form of Dwani or Sound (583) Araagah (without any Sound

bytes or desires) (584) Nayanadhyakshah (The Presider of Eyes and Eyesight) (585) Viswamithah (In the Profile of Viswamitra the Great Sage) (586) Atmabhuh (Self illumitaed) (587) Aniruddhah (Uncontrollable) (588) Atrih (Siva in the form of Sage Atri ) (589) Jinana murthi (Vedic knowledge personified) (590) Maha Yashah (His fame is Boundless) (591) Loka Veeragrani (The Head of the Valiant) (592) Chanda (Very angry with the Evil Minded) (593) Sathya Parakrama (Truthfully Valiant) (594) Vyala Kalpa (Siva in the company of poisonous Snakes) (594) Maha Kalpa (He is Extraordinarily Capable) (595) Kalpa Vriksha (Siva as the Tree of Kalpavriksha granting desires) (596) Kaladhara (He keeps Moon as His head ornament) (597) Alankrishnah (Ornamented and illuminated) (598) Achalah (Firm and Stable) (599) Rochishnu (Brightness incarnate) (600) Vikramonnathah (Bravery of the Highest order) (601) Ayuh (Regulator of Age) (602) Shabdapathi (The Ruler of Vedas) (603) Vagmi plavanah

(Instant grantor of desires) (604) Sikhi saarathih (Facilitator of the tasks of Agni or Fire) (605) Asaprashtah (Confused by various illusions) (606) Athidhih (Guest) (607) Shatru pramathi (Expert in devastating adversaries) (608) Padapasanah (Settled near a tree comfortably) (609) Brihadasvaha (He is in custody of huge Horses) (610) Nabhi yonih (He as the Sky is the cause of causes) (611) Suprateek (He with attractive limbs and features) (612) Tamishrah (He saves devotees from dark ignorance) (613) Nidagasthapanah (He is the saver of Sun and heat) (614) Megha Svakshah (The Viewer of beautiful rainbows and the clouds) (615) Para Puranjayah (The Victor of Enemy holds) (616) Sukhaanilah (The Provider of Cool air comfort) (617) Sunishpannah (The Creator of this charming World) (618) Surabhit ( The endower of great happiness) (619) Sishiratmakah (In the Sishira Rithu or the cool Season between Winter and Summer) (620) Vasantho Madhavah (Spring Season) (621) Greeshmah (The Hot Season of Juices and Scorching Summer) (622) Nabhasyo (Sharat Ritu of Rains) (623) Bija Vahanah (Sharat or Autumn) (624) Hemantha (Winter) (625) Angirah (Siva as Angira Rishi) (626) Gururathreya (As Dattathreya) (627) Vimalah (Figure of Purity) (628) Visva Vahanah (He as the carrier of the burden of the whole World) (629) Pavanah (Singularly Clean) (630) Sumati (Fair minded) (631) Vidwan(An Intellectual par excellence in the know of every thing) (632) TriVidyah (The Source of Three Vedas-RigYajur Sama Vedas) (633) Narayahanah (Siya as Yaksharaja Kubera) (634) Manobuddhih (The epithet of Mind and Mental Power) (635) Ahamkarah (He takes on the form of Ahamkara Tatva or a feature of Self-esteem) (636) Kshetrajna (He keeps the knowledge of the place where Linga Rupas or Raw Forms of the various Beings exist) (637) Kshetra Palak (He who is the Chief of the Kshetra) (638) Jamadagnih (Siva as Rishi Jamagani) (639)(Bala nidhih) He is the Storage Point of Energy) (640) Bingalah (He assumes the appearance of 'Amrith' or Ambrosia (641) Viswa Gabalah (Siva as Sage Viswa Galabha) (642) Viswa Galesa (Siva as Rishi Galesa) (643) Adhirah Abhyankarah (He is brave but protects the needy) (644) Anuttarah (None is greater than Him)(645) Yagnah (As the Fire Sacrifices like Jyotish stoma) (646) Shreyah (Embodiment of Propitiousness) (647) Nisseya- sampathah (All routes leading to auspiciousness) (648) Shilah (River emerging from boulders) (649) Gagan kundabhah (Bright as the flower Gagan kunda) (650) Danavarih (The Arch-rival of Danavas) (651) Arindamah (Slayer of the foes of Devotees) (652) Rajani Janakah (The Creator of Kalaratri Shakti named Rajani) (653) Charu Vishalyah (He has the minute understanding of Inner Beauty) (654) Loka Kalpa Dhrik (He is the preserver of the health and wealth of the Lokas) (655) Loka Shalya Dhrik (Saviour of the decadance of Lokas)(656) Chaturdah (The Originator of the Four Vedas (657) Chaturbhavah (Siva the Expression of the Four 'Bhavas' viz. Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha) (658) Chathurah (Highly Intelligent) (659) Chatura priyah (He who enquires endearingly about the welfare of others with grace) (660) Amnayaha (Veda Swarupa) (661) Samamnayah (He swears by Vedas) (662) Thirtha Deva (The Supreme Deity of 'Thirthas' or the Holy Places) (663) Sivalaya (In the Temple of Siva along with other Deities) (664) Bahurupa (Siva with several names and forms) (665) Sarvarupah (Siva in all forms) (666) Characharah ( Mobile or immobile beings in the Creation) (667) Nyayah (The Essence of Justice) (668) Nirmayakah (The Upholder of Virtue) (669) Nyayi (The Vindicator of Justice) (670) Yoga Gamya Nirantharah ( Always Targetted on Yoga) (671) Sahasra murthah (Of Innumerable Heads) (672) Devendrah (The Leader of Devas) (673) Sarva Shastra Prabhanjanah (The Editor of Shastras in entirety) (674) Mundi (Of

netted and folded hair) (675) Virupah (Of highly attractive countenance) (676) Vikranthah (The most energetic and strong)

(677) Dandi (The Holder of 'Kala Danda' deciding the fates of all) (678) Shantah (Composed and Calm controlling 'Indrivas' or Physical and mental faculties) (679) Gunottamah (The Highest Regulator of 'Gunas' or modes of material nature viz. Satvik or Goodness, Rajasik or Passion and Tamasic or Ignorance) (680) Pingalaksha (Red-Eyed) (681) Janadhyaksha (The Prime Force of humanity) (682) Nilagrivah (Blue Throated owing to retention of 'Halahal' poison in His Throat) (683) Niramaya (Picture of Excellent Health without any physical or mental ailments) (684) Sahasra baahu (Thousand Handed) (685) Sarvesah (The Ultimate Lord) (686) Sharanyah (The Final Refuge for Protection) (687) Sarva loka dhrik (The fulcrum of all Lokas) (688) Padmasana (Seated in Lotus like posture with crossed legs as the right feet on left thigh and left feet on right thigh) (689) Param Jyothi (Of the highest possible glitter) (690) Param par (Navigator through muddled waters of 'Sansar' or life full of Tapatrayas' (691) Paramam Phalam (Great Faciltator of attaining 'Moksha' or Salvation) (692) Padmagarbha (Preserver of Universe in His Lotus like belly) (693) Mahagarbha (Incorporator of the Totality into Himself) (694) Vichakshana ( Analyser and Guide of Vedas and Scriptures) (695) Varadah (Boon provider) (696) Paresaha (Unique in fulfilling wishes) (697) Maha Balah (Possessor of Super Strength) (698) Devasura mahaguruh (He is the Superior Guru or Guide to Devas and Asuras or Demons alike) (699) Devasura Namaskrithah ( He is venerated by Devas and Asuras) (700) Devasura Maha Mithrah (Siva is impartial to both Devas and Danavas and is a great friend of both)(701) Devasura Mahashraya (He is the refuge point of Devas and asuras too) (702) Devadidevah (He is the Lord of not only Devas but of Adi Devas like Brahma) (703) Devagnih (He provides radiance and heat to Agni or Fire) (704) Devagni Sukhadah Prabhu (He ensures the well being of Devas by means of oblations through Agni) (705) Devasureswarh (Both Gods and Demons are aware that Siva is their Chief) (706) Divyo (He is of the most celestial form) (707) Devatmatma Sambhavah (While the Soul of Devas is created by the Creator, the latter's soul is created by Siva Himself) (708) Sadyonih (He is the very origin of Srishti) (709) Asura Vyaghra (He is likened to a Tiger to Asuras) (710) Deva Simhah (He is like a Lion among the Devas) (711) Divakarah (Siva is like the Sun God Surya producing Days) (712) Vibhudhagravarah (Far Superior to Lord Brahma ) (713) Sreshthah (The Highest) (714) Sarva- Devothamothamah (While Devas are themselves are grand, Siva is far more Superior)

(715) Sivajnana ratha (He is totally absorbed in Awareness about Himself or Sivajnana) (716) Sriman (He is the Store House of Prosperity)(717) Sikhi (He as Karthikeya) (718) Sri Parvata Priyah (He is fond of Mountains) (719) Vajrahastaya (Siva in the shape of Indra who wields Vajrayudha in his hands) (720) Siddhi Khadgi (He who possesses the Sword into which are incorporated all kinds of Siddhis) (721) Narasimha nipatahanah

(As in the form of Salabha pulls down the incarnation of Narasimha) (722) Brahmachari (An expert in Vedas who keeps on reciting Vedas incessantly) (723) Lokachari (He who analyses the happenings of various Lokas) (724) Dharmachari (He is the performer of Virtuous deeds always) (725) Dhanadhipah (The Head of Wealth of varying kinds like Property, Liquidity and material possession) (726) Nandi (Siva in the shape of Nandi or Bull) (727) Nandiswarh (The Chief of Bulls) (728) Ananthah (The boundless verging on into nothingness) (729) Nagna Vrittha Dhrik (Neither He has a form nor wears anything) (730) Suchih (Fully Pure and flawless) (731) Lingadhakshah (Siva in the form of the Presiding Deity of Lingas) (732) Suradhakshaya (The Presiding Chief of Devas) (733) Yogadhakshah (The Presiding Deity of Yoga Practitioners) (734) Yogapaha (He who propounds the Theory and Practice of Yogas (735) Swadharmah (He who is absorbed in His own act of Srishti or Creation) (736) Swargataha (He resides in Swarga from where grants boons) (737) Swargi Swara (The Supreme Guide to the Creators or Rishis of Sapta Swaras (738) Swara Maya Swanah Karakah (The Originator of sonorous sounds of Swaras) (739) Banadhakshah (The Controller of Banasasura) (740) Bijakartha (The cause of germinating seeds) (741) Karma krith Dharma Sambhavah (He generates virtuous persons performing good deeds) (742) Dambhah (Siva examines the genuinness of devotees by various forms and acts) (743) Alobhah (He

has no Greed but broad vision) (744) Ardha Vicchumbh (He who commends those with knowledge of Vedas and Shastras) (745) Sarva bhuta Maheswarah (He is present in all beings as the Supreme Lord) (746) Smashana Nilayah (He resides in Burial Ground since these are the ultimate terminating points of relieved souls and deceased bodies) (747) Thryakshah (Trinetra Deva) (748) Sethuh (The bridge to cross the ocean of 'Samsara' or Life) (749) Apratimakrithih (The Form of Nothingness from Prakriti or Maya / Illusion) (750) Lokotthara sphutalokah (He could be visioned by mental eye sight alone) (751) Thryambakah (The Three Eyed or of Three Gunas viz. the modes of material nature) (752) Naga Bhushana (Ornamented by various Serpents like Sesh Nag) (753) Andhakarih (The destroyer of Andhakasura) (754) Makhadweshi (Siva the demolisher of Daksha Prajapati's Yagna) (755) Vishnu kandhara pathana (The slasher of Vishnu's head) (756) Hinadoshah (Devoid of impurities of mind) (757) Akshaya gunah (An Epitome of endless qualities of high merit) (758) Daksharih (The antagonist of Daksha) (759) Pusha danta bhit (The hacker of Demon Pusha Danti) (760) Purna Sampurna Kala Yukth (He who is comprehensive with sixty four 'Kalas' or Arts such as Shilpa Kala, Natya Kala and Sangeeta Kala) (761) Poorayitha (He helps fulfill desires) (762) Punya

(Merits arising out of different kinds of services to Gods, humanity, and other species) (763) Sukumarah ( Siva's Son Skanda) (764) Sulochana (Attractive Eyed) (765) Samageya Priya (The Lover of Sama Veda recital) (766) Akrura (The Merciful) (767) Punya Kirthi (Famous owing to Great Merit and Virtue) ( 768) Anaamaya (Free from all diseases) (769) Manojavah (Quick in solving problems of devotees) (770) Thirtha karah ( Producer of 'Pramanas' or Proofs of Shastras) ( 771) Jatilah ( The wearer of Jatajuta or netted hair) (772) Jeevitheswarah (Giver of Life to all) (773) Jeevithanta -karah (The Provider of Life and also its End) (774) Vasurethah (Of Gold coloured sperm) (775) Vasu pradah (The Benefactor of Gold and Jewellery) (776) Sadgatih (He provides Good behaviour and pathway) (777) Samskriti (He provides solutions to Life's tribulations) (778) Siddhis (He grants fruitful results to dedicated endeavours) (779) Sajjathi (He awards good births to those who are noble and devoted) (780) Kalakantak (He is the Tormentor of Tormenters viz. Lord Yama) (781) Kaladhari (He bestows expertise and fame of any or all of sixty four Kalas or Arts) (782) Maha Kal (Lord Siva is the Greatest Kal Devatha and is the Supreme Destroyer) (783) Bhuta Satya Parayana (He encourages or inspires Truthfulness among all human beings and is the final refuge to them) (784) Loka Lavanya Karthah (Charming builder of Lokas) (785) Lokottara (He maintains the happiness of the Universe at His command) (786) Chandra (He is as cool as gorgeous) (787) Sanjivanah (He has the innate power of keeping the Worlds ever lasting) (788) Sastha (Law maker and Punishes the Evil Forces) (789) Loka Goodhah (Hides enormous capacity inside the caves of His mind) (790) Mahadhipah (The Highest Level of Superiority over the World) (791) Loka Bandhuh (He treats all the Beings of the World as His own relatives) (792) Kritya (As the epitome of Srutis and Smrities or Vedas and Shastras, He guides humanity to distinguish the right and the wrong) (793) Lokanathah

(He is the unquestioned King of the various Lokas) (794) Kritamjanah (He is indeed cognizant of the wrongdoings and the Virtues of what each and every person does) (795) Kirthi Bhushanah (He is adorned by His reputation) (796) Anapayoksharah (He is imperishable and inexaustible) (797) Kanthah (He could even terminate Yama the God of Death) (798) Sarva Shastrah (He is the personification of all Shastras) (799) Shritanvarah (He is the Leader) (800) Tejomayah (He is fully resplendent) (801) Dyuthi dharanah (He possesses the capacity of holding and sustaining Extraordinary radiance) (802) Loka namagrani (He is The World's best)) (803) Anuhu (He is present in the tiniest atom) (804) Suchismithah (He has a charming and petty smile) (805) Prasannatma (He is the extraordinary Soul with the most tranquil poise) (806) Durjayoh (Invincible even by the most notorious Demons of the World) (807) Durathikramah (Unsurpassable) (808) Jyotirmayah (Full of Extraordinary Luminosity) (809) Jagannathah (The Unique Lord of Cosmos) (810) Nirakarah (He has neither shape nor form) (811) Jaleswarah

(He is the Commander of Water in various appearances like Lakes, Rivers or Oceans) (812) Thambu Veenah (The Greatest Expert of Music in playing Veena Instrument made of Thambu Fruit) (813) Mahakopah (The Angriest and the most ferocious while engaged in activities of destruction) (814) Loka

naasakarah ( He could wipe out Lokas instantly) (815) Trilokesah ( The Highest of the Three Worlds) (816) Trilokapah ( The Chief Administrator of the Three Lokas) (817) Sarvashuddhih ( The Purifier of all the Beings) (818) Adhodyakshah ( One could know Him from within or be learnt of Him by one's inner eye) (819) Avyakta lakshana Deva (His features are unknown) (820) Vyaktaavyaktah ( As a Being with a realisable figure He is no doubt definable but at the same time, since He has no Shape nor Form, He is not recognisable) (821) Viswam pathih ( The Absolute monarch of the Universe) (822) Varada Sheelah ( The Afforder of boons) (823) Vara Gunah ( Ornamented with Excellent Gunas or attributes) (824) Sarah

(The Essence of Virtues) (825) Maana dhana (He who considers high merit as wealth) (826) Mayah ( Embedded in happiness) (827) Brahma (Siva as the incarnation of Brahma) (828) Vishnu (As Vishnu the All Pervading and as the Preserver) (829) Haasah (As the Remover of Ignorance and Bright as Parabrahma) (830) Hamsa Gatih (The Liberator as the traverser of Hamsa or Swan guiding Yogis)(831) Vayah (As the free bird who flies on the Skies of Yoga) (832) Vedha (A famed name of Siva as Creator) (833) Vidhata (The Decider of Fate of each Being as per one's own Karma) (834) Dhatha (Who assumes infinite Forms) (835) Srishta (The Creator) (836) Hartha (The Devastator) (837) Chaturmukha (As the Four Headed Brahma) (838) Kailasa Sikhara Vasi (The Resident of the Kailasa Mountain Top) (839) Sarva vasi (He who resides as the 'Antaratma' or the Inner Soul of every Being) (840) Sadgatih (The Conductor of Noble Path) (841) Hiranya Garbhah (As Brahma who has the Golden Belly) (842) Druhinah ( As Brahma Swarup) (843) Bhutapalah ( The Governor of all 'Pranis' or Beings) (844) Bhupathih (The Master of Earth) (845) Sadyogi (The Planner of beneficent deeds) (856) Yoga Vid Yogi (The Learned Guide to Yogis) (857) Varada (The Endower of Windfalls) (858) Brahmana Privah (Affectionate to Brahmanas) (859) Deva Priya (Interested in the well being of Devas) (860) Devanatha (Chief of Deva ganas) (861) Devajna (Encourages Devas to acquire higher knowledge) (862) Deva Chintak (Always engrossed in the welfare of Devas as also to those who pray to Devas) (863) Vishamaaksha (His Third Eye full of Poisonous Fire) (864) Visalaksha (He who has broad and attractive Eyes) (865) Vrishadah (Siva as an Epitome of Dharma or Virtue) (866) Vrisha Vardhanah (Promoter of Dharma) (867) Nirmama (Selfless) (868) Nirahankara (Devoid of ego) (869) Nirmoha (Devoid of obsession) (870) Nirupadrava (Devoid of obstacles) (871) Darpaha Darpadah (He subdues the Arrogant) (872) Triptah (Totally contented) (873) Sarvatra Parivarthak

(He brings about change all over; He transforms Rithus or Seasons alternatively) (874) Sahasrarchi (He has countless rays of radiance) (875) Sahasrajit (Victorious after slaying thousands of enemies) (876) Bhuti bhushah (Blesses various Beings with boons) (877) Snigdha Prakriti Dakshinah (Very talented and soft- minded owing to natural amicability) (878) Bhuta Bhavya Bhavannadhah (The Discerner of the Past, Present and Future) (879) Prabhavah (The Creator) (880) Bhuti nashanath (He wipes out the wealth of Enemies) (881) Arthah (He encourages the Wealth earned by hard work) (882) Anarthah (He knocks down money earned by foul means) (883) Mahakoshah (The Mine of Wealth) (884) Para karya pundithah (Being self-less He fulfills the objectives of others or His devotees) (885) Nishkantakah (He is devoid of hurdles generated by 'Arishdvargas' viz. Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, Matsara) (886) Kritha Anandaha (He has uninterrupted happiness) (887) Nirvyajah (He is totally free from deceit) (888) Vyaja Mardanah (Punisher of dishonesty) (889) Satvavan (Brave and valiant Hero) (890) Satvikah (Essentially of Satva Guna) (891) Satya Kirthih (He has truthful glory) (892) Sneha Krithagamah (Being friendly and affectionate, He exhorts the Essence of Sciptures to devotees) (893) Akampith (unnerved and unmoved) (894) Gunagrahi (He gracefully accepts even small offerings from devotees) (895) Naikatma

(He is Multi Souled) (896) Naika karma krith (performs multiple actions) (897) Supreetha (He is full of Great Happiness) (898) Sookshmah (Of Tiny Form; but capable of expanding endlessly; 'Sarva gathah Sookshmam') (899) Su karah (His hands ready to bestow wishes) (900) Dakshinagatih (He is delighted to appear in the form of cool breeze from the Southern side) (901) Nandi skandha dharaha (Seated comfortably on the shoulders of Nandi Deva) (902) Dhuryah (He holds innumerable Beings of Creation) (903) Prakatah (He is visible and felt in various Forms of Sun, Moon, Fire and Wind) (904) Preethi Vardhanah (He enriches the love of devotees both ways) (905) Aparajithah (Invincible) (906) Sarva

Sattavah (Creates the entire humanity) (907) Govindah (He is revealed by Vedas and Scriptures) (908) Sattva Vahanah (He enables forward movement from Virtue to Salvation) (909) Adhritah (None else could hold excepting Him) ((910) Swadritha (The devotees feel confident of being supported by the Lord) (911) Siddhah (He is the archetype or Role Model of all Siddhas like Anima (Shrinking form), Mahima (Limitless forms), Garima (heavy form), Laghima (Tight form), Prapti

(Fulfillment of desires), Prakasyam (of Irressistible Will), Isithvam (Supremacy), and Vasityam (Gain control) (912) Putha Murthi (Of Pure Figure) (913) Yasho dhanah

(Wealth of Great Reputation) (914) Varaha Shringa Dhrikchhrungi (Siva as the incarnate of Vishnu who assumed the form of Varaha the mighty Boar with a powerful horn and rescued the sinking Earth and Vedas) (915) Balavan (He is the mightiest Super Power) (916) Eka Nayakah (Singular and Ultimate) (917) Shruti Prakashah (He could be revealed by Vedas only) (918) Shrutiman (He is in the possession of Vedas always) (919) Eka Bandhu (He is the Singular Relative to all) (920) Aneka Krithih (He is a Single Entity but creates a multitude; Bahusyam Prajayethi Thadatmanam Swayam kuruth) (921) Sri Vatsalah Sivarambhah (Siva is the intiator of propitiousness to Vishnu and Lashmi) (922) Shanta Bhadrah (The Guarantor of Security to His devotees engaged in peaceful activities) (923) Samoyashah (Imparts impartial access to Fame with Prosperity) (924) Bhushaya (He rests on Earth) (925) Bhushanah (He provides wealth to all the deserving) (926) Bhutih (Siva is the Well-Wisher to one and all) (927) Bhoota Krit (He is the Generator of All) (929) Bhootavahanah (He faciltitates the movement of all Beings) (930) Bhakti Kayakah (He absorbs all kinds of Worship) (931) Akampith (He is unperturbed by material attractions and stable) (932) Kalah (Maha Kal who spares none for destruction) (933) Nilalohithah ( Ratainer of poisonous flames in His throat turned blue) (934) Satyavratha (Unique Practitioner of Truthfulness) (935) Maha Tyagi (The Greatest Renunciator) (936) Nitya Shanti Parayana (The Eternal Observer of Peace) (937) Parartha Bhritir Varada (He blessess those who are interested in Parartha or Other Worldliness) (938) Visarada (The Expert in various Disciplines of Learning) (939) Subhadah ( Grants auspiciousness) (939) Subha nama Subhadah Swayam (As one of His names is 'Subha', He awards propitiousness) (940) Anarthika (He grants wishes without asking for them) (941) Agunah (He has no 'Gunas' or features Himself) (942) Saakshi Akartha (He is the Evidence of Creation executed by Maya or Illusion) (943) Kanaka Prabhuh (Like Gold He is self illuminated) (944) Swabhava Bhadrah ( Whatever is desired in the minds of devotees is granted instantly by Him) (945) Seeghrah ( Swift Dispenser of the wishes of devotees) (946) Seeghra nashanah (Rapid reliever of the difficulties of Bhaktas) (947) Jata and Mundi (Siva as unique with Jatajuta or thick and twisted hair on His Head; Mundi or Shaven Head (948) Kundalini (He has Snake like Ear rings) (949) Sikhandi as the name of Siva, Kavachi or Body Shielded and Shuli or speared) (950) Amrithyah (He has no demise as He has no Beginning or End) (951) Sarva Dushta Simhah (Exterminator of all the Wicked) (952) Tejo Rasi (Fund of Light) (953) Maha Mani (The Best of Jewels like Kaustubh) (954) Asamkhyeh (He has countless Forms) (955) Aprameyatma (An indestructible Super Soul) (956) Viravan Virya Kovidah (A Master of Bravery and Might) (957) Maheshvasah (The Holder of the World-Reputed Bow and arrows) (958) Vedyah (It is He whom Yogis seek to learn all about) (959) Viyogatma (He has a distinct yet unknowable Outline) (960) Paaravaar Muniswarah (He is the Supreme Sage whom Humanity and Devas yearn to know all about) (961) Anuttama ('Parama Sreshtha Prameswara') (962) Dhuradarshah (He has such piercing vision that is impossible even to glance) (963) Madhura Priya Darshanah (Of unimaginably stunning and attractive figure) (964) Suresah (Super Lord of Devas)

(965) Sharanam (He takes into hold the whole Universe for His care) (966) Parvah (He has a Total view of the World) (967) Sabda Brahma (His Voice is of Vedas from Brahma's Four Faces) (968) Sataam Gatih (Sadhus and the Virtuous are in the constant search of His Path) (969) Kaala Paksha (He helps Kaal Deva in the task of Creation) (970) Kaala Kaalah (Superior to Kaala Deva) (971) Sukrithih (The Best of Righteous Deed Makers) (972) Kritha Vasuki (The Creator of the Great Serpent Vasuki) (973) Maheswasaha (The Holder of Great Bow) (974) Mahi Bhartha (He grasps the entire World) (975) Nishkalankah (Blemishless) (976) Visrunkhala (He bestows the power of breaking chains of Maya or

Illusion) (977) Dyutimanirstharani (As He assumes the form of Surya and swims across the Ocean of 'Samsara' or Maya) (978) Dhanyah (He blesses those who do service to humanity) (979) Siddhardhah (He is the Great Siddhi Himself) (980) Siddhi Sadhanah (He enables in guiding those who seek attainment of Siddhis; (981) Viswathah Sarvatah (He is Present all over the Universe with Maya) (982) Samudra Vritthasthu (Surrounded by Oceans) (983) Stulyah (Venerated by all including Devas, Danavas and Humans) (984) Vyudhoraskah (Broad chested) (985) Mahabhujah (Broad shouldered) (986) Sarva yonih (The Grand Originator of the Universe) (987) Niratankah (Devoid of 'Tapatrayas' or Adhi Bhautika or External / Physical problems, Adyatmika or internal diseases and Adi Divika or Natural impediments) (988) Nara Narayana Priyah (Extremely pleased with the Twin Sages of Nara and Narayana) (989) Nirlepah (Un-contaminated) (990) Nishprapanchatmah (The Super Soul without the Worldly features of Panchabhutas) (991) Nirvyangya (The Creator of Special Physical parts) (992) Vyanga naasanah (The destroyer of distorted Body Parts) (993) Stavah (Highly Desirous of Worshipping Siva) (994) Vyasa Murthi (Siva in the Form of Veda Vyasa)(995) Niramkushah (Fully Independent) (996) Nirvadhya mayopaya (Of Blemishless form) (997) Vidya Rashi (Fund of Vidyas) (997) Nirapaya (Imperishable)

(998) Rasa Priyah (He is delighted with 'Nava Rasas') (999) Prashantha Buddhih (Of Exceedingly sober and cool disposition) (1000) Akshannah (Ignored) (1001) Sangrah

(Amasses Devotees) (1002) Nitya Sundarah (Always Exquisite) (1003) Vyaghra dhuryah (Sportive of Tiger Skin) (1004) Dhatreswarah (Sovereign of entire Earth) (1005) Shakalyah (Siva in the form of Sakalya Muni) (1006) Sharvari Pathih (The Lord of the Nights) (1007) Paramardha Guru (The Supreme Bestoyer of Salvation) (1008) Drishstih (The image of Chakshu Devatha is the Goddess of Vision) (1009) Sharisrayashraya Vatsalah (Fond of 'Jeevas' or 'Linga Shariras'having Physical Bodies after death) (1010) Somah (Light up with Moon) (1011) Rasojnapakah (He who has the taste of 'Halahala' poisonous flame) (1012) Sarva satvavanambanah (Siva the Supreme Power surrounded by one and all).

[Basically 'Sahasranamas' or one thousand Names; the above take into account a few groups of Names. Omissions and commisions are regretted]

#### 'Phala Sruti' of Sivasahasranama Stotra

Bhagavan Vishnu did the worship by placing Lotus flowers at the feet of Parama Siva Linga, reciting the Saharanamas as given above. But at the end of the worship, Parameswara concealed the last Lotus Flower to test and Bhagavan Vishnu without any hesitation whatsoever was ready to pull out one of His eyes and place it as a lotus in lieu of the Final Name, while Maha Siva appeared instantly and stopped the action of the intended Sacrifice. From the Form of Linga being worshipped by Vishnu, the Fantastic Figure of Maha Siva emerged and addressed the former that He was well aware of the tribulations of Devas who were constanly tormented by Danavas; He was pleased to award 'Sudarshana Chakra'. Maha Siva assured Vishnu that Sudarshan Chakra was as potent as Maha Deva Himself and its very possession ought to be a great relief to Vishnu since He was squarely responsible to preserve the world and its contents comprising the entirety of mobile and immobile beings. Also whoever reads, hears or recites the Powerful Sahasranama of Siva by cogitating the critical meaning of each Name provides immense peace of mind and confidence, courage to face any challenge, surmount any tribulation, and better still bestow all positive turns of life. Be there even any problem posed by a King or Administration, one should perform 'Anga Nyasa' and recite the Thousand and odd Names sincerely, and indeed there would be instant relief for sure. Even otherwise, the Recital would destroy illness, endow with Vidya, grant prosperity, fulfil all desires and finally pave way for 'Sayujyam'.

#### Some Illustrious Devotees to Siva and Special Austerities in Worship

Among millions of Devotees to Bhagavan Siva, a few of them are illustrious like Durvasa, Viswamitra, Daddhichi, Gautama, Bhargava, Brihaspati, Vaishampayana, Parashar, Vyas, Upamanyu, Yagavalka, Jaimini and Garg. King Sudyumna's experiene was indeed interesting as he became a woman since he entered a specific forest due to an embargo by Siva not to do so. When the King meditated intensely, Siva was pleased to lighten the curse and granted a boon that he would become a man every alternate month!

When asked by Devi Parvati as to which were the best dates that a devotee should observe austerities, Bhagavan Siva prescribed the following days viz. on the eighth day of every month when a day long fast could be ended by the same night; on the day of 'Kalashtami' however the fast should be on the day as well as night and be observed till the next morning; on the thirteenth day of the dark lunar month or the Krishna Trayodasi (especially during Magha Month) the fast should be on day/night basis, while Sukla Trayodasi fast be observed only day long. But on Sukla Ekadasi, fast should be observed on day-night basis and on Krishna Ekadasi fast may be upto the night. Fast be also observed every Monday till the night. On any of the Fast days, Siva Archana, Rudra Japa, Rudra Abhisheka and visit to Siva Temple are the best. The last few days of one's life at Varanasi with austerities and Siva darshana/ worship do deserve salvation.

## Observance of Maha Sivarathri and its significance

Austerities by way of day/night fasts and dedicated devotion on Maha Sivaratri falling on Krishna Paksha or dark fortnight of Phalguna month every year are considered as the sure steps to 'Iham and Param' viz. Happiness in the current phase of Life and Attainment of Salvation threafter! In the early morning of Sivarathi day, a devotee should take a vow to observe day/night austerities. In the night or Sivarathri, there must be Archana, Abhisheka, Japa and full fledged worship either at a Temple or at home depending on convenience; actually the worship by way of continuous 'Maha Nyasayutha Abhisheka' with Archana along with 'Shodasopacharas' or the sixteen types of Services and Arti, but for the sake of convenience, the Puja may be repeated every three hours during the night along with Laghu Nyasa Abhisheka, Archana, Arti etc. The night long austerity must be followed by 'Punah Puja' next morning and Bhojan (meals) along Brahmanas, who should also be satisfied with 'Dakshinas'. After observing 'Sivarathris' for fourteen consecutive years, one could perform 'Udyapan' or successful completion of the Sivarathri Vratha.

Observance of Maha Sivarathri even by mistake could yield fruits, let alone proper and systematic worship; this was illustrated by an incident said Sutha Muni at the congregation of Sages at Naimisaranya. There was a poor hunter named Gurudruha who became extremly hungry along with his family members on a whole day and that night happened to be a Sivarathri. He entered a forest on the eve of Sivarathri and waited for any animal to kill and satisfy the hunger; he waited near a waterbody over a bel tree nearby under which there was a Siva Linga as a coincidence. Having waited for the first 'Prahara' (three hours) of the night, he was lucky to have sighted a female deer along its kids approaching the water body to quench its thirst. He pulled out his bow and an arrow ready to aim at the mother deer and by a twist of fate the branch of the bel tree on which he sat moved, some bel leaves fell on the Siva Linga and some water in a vessel carried by the hunter got spilt down on the Linga, thus performing the first Phahara puja. The deer which was very sensitive even to small sounds of leaves and water falling from the tree noticed that the hunter was ready to kill it. The animal made a sincere and convincing request to the

hunter that if allowed it desired to leave the deer kids to their father and definitely return bach to be killed by him. Very reluctantly, the hunter agreed and let the animals leave. The second Prahara was closing but there was no trace of the mother deer. But the sister of the earlier deer approached the pond along her kids and the happenings of the earlier Prahara repeated viz.the hunter pulled out his bow and arrow, the bel tree leaves as also the water drops from the hunter's vessel fell on the Siva Linga, the sister deer made a similar request and the hunter let the animal leave as he did to the earlier one, thus accomplishing the worship of the third Prahara. As the third Prahara was closing, the husband of the original deer came in search of the female deer and the kids and the earlier happenings repeated once again and the earlier Prahara puja too was executed successfully. It was a great sight of all the deers of both the families approached during the final Prahara and the hunter was delighted that he could have a feast any time but the earlier happenings repeated and the fourth Prahara worship too was implemented. But, after the fourth worship, Gurudruha's psychology was transformed; he repented for his evil thoughts and took a vow to eschew his erstwhile acts of violence. Bhagavan Siva revealed Himself before Gurudruha as a transformed person and blessed him that in his next birth, he would be Nishad during Rama's incarnation and the latter would give him the boon of attaining Vaikuntha.

#### **Steps towards Salvation**

Bhagavan Siva revealed to Lord Vishnu who in turn informed Brahma and further down to Sanat Kumaras to Maharshi Narada and Vyasa that the steps to Salvation are basically four-fold viz. Sarupva (Resemblance of Paramathma), Salokya (Being in the sphere of Paramatma) Sannidhya (Proximity to Paramatma) and Sayujya (Union with Paramatma). Lords Brahma and Vishnu could certainly bestow the first Three Purusharthas viz. Dharma, Artha and Kama, or Virtuosity, Wealth and Worldly Desires respectively. But granting Moksha or Salvation is in the competence of Bhagavan Siva alone. He could also bestow Kaivalya or the Ultimate Stage, the knowledge of Siva Tatvam or Vilakshana / Nirguna Kind of Uniqueness which is not fully known to Brahma or Vishnu, Kumara and the Entirety of Maharshis.Siva Tatvam is described by Veda Vyasa as: Satyam Jnanamanantham cha Sacchidananda Sangjnikam / Nirguno nirupadhischaavyayah Shudho niranjanah. (Siva's everlasting form is of 'Sat-chitananda' or Existence, Consciousness and Bliss; it has no 'Gunas' or attibutes, nirupadhi (without features of Prakriti and Purusha), Avayah (Irreducible), Shuddha (Spotless) and Niranjana (Supreme Enlightenment). This Parabrahma is all pervading like sky; Mayatheetham Paratmanam Dwandaateetham Vimatsaram Thath Prapthischa Bhavedatra Sivajnodayad Dhruvam (This Paramatma is beyond Maya or Illusion, is only one and unique and has no traits like Matsaram or jealousy). To realise Paramathma is well-nigh impossible. The route is complicated by Jnana and Siva Tatvam that might sound too complex and confounding. But simple, sincere, fully dedicated Devotion (Bhakthi) could make miracles. Bhakti is another form of Selflessness, Sacrifice, Persverance, Loyalty, and Complete Surrender. Bhakti and Jnan are two sides of a coin. Yet one cannot claim to become a Jnani nor attain Moksha without Bhakti. Bhakti in pure form is a prerequisite to Moksha with or without Jnana. ['Devaradhana Stotra' of Adi Sankara stated that he was not conversant with Mantras, Yanthras, Hymns of Praise, Invocations, Meditation, Mudras, Stories of Your Glories and imploraions; yet, he knows how to follow Paramatma with Bhakti; thus the most essential features are faith and effort.] But the advanced stage of Bhakti is automatically followed by Jnana in the sense that higher level of Bhakti is facilitated by minimal Jnana or working knowledge). In other words, Jnana per se without regard to Bhakti is not possible. Advanced Stage of Bhakti would face a ceiling without reference to required level of Jnana. Having said this, Bhakti would be of two Formats viz. Nirguna (abstract form) and Saguna (with physical form); also Bhakti is of either 'Naishtik' or without aiming at a specific desire or of 'Anoushtik' variety with desires.

On an enquiry about the variety of manifestations of Paramatma (The Greatest Soul), the doubt of identity of The Super Soul was whether of Brahma or Vishnu and Siva. Muni Sutha replied that at the Time of Creation, Paramatma had neither a form, nor Gunas (Physical Attributes) and nor name. That Supersoul was loosely called Siva. That Siva or Purusha was in Self- Union the Prakrithi. Together, they performed Tapasya or concentration in a huge ocean and that Sacred Place was known as 'Pancha Kosas' or the Five Sheaths. [Annamaya Kosa or Physical Body; Pranamaya Kosa or Prana /Linga Sarira or Vital Astral Sarira; Manonmaya Kosa or the lower Manas or Mind; Vijnana Maya Kosa or Higher Manas Kosa and finally Anandamaya Kosa corresponding to the Spiritual Soul or Buddhi] The Sixth Kosa enclosing the Pancha Kosas is Divine Atman. The Union of Siva and Prakrithi both created Hari Narayana ('Nara' being water) or who was spread over the huge water. From Narayana's navel stood up a Lotus Stem and over the Flower was created Brahma. As there was conflict among the Trimurthis seeking inter -se superiority, Siva presented Himself as Maha Deva. He assured that all the manifes -tations of Himself were equally powerful and each of them was capable of giving boons to their devotees as well. They are like the same gold base but moulded into different ornaments. It was only notional that the tasks of Srishti, Sthithi and Laya were self assigned but each one of the Murthis is equally responsible. Similarly, there is no distinction between Siva and Rudra. Siva explained that Brahma created Rudra to perform the specific task of 'Laya', where as the Original and Unique Self, Siva is the Super Soul or Paramatma responsible for everything. Rudra is always prayed to but never prays to any body. Whoever prays to Lord Rudra, the strength and fruits of the Prayers are automatically transferred to Siva.

#### Siva Gyan – Its Import and the Course

Ishanah Sarva Vidyanam Srutiresha Sanathani / Veda kartha Veda pathih Tasmaccambhurudahtritha / Sa evam Shankarah Saakshaat sarva anugraha karakah/Kartha Bhartha cha Harthaacha Sakshi Nirguna eva Sah /

(Siva is the Master of all 'Vidyas' or Knowledge, the Origin of Vedas and their Chief; He is the epitome of mercy, the Evidence of Creation, Preservation and destruction and the Unique 'Nirguna'). He is the Cause of Causes; the Act, the Action and the Actor; the Sarva Swarup or The Multiple Images and 'Eka Swarup' or the One and Only Figure. Like a Seed becomes a fruit and the fruit yields seeds, Siva is the Seed and the Fruit too. From Parabrahma to a piece of grass, it is all Siva only. But, invariably human beings consider Him as entirely different from themselves. One tends to address Him as 'You' as separate from 'Me', little realising that both are not detached Entities. It is the understanding of this simple truth that Siva Gyan is all about. The reason of this disconnect is due to the interplay of Illusion and the Self. Be it Earth, or Ocean or Ether there are countless forms of Siva in dissimilar dimensions, yet there is an infinite diversity in a unique unity. It is one Sun on the Sky but the reflections in various water bodies assume myriad forms. The Sky is spread out covering the entire Universe, but no object in Creation could ever ever touch it despite the greatest human effort. While human beings are subject to the 'Arishadvargas' or Six Enemies of Desire, Anger, Avarice, Obsession, Ego and Jealousy, Siva is of Pure Form of All-Pervading, Never Ending, All Knowing and Permanent Nature. Human beings need to be purified and polished with 'Samskaras' as in respect of Gold with Acid and Fire and more significantly the deftness of a Guru. When 'Jeevatma' of Human Beings gets freed from life, it gets absorbed in Siva Swarup.

As a new life is initiated again as per preordained decisions of Fate, the superior beings or Jnanis neither get elated with their possessions nor feel dejected with disappointments but practise equanimity. Once the Ego or Ahamkara is washed off and ignorance is uprooted, the Bhakta (Devotee) could take the route of

full consciouness to Bhagavan Siva and then he is ripe to resort to worship by boldly reciting Siva Sthotras in loud voice and pave the way for assuming Siva Gyan or Siva Tatva. As the Bhakta qualifies for Siva Gyan and is well set on the route to Siva Tatva, the pulls and pressures of 'Samsara' or the Earthly issues keep fading away and Adhyatmika Gyan gains priortity. Siva Bhakti having paramount importance, Pure Bhakti paves the way to Prem or Love to all co-existent beings; from Prem to 'Shravan' (hearing) or the unending aptitude to learn; from the learning process the next step is 'Satsang' or companionship of Virtuous Persons or Vidwans or Experts; then emerges a Guru who would ship-shape the process of 'Upasana' or the penultimate step before 'Mukti'.

## Lord Krishna approaches Sage Upamanu for Siva 'Darshan'

Although Lord Krishna was blessed with His son Pradumna from Devi Rukmini, His other wives especially Satyabhama were keen on further offspring and He therefore approached Sage Upamanyu to guide Him to fulfil the desire for Siva Darshan. The Sage was a known devotee of Bhagavan Siva and had glimpses of the Bhagavan when He was sorrounded by Lords Vishnu and Brahma, Devas and Devi Parvathi. The Sage recalled that he aked for three boons viz. that he should be a Siva Bhakta always, that he should secure the knowledge of visualising the past, present and future and that his family should never be devoid of rice and milk. Bhagavan was pleased with Upamanyu and granted him the boons and also blessed him to live for long till Vaivasvata Manvantara. Having given his own experiences with Bhagavan Siva, the Sage initiated Lord Krishna into Siva Tapasya and gave the Mantra 'Om Namah Sivaya'. Krishna performed severe meditation by standing on His toes for sixteen months. Thereafter, Bhagavan Siva blessed Krishna with His appearance in full splendour with Parvathi Devi seated on his Nandi 'Vahana' along with Devas, Pramathaganas and a big procession of Sages. Lord Krishna prostrated before Siva and Parvathi and asked for eight boons viz. that His intelligence should guide the World into righteousness, that He should bless Him to attain immortal fame, that He should have an abode in the proximity of Bhagavan, that He should keep promoting devotion to Siva Deva always, that He be blessed to secure ten valiant and worthy sons, that He be victorious of enemies, that He be blessed to overcome any evil force in the Universe, and that He should guide and be guided by Yogis and Sages. Lord Krishna also sought boons from Devi Parvathi that He should be in the service of His parents and Brahmanas always. Following the Spectacular Darshan of Bhagavan and Devi Parvathi, Lord Krishna described the great impact that Siva Darshana had on Himself to Sage Uapmanyu and thanked the Sage for the favour.

#### Description of 'Mahapathakas' (Greatest Sins) and various other sins

In the *Uma Samhita*, the description of Maha Pathakas and other medium kind of Sins was highlighted. Among the Great Sins committed are by way of sinful thoughts

(Manasik) viz. about other's wealth, women, evil of others and lust for others; or by way of Speech (Vachak) involving others viz. loose talk, lies, critical remarks, and worst of all complaining about others behind the back; and physical based sins viz. eating or drinking prohibited items; Violence against cohumans, animals and all other species; performing illegal or non virtuous acts and exploiting other's money and property. Besides the above twelve sins, the worst possible sin is by way of criticizing the Supreme Siva Himself which deserves to be drowned in the deep Sea of Hell. There are additional six sins of unpardonable nature viz. criticism of the followers of Siva, one's own Guru (preceptor), Parents, finding fault of Siva Gyan, stealing the money of Brahmanas, and pilfering Siva worship related books and other objects. Further, Sinners include those who do not perform Siva Puja, ignore the worship of Siva's Parthiva Linga, heckle at the genuine devotees of Siva, those who exist in a care free world without

discipline or fear of Siva, who resort to charity of money earned fraudulently, mislead innocent persons in the name of Siva, those who are untruthful, physically or mentally uncouth and possess bad company. The 'Pancha Maha Pathakas' are to kill or abet to kill others especially of Brahmanas, indulge in wine drinking, robbing, lust with Guru's wife, and develop intimacy with those who execute the above sins. Equally sinful are the acts of taking back donations from Brahmanas; burning cowsheds, forests, houses, or Cities; performing a wedding by force or on ulterior considerations; incest of any kind, rape, extra marital affairs, and so on.

Among many other sins mentioned by Sanat Kumara were greed, jealousy of good persons, committing pilferages in Temples, harassing persons of 'Ashramas', spoiling or even utilising the wealth of women, taking advantage of women for bad purposes especially in the pretext of providing security to them, adopting or persuading persons to adopt religions of others, reading and forcing others to read wrong books, resorting to illogical conversations and shouting on others with a view to exhibit half baked raw knowledge and irritating others; critisising Devas, Virtuous persons, Sadhus, officials in authority; becoming 'Nastiks' or Anti-God; abandoning one's own 'Dharma' and family traditions under the influence of evil or anti social elements or the so called Society reformers; union with women on auspicious days, menses period days, day time, Shraddh or Ceremony days are blatant sins. Those who persist in maltreating cows, parents, Brahmanas, unmarried virgins, teachers, Sadhus, friends, Sages, and well meaning blood relations shall indeed go to hells for long duration. Those who spit, urinate and spoil in other ways at cowsheds, Temples, Sacred Places, Homa Kundas or Fire Pits, water bodies, Public Places, under the Trees and mountain tops; those who occupy other's areas; those who produce arrows, weapons, and such other war material; those who harass servants, animals, elderly persons, the helpless, invalids, mentally unstable, patients, the hungry / thirsty and guests and so on are all sinners who deserve punishment.

# Description of 'Yamalok' and acts of retribution to sinners

There is none who escapes the journey to Yamalok or Hell after death. Those who have the least account of good deeds during their lives travel the longest distance of eightysix thousand yojanas (one yojana is eight miles) from the southern side of the hell whereas those whose accounts are of mixed pattern are directed to shorter routes from the northern side from earth. The longer route is full of untold miseries, defying description. It is full of fearful thorns, slush, deep and wide gorges, endless jungles, coniferous forests, quick sands, pitch darkness, biting cold and lashy hurricanes, sand storms or blizzards, severe heat waves, sudden floods, attacking cruel animals or gigantic and venomous snakes and non descript reptiles, Spirits and Goblins, severe hunger and thirst, complete loneliness or unbearable sounds, multitudes of 'Linga Dehas' or Limbless bodies being nose-driven by ropes or iron shackles, whippings by Yamadutas, loosely knit body parts, some burnt on iron grills and some fried in oil and such other violences.

At the end of the harrowing journey towards Hell, all the Linga Dehas are made to remain at the Gates of Hell, by which time they are all dead exhausted and await the final verdict of the 'karmas' or deeds performed and the corresponding punishments awarded. But when the departed Souls who did good 'karmas' or deeds enter the Hell Gates, the Yama Dharma Rajah Himself grants audience and orders them to enter higher segments of Heavens or other Lokas as per the 'Punya' or Good Deed account and after enjoying the alloted time slots in concerned 'Lokas' return to Hell again to receive the concerned punishments. To those whose Sin accounts are higher than the Good Deed accounts, the allotted

punishments are enforced in various hell segments and after undergoing the sentences are referred to enjoyments for the limited durations before taking up the next births. While glimpses of Yamadharma Rajah are witnessed in such frightening forms with fire and fumes from his nose, mouth, ears and eyes, the Yamadutas who too are not only scary but execute violent and cruel acts which attract double retribution; if objected or responded to, the degree and duration of the punishment is doubled or increased further. The Yama- dutas are armed with trishuls, swords, thorny ropes of wood or metal, and any other type of improvised torture-tools. As Chitragupta or the Accountant in Chief, discloses the detailed daily activities of each Soul and awards the penalties, loud announcements are followed by hecklings, insinuations and side-punishments by Yamadutas sometimes commented by Yamadharma Raja Himself and some of these annotations and amendments as remarked by the Raja come into force as instant principles. As the sinners are subject to various punishments, they collapse, lose their sense of being alive, then the Yamadutas revive them with enough dose of life to continue the suffering of the punishment. Situated underneath the Earth are the Hells named Ghor, Sughor, Atighor, Maha Ghor, Ghor Rupa, Talatal, Bhayanak, Kalarathri, Bhayatkata, Chanda, Mahachanda, Chanda Kolahala, Prachanda Chanda, Padma, Pamavati, Bhita, Bhima, Bhishma Nayika, Karala, Vikarala, Vaira, Trikona, Panchakona, Sudhirgha, Akhilaktida, Sama Bhimavala, Ahoghra, Deeptamaya and so on.With a view to eradicate the sins of the 'Linga Dehas', the Sinners are exposed to severe heat of Fires and dry their 'Dhatus' or tissues, shackle their feet and hands with heavy irons, let the body parts be bitten by big size mosquitoes, wild animals, and giant birds and reptiles- all this to cleanse their thoughts and make them remember their evil deeds. Their body parts are dismembered one by one and roasted, fried, cut into pieces and mashed. In the course of these acts of reprisal, the physical senses of torture are such that there would not be death but full consciousness and awareness of the happenings. Those who make others follow Fake Scriptures and mislead the public are referred to 'Dvijihva' Narak and are subjected to the gnaws of poisonous snakes; those strong and cruel persons who resort to maltreat and put to violence their parents and Gurus are subjected to ruthless bitings of giant size worms all over their face and body parts; those who wantonly spoil or destroy the Siva Temples and their belongings are exposed to livid fires till the Pralaya time; those who are overplayful in Sacred Waters and misuse them by making love and sex also attract the fury of fires till Pralaya time; those who resort to extra marital life are made to suffer the embraces, kisses and other acts with red hot iron rods; red hot metal nails are thrust into the ears, noses and throats of those who torment the Saintly, Virtuous and Devoted persons; a person who insults a woman with whichever limb of his body, that limb is disfigured; if he makes advances let alone spoil her bodily, his eyes are pierced with hot needles; he who steals the offerings made to Devas, Agni, Guru or Brahmanas and eats, his tongue will be perforated with hot nails; those who disparage or insinuate Devas, Mahatmas, Gurus, Devotees, Dharma, and Dharma Shastra would attract the punishment of hot nails being grilled into the heart, tongue, nose, throat and so on. Those who give wrong evidences and tell lies are despatched Rourarava Narak; those who destroy baby embryos, steal gold and other possessions of others, kill Brahmanas, cows, Preceptors, parents, sisters and brothers, daughters and sons, are consigned to Taptakumbh Narak; whoever sells good and innocent ladies, avoid payment of interest and Principal loans, sell hair and cheat devotees in the name of Gods are sent to Taptaloha Naraka; those who defy or cheat Gurus, Parents, blood relatives or sell Idols and Temple belongings, and sleep with wayward women are referred to Taptabala Naraka; thieves, animal killers, breakers of decency norms, who criticise Devas and misbehave with Sages, Brahmanas, elders, guests or resort to illicit trading or smuggling are sent to Kurmibhaksha and are made to eat worms; those who eat in bad company being Brahmanas, consume wrong food or drink and sell / hire wine and women are forwarded to Rudhiroudhyava Naraka; those who destroy trees wantonly or crops out of vengeance are referred to Asipatravana Naraka and those who make a living out of woman's money or lose balance beacause of youth and wealth are forwarded to Kupya Naraka and so on. The above-mentioned punishments or details of Naraka Lokas are merely illustrative to describe the kind of the penalties prescribed; the process of justice being instant and unsparing. In fact, the larger the sin performed the more severe is the punishment. Indeed there are possibilities of sincere repentance and 'Prayasistchaya' or atonement. Yani theshamaseshanam karmanyutoni teshu vai/ Praayasischamaseshenah Haranrusmaranam Paramaparam/ Prayascinthaha tu

yeshavam papam pumsaha Prajapataye/KrithePapenruthapopi Sivsmaranam param (Whatever sins are committed, Prayasistchyas or remedies are available; infact, Bhagavan Siva's name and japam are the best remedy). 'Paschattapam' (Remorse), 'Japam' Repetition of Siva's names, 'Homam' (Fire oblations), 'Archana' (Worship) are the greatest practices to ward off the sins committed)

#### Charity and its far reaching impact

In the context of the experiences of Yamaloka, charity plays a significant role in mitigating the impact of punishments to a departed Soul. Sage Sanatkumara described: Paneeyadan paramam daanamutthamam sada / Sarvesham Jeevapunjanam tarpanam Jeevanam smrutam (Charity of Water is considered as the best as it provides full contentment and life). This is why offering water outlets is considered as a satisfying act. Construction of water bodies, digging up of wells and supply of water through various means is thus a source of happiness to others and to self whose post-life experiences would become less pungent. Those who facilitate the construction of ponds are doubly blessed giving instant relief to human beings, animals and birds in the long run far beyond the lives of the charity makers and attract considerable reduction of the burden of their sins. In fact, those who are reponsible to perform this best charity of facilitating water supply in all seasons, especially summer, would never fall down the levels lower than heavens after life. Next to water is the charity of planting Trees which make available innumerable solaces to mankind, Sages, animals, birds, Devas and Danavas and even to Evil Spirits whose blessings are richly reaped by those responsible. Those who make available gardens with trees bearing fruits, flowers, shade and various other facilities to public are blessed for countless uses. Several other kinds of charity would certainly yield far reaching results and the acts of kindness however big or small do not indeed go waste. For instance, a person who donates an umbrella would help him to cross the hells without heat and provide him shade; or a person donating footwear would cross parts of hell the protection of feet. Charity of jewellery, cows, land, servants, chariot, foodgrains, beds, Vidya or Knowledge, money, horses, elephants and so on have all highly beneficial value with manifold returns.

# Significance of 'Satya' (Truth) and 'Tapasya' (Meditation)

Sathyameva Parabrahma Satyameva Param Thapah/ Satyameva Paro Yagnah Satyameva Para Srutham/ Satyam Sushteshu Jagatih Satyam cha Paramam Padam/ Satyanaiva Ghritha Pridhvi Satya Sarva Prathishthinam/(Truth is Parabrahma, Truth is Great Meditation, Truth is Sacred Yagna, Truth is highly revered, Truth awakens the slumberous or ignorant, Truth holds the entire Earth, and in this Truth only the entirety exists.)

All aspects of Existence like Tapas (meditation), Yagnas or Sacrifices, Funds of 'Punya' or Essence of Virtuous Deeds, Devas, Rishis, Pitrus, Worship, water, Vidya or Enlightenment are all steeply firmed up in Truth alone. Truth is Omkara representing Sarasvati or Goddess of Studies and of Mantras who literally controls the intrepretation of Learning. It is only due to the power of Truth that 'Vayu' or the Wind God -and indeed the very 'Prana' or the Life Line- enables the World to exist. Sun God radiates heat and light creating days and nights and the very measure of Time due to the Super Energy which is called Truth. Similarly Fire God exists and so does Varun God or the God of Rains; the Planets, Vedas that guide human beings to lead to meaningful existence and fulfillment of lives. If the fruits of performing thousands of Asvamedha and other Yagnas or Sacrifices are on one side of a Balance and a little bit of Truth or Virtue on the other, the Balance would instantly tilt in favour of Truth. Truth alone is the paramount religion or Faith. It is the Parama Mantra par excellence. Innumerable Rishis or various Religious Heads of Faiths, or the humanity as a whole, the Supernatural Elements, Devas, and the entire Universe comprising the Moving and Non-moving beings of Creation have to surrender to the Supremacy of Truth and Truth alone. This is the basic reason why one's conscience pricks when Non-Truth is said or

followed and it is the Truth that triumphs in the long run or 'Satyameva Jayatey'. The emphasis of Truth by way of Speech, Thought, Deed and all other forms is a way of life.

'Tapas' (meditation or penance) is the most potent weapon; normal human beings tend to confuse it as a small slot of prayer; indeed 'Tapas' is a whole way of life. It is a conscious act of physical control (Indriya Nigraha) and mental concentration. It is a higher form of 'Yoga'- a resultant of sacrifice and 'Jnana' or awareness. It yields satisfaction, sense of fulfillment, fame and steps forward to salvation. Tapohi paramam proktam Tapasa Vidhyate phalam/ Taporathahi nithya modat saha Daivataihi/ Tapasa prapte yashah Tapasa prapyate Kamasthapah Sarvardha sadhanam/ Tapasa mokshamapnothi Tapasa Vidhathe mahat /Jnana Vigyana sampathhihi sowbhagyam rupamevacha/ Nana vidhani vastuni tapasa labhate narah/ (Tapas or deep meditation yields several good results. Devas feel happy with those performing Tapas. Tapas yields fame, fulfillment of desires, knowledge, wisdom, prosperity, auspiciousness, attractive physical form and all kinds of things). Even Brahma Hatya or killing of Brahmanas, incest, and such other unpardonable evils would be washed off by the power of Tapas. Nobody including Tri Murthis are free from the penance as they are able to carry on their duties like creation by Brahma, Preservation by Lord Vishnu and Destruction by Rudra, let alone Nava Grahas (Nine Planets), Dik Palakas or The Chiefs of the Eight Directions and Pancha Bhutas or Five Elements.

# Attainment of Siva Loka and Superiority of Human Life

It is an almost impossible venture to succeed in obtaining even a glimpse of Bhagavan Siva. The highest classes of Sages have to strain most considerably even to succeed reaching Devalokas, let alone the Brahma Loka, Vishnu Loka and least of all the Siva Loka. While 'Tapas' is the only means to achieve the Superior Lokas, Devas or high category 'Sanyasins' or pure Brahmacharis might perhaps follow the 'Satvik Guna' or Undiluted Virtue. Normally Devas and humans resort to Rajasika Guna or passion or devotion desirous invariably of fulfillment of material desires, or for Yoga and knowledge. Tamasika Guna is out of ignorance, revenge or personal aggrandisement normally resorted by Danavas or human beings with the qualities of Danavas. When it is stated that Danavas receive boons from Brahma or Siva, it is an illusion and the so called boons granted to the receivers thus serving as warnings to posterity.

Indeed, Satvika type of worship comprises virtuous ways of thinking, external and internal cleanliness, puja, japa, homa, shaucha, ahimsa or non violence, tapas, vrata, upavasa charya or fasting, 'mouna' or observance of silence, 'indriya nirodha' or control of physical parts, buddhi (mental balance), satya or truth, vidya (knowledge or enlightenment), akrodha (calmness), dana or charity, shanta or peacefulness, daya bhava or sympathy, performing or involvement in public utility jobs like construction of water bodies, gardens, temples and schools and hospitals, yagnas, tirtha yathras or pilgrimages, ashram nivas or modest living, observance of daily dhyanas or meditation, yoga practice by way of 'Pranayama' or through air control of Rechaka, Puraka and Kumbhaka, Pratyahara, attainment of eight siddhas viz. Anima, Mahima, Laghima, Garima, Prapti, Prakasyam, Isitham and Vasitam; Sadhana or Endeavours of three types of 'Avasthas' viz. Kashtavastha, Mritavastha and Haritha Avastha; avoidance of Rajaiswarya Vibhutis viz. Nari (Woman), Shayya (comfortable bed), Pana (drink), Vastra (dresses), Dhoopa

(scented air), Lepam (sandal paste), and tamboola bhakshanam (chewing betel leaves and nuts); and bhoga swarupas (forms of luxury) viz. gold and jewellery, residence, cows, singing, music, dance, musical instruments like veena, mridanga and other percussions; elephants and horses, chariots, umbrellas, hand fans and so on. Such is the ideal way of life which a human being needs to practise with

utmost care to qualify for reaching the path to Sivaloka. Indeed this eneavour is not out of the realm of possibility to a human being, as the birth of a human is an excellent opportunity that could be utilised optimally. Manushamcha samasadya Swarga Moksha Prasadhanam / Na charatyamanah shreyah sa mrutaha sochatey chiram (Those who are unable to avail the human body which is difficult to secure and is a good prospect to obtain Swarga (Heaven) and Moksha (Salvation) would regret for long and cry at the missed opportunity). Samprapya dharmato Vyasa tat yatnadanupalayet/ Dharma mulam hi manushyam labdhava Sarvardha Sadhakam/ yadi labhya yatnah samuulam rakshotsvya tatha manushopi cha viprasyam yah prapya khalusadhanam (There cannot be a bigger stupidity, if a human being does not practise virtue which is the root of what all one could achieve, especially if he were born as a Brahmana, a most coveted birth that one could opt for). It is said that among the Sapta Dwipas or Seven Great Islands in the entire Earth, Bharat Desa is supposed to the best 'Karma bhumi' or the Country of Virtuous Action. Having been born into such an enviable Country, if one fails to make be the best, then he is as good as lost his Soul!

# Supremacy of Kriya Yoga coupled with Jnana and Bhakti Yogas-Construction of Bhagavati Temple

Maharshi Veda Vyas requested Sanat Kumara about the efficacy of the three kinds of Yogas while referring to an approach to Devi Bhagavati. Jnana Yoga (Enlightentment) is the togetherness of human mind and Soul, while external nearness of the Self and Devi as two Entities is denoted as Kriya Yoga (Action). Bhakti Yoga (Devotion) is the identity of the Self and Devi. These three Yogas put together constitute 'kriyabhog'. Karma (action) leads to Bhakti (devotion) and Bhakti generates Jnana (enlightentment). Basically Yoga is the principal factor to lead to Mukti (Salvation). Kriya Yoga is a powerful 'Sadhana' or the medium. A firm realisaton that Prakritik Maya or Nature's Illusion and Brahma Maya or the Supreme Illusion are just the same and that awareness would help break worldly ties of human beings. This was the preface described by Sanat Kumara to Veda Vyasa to illustrate the culmination of a unique venture in constructing a Bhagavati Temple. He affirmed that the success of a Sacred Project like the Temple construction is a climactic effort of an illustrious human being who had already led a spiritual life of significance.

Ahanyayin yogena yajatho yanmahaphalam/Prapnothi tat phalam debya yah kaarayati mandiram /Sahasra kulamagami vyaktreetam cha sahasrakam / sa tarayati Dharmaatma Sri Mathru dham kaarayan (Whatever benefit of Virtue had been acquired by performing daily Yagnas had facilitated the construction of Sri Mathru Dham or Bhagavathi Temple. The Virtuous person responsible for the construction not only endows with Salvation to himself but also to thousand future generations too). The number of bricks used in the construction of a Temple would be multiplied by thousand and thus so many years would total the stay of the illustrious person in the 'Manidwipa'. The person responsible for the making and 'pratishtha' or setting up the Holy idol is fearless in the three worlds. If other Idols like the other Devis, viz. Lalitha, Lakshmi and Sarasvathi as also Ganesh, Subrahmanya and so on are also installed at the beginning or subsequently in the Temple, the Punya attained is endless and everlasting. Those who ensure daily upkeep, worship, 'Abhishek' with pure water, milk, honey and coconut water etc. and Arthi, Dhup, and other such Sixteen Sevas ('Shodasopacharas') are blessed too. Special Pujas be performed on Krishna Paksha Ashtami, Navami and Amavasya to Devi Parvathi along with recitations of Devi Sukta, Sri Sukta, as also 'Navavarana Pujas' and 'Moola Mantra Pathana', 'Abhishekas', offerings of Vishnukrantha Flowers, Tulsi and Lotus. Similarly, Special Vrathas be organised on Chaitra Sukla Tritheeya to Devi Bhavani along with 'Dolotsavas' along with Bhagavan Siva. During Vasanta Sukla Paksha, and Akshaya Thritheeya, Special Vratas be executed in the name of Jagadamba. On Jyeshtha Sukla Thriteeya, a Special Vratha is carried out in the name of Maheswari; during the same month on Ashta Sukla Thriteeya a circumbabulation of the Temple and surroundings be organised along with

Bhagavan Siva as a celebration of 'Radhotsava' (Chariot festival) along with 'Veda Pathana' (recital of Vedas) and accompaniment of music by 'Vadyas' or musical instruments. Again on Sravana and Bhadrapada Sukla Tritheeyas be celebrated with Special Worships. The climactic celebrations through out the duration of 'Navarathras' in the first half of Shukla Paksha of Aswiyuja month are expected to be an annual festival looked forward to by devotees and Organisers alike. During the 'Navarathras' or the Nine Days and Nights, magnificent carnivals ought to be fittingly organised by dedicated devotees with day long pujas upto the small hours of each night with hourly pujas, Homas, Ahishekas, congregations of devotees, music-dance programs, Puranas, Bhajans, 'Nagara Samkeerthans' or Group Singings, dramas on Subject-specific religious aspects, 'Samaradhanas' or group eatings and so on. Also monthwise Krishna Thritheeyas of Margasirha, Pausha, and Magha months are performed by male devotees, especially the Mangala Devi Vratha. Besides the above details, Devi Pujas should be performed on all the scheduled days of significance as per Hindu Calendar such as Ganesh Chathurdhis, Depavali on Aswiyuja Amayaysa and the preceeding Narakasura Chathurdhi and so on. Of course, every Ekadasi, Monday aupicious for Bhagavan Siva, Tuesday for Durga and Skanda, Wednesday and Saturday for Vishnu, Friday for Lakshmi and Sunday for Ganesha / Sun God and Thursday for Dattatreya, are all auspicious days in any Temple. Those who manage the temple affairs, including finances, and the devotees who offer services to the Devi Bhagavati round the year are all blessed by Bhagavati Devi and Bhagavan Siva appropriately.

At the end of 'Uma Samhita', the narrations of Siva Purana in the Samhita including the details of Maha Pathakas, Naraka Loka experiences; the importance and the need for Satya, Tapasya, Charity as also the Supremacy of Kriya Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga and finally the benefits of Kriya Yogi's constuction of a Temple are described. The final goal of Life is thus to elevate oneself upward towards Siva Gyan!

# **Significance of Siva Purana**

The virtue in reading Vedas in Gurukulas or under the tutorship of a Preceptor by way of eating 'Kanda Moola Phalas' or uncooked vegetables, roots or raw fruits is not even half of the positive benefit attained by reading or listening to Puranas, especially Siva Purana. The knowledge of Puranas is stated to be as significant as the heat and light of Sun God or the coolness and tranquility of Moon God. Puranas open up wide windows and doors to the Spiritual World, destroy ignorance, illuminate vistas of knowledge and enlighten about the happenings of the Past, guide about the Present time's do's and don't's and warn or caution about the customary pitfalls and traps that ought be avoided in future.. That is why Purana 'Sravana', or 'Pathana' or 'Manana' is an integral part of enlightening of human psyche. Whether it is about the gains of illustrious persons in the past, the vision of Rishis, the ways of the virtuous and of the evil forces, the sacrifices of the committed persons, the vindication of Truth finally, the bench mark attainers among the Sages and Devotees and the exemplary actions of Avataras (Incarnations) prove again and again that The Super Power Himself or Herself does exist. The methodology of devotion to Almighty, the secrets of the Universe, Creation, Preservation, Destruction, Planets, Concepts of Time, Tatvas, and so on are all included in the Puranas. In special reference to Siva Purana, all these aforementioned aspects plus several special features of Siva Gyan ranging from 'Abhishekas' to 'Archanas, Worship to Sayujya, Parthiva Lingas to Dwadasa Jyotirlingas, Austerities to Attainments, Aspects of this world one lives in and of those other worlds, about virtues and evils, and the Final Truth of Existence. Yat punyam Sarvadaaneshu Sarva Yajgneshu va Muney /Shambhoh Purana Shravanaath phalam nischaya bhavet/ Viseshatah kalaou Vyasa Purana Sravanarthey / Paro dharma na pumsam hi mukthidhyana para smrita /Purana Shravana samkeerthanam tadha kalpadruma phalam ramyam manushyaanaam na samsayaha (The fruits of various charities and performance of Yagnas are as good as

hearing Siva Purana for sure. In Kalyug especially, Purana Shravana is considered as a better alternative than even charity or other routes). Being aware that human beings anyway tend to ignore the traditional ways of worship like yagnas and so on, Bhagavan Siva has prescribed that listening to Siva Purana and about Siva Leelas would be as good a route to achieve the Four 'Purushardhas' viz. Dharma (Virtue), Ardha (Prosperity), Kama (Fulfilment of Worldly Desires) and Moksha (Salvation).

#### Omkara 'Jiginasha' (Knowledge) -Its comprehension and Practice

In the penultinate Kailasa Samhita of Siva Purana, Devi Parvathi enquired of Bhagavan Siva Himself about the implication of 'Pranava' or Omkara. Bhagavan emphasised that Pranava Mantra was as good as realisation of Siva Himself. 'Pranava' is the seed that generates the huge 'Vata Vriksham' or the peepal tree of Siva Gyan. It is that Pranava which is the essence of Vedas. 'Panchakshari' is the mix of three words A-U-M plus the half word of 'Bindu' and the sound emphasising the word 'M'. The word 'A' stands for nivrutthi kala or of removal nature; 'U' stands for Indhan kala or of burning up characteristic and 'M' for Kaal Kala or destroying element; thus the words signify Satva, Rajas and Tamas natures and together the words are anti- gunas or Nirguna. Similarly the words signify anti-Vikaras and hence Nirvikara or reactionless. Alternatively, 'A' represents the Universe; the two letters 'A' and 'U' signify Siva and Sakti and 'M' signifies 'Jnana' or knowledge / Illumination. The Panchakshari Mantra AUM thus means the Pranava and the Primary Sound that exists before Creation and after Pralaya which is 'Nadarupa' or of the Form of Sound and of Rupa the Supreme Luminosity. In other words, the Trimatras of A' kar, 'U'kar and 'M' kar followed by half matra bindu is of the nada (sound) swarup. Among these words, 'A' kar has a 'Maha beej' possessing Rajo guna or Brahma the Creator; 'U' kar is of Satvik origin represented by Prakriti Yoni and governed by Vishnu the sustainer and 'M' kar or male seed responsible for destruction and possesses Tamo-guna representing Siva. Also bindu nada swarup is Mahadeva Himself, as He has the feature of 'thirobhava' or reversal of Srishti or 'Laya'/ Pralaya. Interpreted in another way, the 'Panchakshari' denoting Parabrahma or the Supreme Energy comprises: 'A' kar or Maha Deva possessing eight 'Kalas' or skills; 'U'kar' is 'Vamadeva' possessing thirteen 'Kalas' like Prathishtha and Nivritti, 'M' kar is 'Aghora' possessing eight Kalas like 'Vidya'; Bindu is 'Purush' possessing four 'Kalas' and Naad is 'Isaana' possessing five 'Kalas' like Shanti Kala. Understood from yet another view point, Pranava or OM is an amalgam or 'Prapanch -karmakata' universalisation of Six 'Padardhas' or Materials Viz.Mantra, Yantra, Devatha, Loka, Guru, and Sishya. Mantra or Sacred Hymn leads to Yantra or Celestial Engineering, which aims at Devas or Gods, who in turn directs one to the Universe; the Loka pinpoints to the need of a Guru or Preceptor and finally to a 'Sishya' or 'Vidyarthi'/ Student. Pranava thus seeks one to universalise from the Origin to the End-User, which finally is a human body. Hence, Omityadi Sarvamithi Sarva Brahmeti or Omkara is everything and is Brahma or the Supreme. Bhagavan thus sums up to Devi Bhagavathi that the Vachaka (who seeks to preach) and the 'Vachakam' or the lesson is just the same. Pranava seeks to move up in the human body from 'Muladhara' to Manipura to Hridaya to Visuddhi chakra to Ajna Chakra to Shanti Kala; Bhagavan Siva is far beyond Shanti Kala and is Prarathpara.

Practice of 'Pranava Vratha' is indeed an uphill task. The devotee has to possess a high degree of Vairagya or Other-Worldliness for one thing and another is to secure a towering Guru or Preceptor who is a Tapasvi, Jitendriya or controller of human desires, a well read Brahmana and a person who has performed Siva Vrathas already and is Siva-like himself. The devotee has to be secluded on a seashore, or a mountain top or an inside of a cave and practise 'Payovratha' (only consume water) for twelve days and on a Sukla Panchami or Ekadasi get ready early in the morning with clean bath and heart-(antar bahya suddhi). He has to shave his head, beard, and moustache and discard Sacred Thread or 'yajnopaveeth' and assume complete life of a Sanyasi. His Guru then blesses him with Pranava Mantra's Upadesa formally, explains its annotation / analysis, the daily rituals / Upasana and gradually trains/ equips him in the the

methodology of meditation and regulated life of a fulfledged Sanyasi or he who practises the Yoga of Sat plus Nyasa or the life of an ascetic in search of Truth that is Siva. The Pranava Vratha is a life long exercise till the devotee catches up with the route to Moksha.

#### 'Puja Vidhhanam' or the Course of Worship to Bhagavan Siva

Bhagavan Siva explained in great detail to Devi Parvathi the process of worship aimed to Him. First construct a 'Chaturasra Mandala' or a square form of Worship Place and an Eight-petal Lotus inscribed therein with eight designated deities seated with appropriate hymns in the eight directions. The entire process of Mandala constuction and decoration with appropriate colour schemes and placement of deities is quite elaborate and comprehensive. Before seated, the devotee should ensure that the required Puja materials are in place, take the blessing of his Guru, resolve that the Puja be a success, recite the Pranava Mantra and seek the permission of Lord Ganesha that there there should not be any hindrance whatsoever during the course of the Puja. The devotee should seek the blessings of Brahmanas, think of the blessings of Great Sages, recite the Soura Mantra invoking Suryadeva, Gayatri and initiate the Puja with the six lettered Bija Mantras like Hram, Hreem, Hruum etc. and after sprinlking water in the Agneya direction where Agni is situated in the respective Lotus part of the diagram, initiate 'Archana' (Puja) to Kalagni, Rudra, Adhara Shakti, Anantha Prithvi, Ratnadwip, Sankalpa Vriksha, and Rathna Peeth, Dharma, Gyan, Vairagya and Ishwarya. Thereafter, set up Bhagavan Siva's idol on a throne. Then, the devotee should break 'Prana Vayu' or Life Breath at 'Muladhara', with the help of pingala nadi and raise up 'Adhara Sakti' to have a glimpse of Bhagavan and Bhagavati and worship with flowers and 'Manthra Pushpas' or Hymns of Praise. One should experience the sacred feeling of the appearance with Bhagavan wearing Rudraksha malas, Pasha (noose), Khatvanga (club)), Ankusha (Goad), and Kamala. He possesses four faces and twelve eyes, with Ganga on His matted hairs, Moon on His head, blue throat, ashed body and hissing snakes all around. That is the time when the devotee recites Hram Hreem Sah Om invoking Surva Deva and Bhagavan and Devi later on with appropriate mudras and Anga Nyasas with the continuous recital of Mula Mantra: Hraam Hrem Hruum. After offering the traditional 'Pancha Upacharas' or the Five Services viz. Gandha (Sandal Paste), Pushpa (Flowers), Dhoop (Incense), Dipa (Lights), and Naivedya (Offering of Food), there should be Sankalpas (Resolution), performance of three pujas to the Principal Deities and 'Yagnas' in favour of 'Shadangas. ('Siksha' or Phonetics, Vyakaranam or Grammar, Jyotisham or Astrology, Chandas or Prosody, Nirutam or Etymology, Kalpam or a mode of Sacrifice) as well as Lotus. In the Second 'Avarana', archanas are executed in favour of Agni, Eswara and Vayu as also the Twelve Adityas like Aditya, Bhanu, Ravi, Bhaskar; in the Third Avarana, worship is carried out to 'Navagrahas' and Twelve Rasis, viz. Mesha, Vrishabha, Mithuna, Karkataka, Simha, Kanya, Thula, Vrischika, Dhanus, Makara, Kumbha, and Meena. Also, yagnas be perfored in favour of Oceans, Ganga, Rishis, Gandharvas, Pannagas, Apsaras and so on. The Fourth Avarana is taken up by offering water filled in a copper vessel to Suryadeva along with flowers, sandal paste, 'akshatas' or rice grains with turmeric powder, Kumkum and so on. After tendering 'Arghya' as above, appropriate Mantras be recited in praise of the Principal Deities of Siva and Parvati as also other Deities of Rudra, Brahma, Vishnu, Ganesha, Skanda, Nandi and others with extreme piety, sincerity and devotion, the devotee might round up the Worship with Pranava Mantras, Shanti Mantras, Astraya Phut etc.as also execute the rest of the 'Shodasopacharas' and finally prostrate before the Preceptor for his blessings. At the end of the worship, the offerings to Bhagavan Siva and Devi like the Panchamritas, Fruits, Naivedya or food material are distributed to the devotees present.

#### **Description of Bhagavan Siva**

Bhagavan Anantha Deva is snow-white in physique and is as huge as a lion touching the sky possessing four feet of Dharma (Virtue), Gyan (Knowledge), Viragya (devoid of Worldly desires) and Iswarya (prosperity). He is Pancha mukha (five faced), Dasa Bhuja

(Ten-handed), Trinetra (three eyed) on each face, of tranquil visage, extremely luminous like several Sun Gods, with crooked eyebrows, red blood eyes, fearful beard and jumbled moustache. He has an enduring 'Mudra' (posture) with quivering lips as though he has a devastating temper to destroy yet mildly-smiled, wearing half Moon, carrying a trident, parasu (axe), Vajra weapon, and resembling 'Agni golas' or strings of innumerable fire balls. He is 'Isana Deva' sporting an ageless and glittering Crown of the charming face of a Maha Purusha, a sturdy heart of 'Aghora', feet like those of 'Sadyojata' and Guhyam of a 'Vamadeva'. 'Easana' is a 'Kalaprapurna' with thirty eight 'Kalas' or features. He is 'Pancha Brahmamaya' (Full of Five Brahmas), Omkaramaya (Surfeit with Pranava), and Hamsa nyasa maya (Full of Swan like stylish walk). He is 'Panchakshara' (Five-lettered in Sanskrit viz. 'Namah Sivaya'; He is also Six-lettered viz. 'Om Namah Sivaya'; and 'Shadanga Yukta' or with Six-limbs. Bhagavan Siva affirms that He is an 'Ardha- Naareeswara' (Half Woman- Half Man). His left side of the body is 'Manonmayi Gauri'. She is 'Dhyana Swarup' (a personality in meditative feature) with an open and lustrously blossomed lotus-like smile and broad and shining eyes, full Moon-like visage, ornamented with half-Moon on Her head, smeared with red-tilak on forehead, wearing unusually pretty and fragrant flowers and a golden lotus on Her right hand for fun as an embodiment of Sadgunas. It is in such perfect company of Gauri Devi that a devotee faces Maha Deva, sprinkling Sankha (conchshell)-filled holy water on them reciting Omkara Mantras. The devotee offers to them 'Padya'or water for washing feet reciting 'Bhavey bhavey nathibhavey' manthra; as 'Achamanam' or taking a bit of water saying 'Vama devaya namah'; addressing Bhagavan and Devi with 'Vastras' saying 'Jyoshthaya namah'; again 'Achamanam' saying 'Rudraya namah'; 'Kalaya namah' with Sugandham; 'Vikaranaya namah' with 'Akshatas'; 'Bala Vikaranaya namah' offering flowers and 'Balayanamah' with 'Dhup' or fragrant incense; 'Bala Pramadhanaya namah' with 'Deepa Arthi' and 'Sashtanga Namaskara' to Bhagavan and Devi Couple along with 'Bindunada Pranava Mantras'. Thereafter, Bhagavan Siva told Devi Bhagavati:

Sivo Mahaswarachiva Rudro Vishnuh Pithamaha / Sansara Vaidyah Sarvajnah Paramatmeti Mukhyataha /Namashtaka midam nitya Sivasya Prati padakam/

[Siva, Maheswara, Rudra, Vishnu, Pithamaha or Grand father, Physician of the Universe, Sarvajna or the All- Knowing, Paramatma are the major eight names in vogue] Of the above Eight Names, there is an angle of 'Upadhis' or basis among the first Five Names from Siva to Pitamaha; the Five Upadhis are 'Sthulopadhi' (The Gross Body), 'Karmopadhi' (The Causal Body), 'Sukshmopathi' (The Subtle Body), 'Akasa' (The Divine Thought or Consciousness) and 'Atma' (The Inner Soul). There may thus be a number of names, but basically, there is only one name which has no Upadhis ie. Nirupadhi; no Gunas ie. Nirguna and no Vikaras ie. Nirvikara: He is Siva only! The next name is of Maheswara Tatva Gyan of twenty three Tatvas thas accompanied by the Maya Tatva or Prakrithi posseessing the twenty fourth Tatva and in all the twenty fifth Tatva of Purusha is Maheswara. The next name of Bhagavan is Rudra who is the root cause of Sorrows and is also the effective remover of Sorrows too. But Vishnu being the all-pervasive Shakti spreads and perpetuates 'Maya' by the interaction of 'Tatvas' and hence Vishnu is the cause and effect of Tatvas of Siva. Pitamaha is another primary name of Siva who is responsible for Srishti and is the Eldest of the World or the Great Guiding Force of Humanity. Vaidya or the Physician of not only the physical ailments all the residents of the Universe but more importantly is the most efficient curer of the Other-wordly feelings, actions and aspirations by endowing with right guidance of Tatvas and Siva Gyan to lead onto the path of self realisation. Sarvajna is He who is not only aware of the interactions of Maya and Realism but is fully equipped with the awareness and methodology of attainment. From the stage of Sarvajna who has the knowledge of 'Gunas', the devotee has to qualify to realise the Self (Atma) and to Siva Himself as that Super Power is **Paramatma**, Pranavatma, Avinashi and Mahadeva.

# 'Maha Vakyas' (Illustrious Statements) about Siva Gyan

Prajnam Brahma: Brahma is pure consciousness; 2) Aham Brahmasmi: I am Brahma; 3)

Tatvamasi: That Tathvam is Me; 4) Ayamatma Brahma: This Atma is Brahma; 5) Isha-vasyamidam Sarvam: This entire Universe is in Eswara; 6) Praanosmi: I am Prana or Life 7) Prajnatma: Atma is Gyan or Knowledge; 8) Yevaha Thadmutra Yadmutra tha dinvah:

Whatever is there, it is here and that which is here is there too; 9)Anyadeva thadvithadayo Aviditha dapi: That is beyond the Known and Unknown;10) Easha tha Antaratma antaryamrita: That Atma of yours is itself Antharyami and Amrita or inner consciousness and ever lasting; 11) Sa yaschayam Purusho yaschamavaditye sa ekah: Whatever exists in this person and Sun God is the same; 12) Ahamasmi Parabrahma param paratparam: I am Parabrahma myself; 13) Veda Sastra Guruthvath svapananda lakshanam: I am as happy as Guru who knows Vedas and Sastras; 14) Sarva bhutashitham Brahmat dehaha na samasyaha: Brahma who exists in all the beings, undoubtedly; 15) Tatvasya Pranohamasmi: I am the life of Tatvas and the Earth;16) Apam cha Pranohamasmi: I am the Life and water; 17) Vayoscha Pranohamasmi Akshasya Pranohamasmi: I am the Life of Wind and Sky 18) Trigunasya Pranohamasmi: I am the Life of Three Gunas 19) Sarvoha Sarvatmakoh Samsaro Yadbhut uccha bhavyam yadvarthamanam Sarvatmika tvad vithiyoham: I am the Universal Soul as also second to none in the past, present and future; 20) Sarvam khilvada Brahma: This is all Brahma Himself; 21) Sarvoha Vimuktoham: I am everything and free; 22) yo sowseeham hamsaha so hamasmi: I am present as a Swan.

# Origin of Vedas, Time, Basic Duties and Pasupati Vrata

In the Final Volume of Siva Purana, entitled Vayaviya Samhita, the congregation of Sages headed by Suta Muni gave a broad description of the above Titled and related Topics as explained to Veda Vyas by Vayu Deva Himself. Even before the narration, the Holy spot of 'Naimisaranya' or the Nimisa Forest where the congregation was taking place was acknowledged as the most befitting venue for a specific reason. He stated that at the end of the previous 'Dwapara Yuga' and at the very beginning of the now on-going Kali Yuga, Lord Brahma released Manonmaya Chakra to ascertain the impact of the impending Time ahead. The Chakra (disc) would travel around and the entire area traversed by it would be submerged in 'Maya'. Finally, wherever the Chakra would break should be considered as a safe zone covering a large segment of land of the prescribed circumference or the 'nemi' of that zone, fit for Yagnas which were performed for ten thousand years and Lord Brahma too carried on the creation process there itself. Such was the significance of 'Naimisharanya'. [This forest is some 80 km away from Lucknow in Uttar Pradash and there are vestiges here till date of the past 5000 years at the crossing of the two yugas. There is a Chakra-Teertha (waterbody) which is stated to be fathomless as the British failed to disprove the mythology and tried to send down a cable of 1000 meters (3300 feet of depth and gave up; it was in this Sarovar that thousands of Sages took their bath before performing 'Yagnas'. There is a Vyasa Gaddi (Seat) under a Banyan Tree where Sage Vyasa executed the division of Vedas and the writing of Puranas; a huge Hanuman idol of 18 feet- believed to be self-manifested, when Hunuman rescued Rama and Lakshmana hidden by Ravana in Patala Loka up into Chakra Tirtha; and a Pandava Temple. Till date, groups of Bramhanas arrive at Naimisharanya periodically to perform Yagnas and Homas from all over India. Also there is a Siva Temple with His eyes looking east in the morning and west in the evenings. The presiding Deity Lalita Devi has a Temple around Chakra Tirtha, where thousands take bath every Full Moon Monday and pray to Her for instant fulfillment of desires.]

There are Eighteen 'Vidyas' or Disciplines of Learning / Knowledge comprising Four Vedas of Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharvana; Six Vedangas, Meemamsa, Nyaya, Puranas, Ayurveda, Dhanurveda, Gandharva Veda and Artha Sastra. Bhagavan Siva created all the Vidyas.Brahma recited the Vedas, Scriptures, and Puranas; Vishnu preserved them all and since these are difficult to assimilate, created Veda Vyasa to pass on the Learnings to posterity in a lesser difficult manner. In fact the Essence of Vedas is conveyed in some four lakh 'Slokas' (Stanzas) among Eighteen Puranas.

Besides Vidyas, Bhagavan also presented the Concept of **Time** to the World and enabled calulations of years, 'Ayanas' (half years) as per the movement of Sun viz. Uttarayana of Upward movement of Sun and Dakshinayana or downward movement, months, fortnights (Sukla and Krishna Pakshas), weeks, days and nights, hours, thirty muhurthas in a day and night, thirty kalas in a muhurtha, fifteen nimeshas in a kala and so on. Also one year to Devas is three hundred and sixty years to human beings. Satya Yuga is 4000 Deva or Divine years, Threta Yuga is 3000 Deva years, Dwapara Yuga is 2000 Deva Years and Kali Yuga has one thousand Deva years. Four Yugas make a Kalpa during which there are fourteen Manvantaras. One Brahma day is one kalpa; Brahma's age is for thousand kalpas; Vishnu's age is one hundred Brahma Years; Rudra's age is one hundred Vishnu years; Siva's age is one hundred Rudra years and Sada Siva's age is infinite! It is stated that Siva starts a day by Creation and by the end of the night terminates the Universe in annihilation! Having regard to the 'Varanshrama' or the Four Caste System of Brahmanas, Vysyas, Kshtriyas and Sudras, Veda Vyasa in his various Discussions with the Sages, pinpointed the Basic duties of Brahmanas even more than rituals. The basic duties include: 'Trikala Sandhyas' (Gayatri thrice each day), 'Havan' (Offerings to the Sacred Fire), worship to 'Sivalingas' and Charity. Also, he should observe every Being in Siva; Compassion, Virtue, Tripti (contentment), Belief in God; Ahimsa (non violence), Bhakti (Devotion), Veda Pathanam (Reading Vedas), Practice of Yoga, Teaching of Vedas and Scriptures, celibacy, penance, wearing Sacred Thread and tuft; abstitence of night meals, continuous chantings of Omkara, Gayatri and Siva Mantras and finally, Siva worship based so much with Faith rather than mere Rituals. The Siva Mantra viz. 'Om Namah Sivaya' should be chanted a crore times ideally through out the night or fifty lakh times or atleast ten lakh times. One tenth of the chantings of the Siva Mantra must be executed by way of 'Havan'; one tenth of the Havan must be performed by way of 'Tarpan'; one tenth of the Tarpan must be done by way of 'Marjanam' or cleansing or purifying; one tenth of Marjanam should be the number of Brahmanas to be engaged for 'Bhojan' or meals and 'dakshina' or monetary offerings. The next explanation by Veda Vyasa related to 'Mantrik Nvas' or Ascetic Nyas viz. Sthithi Nyas (Posture), Utpatti (origin) and Laya (synthesis). Esablishing and chanting cryptic mantras (alphabets) from thumb to little finger is Stithi nyasa; the cpyptic mantra from right thumb to left thumb is Utpatti Nyasa and from left thumb to right thub is Laya Nyasa. House holderes should perform the Stithi Nyas, the Celebates to prefer Utpatti Nyas, and those who have relinquished the world or the Vanaprashasyas should take to the Laya Nyasa.

Pasupathi Vratha is recommended by Vayudeva to attain worldly pleasures as also Mukti'. The Vratha comprises of Kriya, Tapa, Dhyana, Gyana and Yoga. This is to be performed on Chaitra Pournami, but two days before it, the Devotee should seek the blessings of a Guru, wear coloured clothes, be seated on kusa grass, take a vow of with a kusa on hand to perform the entire Vratha as per prescribed, observe fast on all the three days, execute day long havans, and Dhyana and worship to Siva Linga. After observing the same procedure of the preceding two days, the devotee must on the final day of the Vrata wear deer skin, smear ash of the havans of the preceding two days, practise 'Ashtanga Yoga' under the directives of Guru, perform 'Avarana Puja', and 'Shodasopacharas' or the sixteen kinds of services to the Siva Linga and Siva idol.. This Vratha may be performed once in a life time or every year or for twelve years or even as long as one lives. Depending on the honesty and intensity of the Performer, Pasupathi Vrata is stated to bless the devotee to attain Siva Loka.

**Auspicious days** for performing Siva worship are the eighth or fourteenth day of each fortnight; on the Solictice day or Samkranthi when Sun is positioned north of Equator; on Solar and Lunar Eclipse days;

on the days when Pushya nakshatra falls in Pushya month; or Magha nakshatra falls in Magha month; Uttaraphalguna falls on Pournami of Phaluna month; Chaitra Pournami in Chaitra month; Visakha nakshatra falling on Pournami of Visakha Month; Moola in Jyeshtha month; Uttarashadha in Ashadha month; Shravana star in Shravana Month; Uttarabhadra in Bhadra month; Pournami in Asvayuja month; Kartika Pournami during Kartika Month; and on the day when Ardra nakshatra falls in Margaseersha month.

### Siva Purana 'Phalasruti'

While concluding Siva Purana, Veda Vyasa affirmed that whoever reads or hears Siva Purana would indeed reap ample fruits. Whether it is an athiest or indolent, a stupid or egoistic, a non devotee or careless, any person reading or hearing even portions of the Purana rather casually would raise a flag of virtue. A non devotee would secure devotion and a devotee would obtain devotion in abundance. If a person reads or hears just once, the sins of long standing nature get burnt off instantly. On reading twice, the person becomes a staunch follower of Bhagavan Siva and reading thrice shall indeed reach the person to the abode of Siva. *Achhiva Puranam hi Sivasyatipriyam param /Bhukti mukti pradam Brahmasammitham Bhakti yaradhanam/* 

#### **OM NAMASSIVAYA**

'Nityam Swodara Poshanaya Sakalaanuddishya vitthaasaya /vyartham paryatanam karomi bhavatassevaam na jane Vibho / majjanmanthara punyapaaka balathastvam Sarva! Sarvaanthara stishthasyeva hi thena vaa Pasupathey! tey rakshaneeyosmyaham '

### (Sivanandalahari Stanza 57 by Adi Shankara)

[I have contacted many and travelled a lot without aim just for filling my stomach and desirous of becoming prosperous. Little did I realise the significance of service to you, Oh Lord of all beings and all-pervasive! You do wipe away the sins of your devotees. May be, some good was done in my past birth that I feel confident as you are within all the beings and thus consider me too to be saved!

### ESSENCE OF SKANDA (KARTIKA) PURANA- CONTENTS

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### ESSENCE OF SKANDA (KARTIKA) PURANA

#### MANGALAACHARANA

Om Narayanam Namaskruthya Naramchaiva Narotthamam

Devim Sarasvathichaiva Tato Jagamudeerayet

Yasyajna Jagat Srishta Virinchih Paalako Harih /

Samhartha Kaala Rudrakhyo Namastasmai Pinaakiney

(Our Salutations to you Pinaakini! You have instructed Lord Brahma to create and Lord Hari to administer and you have assumed the task of Destruction as Kaala Rudra.)

Skanda (Kartika) Purana is the largest of all the major Eighteen Puranas, divided into Seven 'Khandas' or Branches viz. Maheswara Khanda, Vishnu Khanda, Brahma Khanda, Kasi Khanda, Avanthya Khanda, Nagara Khanda and Prabhasa Khanda. *Maheswara Khanda* is subdivided into three Upa Khandas as Kedara, Kaumarika and Arunachala. *Vishnu Khanda* has nine Upa Khandas, viz. Venkatachala Mahatmya, Purushottama Kshetra Mahatmya, Badarikashrama Mahatmya, Kartika Masa Mahatmya, Margasira Masa Mahatmya, Vishakha Mahatmya and Ayodhya Mahatmya. *Brahma Khanda* has three Upa Khandas viz. Sethu Mahatmya, Dharmaranya and Uttara / Brahmottara. *Kasi Khanda* has two parts viz. Purvardha and Uttarardha. *Avanthya Khanda* has three Upa Khandas viz. Avanti Kshetra Mahatmya, Chaturasiti Linga Mahatmya and Reva Upa Khanda. *Nagara Khanda* has Tirtha Mahatmya. Finally, *Prabhasa Khanda* has Prabhasa Kshetra Mahatmya and Dwaraka Kshetra Mahatmya. The division of the Skanda (Kartika) Purana into the Seven Khandas is to provide road-map assistance to the readers.

At the successful completion of Yagna organised by Sage Suta at Naimisharanya which was attended by several Munis, Sage Lomesh addressed the congregation about the various incidents related to Maheswara, Vishnu and Brahma as well as the significance of Maha Kshetras like Kasi, Avanthya and Prabhasa and the Preachings so narrated have been immortalised as Skanda (Kartika) Purana.

#### Devi Sati's self-immolation and Daksha Yagna destroyed

Tey Dhanyasthye Mahatmano ye Bhajanti Sada Sivam, Bina Sadaa Sivam yo hi Samsaaram tharthu micchhati, Samoodho Maha Papaha Siva dveshi Na samsayaha, bhakshitamhi garam ena Daksha Yagno vinaashithah, kaalasya dahanam eva krutam Raajyam pramochanam.( Those who perform 'Bhajan' to Sada Siva are worthy of commendation; who could possibly describe such Magnificent Bhagavan who devoured poisonous flames to save the Universe, destroyed Daksha Yagna, burnt off 'Kaala' and saved King Sweta from impossible hardships)!

Daksha Prajapati's daughter Devi Sati, married to Maha Deva, felt insulted that neither she nor her husband was invited to a Maha Yagna conducted by her father. She attended the Yagna uninvited, despite Siva's disagreement. Reluctantly Siva let her go but she was accompanied by Siva Ganas as a security. Not only Daksha ignored Sati's presence, but he made unwarranted and offensive comments against Siva. He said that her husband was inauspicious as he was always surrounded by ghosts, spirits and mean powers and that was why he did not invite him to the Yagna and denied him of the share of the proceeds of the Sacrifice. Sati Devi felt infuriated at her father's unholy remarks and jumped into the Sacrificial Fire and was charred to death, even before any one in the audience realised, especially the Sivaganas. As Narada conveyed the sad news, Lord Siva became furious and created Veerabhadhra with the instruction of devastating Daksha Yagna, uprooting the beard of Bhrigu who was the chief preceptor of the Yagna

and killing Daksha Prajapati. As there was all round violence, bloodshed and obliteration, Lord Brahma prayed to the fuming Lord Siva by 'Sashtanga Vandana' or prostration. Brahma's prayer stated:

'Namo Rudraya Shantaaya Brahmaney Paramaatmaney, Twam hi Viswasrujaam strashtadhata twam Prapitaamahah/ Namo Rudraaya Mahathey Neela Kanthaya Vedhasey, Vishvaya Vishva beejaaya jagadaananda hethavey/ Omkaarastvam Vashatkaraya Sarvarambha pravarthakah, Yagnosi Yagna karmosih Yagnanaamcha pravarthakah/ Sarvesham Yagna karthranaam thvameva pratipaalakah, Yagnoshi Yagnakarmosi Yagnaanaam pravarthakah/ Sarvesham Yagnakartraanaam thvameva Pratipaalakah Saranayosi Maha Deva Sarvesham Praanino Prabho Raksha Raksha Maha Deva Putrashokena peeditham'.

(My Greetings to You Lord Rudra, You are the embodiment of Peace, Parabrahma, Paramatma; You are the Creator of Prajapathies who create and thus You are the father of fathers; You are the Preserver of the Universe; You are the Supreme, the Blue Throated, Vedhasey, the Basic Seed, the Cause of Happiness; the Yagna, the Yagna Karma, the Super Organiser of Yagnas, the Omkar, the Vashatkar, I take refuge in You, kindly save us, be merciful and care for us the progeny of Yours).

In reply, Lord Siva affirmed that whatever had happened was squarely the evil doing of Daksha himself (Sweeyena karmana Daksho hatho Brahmannasamsayaha). Brahma made a sincere request to forgive Daksha and the ever-merciful Siva planted the goat-head by killing the Sacrificial Goat. The revived Daksha was ashamed and prayed to Siva for forgiveness and Siva replied as follows:

Chaturvidha bhajanthey man Janaah sukruthinah Sadaah, Aartho jignaasuraarthaarthi Jnaanischadwija Sattamaa /Thasmanmey Jnaaninah Sarve Priyah Syunarthra samaayasah, Bina Jnanena mam praapthu yathanthey they hi Balishah / kevalam karmanaa twam hi samsaararthumichhasi, Na vedaischa na daanaischan yagnaistapasakwachit/ na shaknuvanthimaam praaptum moodhaah karshavasaanarah, Tasmatjnaana parobhutva kuru karma samaahithah/ Sukha Duhkha Samaa bhutva Sukhibhava nirantaram/

(Human beings pray to me for four end-uses, viz. to escape from the sorrow of wordly entanglements, to enquire about the purpose of existence, to fulfill desires and to genuinely seek me. Among these the best approach is indeed of a Gyani; others are all 'Agnyanis' or ignoramus only. Yagnas and such other Karmas without knowledge are imperfect ways of realising Paramatma; ignorant persons try to reach the Supreme Power Siva by reciting Vedas, perform charities or execute Yagnas and Tapasyas; these too are not the ideal means. The best way is to utilise 'Gyan' and perform 'karma' with undiluted concentration and treat both worldly happiness and sorrows with equanimity).

In other words, rituals are not necessarily the ultimate for seeking Salvation, but dedication and enlightenment are. This was indeed a lesson to Daksha who paid too much stress on rituals with disregard to devotion and mental regulation that landed him in his devastation but for Lord Siva's clemency and forgiveness.

### Significance of Siva Puja- Similarity of Three Murtis

Indeed the multi-sided propitiousness of Siva Puja was described by Sage Lomesh: if one brooms the courtyard of a Siva Temple he is worthy of greeting him all over the world and trace his foot prints to forward him to Siva Loka. He who lights a 'dhup' (incense stick) and offer 'Naivedya' in a Temple of Maha Deva is blessed for two generations and attains name and fame instantly. Those who put up lights before the Deity of Hari-Hara would illuminate the families of their parents and offer 'Naivedya' to the Deity would attain that much of 'Punya' or the fruits of good deeds equating one Yagna. If a reconstruction of a dilapitated temple of Hara or Hari is taken up, the person concerned gets double the benefit and if a temple is constructed afresh, then the number of bricks used would equate the number of years in the Loka of the specified Lord. If a bell is dedicated to a Temple, the donor would become reputed in Three Lokas soon. Frequent 'darshans' or visits to Temples would enhance the Punya account. The person whose tongue is always used to recite the 'Panchakshara Mantra'-Om Namassivaya-is akin to Siva Himself. He who visits Siva Temple regularly in the morning hours burns off the sins of

the current birth; the afternoon visit helps dissolve the sins of previous seven births and the night visits to the Siva Temple is devoid of sins totallly. The two words of 'Si' and 'va' denote propitiousness and sinlessness. If a person recites the name of Siva, thinks of Him, performs Siva Japa incessantly and dedicates himself to Siva in the mouth, hears about Him, thinks of Him, performs service to Him in all possible ways and means, organises 'Puran Pathan' or sings hymns, group singings, musicals, bhajans, Vedic Renderings of Namakam /Chamakam and Mahanyasas and encourages innovative and thoughtful means to worship, has direct accesss to Siva Loka.

While describing the worship of Siva Linga, Sage Lomesh emphasised that there was no difference of Bhagavan Siva and Lord Vishnu: Yo Vishnuh sah Sivo Jneyo yah Sivo Vishnureva sah, Peethika Vishnu Rupamsyallinga ruupee Maheswarah / Thasmallinga- archanam sreshtham Sarveyshaamapi vai Dwijah (He who is Vishnu is Siva and Siva be known as Vishnu Himself; the base is Vishnu and the 'Linga' is Maheswara and thus worship of Siva Linga is idyllic). Brahma worships the Linga made of 'Mani' Stone, Indra worships 'Ratna' Linga, Chandra of Pearl made Linga, Surya of copper, Kuber of Silver made Linga, Varun of Ruby, Yama of Blue coloured Linga, Vayu of Kesari colour and so on. Inhabitants of Pataala too worship Siva. Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Daityas and Rakshasas were no exception.Bali, Namuchi, Hiranyakasipu, Vrishaparva, and several of Sukracharya followers were great Bhaktas of Maha Deva. Rayanaasura was an illustrious devotee of Maha Siva who bestowed a number of boons in appreciation of the Demon's severe 'Tapasya' such as Gyan, Vigyan, invincibility in battles, and even double the number of heads of Panchamukha Parameswara! Ravan thus became the Lord of Trilokas. As Devas approached Nandi to entreat Maha Deva to get rid of the menace of Ravana, Nandi gave the background as to why he sported the face of a monkey when Ravana waited to meet Maha Deva; Nandi did not like the comments of Ravana about Nandi's face and gave a curse that a monkey-face placed before a human being in the Avatar of Lord Vishnu would herald the death of Ravana. Nandi also advised Devas to pray for Vishnu (who too was the same as Siva) to annhilate Ravana. Thus Devas prayed to Vishnu and the latter advised the Demi-Gods to place Nandi ahead and quickly become 'Vanaraas' or monkeys. He would be born at Ayodhya and His consort Sita would be abducted by Ravana who ignored a human being while asking for boons from Siva. Various Devas assumed 'Amsas' or alternate forms like Indra as Vali, Brahma as Jambavaan, Surya as Sugriva, the Eleventh Rudra as Hanuman, Seshanag as Lakshman, Vishnu's 'Bhujadanda' or shoulders as Bharat and Shatrughna, Brahma Vidya (Vedavati in earlier birth) as Devi Sita etc. Indeed Ravan was an illustrious devotee of Maha Deva but despite that unparalelled devotion to Siva, the Demon's wish-list and evil actions were totally misdirected to highly immoral purposes and wicked ambitions that had to inevitably lead to destruction; yet, the steadfast devotion to Parama Siva was credited to provide salvation not only to himself but also his family and followers. Ravana could never realise that both Maha Deva and Bhagavan Vishnu were one and the same, as a thick veil of Maya (Illusion) misdirected him totally, vindicating the absolute Truth that Vishnu and Siva were indeed just the same; foolish entities like Ravana followed wrong convictions!

### Danavas defeat Devas, churning of Ocean and Emergence of 'Amrit'

As Deva Guru Brihaspathi's entry to Court of Indra was ignored as the latter was engrossed in music and dance by Celestial damsels, the Guru cursed Indra to soon lose the splendour of Indraloka. Indra got frightened and approached Brahma who went up to Lord Vishnu in turn. Bhagavan Vishnu confirmed that those who got the Guru insulted were as bad as hurting one's own parents. Thus justifying the curse, Bhagavan Vishnu advised Indra and Devas to take refuge from King Bali of Patala Loka. Already having learnt of the curse, Danava Guru Sukracharya asked Bali the King of Danavas of Patala to group his full strength of his army and armoury and attack Indra and Devas. But since Indra and Devas sought refuge to King Bali and as per the Rules of Ideal Aministration, Bali did not wage a battle but plundered the wealth of Indraloka. But all the valuables of Swarga brought to Patala got submerged in the Ocean since King Bali did not perform hundred 'Aswamedha' Yagnas as were performed by Indra. A Celestial Voice was heard by Davas and Danavas that the best way of recovering the heavenly wealth as also to materialise several objects including 'Amrit' (Ambrosia) would be by way of churning 'Ksheer Sagar' or the Ocean

of Milk with Mandhara Mountain as the churning rod, requesting Maha Nag Vasuki or the Great String (in whose place Maha Garud, the 'Vahan' or the carrier of Maha Vishnu was allowed to bear the brunt of Three Worlds) and approaching Maha Vishnu Himself to take up the Incarnation as 'Kurma' or the stabiliser of the weight of the Mountain. The Super Churning of the Ocean commenced with the proud Danavas holding the Thousand Heads of Vasuki emitting poisonous flames perishing innumerable Danavas in the process while Devas were saved as they were placed at the tail of the Great Serpent. As the speed of churning caught momentum when both Danavas and Devas were engrossed in the historic mission, the whole world was engulfed by 'Halahal' or skywide poisonous blaze gradually swallowing up the Universe. That was the most critical juncture when Maha Deva swallowed the Halahal and avoided Universal Destruction; He kept the Halahal in His throat and hence assumed the epithet as 'Nila Kantha' or the Blue Throated thus ensuring the survival of the Lokas in His belly. As the churning got revived again, Chandra Deva emerged. Danava King Maha Bala roared and re-commenced the operation and in the process of churning appeared Surabhi-Kama Dhenu- the Celestial Cow followed by thousands of multi coloured cows which were requested for by Rishis. Then surfaced Celestial Trees of Four Kinds viz. 'Kalpa Vriksha', Parijata, Mango and Santana, The Jewel of 'Kaustubh' which was like Suryamandal appeared and with mutual consent of Danavas and Devas it was gifted to Lord Vishnu. From the Ocean came up 'Ucchaisva' or the best of the Horses; 'Iravata', the best of the Elephants; and 'Madira'-like intoxicants such as 'Bhang'. Further churning resulted in Devi Maha Lakshmi- also known as 'Anvikshaki' (Vedanta Vidya), or Mula Vidya, Vaishnavi, Brahma Vidya, Maya and Yoga Maya- who instantly threw a 'Varamala' or a neck lace around Bhagavan Vishnu and the whole Universe including Devas, Danavas, Rishis, Siddhas, Apsarsas, Kinnaras and Charanaganas were all immensely happy. Finally Dhanvanthari, the Demi God of Medicine, came to sight holding two pots of Amrit which were instantly snatched by Danavas and ran to Patalaloka and Devas too ran behind. King Bali asked Devas not to interfere with Amrit as he never interfered with several other valuable objects. Devas approached Lord Vishnu and the latter assured that He would personally intervene in the distribution of Amrit and assumed the incarnation of Devi Mohini. King Bali requested Mohini to help distribute and she agreed with a cautionary note the She should abide by Her own discretion, should not challenge the methodology or the Principles of distribution and that She would perform the task only next morning since everybody should consume the Ambrosia with physical and mental purity. Bali, Vrishaparva, Namuchi, Shankha, Budbud, Kalanemi, Vatapi, Kumbha, Nikumbha, Sund, Upasund, Nishumbha, Shumbha and other Danavas were lined up. Mohini said that before the distribution, some of the leading Devas like Indra and other Lokpals did deserve some charity and might be considered as their Guests of Honour. Bali was convinced that the principle of 'Athithis' or Guests was agreeable and the entire other lot would be given away to Danavas as per their Status. Then the whole clan of Daityas nodded their heads to the age old Theory viz. 'Aadhou -hyabhyagathah pujyaa iti vai Vedika Shrutihi' (Vedika Shruti says that at the very beginning, Guests be respected). Thus gradually fooling Danavas by spreading the net of Maya, Mohini gave away Amrit to all Devas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, and Apsarsas; but one Danava named Rahu sat in the queue of Devas by mischief and out of a feeling that his turn would never come otherwise. As Chandra complained to Vishnu alias Mohini, the latter cut off the head of Rahu who tried to take revenge on Chandra by swallowing him. But Chandra prayed to Maha Deva who rescued by keeping him in the lock of His hairs. Rahu chased Chandrama and Maha Deva kept Rahu's many heads -which emerged due to the contact of Amrit- around His neck.

### Devas regain Swarga, Indra commits/ dissolves 'Brahmahatya' and reinstated

As Indra got back his status following the battle of Danavas and Devas, several Danavas were killed where as Devas had the advantage of Amrit. Sukracharya performed severe Tapasya and secured 'Mrita Sanjeevani' and sought to revive the lives of Danavas, especially King Bali who committed suicide. Brahma named Vishwarupa as the Priest since Guru Brihaspati was unavailable even before the time of Churning of the Ocean. Vishwarupa had three heads, one to conduct Yagnas and the other two for non-virtuous tasks like drinking. Originally from among Danavas, he was partial to them by reciting pro-Deva mantras loudly and pro-Danava mantras quietly. Indra observed this trend of partiality and fraud and one

day by observing the open cheating of Devas by anti Deva Mantras became furious and killed him. Indeed, killing a Brahmana is among the 'Pancha Pathakas'-'Brahma hatya Surapanam Steyam Gurvinyagamah Ithyesha mapyaghavathami -dameva cha nishkruthih, Namavyaharanam Vishnorthasatdvishayah mathih' (Those who commit the unpardonable grave sins such as Killing of a Brahmana, drinking alcohol, thieving, and sleeping with Guru's wife have only one recourse to free from the sins viz. to chant the hymns of Bhagavan which alone would enlighten the mind and fill up with Godliness). Indra left his Loka and kept on running out of fright from the grave Sin and performed Tapasya hiding in a pond for three hundred Divya years. Meanwhile, there was chaos in Indraloka as any Kingdom where a Grave Sinner rules, there would be all round misery, death, devastation and famine. Indra had not only killed a Brahmana, but also molested his Guru-like Gautami's wife. With great remorse and shame, Indra approached Brihaspati who told Indra that any sin committed knowingly would have far more intensity than otherwise for which there could be no 'prayaschit' or remedy. Meanwhile Sage Narad suggested Nahush to become a temporary Indra, till Indra returned after long period of penance. Nahush had performed ninety nine Ashvamadh Yagas. But he did not really deserve to be the King as he desired to have Sachi Devi, the wife of former Indra. She did not indeed like the idea of her becoming Nahusha's wife; she said that every Devata had one specific 'Vahan' (Vehicle) but Nahusha had none and after securing one, he could approach her. Nahush selected for himself a 'Palki'that flies without the consent of its owners, viz. two well read Brahmanas; Nahusha said: 'Sarpa Sarpa', which meant Go Go at once'. The Brahmana owners felt that Nahusha was disrespectable to them and purposively misunderstood that Nahush wanted to become Serpents and threw him down the mountains and he was converted as 'Ajagara', a huge serpent. A King like Nahusha who is arrogant, desirous of other's wife and impertinent to virtuous Brahmanas would indeed deserve this kind of treatment!

As there was no King of Swarga, with Indra was at large for fear of 'Brahmahatya' sin and the interim King Nahusha was cursed as an 'Ajagara'down the mountain valleys, there was disorder and confusion. Indrani and Brihaspati accompanied by Senior Devas discovered Indra hiding in Manasarovar, a waterbody, where the Brahmahatya Shakti could not enter. In fact Brahmahatya Devi was alert to catch Indra if he came out of the water body. Brihaspati made an agreement with the Shakti to divide the Great Sin into four parts; one quarter of the Sin be excused in view of the 'Devakarya' or the Divine Task of liberating Indra since Indraloka was in confusion without a King and what was worse that Vishvakarma's had launched a powerful Yagna to obliterate Devas and Sages; the first part of the Sin be borne by Bhu Devi on the understanding that Lord Krishna when born in Dwapara Yuga would purify the entire Earth; the second part of the Sin would be distributed and absorbed in the Oceans, Rivers, Streams and various water bodies all over the Universe; the third part would be shared by trees, forests and the greenery; finally the fourth part would get dissolved by the proportionate sins committed by women by not following the feminine duties to fathers, grandfathers and husbands and their families. Thus the totality of the 'Brahmahatya Paataka' of Indra got dissolved and he got reinstalled as the King of Indraloka.

#### Vritrasura vs. Indra and Sage Dadhichi's illustrious sacrifice

Pursuant to the killing of Viswarupa by Indra, his father Viswakarma being keen on revenge performed relentless 'Tapasya' to Brahma who granted the boon of begetting a mighty son who could defeat Indra and Devas. A boy of huge body dimensions and invincibility named Vritrasura was born and he grew not only in strength but extraordinary mental and spiritual capability. As Indra was in panic and distress, he approached Brahma who advised to request Sage Dadhichi to sacrifice his backbone and head which could destroy Vritrasura and no other force. Keeping in view the Divine Task involved, the Sage made the biggest sacrifice of his life and allowed the 'Asthidaan' or the charity of his bones. Indra commissioned Surabhi to create a 'Vajra' from the Sage's backbone and an 'Astra'- mantrik arrow-from Dadhichi's head, known as 'Brahma Sira'. Surabhi materialised various other 'Astra-Sastras' for the use of other Devas from the powerful and mantra-purvak bones of the Maha Muni. The wife of Dadhichi called Suvarcha Devi who was away when the sacrifice of bones was executed was horror-struck to learn of it and gave a curse to all Devas to become childless, cried at the unbearable loss of her husband sitting

under a pipal tree and gave birth to a radiant son named Pippalad. She blessed the child to become a learned Sage to be near the Pipal tree for long and entered into a 'Samadhi' to join her husband. Meanwhile, the battle of Devas and Danavas broke out under the unique leadership of Vritrasura. Demon Nahuchi became such a ruthless and fierce opponent that even the Vajra could hardly hurt a body hair of his! A Celestial Voice was heard by Devas that Nahuchi be lured to fight on the Sea-shore and the foam of the waves was the key to end up the demon. As the great combatant Nahuchi was destroyed, Vritrasuara entered the battle field and Devas, Dikpalakas, Navagrahas, Gandharvas and the rest took to defensive positions and the battle was on for a while till 'Pradosha Samay' or dusk time and the fight was to resume the next day. This helped Devas to perform the Pradosha Vrata to secure victory against the demons.

# Pradosha Vrata-Procedure of Worship to Lord Siva and its 'Udyapan'

Deva Guru Brihaspathi taught the Procedure of Worship to Bhagavan Siva on Kartika month's Sukla Paksha Pournami or the full moon day; On that day, during the noon time one has to perform Puja formally to a Siva Linga; if the Puja is done to a Linga in a Village, it would be good, but outside village/Township is hundred times better; another hundred times better in a forest; and on a mountain top or a Tapovan, it is thousand times better! At Pradosh time, the devotee should observe silence, light up thousand or at least thirty two lights with ghee (classified butter), perform 'Shodasopacharas' with flowers, fruits, incense sticks, sandal paste, naivedya (food offering) and so on. Later on, the devotee should execute hundred and eight 'Pradakshinas' or circumambulations and Namaskars followed by 'Stuti' or commendation as follows:

Siva Stuti: 'Namo Rudraya, Neelaaya, Bhimaya Paramaatmaney, Kapardiney Sureshaya, Vyomakeshaya vai Namah/ Vrushabhadwajaaya Somaaya Somanathaaya Shambhavey, Digambaraaya Bhargaaya Umaakaanthaya yai Namah, Tapomayaya Bhayyaya Siyasreshthaaya Vishnayey, Vyalapriyaya Vyaalaaya Vyalaanaampathaye Namah / Mahidharaya Vyaghraya Pashunam pathaye Namah, Puraanthakaaya Simhaaya Shaardulaaya Makhaaya cha / Meenaya Meena nathaaya Siddhaya Parameshtiney, Kaamaanthakaya Buddhaaya Buddheenaam pathaye namah / Kapothaya Vishishtaaya Sishtaaya Sakalaatmaney, Vedaaya Veda Jeevaaya Veda Guhyaya vai Namah / Deerghaya Deergha Rupaya Deerghaarthaya vinaashiney, Namo Jagatprathishthaaya Vyomarupaaya vai Namah/ Gajaasura Mahaakaalay andhakaasura bhediney, Neelalohitha Suklaaya Chanda Munda Priyaya cha / Bhakti Priyaya Devaaya Jnaaney Jnaanavyaya cha, Maheshaya Namasthubhyam Mahadeva Haraaya cha/ Trinetraya Tri Vedaya Vedaangaaya Namo Namah, Arthaya cha Artha rupaaya Paramaarthaya vai Namah / Viswa Bhushaya Viswaya Vishwanaadhaya vai Namah, Shankaraayacha Kaalaaya Kaalaavayarupiney / Aruupaaya Viruupaaya Sukshma Sukashmaya vai Namah, Smashaana vaasiney Bhuyo Namasthey krutthi vaasasey/ Shashaanka Shekharayeshaa yograbhumishayaya cha, Durgaya Durgapaaraya Durgaavayava sakshiney/ Linga Rupaaya Lingaaya Lingaanaam pathayenamah, Namah Pralaya Rupaaya Pranavarthaya vai Namah/ Namo Namaha kaarana kaaranaaya Mrityunjayaaya atmabahya swarupiney, Sri Thriyambikaayaasitikantha Sarva Gauripathey Sakala Mangala hetayey namah/

[My Greetings to Rudra, Nila, Bhima, Paramaatma, Kapardi (Jatajuta dhaari), Sureswara (Super Lord of Devaas), Sky coloured like thick haired Vyomakesha; Greetings to Vrishabhadwaja or Carrier of Flag with Bull Insignia, Soma accompanied with Uma, the Lord providing safety to Chandra, Bhagavan Shambhu, Digambara or the Wearer of clothes of all Dishas or Ten Directions (that is naked), Bharga or the resplendent personality worthy of devotion, and Umakantha. My veneration to the Embodiment of 'Tapas', Bhavya or the personification of Auspiciousness, Sivasreshtha, Vishnurupa, Vyalapriya or who has penchant for Snakes, has the Form of Snakes and is the Chief of Snakes; Mahidharaya or wears the brunt of Prithvi, Vyaghraya or Tigerlike, Pashupathi or the Lord of Beings, the annihilator of Demon Tripura, Lionlike and Yagnamaya. Greetings to Siva who is Fishlike, the Lord of Fishes, Siddha, Parameshthi, the destroyer of Kamadeva or the alternate name of desire, the core of Knowledge and mental maturity, Sarva Sreshtha, Sadhu Purusha or the Essence of Goodness and Sarvaatmaney or the

Soul of one and all. My adulation to Veda Swarupa, the Provider of Life to Vedas, Vedagruhnaya or the inner tatva of Vedas, Dirghaya, Dirgha Swarupa, Dirghaartha Swarupa and Avinaashaya or Indestructible, the Creator of Universe, the All Pervasive, and the Destroyer of Demons Gajasura and Andhakaura. My exaltation to the Beloved of Bhaktas, Parama Deva, the hub of Gyan and the Source of knowledge, Mahesha, Maha Deva, Hara, Trinetra, Tri Veda, Vedanga, the means of Artha (wealth), Kama (Desire) and Paramartha (Salvation). My respects to Viswabhusha, Viswarupa, Viswanadha, Shankara, Kaala and Kaala-avayava Rupa. My salutations to Siva who has no Rupa, has Vikruta Rupa, and 'Sukshmakshma Swarupa' or the Tiniest Form, My esteem to 'Smashanavaasi' or the Dweller of Grave Yards, Vyaghracharma dhaari or the Wearer of Tiger Skin, Chandra -sekhara or who sports Moon on His head and the Supreme God who sleeps on frightening grounds. My worship to Paramatma who is 'Durgama'or unattainable and a limb to limb visualiser of Devi Durga. My devotion to Lingarupa, the Cause of Linga and the Cause of Causes or the Chief of Causes. My 'Sashtanga Namaskar'to Maha Pralaya Rudra, the heart of Pranava or Omkara, Mritunjaya or the Triumph of Death, Sri Triambika, Nilakantha or the Blue Throated, Sharva, Gauripathey and 'Mangala hethavey' or The Origin and Foundation of Auspiciousness.] Whoever is desirous of performing Pradosha Vrata ought to recite the Siva Stothra; by so saying Guru Briahaspathi asked to perform the Padosha Vrata at once and take on Demon Vritrasura to secure Glorious Victory by the Grace of Maha Siva. Deva Guru also explained the background of Vritrasura who was cursed by Devi Uma Herself in his earlier birth as Chitrarath, a Celestial King. The latter was travelling various Dwipas by air and witnessed Siva with Devi Uma on His lap and joked that Siva too like human beings could not resist the temptation of women. Devi Uma cursed the King at once to give birth and assume the form of a Raakshasa and that was the origin of Demon Vritrasura.

'Udyapana' (Conclusion) of the Pradosha Vrata: Guru Brihaspathi explained the Procedure of Udyopana as follows: On a silver Murthi of 'Vrishabha' be arranged a Throne over which are to be seated Devi Uma on the lap of Bhagavan Siva; the details of Siva are Three Eyes, Five Heads and Ten Hands presented clearly; Devi Uma / Devi Maheswari's Murthis be made of Gold. A cloth be wrapped on the back of Vrishaba Deva and the Murthis are arranged in a copper container. The Devotee should keep 'Jaagaran' or be awake through out the night with devotion and sincerity. 'Panchamrit Snaan' or Bathing with five items viz. milk, curd, ghee, honey and sugar should be done with the following Mantras: Milk-Goksheera dhama Devesha Goksheerena maya kritam, Snapanam Deva Devesha Grihana Parameswara (Devesha! Deva Deveshwara! Parameshwara! Please accept cow's milk with which I am bathing you); Ghee Snaan-Sapeershaa cha maya Deva Snapanam kriyatedhuna, Grihaana Shraddhaya dattham taya preethyartha meva cha (Now I am bathing you with ghee, kindly accept my offering); Madhu Snaan-Edham Madhu maya dattham tava thruptyartha meva cha, Grihaana Swam hi Devesha mama shanthiprado bhava (For your happiness Devesha! Kindly accept honey and bestow peace to me); Sugar-Sithaya Deva Devesha Snapanam kriyathey maya, Grihaana Shraddhaya datthaam Suprasanno bhava Prabho (I am bathing you with Sugar Prabho! Kindly be gratified and bless me). After Panchamrit Snaan, provide 'Arghya Pradaan' or offer sacred water; Paadyam or water for cleaning feet; 'Aasanam' or Seating; 'Aachamanam' (water for sipping); Yagnopaveetam (Sacred Thread with Brahma grandhi suitable for executing Brahma Karmas like Vedic Yagnas), Vastram (Cloth as a Present with blessings for longevity); Chandanam ( offering Sandal Paste with blessings to provide Sweet aroma like Life to the devotee); Dhupam (offering Incense material to bless the devotee with Peace); Deepam-Deepam hi Paramam Shambho Ghritaprajjvalitham maya, Dattam grihaana Devesha mama Jnanaprado bhava ( I am offering Light with ghee to improve my Gyana); Aarathi: Deapavalim maya dattham grihaana Parameswara Aaraathirka pradaanena mama Tejahprado bhaya (Parameswara! The Deep mala which is being offered be kindly accepted and aarthi given in your honour be blessed with radiance to me.) Thus fruits, lights, Naivedya or Food Offerings and 'Taambula' or betel leaves and nuts be offered step by step and observe a festive atmosphere with music, dance, bhajan and various devotional activities which are dear to Bhagavan Siva.

Pursuant to the successful conclusion of the Pradoshi Vrata, Indra joined the battle along with others; Vyomasura fought with Yamaraja, Thikshnakopa clashed with Agni Deva; Dhum and Athikopa struggled

with Vayu Deva; Kubera was after Demon Kushmanda and many other stalwarts on either side fought fiercely with deadly weapons. Devas had a field day in smashing thousands of Demons happily utilising the bones of Dadhichi and the Danava soldiers resorted either to self defence or retreating from the battle. Vritrasur advanced into the thick of the encounter making such frightful sounds which reverberated across the Earth; there were continuous shootings of missiles far and wide and except lightnings of powerful arrows there was pitch darkness all around, coupled with panic stricken horror cries of death and destruction. With the blessings of Maha Deva who was pleased with the Vrata not only by Indra but various other Devas too, the mighty Demon Vrirasura fell with the final blow of Dadhichi's backbone tactfully utilised by Indra and as soon as the battle concluded with victory of Devas, the remaining left over Danavas took to their heels to Patala and Indra was reinstalled as the King of Swarga.

# Kartikeya exterminates Tarakasura

Lord Siva was engaged in continuous 'Tapasya'in recluse and was disinterested in usual activities following the self-immolation of Devi Sati's life after Daksha's insults at Daksha Yagna. The Demon Tarakasura did rigorous penance and obtained a boon of invincibility except by a child of Lord Siva as the latter was in meditation and was very unlikely to wed and beget a child. Meanwhile King Himavant was blessed with a daughter Girija as Devi Bhagavati's incarnation and at her age of eight approached Lord Siva to help Him for His daily pujas and Bhagavan agreed reluctantly. In course of time as Girija continued to serve Parama Siva in the chores of worship, the Deities, who were frustrated with the dreadful deeds of wickedness of Tarakasura hurting Devas, Sages, and the Righteous Beings, planned that Manmadha the God of Love along with Devi Rati would use his flowery arrows to kindle thoughts of Love in Bhagavan's mind in favour of Devi Girija as a stepping stone for their wedding to beget a son to Siva and Girija who alone could kill the imperishable Tarakasura. But the plan of Devas got badly misfired, since Bhagawan's third eye of fury opened and Manmadha got burnt as ashes. The inconsolate Rati Devi appealed to Lord Siva as after all it was at the behest of Devas that Manmadha acted for a 'Devakarya' or a Divine Task and the brunt was borne by her husband! Devi Girija assured Rati Devi that she would help to revive Manmadha and also please Bhagavan to ask for her hand in wedding. She commenced such rigorous meditation as would shake up the whole Universe by not taking food for long, not even consuming dried leaves dropped from trees thus earning an epithet of 'Aparna' and finally even discarding water. As the Trilokas were ablaze with the heat of her Tapasya, Devas and Sages approached Lord Vishnu who assured that Bhagavan Siva was indeed a 'Purana Purusha' or the Most Ancient, approachable to one and all with clean mind; Varenya or Varaneeya (Devotion worthy) and the Paratpar Paramatma. Thus along with Brahma and Devas, Vishnu prayed for the vision of Pinakadhari Maha Deva who was in a Yoga Samadhi with Vasuki Serpent as Yagnopaveet or the Sacred Thread, Kambal and Aswatar Snakes as His earrings, Karkotak and Kulik as wrist ornaments, Shankh and Padma Serpents as shoulder ornaments, tiger skin as loin cloth, Bhagirathi Ganga and Ardha Chandra or half moon on His head inside the jatajut or His twisted hair and Blue Throat, while Nandi Deva too was nearby. As Lord Brahma eulogised Maha Deva, slowly the latter opened His eyes and described the prevailing situation created by Demon Tarakasura, Brahma's boon that only Bhagavan's son could kill him, the efforts made by Himaraja and Devi Girija whose Tapasya of extreme nature was bursting into flames across the Universe, the burning of Manmadha and Sati's agitation and finally the grand request being submitted to Bhagavan to wed Devi Girija which would eventually lead to the birth of an Illustrious Son who would exterminate the hazardous Demon Tarakasura. Bhagavan replied that as far as Kama Deva was concerned, the decision to burn him off was justified as all the Devas and such other Celestial Beings who had been victims of passion and worldly temptations were unstable of mind and action thas far and after Kamadahan or the destruction of Kama, they would all be like Himself and could all now concentrate in Samadhi the pursuance of Truth and Virtue and seek real bliss of Sat-Chit-Ananda; Bhagavan further said that 'Kama' would inevitably lead to 'Krodha' or anger, Krodha would lead to 'Sammoha' or infatuation and rigidity of thinking, Sammoha would further lead to 'Bhrama' or Maya / Illusion which would for sure camouflage Reality or Truth or the Everlasting; thus Kama the root cause be better put ablaze.

Meanwhile Parvati was fully engrossed in high meditation. Bhagavan Siva was indeed impressed but desired to test her sincerity and unswerving attachment to Him. He took the form of a Brahmachari and enquired from Devi Girija's associates around her as to who she was and why was she performing such severe Tapasya? The associates replied to the queries and the Brahmachari had a hearty laugh that the Tapasya of such severity was a sheer waste as the Tapaswini was replete with ignorance since Rudra was an abhorable and wild person with a 'kapaala' (skull) in hand, a dweller of Smashaan (Burial Ground), an odd exhibitionist of poisonous serpents all over His Body, a bearer of Tiger skin as Loin Cloth, an unkempt and ugly hair style with water flowing from head, always in the highly inauspicious and disgusting company of Pisachas, Goblins, Pramatha Ganas and a typically crazy creation of God! This beautiful and attractive lady coming of a wonderful family background could indeed wed a Demi-God like Indra, Dharmaraja, Varuna Deva, Kubera, Vayu or Agni, but never ever that horrible species like Rudra! Devi Parvati got infuriated with white anger and asked the Brahmachari to be lifted and thrown out at once to have affronted such Mahatma; the stupid and arrogant person was an unpardonable sinner, a Veda-dushak and a brainless brute! Bhagavan Siva then showed up in His real form to Devi Parvati who felt shy and reminded Rudra that She was a reincarnation of Devi Sati and that She gave birth to Devi Meena with the immediate and noble cause of begetting a Son, who alone could free the Universe from the great peril of Tarakasura. On being asked her by Lord Siva for a boon, Devi Parvati desired that Bhagavan should approach her father Himavanta to allow Him to wed her! To this Siva replied that Parvati had indeed declared her real form of Maya or Illusion and that of Maha Tatva which was a display of the interaction of three Gunas of Satva, Rajas and Tamas and that He would never extend His hand to 'receive' as Bhagavan was always a 'Giver'!!

However, Bhagavan Siva deputed 'Sapta Rishis'-the illustrious Seven Sages viz. Marichi, Atri, Angeera, Pulasthya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasishtha- to Himavant's residence to formally present Devi Parvati and Himavant proposed his daughter to wed Siva after consulting the bride's mother Mena and the co-Mountains like Meru, Nishadh, Gandhamadan, Mandarachal and Mainak. The Sapta Rishis who conveyed the most auspicious news to Siva and suggested that Lord Vishnu be immediately called and along with Him Lord Brahma, Indra, Dikpals, Devas, Rishiganas, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Nagas, Siddhas, Vidyadharas, Kinnaras, Apsaras and their spouses and cohorts. Sage Narada among the Sapta Rishis was commissioned to personally invite Vishnu, Brahma, Indra and Devas. Gargacharya was asked to supervise the rituals of the wedding and Viswakarma constructed the 'Mangala Vedika' or the Auspicious Platform to perform the Wedding and oversee the decorations. Chandra provided coolness in the atmosphere, Surya the luminosity, Vayu Deva blew fragrant airs and Indra organised dance, music and instrumental extravaganza. The Bridegroom arrived on Nandi, accompanied by Vishnu, Brahma and Devas, Maharshis, Pramathaganas, Rakshasas, Ghosts, Goblins, Pisachas and Spirits. Indeed the unprecedented and the Most Glorious Wedding of Siva-Parvati was the unique talk of the entire Universe. At the Wedding 'Muhurat', Himavan declared: 'I, Himavan of the Gotra and clan of Mountains have the greatest privilege of offering the hand of my daughter Devi Parvati to Parama Siva in the august presence of Brahma and Vishnu. In turn, I wish to know the Gotra and Vamsa of Bhagavan'. As Sage Narada lifted his Veena instrument, Himavan stopped Narada not to play on it as a reply about the Gotra and Vamsa of Bhagavan; Narada told Himavan that the Gotra and Vamsa of Maha Siva was 'Naad' or Sound and that was why Narada lifted the Veena as a reply! Bhagavan is 'Naadamaya' or the Embodiment of Naada and one could realise Siva only through Naada, as He has no Gotra and no Vamsa since He is above these nomenclatures and yet belongs to all Gotras and all Vamsas. He has neither beginning nor end; He is the Most Supreme Energy beyond comprehension! Then Himavan gave the 'Kanyadaan' or the offering of his daughter saying: 'Imam Kanyaam thubhyamaham dadami Parameswara! Bharyartham prathi gruhneeshva' (Parameswara! I am offering my daughter as your 'Dharma Patni'; kindly accept). After wedding, Maha Deva and Devi Parvathi moved on to Mountain Gandhamadan to a luxurious and lonely place for their honeymoon. As Bhagavan's virility was so potent that parts of humanity were getting destroyed and Vishnu asked Agni Deva to take the form of a Hermit and asked Parvati to donate it and extended his hand which was immediately consumed by Agni even before Her eyes. Parvati got angry

and cursed Agni to become 'Sarva Bhakshak' or he who consumes everything. Agni could not bear the brunt of the virility of Maha Siva and begged Him to show a way to pass it on to someone; Siva advised that the same be planted into virtuous women and Sage Narada annotated that such women of high merit taking bath on an early morning in the instant month of Magha would be attracted to Agni and his hot flames and they would be the best choice for the transfer of the virility in particles. As advised by Narada, Krittikas approached Agni seeking warmth from the cold morning and Agni transferred some drops of virility to the ladies through their skin pores. Kritthikas got pregnant and their angry husbands gave a curse to them to roam on the Sky. They became Stars in a constellation and aborted their pregnancies. The major portion of the virility got left however on top of the Himalayas which was lifted by a crane and pushed into Ganges and the drops which were radiant like fire sparks got meshed up in the river bed plants (Sarkhand) of Ganges, who carried the foetus to a secluded place in the bushes thus emerging a Six Headed Child Kartikeya! As soon as the boy of highly chiselled face and limbs was born with extraodinary splendour, there was such illumination that travelled all over the Three Worlds instantly. Siva Deva and Devi Parvati appeared at once on their Vrishaba carrier and were overwhelmed with parental love and affection. Soon Brahma, Vishnu, Indra and the entire Devaloka assembled and so did Rishis, Yakshas, Gandharvas and all Celestial Beings. Veerabhadra and Pramathaganas as also the whole entourage of Maha Deva were ecstatic with boundless rapture. Devas put their chins up with indescribable relief that it would not be far for the greatest menace of Takakasura to be devastated by the new arrival on the scene! The whole atmosphere was of liberation, festivity and celebration.

The Deities commenced preparations of war to kill Tarakasura but a Celestial Voice was heard that victory would be assured only under the Leadership of Kartikeya and hence all the Devas requested Skanda to become the Chief of the Army of Devas. Meanwhile, Devasena, the daughter of Mrityu Devata, became his wife and hence Skanda was known as Deva Senapati. Kartikeya led the army of Devas of the rank of Indra, Agni, Vayu, Kubera and Yama Dharma Raja and was seated on an elephant. Tarakasura arrived with a huge army of mighty warriors who dominated and controlled the opponents intially. Indra's 'Vajra' was overpowered by Tarakasura's weapon called Shakti and wounded Indra. King Muchukunda who fought for Devas and sought to stop the domination of Daityas but Tarakasura felled him on the ground; Muchukunda wanted to use the 'Brahmaastra' but was restrained by Sage Narada as that weapon would no doubt create havoc but would be ineffective to destroy Tarakasura and hence Kartikeya would have to be warmed up gradually. Veerabhadra swang into action and slaughtered thousands of Demons; Tarakasura realised that Veerabhadra was not easy to control and thus used his 'Maya' and assumed a thousand arms. Lord Vishnu suggested that the time was ripe to kill the Big Demon before he became more powerful and asked Skanda to charge him. With his mighty weapon Shakti on hand, Kartikeya chased Tarakasura but the latter retaliated with his own 'Shakti' and even got Skanda unconscious for a while. After quickly recovering his poise, Kartikeya prayed to his parents and released the Maha Shakti which was fortified with the blessings of Bhagavan and Bhagavati and finally annihilated Tarakasura who incidentally was a Great Siva Bhakta! But Siva Himself was so pleased at the valour of the lad who was more than a match to the Greatest Demon of the times who sent shock waves across the Three Worlds! While Devas and Gandharvas were engaged in unending praises and noise of resounding musical notes, Rishis were engaged in Vedic Hymns to please Kartikeya and there was ecstasy across the Globe. Whoever reads or hears the details of the historic victory of Deva Senapati over the obnoxious Demon would be rid of Sins of even great severity and magnitude.

### Skanda's remorse and 'Prayaschittha' (Atonement)

Although satisfied with the termination of Tarakasura, Kartikeya had strong sense of remorse of having committed Brahmana hatya (killing of a Brahmana) in the depth of his conscience, especially because the Rakshasa was an ardent devotee of Lord Siva. Then Vishnu cajoled Kartikeya saying that deducing from Shrutis (Vedas), Smritis (Shastras), Itihasa (History) and Puranas, there was no sin in killing a kindless Brahmana who had no hesitation in harassing and murdering others. If a cruel demon was distressing and the victims sought refuge, the valiant had a duty to protect Dharma (Justice). As regards the devotion of

Siva, Vishnu said that besides being repentant, Kartikeya should perform 'Siva Aradhana' as there was nothing else in the Three Lokas more ideal; indeed Parama Siva's chariot is Prithvi (Earth), Brahma is the Sarathi (driver), Vishnu is the arrow, Mandharachal is Dhanush (Bow) and Chandra and Surya are the wheels. Some exceptional Sages might resort to the Yoga route to worship Siva, but the easier way is to perform Linga Aradhana. It may be recalled that at the time of Creation, Lords Brahma and Vishnu had a controversy about their inter se seniority and Bhagavan Siva took the form of a huge Siva Linga which had neither beginning nor end and directed them to worship the Linga by performing 'Abhisheka' (bathing) with milk, ghee, honey, curd or pure water and secure boons from Him. Hence Vishnu suggested that Kartikeya should dedicate Siva Lingas made of earth, bricks, or stones and wash off the stigma or sin of Brahma Hatya. Accordingly, Kartikeya called Vishvakarma the Divine Architect and asked that three Visuddha Lingas and their complexes be constructed forthwith. Then in the presence of all the Devas, Brahma, Vishnu and Parama Siva Himself, Skanda established one Linga named 'Pratigneswar' on the West. Lord Siva blessed Kartikeya to declare that whosoever worships the Linga on Chaitra and Kartika Sukla Ashtamis after taking bath, observing fast, performing Puja and Jagaran (nightlong awaken-ness) would be fearless of Mrityu (death). A second Siva Linga was established at Agnidasha (Agneya) where Tarakasura's entire Shakti was released to Pancha Bhutas (Five Elements) through his Kapala and is thus known as Kapaleswar Linga. To the North of Kapaleswara Linga, Skanda established 'Shakti Chhidra' Tirtha, where the auspicious Patala Ganga River gave its presence, which is the demolisher of even grave sins. Lord Siva assured that worship to this Linga on Chitra Krishna Chaturdasi (preferably falling on Mondays) by observing fast and day long 'Rudra Parayana' or the Recital of Rudra Geeta in praise of Parama Siva would secure the Devotee concerned a place in Rudra Loka. Enthused by the three Lingas set up by Kartikeya, Lord Brahma established a Siva Linga nearby a Sarovar or a pure water-body and it is said that Bhagavan Siva Himself would with His own hands receive the offerings by a devotee reciting 'Sadyojathaadi Pancha Mukha' or Five Faced Siva Mantras. Like wise anybody establishes a Siva Linga and a Temple Complex would surely reserve a place in Siva Loka. Those who clean up any Siva Temple with a broom would be free from ailments and illness; whitewashes a complex or paints it would improve physical strength; decorates the Linga with flowers, Kusha grass, til or sesame seeds, 'Akshatas' or rice grains mixed with turmeric powder would stay in Swarga Loka for many 'Divya' years; those who perform 'Abhisheka' (Bathing) to the Siva Linga with milk, curd, ghee / butter or even pure water would receive double the benefits; those who apply Kapila Cow's 'Panchagavya' comprising milk, curd, ghee, urine and dung in equal proportions along with Ganges Water, Kusha water or Sandal wood paste liquid with Mantras of 'Namakam' and 'Chamakam' would attain 'Parama dhama' or Moksha. A devotee performing 'Shodasopacharas' or Sixteen Services including offering sandal paste, Agar or incense / Dhoop, Dipa (lighting of cotton vicks soaked in ghee), chaamara (hand fan), 'Naivedya' (offering of food items), Ghanta (Bell), Shankha (Conch shell), 'Geet' or Singing in praise of Siva, Vadya (instrumental music), 'Nritya' (dance), Ratha Yatra (Chariot drive) and similar services according to one's own capacities and desires would yield immense benefits. After setting up the Tri Linga Complex called 'Kumareswara', Skanda along with Devas and Brahma extolled Bhagawan Siva as follows:

Namah Sivayastu niraamayaya namah Sivayasthu manomayaya , Namah Sivayasthu Surarchitaya thubhyam sadaa Bhakta krupaparaaya / Namo Bhavaayasthu Bhavodbhavaaya Namasthesthu the Dhwastha mano bhavaaya, Namasthesthu the Goodhamaha Vrataya Namasthesthu Maya gahanashrayaya / Namasthesthu Sarvaaya Namah Sivaaya Namasthesthu Siddhaaya Puraathanaya, Namasthesthu Kaalaayanamah Kaalaaya Namasthestu the Kaalakalaathigaya / Namo Nisargaatmaka Bhutikaaya Namostvameyoksha Mahindrakaaya, Namah Sharanyaya Namogunaaya Namasthesthu the Bhimagunaanugaaya /Namasthusthu Naanaa Bhuvanaadhikatreh Namosthu Bhaktaabhimata pradaatre, Namasthesthu Karmaprasavaya Dhaathre Namah Sadaa the Bhagavansukatreyh / Anantha Rupaya Sadaiva thubhhyamasajna kopaaya sadaiva thubhyam, Ameyamaanaaya Namasthesthu thubhyam Virishendrayanaaya Namasthesthu thubham /Namah Prasiddhaaya Mahoushadhaaya Namasthesthu the Vyadhi –ganaapahaaya, Charaacharaaya vichaaradaaya Kumaranathaaya Namah Sivaya /Mahesha

Bhuteysha Maheshvarosi Kaamesha Vaageesha Balesha Dhisha, Krodhesha Mohesha Paraparesha Namasthesthu Mokshesha Grihaashayesha /

(Our Greetings to you Siva, who is devoid of all kinds of sorrows and physical ailments, the epitome of propitiousness; who is worshipped by the entirety of Devas and is ever merciful to Devotees; who is the origin of Creation and the Supreme Architect of the Universe, the demolisher of Kamadeva the Lord of Love; the Administrator of the most confidential 'Vratas'; the Lord of 'Maha Gahan' or the Illusory Sky; the most elusive Yoga Maya; the unknown Sharva at the time of the Great Illusion; the most ancient 'Siddha Swarupa' or the well established Body Figure; the Kaala Rupa or the Form of Time; the Wizard Accountant of the Pluses and Minuses of all Beings; the Unknown Entity beyond the scope and reach of Time; the Natural Source of Wealth and Prosperity; the Essence of Abundance and Miracles; the Unique anchor of Hope and the Final Refuge; the Nirguna Brahma or the negation of Gunas / human characteristics; the Supreme Chief of all the Worlds; the Great Bestower of boons to Bhaktas; the Final Judge of 'Karmaphal' or the End results of Actions; the Hold and the Holder; the Preserver and the Prop; the Endless Form; the Angriest and the most Logical; the Immeasurable; the 'Mahoushadhi' or the Supreme Physician; the destroyer of all kinds of diseases and disorders; the Grand Chief of Movable and Immovable Objects; the Master of the Ilustrious Kumara; Mahesha, Bhutesha, the Fountain Head of desires and joys; the Lord of 'Vani' the Goddess of Learning and Clarity of Expressions; the Lord of Strength and Mind; the Controller of Anger and Equanimity; the Epitome of Moha or infatuation; the Chief of this and all other destinies and the Overlord of Moksha or Salvation.)

As Kartikeya prostrated before Bhagavan with extreme devotion, Parama Siva complimented the former about his valour and intellect and assured that those who worship him by morning and evening would be rid of malady, poverty, cowardice and attain 'Paramadhaam'. More so, those who adore Kartikeya on Visakha Pournami on a seashore or river bed by observing purity and perform Puja, havan, Recital of Rudra, and charity to learned and well deserved Brahmanas would steer clear of Shathru Peeda (Terror of Enemies), Mrityu Peeda (Fear of untimely death), Visha Roga (Disease due to Poisonous Sources), alarm of thieves, fright of snakes and cruel animals etc; on the other hand, the devotees are blessed with health, wealth, progeny, comfort and contentment.

### Ashtottara Namavali of Kartikeya and Phala Sruti

Sage Viswamitra recited the following Ashtottara Namavali (108 names) about Skanda Deva on the most significant day of Kartika Pournami of which Kartikaya is fond of:

(1)Brahmavaadi (Profounder of Parama Tatvas) (2) Brahma (Creator and the Reciter of Vedas) (3) Brahma Vid (The Exponent and Interpreter of Brahma Gyan) (4) Brahma Vatsala (The beloved of Lord Brahma) (5) Brahmanya (Brahmana Bhakta) (6) Brahmadeva(7)Brahmad (The Donor of Brahma Gyan) (8) Brahma Sangrah (The absorber of Vedardha or the Para Brahma's reality) (9) Sarvotkrushta Parama Teja (The Highest of All of Super Luminosity) (10) Mangala Mangala (The Most Propitious of the Propitious)(11) Aprameya Guna (He who has countless qualities) (12) Mantra Mantraga (The Quintessence of Mantras) (13) Savitrimaya (Full of Pranava or Omkara) (14) Sarvatra Aparajita ( Always unconquerable) (15) Sarvatmika Mantra (The universally applicable Mantra) (16) Deva (Replete with Divinity) (17) Shadakshara Vatam Vara (The best reciter of Om Namassivaya) (18) Gava Putra (The Illustrious Son of Cow or Ganges) (19) Surarighna (The Destroyer of the Enemies of Devas) (20) Sambhava (He who makes the Impossible possible) (21) Bhava bhaavana (The Creator of the Universe in the form of Brahma) (22) Pinakini (The Carrier of Pinakini Dhanush in the form of Shankara)(23) Shatruha (The Terminator of Opponents) (24) Swetha (He assumes the form of a white Mountain or Himalaya) (25) Guudha (Born in a hidden place or He who has latent Shakti) (26) Skanda (He who jumps while walking) (27) Suraagrani (The Chief of Suras)(28) Dwaadasha (Who has twelve eyes and ears) (29) Bhu (Bhu mandala Swarupa or the Form of Earth) (30)Bhuvah (Antariksha Rupa or Of the form of Sky) (31) Bhavi (Bhavitva Rupa ) (32) Bhuva Putra (Bhumi Putra as Siva's manliness was absorbed into Earth) (33) Namaskruth (Saluted by one and all) (34) Nagaraja (The King of Serpents)(35) Sudharmatma

(Epitome of Virtue) (36) Naka Prushtha (He is the Base of Swarga as He is the Saviour of Devas) (37) Sanatan (He is Eternal) (38) Hema garbha (Born of Siva's gold-like semen) (39) Mahagarbha (Born of several mothers) (40) Jaya (Victorious) (41) Vijayeswara (The Deity of Victory) (42) Karta (The Performer) (43) Vidhata (The Preserver) (44) Nithya (Everlasting) (45) Nithyarimardana (The constant destroyer of enemies) (46) Mahasena (The Chief of a huge army) (47) Maha Teja (The most Illuminated) (48) Virasena (Commander of a Valiant army) (49) Chamupati (The Leader of Militia) (50) Surasena (The Principal of an intrepid band of soldiers) (51) Suradhaksha (The Supreme Head of Devas) (52) Bhimasena (The Chief of a terrifying military) (53) Niramaya (Devoid of illness) (54) Shouri (The most gallant Son of Shankara) (55) Patu (Smart and Enterprising) (56) Maha Teja (The highly radiant) 57) Viryavan (Personification of Might) (58) Satya Vikram (Courageously Truthful)(59) Tejogarbha (Agni Putra) (60) Asuripu (Antagonist of Demons) (61) Suramurthi (A byword for Devas) (62) Surojit (More gutsy than Devas) (63) Krutajna (Grateful to those who stand by Him) (64) Varada (Bestower of windfalls) (65) Satya (Satyavadi or He who stands for Truth) (66) Sharanya (Protector of those who seek refuge) (67) Sadhu Vatsal (Affectionate and kind to the Good) (68) Suvratha (Benefactor of those who perform good Vrathas) (69) Surva Sankash (Luminous like Sun) (70) Vahnigarbha (Begotten of Agni) (71) Ranotsuk (Enthusiastic of Battles) (72) Pippali (Consumer of Pippali)(73) Seeghraga (Travels at top speed) (74) Roudri (Son of Rudra) (75) Gangeya (Son of Ganges) (76) Ripudarun (Demolisher of Foes) (77) Kartikeya (Son of Krittikas)(78) Prabhu (Highly accomplished) (79) Kshanth (Forgiving and Patient) (80) Neela-damshtra (Blue Thoated) (81) Mahamana (of large heart disposition) (82) Nigrah(Possessive of Restraint) (83) Netha (Leader) (84) Suranandana (Provider of happiness to Devas) (85) Pragrah (Controller of Enemies) (86) Paramananda (Extremely blissful) (87) Krodhagna (Alleviates the anger of Devotees) (88) Tar (Producer of heavy sound) (89) Vucchrit (High stamper of feet) (90) Kukkuti (Keeper of Cock as chariot flag) (91) Bahuli (Possessor of many useful implements) (92) Divya (Has Divine illumination) (93)Kamad (Fulfilled of desires) (94) Bhurivardhan (Has extreme amusement) (95) Amogh (Unconquerable and ever successful) (96) Amritada (Endower of Amrit) (97) Agni (Agni Swarup) (98) Shatrughna (Terminator of Opponents) (99) Sarvabodhan (Provider of Knowledge to one and all) (100) Anagha (Devoid of sins) (101) Amar (indestructible)(102) Sriman (Highly Prosperous) (103) Unnati (High Profiled) (104) Agni Sambhava(105) Piscacha Raja (King of Piscachas and Siva Ganas) (106)Suryabha (Akin to Sun God in radiance) (107) Sivatma (Siva Swarupa) and (108) Sanatana (Eternal).

Phalasruti: Those who recite the Ashtottara of Kartikeya become fearless, contented, and happy; a pregnant woman reads or hears the Ashtottara would be blessed with a son of virtue and fortune; and if unmarried girls read they are sure to secure ideal husbands.

### Significance of 'Daan' (Charity)-Its Profile and Fruits

In the 'Kaumarika Khand' of the present Skanda Purana, some details of Pandava's 'Vanavasa' (forest life) for twelve years pursuant to the unjust game of chess by Kauravas and Arjun's 'Tirtha Yatras' or visits to Holy Places and Rivers were described. The important Tirthas were Kumaresh Tirtha, Stambhesh Tirtha, Varkareswari Tirtha, Mahakaleswara Tirtha, and Siddheswari Tirtha. But these Tirthas were infested by crocodiles and used to pull down 'Tapasvis' from river beds into water and kill them. Thus nobody dared to enter the Tirthas. Some persons warned Arjuna but he did not heed the advice and was caught by a crocodile which was forcibly drawn out of water and hurt so much that it was almost killed. From the dying crocodile emerged an 'Apsara' or a Divine Damsel. Similarly crocodiles from other Tirthas also turned out to be Apsaras and told Arjuna of their experience of a Tapasvi on a river bank attracted them but the Brahmana cursed them to become crocodiles till such time that a mighty warrior entered the waters and dragged the curse-ridden crocodiles forcibly on to the banks of the Rivers. The four Apsaras so redeemed by Arjuna were Sourabhi, Sameyi, Budbuda and Lata and henceforth the Sacred Tirthas were made accessible and active once again.

Thereafter, Arjuna visited the Ashram of Sage Narada and secured blessings, especially since Arjun made the 'Panchaapsara Tirthas' accessible once again. In this context, Narada described to Arjun about 'daan'

(charity), its two 'hethus' (varieties), six 'Adhishtaans' (Reasons), six 'Anks' (Parties), two 'Parinaams' (end results or fruits), three bhedas (classifications) and three 'Vinas Saadhanas' (negative results). The two 'hethus' as normally perceived are about the size of the charity-small or big- as also of the quality. But such 'hethus' are not as important as the 'shraddha' or dedication and devotion are. Bhagavan Siva would be pleased only by the sincerity and pure heart that is attached to the charity rather than any other aspect. Again, 'Dhana Daan' or the charity of money is more popular than 'Vastu Daan' or charity of material, 'Vastra Daan' or charity of clothes etc. since charity of money would buy back Vastu or Vastra. Then the six 'Adhishtaans' or reasons of Daan are: 'Dharma Daan' without strings attached ie.Daan given to the Virtuous or Dharmatmas; 'Artha Daan' keeping in view some purpose or utility; 'Kaama Daan' like favours for women, wine or such other benefits in view; 'Lajja Daan is due to compulsions of Public or Society; 'Harsha Daan' is made on receiving good news and out of happiness; and 'Bhaya daan' out of compulsion, fear or avoidance of risks. The six 'Anks' or donor/receiver parties are as follows: The Positive Donors are 'Daatas' by nature; the 'Dharmatmas' or the Virtuous; those desirous of donating willingly and happily; the 'Vyasana rahit' or devoid of bad habits; 'Pavitra' or Symbols of Purity and 'Anindaneeya' or the blemishless. The Negative Donors are ill mannered, indolent, evil minded, persons of bad habits, persons who swear to support the Evil and persons who are sleepy! Among the Good Receivers of Charity are those of good 'Kula' or caste, who has 'Vidya' or good Education, good 'Aachaar' or family bearing / tradition, earners of rightful way of life or of Satvik Life, of kind heart, 'Jitendriya' or of Controlled Emotions and finally of excellent parenthood. The second category of receivers of donations is of pleasant visage, of sincerity and thankfulness but not of demanding nature, cantankerous or mean. The donors of charity must have the perspective of what kind of material is required or useful to the receiver or otherwise the purpose of charity would be defeated. The two 'Parinams' or end results/fruits are either gain of 'Punya' for the 'Paralok' or after death or for use in 'Ihalok' or the current life to the receiver. The latter 'Dannas' or for the use of Ihalok are of four types viz. Dhruva, Trika, Kamya and Naimittika. Dhruva is for public use like digging wells, construction of Temples, gardens, Choultries, schools etc. Trikha is for daily utility like 'Nithya Daan', say Vidya Daan. Kamya Daan is to fulfill one's own desires like victory, wealth, might etc. Naimittika Daan is like Samkranti Daan, Grahana (Eclipse) Daan, Daan at auspicious occasions like weddings, Vraths etc. or Kriyapeksha Daan like Shraadh, Vratas etc.; Gunapeksha Daan like Vidyabhyas and so on. Three 'Bhedas' or types of Daan are classified; the best types are charity of houses, temples, buildings, Bhumi (farms / fields), cows, Wells, gold and ornaments and the best of course is to give away one's own life itself as 'Daan'. The Secondary Variety of charity relates to Anna (Food grains), Vastra (Clothing), 'Vahan' etc. The tertiary kind of Daan is to donate footwear, umbrellas, utensils, curd, honey, 'Asan' or seating, deepa or Light, wood, stones etc. Now, there are three kinds of 'Daan Naashak' reasons viz. 'Paschattaap' or regret of having given the Daan; 'Apaatra Daan' or charity to the wrong and unserved person or 'Ashraddha Daan'is to a person on account of laziness. Paschattapaya Daan indicates as to why the Daan is given at all; Ashraddha Daan is Rakshasa Daan and Apaatra Daan is as bad as not giving it away. The worst Daan is 'Paisacha Daan' or the charity duly given is returned under duress or due to the bad behaviour of the receiver or the donor. Incidentally, Apaatra Daan should be avoided to an undeserving Brahmana who is bereft of 'Vidya', sells his/her conscience if his Bhumi is accepted; if he accepts a cow to kill it or sell it; if he accepts gold to encash it, a horse that might destroy the receiver's eyes; Vastra to harm his wife; ghee his manliness; til seeds that might harm his children and so on.

### Narada seeks replies to a questionnaire and bestows Brahma's Charity to Kalaap Village

Sage Narad told Arjun that in the context of 'Daan Pradaan' or bestowing charity of a large piece of land to a well deserved Brahmana Community; he travelled the World over to identify a Place where satisfactory replies are received to a Questionnaire of Twelve Queries framed by him. The questions were: 1) who knows 'Matrikas' well; how many 'Matrikas' are there and how many 'Aksharas' or Letters? 2) What are the Twentyfive Materials in the domestic or personal context? 3) Who knows the art of converting several women into one? 4) Who is the unique person that knows the 'Vaakya Rachana' or the Writer of Sentences connected with Strange Fiction? 5) Who is the learned Brahmana living in an

Ocean with full awareness that a ferocious crocodile is always around? 6) Who is the best Brahmana possessing the knowledge of eight-fold Braahmanatva? 7) Which are the foremost days falling at the beginning of each Yuga? 8) Which are the first days of each 'Manvantara'? 9) Which was the first day that Surya Deva rode in his chariot? 10) Who could explain that human beings are put to tremendous anxiety like a black serpent has? 11) Who is the most intelligent and practical human being in the whole world and why? 12) Who is aware of the two distinct routes available to human beings? Sage Narada could not get convincing replies to the above questionnaire among the several places visited and Expets interviewed as the questions were supposed to be tough! Then suddenly it occurred to the Sage that he could perhaps try out the Kalap Village that boasted of exceptionally renowned Veda Pundits. On reaching there and having posed the questions, the Elders of the Village commented that the questions were indeed very elementary and could as well be replied by one of an unintelligent and dull boys of the village! He asked a boy said to be of an inferior intelligence named Suthanu who gave the replies as follows:

In his preface before answering the questions, Suthanu said that various Gurus normally tended to teach the Scriptures and Mantras, generations after generations, only by memorizing but without necessarily providing the meaning, let alone the implications and intricacies of the stanzas. Indeed a Brahmana who merely memorized the Mantras without realizing the meaning was a mere two legged animal! For example, 'Aakar' is known as Brahma, 'Ukar' is Vishnu and 'Makar' is Siva; the Triguna form of AUM with 'Anuswarup Artha Matra' on top of AUM (in Sanskrit) is Maheswara Himself! How many are aware of the significance of Omkara Mantra?

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

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

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

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

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

The Sixth inquiry concerns the Eight-fold 'Brahmanatva' classified as Matra, Brahmana, Srotriya, Anuchan, Bhruna, Rishi Kalpa, Rishi and Muni. A normal Brahmana by birth and caste is invariably the one who nodoubt has the advantage of 'Upanayana' Samskara and Gayatri 'Upasesha' called Sacred Thread Ceremony but with or without performing Vedic Karmas or duties; this kind of an ordinary Brahmana is name sake only. He who follows 'Vedic Achara' or performs Veda Practices being soft natured, fond of loneliness, truthful and pious is a Brahmana in a better sense than a 'Matra' type. The better category of Brahmanas are 'Srotriyas' who are Ritual, Virtuous, proficient of atleast one Veda sakha (Branch) along with six vedangas, pure hearted and Dharmajnanas. The higher class of Brahmanas called 'Anuchans' are well read, Guru Type of senior Vidwans who preach and teach and practise ideal 'Brahmanatva'. The further higher category is called Brahmanas with worldly wisdom to be able to interpret Principles to practical situations, authorities on Vedas, 'Samyamis' who have restraint and poise, Tatva Gyan and Senior Guides on Rituals etc. 'Rishi Kalpas' are Ashrama Dwellers, Naishthies, and limited Eaters. The Rishis are Dhyana Nishtha Parayanas (Meditation-Centric) and Jitendriyas or victorious of various worldly temptations. Munis are beyond the barriers of Brahmanas and the known norms and controls applicable to them, since they belong to Super Human Beings worthy of worship and possess yogic powers and Siddhhis.

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

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

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

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

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

Finally, the Twelfth question seeks reply about the two alternative routes of attaining Salvation viz. the normal 'Karma Marg'/ the Dharmic route of enjoying life as also of attaining the high bliss of Moksha

after death and alrernatively adopting the 'Vihanga Marg' (The Sky route) or straight-away adopt the 'Naishkarma' Marg or the 'Jnaana Marg. If one were not to opt for either route, the concerned human being is as good as a 'Pakhandi' or ignorant fool!

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

### King Indradyumna and his 'Satsang' Group

An illustrious King of yore named Indradyumna was highly virtuous and propagated Dharma (high merit) all over his Kingdom to such an extent as to make announcements of the next Ekadasi Vrata to be performed with sincerity! The King was an extraordinary example of charity to all the needy subjects, especially Brahmanas. Lord Brahma did the unique honour of inviting him in human body form by an aeroplane to Brahma Loka to let him enjoy the just pleasures there and return back. The King met the memorable Sage Markandeya, Nadijangh Baka (in the form of a Crane), Prakarakarma Uluk (in the form of an Owl), Chirayu Gadhi Raj (in the form of a Donkey) and Manthar Kacchuva (in the form of Tortoise)-all of exceptional learning of Scriptures! He also met Sage Lomesh of the famed Kalaap Village near Kedareswara mentioned above. He prostrated before all the Experts of Scriptures and got the benefit of their discussions on Parama Tatvas of high learning. Sage Lomesh revealed that the King was in his past life a 'Sudra', who entered a waterbody and performed several pujas with Lotuses to Parama Siva very sincerely and died eventually. In the next earlier birth, he was a Brahmana with the knowledge of his earlier life and even from childhood had strange behaviour but as a penchant for Siva Puja and used to talk of 'Avidya' (ignorance), Maya (illusion) and Siva 'Aradhana'. Eventually the boy secured Siva Darshan (Vision) and gave him the boon of longevity till such time that all his body hairs dropped away. Such was the background of the King that Lord Siva Himself taught him 'Bahir Yoga' and 'Antar Yoga'. He performed innumerable Yagnas and a series of debates on Dharmik Topics in the august company of the 'Sadhu Sabhas' or 'Satsangs' of Vedic Luminaries like Markandeya, Lomesh, Baka, Uluk, Gadhiraj and Kacchuva. The Collective Aradhanas of these and such other Mahatmas (The Great Souls) generated waves of blissful Ambrosia full of 'Bhakta Shadrasas' (or Six Bhavas) viz. Dasya Rathi, Sakya Rathi, Vatsalva Rathi, Shantha Rathi, Kranta Rathi, and Adbhuta Rati! They also performed sacred 'snaans' (baths) in the River Mahanadi, (next in importance of Mahi Sagara Sangam), and its various other Tirthas like Kasi, Kurukshetra, Ganga, Narmada, Sarasvati, Tapa, Payoshmi, Nirvindhya, Gaya, Godavari, Aruna, Varuna and such other twenty thousand six hundred rivers on Prithvi! The conclusion of the Satsang Group states: Human life is full of Avidya (Ignorance), Asmitha (Anger), Raag (Desire), Dvesha (Hatred) and Abhinivesh (Death). Since such factors in mind are abounding with sins, it is highly unlikely that one could meditate Sada Siva; it is highly unlikely that one could take birth in the Karma Bhumi of Bharata Desa; it is highly unlikely to have Ganga Snan; it is unlikely to practise charity to virtuous Brahmanas; it is unlikely that one could make oblations to Agni Deva; and it is also unlikely to worship Siva regularly.

( Papohat Buddhinaam Siva Varthapi durlabham, Durlabham Bharatey Janma durlabham Siva pujanam / Durlabham Jahnavi snanam Sivey Bhakti sudurlabham, Durlabham Braahmaney daanam durlabham Vahni pujanam / Alpa punaischa dushpraapyam Purushotthama pujanam / ) Thus Tirtha Snaan, Japa, Tapasya, and such Acts of would alone redeem human life and Siva Aradhana should be the only

objective of purposeful life. Why does a foolish person run after mirages having kept in hand a full vessel of Ambrosia!

## The famed 'Shata Rudreeyam'

1)Brahma dedicated a golden Linga to Bhagavan Siva named *Jagat Pradhana* and prays it at His feet 2) Sri Krishna set up a black coloured Linga called *Urjit* and prays to Siva's head 3) Sanaka and other Manasa Putras of Lord Brahma pray to Siva Hridaya (Heart) Linga as *Jagadrati* 4) Sapta Rishis pray to 'Dharbhaankura maya' (Dharbha made) Linga called Viswa Yoni 5) Devarshi Narada conceived Siva Linga as an all pervasive 'Aakash' (Sky) and prayed to Jagatvija 6) Devaraj Indra prays to a Diamond Linga called *Vishvatma* 7) Surya Deva prays to a copper Linga called *Vishwasruga* 8) Chandra performs Puja to a Pearl Linga known as Jagatpathi 9) Agni Deva prays to an Indra Nila Mani Linga named Viswesvara10) Brihaspathi prays to a Pushparajamani with the name Visva Yoni 11) Sukracharya pays penance to a Padmaragamani Linga called Viswakarma 12) A golden Linga is worshipped by Kubera called Iswara 13) Viswa Deva Ganas perform puja to a Silver Linga called Jagatgati 14) Yama Dharma raja pays his obeisance to a peethal (brass) Linga named Shambhu15) 'Ashtavasus' execute 'Aradhana' to a Glass made Linga called *Shambhu* 16) Maruganas do puja to a Triloha Linga (three kinds of metals) called *Umesh / Bhupesh* 17) Raakshasas pay penance to an iron Linga and named Siva as *Bhuta Bhavya* Bhavodbhava 18) Guhyaka Ganas perform puja to a mirror-made Siva Linga named Yoga 19) Muni Jaigeeshya does Upasana to Brahmarandhra maya Linga named Jaigeeswara Yogeeswar 20) King Nimi considers the Ugal Netra or the Two Eyes as Parameswara Linga called Sharva 21) Dhanvanthari worships Gomaya Linga (cow dung) in the name of Sarva Lokewswareswara 22) Gandharvas perform Puja to wood based Siva Linga named Sarva Sreshtha 23) Lord Rama did intense 'Japa' to 'Vidyunmani' Linga in the name of *Jyeshtha* 24) Banasura paid homage to Marakathamani Linga named *Varishtha* 25) Varuna Deva offers reverence to a Sphatikamani Linga named *Parameswara* 26) *Lokatrayankara* is the name given to a Linga made of Munga (Black Pearl) by Nagagana 27) Devi Saraswathi pays reverence to Suddha mukta maya Linga named Lokatrayashrita 28) Sani Deva performs 'Japa' on Saturday Amavasya midnight at Maha Sagara Sangama the Bhavari (Honey Bee) Swarupa Linga named Jagannadha 29) Rayana implored to a Linga made of Chameli flower and named it Suduriaya 30) Siddhaganas paid respects to Manasa Linga called Kama Mrityu Jaraatiga 31) Raja Bali worshipped Yashamaya (Famed) Linga named *Jnanatma* 32) Marichi and other Maharshis pray to Pushpamaya (flowerful) Linga with the name Jnana gamya 33) Devathas who performed noble deeds made approbation to Shubhamaya Linga (Propitiousness) named *Jnaanaineya* 34) Maharshi Phenaj (foam) who drank Phena did Upasana to Phena Linga called Sarvavid 35) Sage Kapila performed Japa to Balukamaya Ling named Varada. 36) Saarasvat, the son of Devi Sarasvathi did Upasana to Vanimaya Linga named *Vaageeswara*. 37) Sivaganas made a Linga of Bhagavan Siva and provided penance to Rudra. 38) Devathas made a Jambu River golden Linga to pray to Sitikantha. 39) Budha prays to Shankhamaya (conchshell) Linga by the name of Kanishtha. 40) The Two Ashvini Kumars pray to Muktikmaya Parthiva Linga named Suvedha. 41) Ganesha made a Siva Linga made of Wheat Flour worships it by the name of *Kapardi* 42) Mangala Graha (The Planet of Mars) made a Buttermade Linga called Karaala to pray. 43) Garuda prays to an Odanamaya Linga named Haryaksha. 44) Kamadeva Manmadha prays to a jaggery made Linga called Rathida .45) Sachi Devi, the Consort of King Indra paid reverence to a Salt-made Linga Buddhakesha. 46) Visvakarma prayed to a Prasaadamaya (or of the shape of a Mahal / Building) Linga called *Yamya*. 47) Vibhishana made a dustfulof Linga called *Suhrutam* to pray. 48) Raja Sagar who brought Ganga from Siva's Head made a 'Vamsamkura' Linga called Sangat. 49) Rahu made a Hing (asafoetida) made Linga named Gamya to worship. 50) Devi Lakshmi made a Lehya Linga named Harinetra and worshipped it. 51) Yogi Purush prays to Sarvabhuthatha Linga called *Sthaanu*. 52) Human beings prepare a wide variety of Lingas and worship them by the name of *Purusha*. 53) Nakshatras (Stars) pray to Tejomaya (full of Radiance) Linga called Bhaga / Bhaskara. 54) Kinnaras make a Dhaatumaya Linga by the name of Sudeepth for Japas. 55) Brahma Raakshasa Ganas pray to Asthimaya (Bones) Linga named Deva Deva. 56) Charanas worship dantamaya (full of Teeth) Linga called Ramhas. 57) Sadhya ganas pray to Saptaloka maya Linga titled *Bahurupa*. 58) Ritus worship Doorvaankura maya Linga named *Sarva*. 59)

Celestial Damsel Urvasi prays to Sindhura Linga named *Priva Vasan*. 60) Apsaras perform Archana to Kumkuma Linga called *Abhushana*. 61) Guru Deva performs puja to Brahmachari Linga named *Ushnivi*. 62) Yoginis offer their obsequiousness to Alakthak Linga by name Suvabhruk. 63) Siddha Yoginis worship Srikhanda Linga named Sahasraaksha. 64) Dakinis perform puja to Lingas made of Mamsa or Meat and call Siva by the name of Sumidhsha, 65) Manna Ganaas worship Annamaya Linga called Girisha. 66) Agasthya Muni worships Vreehimaya Linga to Siva named Sushanth. 67) Muni Devala made Yavamaya Linga and called Siva with the name of Pathi. 68) Valmiki Muni made a Linga of Valmikas and prayed to *Chira Vasa*. 69) Pratardan prays to Baana Linga named *Hiranyabhui*, 70) Daityagana made Rayi made Siva Linga and prayed to Ugra. 71) Daanavas worship a Nishpaavaj Linga known as Dikpathi. 72) Baadal (Clouds) pray to Neeramaya (waterful) Lingas called Parjanya. 73) Yaksharaj made Maashamaya Linga and performed puja to *Bhutapathi*. 74) Pitruganas made Tilamaya (Sesame seeds) Linga and worshipped Siva as Vrishapathi. 75) Gouthama Muni worships Godhulimaya Linga named Gopathi. 76) Vanaprastha ganas display veneration to a phalamaya (full of fruits) Linga named Vrikshavrita 77) Karthikeya is highly devoted to Siva in the form of a stone Linga called Senanya 78) Ashtavatar Nag worshipped Dhanya linga called *Madhyama*. 79) Yagna Kartha prayed to Purusha Linga named Sthruva hasta. 80) Yama worships 'Kalaaya samaya' Linga called Dhanvi. 81) Parasurama prays to Yavaankura Linga named Bhargava. 82) Pururava prays to Ghritamaya (Gheeful) Linga by name Bahurupa. 83) Mandhata paid admiration to a Sugary Linga by name Bahuyug. 84) The clan of Cows utilises a Dugdhamaya Linga (full of Milk) for paying their respects and sincere devotion to Nethra sahasrak. 85) Pathivrata Sthrees (Women devoted to their husbands) worship to Bhatrumaya Linga called Viswapati. 86) Nara and Narayana worship Siva in the form of Mounji Linga named Sahasra Sirsha. 87) Pruthu worships Thaaksharya Linga known as Sahasra Charan. 88) Birds pay their homage to Vyoma Linga in the name of Sarvatmaka. 89) Prithivi prays to Gandhamaya Linga named as Dvithanu. 90) The entire Animal Kingdom prays to Bhasmamaya Linga known by the name of *Maheswara*. 91) Rishiganas perform Upasana to Jnanamaya Linga called Chirasthan. 92) Brahmanas do penance to Brahma Linga in the name of Siva as *Jyeshtha*. 93) Sesha Nag worships to 'Gorochanamaya' Linga named *Pashupathi*. 94) Vasuki Nag prays to Visha (poison) Linga with the name of Shankara. 95) Takshaka Nag prays to Kaalakutamaya Linga called Bahurup. 96) Karkotaka Nag pays esteem to Halahalamaya Linga named Pingaksha, 97) Shringi prays to Vishamaya Linga by the name of Dhurjati, 98) Puthras (Sons) perform in the name of Pitrumaya Linga (Fathers) called Vishwarupa. 99) Siva Devi worships Parama maya Linga named Vyambak. 100) Matsya and such other Jeevas pray to Shastramaya Linga named Vrishakapi.

<u>Phalasruti</u>: Whoever recites Siva Sata Rudreeyam in the morning, the sins committed by the mind, tongue and action get vanished; diseases and fatigue get dissolved; fear and apprehension evaporate; and worries and anxiety disappear. Those who utter the hundred names of Parama Siva and make Salutations to Him as many times would instantly secure mental peace and contentment.

### Skanda's 'Vijaya Sthambh' (Tower of Victory) and 'Siddha Saptaka'

Since Kumareswar Complex was set up already, Skanda Deva agreed to the request of Devas to put up a Victory Tower named 'Viswanandak' and before it a Siva Linga. Skanda put in His 'Shakti' and created 'Patala Ganga' in a Well atop the Victory Tower, where on Magha Krishna Paksha Chaturdasi, human beings would take bath in that Well, offer 'Pitru Tarpans' and worship to Vijaya Sthambheswar with Flowers and Sandal Paste; these acts would be as significant as Gaya Shraddh and Vajapeya Yagna Phal respectively. In fact, the Tarpan and Worship could as well be repeated every Pournima and Amavasya in the Mahi Sagar Sangam for similar results. When this Victory Tower and Procedure were announced, Indra, Brahma and Vishnu were highly enthusiastic and appreciative. Meanwhile, a Demon named **Pralambasura**, who ran away from the army of Tarakasura, hid himself in Patalaloka and tormented the Devotees of the Siva Lingas set up by Skanda as a **Prayaschittha** of Brahmahathya Sin; this information was given by Kumud, the son of Sesha Nag, the Deva Serpent to Skanda who utilised the Shakti named arrow, tore apart a line through Prithvi and smashed the Demon Pralamba and his associates. As a follow up, Brahma and others set up a 'Siddheswar Linga' and Devatas themselves dug up a Sarovar and Skanda

named it as 'Siddha Kupa' (which incidentally was the route through which Pralamba and company were killed in Patalaloka); they all prayed to Shakti Siddhamba to be present and bless devotees, especially on Ashtamis and Chaturdasis. Again, in the Siddheswara Tirtha, Devas requested Lord Ganesh too to stay at the Siddha Kshetra in the form of Sidhha Vinayaka. In fact, Devas and Brahma set up Seven Siddha Entities viz. Siddheswar, Siddh Vat (Vriksha), Siddhambika, Siddhi Vinayak, Siddha Kshetraadhipathi, Siddheswar Tirtha and Siddha Kupa.

### Mahakaal blesses Kumari, Kalabhiti and Karandhama

King Rishyashring had seven sons and a daughter **Kumari**. The background of the daughter was interesting indeed. Once at the banks of Mahi Sagar Tirtha and the Vijaya Sthambha, a stray goat was thirsty, got entangled among flower creepers, its neck was snapped on the ground, its body fell into water and was dead. By the blessings of the Sacred Tirtha, the head of the Goat was fixed to the daughter of the King of Simhala named Shatha Shringa. As the girl grew, she saw her face in a mirror to find the head of the dead Goat and soon after that she obtained the knowledge of past birth; she took permission of her parents and proceeded to Mahi Sagar and by the power of the Tirtha, got rid of her goat-head and turned out to be a very charming girl. She refused to marry despite many offers but performed severe Tapasya to Maheswara. She secured a boon from the latter that she would like to live at the Tirtha always later. She set up a Linga named Varkaresh at the same place where the goat felt thirsy. Bhagayan Siva was pleased and said that anybody who felt thirsty and died and the body's bones were dropped into the Mahisagara Sangam then that person would stay in Swaraga for long time and return to Earth as a King. Also, whoever would take bath in the Sangam and worship Varkareshwar, the person's desire would be surely fulfilled. If Pitru Tarpanas were performed on a Kartika Krishna Chaturdasi after Puja to Varkarkareswar, the person concerned would be blessed. After returning to her father at Simhala, he divided his Kingdom in favour of his children including Kumari. After his death, she got to her share's Kumarikhand but soon continued to stay and perform charities at Sthambha Tirtha from her income. She reconstructed the Temple originally built by Kartikeya and dedicated the newly made Golden Temple to Siva who was immensely pleased and declared that the earlier Kumareswar Tirtha be also called Kumariswar Tirtha. As her age advanced and was to die soon, Parama Siva desired that she should not end her life as an unmarried woman and hence wanted to marry Him in the form of Mahakaal and took her to Rudra Loka, where Parvati Devi endeared her and named her as Chitralekha, since Kumari was an expert in Chitralekhan or painting.

While this was the position, there was a pure Brahmana in Kasipura well known for chanting Manti Rudra Mantra always and was thus called Manti. After constant recitation of the Mantra, the Brahmana was blessed with the Vision of Rudra and gave the boon of begetting a very pious son from his wife. But at the time of delivery, the child refused to come out of the womb as he argued that despite knowing the importance of human birth, he was afraid of the bad qualities of human life which tended to attract innumerable sins entering into the cycle of sins and redemption. Manti prayed to Maha Deva again and blessed Manti to get the child out, naming the child as Kaalabhiti, since he was afraid of Kala Marg. Kaalabhiti grew as an illustrious youth with the knowledge of Pasupathi Mantra, Sadyojatadi Pancha Mantras and an excellent background of Vedas and Scriptures. He visited Mahi Sagar Sangama and soon after taking bath in the Tirtha, he felt considerable transformation and executed Tapasya by standing on one leg's toe underneath the Bilvapatra Tree near the Sangam. A few months later a Stranger approached Kalabhiti and asked him to have some water as he did enough Tapasya. Kaalabhiti enquired of the latter's background but the Stranger replied that He was not aware of His parentage or caste or religion. Kaalabhiti said that his Guru asked him not to entertain a stranger without parentage and caste. The Stranger made fun of him as there was no logic in ascertaining the details, as after all, all the human beings were born of some parents by same Paramatma, lived on the same Earth, breathed the same air, lived under the same sky, ate similar food and drank same water, the same type of blood ran into the veins etc. Kaalabhiti argued that no doubt same Siva was in all the human beings, but some were Bhaktas and some were 'Nastiks'; nobody ate ash and dust but only edible items and so on. That was why certain

regulations were set up in human life. In the past, Lord Brahma created the Universe out of 'Panchabhutas'; four differences viz. 'Dhvani'/ Naad Swarup (Sound), 'Varnas' (Omkaraful of Aksharas or Letters), 'Padas' or words like 'Sivam' and Vakyas or Sentences which were of three types viz. 'Prabhusattam' which gave orders like do this or do that; 'Suhruthsattam' like 'Itihasas' and 'Puranas' providing guidance and direction; and 'Kanthasattam' on the lines of a beloved indicating do's and don'ts. That was how feelings of friendship, affection and respect are promoted, thus proving that there would have to be a regulated and controlled Society. Varnashram was an extension of the Rules of a Society since the Four Classes had established rules for Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vyasyas and Sudras. Could one ignore the Directives of Vedas, Shastras and Puranas as waste? How Saptarshis could in the olden days become Brahmanas and Kshatriyas; were they fools? It is not being said that Siva is not in every being but just as Pure Gold gets converted into various qualities of the metal, human beings too are of various types, some are virtuous and some are vicious, some are of nobility and some are not and so on. The Stranger then scratched with his right foot thumb a small water line which became a big waterbody but even then Kalabhiti was not impressed as there might be some Bhuta or Pisacha trying to create a sense of awe. The Stranger said: Suppose the water of this Sarovar belonged to me, the vessel belonged to me and the rope too, then why should you not accept my water, since I am the donor of water and the owner of the Waterbody? Kalabhiti still said that he would never ever accept the water from a Stranger without knowing who he was and the details of his parentage! Smilingly the Stranger disappeared and under the Bilva Tree there appeared a Siva Linga as Devas rained Parijata flowers and then Kalabhiti realised that the Stranger was none other than Mahakaala Himself! Kalabhiti made a sincere Stuti (eulogy) to the Mahakaal Linga saying: Hey Sin terminator Kaal, Kaal margik Kaal, Kaal who has Kaal (Black) coloured 'Kantha' or Throat, Kaal who has Kaalarupa (Dark coloured Swarupa), Bhagavan Mahakala, I bow to the Unreserved Embodiment of Vidyas; You are known as the 'Tatpurusha', Maheswara of the Creation in totality; My 'Sashtanga' (prostrated) Namaskar.' Parameswara gave Darshan to Kalabhiti from the Swayambhu Linga being worshipped by him and told: 'I was testing your 'Dharmaparaayana' or the grit of your proven virtue and am satisfied; Kaal could never impose any restriction on you due to your steadfast belief in Scriptures and the proven path of Dharma. Do follow this route always and this Sarovar created for you would confer contentment to whosoever took bath in it and worship me!'Kaalabhiti requested Mahaakal that the Linga being worshipped be popularised all over as Mahaakal Linga and that he be blessed to be always near Him. Bhagavan agreed to both the requests and blessed Kaalabhiti to become an additional Dwar Pal in addition to Nandi! As Kaalabhiti had conquered 'Kaal' (death), he became Mahakaal himself in the form of a Sage!

The illustrious Siva Bhakta King Karandhama visited Mahi Sagara Sangam to worship Mahakaal. He took bath in the pious waters of the Sangam, performed Special Pujas to Maha Deva and made elaborate eulogies. Sage Mahakaal (erstwhile Kaalabhiti) sat near the King and made affectionate enquiries to him. The King took this great opportunity and sought clarifications on certain doubts tormenting his mind for long still unanswered: Human beings perform 'Tarpans' with water to the deceased 'Pithras' and this water goes back to water; similarly 'Pinda Daans' are offered and how could one surmise that the offerings actually reach the 'Pithras'? Mahaakal replied that not all Pithras were bound by their Karma as seven categories of Pitras like deities, Asuras, Yakshas were disembodied and were beyond the rules of Karma; They could hear from distance, accept Pujas from a distance, and acknowledge commendations from a distance; in fact they could reach anywhere and possess the knowledge of the Past, Present and Future. Their physical features possess 'Tatvas' including Five Tanmatras of Sound, Colour, Taste, Touch and and Smell as also Manas, Buddhi, Ahamkar and Prakriti totalling Nine Tatvas; outside the physique beyond these Tatvas dwells Bhagavan Purushottam; thus both Devatas and Pitras get contented by Rasa-Gandhas or Rasa-Tatvas. They experience 'Shabda Tatva' or 'Sparsha Tatva' and also get satisfied with the 'Anna Saara and Jala Saara Tatvas' or the essence food and water mitigating their hunger and thirst, irrespective of the place, rupa and condition. It was to such categories of Pitras that the Tarpans and Pinda Daans were meant and they could bless the persons performing the offerings. The second question was as to why the offerings being made through Agni to various Devas needed to be made name wise, instead of

uttering 'Idam Bhutadibhaya'; is it necessary to specify for eg. 'Indra Devaya edam namah'etc. The reply was simple as Superior Devas would never ever accept offerings unless through the medium of Mantras name by name. The next query was as to why Daan or Charity was to be offered along with Kusha grass, Akshatas (Rice grains mixed with Turmeric powder), water and Til (Sesame Seed) would need to be taken into hands, depending on the nature of offering. Mahakaal replied that in the past 'daan phal' was being short-circuited or intercepted by Asuras even before the Fruits of Charity reached the receiver; hence Brahma devised a formula that charities meant for Pitharas be offered along with tilas and water by observing 'Pracheenaaveethi' or changing the direction of the Sacred Thread from left to right shoulder and to Devas along with Akshatas, water and Kusa grass. A futher question of Karandhama to Mahakaal was regarding the Four Yugas and their main features. Mahakaal described that 'Dhyana' (meditation) was the major feature of Kritha Yuga; Yagnas or Sacrifices constituted the dominant attribute of Tretayuga; Satya or Truth was the predominant characteristic of Dwapar Yuga, while Daan was the redeeming trait of the Kali Yuga. In Krita Yuga, there was all-round happiness, contentment, perfect Varnasrama practice and devotion to Parama Siva; in Treta Yuga and Dwapara Yugas, there were gradual slippages of Dharma, rise of vices and lack of consistency in the behaviour pattern of human beings. In Kali Yuga, there has been rapid display of 'Tamo guna' and viciousness, ferocity, violence, sadism, corruption, dishonesty and duplicity. Alongside these, there have been famines, floods, failure of crops, disease, lawlessness, debauchery, decadence of social values and a state of no return paving way to 'Pralay' (the Great Dissolution).

Yet another query made by Karandhama to Kaalaakal was about the **Supremacy of Trimurtis**, Viz. Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. Mahaakaal replied that in the past there were intense deliberations by Maharshis at Naimisharanya and deputed Munis to Lord Brahma whether He was the most significant among the 'Trimurthis'; Brahma replied: Ananthaya namasthasmai yasyantho Nopalabhyathe, Maheshaya cha dwavethou mahi stham Sumukhou Sada (I greet that Bhagavaan Anantha, whose terminating point is elusive; yet, My reverences are with both Vishnu and Shankara). The Munis reached Ksheera Sagar and asked the same question and Vishnu replied: Brahmanam Sarva Bhutheshu Paramam Brahmarupinam, Sadasivam cha Vandey thou Bhavetaam Mangalaya mey/ (I greet that Bhagavan who is present all over called Brahma and Sada Siva, as both are propitious to me). Then the delegation of Sages visited Kailasa and put this question to Devi Uma so that Parama Siva would get the reply indirectly and Bhagavan Shankara told Devi Parvati: Ekadashyam Pranrutyami Jaagare Vishnu Sahasraani, Sadaa Tapasyancharami preetharthamHari Vedhasou / (Devi, I observe Eakadasi by 'Jaagaran' (keeping awake in the night) and also perform 'Nritya' (dance) in Vishnu Mandir (Temple) to seek the love and blessings of both Brahma and Vishnu). As the Munis returned to Naimisharanya rather confused and decided to worship the 'Trimurthi Swarupa' and declared that whosoever made inter se comparisons of the Three Devas or grade them, would indeed go to Naraka, as such comparisons are unmerited, futile and evil minded).

Karandhama sought reply from Mahaakaal about the **Types and Description of Sins**. Adharmas or Acts of Sin are mainly of three categories: 'Sthuula' (in Gross Form), 'Sukshma' (Small in content) and 'Athyantha Sukshma' (Minute). These sins are performed by Mind (Manas), Tongue (Vani) or Karma (Action). The Manasik type is four-fold: Thinking of other's women, wealth, material loss and difficulties. 'Vachik Paap karma' (Sinful Utterances) like lies, unpalatable sayings, blaming others and using provocative language. The physically performed Sins are consuming the non consumable and resorting to violence, vicious deeds and swindling other's belongings; also, harbouring hatred to Maha Deva, visiting Temples but not greeting Gods and Goddesses nor praising the Deities; criticising them, being playful to them, behaving unpardonably to Siva Bhaktas and keeping hatred to them. The Pancha Maha Patakas or the Major Five Sins are Brahma hatya, consuming intoxicants, thieving, being desirous of Guru's wife and keeping company to those who perform these major sins. Those who do harm to Brahmanas or the Virtuous out of hatred, jealousy, anger, temptation or fear are sinners called 'Brahmaghatis'. Those who pick up quarrels with Good persons on flimsy pretexts and obtain vicarious pleasure are as good as 'Brahmahatyaras'. Abandoning one's parents, providing wrong witnesses;

exposing villages, houses, forests and Cow-sheds on fire are considered as sins of high order. Taking away everything from the poor, kidnapping women, children and animals; robbing men, women, animals, 'Bhumi', gold and precious metals, medicines, items of luxury, textiles, and any other material, raping, etc. are clear examples of sins. In the context of committing sins of major, medium, small, tiny, ignorable or the least acts of acceptance, the best evidence is one's own conscience. Besides being repentant, helpful qualities of a sinner include the courage to own a sin, the capacity to refrain from repeating it and discouraging others not to do it.

### Procedure of Siva Puja

Asked about the Procedure of Siva Puja, Mahaakaal explained to Karandhama that after taking bath early morning and wearing white 'dhoty' and 'uttareeya' robes, Tripundra vibhudhi (three lined ash) on the forehead, chest and shoulders and with sincerity and resolve to perform the worship, a devotee should keep a clean vessel with pure water and fill up atleast four smaller vessels with milk, curd, ghee and honey and settle down along with other Puja material like flowers, fruits, Kumkum / Sindur, turmeric powder, coconuts, 'Akshatas' (rice grains mixed with turmeric powder), Bilwa leaves, Sandal paste, Agar for Dhup, camphor for Deepa etc. kept on Siva Linga's left. The worship commences with Mantras addressing the very first Deity Ganesha with 'Om Gam Ganesaya namah' followed by two others, with Om Kshey Kshetra Palaaya namah, and Om Gum Gurubhyo namah and dedicates the Puja material to 'Akash' (Sky). Later on, he worships in the following order directed towards to four directions viz. Kula Devatha, Nandi, Mahaakaal, and Dhatha-Vidhata with the mantras: Om Kum Kula Devathaya namah, Om nam Nandiney namah, Om Mahaakaalaya namah and Om Dhaam Dhaatrey Vidhaatrey namah. Thereafter the devotee should sit to the left of Siva Linga facing 'uttarabhimukha' and perform Dhyan or imagine a lotus of Surva mandal, its central portion as Chandra mandal, the central portion of the Chandra mandal as Agni mandal and the further central portion as Bhagavan Siva surrounded by His 'Vama', 'Jyeshtha' and other Shaktis; Siva having Five Faces, ten hands, each face possessing three eyes and each head decorated with Chandra, His left lap seated by Devi Uma and Siddhaganas reciting Hymns of His Glories. After Dhyan, service to Maha Deva commences with 'Padya' (washing His feet with water) and 'Arghya' comprising nine inputs viz. Jal (water), Akshath, Kusha grass roots, Chandan, Pushpa, mustard, milk, curd and honey, each material to be given to Bhagavan, smear the mix on His Mastak (Top) and after Abhishek (Snaan / bathing), show Dhup (Agar smoke) by reciting the 'Shodasha -akshara' Moola Mantra viz. Om Hum Vishva Murthaye Sivaaya namah. The Snaan with the mix of the above nine materials should be done again and again and later apply Chandan paste to appease the Linga as also perform puja with flowers and bilwa leaves on and around the 'Adhaara Peetha' or the base structure of the Linga on the Agneya side by reciting: Om Dharmaya namah; on the Nairutya side by reciting Om *Jnanayaa namah*; on the Vayavya side by reciting *Om Vairagyaya namah*; on the Eshaanya side by reciting Om Ishvarvyaya namah; on the Eastern side by reciting Om Adharmaya namah; on Southern side by reciting Om Ajnaanaya namah; on the Western side by reciting Om Avairaagyaaya namah; and on the Northern side by reciting *Om Anaiswaryaya namah*. Thus worshipping Vairagya and 'Anant' features be worshipped on the Lotus-ear ends as follows: Om Anantaya namah; Om Padmaaya namah; Om Arka mandalaaya namah; Om Soma mandalaya namah; Om Vahni mandalaya namah; Om Vaama Jyeshthaadi Panchamantra Shaktiyobhye namah; and Om Parama Prakrutyai Devyai namah. Then follows the Puja of Eshaana, Tat Purusha, Aghora, Vama Deva and Sadyojaatha-the Pancha Mukhas or Five Faces of Maha Deva; Rudra, Sadhya, Vasu, Aditya and Vishva Deva and other Deva Swarupas; Andaja, Svedaja, Udbhuja and Jaraayuja 'Sthavara-Jangama Murthi Parameswara and Vishva murthi Siva by the folowing Mantra: Om EshaanaTatpurushaaghora Vaama deva Sayojaatha Panchavaktraaya Rudra Saadhya Vasuvaaditya Vishvadevaadi Deva Rupaandaja Svyedajodbhuja Jvaraayujarupasthavara Jangamamurthaye Parameswaraya Om Hum Vishva murthaye Sivaayanamah/ The worship would continue to 'Trisula' and other arms of Siva by reciting: Trisula Dhanuh Khadga Kapaala Kuthaarebhyo namah/ followed by Chandiswara Puja be performed by reciting the Mantra: Om Chandiswaraya namah. After this 'Vidhi Purvak' (according the Procedure) puja, Maha Deva should receive 'Arghya' comprising 'Jal, Akshat, flowers etc.followed by Dhan, Dhupa, Deepa, and Naivedya as well as Ghanta (Bells) and

'Vaadyadhwani'or sound of various musical instruments alongwith 'Arathi', Nritya, Sangeetha and Vadya, Stotras, Hymn Singing (Mantra Pushpam), Physical circling while standing and 'Saashtanga Namaskars' (prostrated greetings). Then the 'Aparadha' mantras are recited to seek forgiving of lapses in the Puja to say: *Mantra heenam, Kriya heena, Bhakti heenam Maheswara, Yatpujitham maya Deva paripurnam thadasthutey, Anaya Dhyanaavaahanadi Shodasopaachaara Pujaya Bhagavan Sarvaatmakah - Supreetah Suprasanno varado bhavathu:* by so saying leave water and Akshathas in a plate and say again: Devatha Prasaadam Sirasa Grihnaami, Ethat Phalam Parameswaraarpana masthu, so saying take Pushpas and Akshatas on the Devotee's head. Having explained the Sacred Procedure of Siva Puja to Karandhama, Mahakaal left for Siva Loka and those who would read this and more so perform the Puja as prescribed would attain Siva dhaam / Kailasa.

#### 'Narada sets up the Idols of Vasudeva and Bhattaditya (Surya Deva)

Sage Narada felt that at the Sacred Place of Mahi Sagar Tirtha, the Presence of Purushottama and Bhattaditya should be established too to add further significance. He worshipped Vishnu for hundred years and as He was pleased with His appearance finally. Narada requested Bhagavan to establish Himself in the Tirtha as Vasudeva. Since then a beautiful Idol came to be woshipped by devotees on Kartika Shukla Ekadasi by observing fasting, Japa of the Mantra of Om Namo Narayanaya, perform Jaagaran with singing of hymns, group dances and bhajans in praise of Vasudeva and on the next morning execute worship again and offer charities. The Virtuous Brahmana Aitreva excelled in his constant Japa of Dwadashakshara Mantra 'Om Namo Bhagatey Vasudevaya'right from his childhood and never heeded his parents or relatives and neighbours, who had all thought that he was dumb. His mother was terribly upset, as her husband Manduki Muni married again and Aitreya's brothers were not abnormal. One day, the mother threatened to kill herself as her son was always spending time in the temple; Aitraya smiled and explained to her at length about the futility of normal life with the routine matters like marriage, family, earning livelihood, begetting children, getting old, diseases and death. He also told her that he had the knowledge of his earlier birth as a Sudra and he approached a kind and Dharmatma Brahmana who taught him the Dwadasakshara Mantra and the awareness of Bhagavan Vishnu; that was why he looked to be a stupid and dumb person. In the course of the discussion, Vasudava appeared in full glory with four hands along with ornaments and arms like Shankham (Conchshell), Chakram (Wheel), Gada (Mace) etc.before Atreya who was dumbfounded and confounded and having gradually recovered his senses made endless eulogies and asked for 'Moksha'. Vasudeva replied that as he worshipped Him relenlessly, sincerely and selflessly at this Vasudeva Mandir of Mahi Sagara Kshetra, it would be called 'Aghanaashan' and asked him to continue the daily worship as in the past till his end and reach Vaikuntha after his normal death. His mother was proud of her son and his father joined the Aswamedha Yagna after the Darshan of Vasudeva. Aitreya explained to his parents: Namasthasmai Bhagavatey Vishnuvetkunthamedhasey, Yanmayaamohitadhayo bhramanah Karma saagare/ (I salute Bhagavan Vishnu, as our minds are illusioned with 'Maya Moha' (obsession) and are aimless in this vast Ocean of Samsara).'

Sage Narada also performed the 'Pratishtha' (Consecration) of **Bhattaditya** (Sun God) who is 'Prathyaksha saakshi' or ready-evidence on the Skies who is all pervasive and omniscient. He is the holder of the Universe. Those who do not recognise His magnitude and prominence are blind and who do not worship Him or highly unintelligent; one could see Him, feel Him and recognise Him on a daily basis but not pray to Him and wirship Him may be truly termed as 'Atmadrohis' or self-deceitful. Narada performed severe Tapasya for hundred years and requested Him to retain one of His 'Amsas' (Features) in the Bhattadithya Idol and bless those who worship Him especially on Sundays and recite the following one hunred eight names to Surya Deva:

'Saptasatmi, Achintyathmikathma, Mahakaarunyatotthama, Sanjjevana, Jaya, Jeeva, Jeevanadha, Jagatpati, Kaalashraya, Kaalakarta, Mahayogi, Mahamati, Bhutaanthahkarana, Deva, Kamalaanandana, Sahasrapaad, Varada, Diyamandalamandita, Dharmapriya, Aarchitatma, Savita, Vayuvaahana, Adithya, Akrodhana, Surya, Rashmimaali, Vibhavasu, Dinakruta, Dinahnuta, Moun, Suradha, Raashimpathi, Swarnaretha, Pusha, Twashtha, Divakara, Aakkashatilaka, Dhatha, Samvibhagi, Manohara, Praajana, Prajaapati, Dhanya, Vishnu, Shreesha, Bhishagvara, Alokakrut, Lokanatha, Viditashaya, Sunaya, Mahatma, Bhaktavatsala, Kirthi, Kirthikara, Nithya, Rochishnu, Kalmashapaha, Jitananda, Mahaveerya, Hamsa, Samharakaaraka, Krithakrithya, Asanga, Bahujna, Vachasaampati, Vishvapujya, Mrityuhaari, Ghruni, Dharakaarana, Pranatatrihara, Aroga, Aayushmaan, Sukhada, Sukhi, Mangala, Pundarikaksha, Vrati, Vrataphalaprada, Suchi, Purna, Mokshamarga, Daata, Bhokta, Dhanvanthari, Priyabhasa, Dhunurvedavith, Ekarat, Jagatpitha, Dhumrakethu, Vidhut, Dwaanthaha, Guru, Gopathi, Kritathitthya, Shubhaachaar, Shuchipriya, Saamapriya, Lokabandhu, Naikarupa, Yugakrith, Dharmasethu, Lokasakshi, Kheta, Arka, Sarvada and Prabhu.

### Why had 'Mahi Sagara Sangama Tirtha' become a 'Gupta Kshetra"?

Lord Brahma convened a Conference of various Tirthas which were well known by Devotees from all over Bharat. Skanda Deva was also present and so did Dharma Deva. Brahma said that it might not be fair for Him to unilaterally decide on the Supremacy of a particular Tirtha and hence the invitees could air their special features considering the Sacredness, Boons secured by the Devotees from the respective Gods, and the general popularity and the turnover of the devotees at their respective Tirthas. The Mahi Sagara Tirtha Representative said that his Tirtha was unparalelled; in the past King Indradyumna did such Tapasya that Prithvi who was the 'Sarva Tirthamayi' (the bearer of all the Tirthas) herself acknowledged the Supremacy of Mahi Sagara and none else could make a claim over the Maha Tirtha! Dharma Deva, the elder son of Brahma Deva reacted sharply against what Mahi Sagara said and condemned the highly self-opinionated views; he said that virtuous persons never made statements like that since that tantamounted to boasting, ego and a blatant display of 'Ahamkar' which was against the established norms of morality, especially referring to the merits of others. So saying, Dharma Deva gave a curse that the Tirtha be destroyed! On witnessing the proceedings at the Conference, there were 'Hahakars' or Great Commotions. Skanda Deva objected to Dharma's 'Shaapa' (Curse) and defended the fact that there was indeed no other Tirtha in the Universe that was comparable to Mahi Sagara. In turn, Dharma Deva became ready to resign, which meant that the entire World would become irreligous, full of Adharma and lawless! Narad intervened at this juncture that on the one hand, Dharma Deva's role was oustanding in upholding virtues while Skanda Deva was actually the Son of Bhagavan Ishvar and the Commander-in-Chief of Deva Sena. Any friction between these two illustrious personsalities might jeopardise Universal balance and as such the compromise formula suggested was that Mahi Sagara Tirtha be declared as a Gupta (Secret) Kshetra and as an Unknown Destination; but any devotee observing fast and worship on Amavasya falling on Saturdays in the name of the Mahi Tirtha would be reaping worth ten times more of Prabhasa Tirtha, Seven times of Pushkar Tirtha Yatras, and eight times of Prayag. This was also acceptable to Brahma, Dharma and Skanda and all the Sacred Deities represented at Mahi Sagara including Paramatma Vishnu, Maha Deva and Maha Devis.

### Some Tirthas and Kshetras of repute

Nandiswar narrated to Markandeya that besides the Gupta Kshetra, Bharat is dotted with innumerable Tirthas and Punya Kshetras all over. The major Siva Pradhan (Siva-Oriented) Kshetras include 'Varanasi' where Avimukta Maha Deva, Visalakshi, Annapurna, Kapala Mochana Tirtha, Kala Bhairava Nivas and the Jeeva Ganga were the highlights; 'Gaya' Tirtha is well reputed as a Holy Place for performing 'Pinda Pradaan'; 'Kedar' where Shankar is present in the Form of Mahisha fulfilling human desires; 'Badarikashrama' where Devi Parvati and Maha Deva worship Vishnu in the form of Nara Narayana; 'Naimisharanya' where Maha Deva was known for destroying Tripurasura; 'Amaresha' Kshetra where Siva is in the form of 'Omkareswara' and Devi Parvati as 'Chandika'; 'Pushkar Maha Tirtha' where Rujogandhi Siva and Puruhuta named Devi reside; 'Ashadhi'named Tirtha Sthaan where 'Ashadh

Mahadeva and Rati Devi stay; 'Dandi-Mundi' Tirtha where Mundi named Rudra and 'Dandi' Devatha inhabit; 'Aralakeswar' Kshetra is the abode of 'Sukshma' Siva and 'Sukshmi' Girijakumari; 'Kurukshetra' where 'Sthanu' Deva and 'Sthanupriya' Devi stay; 'Kankhal' where Siva in the form of 'Ugra' and 'Uma' named Devi are housed; 'Attahaas' Tirtha is the Place where Surya Deva worships; 'Srishaila' is a popular Kshetra worshipping 'Mallikarjuna' and 'Bhramaramba', where Brahma did penance for Siddhi before taking up Creation of human beings; 'Kalahasti' on the banks of River 'Suvarnamukhi' displaying 'Kalahasteswara' and 'Bhringamukharalika' (Jnana Prasunamba) where Veda Vyasa worshipped; till date Pujas are performed to appease Rahu and Kethu Devas among the 'Navagrahas'; 'Kancheepura Kshetra' where 'Devi Kamakshi' performed Tapasya under a Mangoe Tree to 'Kamashasan' (Ekambareswar); 'Vyaghrapuri Tirtha' near Tillinanam where Siva is present as famous 'Nataraja' in the dance form at Chidambaram, where Maharshi Patanjali did his 'upasana'; 'Sethubandhana' / 'Rameswara'where Sri Rama and Devi Sita returned from Lanka after killing Ravanasura and Sita set up a Sand Linga, since Hanuman Deva was unable to bring a fascimile of Kasi Visveswara on time; 'Soma Tirtha' where 'Somnath'is present; 'Gokarna Kshetra' where Bhagavan Gokarneswar is present; 'Brahmapura Kshetra' on the banks of Pushkarini where Brahma established Parama Siva; 'Tripuranthak Kshetra' where the Three Eyed Siva demolishes the devotees' fear of 'Naraka'; 'Prabhasa Kshetra'where Sri Krishna and Balabhadra worship 'Chandrardha Sekhar'; 'Jaalandhar kshetra'where Andhakasura was killed by Siva and Jalandhar did Tapasya to become the Head of 'Shivaganas'; 'Jwalamukhi' Sthaan ( Place) where Devi Jwalamukhi worships 'Kaala Rudra'; 'Triambakeswar' on the banks of Godavari River where Kartikeya secured the Shakti to kill Tarakasura and so on.

#### Arunachala 'Mahatmya'

Both Brahma and Vishnu witnessed one 'Agni Sthumbh' (Pillar of Fire) which was dazzling to eyes and emanating extraordinary heat, without beginning or end. Brahma's Four faces recited Vedas and He performed 'Manasik Puja' (Worship by mind) and so did Lord Vishnu. Bhagavan Siva appeared and was pleased by their eulogies; they requested that His huge Form of Fire of unbearable radiance and heat be please reduced as a Siva Linga so that worship became possible to all including themselves, Devas and human beings. The gigantic form of the Fire Pillar then got converted as a 'Sthayara Linga' at Arunachal. Most interestingly, even at the time of 'Pralaya' (Great Dissolution), the entire Universe was submerged in water and there was no trace of Earth visible, the Land of Arunachala was never even touched! This Place is in the South of Bharat and Arunachal (Tiruvannamalai) is in the form of Mountain Range comprising the 'Pancha Mukhas' or the Five Faces of Lord Rudra viz. 'Tatpurusha', 'Aghora', 'Sadyojata', 'Vamadeva', 'Eshana' which are visible till date. Nandikeswara told Markandeya that this Sacred Region is like the heart of Devi Prithvi. This Arunachal is expected to be Parameswar Himself and a fourteen kilometre distance surrounding the Mountain is as good as a complete 'Pradakshina' (Circumambulation) of Lord Siva. A large number of persons perform the Pradakshina on every full moon night barefooted and Pournami of Chaitra Month is a very special day as over hundreds of thousands throng the Temple and the Mountain displaying sincere devotion from all over the World. A ten day long celebration culminating on the day of Karthika Deepam or lights day is a massive crowd puller; on that evening a huge lamp is lit in an open vessel with three tons of ghee from the mountain top. Among the 'Pancha Bhutas' (Five Elements), viz. Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Sky, the Fire is the symbol of Arunachaleswar as a corollary of the Agni Stumbh referred to as above. (The 'Tiruvannaikavil'/ 'Jalakantheswara' Linga represents Water, Kancheepuram / Ekambareswara Linga the Earth, Kalahasti represents Vayu and Chidambaram represents Akash or Sky).

Nandikeswar told Markandeya that at the commencement of 'Ayanas' (Fortnights) or Vishuvyog times, worship to Arunachal Linga would be very propitious. Early morning puja is performed with 'Tulasi' leaves, the mid-day puja with 'Amalataasa' and Bel flowers in the evening. By chanting the 'Aghora Mantra'viz. *Aghorebhyothaghorebhyo Namasthey Asthu Rudra rupebhyaha/Tat Purushaaya Vidmahe Maha Devaaya dhimahi, tanno Rudrah Prachodayat/* a devotee performs 'Abishekam' (bath) with thousand 'Kalasas' (vessels) full of water. On 'Sivaratri', special puja is done with Bilvapatras by

chanting 'Shata Rudreeyam', observe 'Jaagaran' (night long worship) and Puja with lotus, Ganera and such flowers as well as please the Lord with hymns, instrumental / vocal music and 'Tandava' (dance). The same kind of Puja is performed on birthdays, House warming, travel and such other Special occasions. Nandikeswara informed Markandeya further about Devi Parvathi's Tapasya to wed Lord Siva, their happy union and the birth of Ganesh and Skanda. Meanwhile, a demon duo named Shumbh and Nikumbh obtained the boon of invincibility from Brahma Deva and distressed Devas, Sages and virtuous human beings. Vishnu accompanied by Devas approached Maha Deva and He assured quick action against the demons. Parvati who was of dark complexion, desired to please Siva, discarded her dark skin and assumed the form of Kali Kaushiki. As she was doing penance at Vindhya Mountain, the demon brothers desired to marry her and she killed both of them. Subsequently, she was attracted by the scenic beauty of Arunachala and performed Tapasya at the Ashram of Sage Gautama. She kept Devi Durga to stand guard and also appointed Subhaga and Dhundhukumari to watch in all directions while she was in penance. At the same time, Demon Mahishasur created havoc in Devaloka and dethroned Indra and Devas. He heard about her beauty and sent an emissary to propose a match with her and Devi Parvati's representative had literally thrown him out. Mahishasur declared war. Powerful Danavas like Karaal, Dhurthar, Vichasunu, Vikaraal, Durmukh, Chanda, Prachanda, Mahamouli, Vikatekshan and Jwalasya were among the mighty demons that were lined up in offence. As there was considerable sound and confusion, Parvati Devi's Tapasya was disturbed and instructed Durga Devi to terminate the demons. Being in a lonely cave on Arunachal Mountain Durga Devi seated on a Lion and jumped onto Earth like Kalika and made frightening sounds. She created from her body crores of 'Matruka -ganas' who made such mayhem and slaughter of the Demons. Chamundi Devi slashed the heads of Chamunda and assosiates and finally Mahishasura entered the fray. Durga Herself jumped down from the Lion and by her several hands killed Prachanda with Her Plough head; Bindipipal with chamara; Mahamoulika with her knife, Mahahunu with her kirpaan; Ugravakta with her Kuthar, Vikatakshak with Shakti, Jwalamukh with her mudgar and so on. As Mahishasura made his last bid on Durga Devi, the former looked to have controlled her for a while as he was changing his forms as a lion, tiger, Varaha, Elephant or Mahisha and his Original form. Finally however, Devi Durga overpowered and destroyed the Devil 'Mahishasur' who was felled with a huge sound of a thud and there were innumerable cries of joy and relief world wide. Devi Durga held the Demon's head in one hand, sword in another and greeted Devi Parvati who praised the Vindhyanivasini Durga. Gauri asked Durga to wash off her hands with blood and Durga broke a mountain boulder with her powerful hands to create water reciting the Mantra, 'Namah Shonadrinathaya' and the waterbody so formed had become popular as 'Papanashini'Tirtha eversince. Thereafter an extraordinary 'Jyoti' came to be viewed from the top of the Arunachala Mountain on every Kartika Pournami Sandhya (evening) without any oil, cotton, and firewood and thus the tradition had been carried on (on a man-made basis, of course) to signify this Holy Happening and the Maha Deep continued to be viewed by devotees doing 'Giri Pradakshinas'. While doing the circumambulation, devotees are advised to recite: "My Namaskars (Greetings) to Siva who stays at Merugiri and Kailasa; to Siva who is the son-in-law of Himachal; to the merciful Arunachalanatha who is worshipped by Siva the mid-day like Sun, besides various Devatas like Varuna and Vayu; to Siva on whose head are positioned Ganga and Chandra as ornaments; to Siva whose 'Maya' makes us feel that your Swarup is confused as that of Narayana; to Siva who performs the magnificent Siva 'Thandava' (Dance) and creates ripples of happiness all over the Universe; to you Shambho, Siva, Eshana, who is worshipped by Devas, Gandharvas, Siddhas and Vidyadharas; to Siva the 'Janmadata' of Ganesha and Kartikeya; to Siva who is the husband of Devi Parvati; We are beholden to You to bless us and relieve us of all our physical, mental and 'Daivika' problems beyond our control." Siva blessed Parvati to be present at Arunachal by the name of Apeethastani since she left Kartikeya to perform Tapasya without feeding milk to him! Nandikeswar narrated to Marandeya the background of Vrajangada the King of Pandyadesha and how he became a staunch devotee of Arunachaleswara. The King was pious, charitable and Siva worshipper. Once he went by his horse for hunting deep inside the Arunachala forest and ran after a 'Kasturi Mriga' (Deer like animal), without being aware that the King had made a 'Pradakshina' of Arunachal. As Kasturi Mrig ran fast and was untraceable, the King stopped for quenching his thirst at a nearby pond; on return, he found

the horse missing. He saw however a strange happening as two Celestial Beings came down from the Sky and recounted that they were two Vidyadharas, named **Kanthishali and Kaladhara** who were cursed by Sage Durvasa as they plucked flowers from the Sage's garden and became the Kasturi Mrig and the King's horse; the Sage was merciful to relieve them of the curse subsequently that a King would ride one of the accused as a horse and chase another as Kasturi and when a full Pradakshina was performed by the King, the horse and Kasturi animal, then the accused would get back their original positions as Vidyadharas. On hearing the entire background, the King became such a strong devotee of Arunachaleswara that he did considerable works in the Temple Complex and was wholly devoted to the promotional tasks of the Arunachalapathi. Once when Sage Agasthya and his wife Lopamudra visited the Arunachala Tirtha, they complimented the devotion of the King. Considering the dedication to the Tirtha, Bhagavan Siva gave darshan to the King and informed him that he was in his earlier birth Lord Indra but since he did an indiscretion on Kailasa top out of egoism he was cursed but since he was sincerely dedicated as Siva Bhakta, He was pleased to secure Indra's original position. Thus Nandikeswar commended the unparalelled 'Mahatmya' of Arunachala Tirtha.

# Venkatachala 'Mahatmya'

In the 'Vaishnava Khanda' of Skanda (Kartika) Purana, Varaha Deva gave 'Upadesha' (instruction) of the Sacred Mantra Om Namah Shri Varahaya Dharanyu Uddharanaya Swaha to Bhu Devi and its significance; the Mantra fulfills all desires and leads to liberation. A Manu called Dharma recited the Mantra persistently and attained Moksha; Indra chanted it and regained his throne that was occupied by demons therebefore and Anantha the Chief of Serpents secured such extraordinary strength as to hold the weight of Prithvi (Earth) on his hoods. Bhu Devi expressed her gratitude to Varaha Deva to have saved from the grip of Demon Hiranyakasipu as also taught the Great Mantra. She admired Varaha Deva for providing the power and perseverance to hold the weight of huge mountains and desired Him to describe to her the names of some of the illustrious Mountains the weight of which was borne by her. These include Sumeru, Himachal, Vindhyachal, Mandarachal, Gandhamadhan, Chitrakoot, Malyavaan, Pariyatrik, Mahendra, Malay, Sahya, Simhachal, Raivat and Anjana; in the South of Bharat the most significant are Arunachal, Hasthiparvat, Grudhrachal, Ghatikachal and most importantly the Narayana Giri or Venkatachal which possesses the Seven Tirthas in the Mountain Range viz. Chakra Tirth, Daiva Tirth, Akasha Ganga, Kumaradhari Kartikeya, Papanashani, Pandava Tirha, and Swami Pushkarini. Varaha Deva affirmed that in Krita Yuga, the most important Mountain Range was that of Anjanagiri; in Treta Yuga it was Narayana Giri; in Dwapar Yuga was Simhachal and in Kali Yuga again the most sacred mountain range is Venkatachala. In Magha month when Surya Deva is in Kumbha Rasi on Purnima day coinciding with the Makha Star, Skanda worships Venkateswara on the banks of Swami Pushkarini Tirtha at the noon time and devotees performing 'Snaan' and Puja as also 'Annadaan' are blessed by the Lord. Similarly, Snaans, worships and charities at Venkatachal are highly beneficial on the auspicious timings when Surya is in Meena Rasi on Purnima with Uttaraphalgini in Thumbha Tirtha; when Surya is in Mesha Rasi on Purnima with Chitra Star in Akasha Ganga at early mornings; when Surya is in Vrishabha Rasi in Visakha Shukla / Krishna fortnights on Dwadasi Sunday / Tuesday at Pandava Tirtha on evenings; on Sundays of Shukla / Krishna fortnights, coinciding Saptami at Papanashana Tirtha; on Brihaspati / Vyakteeta Yogya, Star Pushya / Sravana Mondays etc;

Varaha Deva described to Bhu Devi that Emperor Akash decided to perform a Grand Yagna on the banks of Arani and while tilling, he found a girl child and as he was issueless, brought her up as their own, named as **Padmavati.** Once Sage Narad met Padmavati as she was grown up as an eligible bride and predicted that she would be the wife of Lord Srinisasa of Venkatachal. Almost immediately she met a Stranger in the Royal Garden and introduced himself as Anant or Veerapati from Venkatachal Mountain and that he was hunting a wolf. Padmavati's companions rebuffed Ananta Deva that hunting was prohibited in their garden. Anantha returned but desired intensely that Padmavati should become His life partner and sent Vakulamala to the court of Emperor Aakash to negotiate their wedding. The Emperor had no bounds of joy and the holy wedding of Lord Venkateswara and Padmavati took place in style and

grandeur when Devi Lakshmi was present to make Padmavati happy and comfortable, whereafter they all resided in Tirumala bestowing boons to lakhs of Devotees till date. Varaha Deva narrated the background of Padmavati's earlier birth as **Vedavati** to Bhu Devi. Vedavati was a companion of Devi Lakshmi and when the latter became Rama's spouse as Sita, she left for forests to perform Tapasya, but demon Ravana misbehaved with her and she ended her life by jumping into fire and cursed Ravana that his entire clan would be wiped out because of a woman. Sita was abducted by Ravana by creating such circumstances that Maricha was converted as a Golden Deer; Sita took fancy for it and prevailed Sri Rama to chase the animal which deceitfully wailed as though Rama was in trouble and Lakshmana had to leave Sita alone even by drawing a Lakshman Rekha that none could cross. The vily Ravana dressed as a Tapsvi revealed his real form as soon as she was prevailed to cross the fiery Lakshman Rekha and forcibly took her to Lanka. After Rama killed Ravana, there was 'Agni-Pariksha' (Proof of Purity / by Fire), Sita came out unscathed. But the real fact was that Agni Deva hid real Sita in Patala and Agni's wife Swaha assumed the role of Maya Sita; in fact Vedavati's earlier birth was of Swaha Devi! Thus, Vedavati / Swaha turned to Maya Sita was Padmavati.

Devi Prithvi enquired of Bhagavan Varaha as to where and how to secure the 'Darshan' (Vision) of Lord Venkateswara and the former replied that He would mention of those future happenings as recorded in the past. There was a Nishad (Hunter) in Shyamak Jungle named Vasu and his wife Chitravati and Son Vira. Nishad was the Chief of his clan living honestly and peacefully by eating cooked rice and honey. Both his wife and he decided one day to a nearby forest to search for additional stock of honey and entrusted the responsibility of looking after his followers and daily chores to Vira, their son. The daily practice was that the family cooked rice and mixed with honey, offered the same as Naivedya to Venkatachalapati and ate the Prashad. But, Vira in their absence for the day offered some portion of the honeyed rice into Agni, some to tree bushes and the rest was consumed. On return from the other forest, Vasu became furious to learn that no offer of the honeyed rice was made to Venkatachalapati but gave it away as described above. Vasu felt agitated and remorsefully guilty and even tried to kill his son for what was considered as Sacrilege.Lord Ventatachal appeared before Nishad in full glory with His four hands, fully ornamented and armed and stopped Vasu from harming his son; he was completely taken aback. The Lord said that the acts of his son Vira were infact worth emulation and not condemnation for he did a homam (Offering to Agni); homage to Nature and only the remainder was consumed with dedication as 'prashad'. Nishad was so happy that he heard this from Bhagavan Himself!

Varaha Deva also narrated an incident related to King Thondaman and Nishad. As an ideal Prince, he imbibed all the qualities required of a King, viz. of nobility, intellect, valour and devotion to Almighty. Once he took King's permission for hunting in Venkatachal forests, chased an elephant, crossed the River Swarnamukhi and reached the Ashram of Brahmarshi Suka and an Idol of Goddess Renuka nearby. As he proceeded further, he found a 'Pancharangi' (Five Coloured) Parrot screeching the name of 'Srinivasa, Srinivasa' and followed the bird till the mountain top. There he met Nishad who informed that the parrot was very dear to Suka Muni as also to Bhagavan Srihari and hovered around the Pushkarini Tirtha; by so saying the Nishad desired to have a Darshan of the Lord and the Prince too accompanied him. Thondaman was indeed thrilled with the Darshan and witnessed the 'Naivedya' of Cooked rice and honey performed by Vasu Nishad. He was overpowered by the magnificent experience of the Lord and thereafter met Suka Muni and secured his blessings that soon he would become a King after his father's retirement and serve Srinivasa for long time to come. A few days after Thondaman's return to his Capital, he was made the King and started settling in his throne. Suddenly after a few months, Vasu the Nishad approached the Palace in an agitated manner and told the King that he dreamt chasing a 'Varaha' which entered a thick bush, that he started digging up and swooned, that his son was also near him, that the Varaha entered his mind and body and made him say the following: 'Nishada! You must reach King Todarman and ask him to perform 'Abhishek' with lots of milk to a 'Shila' (Stone) underneath this thick bush, pull it out and ask a 'Shilpi' (Sculptor) to prepare an Idol of my features with Bhu Devi on my left lap, set up plants of Tamarind and Champa as are loved by Vishnu and Lakshmi repectively and invite learned Sages and Brahmanas to attend a grand function to be hosted by Tondaman and wait for my further instructions. The

King followed the instructions as conveyed by Nishad and called Sages and Brahmanas to a Grand Puja of Varaha Deva and Bhu Devi through an underground passage and continued the daily practice of taking bath, worshipping the Murthis of Varaha and Bhu Devi and arranging 'Prashad' or the left-behinds of Naivedya to Brahmanas and visitors. As this practice got routinised and the interest of Bhaktas snow-balled gradually, a Brahmana stranger approached the King that he was on way to Kasi, Prayaga and a few prominent Tirthas but his wife was unable to travel as she was in the family way; he requested the King to provide accommodation and food to his wife and generally supervise her welfare. The Brahmana returned very late after several months but unfortunately the wife had a miscarriage and died just a couple of days before the return of the Brahmana after visiting several Pilgrimage Centers and Tirthas. The King got frightened at the tragedy as he gave a surety to the Brahmana's wife and approached Srinisasa, who instructed that the Queens as well as the body of the Brahmana's wife should be made to take bath in the Asthi Sarovar Tirtha and as the queens took dips in the holy water and came out, the Brahmana's wife too would emerge. The Brahmana was thrilled at the miracle witnessed by co-devotees!

Raja Todarman followed the practice of worshipping Srinivasa with golden lotuses daily. He found one day some Tulasi leaves pulled out from muddy plants and wondered how this indiscretion happened. As the King was wondering about this, there emerged a voice saying: "There is a pot maker (**Kumhara**) who also did daily Puja to me with the muddy Tulasi leaves from his house and that I have accepted his worship too!" The King reached Kurmapuri in search of the Kumhara, who replied to the King that he never ever did any puja to Srinivasa! But when the King said that there was a voice which said these words, the Kumahara and his wife recalled the voice of Srinivasa in their earlier births that as and when a King would knock their hut, and then a Pushpa Viman would arrive to pick them to Vishnuloka! Indeed that had just happened! The King returned to Venkateswara Temple to perform worship again after this unusual happening and Srinivasa appeared before Tondaman and bestowed him the blessing of a lasting Abode of bliss.

Parikshit, son of Abhimanyu of Pandavas, was no doubt a noble and virtuous King, but unfortunately did the unpardonable sin of hanging a dead serpent around the neck of Samika Muni who was in deep Tapasya and his son Shringi cursed Parikshit that he would be dead within a week as a result of a snake bite. Takshak was assigned the task of killing Parikshit but Brahmana **Kashyap** who could indeed have prevented the tragedy and even demonstrated his ability to do so, was won over by dubious means by Takshak and Kashyap who did the sin was sought to be washed off by a bath in **Swami Pushkarini** and worship to Lord Srinivasa, as advised by Shakalya Muni. Indeed the sin of Kashyap was eradicated by the Grace of Lord Venkateswara.

Another illustration of the Sanctity of Snaan in Swami Pushkarini was given by Sutha Maha Muni to Rishis at a Congregation at Naimisharanya (The forest of Naimisha). A King of Chandravamsa called **Dharma-gupta** was a rare example of nobility and virtue. He went hunting and by the evening desired to perform the Puja of Gayatri and was delayed to late hours and had to stay back on a tree. A lion came running after a wolf and ascended the same tree; it asked the King not to worry and would not hurt him in any way. It asked the King to come to an understanding that it would sleep off half night and he might sleep off the other half. The lion tempted the wolf to drop the King down and share a good portion of the King. The wolf rejected the proposal outright as ingratitude was a far heinous sin than the 'Panchapatakas' or the Five known major sins. During the other half of the night when the King was to guard the wolf, the lion gave a similar proposal to him; he accepted and tried to drop the sleeping wolf. But luckily, the wolf was saved and preached the King against ingratitude and gave a curse to the King to become a mad man. It said that he was a Sage, named Dhyanakashtha, who could take any form and told the lion that in his earlier birth he was a Minister in the Court of Kubera and was cursed by Gautama Muni to become a lion as he was standing naked in the Sage's garden with his woman. As regards Dharmagupta's curse for ingratitude, Sage Jaimini suggested a bath in the Sacred 'Swami Pushkarini'on Venkatadri on the banks of River Suvarnamukhi, followed by worship of Lord Venkateswara. Suta Maha Muni described that those who purify themselves in the Pushkarini would surely avoid hells named

Tamisra, Andhamisra, Rouray, Maha Rouray, Kumbhipak, Kaalsutra, Asipatrayan and such others. On the other hand, the devotees attain the 'Punya' of performing Aswamedha Yagna and achieve Buddhi (Intellect), Lakshmi (Wealth), Kirti (Fame), Sampatthi (Prosperity), Gyan (wisdom), Dharma (Virtue), Manoshuddhi (Purity of mind) and Vairagya (Other Worldliness). Krishna Tirtha is a Tirtha named after a deeply devoted Brahmana whose Tapasya was so severe and extensive that his body developed molehills (Valmikas) and Indra rained forcefully to wash off the mud. Lord Srinivasa was impressed by the relentless and highly dedicated devotion and blessed him with His Darshan, created a Tirtha after his name, declared that those who have the fortune of bathing in it would become as learned and focussed and bestowed Salvation to him. Papanashana Tirtha is such a powerful place that even merely uttering its name, sins of the past and present get vanished. There was a Brahmana named Bhadhramati who had enormous knowledge of Vedas and Scriptures but was acutely impoverished having six wives and several children. His each day was a harrowing experience of poverty with several mouths to feed. One of his wives named Kamini told him one day that her father met Sage Narada who described Tirtha called Papanashana lying on the Venkateswar Mountain cluster was a big draw and a bath, preferably after giving away a small token 'bhudaan' to a deserving Brahmana followed by a darshan of the Lord would abolish poverty, and fulfil all human desires. This emboldened Bhadramati to travel along with his family to the Srinivasa Mountain. He was fortunate to obtain on way a token of five feet of land. The entire family took bath in the Papasahana Tirtha and gave away charity of the five feet of land to a deserving Brahmana. Bhagavan Vishnu had instantly appeared before Bhadramati; the latter was extremely thrilled at the darshan and eulogised Him as follows: 'Namo Namasthekhila karanaaya, Namo namesthekhila paalakaya/ Namo Namestheyemara nayakaya Namo Namo Daithya vimardanaya/ Namo Namo Bhakthajanapriyaya, Namo Namah Paapavidaaranaya/ Namo Namo Durjananashakaya, Namasthesthu Tasmai Jagadeeshvaraya/ Namo namah Karanavamayaya, Naraayanaathivikramaya/ Shri Shankha chakraasi gadaadharaaya, Namasthesthu tasmai Purushottamaya/ Namah payoraasi nivaasakaaya, Namasthesthu Lakshmi pathayayyaya/ Namasthesthu Suryadyamitha-prabhaaya, Namo Namah Punyagathaagathaaya/ Namo Namokyenduvilochanaya, Namasesthudey Yagna phalapradaaya/ Namastesthu Yagnaangavilochanaya, Namasthesthu thye Sajjanavallabhaaya/Namo namah Kaarana Kaaranaaya, Namesthesthu Shabdaadi vivariitaaya/ Namasthethutheybhheshta sukhahpradaaya, Namo Namo Bhakta -manoramaaya/ Namo namasthedbhuta karanaaya, Namasthestuthy Manda radhaarakaya/ Namasthestuthey Yagnavarrahanaagney, Namo Hiranyakshavidaarakaya/ Namasthesthuthy Vaamana rupabhaaje, Namasthesthuthey Kshatrakulaanthakaaya/ Namastheshuthey Rayana mardanaaya, Namasthesthuthey Nanda sutaagrajaaya, Namasthey kamalaakaantha Namasthey Sukha daayiney, Ashritarthi nashiney tubhyam bhuyo bhuyo Namo namah/'. As Bhadramati praised Lord Srinivasa, He blessed him to enjoy full-swing prosperity to him and family and attain Moksha to him thereafter. 'Akashaganga Tirtha' was well known for bestowing boons to the highly erudite and dedicated Brahmana called **Ramanuja**. He did Tapasya of rigorous nature on the banks of Akashganga by standing with 'Panchagni' (Five flames) around him during the hot summer mid-days and under the sky in heavy rains fully exposed chanting the Ashtakshari Mantra 'Om Namo Narayanaya'; he ate dry leaves fallen from trees for years together, for some years by drinking water and many other years by consuming air only. Finally, Bhagavan appeared and Ramanuja who was almost dying with the severity of his Tapasya became fully normal and healthy instantly. He received the boons that the Place of Akasha Ganga where Ramanuja had the fortune of discovering Vishnu in person would be an Eternal water-spring and those who performed 'Snaan' would change his entire life style and become an ideal Bhakta and at the end they would have no other birth and would get salvation.

In an another context, Akash Ganga was immortalised as the Tirtha where Devi **Anjana** executed penance, since she and her husband Vayu Deva were not blessed with a son. Vishnu Bhakta Sage Matangi directed Anjana Devi to reach River Suvarnamukhi, far south of Vindhya Mountain, reach Vrishabhachal on whose top was situated the famous Swami Pushkarini, worship Varaha Deva and Venkateswara, proceed to north, find Akashaganga and perform Snaan in a formal manner along with Vayu Deva. The Sage confirmed that if the couple did so, a Son of unparalelled prowess and 'Swami Bhakti' (Loyalty to

the Master) would be born, to be called **Hanuman** who was invincible by Devas, Raakshasas, Sages, Brahmanas, Celestial and human beings. As Anjana Devi followed the insructions to the last letter and spirit, Bhagavan Venkateswara appeared before her and blessed that such a Son would be born that his parents would indeed be proud of and play a pivotal role in Treta Yuga as the most powerful personality of 'Siva Amsa'.

Besides the above, Venakatachal has quite a few other Tirthas like Chakra Tirtha where a Maha Muni Padmanabha prayed to Srinivasa to chase away the dread of Rakshasas and Bhagavan stationed His Sudarshan Chakra known for dispelling the fear of Evil Spirits; Varaha Tirtha, Pandu Tirtha, Tumba Tirtha, Kapila Tirtha, Kumara Tirtha, Jaraharaadi Tirtha Traya, Phalguni Tirtha, Deva Tirtha, Jabaali Tirtha, Sanaka Sanandana Tirtha, Asthi Sarovara Tirtha, Kataha Tirtha and Manvadyashtottara Tirtha.

# Eight-folded approach to Venkateswara

Sage Suta prescribed an eight-fold Bhakti Route to Lord Venkateswara:1)To display and ensure 'Sneha Bhava'(feeling of friendship) towards His Bhaktas (devotees); 2) To perform service to 'Bhagavat Bhaktas' and satisfy them; 3) To perform Puja to Bhagawan with sincerity; 4) All the actions of the Self are to be targetted to Bhagavan; 5) To generate Bhakti and love in the eyes and other 'Jnanendriayas' of one self towards Venkateswara; 6) To hear and cogitate about the 'Mahatmya' of the Lord and accord importance to whatver is said, described, sung or taught about the same; 7) To keep the name of Srinivasa on one's lips, thoughts and heart always and 8) To dedicate one self to Lord Venkateswara and take absolute and comprehensive refuge in Him. Those who are fortunate to have even a glimpse of the fantastic Idol of Venkateswara do experience the awe and satisfaction that leaves behind a lasting familiarity and nearness. Those who think of Srinivasa, either out of curiosity, or greediness, love of materialism, or fear or casual occurrence undergo a definite transformation of outlook, approach to life and morality. If such casual approach has a multiplier effect, could one imagine the far reaching impact of the Eight-folded dedication! As Fire is capable of pulling down a huge mansion within minutes, the stockpile of sins gets ablaze into ash as fast, provided one takes the shelter of Srinivasa. Human life, which is indeed difficult to secure compared to myriad forms of creatures ranging from animals to insects, is stated to be well spent and appropriately lived through, if one takes asylum of that Supreme Power which is 'Avyaktam' (Unknown), 'Shasvatham' (Everlasting), 'Vishnum' (All Pervading), 'Anantham' (Endless), 'Ajam' (Unborn) and 'Avyayam' (Never Spent out), called Venkateswara!

#### Purushottama Kshetra (Utkala Khanda) Mahatmya

As Lord Varaha liberated Bhu Devi from the depths of Rasatala from the clutches of the Demon Hiranyakashipu and Bhu Devi gained normalcy, Lord Brahma resumed the task of Creation again but wondered as to how humanity could be saved from the three major hindrances to life viz. 'Adhibhoutika' or pertaining to the Physical body, 'Adhidaivika' related to occurences created by Almighty like earthquakes or famines and 'Adhyatmika' (Spiritual issues). He prayed to Lord Narayana for guidance and the latter directed Brahma to visit Purushottama Kshetra on the Sea shore, where Lord Shyama Sundar settled in the form of wooden Idols along with His Brother Balabhadra and Sister Subhadra as also the Sudarshan Chakra and provided solace to humanity from ignorance, lack of direction and discontentment. Brahma reached there as advised by Vishnu and while performing Tapasya got into such a deep and long trance that he was even negligent of the duty of Creation. For a while the Cycle of Life and Death got disturbed as there was no ingress and egress from the Universe. Yamadharma Raja approached Bhagavan Vishnu along whom Devi Lakshmi was seated too. Devi Lakshmi replied that if the reference being given by Yamaraja was to the current issue of the Cycle of Life being disturbed, then it was not posible for Vishnu to leave the Purushottama Kshetra. The Sins of human beings, animals and birds would continue to be burnt off at the Purushottama Kshetra, which was the only hallowed Region unaffected by the Great Deluge ('Pralaya'); even Sage Markandeya who was blessed by 'Paramatma'to achieve immortality for Seven Kalpas had to struggle through the rough waters, till he reached the Purushottama Kshetra where the Divine Tree 'Akshay Vat' was the lone survivor on top of which was

Vishnu in a miniature form and advised Markandeya to swim somehow to reach that spot! It was 'Kaal' (Vishnu) as a child who rescued the Sage and the belly of Kaal was bottomless. Lakshmi Devi who was present too there witnessed all these happenings. Brahmarshi Markandeya who had the unique honour of receiving refuge from Vishnu was grateful to the Kshetra and materialised a Water reservoir with the help of Sudarshana Chakra, immortalised as 'Markandeya Kund'. The Sage established a Markandeswra Linga, which was basically of the form of Narayana as also known as Yameswar where Yamaraja was controlled from Mrityu owing to the Sanctity of the Kshetra. Bathing in the Markandeya Kund and worship of Markandeswara Linga is stated to equal the fruit of Aswamedha Yagna.

Devi Lakshmi continued her explanation to Yamadharma Raja that the Purushottama Kshetra was of a conch shape whose North West was dominated by Shankara and the North East by Neelakantha and the Central Portion of a distance of a mile or so was of Narayana. Nearer the Shankara Tirtha is situated the Kapala Vimochana Linga and the third part of the conchshell was of Adya Shakti Vimala Devi. In the Nabhi Sthaan or the Central Region are situated the 'Vat' (Tree) and Bhagavan Purushottama. Thus the Three Portions of the Purushottama Kshetra are popular as Tirtha Raj. There is also a Rohini Kund, the waters of which relieve sins and constiteted the tail-end of the Pralayakal water! At the southern tip of the Conchshell is situated Narasimha whose darshan itself is an instant sin destroyer. There are 'Antarvedi' (underlying) Eight Shaktis which are stated to be providing security at the Purushottama Kshetra viz. Devi Mangala in the roots of the Vata Tree, Devi Vimala in the West, Devi Sarva Mangala in the rear lower portion of the Conchshell, on the northern side Devi Arthashini and Devi Lamba, Devi Kalarathri in the Southern side, Devi Marichika and Devi Chandarupa in the East. Also, Bhagavan Siva assumed Eight Linga Rupas viz. Kapalamochan, Kshetrapal, Yameswar, Markandey -eshwar, Eshana, Bileswar, Neelakantha, and Vateswar. If these Lingas are visioned, touched or worshipped, the devotees have access to Moksha Marga (The Road to Salvation) and if they die, their life-end is tied up with Bhagavan Siva directly without any intervention from Yama Raja.

Sage Jaimini told the Munis at Naimisharanya that King Indradyumna, an ardent devotee of Vishnu was keen in having a 'darshan' of the Idol of Neela Madhava at the Temple situated in the Nilachal Mountain's cave, on the coastal side of East Bharatavarsha, in the Utkal Region. The King asked his Priest to ascertain the route and arrange for the trip. One of the Pilgrims who returned from the famed Temple in the foothills of Nilachal Mountain (who perhaps was Bhagavan Jagannatha Himself) described the route to the Royal Priest that the Temple was in Purushottama Kshetra near a holy pond known as Rohin adjacent to a place called Odhra and that there was a Temple of Vasudeva besides which there was a hermitage called 'Shabardeep' leading to the path of Jagannath Temple. The Royal Priest's younger brother Vidyapati was approved by the King to make an initial trip so that the King would perform the 'Yatra' (expedition) subsequently. Vidyapati and party undertook a tedious and tiring journey to the Ekamvaran forests at the foothills of Mountain and at the Shabardeep hermitage met Vishvavasu. Both Vidyapati and Vishvavasu visited the Place after a steep ascent of the Mountain and finally reached the Rohin Pond and after a bath had Darshan of Neela Madhaya. Vidyapati was overwhelmed by the thrilling experience of Jagannatha's Darshan and prayed to Him to his heart's content. Vidyapati was told by Shabar Vishvavasu that several Devas frequented the Temple and brought expensive gifts and garlands to the Lord; when Vidyapati returned back to King Indradyumna the former showed the flowers which never withered as they were celestial! But Vishvavasu gave the disheartening news to Vidyapati that the latter would not be able to have a darshan of Neela Madhava, although something better might happen! Vidyapati was advised not to disclose this fact to the King on his return to the Kingdom as the King might be highly discouraged. Even as Vidyapati returned and was describing the rapturous darshan that he had of Neela Madhava, Sage Narada appeared and desired to accompany the King on his way to the Purushottama Kshetra. The King and his large entourage set for the journey and reached the banks of River Mahanadi for an overnight stay before proceeding to the Jagannatha Temple next morning. The King of Utkal informed the senior King Indradyumna that there was a very heavy sand storm and the Idol of Neela Madhava was underneath a huge heap of debris. Luckily Sage Narada was with Indradyumna and consoled the latter and assured him that Lord Jagannatha was extremely merciful and that something

memorable would happen! Next morning the King's full entourage crossed River Mahanadi, worshipped Lord Purushottama at 'Eakaamrechhetra' and further proceeded to Kotishwar Mahalaya to perform Puja to 'Tribhuvaneswara'. The latter appeared before Sage Narada and instructed that King Indradyumna should perform hundred 'Yagyas'; that Lord Jagannatha would manifest Himself from under the debris; that a Vata Tree with four branches would have to be carved out by Viswakarma the Celestial Artist as Four Idols of Lord Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra the sister of the former brothers and 'Sudarshan Chakra'; that He (Tribhuneswara) along with Devi Durga would be present at the top entry of the conchshell shaped Purusha Kshetra; that Lord Brahma would install and consecrate the Holy Idols for the everlasting benefit of generations ahead and the dream and perseverance of King Indradyumna would become fruitful. Sage Narada assured that Lord Tribhuvaneswara's instructions would be followed in full letter and spirit. From there the caravan moved to Nilakantha Mahadeva and worshipped Mahadeva and Durga. The King was anxious to reach the Place where Lord Jagannatha was under the sand; he prayed to Him as though he could visualise the Idol and there emerged a voice from the rubble assuring the King that he would soon have His appearance. Since the first task to be performed was to organise the hundred Yagnas as directed by Tribhuvaneswara, Narad was anxious to take up the construction of the Temple of Lord Nrisimha as that was the Place to complete the Yagnas. Sughat, the son of Viswakarma completed the construction of the Temple within five days, while Vishwakarma made the Idol of Nrisimha which was installed by Narada. Thereafter the task of carving wood for the four major Idols of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan Chakra was taken up and a Celestial voice came saying that the Idols would emerge on their own, that the oldest worker be sent inside the Main Gate which should be closed till the job was over, that the sound of drums be kept on continuously till the job was going on inside to cover up the sounds from there, that if somebody heard the sounds from inside he would be irrevocably deaf, and that somebody saw what was happening inside that person would be blind for ever. On the fifteenth day, a Celestial Voice emerged that all the Idols were manifested. Thereafter the heavenly voices kept on giving instructions about the colour schemes of the Idols ( Deep blue like clouds for Jagannatha, white for Balabhadra, red like rising Sun for Subhadra and deep red for Sudarshan), the ornament details and so on. As the Idols were getting ready with all finishing touches, Indradyumna was in trance and asked Jagannatha for nothing excepting salvation from the mortal life. Narada, the King and the entire entourage entered the Sanctum Sanctorium chanting 'Dwadasaakshara Mantra' (Om Namo Vasudevaya) in praise of the Lord Jagannatha, 'Purusha Suktam' addressed to Balabhadra, 'Sri Suktam' for Subhadra and appropriate Vedic Mantras for Sudarshana Chakra. Narada visualised the various articles required for the Consecration Ceremony and were secured by the King. A Palace was built for Brahma and three Chariots were readied for the three Deities; the required number of horsessixteen to Jagannatha, fourteen to Balabhadra and twelve to Subhadra-were readied too. The mast on top of the Chariot of Jagannatha was made with Garuda Vahan (The Lord's Carrier), that of Balabhadra had a plough, and of Subhadra's chariot was a Lotus. Indeed the King was so fortunate that the wherewithall for the Function was instantly procured by Sages and Devas! Finally, at the 'Muhurat' time, Lord Brahma performed the Consecration on Suddha Visakha Ashtami on Thursday with Pushyami as the Nakshatra, as witnessed by Devas, Yakshas, Kinnaras and Maharshis! The famous nine day Ratha Yatra commenced on Suddha Ashadha Vidiya and returned from the banks of Bindu Tirtha on the eighth day.

Sage Jaimini explained that Lord Brahma clarified to Raja Indradyumna about a doubt as to *why Jagannath assumed the Wooden Form of Idols*. The 'Daru' (Wooden) Idols represent 'Duhkha vidarana' or destroying of distress and bestowing of endless happiness; as Srihari is 'Darumaya' He therefore manifested in wooden form. At the time of 'Srishti' (Creation) following Pralaya, 'Parabrahma' (The Supreme Being) manifested in the Form of Vedas or the mix of 'Sabda Brahma' and 'Artha Brahma'. Bhagavan Balabhadra is of Rig Ved Swarup, while Subhdra is of Yajur Veda Swarup. Nrisimha is of Sama Veda Swarup and Sudarshan is of Atharva Veda Swarup. If a composite view is taken, the Deities thus represented all the Veda Swarupas and Jagannatha is the sum total and likewise all these forms are Jagannatha Himself. The 'Vata Vriksha' on the Sea Bed at the time of Pralaya was thus the depiction of Bhagavan and the Wooden Idols made out of the Tree are His Symbols!

#### Badari Kshetra Mahatmya

Kartikeya asked Maha Deva as to how human beings with their limited understanding of Spiritual matters especially in Kali Yuga could ever imagine of securing the Four Featured Desires of Samsara viz. Dharma (Virtue), Artha (Prosperity), Kama (Fulfillment of Desires) and Moksha (Liberation). Bhagavan Siva's ready reply was that there were several holy Tirthas and Kshetras dotted all over Bharata Varsha which could transform the outlook of a human being and imbibe piety and virtue; for example there are Rivers like Ganga, Godavari, Narmada, Tapati, Yamuna, Kshipra, Goutami, Kaushiki, Kaveri, Tamraparni, Chandrabhaga, Mahendraja, Chitrotpala, Vetravati, Sarayu, Charmanvati, Shatadu, Payaswini, Gandaki, Baahuda, Sindhu and Sarasvati. Also there are Punya Kshetras like Ayodhya, Dwaraka, Kashi, Mathura, Avanti, Kurukshetra, Rama Tirtha, Kanchi, Purushottama Kshetra, Pushkara, Dardura Kshetra, Varaha Kshetra and Badari which are all boon providing Places. Bathing, vision of the Idols, performing Puja to them, practising austerities and giving away Charity constitute the best means of washing off sins, fulfilling desires, enabling noble deeds and even securing Salvation.

Badari Kshetra is one of the most outstanding and ancient Pilgrimage Points on Himalayas where Bhagavan Narayana Himself resides. Mahadeva described to Skanda that the significance of 'darshan' in Kashi, Kailash and Shri Parvat is far more superior than that of Badari where the foot prints of Srihari apart, this Kshetra is also the abode of Agni since the latter as 'Sarvabhakshak' (consumer of any material worthy of consumption or not) prayed to Vishnu to absolve him of the sins and Bhagavan Vishnu provided refuge at His feet where no sin could reach Agni. Also, Kedar Kshetra is in the same region as Badari where Siva's magnificent Linga is present and even a darshan and if possible an 'Abhishek' and Puja of the Linga would instantly perish the sins of a devotee. Moreover, Mahadeva's fifteen 'Kalas' (features) are present in the Kedar Linga and worship of the Linga by way of 'Japa' (continuous recital) of Siva's name, 'Manana' (Constant thinking about Him), 'Stuti' (Extolling Him) and 'Bhajan' (Singing in praise of Him) would assure that there would be freedom from the vicious cycle of births and deaths! Thus Parameswara advised Skanda that Badari Kshetra has the double advantage of worship to Narayana and Mahadeva as this Unified Point on Himalayas is an ideal Pilgrimage Center. 'Snaan' at Agni Tirtha absolves even the 'Pancha Patakas' or the extreme Five Sins, besides performing 'Pranaayam' and other Yogic Exercises.

Lord Siva explained to Kartikeya that there were Five Sacred 'Shilas' or Rocks, viz. Naradi, Narasimhi, Varahi, Garudi and Markandeyi, each one of them being capable of fulfillment and contentment. Sage Narada sat once on a rock and did severe Tapasya for visualising Lord Vishnu. When Narayana along with Devi Lakshmi gave darshan, Narada asked for the boons of ever lasting devotion to Him, never leaving the rock on which he did Tapasya and creating a Tirtha nearby which should absolve the sins of those who bathe in it and worship Narayana there. Markandeya the great devotee met Sage Narada at Mathura and was advised that he should visit Badari Kshetra and pray to Narayana. Markandeya did accordingly and was fortunate to secure the darshan of Sri Hari after continuously reciting the Ashtakshara Mantra viz. Om Namo Narayanaya. He was dumbfounded when Bhagayan Vishnu stood before him in full glory with four hands ornamented with Shankh, Chakra, Gada and Saranga. After extolling Narayana to his heart's content, Markandeya desired for 'Janma rahitya' or freedom from births, that his devotion to Narayana should become stronger and unflinching, that He should be always present at the rock where he was having the darshan of Bhagavan and that He should bless devotees when they visited the Markandeya Shila. Garuda was the son of Sage Kashyap and Devi Vinata whose ambition was to emulate the example of his brother Aruna who was Surya Deva's charioteer and had the intense desire of becoming the Carrier of Bhagava Vishnu. He chose Badari Kshetra on the top of the adjacent 'Gandhamadan Parvat' (Mountain) and was in penance for years together with undaunted grit and devotion. As Lord Narayana finally gave darshan, Garud extolled Him as Trividha Murti integrating the Forms of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara as also of 'Ashta Shaktis' (Eight Powers) and the Supreme Might of the Universe. Vishnu was pleased and materialised 'Panchamukha Ganga' or the five faced Ganges with the waters of which gave the unique opportunity to Garuda to wash His feet. He also granted the boons of making him His personal 'Vahan' (Carrier), of becoming invincible by any force in the Three Worlds, of making him a never-failing personal devotee of Bhagavan and of fulfilling the desires of those who visit the Garuda Shila and worship Bhagavan Narayana. *Narasimha Deva* in one of Lord Vishnu's incarnations annihilated the Demon Hiranyakasipu and saved the illustrious devotee Prahlada; He looked like Fire while massacring the Demon with His sharp nails and was in a highly infuriated mood when all the Devas prayed to Him to calm down. After becoming somewhat composed, He declared that He would settle at Vishalapuri (Badarikashram); all the Sages were extremely delighted that Narasimha would be present at Narasimha Shila for facilitating their constant worship and also to bless Bhaktas visiting the Shila. *Bhagavan Varaha* who pulled up Bhu Devi from the underworld of Rasatala destroyed Demon Hiranyaksha and saved the Vedas and Holy Scriptures. The Varaha incarnation of Lord Vishnu appeared at Vishalapuri as Varaha Shila and continued to bless the devotees at the Shila.

Devas approached Lord Brahma to complain that in the Satya Yuga virtuous human beings, Sages and they could easily access Bhagavan Vishnu, while in Treta Yuga they could visualise Bhagavan through 'Yogabhyas' only but in Dwapar Yuga, His Darshan had become virtually impossible and in the future during the Kali Yuga, human beings might even question or ignore the existence of Vishnu! Accordingly, a Delegation of Devas was led by Brahma to Bhagavan Vishnu at Kshirasagara (Ocean of Milk), as Vishnu replied only to Brahma that Devas had become quite irresponsible and ignorant without even realising the very obvious existence of Himself at Badarikashrama! In fact, Bhagavan kept in view the limitations of human beings in Kali Yuga and as such made His Darshan very easy and possible. As the gist of Vishnu's admonition to Devas was conveyed, they became ashamed and made instant trips to worship Badari Narayana at Badarikashama. That was why this Kshetra acquired additional significance. It is stated that even if a grain of 'Prasad' (Left over of the offering given to Badari Narayana) is consumed, the devotee concerned who visited the Holy Kshetra would get rid of all kinds of Patakas (sins) including Maha Pancha Patakas. There is a strong belief down the ages that visitors to the Holy Region would attain Vishnu Swarupa, whose heart is replete with the Vision of Narayana, whose tongue and ears are full of His glories, whose stomach is with even a morsel of His Prashad and whose kneeled head touches the feet of Narayana's Idol. The worst Sins like killing the Virtuous, intoxication, robberies and incest with 'Guru Patni' equivalent to one's mother would all evaporate once the above requirements are fulfilled. If Bhojan daan is performed among Sanyasins and good Brahmanas and the Prasad is consumed then the benefits of Badarika Darshan and worship are indeed doubled. Bhagavan Siva described the significance of several Tirthas like Kapala Tirtha in the Badarika Region to Kartikeya. This Tirtha is very popular as Pinda Daanas are formally organised to provide relief to Pitraganas from various hells and is thus known as Pitru Tirtha. Considered highly important, this Sacred Spot is greeted with heads down by Devas and Rakshasas alike as the belief had been that this was Brahma's 'Pancha Sira Kapala' or the Fifth skull top which was snipped by Siva Deva for Brahma's indiscretion of getting attracted to His own Creation of Devi Sarasvati (His daughter). [An alternative Story was that Brahma spoke a lie that he saw the top portion of the huge Siva Linga which indeed was endless]. Brahma Tirtha signified Vishnu's Avatar of Hayagreeva as the two Demon Brothers called Madhu and Kaitabha stole the Vedas and Brahma witnessed the extraordinary Vision of Hahagreeva emerging from a Kund (Pond) to terminate the Demons. Siva informed Kartikeya that after rescuing the Vedas, the 'Deva Rupi Vedas' were deposited in the Brahma Kund and 'Jnaana Rupi Vedas' were given away to Brahma. Hence the high importance of 'Snaan', worship and Daan at the Brahma Kund. To the North of the Kund flows River Saraswati along side the Kapala Tirtha where Pitru Karyas (tasks to relieve the past generations) are held. Vishnu established the Vagdevi River most appropriately as Deva Rupi Vedas, Jnaana Rupi Vedas, Pitra Loka and Bhuloka are all concentrated in Badarikashrama which is the confluence of Three Lokas! Bathing in the Holy River Saraswati, its worship, Stuti (Praise) and sincere greetings would indeed enhance a devotee's vocal and mental power and ensure that the ensuing generation's abilities would never ever fail. South of Sarasvati coming from the mountains is *Indrapada Tirtha* where Lord Indra conducted Tapasya, fasting and worship and is stated to bestow the devotees who also perform the same austerities as Indra did. Nearby the Indrapada Tirtha are situated the Manasodbheda Tirtha and

Vasudhara Tirtha both being of considerable importance. Not far from Indrapada Tirtha is the Pancha Tirtha Complex comprising Five Streams named Prabhas, Pushkar, Gaya, Naimish and Kurukshetra. There is also an important Soma Tirtha where Chandra Deva performed Tapasya to Narayana and secured the boons of becoming the Chief of Nakshatras (Stars), Aushadhis (Medicines), Grahas (Planets) and the entire Brahmana Community. Further there are Dwadasha Aditya Tirtha, Chatuhstotra Tirtha, Satyapada Tirtha, Meru Tirtha, Lokapala Tirtha, Dandapushkarin and Ganga Sangam.

# Significance of the month of Kartika

Sage Narada enquired of Lord Brahma as to which was the best month of a year, who was the best Deity to worship and which was the best Tirtha to visit. Brahma's instant reply was that the best month of a Year was Kartika, the Supreme Deity to worship was Narayana and the most Sacred Tirtha was Badari Kshetra. As regards Kartika Month, Bhagavan Vishnu always accorded high esteem and whatever good deeds were performed in the 'Masa' were fully accepted by all the Devas since they were readily available there through out the month. The acts and endeavours of the devotees like 'Snaan', 'Daan', 'Bhojan', 'Vrath', 'Til'(Sesame Seeds), Dhenu (Cows), 'Suvarna' (Gold), 'Rajat' (Silver), 'Bhumi' (Land), 'Vastra' (Clothing), Tapasya, Japa, Homa, Yagna, Annadaan, Puja with Tulasi leaves, Abhishek of Vishnu's Idol with Ganges and other holy river waters as also 'Panchamrit' comprising milk, ghee, curd, honey and sugar; 'Shodasopacharas' to Deities, Veda-parayana, Purana Shrayan, Bhajans, Deva Stutis, Visits to Temples, fasting, abstinence, 'Jaagarans' (Keeping awake in the night singing hymns), Guru Seva etc. would indeed secure manifold returns in the consecrated month of Kartik. At every time during the day and night, 'kirtans' (Stanzas) on one's own lips must be uttered like 'Govinda Govinda Hare Murari, Govinda Govinda Mukunda Krishna, Govinda Govinda Rathangapane, Govinda Damodara Maadhaveti'. Specific time on each day must also be apportioned for 'Bhagavat Geeta Paath' or reading as many Chapters as possible. Also, a devotee must observe sleeping on the floor and if possible perform Kanya Daan and Vidya Daan in the month. Practice of the month long austerity and good conduct even in one Kartika month in a year ought to result in tangible benefits for sure!

One has to observe certain dont's during Kartika Month such as avoiding use of oil on the body and food (except on Naraka Chaturdasi), food from others, fruits with many seeds, rice, left over or spoilt food, heavy food and twice a day, drinking intoxicants, use of glass items, eating group food or from prostitute, Grama Purohit, Sudras, Shraddhas and from women during menses period; eating in lotus leaves, consuming brinjals, carrots, 'Loki, onions and masoor dal; eating on Ekadashi days; turning off guests at eating time; conversing with chandal, Mlechha, Patita (women with bad character), Vratahin (those not observing the rules of Kartika month), hater of Brahmanas, those who talk ill of others, non believers of God/ Godmen and immoral beings. During the month of Kartika, Snanaas (bathings) acquire considerable importance. Those who are devoted to Surya Deva, Ganesha, Shakti, Siva and Vishnu are all required to formally observe Kartika Snanas. Snanas in favour of Surya need to be followed as long as Surya is in 'Tula' Rasi. Snanas in favour of Shankara be performed from Asvayuja Pournami to Kartika Pournami. Bathings in favour of Devis be observed from Aswayuja Shukla Pradhana day till Karthika Krishna Chaturdasi while for Ganesha Snanas are to be performed From Ashvin Krishna Chaturdasi till Kartika Krishna Chaturdasi. Bhagavan Janardana would be pleased with formal Snaanas from Aswin Shukla Ekadashi till Kartika Shukla Ekadashi. Those who observe the Snana Procedure during the month of Kartika would be free from the tributations of Yama Dharma Raja. Special Snaans and worship to Radha and Gopala during the month preferably under a Tulasi Tree have immense significance. While observing Kartika Snaans the following Stanza is recited: Kartikeham Karishyami Pratha Snaanam Janardana, Preethyartha Tava Devesha Damodara maya sahah. (Janardana! Deveshwara Damodara! I am performing my early morning Snaan to please You and Devi Lakshmi). Also recite the following: Grihaanaarghya maya dattam Radhaya Sahiti Hare, Namah Kamala -naabhaaya Nammasthey Jalashhaviney, Namasthesthu Hrishikesha Gruhaanaarghya Namosthutey. (Bhagavan! Please accept this 'Arghya' (handful of water) of mine to please You and Devi Radha; My greetings to you Kamalanaabha, greetings to You Jalashaayiney; greetings to You Hrishikesha; my repeated greetings to You!). Before

taking bath, one should take the name of 'Pavitra Ganga' (Holy Ganges); while taking the bath on the head, recite 'Purusha Suktam' / 'Sri Suktam' and after the Snaan, take Tulasi in hand and perform 'Achaman' (Sipping water thrice with the Names of Keshava, Narayana, Madhava etc.) and later apply Tilak / Vibhudi/ Kumkum on the forehead. Cold water snaan is always preferable to hot water for double Punya. It is said that there are four types of Snaan viz. 'Vayavya' (along with 'Godhuli'/Cow dung); 'Varuna' (in the Sea and Holy Rivers); 'Brahma' or with Veda Mantras and 'Divya' or as Sun rays pass on the body. Snaanas by women should not be with Veda Mantras.

Lord Brahma affirmed that the fortnight from Kartika Krishna Trayodasi to the end of the month ie from Deepavali on the Amavasya of Aswayuja should be observed as Festival Days. The 'Pradosha' time of that Trayodasi is the most significant time when Lord Yama is worshipped with 'Deepas' at the main door of the residence and Naivedya to ensure that there would never be an 'Apamrutyu' or Akaala Mrithyu (premature and sudden death) in the family. Yama Raja would be pleased with the recitation of the Mantra after the worship: Mrityuna pasha dandaabhyaam Kaalena cha maya saha, Trayodashyam Deepa daanaath Suryajah Preeyathamiti [With this Deepa daan on Trayodashi, may Surya's son Yama be pleased without Mrityu (Death), Pasha (Yama's rope of death), Danda (Yama's stick) and 'Kaal' (Death time)] Thereafter, on Kartika Amavasya morning, worship is to be performed to Devatas and at the Pradosha time of the same evening, strings of 'Deepas' should be lit and Devi Lakshmi is worshipped saying: 'Devi Lakshmi! We welcome You with 'Deepa Jyoti' (the splendour of these Lamps) as You are the Symbol of Limitless Illumination; You are the representation of Surya, Chandra, Agni, and Gold (Prosperity); Do make Your residence as our own!' Thus the Kartika Krishna Paksha is the most auspicious fortnight praying for 'Apamrityu' / Good Health to Yama raja and Wealth for Devi Lakshmi ushering an era of happiness. If during the entire Kartik Month-or atleast 'Pancha Rathras' (five nights), a devotee recites 'Om Namo Narayanaya' as well as reads / hears 'Vishnu Sahasranam' and 'Gajendra Moksha Paatha', he secures freedom from want, disease, adversity and discontent. Most certainly, the austerities observed on Kartika Ekadashi day alone would ensure contentment in 'Iham' (Current Life) and bliss in 'Param' (Post Life). Each act of virtue on the most auspicious day of Kartika Ekadashi is bound to obtain a multiplier effect endlessly.

# Margasirsha Mahatmya

While addressing a group of Munis, Sage Sutha narrated that Lord Brahma asked Bhagavan Narayana about the significance of Margasirsha Month and the reply was that in His earlier incarnation as Krishna, He advised thousands of Gopikas and Gopas to observe austerities during that month by performing 'Snaans', 'Pujas', fastings and total dedication to Him to attain Salvation. Thus Gopikas and Gopas adopted a daily routine of waking up early; taking bath with Tulasi roots of earth on head by reciting the Mula Mantra of 'Om Namo Narayanaya' and Gayatri Mantra; praying to Ganga saying 'Vishnupaada prasuthaasi Vaishnavi Vishnu devatha, Thrahi naha thvam aghaatthasmaat aajanma maranaanthikat' (Hey Gangey, You were materialised from Vishnu's feet, thus known as Vaishnavi, Vishnu is your Devata, please save me of my sins from birth to death); and applying mritthika (earth) on the body by reciting 'Ashvakraanthey Rathakraanthey Vishnu kraanthey Vasundharey, Mrittikey hara mey Paapam yanmayaa dushkrutam krutam/ Uddhrutasi Varaahena Krishnena Shata baahunaa, Namasthey Sarva bhutaanam prabhavarani Suvrathey' (Hey Vasundharey, Bhagavan Vishnu rides horses and chariots over your physique, I request your Mrittika to wash off my sins like the fire from the pit, you are the creator and tolerator of all beings and the Supreme Lord Varaha lifted you with His thousand hands from deep waters, I salute you!). After the former bath and wearing clean clothes, the routine continues with applying 'Vibhudi' (ash of homa or of cow dung), perform 'Sandhya Vandan'/ Gayatri Japa followed by Vishnu Puja with 'Ghantanaad' (ringing bell), Chandana, Pushpa, Tulasidal, dhoop, deepa and other 'Shodasopacharas', 'Stutipaath' (Extolling hymns) of Vishnu Sahasranaam, Bhishmastavaraj, Gajendra Moksha, Anusmriti and Bhagavad Gita, Mantrajap viz. 'Om Namo Damodaraya Namah' and 'Saashtanga Pranaam' (prostration or lying on the ground by putting both the hands, both the feet, both the knees together, as also chest, forehead, heart, mouth, and vision) and finally recite the Mantra: Mantra heenam,

Kriya heenam, Bhakti heenam Janaardana, Yat pujitam maya Deva Paripurnam tha dasthu the/ Anaya Dhyaanaa vaahanaadi Shodasopachaaraaya Bhagavaan Sarvaatmakah-Supreeta Suparasanno varado bhavatu- so saying-Devataa Prasaadam Sirasa grihnnami, ye that phalam Parameswar-arpanamasthu. (Hey Janaardana, my worship to You is without Mantras, without rituals, and without devotion; kindly accept my worship without these qualities; also without meditation, 'Vahanas' or Carriers, and such other Sixteen Services, I am concluding my worship; kindly be pleased with my worship and ignore all my limitations).

In Kampilya Nagar in the past, there was a King Virabahu who was righteous and devoted and his wife Kantimati too was devout. He was visited by Sage Bharadvaj and was pleased by their high merit and good qualities. The Sage told the King that he was a cruel and sinful Shudra in his previous birth who never believed in Narayana, but his present wife was his previous wife too and was a dutiful and devout woman. While in a forest hunting once, the Shudra found an aged Muni named Devasharma who lost his way into the forest and was pitifully exhausted unable to move. The cruel hunter somehow felt pity on the old person and carried him into his abode and offered him fruits and water. Asked about him, the Shudra confessed to the Muni that he was a cruel hunter, was irreligious and unpardonable; meanwhile his wife gave some fruits and water which the Muni accepted. As the hunter expressed sincere remorse for his earlier actions and showed keen desire to pray to Vishnu. Muni Devasharma opined that the sincerity shown by the hunter in rescuing an old and tired Sanyasi like him and providing timely assistance and service to him was itself an indication of the innumerable sins committed by him in the past. The Sage having narrated the story of the hunter gave 'Upadesh' (teaching) to the King about the significance of the month of Margasirsha and of the worship of Narayana by performing the 'Akhanda Ekadashi Vrata' commencing from Dashami through Dwadashi. On the evening of Dashami when Sun becomes less severe, one has to observe 'Nakta Vratha' or light meal; on Ekadashi day, one should avoid frequent drinking of water, violence, impurity, speaking lies, consumption of betel leaves, cleaning of teeth more than once, sleeping during the day, mating, gambling, non-observance of Jaagaran and conversation with sinners. On Ekadashi day, one should observe strict fasting which means avioding comfort. On the following Dwadashi day, one should observe the avoidables of Ekadashi as also keep away from other's food, honey, and use of oils on the body as also consume the same. But the fast could be terminated to the 'Karta' (the devotee) on Dwadashi, only after providing Bhojan to Brahmanas. After observing the Akhanda Vrata for one full year till the last Dwadashi, 'Udyapan' or conclusion is executed on the Margasirsha Shukla Ekadashi by engaging twelve Brahmanas and one 'Acharya' (Chief) and his wife. First of all, the Acharya and the Brahmanas should be invited with Arghya, Padya, Vastra and Dakshina. The Acharya would then supervise the preparation of 'Chakra Kamala Mandala' based on a white cloth, sub-divided into five segments each having five copper 'Kalashas' (vessels) duly garlanded around and on top of the Kalasas are set with the Idols of Lakshmi Narayana and the Shankha and Chakra. To the northern side there should be 'Havan Kund' where 'homas' are performed with Veda Mantras. The Idols are worshipped with Dhupa, Deepa, Naivedya, Arathi and other services, besides Yaksha Kardama Puja (comprising Camphor, Agaru, Kasturi, and Anga lepa) and Parikrama / Pradakshina. Later on, there should be recitals of Pavamana Sukta, Mantras viz. 'Madhuvaata ruthaayatey', 'Tejosi'etc. Sukranja etc. Vaachyam Brahma (Samam), 'Pavitravantam Suryasya', 'Vishnormahasi' etc. followed by Samidha homa, Charu homa, Tila homa and so on. Finally, charities should take place including Kalasha (Vessel) Daan, Vastra (Clothing) Daan, Suvarna (Gold) Daan and Artha (Cash) Daan as per the devotee's capacity and convenience.

#### Vaisakha Month's Significance

Sage Narada confirmed from Brahma that 'Vaisakha Masa' was of immense consequence as it fulfills all desires to human beings just as a mother did to children. The month is very dear to Vishnu and confers several boons to those who deserve. The month is the essence of Dharma, Yagna, Kriya (noble tasks) and Tapasya. Vaisakha is a 'Dharma Sadhaka' (Virtue-prone) month, just as Veda Vidya is the preeminent of Vidyas, 'Pranava' is the superlative of Mantras, 'Kalpa Vriksha' is the paramount of Trees, Surya Deva is

the most superior of all radiances, Sudarshan Chakra is the most powerful among all Shastraas and Astras, Gold is the best of all metals, Siva is the unique among Vaishnavas and 'Kaustubh' is the best among the jewels. Those who perform 'Snaan' even before Sunrise are valued by Narayana. Just as Vaishakha, there is no Yuga like Satya, no charity like that of water, no prosperity like farming, no Tapasya like Upavas (fasting), no happiness like giving away, no virtue like mercy and forgiving, no superiority like good health, and above all there is no Bhagavan like Vishnu.

During the month of Vaishakha, 'Jala Daan' assumes high importance as those who wish to attain affluence must resort to ways and means of supplying water to public; road side outlets to travellers are of great utility especially in Summer season. Planting trees for shade, providing umbrellas, footwear and fans to individuals, 'Anna daan' or mid day meals and free accommodation in rest houses especially to 'Yatris' and devising other facilities have enormous and far reaching 'Punya'; the donors of these items would automatically receive manifold benefits in 'Iham' (current life) and 'Param', especially the 'Naraka lokas' which one ought to visit after life. To those who give away clothing in charity would be rid of difficulties at birth and death; to those who donate mats that Lord Vishnu Himself rests on; to those who give away bed sheets would have comfortable sleep; to those who provide relaxed clothing to Brahmanas their life span would be extended; to those who donate flowers would be blessed with luxuries in life; to those who offer chandan would enjoy happiness; to those who construct free rest houses would become Kings; to those who provide free facilities of gardens, water wells, and 'Mandapas' would have the happiness of good children; and to those who perform rites to 'Pitras' by offering Kasturi, Camphor, fragrant material and pots full of scented waters are sure to achieve various types of reliefs in the 'Paraloka'. While these are illustrative types of charities and the far reaching results of benevolence, the avoidable tasks during the Vaisakha month are eight-folded viz. applying oils on body, bathing in the house, sleeping during the day timings, eating in glass utensils, sleeping on water beds, keeping away from avoidable foods, eating more than once a day and eating in the night. If one takes Vaishakha bath before Sun-rise in any of the Seven Gangas viz. Ganga, Buddha Ganga (Godavari), Kalindi or Yamuna, Saraswathi, Kaveri, Narmada and Veni, the person concerned would be saved from even 'Pancha Patakas', let alone lesser level sins. Daanas of 'Kanda'/ 'Moola' (Underground Vegetables), Phala (Fruits) Shakha (Plain Vegetables), Salt, Gud, Edible Leaves, and water would have endless benefits.

While performing 'Snaanas' during Vaishaka, the following Mantras should be read in praise of Madhusudan as follows: *Madhusudan Devesha Vaishaakhe Meshage Ravai*, *Prathahsnaanam karishyaami nirvighnam kuru Madhava*. (Hey Madhusudan, Deveswara Madhava, I am performing Vaishakha month bathing early morning when Surya Deva is situated in Mesha Rasi; Kindly accomplish my bathing without hindrance and bless me). After the bath, one should offer 'Arghya' (Handful of water) looking at Sun: *Vaishaakhe Meshage Bhaanau Praathah Snaana paraayanah, Arghyam theham pradaasmahi gruhaana Madhusudana*. (I am formally offering the 'Arghya' during early morning of Vaishaka when Surya is in Mesha Rasi; kindly accept, Madhusudana!)

Once there was a King named Kirtiman in Kashipura who went hunting in forests and being desirous of visiting the 'Ashram' of Sage Vasishtha found several of the Sage's disciples offering the shade of umbrellas, fruits and cool drinks to passers by. They were unmindful of normal human beings and Kings like him and asked why were they doing the service, they did not reply. On meeting Vasishtha, the King enquired about the acts of the disciples and the Sage described the significance of Vaisakha Month. Pursuant to this the King ordered that the good example of the disciples of the Sage be followed in the nook and corner of the entire Kingdom and was able to save the lives of several of his subjects, especially Brahmanas by providing rest houses, planting trees, supplying food and cool water and creating innumerable facilities to his people. Also, the King organised a Kingdom-wide campaign of propagating Dharma in the Vaishakha Month and spreading the awareness of the 'do's and don'ts' as also strictly enforcing early mornig bathings, performances of daanas, 'Pujas'by individual families and a general uplift of Dharma. This resulted in a very thin outgo of deaths from his Kingdom in the months of Vaishaka and Lord Yamaraja made an appeal to Brahma that the traffic of deaths and births registered in the

Kingdom of Kirtiman was highly disturbed, that there was little difference of 'Swarga' and 'Naraka' and even those few deaths in the Kingdom made a bee-line to Vaikuntha! Amused by the complaint of Yamaraja, Brahma accompanied by Yamaraja approached the 'Ksheera Sagar' (Ocean of Milk) and Vishnu replied smilingly that He would rather leave away His Srivatsa, Kaustubh jewel, Vijayanti Mala, Sweta Dwip, Vaikuntha, Ksheera Sagar, Sesha Nag, Garud or even Devi Lakshmi, but would never abandon His Bhakta Raja Kirtiman. He further said that He would desire to multiply the good illustrations of that King and extend their lives for thousands of Years. He warned Yamadharmaraja not to interfere with the observance of the 'Mahatmya' of the month of Vaisakha. However, Lord Vishnu provided for a special dispensation in favour of Yamadharmaraja that the devotees of Vaisaska month should perform a special Puja in his favour during the first half of the month before Purnima and give away a Daan of potful of water, curd and Anna (rice/foodgrains) to appease him. Only after the special Puja that one should observe Pujas to Pitras, Gurus and Bhagavan Vishnu in their names and charity be given to Brahmanas offering cool water, curd, Anna, fruits, betel leaves/ nuts and 'dakshina' along with a copper vessel and an Idol of Maha Vishnu.

The importance of Vaisakha *Akshaya Triteeya* through the end of the month was illustrated by a King Purushaya of Panchaladesha who no doubt was virtuous and noble but lost his kingdom following a famine in his Kingdom and the opportune neighbouring Kings defeated and sent Purushaya into exile. Two Sages explained that Purushaya was a cruel hunter in his previous birth but luckily he showed two old and very thirsty passers-by about the location of a waterbody and hence he became a King; yet Purushaya never performed charity and hence faced bad days. The Sages suggested that the next day was Vaisakha Akshaya Triteeya and the King could therefore observe early morning Snaan, Puja to Lakshmipati, perform charity by way of water-dispensers for the benefit of thirsty passers- by and such other good deeds. Purushaya realised the fault and executed several charitable deeds during Akshaya Triteeya through Amavasya and regained his kingdom eventually and decided to provide many charities in the entire month of Vaisakha month every year. Eventually, the King became a great devotee of Lord Vishnu, had His darshan and attained 'Sayujya'.

While all the days of Vaishakha Month are significant, *Ekadashi*, assumes special value. The ideal deeds like Snaan, Daan, Homa, Deva Puja and other Punya Karmas like Japas, Stotras and Katha Shravanas bestow instant results. Those who suffer from illness and acute poverty would be free from Purana Shravana; those who are blind, widows, or normal men, women, and children, youth, old, decrepit and the rest would all be able to lessen or even remove their problems as a result of their virtues on Ekadashi of the month. Similarly, *Amavasya* of Vaisakha Month is of the great impact for Pitru Puja and for performing 'Shraddhas', 'Pinda daanas' and 'Tila Tarpanas'.

## Ayodhya 'Mahatmya' and the Import of 'Tirthas' around

Bhagavan Vishnu's right foot thumb created Ganga and left foot thumb created Sarayu and thus both the Rivers are Sacred and bathings of these 'Tirthas' bestow purity of high merit and destroy the effect of evil deeds even of the intensity of the 'Maha Patakas' or the Great Sins. The origin of the word Ayodhya emerged from the amalgam of 'Akar'standing for Brahma, 'Yakar'for Vishnu and 'dhakar' standing for Rudra. Ayodhya is the 'Adipuri'of Lord Vishnu, also the abode of Sudarshana Chakra and as such the sin demolisher. The City has the shape of a fish ranging from Go-Prathara Tirtha in the West to 'Asi' Tirtha in the East. In the days of yore, there was a famous Brahmana by name Vishnu Sharma who did such Tapasya with great resolve and sacrifice for several years that finally Bhagavan appeared before him in His full Form and materialised a Holy Tirtha from His Chakra which was named **Chakra Tirtha**. Persons doing bath, worship and charity at this Sacred Tirtha are believed to enjoy long and happy life and after termination of life achieve Mukti. Lord Brahma decided to visit Ayodhya once and materialised a vast Tirtha, named after Him ie. **Brahma Kunda**, and said that He would reside there for good. Sage Lomesh did his bathing in the **Runa Vimochan Tirtha** and declared that the waters possess the great quality of 'runa vimochana' or getting rid of debts of the current and previous births. Not far from Brahma Kunda is a **Papa Vimochan Tirtha** where a Brahmana named Narahari who became a victim of bad company and

performed several great sins including cursing the Vedas; but luckily he met a few Sadhus visiting Ayodhya once and along with them performed Snaan, Puja and Daan in the name of Narayana on a special day of Magha Krishna Chaturdasi and all his sins were washed out since he was basically a Brahmana who fell a prey to wrong actions. There was also a Tirtha which had the history of Shri Ram disowning Lakshman due to certain peculiar circumstances; Shri Ram instructed Lakshman to guard the main entry and who ever entered would be punished since the former and Kaala Devata were meditating together on Deva Karya (a certain task of Devas) and were not to be disturbed. But Sage Durvasa arrived and pressurised Lakshman to inform Rama of his arrival and Laxman had to be punished of being disowned. The forsaken Lakshman did severe Tapasya to Parameswara to absolve the indiscretion that he had done due to Durvasa's unexpected entry. This made 'Seshanag' (whose Avatar was Lakshmana) appear and the exraodinary radiance and heat of the jewels of the thousand hoods of Seshanag pierced through the banks of Sarayu River and up came a **Sahasradhara Tirtha.** Indra and Devas also appeared and the indiscretion of Laksmana due to circumstances beyond his control was pardoned. Such is the power of the Tirtha that even Lakshman's blunders were pardoned and devotees performing 'Snaan', 'Puja' and 'Daan' in the name of Seshanag (Naga Puja) especially in Vaisakha Month would never bother the fear of Snakes. Away from Sahasradhara Tirtha is Swargadwara as the name indicates the Tirtha is expected to have the nearest acesss to Swarga where devotees perform sacred tasks for a month including fasting, Japas, tapas, havans, dhyanas, Adhyayanas (Studies of Sacred Books) and Danaas including Godaanas, Bhu daanas, Vastra danaas, etc. Popularly believed as the abode of Siva, Shri Rama along with His younger brothers was in the habit of frequenting the Tirtha not only to review the good deeds of Brahmanas but all human beings, animals, birds and even the smallest flies for granting boons to each and everybody. Chandrahari Tirtha is named after Chandrahari or Bhagavan Vishnu and following 'Snaan' at the Tirtha, devotees observe Chandrahari Vrata on Purnima in the Month with Daan, Vrata Puja and homam. After eighty three years four months on Purnimasi day, the Vrata's 'Udyapan' is performed on the completion of Sahasra Chandra Darshana .The Udyapan includes Pujas of Ganesha, Vishnu, Gauri, Siva, Sixteen Matrikas, Chandra Homa, Chandra Mantra Japa, Soma Sukta, Chandra nyasa, Kalaanyasa, Arghya Mantra in favour of Chandra, Daan of Sixteen Kalasas full of milk, Vastra Daan, Dakshina and 'Bhojan'. On the following day, 'punah puja' (Puja again) is performed again to Srihari. Completion of the Function accordingly would reserve a prominent Place to the devotee in Chandra Loka, at the end of his life. To the Agneya direction of Chandrahari Tirtha is situated **Dharmahari Tirtha** which was set up by erudite Brahmana who was well read in Vedas and visited Ayodhya the abode of Bhagavan Vishnu. He was highly thrilled to have a darshan of Bhagavan who was immensely pleased by the devotee's eulogy and gave the boon of manifesting Himself in form of an Idol as Dharmahari at the Place where He appeared before the Brahmana and assured that in future, whosoever took the 'Snaan' at Swargadwar Tirtha and performed penance, Puja, and charities would be blessed and become sin-free. To South of Dharmahari, is situated 'Swarnakhani Tirtha' where Lord Kubera showered gold rain in Ayodhya to please King Raghu. The King completed 'Vishva Digvijaya' Yagna and since then Snaans at the Tirtha on Vaisakha Sukla Dwadashi would fulfill their desires including possesion of immense Gold and prosperity. Sambheda Tirtha is known as 'Tilodaki' where the water too has the colour of Black Til and is used for 'Pitru Tarpanas' with black Til ie. Sesamum Seeds. Tarpanas on Bhadrapada Krishna Amayasya would help relieve the travails of Pitras and the sins of their seven generations get burnt off with the worship of Narayana. To the West of the Sambheda Tirtha, is the **Sita Kunda** which was set up by Sita Herself. Guptahari was the Place in Ayodhya where Lord Vishnu stayed without the knowledge of Asuras who were creating havoc in Bhuloka; Devas and Bhagavan Shankar approached the Lord who assured that He would execute Tapasya for the security of Devas and annihilate them by taking the Avatar of Sri Rama. After taking Snaan at Guptahari, devotees pay respects at Chakrahari Tirtha perform Japas and Homas and proceed further to Gopratara ghat of Saruyu Sangam on Margasirsha Sukla Dwadasi for Sacred baths. In Sarayu and Dadhra Sangam, there are ten crores of Tirthas where devotes offer Pitra Tarpans and Daans as per individual capacities and inclinations. The auspicious days as considered by devotees for rituals, homas, Daanas etc. all along the banks of Sarayu River include Amavasya, Purnimas, Dwadashi Tithis, 'Ayana' change days, 'Vyaktipaathayoga' days (as per individual horoscopes) etc. Just as Manikarnika is most Sacred at Kasi, Chakra Tirtha at Naimisha Forest and Mahakaal Mandir at Ujjain, Gopratara Tirtha is the most significant at Ayodhya as that was the Place of 'Parama Gaman' (Great Departure) of Lord Sri Rama. Besides the above, there are other important Tirthas like Ksheerodak Tirtha (where King Dasarath performed 'Putra Kameshthi' or Yagna aiming at begetting children and devotees execute 'Vratas' on Aswin Shukla Ekadashi); Brihaspati Kund (the abode of Deva Guru Brisahpati); Rukmini Kund (which was constructed by Devi Rukmini and Lord Krishna too stays in the Tirtha and devotees perform Vaishnava Mantra Homa, Brahmana Puja and 'Krishna Archana'on Kartika Krishna Navami and observe annual Yatra or Procession with great pomp); Dhana Yaksha Yagna where King Harischandra donated his entire Kingdom to Sage Viswamitra who entrusted the responsibility of giving security to the Kingdom by one Yaksha; Vasishtha Kunda (where Sage Vasishtha and his wife Maha Pativrata Devi Arundhati stay and bless devotees); Yogini Kund (where sixty four Yoginis reside and provide 'Sidhis' to men and women); Urvashi Kund (where those males who bathe desirous of getting access to Swarga) and Ghoshaarka Kund (where King Ghosh did severe Tapasya to Surya Deva and devotees bathing and worshipping Him on Sundays bestows good health and contentment. One of the most distinct and popular Places in the vicinity of Ayodhya is Gaya Kupa where 'Shraddahas' to Pitras are performed not only to relieve the ancestors from their miseries and experiences of Narakaloka (hells) but also seek the blessings of Devas and Rishis; Somavati Amavasya is the day when the Shraddhas offered to Pitras are most fruitful but the 'Pitra Karyas' (The Acts addressed to ancestors) on the specific Tithi (day when the concerned ancestor passed away) are equally significant. As a last resort, such 'Karyas' performed on any day visiting Gaya Kshetra are also stated important, since Shraddhas offered would help provide respite to the Souls of the deceased. Manasa Tirtha is known for 'Piscacha Vimochana' as Snaan and Daan on Agahana Sukla Chaturdasi ensure that never in births ahead would become a Piscacha. As Sri Rama stood for seven noble features, Seven Noble Tirthas emerged viz. Satya Tirtha, Kshama Tirtha, Sarva bhuta daya Tirtha, Indriyanigraha Tirtha, Satyavaadita Tirtha, Jnana Tirtha and Tapas Tirtha. Ayodhya is also famous for Sri Rama Janma Sthaan where Sri Rama Navami Celebrations are at peak in the City.

# Setu Tirtha (Rameswara Kshetra)

In the Brahma Khanda of Skanda Purana, Suta Maha Muni addressed a Conclave of Rishis and narrated the significance of Setu Bandhan/ Tirtha as also of Rameswara Kshetra which were visualised and built by Sri Rama; even visioning these Places would bestow Mukti from Samsara. Emphasising the Unity of Vishnu and Siva, the Three Sacred Places viz. Setu (bridge), Rameswara Linga and Gandhamadan Mountain constitute the composite identity. If one lies down on Setu's banks and sticks the sand on the body, the number of as many sand particles would absolve as many Brahmahatya sins! The touch of the wind on one's body from the mid-banks of Setu would pardon ten thousand 'Surapanaas' (drinking intoxicants). If one does 'Snaan' at the Tirtha and seeks relief on somebody else's favour, then too the sins of the proxy beneficiaries are washed off. The Five Brahmahatya sinners, who spoil the roads, prepare food for them only, abuse Brahmanas and Sanyasis, accept the food of a Chandala and sell Vedas are also excused by the holy bath at Setu Tirtha. Those who offer charity but deny in reality, those who teach Dharma (Virtue) but hate and ridicule the teachers, who obstruct cows from drinking water from public places, abandon 'Upasana' (meditation), steals food meant for Devas, drink wine from women who too drink and consume food from fallen and poverty stricken women also secure reprieve as the Setu and Ramalingeswra Snaanas and worship are very powerful. Those who steal Kanda-Moolas (earth sprouted / underneathed vegetables) and fruits, Kasturi, silk materials, milk, Chandan, Camphor, honey, ghee, glass and copper material and Rudrakshas are considered as sinful as those who steal gold; but even such deplorable persons are forgiven by visiting Setu Kshetra. Incest of all kinds which is as abhorable as sleeping with Guru's wife is also exonerated by the Setu Kshetra. If for any reason, one is unable to visit the Setu / Ramalinga Temple, he or she could depute a trustworthy person on his behalf by bearing the expenses.

As Lord Sri Ram, Devi Sita and Lakshman were consigned to the forest, Dandakaranya, for twelve years following His father's instruction and resided at a hermitage called 'Panchavati', the Demon Ravanasura tricked Devi Sita with a Golden Deer in the disguise of another Demon Maricha and forcibly abducted her to his kingdom of Lanka. Rama and Lakshmana were in futile search of Sita and made friends with Hanuman and Sugriva. The latter was helped by Rama to kill Vali and made him the King of Kishkintha. Hanuman crossed the Ocean, met Devi Sita by raising confidence in her about him as a Bhakta of Sri Ram by giving her 'chudamani' (jewellery of hers brought from Rama) and gave a taste of his prowess to Ravana by destroying the forests and major parts of Lanka's Capital City. Hanuman returned back to Rama and gave the news of Sita's where-abouts. Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva, Hanuman, Jambavan and other great warriors of Vanara Sena (the monkey's army) travelled many Kingdoms en route to Mahendra Mountain. Vibhishan, younger brother of Ravana joined Rama as he did not approve of Ravana's evil policies. Rama decided to cross the Ocean but only the mighty Hanuman could perform the great leap to Lanka and others would not be able to do so. It was also not possible to navigate as several boats were not available in such short time. Rama therefore prayed to Samudra Deva, the God of Ocean, for three days but the Deva did not respond. Rama grew angry and took his Dhanush (bow and arrow) to punish the Ocean. Samudra Deva appeared and agreed to help Rama; there were only two ways of reaching Lanka viz. by drying up the Ocean which might not be a plausible solution or by asking 'Nala' of the army of Sugriva who like his father Viswakarma was an adept to prepare a Setu (Bridge). The monkey brigade could throw any thing like boulders, stones or even pebbles, Samudra on his part would hold of whatever is thrown into the waters and Nala could shape up a bridge in view of his inborn talent. Thus commenced the 'Setu Bandhan' with the help of any material including trees, plants, flowers, and even grass thrown into the deep waters by Nala and soon enough a remarkable bridge was planned right across the Ocean which was of a huge dimension of ten Yojanas width and hundred yojanas length. Lord Sri Rama determined an excellent 'Muhurat' (auspicious time) for Ganesh Puja and Maheswara Puja at the Devipatthan Nagar. The Setubandhan Mantra recited by all those involved in the mammoth task stated: Raghuvira padanyasa Pavitrikruta Pamsavey, Dasakantha siraccheda hetavey Setavey namah / Ketavey Ramachandrasya Moksha maargonka hetavey, Sitaayaa Maanasambhoja bhaanavey Setava namah (This Place has become sacred with the dust of Sri Ram's feet; this Setu is the one being constructed to devastate the ten heads of Ravanasura; this is the Ketu (dhwaja or flag symbol) being built as the proof of 'Moksha Sadhana' or the Route to Salvation, Sri Rama's universal distinction and Devi Sita's happiness like the opening of her lotus like heart with Surya Deva's high radiance. Our Geetings to this immortal Setu! Starting the task of Setu Bandhan, the construction was accomplished within five days!)

There are several Tirthas on either side of the Setu, but most significant are twenty four. The most important ones are Chakra Tirtha, Betala varada Tirtha, and Paapavinashana Tirtha which were famous. Then there are Sitasarovar Tirtha, Mangala Tirtha and Amritavaapika. Again, there are Brahmakund, Hanumakund, Agasthya Tirtha, Rama Tirtha, Lakshmana Tirtha, Jaya Tirtha, Lakshmi Tirtha, Agni Tirtha, Chakra Tirtha, Siva Tirtha, Shankha Tirtha, Yamuna Tirtha, Ganga Tirtha, Gaya Tirtha, Koti Tirtha, Saadhyamrita Tirtha, Maanasa Tirtha and Dhanushkodi Tirtha. These are only illustrative Tirthas which are all Sin demolishers. Chakra Tirtha is known as the foremost and original one where a Vaishnava Mahatma called Galava resided. He performed rigorous Tapasya for several years without any human contact by eating leaves, then water and subsequently with only Vayu (air), ignoring the harshness of summer, winter and rains. He had targetted Lord Vishnu and disregarded every thing else in the World. Bhagavan was pleased with the determination of the Vaishnava's devotion and gave His 'Darshan'. Galaya was indeed extremely happy but requested Bhagayan to save him from Devils known as Hunger, thirst and physical disability experienced during the course of his Tapasya; he was obsessed about his scare and Bhagavan asked His Sudarshan Chakra to throw away the Devils and keep one of the Chakra's 'Amsas' (features) there which would be immortalised as Chakra Tirtha bestowing fearlessness and Mukti. SitaKund was the Place where Devi Sita was asked by Rama to enter an 'Agni Kunda' and came out to vindicate her chastity although she stayed in Ravana's custody for long and there were doubts raised by a handful of citizens of Ayodhya. After taking Snaan at Sita Kund which bestows purity of

thought and action, devotees visit Mangala Tirtha to signify the virtues of altruism, selflessness and nonviolence as were taught to King Manojava by fate who taxed Brahmanas, never gave charity and was unscrupulous with his Subjects, eventually lost his Kingdom, suffered the worst poverty and hunger in forests but was saved by Sage Parasara who advised the King to visit Mangala Tirtha and eventually regained his Kingdom. Ekantaramanatha was the Confidential Place where after crossing Sethu Rama was engrossed with Lakshman, Sugriva, Vibhishana, Hanuman and Jambavan in planning the Battle with Ravana and the Sea was peaceful, less noisy and conducive for mental ability. Amrita vati was next to Ekantaramanatha which was like nectar providing contentment and great enthusiasm. Brahma Kund was a sin destroyer, fulfiller of human desires and most auspicious after preforming Snaan and charities. Hanuma Kund Snaan blesses childless parents of highly virtuous and brave sons. Rama Tirtha is known for securing innumerable Siddhis like ability to fly on the sky, excellence in various 'Kalaas' or Art Forms, free mobility among various Deva lokas and capacity to convese with Devatas. The Tirtha Snaan yields many noble traits which Sri Rama Chandra stood for like Truthfulness, extraordinary courage, invincibility and obeying the orders of His father in letter and spirit. Worship at Lakshmana **Tirtha** confers faith in virtue, bravery, conviction and loyalty. **Koti Tirtha** was the source of Holy Waters of Ganga, Yamuna and several other Rivers which were materialised by Sri Rama to perform the 'Abhisheka' or Sacred Bathing of the Rameswara Linga at the time of 'Pratishtha' (Setting up) to undertake 'Prayaschitta' or Self-Purification of Sri Rama to demolish the 'Brahmahatya Pataka' which was among the Five Greatest Sins, ie.killing of Brahmanas like Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Indra jit. Sage Narada advised Sri Krishna to take Snaan at Koti Tirtha after assassination of his maternal uncle, the merciless King Kamsa. Dhanush Tirtha was materialised as Ravana was killed and Vibhishana was made the King; the latter entreated Rama to destroy the Setu as all the Vanaras returned to Gandhamadan Mountain from Lanka and since any enterprising King from Bharat might walk across easily and attack the Lanka Kingdom in future. Setu was destroyed by Rama and Snaan / Daan and worship at Dhanush Tirtha became a Sin-destroyer, the Place of Pitru 'Karyas' and for Salvation.

Rameswara Maha Linga is the most hallowed Parameswara Linga established by Rama and Sita for the twin reasons of Prayaschitta to atone from Brahma Patakas as also by way of gratitude and veneration to Maha Deva. In consultation with Maha Munis, Sri Ram decided to perform the 'Pratishtha' of Rameswara Linga at the most auspicious 'Muhurat' and commissioned Hanuman to bring the Linga from Maha Deva at Kailasa Mountain. Hanuman raced to Kailasa by the Sky route in a record time but could not secure Siva Darshana fast and had to meditate Maha Deva for days together. Finally, Maha Deva blessed Rameswara Linga and without loss of time Hanuman sought to return to Gandhamaadana where the Consecration was planned. Unfortunately however Hunuman could not meet the deadline of the Muhurat for the Consecration of the Linga and Devi Sita had to perforce prepare a Sand Linga that was set up as a temporary stop-gap but in reality that became the real Linga virtually. Later a Nandisewara Linga too was set up and Ahishekas were performed amid recitals of Vedas and other appropriate Mantras by the Holy Waters from Koti Tirtha. Meanwhile Hanuman returned from Kailasa but was highly disappointed and felt that all his efforts proved futile. Sri Rama assuaged Hanuma's hurt feelings and told him that he was a Great Tatva Gyani himself and that he knew well that Atma was eternal and human body was ephemeral subject to emotions like anger, desire, envy, infatuation and disappointment. Having said that Rama did the Pratishtha of the Hanumadiswara Linga and announced that devotees should have the Darshan of this Linga even before the worship of Rameswar Linga as the former which was gifted by Siva Himself bestowed courage, enterprise, loyalty and great devotion. As regards Rameswara Linga, devotees who secure darshan; perform worship, Abhishek, Veda Pathana, Charities, Kirtanas, and so on are among the top Bhaktas whose sins perish like Agni would do to flies! The kinds of Bhakti to Siva Linga are basically eight-fold: Devotees of Rameswara should display devotion and kindness; they should worship the Devotees of the Linga and satisfy them; perform worship to Siva without reservations; their each and every action, emotion and feelings ought to be reflected in the devotee's physique, mind and Inner Consciousness; listen carefully to the Sacred Stories of Rameswara Mahatmya; their love and attachment to Rameswara should result in their voices full of emotions, eyes full of tears, their instant reactions in

terms of hair rising incidents when related to them; remembering the name of Ramesewara and perform 'Japa'always by reciting the Mantra: Ramanatha Mahadeva maam Raksha Karunanithey, Iti Yaha Satatam bruyat Kalinasow na bandhyatey; and taking refuge in Him, carry on one's life! [The list of Major Tirthas at Rameswaram includes: Chakra Tirtham at Darbhhashayanam; Vetala Varada at South of Chakra Tirtha; Wells inside Rathna Swami Temple: Lakshmi Tirtha, Chakra Tirtha, Siva Tirtha, Yamuna Tirtha, Ganga Tirtha, Gaya Tirtha, Koti Tirtha, Sadhyamrita Tirtha, Jambava Tirtha, Angada Tirtha, Sarva Tirtha, Chandra Tirtha, Surya Tirtha, Brahmahatti Vimochana Tirtha, Madhava Tirtha, Nala Tirtha, Nila Tirtha, Gavaya Tirtha, Gavaska Tirtha, Gandhamaadana Tirtha, Savitri Tirtha, Sarasvati Tirtha and Gayatri Tirtha; Near Ekantarama Temple: Amrita vapi, Mangala Tirtha, Runa Vimochana Tirtha and Pancha Pandava Tirtha; At Gandhamaadana Mountain, there is Paapa Vinaasana, and on way there are Nakula Tirtha, Sahadeva Tirtha, Bhima Tirtha, Draupadi Tirtha, Arjuna Tirtha, and Sugriva Tirtha; at Pamban the Tirthas are of Kapila, Bhairava an Amrita; Nearby Ratna SwamiTemple are Hanuma Kunda, Agasthya Tirtham and Lashmana Kundam; Agni Tirtha at the East beach of the Sea and Dhanushkodi at the Sea etc.] The Procedure for Sethu Tirtha is to greet Samudra first, offer Arghya daan, recite the Mantra saying 'Hey Sagara, Swami of Rivers, allow me to take bath and wash off my sins just as a snake rejects its old skin'; thus one takes three dips; offers Tarpanas to Devas, Rishis and Pitras; takes bath at Chakra Tirtha, Kapila Tirtha, Sita kund, Runa Vimochana Tirtha, Rama Tirtha, Lakshmana Tirtha, Papanashana Tirtha, Brahma Tirtha, Dhanush kodi, Agni Tirtha and so on.

# Dharmaranya Mahatmya-Sadachari Brahmanas, SandhaVandana, Do's & Dont's

Maha Muni Veda Vyas described to Yudhishtara the eldest of Pandavas about the enormous significance of Dharmaranya where none had enemity with anybody, a typical Place of fearlessness, as tigers and rats played with each other, frogs and snakes coexist in Peace and human beings and Rakshasas are mutually helpful and friendly! That was the famous Forest where (Yama) Dharma Raja practised ruthless Tapasya for several Deva Years (each day of Devas equalling hundred human years) addressed to Maha Deva. Apprehensive of Dhamaraja's intentions of a risk to his throne, Indra approached Brahma who prayed to Maha Deva and the latter confirmed that Dharmaraja's objective was dignified and noble, but Indra became increasingly suspicious and despatched an 'Apsara' named Vardhini to tempt Dharmaraia. Yamaraja had indeed known her intentions but asked her to convey to Indra that he had no desire to occupy the Throne of Heaven. As the Tapasya of Dharmaraja became more and more fierce, Maha Deva gave His 'Darshan' and agreed to three of his boons viz. that Dharmaranya where his sincere meditation was made be admired in Three Lokas; that there be a highly Sacred Tirtha so materialised and that He (Maha Deva) be always present as Visweswara Linga. The Linga so set up with Maha Deva's boons eventually became as Dharmeswara Linga and sacred baths in the Dhramavapi set up by Dharmaraja became popular as 'Vyadhinashak' or the destroyer of diseases; those who offer 'Yama Tarpanas' would never face any danger in life; illnesses like Antariya, Tijari, 'Jwaras' of limited days and Sheeta Jwaras of varying kinds should never trouble human beings.

Veda Vyasa described to Yudhishtara the basic traits of *Sadaachara Brahmanas*; he said that among Human beings, Brahmanas constituted the cream of the Society; among them were Vidwans, among Vidwans were Budhhimaans, and among them were Karmatthas or those who practise Karmas were Brahmaparayana Purushas. Those who desire to maintain Dharma do administer the precepts of 'Yama' and 'Niyama'. Yama connotes Satya (Truth), Kshama (Patience), Saralata (Tendernes), Dhyan (Meditation), 'Karuna' mercifulness, Ahimsa (Non-violence), Mental and Physical Control, Sada Prasannata (cool temper always), Sweet behaviour and delicate demeanour. Niyama connotes the ten fold activities viz. Shaucha (Physical Cleanliness), 'Snaan' (Bathing), Tapa (meditation), Daan (charity), Mouna (Maintaining Silence), Yagna, Swadhyayana (Reading by Self), Vrata (Pujas as prescribed), Upavasa (fasting), and Indriya Daman (Control of Limbs). Human Beings should certainly do well in controlling the Six Proverbial Enemies of Kama (Desire), Krodha (Anger), Lobha (avarice), Moha (Infatuation), Mada (Arrogance) and Matsarya (Jealousy). One should definitely realize that a human being enters the World alone and dies alone and in between becomes responsible for the noble or ignoble

tasks executed. On the arrival of Mritu (death), human body is disposed off and almost immediately one's brothers and relatives tend to forget the dead person sooner than later. *Jaayato haikalah Praani cha tathaikalah, Ekalah Sukrutam Bhunkthey Bhunktey Dushkrutamekalaha / Dehe Panchatvamapanne tyaktvaikam kaashttaloshtavat, badhva vimukha yaanti dharmom yaantamanuvrajet /* Such is the reality of life.

Among the Niyamas, Shoucha is to be observed by way of physical cleanliness including the morning ablutions. Formal Snaan has an important role among the Niyamas which is observed with 'Kusha' grass on hand and tucked in the tuft on head, wear clean clothes, perform *Pranayama* ten to twelve times holding breath in a modulated manner in alternate nostrils by reciting Pranava Mantra OM, then observe Morning Sandhya Vandana commencing with 'Achamana' of Om Keshavaya Swaha, Narayana Swaha, Madhavaya Swaha etc. followed by Marjana Mantra of 'Om Aapo hishtha mayo bhuvaha thaana vurje thadathana, Maherayanaya chakshasey/ yovassivatamo rasah tasya bhajahthehanaha usiteeravamaatarah /tasya aranga maamavaha /Yassyakshayaya jinvadhah Apojanah yadhaachanah' (Paramatma! As You are kind to accept our Prayers, do favour us with the means of our existence like food etc; do bless us with endless kindness our sincere desire to have Your divine appearance which is eternally blissful). Then sprinkle water nine times on Prithivi (Earth), Mastak (head), up on Akaakaash (the Sky), again on Akaakaash, on Prithvi again, on Mastak twice, on Akaakaash and on Prithvi again. The words Prithvi signify the two feet; Aaakaash signifies heart, the word Mastak signifies brain. Six kinds of 'Snaanas'have been named viz. Varauna Snaan (bath with water), Agneya Snaan (Spread over 'Dhuup'or smoke on all the limbs), Vayavya Snaan (Bathing by free air), Yendra Snaan (Bathing with rain water), Mantra Snaan (Purifying the body with Mantras) and Braahma Snaan (Veda Mantra Abhishek). Indeed Braahma Snaan is the best as it ensures 'Baahyanatra Snaan' -Purity both of external or physical and internal or mental cleanliness. After Marjana Mantra, 'Drupadadiva Mumunchaanah' Mantra is followed by the recital of Vidhijna Purusha 'Ruthajna Sathyajna' Mantras; thereafter, Aghamarshana Mantra is recited thrice further followed by Pranava (Om), Vyahritis viz. Bhuh, Bhuva and Suvaha and Gayatri Mantra: Tatsavithur Varenyam Bhargo Devasya Dheemahe Dhiyoyonah Prachodayat' (May we attain the great Glory of Savitur / Paramatma, so that He/She stimulates our prayers). He who performs Gayatri Japa three Sandhyas a day through Surya Deva achieves Progeny, Wealth, Agricultural and Animal prosperity, Good Health, Longevity, and all round Contentment. Gayatri Mantra Japa is followed by Tarpanas with water and 'Kushas' to Brahma and Devas; Marichi and other Rishis with Niveeti (Yagnopaveet as a Mala or Garland); and to Pitras with Tilas Black Tila' or Sesamum (with Yagnopaveeta as Praachinaveeta or reverse side); Note: Black Tila Tarpana be avoided on Sundays, Sukla Trayodasi, Saptami, nights, Sandhya Vandana Times) and at these times, only white Til be used.

Vedagnihotra or Use of Fire along with Vedas is of five kinds: 'Sweekar' or what is taught from a Guru; 'Artha Vichar' (Aimed at Prosperity); 'Mantra paatha Abhyas' (Practice of Mantras); 'Tapah' (as per practice of Vedas); and Teaching Sishyas (disciples). Morning Agnihotras are aimed at 'Praapti Raksha' (Safeguarding what ever is achieved) and 'Aprapti Prapti' (Achieving what is not available). 'Madhyahna kaala' (mid-day) Agnihotras are oriented to Bali Viswa 'homas' into Agni with lentils like Urad, Chana and Matar; uncooked / cooked oil items, cooked rice, and ghee). Agni Puja is performed later with Gandha, Pushpa, Akshatas (rice with turmeric powder) and so on. Sprinkling water on all the sides of the Fire Pit is to ensure that Agni is never exposed naked). The Prasad is distributed among the six categories of Dharma bikshus or Guests of Soceity without hesitation, viz hungry travellers, widows /widowers, Vidyarthis, those who look after others; Sanyasis and Brahmacharis. Also, food given away to Chandalas, dogs, yachakas (beggars), patitas (fallen women), paparogis (diseased due to sins), etc. has its own benefits to Brahmanas.

In the *Grihashtashram* (family life), Maharshi Veda Vyas extolled to Yudhishthar the virtues of human beings, especially Brahmanas, as they play a pivotal role in performing duties to Devas, Pitras, Cohuman beings, Bhuta Pranis, Krumi-Keetas (insects), Pakshis (birds) and even Asuras. Cows standing for virtues do fall in the care of Brahmanas as the former represent Vedas-Rig Ved being the back of Cows,

Yajur Ved being their middle portion, and Sama Ved their 'Kukshi' (stomach); 'Ishta' or Yagnas and Yagas and 'Apurti' or Wells, Tatakas, Gardens etc are their horns; Veda Suktas are the body hairs; Shanti Karma and Pushti Karma are their dung and urine; 'Aksharas' are their feet; Cows live for their Pada-Krama-Jata-and Ghana Paatha viz. the various Mantras; Swahakar, Swadhakar, Vashatkar and Hanthakar are the four nipples of their breasts, each of the nipples representing Devatas; Pitras; Bhutas, Rishis, Munis and Sureswaraganas; and Human beings respectively. The last nipple yeilds maximum milk to human beings. Thus the responsibility of looking after cows is squarely on human beings. Besides, the 'Grihastas' or family members need to observe Snaanas, Pujas, Tarpanas, Bali Vaiswadevas, and 'Atithi Pujas' or veneration to Guests in the normal course. Veda Vyas explained to Yudhishtar the eight kinds of 'Vivahas' (weddings) viz. Braahma, Daiya, Arsha, Praajaapathya, Asura, Gandharva, Raakshasa and Paisachika. When a bridegroom is invited and a bride is given away with Vastras (clothing) and jewellery is the Braahma Vivaha; Kanyadaan (offering a virgin) by way of Yagna by Ritviks is a Diva Vivaha; when a bridegroom gifts a cow and a bull to the bride's parents then the wedding is known as Arsha Vivah; when the bride and groom are specifically told that they would both observe Dharma in their Grahasta life and take vows to that effect, then the wedding is a Praajapatya category; if the couple like each other and marry freely without any strings of Chaturvarans or family restrictions whatsoever, then the wedding is of a Gandharva type; when a bridegroom forcibly abducts a bride and marries then it is a Raakshasa Vivah which is blamed by one and all; when a bride is forcibly married without her consent and money or other considerations are offered to the bride's parents, then it is known as Asura Vivah; and a bride disappears suddenly and her where abouts are not known, then the worst kind of wedding is termed as Paisaachika Vivah. Of all the types of weddings, the best ones are obviously the Braahma, Daiva and Paraajapatya vivahas and even the Arsha Vivaha there is an angle of 'Kanya Sulka' or the tax payment involved and that leads the groom and parents to Kumbha Naraka! The various other kinds of Vivahas are subjected to vagaries of happiness in the union in the long run, none-too-ideal progeny, discontented family life, poverty, diseases, premature deaths in the families, and so on. Keeping in view the violences committed by human beings in daily life, such as sweeping, cooking, watering, flour making etc. one must perform Pancha Yagnas; even otherwise Vedas and Shastras have prescribed Brahma Yagna by way of Veda-Shastra Swadhyayana; Pirtu Yagna by way of Tarpana, Homas by way of Deva Yagna, Bhuta Yagna by way of Bali or offering eats to insects etc; and Manushya Yagna by way of 'Atithi' Yagna. Do's and Dont's: As one could witness the rising and falling Surya Deva, never witness the midday Sun nor the Sun during eclipse time and not the egg shaped Sun soon after rise. Don't see the shadows in water, never run in mud; never enter water naked; never witness a nude woman. One should pass to the right a Temple, Cow, Brahmana, honey, heap of earth, elders and the learned, Asvattha Tree, Guru, Pots of Water, cooked rice, curd and Til. Never serve a woman in menses nor eat along with her, never eat with a single cloth on or a seat which is too comfortable. Never eat food without propitiating Devas and Pitras; never urinate while standing or in motion, nor in Goshalas, water bodies and traps where there would be insects. Never perform Mala-Mutras looking at Brahmanas, Surya, Agni, Moon, Stars or Gurus. Never extinguish fire by mouth or feet. Never eat food or sleep at 'Sandhya' times (dawn or dusk). Never show Rainbow to anybody. Never wake up a person fast asleep. Do not drink in 'Anjali' (palms together). Do not eat bellyful in the nights. Refrain from dance-music. Never use the clothes, footwear worn by others. Never sit on the back of cows.Don't bite nails with teeth. Clean hands, feet and mouth before eating. Never eat or drink in bed or while standing. Do not use both the hands on head and scratch. Do not give away Mantras to Shudras, lest the Brahmana loses his identity. Never beat any body including a child, woman, animal, bird etc with both hands. Observe celibacy /abstinence on Chaturdasi, Ashtami, Amavasya and Purnami. Never blame Vedas, Devas, Brahmanas, Gurus, Kings or persons in authority, Sadhus, Tapasvis, Elders and Pativratas. Those who perform Bhu Daan would surely become a Mandaleswar, Anna daata is always happy and contented, donor of water would have good features, donor of Lights would get beautiful eyes, Godaan would qualify access to Suryaloka, donor of gold deserves long life, Til daan gets high status in life, Vastra daan gives entry to Chandra loka, a 'Palki'or a cot gets a beautiful woman as wife. Speaking each lie or foul word in life reduces the stock of good tasks (Punya) earned already.

## Kamadhenu creates Vaishyas to safeguard and assist Brahmanas

Veda Vyas informed Yudhishtara that in Dharmaranya quite a few Sadachari Brahmanas practising Dharma came to reside. In fact, there were some illustrious Sages who begot sons and from them came a huge stock of progeny; for instance some twenty four prominent Sages added to the stock such as Bharadwaja, Vatsa (Pradhama), Kaushika, Kusha, Sandilya, Kashyapa, Gauthama, Chandana, Jatkaranya, Vatsa (Dwiteeya), Vasishtha, Dharana, Atreya, Bhandila, Laukika, Krishnayana, Upamanyu, Gargeya, Mridula, Maushaka, Punyasana, Parashara, Kaundinya and Gangasana. The progeny of these Gothras named after these and many other Sages expanded and there came up a problem of all the men engaged in various Dharmik tasks through out the day and even early nights, there emerged problems of their security and threats from Rakashasas, Yakshas and Pisachas. The concerned Kula Devis were created by Devas to protect the Sages and Brahmanas, like Srimata, Tharani Devi, Gotrapa, Ashapuri, Icchhartinashani, Pippali, Vikara vasha, Bhattarika, Suparna, Bhadri, Mahabala, Chamunda etc. But the progeny of Brahmanas increased manifold. Once the Trimurties visited Dharmaranya and found all the Brahmanas were extremely busy collecting Samidhas, flowers, Kusha grass, wood etc. and some of the Sages narrated their hardship in procuring the Puja material from the far off forests cutting into the Puja time and energy. Lord Vishnu appreciated the hardship of Brahmanas and remembered Kamadhenu to create thirty six thousand men, known as Vaishvas who were almost like Brahmanas at a few steps below their level, though not versatile in Scriptures, Rituals and practice of Dharma, but capable of assisting Brahmanas to fetch Puja material, safeguarding their interests and aware of the needs of Brahmanas in general.Bhagavan Shankar commanded the King of Gandharvas called Vishvavasu to supply sixty thousand virgins and facilitated weddings to the Viashyas thus created by Kamadhenu to assist the Sages, Brahmanas and all those who could spare far longer time each day to the Dharmic tasks thereafter.

# Chaturmasya Mahatmya and 'Shodasopacharas' (Sixteen Services)

Chaturmasa or Four Month period commencing from Ashadha Shukla Ekadasi known as Devashayani Ekadasi (when God sleeps) till Kartika Shukla Ekadasi called Deva Prabodhini Ekadasi(when God is awake) is observed by persons of all 'Varnas' with piety, Indriva Nigraha or Self control of Organs and Rituals. (Chaturmasa commences from Ashadha Purnima or Guru Purnima till Kartika Purnima for Sanyasins). Bhagavan Vishnu is stated to rest on 'Ksheera Sagar' (Ocean of Milk) during the Chaturmasya (Four Month) period and hence all Oceans, Rivers, Ponds and Water Bodies acquire divinity. Bathing in these Places is thus a significant exercise as Bhagavan Narayana spreads out Himself in water and destroys sins of those who bathe especially in the holy rivers like Pushkar, Prayag, Narmada, Bhaskara Kshetra, Prachi Saraswati, Samudra Sangam, Godavari, or Ganga. For example, bathing in Narmada even for three days with great piety and concentration results in demolition of sins; Godavari baths for a fortnight of early mornings secure devastation of old and current account failings in life and pave the way to Vishnudham. 'Snaans' with tila and Amla mix or Tulasi or Bilva leaves placed on head and reciting Vishnu namaas on the lips and in mind during as many days as possible during the Chaturmasya would yield instant results by providing physical fresshness, mental contentment and purity of thought and action. According to Scriptures, Snaan is the first step of physical clealiness and 'Anthassuddhi' (internal purity), before taking up any task to invoke the Almighty. During the fourmonth period of Sacrifice and Sanctity, 'Tarpanas' to Devas, Rishis and Pitras after the holy baths are natural duties, followed by 'Anushthaana', Agni havans, Veda Paatha, Satsang, Bhakti, and charities especially of Anna daanas. The Chaturmasya is the period for abstinence, 'Ishta Vasthu Parithyaga' or leaving out material dear to oneself and strict following up of daily 'niyamas' and continuous recital of Bhagavan's glories by way of hymns, Japas, Mantras and Bhakti Songs. Satkarmah Satkathachaiva Satseva Darshanam sathaam, Vishnu Pujarathidaaney Chaaturmasya sudurlabha (Superior Tasks, Ouality Stories in Praise of Vishnu, Pure hearted Service to Noble Persons, Darshanam or Viewing of Saints, Bhagavan Vishnu's devotion and sincere interest in charities are all stated to yield excellent results during the Chaaturmasya Period). Some of the items of daily utility are avoided during the Holy Period

such as eating/drinking in metal plates and vessels; eating in leaves of Vata tree; consumption of hot and sour food, Chillies, pulses like urad and Chana; wearing silks and dark clothes; avoid flowers, beds, and Kesar; shun indulgence of lying, carrying tales, rude conversation and 'Para ninda' or criticising others; observe silence or limited conversation, truthfulness, piety, mercifulness, nonviolence, patience and equanimity. It is said that there are eight ways of observing the Chaturmasa Vrath as follows: *Vishno Kathaya Shravanam Vachanam Guna Kirtanam/ Maha Puja Mantra Japah Stotra paatha Pradakshina/ Saashtaanga Pranatischeti niyama uttama mataah/Eteshvekatamo bhaktaaya dhaaraniiyo Viseshatah/* (To listen the Stories of Vishnu Bhagavan or recite them or sing hymns in His Praise, to perform Maha Puja to His Murthi, to chant His Mantras or 'Naamas'as in 'Vishnu Sahasranamaa' or Stotras, to do Pradakshina to His Murthi and bow to Him with veneration are the aptest duties to be executed with dedication).

Shodasopacharas: Bhagavan Narayana is in Yoga nidra during the Chaturmasa period

as He lies on water that is omnipresent; water is the root of 'Anna (food) and the entireUniverse is sustained by food which causes 'Tripti' (contentment). Thus 'Anna Brahma' is the origin of Paramatma or the Supreme Energy. When a devotee appeals to that Great Force, the invocation or <u>Avahana</u> instantly responds to a true and hearty dedication with the recital of the Sixteen Stanza 'Maha Purusha Suktam' of Yajurveda stating: *Om Sahasra Seersha Purushah Sahasraakshassahasra paath/ Sa Bhumim Viswato Vrutwa Athathishtha Dassangulam/* In response to the Avahana one visions the appearance of Vishnu as: Jyotissantham Sarva Lokantharastham, Omkaarakhyam Yogi Hriddhyana gamyam, Sangam Shaktim Sayudham Bhaktasevyam, Sarvakaaram Vishnumaavaahayami. With the Second 'Rucha' (Stanza) stating: *Purusha Evedagum Sarvam, Yadbhutam yaccha bhavyam/Utaamrutatva syeshanah, yadanney naa thirohati/* Asanam:Kalpadrumuley

Manivedimadhye,SimhaasanamSwarnamayamSuRatnam/VichitraVastraavrutham achyuta Prabha,GrihanaLakshmidharanisamanvita!NavarathnakhachitaheaSimhaasanamSamarpayami.Padyam:Et avanasyaMahimaAtojyayagumschaPuurushah,PaadosyaViswabhuutaatripaadasyaamrutamdivi/SriKrish naSarvaDevaanamadhikassarvaKaamadah,MayaniveditamthubhyamSamgraahanaSupaadyakamPaadyam Samarpayami;Arghyam:TripaadauurdhvaUdaPurushahaPaadosyaabhavathpunahTatoVishvajvyakraama t,saasanaanasaneAbhi/Gangajalam Samaaneetham Suvarna Kalase Sthitham, Arghyam Grihaana Bhagavan Kaala RupaNamostuthey; Arghyam Samarpayami. Achamaneeyam: Tasmadviraadajayatha Virajo Adhi Puurushah/Sajaatho Athyarichyatha Paschadbhumi matho purah/Namo Janaardanaaya Devaaya Samstha Jagadaatmaney, Nirmala Jnaana Rupaya dattamaachaneeyakam; Mukhe Achamaneeyam Samarpayami. Madhuparkam: Yatpurushena havisha Devaa Yagnamathanvatha, Vasantho Asya see dajyam Greeshma Idhma ssaradhhavihi/ Madhyajya Dadhi Samyuktam Swarna Patrey Prathishthitam,

MadhuparkamGrihaanathvamLakshmikanthaNamesthuthey;MadhuparkamSamarpayami.

SnaanamSaptasyasanparidhayaTrissapthaSamidhahkritah/Devaayadyagnam tanvaanaaAbhadhna
purusham Pasum. Panchamrita Snaanam Samarpayami [Cow milk, Curd, ghee, honey, coconut water]

Vastram: Tam Yagnam barhishi prokshan Purusham jaathamagrathaha, Thena Devaa Ajayantha
Saadhya Rishayascha ye/ Swarnaanchalam Swarnavichitra Sobhitham, Kauseya Yugmam Parikalpitham
maya, Daamodara Praavaranam grahana, Maayaabala pravritha Divya rupa; Vastra Yugmam
Samarpayami. Yagnovapeetham: Thasmadyajnath Sarvahuthah, Sambhrutam Prushadaajam, Pasuugum
stagumschakreyVayavyan, Aranyan Graamaashaye/ Suvarnathanthuudbhava Yagna Sutram,
Mukataphalasyutha manekaratnam, Grihaana tadvakritha mutthareeyam, Swakarma sutram dharathey
namosthu. Yagnopaveetham samarpayami Chandanam: Thasmat yajnath sarva huthah rucha ssaamaani
jajnirey, Chhandagumsi jajnirey thasmat dajaayatha/ Kasthurika kardama chandanaani, Kashmira
Samyojitha Gandha Saraih/ Vilepanam Sweekuru Deva Deva! Sri Devi Vakshoja
vilopanaamkam; GandhamSamarpayami; Pushpam: ThasmaadaswaAjaayantha, Ekechobhayadathah/
Gaavo ha jajnire tasmaatjaatha Ajaavah/ Chaamantika

vakula champaka Paatalaabja Punnaga Jaaji karaveera rasaala Pushpaih, Bilva Pravaala Tulasi dhala mallikaabhih twaam Pujayaami Jagadeeswara Vasu Deva! Pushpai Pujayami. <u>Dhupam: Brahmanosya mukhamaaseeth Baahuu Raajanyah Krithah, Vuuru thadasya Yadvasyaih Padbhaagum Suudro Ajaayatha/</u>Vanaspathudbhavair Divyair naanaa gandhaissu samyuthah, Aaghreyassrava Devaanaam Dhuupoyam Prathi gruhyataam.

Dhupamaaghraapayami.Deepam:ChandramamanasoJaataah,ChakshohSuryoAjaayatha,Mukhaadrindraa schagnischaPraanadwayurajayatha; SaajyamTrivartiSamyuktam Vahnina Yojitham Priyam, Grihaana Mangalam Deepam Thrailokya Thimiraapahaaram, Bhaktya Deepam Prayacchaami Devaaya Paramaatmaney, Thraahi maam Narakaadghorat Divya Jyothir namosthuthey; Deepam Darsayaami. Naivedyam / Anna daanam: Nabhyaa Aaseedantariksham, Seershno dyaouh Samavarthatha, Padbhyam Bhumirdisah Srotraat Tatha Lokaagum Akalpayan/ Naivedyam is performed by sprinkling water on the Anna Prasada and recites the Mantra: Om Bhurbhuvassuvah, Tat Savithur Varenyam, Bhargo Devasya Dheemahih, Dhiyo yonah Prachodayaat. Thereafter recite 'Satyamtharthena Parishinchaami' if the Naivedya is during the day; in the night, recite the Mantra: Ruthamthwa Sathyena Parishinchaami; then round up the Material for Naivedya with water and recite Amritamasthu and leave water in a Plate and again recite: 'Amritopastharamamasi' and show the Prasad to Deva reciting Om Praanaya Swaha, Om Apaanaaya Swaha, Om Udaanaaya Swaaha, Om Samaanaaya Swaha, and after Naivedya one must address Deva saying Madhyey Madhyey Paaneeyam Samarpayaami, Hasthou Prakshaalayami, Paadou Prakshaalayami, Suddhaachamaneeyam Samarpayami. After Naivedyam, the devotee performs the Thirteenth Service by way of Punarachamana; the corresponding Rucha states: Vedaahametham Purusham Mahaantham, Aadityavarnam thamasasthupaare, Sarvaani Ruupaani Vichitya Dheerah, Naamaani Krutwabhiyadan yadaasthey/ The fourteenth Service is executed by Sashtanga Namaskar and the Rucha of

PurushaSuktamstates: Dhatapurasthadyamudaajahaara, SakrahPravidvaanpradisaschathasrah Thamevam Vidvanamritha Iha Bhavati, Naanyah Pandhaa Ayanaaya Vidyathey. The fifteenth Service is by way of Parikrama (Circumambulation) as the corresponding Rucha is: Yagnena Yagna mayajamtha Devaah, Thani Dharmani Prathamaanyaasan, the ha naakam Mahimaanah Sachamthey yathra Puurvey Saadhyaah Santhi Devaah. Finally the Sixteenth Service is Self realisation that is to identify the self with Bhagavan Vishnu Himself! The relevant Stanza of Purusha Suktam states: Vedahametham Purusham Mahaantam Aditya Varnam Tamasah Parasthat, Thamevam Vidwanamritha Iha Bhavati, Naanyah Panthah Vidyatheyanaaya (I know Purusha or Bhagavan who is Mahantham or Supreme; who is resplendent like Sun and is very far off from darkness. Whoever could realise Him attains Salvation in this world itself; there is no other way indeed.)

#### Siva Mantra, Siva Ratri, Siva Puja, Siva Pradosha Vrata and Siva Kavacha

Jyotirmatra Swarupaya Nirmala Jnaana Chakshusey, Namah Sivaaya Shantaya Brahmaney Lingamurthaye/ (My humble Greetings to Siva whose Form is of splendour, Eyes are of sparkling wisdom, Linga Swarup is Brahma and Features are of Peace and Propitiousness!)

Sage Suta while addressing a Gathering of Rishis and narrating the 'Brahmottara Khanda' of Skanda Purana described the significance of devotion to Maha Deva by way of Siva Mantras, Siva Ratri and Siva Puja. The 'Adi Panchakshari Mantra' when complemented with Pranava Mantra 'Om' is known as the Shadakshari Siva Mantra *Om Namah Sivaaya*. This most Sacred Mantra is complete, composed and compact which is considered as the Soul of 'Upanishads' and is the most potent tool utilised by Sages down the ages for realising Bhagavan; it is stated that this simple device is the Key to multiple applications like Tirthas, Yagnas, Tapas, Japas, Yoga Practices, Vrathas, Sacrifices and Pujas. A person lost in the dark and frightful forests of 'Samsara', the Mantra is a beacon light; it is the 'Badabagni' or the engulfing fire that brings down huge trees of 'Maha Pathakas' or the Great Sins into ash; This Shadakshara is Ambrosia to those who have no awareness of Ritulas, Deekshas or Pujas with strict regulations and controls; methodology of Homas, Tarpans and 'Upadeshas' by Gurus, and extreme care for observing Physical and Mental directives and parameters. This Mantra is a God-sent facility especially

to woman folk, Shudras with no access of complicated Mantras much less to Vedas and Scriptures, those who are 'Varna Sankaras' or who jumped the Rules of Superior Varnas, outlaws of Society and confirmed Sinners, Criminals and fallen men and women. Sage Suta cited the example of a King Dashahi of Mathurapuri married to Kalavati the daughter the King of Kasipura. After the wedding, the bride requested her husband to observe celibacy as she was performing a Vrata for a few days, but the King attempted force despite protests; the bride's body became so hot that the groom had to refrain. The King realised his folly and asked his wife to teach the Panchakshari Mantra, but since she was a wife to the King advised him to approach Guru Gargacharya to be initiated with the Panchakshari Mantra. The King practised the Mantra and within hours experienced a feeling of freshness and freedom of sins. After the Vrata by the Queen, the King became completely changed and lived with happiness and good progeny, as they continued the practice of the Panchakshari Mantra always.

Siva Ratri in the months of Magha / Phalgun Krishna Paksha Chaturdasis are considered extremely crucial, especially the 'Upavasas' (day-night fasts) and Jaagarans (night-long awakenings). The 'Punya' of worshipping Siva Linga especially with Bilwa Tree Leaves along with 'Abhishekas 'is stated to be as good as ten thousand Ganga Snaanas. Siva Ratri 'Upavasas' are said to equate performing hundred Yagnas. These facts were illustrated by the experience of a noble King called Mitrasaha who visited forests for hunting. He killed a Rakshasa and the latter's younger brother desired to teach a lesson to the King, took the form of a human being and wangled a job in the Royal Kitchen as a cook. Sage Vasishtha visited the King who invited the Sage for a meal. The cunning Rakshasa brother who was a cook in the Royal Kitchen served 'Nara Maamsa' or human flesh to Vasishtha. The Sage who found human flesh in the food became extremely angry and cursed the King to become a Raakshasa. The King being innocent of the charge appealed to the Sage to withdraw the false charge but no avail. The King grew angry and was about to give a return Curse to the Sage but the Queen named Madayanthi begged of the King not to do so but since the Manrtik waters of the King were already drawn out; he had to sprinkle the waters on his own feet and hence was known as 'Kalmashapaad.' But in view of the curse of Vasishtha, the King had to roam in the forest as a Raakshasa for twelve years. As the curse-period was almost over, the Kingturned-Raakshasa found a young Brahmana couple roaming in the forest for fun and caught hold of the Brahmana boy; his wife who had the awareness of the Rakshasa's background made an appeal to him and conveyed that the Rakshasa was actually a King but was converted due to Vasishtha's curse. But the Rakshasa killed the boy and out of fury and sorrow the woman jumped into death pyre for Sati Sahagamana while cursing the Rakshasa that if even after his return as a King would ever meet his wife in union, he would die at once. Queen Madayanti was aware of the curse to the King by the Brahmana woman and conveyed the same to the King too. Thus the Royal Couple desisted themselves their desires and became ascetic-like. The King had the feeling that a Piscachi was always after him due to the 'Brahmahatya Pathaka' of the Brahmana Couple. That was the time when Sage Gautham called on the King and the Queen who conveyed their entire story of misfortune. The Sage suggested that King Mitrasaha and Queen Madayanti must visit a highly Sacred Kshetra called Gokarna where the utterance of Bhagavan Siva's name itself would instantly dissolve the worst possible Maha Patakas. This Kshetra was as potent and Sacred as Kailasa and Mandarachal on whose Sikharas (Peaks) stayed Maha Deva. Demon Ravanaasura did severe Tapasya and secured a Siva Linga, but on way when Raavana asked Ganesha disguised as a care-free lad tha latter tricked the Asura and established the Parama Linga at Gokarna instead of being taken to Lanka since Rayana would have become invincible otherwise. This most sanctified Kshetra is the residing Place of Vishnu, Brahma, Kartikeya and Ganesha and had no parallel in destroying even the toughest Sins. Situated on the west coast of Bharata Desha, this most sancrosanct Temple Complex is the most sought after Center known for disbanding Brahmaghaati, Bhuta drohi, Bhratrudrohi as also hardcore and toughest crimes. On certain specified days, Darshan and Puja yield double the benefit, such as Sunday, Monday and Wednesday coinciding preferably with 'Amavaasyas'. Sacred bathing in the Ocean, followed by Daan, Pitru Tarpan, Siva Puja, Japa, Homa, Vratacharya and Brahmana Satkaar (Gifts to Braahmanaas) as also Bilwa Puja and Abhisheka with milk, ash and Gandham (Sandal Paste) would keep a mortal on a high pedestal indeed. On the sacred Krishna

Chaturdasi of Maagha (Phalguna) month, Siva Puja with Bilwa leaves, followed by Upavaas, Jaagaran and stay in the Temple Premises would set up steps to Sivaloka. Thus Sage Gautama advised the Royal Couple, who had almost lost hope in their lives! He narrated a strange incident to reinforce faith in the Gokarna Kshetra; he saw a Sarovar in the consecrated surroundings where an old, diseased and tattered Chandali woman who was almost dying. He also saw an aeroplane in the shy carrying a handful of passengers dressed like Lord Siva Himself! As they got down from the skies, they approached the old woman whom none would not even like to touch. The Sage noted that they were Sivadutas and prevented them from going nearby as he could see from his 'Divya Drishti' (Celsetial Vision) that the wretched woman had a frightfully sinful background in her earlier life; she was an immoral, lusty and despicable prostitute who never even took the name of Bhagavan Siva and steeped in sins of all kinds. Yet, Sivadutas arrived by a special 'Vimana' (aeroplane) to fetch the woman to Sivaloka! The secret of the woman was that she used to take the name of Siva inadvertently, more as a byword; she had the fortune of residing in Gokarna Kshetra; she spent nights without food and was awake all through on Siva Ratri days; she had kept bilva leaves on a Siva Linga a few times again accidentally and not out of veneration. It was in this context that Sivadutas took her soul to Sivaloka having given to her a beautiful physical get-up, dressed in silks and ornaments, decorated with flowers, with fragrances spread out all around!

Siva Puja: Sivo Guruh Sivo Devah Sivo bandhuh Sharirinam, Siva Atma Sivo Jeevah Sivaadannayna kinchana/ Bhagavan Siva is Guru, Siva is Devata, Siva is the relative of Human Beings, Siva is Atma, and Siva is Life; without Siva none else exists. With Siva as the receiver, the returns are immense of whatever Daan, Japa and homa are performed. It is the tongue which praises Siva that is worth possessing; the mind which meditates Siva is worth having; the ears that listen to Siva's holy acts are worth keeping; the eyes which look down with veneration of Siva are worthy of acquiring; the feet which roam freely in Siva Kshetras are valuable; and the limbs of one's body are worth retaining if only they are utilised in the honour of Siva. Be it a human being as a chandala, man, woman or eunuch, a Siva Bhakta is always eligible for attaining Mukti. This was illustrated by Suta Muni to the congregation of Rishis at Naimisa Forest by the experience of Raja Chandrasena of Ujjain and a Cow-boy called Srikar. Chandrasena was an extraordinary Siva Bhakta and Manibhadra the Chief of Siva Parishad gifted a Chintamani to the King. The Kings of surrounding Kingdoms grew jealous of Chitrasena and attacked his Kingdom, but he was unnerved since he had immense faith in Bhagavan Siva and continued his prayers in the Mahakaal Temple. At the same time, a Cow-woman accompanied by her son too witnessed the King's Puja. On return to his home, the boy who fully understood the Puja procedure practised the Puja secretly without the knowledge of his mother; he improvised a stone as a Sivalinga and performed various imaginary services to Bhagavan like Snaana, Pushpa, Chandana, Akshata, Dhup, Deepa and Naivedya. As the boy was deeply immersed in the worship, his mother called him for food but as there was no response she searched for him and he was engrossed in the Puja. The mother chided him and even threw away the so-called Puja material that was improvised; in fact when the boy was in a trance of devotion and she dragged him away; he begged of the 'Siva Linga' or the Stone that was improvised not to punish his mother as she was an ignorant woman. Within minutes, the Place where the boy worshipped turned out to be a huge Sivalaya with golden domes and beautifully laid walls, doors and floors and an installed Linga on a platform made of blue sapphire and other precious stones. The appearance of Sivalaya surprised the boy, his mother, entire Ujjain, Chitrasena, his enemies who surrounded Ujjain and the whole Region. The enemy Kings sought the pardon of King Chitrasena; the King extolled the devotion of the Gopa boy; the mother of the boy was overwhelmed with repentance of her indiscretion on the one hand and of supreme iov and pride for her son on the other, and the unimaginable happening became a talk of the Region. At this very time, Lord Hanuman appeared and addressed the gathering of devotees and stated that the formation of the Linga happenned at the Pradosha Time on a Saturday just on the strength of the sincerity and unadulterated faith of the boy who would be known further as Srikar, that in the eighth generation after the boy there would be an Avatara of Vishnu popularly called Sri Krishna and meanwhile that He would teach the Rituals in the Temple to the Gopabala Srikar to carry on the daily tasks from then onward.

On every Trayodasi evening, Pradosha time is observed as Mahadeva performs 'Siva Thanadava' (dance) on the Silveren Mountain of Kailasha as all Devas would be present and euologise Nataraja and His Supremacy. The Bhaktas, desirous of attaining the 'Four Purusharthas' viz. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, observe the Pradosha Time with Siva Puja, Homams, Stutis (Praises) and charities. Those devotees who are involved in such activities secure immediate relief from poverty, disease, indebtedness and discontentment. Pradosha Vrata is observed by fasting, 'Snaan'at three 'ghadis' before evening, 'Sandhyavandana' and Siva Puja. The Puja is initiated by way of Atma Suddhi, Bhuta Suddhi, three Pranaayamas, Matrukaa Nyasa, Devata Dhyana, Parama Siva's Dhyana, greeting to Guru on the left side of one's back, bowing of head on the right side, touching both the shoulders and thighs by way of Nyasa of Dharma, Jnaana, Vairagya and Iswarya; Nyasa of Naabhi and both the sides of the body to avoid Adharma, Agyaan, Avairagya and Anaiswarya; Nyasa on Hridaya (heart) with Ananta, Achyuta etc.; perform Nyasa from Adhaara Shaki to Jnaanatmaka Shakti imagining heart as a lotus of various petals; Bhagavan with Three Eyes, Chandra on His Head, 'Jatajut' (Twisted Hairs on the Head); 'Neela kantha' indicating enormous mercy; Sarpa Haara or a Chain of Snakes; Tiger Skin and so on. Thereafter the Puja is performed by way of Avahana (Welcome), Rudra Sukta Recital, 'Panchamrita Abhishek', Vastra, Arghya, Paadya, Achamana, Yagnopaveeta (Sacred Thread), Aabhuushana (Ornaments), Chandana, and worship with Bilva, Mandara, Red Lotus, Dhatura, Kanera, Chameli, Kusha, Tulasi, Apamarga, Champa, Karayeera and other flowers and 'Dalaas' (leaves); Dhupa, Deepa, 'Naivedya', Neerajana; Mantra Pushpa viz. Yopaam Pushpam Veda to Chandra, Agni, Vayu, Nakshatra, Parjanya, etc; followed by 'Atma Pradakshina', Chhatram, Chaamaram, Nrityam, Geetam, Aaandolika, and various other Services. The Grand Finale of the Pradosha Vrata ought to be 'Siva Stuti' as follows: Jaya Deva Jagannadha Jaya Shankara Shaswata, Jaya Sarva Suraadhyaksha Jaya Sarva Suraarchita, Jaya Sarva Gunaathita Jaya Srava Varaprada, Jaya Nitya Niraadhhara Jaya Vishvambharaavyaya, Jaya Vishvaikavedyesha Jaya Naagendra Bhushana, Jaya Gauripathey Shambho Jaya Chandra Sekhara, Jaya Kotyarka samkaasha Jayaanantha Gunaashraya, Jaya Rudra Viruupaksha Jayaachinthya Niranjana, Jaya Naatha Kripaasindho Jaya Bhaktartibhanjana, Jaya DustaraSamsaara Saagarottharana Prabho,Praseeda me Mahadeva Samsaarartasya Khidyatah, Sarva Paapabhayam hrutva Rakshamaam Parameswara, Mahadaaridya –magnascha Mahapaap hatasyacha, Mahashoka Vinishtascha Mahaarogaathurasya cha, Runabhaara pareethyasya Dahyamaanasya Karmabhih, Graheh Prapeedyamaanasya Praseeda mama Shankara.

Siva Kavacha: Realising that Bhagavan Siva was the Origin of 'Srishti' (Creation) which was far beyond human comprehension; Sage Sharabha scripted the famed Siva Kavacha or the Body Safeguard to humanity: 'May Sarvadevamaya Mahadeva save me from this deep Samsaara Kupa; may His Sacred name relieve me from the totality of sins from my heart. May Bhagavan Siva save me whose Body Form is His Universe and whose resplendent and happy embodiment of 'Chidaatma' or Ever Happy Soul is Eternal. May Eswara, whose presence is all pervading from even the small to the smallest existence is replete in the Universe, save me from the massive stock of sins from my life! May 'Ashtamurthi' Girisha who had taken the Form of Earth save me from my daily tribulations. May Parama Siva who assumed the appearance of Water which is life-giving provide me security of life. May Maha Siva who ends up the Universe with fearful flames and performs Rudra Tandava (dance) while enjoying the destruction of Life bestow relief to me from heat and fury. May the Three Eyed and Five Faced Siva, the 'Satpurusha' grant me Vidya (Knowledge), Abhay (shelter) and 'Vara' (boon) at all times out of His endless mercy fron the Eastern side. May Siva, who wears Kuthara, Ankusha Pasha, Shula Nagaada and Rudrakshamaala and is also known as Neelaruchi, Trinetra, and 'Aghora', keep me safe in the Dakshina (Southern) side. May Omni Potent 'Sadvojata' who sports Chandama, Shankha and Sphatikamala on His Body look after me on the Western front. May 'Vamadeva' Bhagavan save me from the Northern Front. May 'Ishana' save me from the above or the sky! May Bhagavan Chandramouli save my head, Phaalanetra my forehead, Bhaganetrahaari my eyes, Viswanaatha my nose, Shrutageetakirti my ears, Panchamukha my face, Vedajihva my tongue, Girisha my neck, Neelaantha my two hands, Dharmabaahu my shoulders, Daksha Yagna Vidhvmavsi my Vakshasthal Girindradhanva my stomach, Kamadevanaashak my

Mahyadesh, Ganesha Pita my navel, Dhurjati my 'Kati', Kubera Mitra my Pindaliyas, Jagadeeswar my Ghutnas, Pungavakethu (two janghas or thighs), and Suravandyacharan (both the feet worshipped by Devas). May Maheswara save me during the first Prahara Time; Vaamadeva the second Prahara, Triayambak the third Prahara and Vrishabhadwaja the final Prahara; Sisireswar at the begnning of the night; Gangadhar save me midnight; Gauripati at the end of night; and may Mrityunjaya save me always. Shankar should protect me from the Internal Physique; Sthhaanu from the Bahya Stithi or Extrenal Being, Pashupati saves me from the intermediate Stage of consciousness and Sadasiva may protect everybody always. Let Bhuvanaikanath save me while standing, Prananath in motion; Vedantavedya while my standing, Avinaashi Siva during my sleep; Neelakantha during our tavel; Tripuraari while passing rocky places; Mrigavyaaghra passing through forests; and Mrigavyaghya in Maha Pravaasa or deep and dense jungles. I seek the refuge of Veerabhadra whose high blast and frightening presence shakes up the whole Universe. May Bhagavan Mrida who could devastate crore-strong of armies in split seconds and has the unimaginable might and speed to do so, and Tripurantaka whose 'Pralayakaal' Trisula could submerge the entire Creation into an endless sheet of water, save me from my bad dreams, awful omens, dreadful feelings of mind, durbhiksha (extreme poverty), Durvyasanas (terrible habits), diseases, fear of poisonous species, and victimisation of evil 'grahas', natural mishaps like cylones, earthquakes and floods and all such unfortunate experiences. I greet Sadasiva who is the embodiment of all Tatvas and their interpretation, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of all the Worlds, the unique witness of existence, the Donor, Sin Remover, the epitome of Propitiousness, the Nirguna, the Unparalelled, Nirakar, Niraabhas, Niramaya, Nishprapancha, Nishkalanka, Nidvandhya, Nissanga, Nirmala, Gati Sunya, Nithya Rupa, Nithya Vaibhava Sampanna, Anupama Iswarya, Adhara Sunya, Nithya, Shuddha Buddha, Paripurna, Sachhidanandaghana, Adviteeya, Parama Shanta, Prakashamaya, and Teja Swarupa. Hey! Rudra, Maha Roudra, Bhadraavataar, Duhkhadavagni vidarana, Maha Bharava, Kaala Bharava, Kalpanta Bhairava, and Kapaala Maalaadhari. Hey, Wearer of Khatvanga, Khatga, Dhala, Paasha, Ankusha, Damaru, Shula, Dhanush, Baana, Gada, Shakti, Bhidipaala, Thomar, Mushal, Mudgar, Pattisha, Parashu, Parigha, Bhushundi, Shataghni, Chakra such other frightful weapons! Hey, Mukhadamshtra karaala, Vikata Attahaasya visphaarita Brahmaandala mandala, Nagendra kundala, Nagendravalaya, Nagendracharmadhara, Mritunjaya, Triambaka, Tripurantaka, Viruupaksha, Visweswara, Viswesw Vrishavaahana, Vidyubhushana and Vishvatomukha. You guard me, burn off fear of my death, demolish my Apamrityu and my fear of external and internal diseases, shield me from 'Arishatvargas' or the Six Enemies of Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsara; tear down my terror of Raakshasas, Bhutaas, Kushmandas, Betalas, Brahma Raakshasas and such other Kshudra Shaktis. Oh Lord, equip me against Naraka Bhaya (Terror of Hell), Kshudha Trishna (hunger and thirst), and apprehensions. Victory to You Bhagavan! Do strengthen my physique, mind and Soul and insulate me from all possible risks of life with this Parama Shakti Maha Siya Kayacha.

# Kashi Mahatmya- Pride of Vindhyachal suppressed by Sage Agastya

'Bhoomishthapi na yatra Bhoomnidivatopuschairathah sthaapiya, ya badhhava Bhuvi Muktida syuramrutam Yasyam mrita Jantavah/ Ya nityam trijagat pavitra thatini Theero Suraih Sevyathe, Saa Kashi Tripurari raja nagari Paayadpaayaajjagat' (Even situated on Earth it is disconnected with it and even connected with the Upper Lokas it is situated in the lower Lokas, the City of Kasi provides salvation to all the Lokas even while it is set up in the 'Panchabhoutika'Bhu Loka, whose dead persons attain divinity since Kasi Nagar is Maha Deva's Capital, where Sacred Ganga flows always).

Sage Narada incited 'Vindhyachala' comparing it with Maha Meru and the latter grew his size to surpass the height of Meru Parvata. As a result, the course of Surya Deva was obstructed and one half of the Universe became dark and the other half became too hot to live in. All the Deities made an appeal to Lord Brahma who suggested that they should all approach Sage Agastya who could only control the situation. When the Devas approached the Sage, he was upset and sad but had no recourse to defy Lord Brahma's command; along with his wife Lopamudra, an illustrious 'Pativrata' dedicated fully to her husband, the Sage had to leave Kashi which was very dear to both of them and knew fully well they would not return

in their life time. The Sage took leave of Parama Siva Visweswara, Devi Annapurna, Devi Visalakshi and Kaalabhairava and also of Devi Ganga for his last dip at Kasi. The Couple experienced such grief of parting Kasi as a child would cry parting with the parents. As soon as Sage Agastya arrived, Vindhyachal was frightened that the Sage could as well obliterate his very existence as he was aware of his unpardonable mistake having upset the whole Universe. As such, Vidhyachal had taken the first command of the Sage and became diminutive in size and the course of Surya Deva got restored at once. Agastya asked Vindhyachal to be in that form till he returned back to the same Place. Subsequently, the Couple travelled Southwards of Vindhya on the banks of River Godavari and reached Kolhapuri and secured the 'Darshan' of Maha Lakshmi. The Sage extolled Devi Lakshmi as follows: Matarnamaami Kamale Kamalayathakshi, Shri Vishnu hritkamala vaasini Viswa maathah/ Ksheerodaje Kamalakomala garbha Gauri, Lakshmi Praseeda satatam namathaam Sharanye/ Twam Sri Rupendra sadaney Madanaika maatha-Jyothistraasi Chandramasi Chandramanoharaasye/ Surye Prabhasi cha Jagathrithaye Prabhaasi Lakshmi Praseeda Satatham Namathaam Sharanye/ Twam Jaathavedasi Sadaa Dahanaatma Shakti-Vedhastvayaa Jagadinda Vividham Vidhatyat/ Vishambharopi Bibhrudaakhilam Bhayatya, Lakshmi Praseeda Satatam Namathaam Sharanye/Twaktyakthamyetadamaley Harathey Haropi, Twam Paasi Hamsi Vidadhasi Paravaraasi/ Eedhyo babhuva harirapamaley Twadaaptya Lakshmi Praseeda Satataam Namataam Sharanye/Surah sa eva sa Gunii sa Dhanyo, Maanyah sa eva Kula sheela kalaakalaapih/ Ekam Shuchih sa hi pumaan Sakalopi Loke, Yatrapoktava Shubhey Karunaa kataakshah/ Yasmivaseh Khanamaho Purushey Gajesvey, Strainey Thruney Sarasi Devakuley Gruhenney/ Ratney Patatrini Pashaou Dharaayaam/ Susreekameya Sakaley Thadihasthinanyat/ Twaktspushtameva Sakalam Shuchitaam lameta, Twaktameva Sakalam Twashuchih Lakshmi/ Twannama Yatra cha Sumangaleva tatra, Sri Vishnu Patni Kamaley Kamalalayopi/Lakshmi Shriyam cha Kalaam Kamalaalayam cha, Padma Ramaam Nalina Yugma karaam cha Maam cha/ Ksheerodaja amamrita kumbhakarimiraam cha, Vishnupriyamiti Sadaa Japataam kka duhkkam/ (My greetings to You Mother! You have the broad Eyes of a Lotus; the Resider of Lord Vishnu's own Heart and the Supreme Mother of the entire Universe with a delicate belly like the softness of a Lotus leaf; I seek protection from You for Your Kindness always. You are the Mother of Madana and are memorable with the name of Sri in Vaikuntha. You possess the coolness of Chandra, the spendour of Surya and the blistering heat of Agni; You share the reponsibility of Brahma for Creation, Vishnu for Preservation and Rudra for destruction of the Universe or in short the Karya-Karana Swarupa of the Whole World; You are the Unique Shuura Veera, Gunavaan, Vidwaan, Dhanya, Maanya, Kuleen, Sheelavaan, and the epitome of all 'Kalaas' or features of the World and of Piety and Purity. Even a split second gaze of Yours would bless the Beings, be it a human being, elephant, horse, Eunuch, Water body, Deva Mandir, Home, Anna (Food), Jewellery, Animals and Birds, Earth and any thing in short. When a light touch of Yours is blessed to a being, it becomes Live and Pure and the converse too is true. You are the Emblem of Propitiousness, Prosperity and Success. Every one is ready and too happy when Your any name is pronounced as Lakshmi, Shri, Kamala, Kamalaalaya, Padma, Ramaa, Nalinayugmakara, Maa, Kseerodaja, Amritakumbhikara, Era or Vishnu Priya). Sri Laksmi was pleased with Sage Agastya at his sincere and heartfelt eulogy and blessed the couple with Her appearance; She stated that since She knew as to what was tormenting the Sage, he would certainly return to Kashi during the next twenty ninth Dwapara Yuga as Veda Vyasa and take up the Sacred Task of annotating Vedas and scripting 'Ashtaadasa Puranaas' and gain immorality through his glorious Works!

#### **Manasa Tirtha**

After leaving Kolhapuri, Sage Agastya and his wife Lopamudra visited Srishaila; it is stated that a glimpse of the Temple 'Shikhara' (Minaret) where Bhagavan Mallikarjuna and Devi Bhramaraamba reside is enough guarantee against Punarjanma (rebirth). The Sage described that after Kasi, there were several important Tirthas like Prayaga, Naimisharanya, Kurukshetra, Gangadwar (Haridwar), Avanthi, Ayodhya, Mathura, Dwaraka, Amaravati, Ganda sagar Sangam, Kancheepura, Triambaka, Prabasa Tirtha, Badarikaashrama, Omkara Kshetra, Purushottama Kshetra (Jagannatha puri), Gokarna, Pushkara, and Gaya which is well known for indebtedness to Pitras. But the most significant one is the Manasa Tirtha,

which stands for Kshama (Tolerance), Satya (Truth), Indriya Nigraha (Control of Body Parts), Daya (Mercy), Dana (Charity), Dama (Mind Control), Santosha (Happiness or Contentment), 'Brahmacharya Paalana' or Celibacy, Jnaana Tirtha, Dhairya Tirtha and Anthakarana Shuddhi Tirtha. Such Manasa Tirthas represent the essential virtues of humanity and are the bye- products of Mind and Heart. Just as bathing in a Holy River is not mere task of body cleanlinesss devoid of mental purity, visits to Tirthas also are not necessarily as simple as diving and dunking. Indeed the physical hygiene might be the first step to Internal Transparency, but visits to Tirthas by person of cruelty, crookedness, avarice, and such other negative tendencies are of little consequence. At the same time, frequent visits to Tirthas and Snaans in Holy Rivers do pave the ways to the right paths and hence the prescription by the Scriptures till a stage arrives for Manasa Tirtha visits!

#### **Description of Celestial Worlds**

A Bramhana by name Siva Sarma lived in Mathura who was no doubt well versed in Scriptures but gradually became worldly wise and gave more and more of priority to earning property, Bhumi, jewellery and the like. He had suddenly realised his folly and cursed himself that none of the precepts that he exhorted to others for making money was practised by him. He then commenced Tirtha Yatras and executed Snaans, Worships, charities, daily 'Agni Karyas' or homams, Tarpanas, Shraddhas and such other noble tasks at various Tirthas like Ayodhya, Prayaga, Kashi, and Mayapuri. In the course of the Tirtha Yatras, Siva Sharma experienced death and felt that an aeroplane arrived from Vishnuloka with two passengers named Vishnu prashads to take him away. Along with Siva Sharma, the Ganas travelled various Lokas on way to Vishnu Loka. They first flew over *Piscacha Loka* where they saw the miserable creatures that gave away charities reluctantly, performed Siva Pujas for showing off to others and discouraged others to give charity, Pujas, Snaans, homas, Tarpanas and prayers. They then witnessed Guhya Loka where the inhabitants amassed money but had hidden gold, properties and jewelery that could not be traced. Then came Gandharva Loka which was full of singers who made several good turns in their mortal lives such as charities, Pujas, Tirtha Yatras, Agni Homas, recitals of Bhakti Geetas, Veda Parayanas and so on; illustrious singers like Tumbura and Narada who had ready access to Devas, Planets, Trimurtis and even lower worlds belonged to this Loka, Siva Sharma and the Vishnu Ganas witnessed Vidyadhara Loka where Gurus treated their disciples as their own sons, the well-to-do persons performed charities like Kanya Daans, Bhu Daans, Go Daans, Suvrna Daans and led virtuous lives on Earth engaged in Veda Pathana, Vratas, Worships, and so on. The Vishnugana duo had then shown Siva Sharma a few glimpses of Naraka Loka, the scenes of retribution to sins perpetrated by human beings and the treatment given by the Yama dutas as per the Manuals of the various Hells; however the Vishnuganas portrayed Dharma Raja as a benevolent King much unlike what was normally imagined. No doubt Yama Dharma Raja was a strict disciplinarian and stickler of Rules. The Vision of Dharma Raja is as per the eyes of the Viewer who could be guilty, less guilty or non-guilty! However, Dharma Raja instructed his Yamadutas that they should not approach persons who take the names of Govinda, Madhava, Mukunda, Hari, Murari, Shambhu, Siva, Esha, Chandrasekhara, Damodara, Achyuta, Hara, Neelakantha, Vishnu, Nrisimha, Shankara, Narayana and so on. Sivasharma and Vishnuprashads then travelled to Surya Loka and found Surya Deva who was Sarvatma Veda Purusha. Those who were taught Gayatri Mantra ought to perform Gayatri Japa thrice a day at the Three Sandhyas and if they did not do so were considered as the fallen human beings attracting retribution of justice. Those who observed the 'Sandhya Vandana' in favour of Surya Deva and Gayatri Mata as prescribed would be blessed with long life, health, affluence, Wealth, Cattle, Friends, Progeny, Good Life Partner, viz. the 'Ashta Ishwaryas' or the Eight folded Prosperity. One should realise that Gayatri and Surya Deva has the 'Vachya-Vaachaka' relationship or of the Speech and the Target of the Speech (Gayatri Mantra and Sun God). Also, Gayatri is Brahma, Vishnu and Parama Siva and is the Quintessence of Vedas and Scriptures, defining what Supreme Energy or Paramatma is all about! Durlabha Sarva Mantreshu Gayatri Pranayaanvita, Na Gayatryadhikam Kinchitrayopu Parigayathey/ Na Gayatri samo mantro na Kasisaddashi Puri, Na Viswesha samam LingamSatya satyam Punah Punah/ Gayatri Veda Jananii, Gayatri Brahmanaprasuh, Gaataaram Shrayatey Yasmaadyatri thena gaayathey/ At the time of Solar Eclipse, what ever virtuous tasks like

Snaan, Daan, Japa, Homa etc. are performed would help 'Surva Saameepva Praapti' or steps to attaining Surya Loka after one's mortal life. Recital of the following Surya 'naamaas' (names) by prefixing 'Om' and suffixing 'Namah' during the Eclipse Time would assure removal of poverty, disease, difficulties and discontentment: Hamsa, Bhanu, Sahasranshu, Tapana, Taapana, Ravi, Vikartan, Vivaswaan, Viswakarma, Vibhaayasu, Viswarupa, Vishwakarta, Maarthanda, Mihira, Anshumaan, Aditya, Ushnagu, Surya, Arthama, Bradhna Diwakara, Dwaadashaatma, Saptahaya, Bhaskara, Ahaskara, Khaga, Sura, Prabhakara, Srimaan, Lokachakshu, Graheswara, Trilokesha, Loka saakshi, Thamaari, Shaswatha, Shuchi, Gabhastihasta, Teevramshu, Tharani, Sumahorani, Dyumani, Haridaswa, Arka, Bhaanumaan, Bhayanaashana, Chhandoshva, Veda Vedya, Bhaswan, Pusha, Vrishaakapi, Ekachakraratha, Mitra, Mandehaari, Tamishraha, Daityaha, Paapa harta, Dharma, Dharmaprakashaka, Helika, Chitrabhaanu, Kalighna, Thakshyavahana, Dikpati, Padmininatha, Kusheshayakar, Hari, Dharmarashmi, Durnireeksha, Chandamsu and Kashyapaatmaja. The two-some Vishnu Ganas and Siva Sharma approached the glittering *Indra Loka* which was built by Viswakarma by the power of his Tapasya. In Amaravati, the Capital of Indra Loka, nobody produces Clothes or Jewellery, as KalpaVriksha does the tasks exceedingly well. Similarly, Kamadhenu fulfils all desires of food. Indra who had performed hundred Aswamedha Yagnas is known therefore as Shataamanu and has thousand eyes. His deputies are Seven Lokapals like Agni, Vayu, Varuna etc.Siva Sharma and Vishnu Prashad then witnessed Agni Puri where besides Agni Deva, there are Agnideva's 'Upasakas' or top devotees of Agni viz. Agnihotraparaayana Brahmana, Agnisevi Brahmachari, and Panchagni Vrata's Administrator, who are all as powerful as Agni Deva himself. Also, there are Agni Experts who could treat Mandanaagni with Jatharagni and so on. Agni is the most propitious Deity who is known as 'Paavak' or the Purifier and is also the Third Eye of Parameswara. After visiting Agni Loka, Siva Sharma sought the details of *Nirruti Loka* resided by Rakshasas, but they were of different type as they seldom cheated; in fact they were only Rakshasas by birth but were Virtuous persons by habits as they visited Tirthas, performed worship to Devas and had all the laudable qualities of resorting to Snaan, Daya (Mercy), 'Kshama' (Patience), 'Shoucha' (Physical Cleanliness), 'Astheya' (Non stealing), and 'Paropakaris' (Helpful to others). North to Nirruti Loka is situated Varuna Loka where its residents dig up a number if Wells, Sarovars and Water Bodies with their rightly earned money and along with highly tasteful water offer to travellers food, shelter and rest houses. They also nurture water-oriented marine life including fishes, crocodiles and a large variety of aquatic animals. They live fearlessly under the protection of Varuna Deva and enjoy long and contented life where there is no disease, want and difficulty of any kind. They are all highly virtuous, engrossed in devotion to Paramatma and unnerved by 'Arishadvargas'. Vayu Loka is known as Gandhavati Loka ruled by 'Praana Prabhanjana' Vayudeva always immersed in the worship of Maha deva; a well-known devotee of Siva at Kasi called Pavaneswar did Tapasya for ten lakh long years and had darshan of Maha Deva who appointed him as one of the Dikpalas, blessed him with the knowledge of all Tatvas and made him the Chief of 'Praana'/ 'Aayu' or Life Span as also of air or the essence of Life and very existence. Siva also made Vayu the Head of 'Gandhas' or the Ruler of Smells. Next to Gandhapuri is Alkapuri of Kubera who was too an intense devotee turned friend of Parama Siva who was pleased to bless. Kubera as the In charge of 'Nava Ratnas' or Nine Gems as an Administrator, Provider and Promoter. Adjacent to Kubera Loka where the residents are eternally rich with breath-taking designs of Nava Ratnas is the *Ishanapuri* with high concentration of 'Tapasvis', always deeply engaged with the thoughts and actions of Siva; in the performance of Siva Vratas, Siva 'Abhishekas', Siva Archanas, and Homams oriented to Siva; and totally dedicated to Siva. This Place is also the residence of Eleven Rudras viz. Aja, Ekpada, Abhirbudhna, Pinaki, Aparajita, Triambak, Nisha, Shambhu, Haran, Ishwara and Kapi. The next is of Chandra Loka which is the epitome of coolness, happiness, health and mental peace. Chandra was the son of Sage Atri who performed Tapasya for three thousand Divya Years to Brahma who not only blessed the Sage to beget Chandra but even brought up the child. Having come of age, Chandra too did Tapasya to Bhagavan Siva at the Avimukta Kshetra Kasi and set up a Siva Linga called Chandrasekhara. Siva was pleased with Chandra's worship and adorned the best 'Kala' (feature) of Chandra on His head; later on Daksha Prajapati cursed Chandra to disappear but the best Kala of Chandra retained on Maha Deva's 'mastak' (head) is revived every Purnima night but gradually wanes day by day till Amavasya and grows

gradually again grows there after in the ensuing fortnight. With the blessing of Mahadeva, Lord Vighneswara gave Chandra the responsibility of 'Beejas' (seeds), 'Aushadhis' (Medicines), Water and of Brahmanas. Mondays are the days dear to Chandra and worship to him, especially if coinciding with Amavasya, has far reaching benefits of good health, mental peace, 'Dhanya Vriddhi' or plentiful foodgrains and stay at Chandra Loka after life. Budha Loka is near Chandra Loka and Budha (Mercury) is Chandra's son. After securing his father's permission, Budha set up a Budheswara Linga at Kasi and did Tapasya for ten thousand years. Maha Deva gave His darshan to Budha and gave the boon that his Loka would be situated above the residences of Stars and that the Budha Graha would be considered as the most auspicious and the least trouble-making planet to humanity. Siva also gave the boon that whosoever worshipped Budheswar would retain the 'Buddhi' or memory and full consciousness till the last breath. Shukra Loka (Venus) is the residing Place of Danava Guru Shukracharya who secured 'Mrita Sanjeevani Maha Vidya' (The Unique Discipline to revive the dead) from Shankara Deva after pleasing Him with rigorous Tapasya for five thousand years. This Vidya was not obtained by Deva Guru Brihaspati but Shukra the son of Sage Bhrigu was able to achieve. Also, Siva was pleased to bestow additional boons such as designating Shukrawar (Friday) in a week in favour of Shukra and whosoever observed fast on that day and worshipped Shukreshwara Linga at Kashi would be blessed to secure courage, comfort and contentment besides good progeny. The next Planet is of Mangala Deva (Mars) born to Bhu Devi having stayed in Kashi meditated to Visweswara in the form of a Linga named Angarakeswara and decided that he would not cease his Tapasya till such time that from his body there must be emerging fires or Angarakas. Maha Deva was happy with the Tapasya and granted the Status of a fulfedged Planet to him. Persons worshipping at the 'Angarakeswara' Linga on Mangalawar or Tuesdays would be rid of 'Graha Peeda' and provide relief from the difficulties experienced by human beings. Belief among human beings is rampant till date that especially unmarried girls if born with Mangala Dosha are not preferred for weddings and are better wedded to unmarried boys with similar Dosha! Devapujya Brihaspati's Loka is next to that of Mangala Deva. The son of Sage Angira, Brihaspati happened to be the most Learned Vidwan, who was 'Jitendriya' or the Conquerer of Physical Limbs and Internal 'Gunas'; he was steeped in the comprehension of Vedas, Shastras and all other Scriptures, had the capacity to apply the knowledge to practical situations and was ideally suited to be the Guru of Devatas. Immensely delighted by his 'Tapasya', Bhagavan Siva granted the most important boon of appointing him as Deva Guru; Siva stated that 'Brihat'or Great Devas needed a 'Pati' or a Teacher and as such he would be known as Brihaspati to one and all. Siva also told that on Brihaspativars (Thursdays) any new task commenced after worshipping the Linga set up in the name of 'Brihaspatiswara' or to Brihaspati himself would be very successful. Sage Agastya told Devi Lopamudra that the Vishnu Bhaktas Siva Sharma and Vishnupradas were gratified to vision Shani Loka soon after passing the Brihaspati Loka. Shani (Saturn) was the Son of Surva and the brother of Yama Dharma Raja and he too executed persistent Meditation and Sacrifices to Shaniswara Linga. Maha Deva was particularly satisfied with Shani's penance and granted him the Status of a very powerful role as one of the 'Nava Grahas' since human beings were punished to experience the 'Karma phala' during the Shani phase of one's life or at times let them experience helpful kick-starts of benevolent tasks performed in their 'Prarabdha' or earlier life. Saptarshi Loka is the most hallowed Land where Seven Most Illustrious Rishis appointed by Lord Brahma reside; these Sapta Rishis are Marichi, Atri, Pulaha, Pulastya, Kratu, Angira and Vasishtha, the 'Manasa Putras' the Mind Borne Sons of Lord Brahma. Their Wives respectively are Sambhuti, Anasuya, Kshama, Preeti, Sannati, Smriti and Arundhati, all of them being esteemed as 'Lokamathas' or the Mothers of the Universe. Each of the Sapta Rishis executed extraordinary Tapasya and a happy Sada Siva bestowed the Title of Prajapatis to them. As the *Dhruva Loka* came nearby, Vishnuprasadas narrated the Story to Siva Sharma as to how Dhruva, the grand son of Swayambhu Manu, made the most difficult resolve to seek the 'Darshan' (Vision) of Vishnu as he was hurt since his step mother (Suruchi) prevented him-a mere boy- to sit on his father's (King Uttanapad) lap, while his cousin brother(Uttam) sat; the King did nothing even while the step mother said that Dhruva would have to do Tapasya to Narayana to reach the father's lap. Dhruva's own mother (Suniti) was not favoured although she was the elder Queen and the King had supported the younger wife. Dhruva took his mother's permission, was fired by the ambition to vision Narayana and

met the Sapta Rishis who taught the Mantra: Om Bhagavathey Vasudevaya. He recited the Mantra while standing, moving, sleeping, sitting, or being awake and as there was nothing else that interested him in life even at that tender age and after innumerable years of unending perseverance Vishnu made His appearance and said: 'I am fully aware of your ambition which far surpassed the mere lap of your father; you conquered me with your steadfast and unprecedented devotion to me; I am pleased to make you the center of gravity of all celestial bodies including Surya Deva, Planets, Stars and the rest as also as the Chief of Dhruva Mandala till the end of the Kalpa'. After crossing Dhruvaloka, the Vishnu Bhaktas passed Maha Loka where Maha Tapasvis reside till the end of the Kalpa targetting Vishnu alone in their minds; Jana Loka where Brahma Manasa Putras viz. Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanaatana and Sanat Kumaras stay practising 'Akhanda Brahmaharya' or Endless Celibacy; and *Tapo Loka* where Mahatmas like Brahma Himself and of Brahma's life span concentrate on the ways and means of promoting and innovating Virtues and Spiritual Values of the entire Universe. Even while the thoughts of Tapo Loka were in the minds of Vishnu Bhaktas, Satya Loka arrived and the three of them fell on the feet of Lord Brahma who complemented Siva Sharma for his knowledge of Vedas and Scriptures; He said that at the end of each day (to Brahma) witnessed a Pralaya and fresh Srishti was taken up and that the various Lokas witnessed by Siva Sharma would soon be forgotten. Brahma also stated that among the four kinds of Creation viz. Swedaja(born of sweat like Lice), Udbhija (created by Earth like trees), Pindaja (born of womb like human beings and animals) and Andaja (born of Egg like birds), only human beings had the unique prospect to control Indrivas, Gunas, Shatvargas provided they availed the opportunity; there was no Place like Bharat which happened to be the 'Karmabhumi' or the Place where Noble Deeds were rewarded and there was no Tirtha like Kasi and no Bhagavan like Viswanath Linga in the Universe.' Having visited Satya Loka, Siva Sharma asked the Vishnu Prashads as to how far he would have to travel farther and the latter replied that from Prithvi to Surya Loka the distance was away by a lakh Yojanas (one Yojana is 13-16 km approx); from Prithvi to Maha Loka is one Crore Yojanas; from Prithvi to Jana Loka is two crore yojanas, four crore yojanas to Jana Loka and eight crore yojanas to Satya Loka; sixteen crore yojanas to Vishnu Loka and sixteen times higher from Vaikuntha to Kailasa Dham; in other words, the distance from Bhu Loka to Kailas is a staggering figure of two arab and fifty six crore yojanas! From Satya Loka Siva Sharma was blessed to travel further to reside at Vaikuntha.

## Origin and 'Mahatmya' of Kasi

After subduing the arrogance of Vindhyachal by reducing its height below that of Meru Mountain and restored the free movement of Surya Deva across the Universe, Sage Agastya and his wife Lopamudra visited several Tirthas including Kolhapuri where Devi Lakshmi blessed and suggested them to visit Lohit Mountain where Kartikeya was performing 'Tapas'. Kartikeya was delighted at the visit of the Sage couple and touched the body parts of the Sage who was fortunate to have lived at Kashi for such a long time. Asked about the origin of Kasi, Kartikeya explained that originally Kasi was situated on 'Akash' or the Sky and not in Bhu Loka and only those blessed Yogis and Maharshis were able to vision it. But the Sacred Kasi was materialised on Earth to bless humanity, after the Maha Pralaya or The Great Dissolution, when there were neither 'Panchabhutas' like Surya, Vayu and Agni; only the Unique Supreme Being existed and that Super Force created Prakrithi or Maya; as the Scriptures revealed: there emerged Ekameva Dweiteeyam. Purusha and Prakriti materialised Kasi on Earth itself not only as their Transit Abode but also as a Holy Place to destroy the Sins that human beings would tend to commit.In fact, Siva and Parvati never abandoned Kasi Kshetra even during the Pralaya and hence the Sacred Place was known as 'Avimukta Kshetra'. This Place is the provider of 'Ananda' (Joy) as in the days of yore, it was known as 'Anandavan'. Eventually, Maha Deva -and the Devi placed on His left side- materialised a 'Purushottama' full of virtues, 'Kalas' and 'Gunas' and named Him as Vishnu; Bhagavan told Vishnu that from His breathing would emerge Vedas which would provide complete awareness about every task and activity and that from His navel with various fragrances of a Lotus would surface Brahma. Vishnu resorted to instant meditation and created a water-body named Pushkarini out of His sweat and duly dug with His Chakra (Sacred Wheel). As Vishnu made severe Tapasya in a manner that Siva could hardly believe it and moved His face across in disbelief, Siva's 'Mani Karnika' (Ear-ring) fell in the water and was thus

named as 'Mani Karnika' till date as the most hallowed Tirtha. Any being from an insignificant ant to Brahma were to lose life at the Manikarnika Tirtha, the person would attain 'Moksha'; any virtuous deeds done by way of Snaan, Sandhyavandana, Japa, homa, Vedadhyayana, Tarpana, Pinda daan; charities of cows, Bhumi, Tila, Suvarna, Ashva, Deepa, Anna (food), Vastra, Abhushana (Jewellery) and Kanyas; performance of Yagnas, Vratodyapanas, Vrushotsarga (castration of bulls) and 'Sthapana' (Set up Siva Lingas) etc.ought to secure the corresponding 'fruits'. Kasi is thus well known for securing 'Punya' of the Good Deeds done, being done, promised to be done and would be done. Visits to Kasi, extended stays at Kasi and if one is fortunate a death in Kasi are all matters of luck of human life. A youthful person feeling that the time is not yet ripe or ready for visiting Kasi since death is far away is as foolish as an old person thinking that let the few days left be enjoyed in family-life with children and grand children! The mere thought, or Vision or better still of the worship or the Abhisheka of the Holiest Linga of Lord Visveswara ought to create vibrations of life among the devotees whose faith and sincerity are directly proportionate to the intensity of their emotions. Ganga Snaan is an integral component of Kasi Tirtha. King Bhagirath was keen on reviving the lives of his grand fathers who were burnt into ashes by the curse of Kapila Muni as they misbehaved with the Muni; Bhagirath learnt that short of bringing Ganga from heavens to the Place where the ashes were still present and washing away the impact of the curse, there was no salvation the their tormented Souls. Stern Tapasya was performed to Ganga and Siva to release a bay of the Sacred River to travel down to Earth at 'Aryavarta' and bestow salvation to the affected Souls. Those who bathe in Ganga would have bathed in all the Sacred Rivers, would have taken diksha of all Yagnas and would have completed all Vratas on Earth. Those who had amassed all kinds of sins in life would indeed get freed from them; those who suffer from ignorance, illness, poverty and the Six Enemies of life viz. excessive desires, anger, avarice, ego, jealousy and attachments would be freed by the Sacred Snanas in Ganga. Pitru Tarpans, Snaans during Solar and Lunar Eclipses, worship and Shodasopachars to Ganga are all means of securing boons from the Holy Ganga. Charities, Japas and Homas in the name of Holy Ganga as also Hymns in Praise of the River are all conduits of health, long and contented life in current life and Salvation thereafter.

Besides Ganga, Kasi also has Dwadasa (Twelve) Tirthas of Surya Deva's Forms viz. Lolarka whose Snaan ensures freedom from Skin diseases; Uttararka (Bakari Kunda) bestows blessings of Maha Deva and Devi Parvati as they did to devotee Sulakshna and her Goat with contentment and long life; Sambaditya provides complete freedom from diseases; Draupad – aditya abolishes thirst and hunger; Mayukhaditya responds to devotees of Recitals of Stutis – Chaturashthak to Maha Deva and Mangalashtak to Gauri Devi\*\* as also observance of Mangala Gauri Vrata; Kakoladitya / Garudeswara Linga grants good health and fulfillment of human wants; Arunaditya awards removal of grief, illness and difficulties; Buddhaditya provides youth, physical fitness and mental agility; Keshavaditya destroys sins instantaneously and paves the way for Moksha; Vimaladitya is best known as Roga Nashak (demolisher of disease) and provider of good health; Gangaditya gives grit and confidence and Yamaditya saves from the severity of Yamaloka.\*\* MahaDevaChaturashtaka: Deva deva Jagamaatapathey Vibho, Bharga Bhima Bhava Chandra bhushana / Bhuta natha Bavabheeti haraka, Twam natosmi natha vaanchhita prada/ Chandrachooda Mrida Dhurjati Hara, Thrayksha Daksha shatatanthushatanaha / Shanta Saashwata Siva, Twam natosmi Natavanchita prada/Neelalohita Samohitaryada, Dyuklochana Virupa lochana/ Vyomakesha Pashupaashana, twaa natosmi natavaanchitaprada/ Vaamadva Shitikantha Shuulabhruk chandrasekhara Phaneendra bhushana/ Kaamakrut pashu pathey Maheswara Twam natosmi natha vaanchhitaprada/ Triambaka Tripurasudane swara, Traanakrutri nayana Trayeemaya/ Kaalakutadala nantakantak Twam natosmi natavaanchhita -prada/ Sharvari rahita Sharva Sarwaga, Swarga marga sukhadaapa vargada/ Shankarogra Girirajapathey Pathey Vishva -natha Vidhi Vishnu samstuta/ Vedavedya viditakhilenjnita, Twam Natosmi Nata vaanchhita prada/ Viswa rupa, Pararupa varjita Brahmaa Jihmarahitamprada/ Braahanovishayadura Duuraga, Twam Natosmi Natayaanchhita prada/ Mangalashtak to Devi Gauri: Devi Twadiya Charanamuja renu Gauri, Bhaalasthali bahati hah Pranati Praveenah/ Janmaamtaropi Rajani kara charurekha, tam Gaurayatyatiram kila taysya pumsah /Sri Mangaley Sakala Mangala Janmabhumey, Sri Mangaley Sakala kalmasha tula vastrey/ Sri Mangaley

Sakala Daanava darpa hantri, Sri Mangalekhilaminda paripaahi Viswam/ Visweswara twamasi Viswajanasya katreem, twam Palayishyasi tatha Pralayopihantri/ Twannama kirtana samullasadacchapunya, Srotaswini harati paathakakula vrikshaan/ Matarbhavaani Bhavati Bhavateevra dhuhkha sambharana harini, Sharanyamihaasti nanya/ Dhanyasta yeva bhuvaneshu ta eva maanya, Yeshu sphuratteyva Shubham Karuna Kataakshaha/ Yey twam smaranti satatam Sahaja -prakaashakah., Kaasi pureesthamatheeh natamoksha Lakshmeem / Taanu Samsaretsmiharo Dhrutasshuddha bhudheen, Nirvana rakshana vichakshana patrabhutaan/ Maatastwaanguli yugalam Vimalam Hridayasyam Yasyasti tasya Bhvanam Sakalam karasyam/ Yo naamatey japati Mangala Gauri Nityam Sidhyashtakam na parimuschati tasya geham/ Twam Devi Veda janamee Pranava –swarupa Gayatrasi twamasi vye Dwija Kaama dhenuhu/ Twam baahatriyamihakhila Karma Siddhavai Swaha Swadhasi Sunah Pitru tripti hetuhu/ Gauri twameya Shashi moulini Vedhasi twam Saavidhyasi Twamasi Chakrini Chaaru Lakshmih/ Kaashyaam Tasma Mula rupini Moksha Lakshmiratwam me Sharanamihi Mangala Gauri mathah.

Illustrious King of Kasi Ripunjaya also known as Devodas who practised Dharma as one of the noblest examples whose adminisration was impeccable with 'Varnashrama Vidhana' in full swing, 'Deva Karyas' most ideal, 'Daana Dharmas' unparalelled, and every aspect of life being such that neither human beings, Maharshis nor Devas could raise a finger in doubt and most significantly Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara were highly satisfied. Lord Brahma performed Dashaswamedha Yagna in Kasi with the active assistance of Devodas. Ganesha visited Kasi as an old Vidwan and blessed the King and his subjects. Bhagavan Vishnu, Devi Lakshmi and Garuda too visited in the guises of Brahmana Devas and as advised by Ganesha, King Devodas waited for eighteen days for the arrival of the Punyakirti (Vishnu in disguise) who gave the final 'Upadesh' to the King, set up a'Bhupa Lakshmi'Linga and had 'Nirvana Prapti'finally. Kasi is also the abode of Dharmanadi Tirtha which came to be called *Panchanadi* comprising Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati as also Kiran which was the Maha Swedi or the sweat of Mayuraditya who performed severe Tapas to Siva and Dhutpapa River; the Tirtha's importance improved manifold since Maha Tapaswi Agnivindu obtained a boon after hard Tapas to Bhagavan Vishnu that Panchaganga would be His habitat and those who perform Snaan, Tarpans to Devas, Rishis and Pitras and worship of Vishnu or Vishvanath who were both the same. Vyaghreshwar Linga was set up as a request was made by a Tapasvi Brahmana to Siva observing the Rituals of Siva Ratri with complete involvement when a Rakshasa named 'Dundhubi nihlad'the maternal uncle of Bhakta Prahlada desired to kill the Tapasvi in the disguise of a 'Vyaghra'-a Tiger. But Siva rescued the Tapasvi from the Vyaghra and the Tapasvi eulogised to Siva to set up a Siva Linga as 'Vyaghreswar'. Himavan, the father-in-law of Maha Deva was on a visit to Kasi and having brought a beautiful Vijayanti mala full of most precious stones sparkling the sky as though brought from Swarga; he showed it proudly to a Tirtha Yatri but the latter made him realise the incomparable Wealth of Bhagavan Siva in the course of conversation and felt too small to gift that Mala to Siva; he then ordered that his entourage comprising several persons must build a Siva Temple overnight with a Chandrakanti Mani Linga installed in it. Siva Ganas informed Siva and Parvati about the setting up of the Temple overnight and the latter visited it and were pleased with the gift and commended the good work; Devi Parvati requested Siva to reside in the Linga and Himavan was immensely happy that He agreed to the request, thus blessing the devotees to worship the Linga called henceforth as Shaileswar Linga. At the same Temple, a Ratneswar Linga also manifested when Siva and Parvati visited the Place and Siva explained that the Ratnas (Jewels) brought by Himavan to gift to the Siva couple were also set up at the same Temple. Meanwhile, there was considerable confusion and noise ouside the Temple as Siva and Parvati were on visit; there were shouts and cries from the crowd saying 'help, help'. Gajasura the son of Mahishasura was around and Siva threw His 'Shula'at the Demon who obtained a boon from Brahma earlier that Gajusura could not be killed by anyone excepting the person who conquered 'Kama'; indeed that was only Parama Siva who burnt off Kama Deva with His Third Eye as the latter released arrows of Love but got burnt off instead. Gajasura made his death wish to Siva that He should don Gajasura's skin and Siva granted it. The Place where Siva's Trishul killed Gajarasura manifested a Krittivaseshwara Linga.

As Lord Brahma performed Tapas for several Yugas, there manifested a huge mass of Light that emerged from His own 'Anthahkaran' (Conscience), the Akshar (Word) viz. AUMKAR indicating 'A' or 'Akar'which was full of Satvika Guna, Adhishthan of Rig Veda and the Creator of the Universe viz, Srishti Karak; then came the Next Word 'U-kara' replete with Rajo Guna representing Vishnu and finally 'Makar' represented by Rudra full of Tamo Guna. The sum total of Pranava Swarupa, with the 'Naad' or Sound and 'Anuswarup Ardha Matra' being Maheswara or the Supreme Energy, appeared in the Form of *Omkara Linga*. Next in significance is *Trilochana Linga* which was manifested as Bhagavan Siva was in a Yogic trance breaking through the seven sub-terrestrial Lokas like Patala onto Earth and was stated to be an embodiment of Gyana Shakti; devotees taking bath in Pilpila Kund, observe day long fast, perform night-long Jaagaran, worship Trilochana and carry out Tarpans and charities would result in Jeevan Mukti.

There are innumerable Lingas in Kasi but among the Swayambhu Lingas, the front ranking ones are Omkar Linga, Trilochan Linga, Maha Deva Linga, Kritthivasa Linga, Ratneswar Linga, Chandreswar Linga, Kedareswar Linga, Dharmeshwar Linga, Veerotsar Linga, Kameswar Linga, Viswakarmeswara Linga, Manikarneswara Linga, Avimukteswar Linga and Vighneshwara Maha Linga. Besides, other Lingas include Shaileswar Linga, Sangameswar Linga, Madhyameswar Linga, Hiranya Garbheswara Linga, Ishaaneswara Linga, Gomrekshar Linga, Vrishabhadhwajesara Linga, Upa Shanteswara Linga, Jyeshtheswara Linga, Nivasheswara Linga, Shukreswara Linga, Vyaghreswara Linga and Jambukeswar Linga. Bhagavan Siva Himself described the magnificence of Vishweswara Linga [which stood the ravages of time dating some five thousand years of the past, flourishing through Yugas with values of life since Satya Yuga where Harischandra lived for the vindication of Truth, Perseverance and Sacrifice; the Treta Yuga and Dwapara Yuga dominated by Rama and Krishna respectively and during the first phase of Kali Yuga; by surviving foreign invasions, plunders, conflicts and religious fanaticism]. Siva commended the holy activities of each day's early mornings climaxing through the day/night, especially by observing the most propitious Kartika month with the Sin washing Ganga Snaans, resounding notes of musical instruments, Maha Nyasas, Namakam / Chamakam recitations, Veda Parayanas, Linga Abishekams with Shodasopacharas, and so on. Bhagavan Siva described that the Temple's 'Prayesha Kaal' (Entry time) witnessed a frenzied and emotional outburst of devotion when Gandharvas sang Siva Stuthis, Apsaras danced, while Nandi, Bhairay, Pramadhaganaas, Yakshas, Piscachas, the cream of Sages would go wild; Nava Grahas, Lokapals and Devas as also Brahma and Vishnu would go into trance and Siva, Parvati, Ganeshwara and Skanda bestow benevolences.

# Avanti Kshetra Mahatmya

Devi Parvati asked Maha Deva as to why Mahakaal Kshetra was considered significant. Siva

told her that Sanatkumara, the Brahma Manasa Putra (Mind-born Son of Brahma), had the same question too. The reply was that Bhagavan liked the Kshetra for more than one reason: It was the abode of Sapta Matrikas viz. Brahmani, Vaishnavi, Rudrani, Indrani, Kaumari or Kartikeyini, Varahi and Chamundi; there was a very fascinating Mahaakal Vana; a 'Smashaan vatika' immensely liked by Siva; a Kushasthali or Yagna Bhumi where Brahma performed a famed Yagna in favour of Chandra Shekhara Siva; a Maha Pashupati Vrata was executed by Devas as taught by Brahma and most importantly Siva did 'Kapala vimochana' or threw the Kapala (Skull) on the ground with which He begged alms from Devi Annapurni, seemingly as a parting gift to the grateful trees and plants of the 'Mahaakaal Vana' for their great devotion, but actually since the tremendous reverberation created by throwing the Kapala had killed all the Daityas headed by Haya who was versatile in innumerable Mayas (Illusions) and sought to stealthily attack Devas who would have been caught competely unawares! Devas were grateful for Maha Deva's kind mercy in averting the tragedy. Eventually this holy Place where Kapala Vimochan Temple was situated was known as *Ujjain* which had many other names viz. 'Kanaka Shringa' which was already the abode of Vishnu even before Siva glorified it as the location of Kapala Vimochana as Brahma and Siva searched for Vishnu and found Him at Ujjainpuri already well known as the Mountain of Golden Peaks; 'Kuthasthali' which Brahma selected for Vishnu to undertake the task of Preservation of Brahma's

creation by throwing 'Kushagrass' on Bhumi; ' 'Avantipuri' as Danavas defeated Devas who fled to Meru and approached Brahma for help when a Celestial Voice asked Devas to pray at Kushasthali where Siva was already present and after meditation by Devas, Swarga was restored to them( the word 'Avan' meant Protector and since Vishnu protected the Deities, Ujjainpuri was als known as Avantipuri); Kuthasthali was also known as 'Ujjaini' as Brahma gave boons to Demon Tripura for invincibility and as the latter distressed Rishis and Deities Parama Siva terminated the Demon with His 'Pashupatha Astra' and the locale where the battle took place was known as 'Ujjaini'; Ujjain was also called 'Padmavati' since the Wealth secured from the churning of Ocean by Devas and Danavas for Amrit (Ambrosia) was distributed among Devas themselves, despite the unsucessful efforts made by Danavas in obtaining Ambrosia, but for Demon Rahu's stealthy task of sitting in the Area apportioned for Devas for the distribution of Amrit and having his head sliced by Devi Mohini jointly appointed by Danavas and Devas for the distribution of the Amrit. Continuing the significance of Kapaala Vimochana Tirtha, Siva further informed Devi Parvati that this Holy Territory witnessed the killing of a Daitya called 'Haalaahal' by Matrikas at Siva's invitation to perish him and since then became glorified as 'Kapaala Matrika Nivas'. The Spot where 'Kapala bhed'took place emerged a 'Rudra Sarovar' whose water is so Pure and Sacred that by sipping it, bathed in, or preserved by devotees for consumption later on, has the impact of performing Aswamedha Yagna and laying a ladder with steps to Swarga. In fact there are countless Tirthas, each of which had a memorable history behind; for example, Shankaravaapi, Shankaraditya, Harasiddhi Devi, Vata Yakshini, Piscacha Tirtha, Kshipra Gupteswar, Hanumatkeswar, Vaalmikeshwar, Ankapaada Tirtha, Ladduka priya Ganesha, Kusumeswar, Markandeswar, Bhamani Devi, Brahmeswar, and so on. Most significant of all these was Omkareshwar Tirtha from where the Trishul of Rudra chased Andhakasura to Patala; Siva's 'Simhanada' (Lion's roar) in the form of Simheswara frightened the demon. The Most Merciful Maha Deva noticed the demon's genuine remorse and prayers and blessed him to join the Siva Ganas!

As regards the significance of Avanti Kshetra, Maha Deva Siva explained to Parvati that there were four major Rivers viz. Kshipra Nadi, Divya Nava Nadi, Neela Ganga and Gandhayati; eighty four Lingas in whom as many forms of Sivas resided; Eight Bhairava Rupas viz. Dandapaani, Vikrant, Maha Bhairav, Batuk, Baalak, Bandi, Shatpancha Shatak, and Apara Kaala Bhairay; Eleven Rudras viz. Kapardi, Kapaali, Kalaanatha, Vrishasan, Traimbak, Shulapaani, Chiravaasa, Digambar, Girisha, Kaamchaari and Sarpangabhushan Sharva; Twelve Adityas viz. Aruna, Surya, Vedanga, Bhanu, Indra, Ravi, Anjumaan, Suvarnaretha, Aha -Karta, Mitra, vishnu and Sanaatan; Six Ganeshas viz. Ruddhi Siddhi Daata, Kaamadaata, Ganapati, Vighna naashak, Pramodi, and Chaturdhi Vrata Priya; Eight Matrikas viz. Uma, Chandi, Eswari, Gauri, Ruddhida, Siddhida, Varayakshini and Veerabhadra; Maha Maya Sati who is called Kapala Matrika who has Seven Matrika Associates viz. Ambika, Sheetala, Siddhidayini, Ekaanamsha, Brahmani, Parvati, and Yogashalini; Eighteen Para Shaktis viz. Yogini, Bhagavati Kaumari, Shatkrittika, Charpat Matrika, Vara Matrika, Sarasvati, Maha Lakshmi, Yogini Matrika, Chathussashthi Yogini, Kalika, Maha Kali, Chamunda, Brahmachaarini, Vaishnavi, Vaaraahi, Vindhya vasini, Amba and Ambaalika; Four Dwarpalaks of Avanti Kshetra viz. Pingaleswar, Kayavarohaneswar, Bilvakeswar and Vidyamaan; Four Pavanputras viz. Hanuman, Brahmachari, Kumaresh and Maha Bali; and Ten Vishnu Rupas viz. Vasudeva, Ananta, Balarama, Janaardana, Narayana, Hrishikesha, Vaaraaha, Dharanidhara, Vaamanarupa dhari and Seshasaayi. The importance of Avanti Kshetra got furthered enhanced by the Holy Presence of Maha Deva Himself who manifested in several forms as described above.

## Narmada's Origin, significant events ascribed to the River and her Mahatmya

In the Reva Khand of Skanda Purana, Sage Suta enlightened a Congregation of Rishis

about a query of Yudhishthar (of Pandavas) to Maharshi Markandeya about the origin of River Narmada. Several Holy Persons and Brahmanas approached King Pururava to let a Holy River descend from Heaven so that various religious activities aimed at Devas and Pitras by human beings were facilitated and the King performed relentless Tapasya to Parama Siva who in turn asked Narmada Devi to

descend. She desired to have a strong base to do so and Siva asked Paryank, the son of Vindhya, to bear the brunt. As Narmada descended, there were floods of water and the Deities requested her to diminish her size and taught Pururava the details of the Rituals to perform tarpans to his ancestors which were followed by generations thereafter. But since Narmada was a virgin, she did not allow her divine touch to Deities and therefore agreed to marry King Purukutsu, who actually was Samudra Deva but was cursed by Brahma to become a human being as the King Purukutsu also learnt from Narmada about the rituals to liberate his ancestors. It was stated that Narmada 'Snaans' at various points of Her Course cutting the Vindhya Mountains and peaks every where on way were not only refreshing and cool but are Sacred and divinely and those who perform the baths, especially of early hours of a day, secure Punya of several Snaans of Ganga! The Sacred Snaans at that time are instant destroyers of sins committed in the current and previous lives. On the northern side of the River is situated *Anantapu*r where Anantasiddhi Linga is popular and is stated to be the hub of Maharshis like Saavarni, Kaushik and Aghamarshan performing Vratas and Tapas. Sage Valmiki is also stated to have lived here for long till attainment of Moksha. Another important Tirth named *Dipeswar* or *Vyasa Tirtha* is known for Vrishabha daan (Charity of a bull) on Kartika Krishna Paksha Chaturdasi bestowing Swargayaas after life. At the Narmada-Varangana Sangam is popular to wash off physical ailments and nearby the Sangam is situated the Siva kshetra where rituals of 'Snaan and Daan' during Solar Eclipse award the same impact as at Kurukshetra; this is the abode of Narmada, Siva and Vishnu the latter being called Utpalaavarta having thousand heads! It is the belief that even flies and birds here reach Haridhaam, let alone human beings. Tripuri Kshetra is noted as a popular and powerful Tirtha where eight Swayambhu Lingas manifested on their own, where any act of Virtue would have manifold fruits of life. Sage Markandeya recalled an interesting happening about the Tripuri Kshetra: Swayambhu Manu-the first Manu-heard at Ayodhya while sleeping the remote sounds of bells and Vasishtha explained to Manu that those sounds were heard from Tripuri on the banks of Sacred Narmada, from the aeroplanes taking off from the roofs of virtuous human beings destined to celestial worlds like Kailasa, Vaikuntha and Indra loka. Swayambhu Manu immediately left for Tripuri and performed several rituals including Aswamedha Yagna and prayed to Devi Narmada who blessed the Manu that in his lineage one famous Bhagirath would be borne in Treta Yuga and would succeed bringing Pavitra Ganga to 'Aryavarta' from the Celestial Worlds! In the Tripuri Kshetra itself, Sage Bhrigu prayed to Trilochan Siva being desirous of the darshan of His Third Eye and as Siva obliged with His appearance, the Sage asked for the boons of obtaining Siddhis, formation of Bhrigu Tirtha with His presence always, manifesting Eight Rudras in the Bhrigu Tirtha named Bhrigu, Shooli, Ved, Chandra, Mukha, Attahaas, Kaal and Karaali; and granting benevolence to visitors of Bhrigu Tirtha as a sindestroyer. Similarly Bhagavan Soma (Chandra) prayed to Siva to set up Soma Tirtha as the Sangam of the three Rivers viz. Ganga, Jamuna and Narmada. Narmadapuri on the bank of Narmada was indeed worthy as Sage Jamadagni prayed to Maha Deva and secured a Kama Dhenu and King Kartaveeryarjuna being jealous of the prized possession, took away the Holy Cow by force after killing Jamadagni and the Sage's son Parasurama not only killed the most powerful King of the Time but also uprooted the concept of Kshatriyas and Kings by waging twenty one battles; he set up a Memorial named Devadroni (Kapila Dhenu) where Pinda daanas continued to be performed to Jamadagi and ancestors. Sage Markandeya narrated the renowned happening of a 'Nishad' (Hunter) to Yudhishthar about the formation of Trinetra Kund as the high devotee of Siva Linga discovered that the Third Eye was missing on the Linga, cut his own eye as a replacement to it by resisting extreme pain and flow of blood and pasting it on the third eye position of the Siva Linga; Maha Deva appeared before Nishad with blind faith, extreme sense of sacrifice and unnerving devotion and granted him 'Siva Sayujyam' (Attainment of Oneness with Siva). Sapta Sarasvat Tirtha came into being since a Gandharva, who was an excellent singer of hymns extolling Parama Siva, got into the habit of drinking and Nandi cursed that the singer be born to a Chandala. The Singer became extremely repentant and entreated Nandi to show a means of reversing the curse; the Chandala had luckily retained the memory of his earlier birth as Gandharva and reached the banks of Narmada and sang hymns of Siva at 'Shankarasthandil' or Siva Vedi when a Siva Linga appeared by name Sapta Sarasvata and the Chandala regained the earlier life as Gandharva. Shandileswar Tirtha was formed after the famous Sage Shandilya (the Founder of the Shandilya Gotra) whose Tapasya to

Maheswara in his hermitage on the banks of Narmada was exemplary; along with two other Lingas viz. Pancha Brahmeswar and Pushpeshwar, the Shandileswar was well known as among the 'Tirtha Traya'where worship of the Lingas and Pitru Tarpans / Pinda Pradaanas were performed. Markandeya narrated to Yudhishtar the story of Chakravarthi *Mandhata*, who performed Yagnas near Amarakashtak Mountain and prayed to *Omkareswar*. He was a gift of a powerful Yagna by his father, King Yayanashva, who drank by mistake the 'Mantra Jala' meant for his wife. Yuvanashva got pregnant instead and delivered a boy by the opening of his belly. Devas and Indra visited the child and wondered as to who might feed milk to the boy; Indra said: 'Esha Maa Dhata' and fed Amrit-like milk by inserting his middle finger in the baby's mouth and hence the child's name became Mandhata. As the boy grew he became a model King of virtue, valour and justice. Omkareswar appeared in response to Mandhata's prayers and gave the boon of naming the Mountain of Vaidurya as Mandhata. Jaleswar or Bana Linga was the manifestation of Siva; Banasura, the son of Bali Chakravarti, meditated to Maha Deva for thousand divine years and obtained the boons of impregnability of his City by any body excepting Mahadeva Himself and also flying mobility along with him and to those whom he chose any where. As Siva gave the boons, Vishnu and Brahma too bestowed the same kind of boons and Banasura thus emerged the Great Mighty King of 'Three Puras' or as the dreaded 'Tripurasura', who came to attack Deva Lokas and Bhuloka. Sages, Devas, Brahma and Vishnu were all alarmed and approached Siva, who decided to fight the Demon by Himself and smashed him with His Aghora astra which could absorb its heat and force by Narmada only after its attack. Banasura was badly hurt and realising his foolishness prayed to Maha Deva once again. The most lenient and gracious Bhagavan granted that Banasura would not have another birth and that a Siva Linga would be manifested as Bana Linga or Jala Linga. Another instance narrated by Markandeya to Yudhishthar related to the memorable King *Indradyumna* who performed Maha Yagna on the banks of Narmada, had darshan of Omkareswara Linga and visioned a radiant spectacle of an Inner Linga of Maha Deva in the central portion of the Principal Omkareswar Linga; he also had a special visualization of Bhagavan Vishnu in His full resplendent and ornamented form with four hands with Shankha, Chakra, Gada and Lotus at the top portion of Omkareswara Linga and prayed to Him; the King also invoked various Holy Rivers especially Ganga to join the Mahanadi Narmada at the bottom of the Linga; and to Narmada to manifest Seven Branches from the north to south to facilitate Daanas, Homams, Vratas, Tarpans and Pinda Pradaans to Pitras and other rituals. The King's prayers were all granted adding to the magnificence of the entire Region in which the Sacred River Narmada flowed.

Rudra Stuti: While elaborating the implication of the word OM, Markandeya told Yudhishthar that when a person breathed last reciting that single 'Akshara', he or she would surely reach 'Paramagati': Omithekaksharam Rajan! Vyaaharan Samanussmaran, Vah Pragati thyajan deham sa yaati Paramam Gatim. Gayatri, the Mother of Vedas, manifested from Omkara. In the single word of Om are firmly set up the Trimurtis of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. Omkar is the base of Vedas, from which are spread the branches of Shriti forms. 'Smritis' and 'Agamas' are the fruits, flowers and leaves. Just as Omkara is the root of all disciplines of knowedge, Siva is the origin of all Deities. The Three Sandhyas of morning, noon, and Evening, the Three kinds of Agni, the Three Lokas, the Three Vargas of Dharma, Artha and Kaama are all set in Omkara. In the initial phase of Satya Yuga, Demons named Kankola, Kalikeya, and Kaalak made Devas retreat from the banks of Narmada and the Devas approached Brahma and Siva for help. Then from the Mountains was manifested a blazing Linga cutting across Patala Lokas along with a resonant sound saying 'Om Bhurbhuvah Swaha'. Then there was a furious look to destroy the Demons and a pleasant and cool look to protect the Virtuous. The Danavas were frightened and ran helter skelter and the Righteous proceeded to perform Siva Puja. Then Bhagavan Omkara bestowed the 'Mantra Upadesh' or The Counsel of Sacred Mantras to Brahma and the latter extolled Omkareswar as follows: Vyoma Samsthayi, Sarvavyapi Vyomahara, Ananta, Anatha, Amrita, Dhruva, Shaswata Shambhava, Yogapeetha Samsthita, Nitya Yoga Yogi, Siva, Sarvaprabhava, Eshaana, Tatpurusha, Aghora, Vamadeva, Sadyojata, Kaalaatheetha, Avyaya, Buddha, Vajra dehopa- mardana, Adyaksha, Vidhu, Shasta, Pinaakini, Tridasha adhipa, Agni, Rudra, Hutasha, Pingala, Pavana, Hara, Jwalan, Dahan, Vastu, Bhasmaanta, Kshamaantaka, Apamrutyunhara, Dhata, Vidhata, Karta, Kaal, Dharmapati, Shasta, Viyokta, Anavama or

Nyunatarahit, Priya, Nimitta, Vaarun, Hantha, Kruradrishti, Bhayavaha, Urdhva Drishti, Viruupaaksha, Damshtravaan, Dhumralochana, Baala, Atibala, Paashahasta, Mahaabala, Sweta, Virupa, Rudra, Deerghabaahu, Jadaantaka, Sheeghra, Laghu, Vayuvega, Bhima, Badaba mukha, Panchaseersha, Kapardi, Sukshma, Teekshna, Ksapantaka, Nidhisha, Raudravaan, Dhanvi, Soumyadeva, Pramardana, Anantapalak, Dhara, Pataalesha, Sadhumna, Shasvata, Sharva, Sarvapinga, Kaalavaan, Vishnu, Esha, Mahatma, Sukha, Mrutyuvivarjita, Shambhu, Vibhu, Ganaadhyaksha, Tryaksha, Divaspati, Samavaada, Vivaada, Prabha Vishnu, and Vivardhan. The above Rudra namaas are to be prefixed with 'Om'. Brahma made the above 'Stuti' (Commendation), performed 'Sashtanga', 'Parikrama' and Mental Visualisation. As Siva was highly satisfied with the above, Brahma desired the boon from Bhagavan that whoever read, or heard or recided mentally the above Rudra Stotra would enjoy the best of this life and post life, and secures full contentment always.

#### Viswamitra sends mortal Trishanku to Swarga

In the Nagara Khand of Skanda Purana, King Trishanku of Surya Vamsa made an odd request to the his Guru Sage Vasishtha that he would like to go to Swarga with his mortal body and that such a Yagna be performed enabling him to do so. Vasishtha ridiculed the idea and the King asked the Sage's sons to find a way out, lest he might abandon Vasishtha as his Guru; the infuriated sons cursed the King to turn out to be a 'chandala' of low caste. The frustrated Trishankhu in the form of a chandala left the Kingdom making way for his son Harischandra as the King and wandered in forests where he met Sage Viswamitra who took up the issue as a challenge, especially because he was a traditional competitor and enemy of Vasishtha. The Sage asked that Trishanku should first get rid of the form of a chandal and desired him to perform a Holy Pilgrimage. As both of them were set on visiting Tirthas, they reached Arbudachal (Abu) to visit 'Achalaswar' and met Markandeya who advised them to take a trip to Haatakeswar and take bath in the Patala Ganga there. To their great surprise, the Snaan and worship at that place did the miracle and Trishanku got rid of the curse of his becoming a chandala. Even as Trishanku was preparing to perform a Grand Yagna, the Sage approached Lord Brahma to be the Chief Guest who refused saying that it was against the realm of possibility that a human in his form could reach Swarga. This nodoubt frustrated Trishanku as also Viswamitra but the latter never gave up the effort and did harsh Tapasya to Bhagavan Siva who out of generosity granted the boon of ability to duplicate the task of Brahma's Creation; the Sage succeeded in creating another Sun, Moon, Sky, Air, Water etc. Indeed the parallel Srishti panicked Brahma and the compromise reached was that if Brahma took Trishanku to Swarga in the latter's mortal body; Viswamitra would refrain from making a paralell creation.

As Sage Viswamitra found the significance of Haatakeswara Kshetra where Trishnaku's curse of becoming a Chandala was washed off, the Sage concentrated on this Kshetra only and stopped visiting other Kshetras like Kurukshetras. The word had gone round and many Munis established their Ashrams there. In fact the Place became so famous that many Pilgrims had dips in the Patala Ganga Tirtha and worshipped Haatakeswar and even without performing Yagnas, Vratas, Charities and Yatras to other established Kshetras, devotees found it easier to visit Haatakeswar and secure Swargaloka! Having noticed this, Devas were not receiving their share of Yagnas and devotees stopped Karmik activites and made huge influx to Haatakeswara. Vayu Deva closed the traffic links after getting Indra's permission to cover up the route to Haatakeswar and there was highly a confidential approach through 'Nagabila'in Nagaloka in exceptional cases only in a roundabout unknown manner. As Indra had killed Vristrasura who was a Brahmana, he became a victim of the Sin of Brahmahatya and at one stage even attempted suicide by jumping from a mountain top; but a Celestial Voice advised him to pay homage to Hatakeswara Linga after purifying in Patala Ganga nearby the Kshetra through the Nagabila to absolve him from the Brahmahatya sin. Thus Indra got rid of his great sin and regained his throne.

## Origin of Nagara, Shankha Tirtha, Achaleswara / Siddheswara Lingas

Deva Guru Brihaspati suggested to Indra Deva that Nagabila leading to Patala Loka from Bhu Loka be closed and that one of the sons of Mountain Himalaya viz. Mainaaka, Nandivardhana and Raktashringa

could accomplish the task. Himalaya asked Raktashringa to do so but the latter replied that Indra had cut his wings already in the past. Indra agreed to carry Rakta -shringa by his hands, that the Mountain would be blessed with green trees, fruits and flowers; that a Temple, Punya Tirtha and an Ashram for Sages would be constructed too. Indra also gave the boon to Raktashringa that on the top of the Mountain there would be a Nagar to live in by Vidwan Brahmanas; that a King named Chamatkar would administer the Nagar and that Hatakeswar Linga would be worshipped by one and all including Devas. That was how Nagabila was closed forever. The King Chamatkar went hunting in a forest and killed a deer and baby deers; while dying, the deer cursed the King to become a leper. The leper King took pity on a Brahmana and suggested to take bath in Shankha Tirtha which healed several persons of physical infirmities by taking bath and observing fatsting there on Chaitra Purnima. The Brahmana disclosed the background of the Tirtha that in the past there was one Sage named Likhit. His younger brother Shankha who was also a Tapasi ate a few fruits of Likhit's garden, but the enraged Likhit said that as per the rules of the Ashram, the punishment to thieves was to have the culprit's hands cut! Shankha whose hands were cut did harsh Tapasya to Maha Deva and obtained the boons of not only restoring the hands which were chopped but also forming a Tirtha known as Shanka Tirth. After Chamatkar left his kingdom since he became a leper, there was confusion in it and Parasu Rama killed the incumbent King in a spree of destroying Kshatriya Kings and Chamatkar was thus saved and built the beautiful Nagara which was donated to Brahmasas.Raja Chamatkar performed Tapasya to Siva subsequently and secured the boon of materialising Achaleswara Linga; this highly sacred Linga has the unique feature of its shadow of Its position always on the rear side only, irrespective of Sun's movement! If one was unable to see the shadow then the concerned person's life was stated to be in danger within the next six months! Muni Suta described that this Region of Chamatkara Pura comprised three other major Tirthas viz. Gaya Tirtha, Nrisimha Sthaan, and Gokarneswara Siva. In the past, the Region was known as Haataka Kshetra, but since it was donated away to Brahmanas, it came to be known as Chamatkarapura. Lord Indra blessed Raktashringa that 'Parikama' of the Mountain would bestow the fulfilment of one's desires and a 'Nishkama Parikrama' would be a stepping stone to Moksha. Another Siva Linga popular as *Siddheswara* in the Region had the potency of retaining the youth of a devotee and the vision of past, present and future by continously reciting the Shadakshara Mantra: 'Om Namah Sivaya'.

## Most Significant 'Siva Kshetras' as identified by Maha Deva

Devi Parvati's query as which were the most significant Siva Kshetras, Maha Deva Himself announced the following sixty eight ones along with the details of corresponding Siva's names: Kasi (Vishwanath), Prayag (Maheswar), Naimisharanya (Deva Deva), Gaya Prapitamaha (Brahma), Kurukshetra (Sthanu), Prabhas (Shashishekhara), Pushkar (Ajagandhi), Visweshwara (Vishwa), Attahaas (Mahanaad), Mahendra (Mahavrat), Ujjain (Mahaakaal), Marukot (Mahotkat), Shankhakarna (Maha Teja), Gokarna ( Mahabal), Rudrakoti (Maha Yoga), Sthaleswar (Mahalinga), Harshit (Harsha), Vrishabhadwaj ( Vrishabha), Kedar (Ishaana), Madhyamakeshwar (Sharva), Suparna (Sahasraankshu), Kartikeswara (Susukshma), Vastrapath (Bhav), Kanakhal (Ugra), Bhadrakarna (Siva), Dandak (Dandin), Tridanda (Urthvaretha), Kurujangal (Chandisha), Ekamra (Krittivasa), Chhagleya (Kapardi), Kaalinjar (Neelakantha), Mandaleswar (Sri Kantha), Kashmir (Vijaya), Marudeswar (Jayanta), Harischandra (Hara), Puraschandra (Shankar), Vameswar (Jati), Kukkuteswar (Sowmya), Bhasmagatra (Bhuteswar), Amarakanthak (Omkara), Trisandhya (Trayambak), Viraja (Trilochan), Omkareswar (Deepta), Pashupatinath in Nepal (Pashupati), Dushkarna (Yamalinga), Karaveera (Kapali), Jaleswar (Trisuli), Sri Shaila (Tripurantak), Ayodhya (Nageshwar), Patala (Haatakeswar), Kaarohan (Nakuleesha), Devika (Umapati), Bhairav (Bhairavakar), Purvasaagar (Amar), Saptagodavari Tirtha (Bhim), Nirmaleswar (Shambhu), Karnikar (Ganadhyaksha), Kailasa (Ganadhipa), Gangadwar (Himasthaan), Jala Linga (Jalapriya), Badabaagni (Anala), Badarikashwar (Bhima), Sreshthasthan (Kotiswar), Vindhyachal (Varaha), Hemakuntha (Virupaaksha), Gandhamaadan (Bhurbhuva), Lingeswar (Varada) and Lanka ( Naraantak).Bhagavan Siva told Devi Parvati that in a house if somebody recites the names of Siva three times a day, there would not be any threat from Bhutas, Pretas, diseases, illnesses, serpents, thefts, Kings or persons in power. Among the sixty eight Siva Kshetras aforementioned, eight of them are stated to be most noteworthy and these are Naimisharanya, Kedar, Pushkar, Kurujangal, Kasi, Kurukshetra, Prabhasa and Haathakeswar, where formal bathings are considered extremely Sacred and effective. The single most important Kshetra is however deemed to be that of Haatakeswara, as stated by Siva Himself.

# Origin of Kedar Kshetra and its importance

As Maha Deva was performing 'Tapasya' on the Mountains of Himalayas in the form of a Mahisha, He found Indra the King of Devas doing sincere penance at Gangadwara Kshetra, since the latter was dethroned from Sura Loka by the Demon Hiranyaksha and associates. Siva appeared before Indra and asked him as to whom all among the Daityas should be submerged under water (Ke daarayami?). Indra named five of the most dangerous Demons, viz. Hiranyaksha, Subahu, Vaktrakandhar, Trishringa and Lohitaaksha. Siva in the shape of Mahisha destroyed the outer walls of the Demon's fort, pulled all of them, drowned them underneath deep waters and killed them. He asked Indra to get back to Swarga and be the Ruler of Trilokas once again. Bhagavan also materialised a Sacred 'Kund' (Pond) full of milk-like sweet water. Indra declared that whosoever drinks the water of the Kund with both palms together thrice would be blessed for three past generations; the left palm full of water would provide solace to motherside ancestors, the right palm full of water to father-side ancestors and both the palms together would uplift the self. Since Siva asked Indra: Ke daarayami, the Kshetra was called 'Kedara'. Indra constructed a beautiful Temple with Kedara Linga as the highlight and all the Devas visit the Temple and worship Bhagavan and the Kund daily. The Kshetra is open for eight months from Chaitra ie from Meena gati Surya till Vrischika Sankranti and closes for the rest of the four months there would be no access to the snow-clad mountains during which time Siva is stated to shift to Haataka Kshetra from Vrischika Sankranti till Surya in Kumbha Rasi. Bhagavan further stated to Indra that when any devotee drinks the water of Kedara Kund and gives away Pinda daan to Pitras at Gaya would attain Brahma Gyan instantly and would be free from the cycle of births and deaths to attain Moksha.

# Birth of Viswamitra, cause of his rivalry with Vasishtha and his curse to Saraswati

Pursuant to Indra's boon to Himalaya's son to Raktashringa [See the reference of the 'Origin of Nagara' afore-mentioned] that Chamatkarpuri would be donated to Vidwan Brahmanas, the Township banished one of the Brahmanas called Chanda Sharma because of difference of opinion about the manner of worship and he had to leave the Town, settled on the banks of River Saraswati and built an Ashram along with his wife called Shakambhari. Chanda Sharma made and worshipped to Twenty Seven Siva Lingas regularly and pleased Maha Deva who appeared before him and materialised a Sacred Linga and a Temple which became very popular eventually far more than Chamatkarpuri. Sakambhari too worshipped Devi Durga, day and night, and blessed her that whoever worshipped the Idol of Durga on Aswin Shukla Maha Navami would attain boons both materailistic and spiritual. Devi Durga also granted a boon to Sakambhari that the Sixty Four Matruganas would be also present in the same Durga Temple. Since the appearances of Maha Deva to Chanda Sharma and Durga Devi to Shakambhari, the Place became extremely popular as Brahma Nagar in the banks of River Saraswati, where among many other Sages, Viswamitra stayed for long till such time that he cursed Sarasvati and shifted to the Ashram of Sage Markandeya on the banks of River Narmada; the curse was that the River Sarasvati would flow blood and not clear water! Sage Vasishtha reversed the curse of Viswamitra. The episode of Viswamitra's curse to River Saraswati is as follows:

In the days of yore, Sage Bhrigu's son Maha Muni Rucheek was on 'Tirtha Yatra' and reached a Place called Bhojkat on the banks of River Kaushiki, ruled by King Gaadhi. As the Muni was at the River for taking his 'Snaan', he saw an extraordinarily pretty girl and on enquiry came to learn that she was the daughter of the King named Tribhuvan Sundari who arrived there to worship Devi Gauri in the Temple there with the desire to secure a suitable husband. Sage Rucheek approached King Gaadhi with a proposal

to marry his daughter and the latter did not relish the offer since the Sage was old and none too handsome but could not directly convey the negative reply as the Sage might curse either the King or his daughter. He had indirectly suggested that he would expect 'Kanya sulkam' or dowry as per the Royal Tradition and the dowry would be seven hundred white horses with black ears which could run as fast as wind; the King felt that this kind of difficult demand would surely dissuade the Sage. On the other hand, Sage Rucheek prayed to Devatas and recited sixty four Ruchas (stanzas) in Chanda or symmetry invoking seven hundred mighty horses coloured white with black ears along with strong riders who could run like wind! That specific Ghat of Ganges was thus known as 'Ashva Tirtha'. As per the earlier understanding the King could not wriggle out and had to marry off the daughter to the Muni. Almost after the wedding, the Muni told the bride that he was going off for performing Tapasya and asked her for a boon. The bride's mother advised the daughter to ask the Sage for an excellent boy full of Brahmana's virtues for herself and for a brave Kshatriya boy for the Queen. The Sage performed 'Putreshtu Yagna'to fulfill the desires of the daughter and her mother, viz. a boy of great Brahmanik radiance and another boy with unusual Kshatriya's vivacity respectively and gave away two seedlings one for herself and another for her mother. He instructed that his wife should embrace a Pipal Tree and her mother should embrace a 'Bargad' Tree after consuming the respective seedlings. But the daughter and the mother wanted to test the Sage and thus exchanged the seedlings and the trees. The Sage discovered that exchanges of the seedlings and the trees took place and got quite angry, but the young wife sincerely begged the husband to conceive a boy with Brahmanic qualities although he might have the Kshatriya background. The Sage replied that there could not be a reversal of the situation, yet the boy born of Kshatriya origin might however be an illustrated Sage or a Rajarshi. Thus were born Vishwamitra to Tribhuvansundari and Jamadagni to the Queen. Jamadagni begot Parasurama who not only destroyed King Kartaviryarjuna for killing Sage Jamadagni but also wiped out Kshatriyas in a series of twenty one battles and uplifted the supremacy of Brahmanas as a race. On the other hand, Viswamitra became a Rajarshi with the qualities of a Brahmana. After Gaadhi, Viswamitra became the King and once went on a hunting spree; as he was tired he approached the Ashram of Maharshi Vasishtha who gave him the honours as a King. Vasishtha made the offer of hosting a lunch not only to Viswamitra but his entire entourage comprising a large army, elephants, camels, horses and bullock-carts. He invited a Kamadhenu (Cow which fulfils all desires) named Nandini which materialised a grand and tasty lunch comprising 'bhakshya' (sweets and savouries), 'bhojya' (Cereal preparations), 'Lehya' (tongue teasers), Choshya (intakables), and 'Paneeyas' (liquids) all ready within minutes. King Viswamitra was highly impressed and desired to possess it at any cost in exchange of chariots, elephants, horses or any other material. Vasishtha politely declined the offer to exchange and said that he could not sell his mother-like cow. No amount of persuasion helped and finally Viswamitra resorted to force. Being helpless, Vasishtha implored Nandini to protect herself; Nandini too failed in her self-protection despite her divinely efforts. Viswamitra raised his sword to kill Nandini and then Vasishtha with his Mantrik-power paralysed the raised hand. The utterly confused entourage of army, elephants, horses etc. ran helter-skelter as the normally composed Vasishtha was provoked and might destroy everybody with his mantras. King Viswamitra's raised hand was stuck for long; he realised his folly stating that Vidya without politeness and prosperity without avarice were his ruin and being highly remorseful made a desperate appeal to the Sage to free the arrested hand. The kind Vasishtha warned Viswamitra not to enter into problems with Brahmanas and Sages out of ego and bravado any longer. The King who was put to shame by a Brahmana realised that Brahmanic Strength was far more effective than Kshatra Might; having installed his son as the King went away to perform rituals, worship, homas, and severe Tapasya for thousands of years, some time eating fruits, later on dried leaves, subsequently water only and finally without any intake. Lord Brahma was contented with the Tapsya and Viswamitra requested for securing 'Brahmanatva'. Brahma conferred the Title of Brahmarshi but Vasishtha protested and having shifted to the banks of Sarasvati River, built an Ashram at Shankha Tirtha in Haatakewara Kshetra to perform Tapasya there. Meanwhile Viswamitra invoked a 'Maarana Shakti' to kill Vasishtha who noticed certain change in the Climate and by his Sacred Vision came to realise that Viswamitra was despatching a Maarana Shakti against him. He also deduced that Viswamitra used Sama Veda Mantras to create the Shakti and as such strengthened himself with the antidote Mantras

from Atharva Veda. The Shakti touched Vasishtha and became ineffective, although he had severe sweat from his body which created a stream which eventually turned out to be a Sacred Kund whose 'Snaans' conferred the power of prosperity, longevity, good progeny and satisfaction in life. Since the River Sarasvati took a pro-active role in protecting Vasishtha from the 'Maarana Shakti', Viswamitra cursed the River that its flow would carry blood and not water, thus causing many Sages and the Virtuous shifting away as its purity vanished instantly and none came forward to bathe in it. Even Vasishtha shifted away to Arbudachal and Viswamitra settled at Haataka Kshetra performing very rigourous Tapasya as a result of which, Parama Siva gave the boon of making parallell Srishti as against the creation by Brahma in the normal way! Devi Saraswati approached Vasishtha crying away; Vasishtha went to the Place of Sarasvati's origin, obtained a branch of the Tree and concentrated on the Bhumi reciting Brahma Mantra whereby the waters of the River turned normal and in fact became fresher, tastier and rejuvenated.

# Prabhasa Kshetra Mahatmya

In the final 'Prabhasa Khanda' of Skanda Purana, Sage Lomaharshana described to the Congregation of Munis headed by Suta Maha Muni at Naimisharanya the details of the Eighteen Maha Puranas and as many Upa Puranas. The Maha Puranas along with the number of Stanzas contained in each of them are: Brahma Purana (10,000 stanzas), Vishnu Purana (23,000), Siva Purana (24,000), Padma Purana (55,000), Vayu Purana (24,000), Srimad Bhagayata Purana (18,000), Narada Purana (25,000), Markandeya Purana (9000), Agni Purana (16,000), Bhavishyat Purana (14,500), Brahma Vaivarta Purana (18000), Linga Purana (11,000), Varaha Purana (24,000), Skanda Purana (81,000), Vamana Purana (10,000), Kurma Purana (17,000), Matsya Purana (14,000), Garuda Purana (18,000) and Brahmanda Purana (12,200). The Upa Puranas are Sanatkumara, Narasimha, Skanda, Siva Dharma, Durvasa, Narada, Kapila, Manu, Ushana, Brahmanda, Varuna, Kalika, Maheswara, Samba, Shaura, Parashara, Maricha and Bhargava. The Maha Puranas are broadly categorised covering the Gunas (Characteristics) of Satvik, Rajasic and Tamasic nature of Lords Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara, thus Vishnu Purana, Bhagavata, Narada, Garuda, Padma and Varaha Puranas of Satvik nature; Brahmanda, Brahma Vaivarta, Markandeya, Bhavishya, Vamana and Brahma Puranas of Rajasik nature; and Matsya, Kurma, Linga, Siva, Skanda and Agni Puranas of Tamasik nature. The major aspects covered in each of the Puranas are Sarga (Creation). Pratisarga (Destruction), Vamsa (The description of Dynasties), Manyantar and Vamshanucharit (about the events covering the generation next). Having thus given the background of the various Puranas, Sage Lomesh concluded the narration of Skanda Purana's final 'Khanda'with the following Invocation to Bhagavan Siva:

Om Namo Deva devaya Sivaya Paramatmaney, Aprameya swarupaaya Vyaktaavyakta Swarupiney/Twam Patir yoginaa mesha Twayi Sarva Prathishthitam, TwamYagnastvam Vashatkaarastham Omkarah Prajapatih/ (My Greetings to You, Devadideva Paramatma Siva! You have a Sacred Form which is rootless with a 'Saakara' or Fully Manifested Form and at the same time a 'Niraakara' or of Unmanifested and Unknown Appearance. You are in the control of Yogis, and everything is established in You. You are the 'Vashatkar' (the knowledge content of enjoyble sound), the Omkar and the Prajapati.

Bhagvan Siva told Devi Parvati that in Kali Yuga the World would be full of 'Nastiks' (non-believers of God), so-called 'Hetuvaadis' or Reason-mongers and Sinners; they would neither have mental capability nor faith in themselves. They would tend to argue in circles foolishly and often dispute the very existence the Supernatural Force which created, preserved and destroyed the Universe. They would heckle at the purpose of visiting Punya Kshetras while Almighty created as many as three crore and fifty lakh Tirthas and Kshetras all over 'Bharat', the 'Karma bhumi', with the hope that human beings might avail the golden opportunities of visiting at least a few of these Sacred Places, either by decision, coincidence, or even by mistake! Maha Deva further told Parvati that with sincerity and devotion any Place was worthy of worshipping to the Supreme Energy and the existence of the available Tirthas was only suggestive, but some of these had definite 'Mahatmya' and happened to raise strong faith so as to anchor one's devotion to. On Earth, the Naimisha Tirtha and on Sky Pushkar Tirtha are well established. Also, there are Kedar, Prayag, Vipasha (Vyas), Urmila, Krishna, Vena, Maha Devi, Chandrabhaga (Chenav), Saraswati, Ganga

Saagara Sangam, Kasipura, Shatabhadra, Sindhu, Godavari, Kapila, Shona, Payodhi, Kaushiki, Devakhat, Gaya, Dwaravati and *Prabhasa*. Emphasising Prabhasa, Maha Deva said that He materialised a highly powerful Linga there which had the radiance of Sun and the heat of Agni and the Sacred Mix of Three Shaktis viz. 'Iccha' (Desire), 'Gyan' (Knowledge) and 'Kriya' (Devotional Acts). This is the Place where the most famous Somnath Linga manifested as 'Swayambhu' or on its own. Prabhasa Kshetra is known for attaining Siddhis and Salvation. Its East is adorned by the destroyer of darkness Suryanarayana, while the West has the abode of Madhava Deva, South has the Sea and North is Devi Bhavani. The Tirtha is five Yojanas wide and long square with Vajrini in East, Nyankumati in the West, Maheswari in the South and the Sea in the North. The Garbha Griha or the Sanctum Sanctoram is spread over from South to North by Sea to Kauraveswari Devi while from East to West is spread over from Gomukha to Aswamedhik Tirtha. Within the Garbha Griha are a number of Tirthas, Sarovars, Wells, and Deva Mandirs which are all sin-destroyers and Providers of Desires. The First Part of the Prabhasa Kshetra is dedicated to Maheswara, the Second Region is of Vaishnava and the Third Part is Brahma 'Bhaga'. The Central Region has crores of Tirthas. The Brahma Vibhaga is stated to be dominated by Icchha Shakti, Vaishnava Bhaga is known for Kriva Shakti and the Rudra Bhaga is governed by Gyana Shakti. Bhagavan Siva stated that apart from Himalaya, Gandhamaadan, Kailas, Nishadh, Meru, Trikut, Manasarovar, Devodyan and Nandanavan, Prabhasa is one Place where He would like to accord significance. Those who stayed in the Kshetra and recite Mrithyunjaya Mantra and Shata Rudreeya on daily basis would secure Brahma Gyan within six months. Shata Rudra Mantra is denoted as the Soul of Siva Swarupa. Even mere stay in Prabhas is eventful without Bhakti bhava and worship with recitals and other acts would indeed derive far larger and unimaginable consequences. Since Somnath Linga is present at Prabhas, crores of Rudra's manifestations are attracted from all over the Universe, especially on Vaishakha Chaturdasi. There is a concentration of Practitioners of Yoga, Sankhya and Pancha Ratras as they are readily dedicated to Prabhas which is considered as a happening Kshetra. Vedavadi Purush who is immersed in Veda Gyan known as Kaalagni Rudra or Kalabhairava Rupa is firmly seated in Prabahas. Death in Prabhasa is a sure climb-up to Kailasa. This Kshetra is protected by Vishwanath in South and Dandapaani in North. Various Ganaadhakshas who act as per the commands of Bhagavan include Maha Rudra, Chandisha, Ghantaakarna, Gomukha, Vinayaka, Mahanaada, Kaakavaktra, Subhekshana, Eakaksha, Dundubhi, Chanda, Taalajaghna, Bhumi Danda, Danda, Shankhukarna, Vaidhruti, Taaladanda, Maha Teja, Chipitaaksha, Hayaanana, Swavaktra, Vidaalavadana, Simhamukh, Vyaghramukh and Virabhadra. These Ganadhyakshas are led by Ganesha to guard the Kshetra. They keep an eye on the evil-doers and facilitate Bhaktas in their Rituals and other activities. Those who undertake bathings in the Kshetra attain the result equivalent to ten 'Godaanas'. Those who die in Praachi Sarasvati would reach Siva Loka. Those who give away material such as Curd and Blankets have unique benefits. Those who provide food to a needy Brahmana at Brahmasthan secures benefits by a crorefold. As regards *Soma Linga* Swarup, it assumes Rigveda Form in the early morning, before noon time the Yajurved Form, afternoon the Linga assumes Sama Veda Form, and the evening time the Atharva Veda Form. In the Prahasa Kshetra, the Siva Swarup Soma Linga has the unique features of Nirbhaya, Nirmala, Nitya, Nirapeksha, Nirashraya, Niranjana, Nishprapancha, Nissanga and Nirupadrava. The Sparsha Linga of Someswara had been in existence since humanity arrived; Kalpas after Kalpas or ages after ages and each time there was a Pralaya and new eras commenced, Bhagavan assumed new Names with the change of Brahmas for the sixth time and the seventh one at present is called Shatanand as Siva's name is Someshwara. The names in the first Kalpa of Brahma and Siva respectively were Virinchi and Mritunjaya, and the subsequent ones were Padmabhu and Kaalaagni Rudra, Swayambhu and Amritesh, Parameshthi and Anamaya, Surajyeshtha and Krittivasa, and Hemagarbha and Bharavanath. The eighth and the next Brahma-Someswara combination would be Chaturmukha and Prana natha. Similarly the names of Parvati Devi in the first Kalpa onward were Jaganmatha, Jagadyoni, Shaambhavi, Viswa Rupini, Nandini, Ganambika, and Vibhuti. The eighth to the eighteenth Devis would be Shubhra, Ananda, Vaama -lochana, Varaaroha, Sumangala, Mahamaya, Anantha, Bhutamata, Uttama, Pitru Kalpa and Dakshayani; the nineteenth was that of Parvati. The present name of Somanatha Siva emerged since Chandra deva performed severe Tapasya to Siva and secured the boon of creating Siva Linga to be named Soma Linga. Chandra Deva obtained several boons from Parama Siva that the devotees worshipping Someswara Linga would become free from various 'doshas' or deficiencies like 'Bhuta dosha' or threats from Supernatural Spirits like Dakinis, Pretas, Betals, Rakshasas, Nava Grahas, Putanas, Piscachas, Matrukas, Bala Grahas, Jvara rupi Grahas, and Vridha Grahas; diseases like Atisaara, Bhagandar, Pathari Rog, Mutra kruccha, and such others; Sarpa Doshas; 'Chora Bhaya' (Fear of Thieves) etc. would all be burnt like dry wood against fire. Kaalaagni Rudra's presence in the Kshetra is the safest shield against any kind of problems, both mild and insurmountable alike. Bhagavan Siva told Parvati further that there might be crores of Tirthas but Prabhasa was unique as that was the seat of all the 'Tatvas' of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva; Brahma was endowed with twenty four Tatvas. Vishnu with twenty five Tatvas and Siva with thirty six Tatvas. Thus Prabhasa is the most powerful Tatvamaya Kshetra, providing propitiousness to men and women of all 'Varnas', animals, birds and reptiles! This Glorious Tirtha comprises all the Pancha Bhutas or Five Elements of Nature with Brahma in the Form of Prithvi, Vishnu in the Form of Water, Rudra in the Form of Tejas (Illumination / Heat), Kubera in the Form of Vayu (Ether), and Sada Siva Himself in the Form of Aakasha (Sky). There are Eight 'Adi Guhas' or Original Caves signifying water viz. Amaresh, Prabhas, Naimisha, Pushkar, Aashaasdhi, Danda, Bharabhuti, and Laangali. Also, there are 'Ati Guha' Kshetras signifying Tejas viz. Harishchandra, Sri Shaila, Jaaleswar, Preetikeswar, Mahakaal, Madhyama, Kedara and Bhairava. Further, there are 'Guha Gruhantara' Kshetras signifying 'Vayu' viz. Gaya, Kasi, Kurukshetra, Kankhal Tirtha, Vimala Tirtha, Attahaasa, Mahendra and Bhima. Signifying 'Akaash' (Sky), Eight 'Pavitratmak' (hallowed) Kshetras are Vastrapath, Rudrakoti, Jeshyeswar, Mahalaya, Gokarna, Rudrakarna, Karnaaksha and Sthapa. There are also eight more Kshetras denoting 'Prithvi' (Earth) viz. Chhagal, Bruhasudh, Maakoth, Achaleswar, Kalanjaravan, Shanka -karna, Sthaleswar and Suleswar. Among all these, Prabhas is the abode of water and radiance representing both Siva and Vishnu, a vital fact unnoticed by several devotees! Lord Siva re-emphasised the fact that from the Sea in South to Kaureswari River born to Surya Deva the Region in between is Prabhasa literally meaning Radiance. That is why Devotees visiting Prabhasa Kshetra never miss having a Darshan of Surya Deva Temple and perform 'Arka Puja' and Daan. Not far from Surya Temple is the renowned Siddheswara Linga which fulfills the wishes of devotees from the days of yore known as Jaigeshaveshwar. In the earlier 'Kalpa', there was one Great Yogi named Jaigeshva who was an extraordinary devotee of 'Mahodaya', a Swayambhu Linga; as Parama Siva was fond of smearing ashes on His body, the Yogi too smeared ash and even slept on ashes. Mahadeva was pleased and gave darshan to Jaigeshwa, complemented on his spiritual efforts, blessed him to become popular as Yogacharya and granted him Salvation; the Mahodaya Linga came to be called as Jaigeshwara Linga and in Kaliyuga when Sages called Balkhilas attained Siddhis and the Linga came to be popular as Siddha Linga.

Another interesting incident was narrated by Parama Siva to Devi Parvati as to how Chandra was associated with Someswara Linga and Somnath Temple: As Chandra neglected his twenty seven wives viz. 'Nakshatras' (Stars) excepting Rohini, Daksha Prajapati who was the father-in-law of Chandra cursed him to fade away in his brightness and Chandra became dimmer by each day. He worshipped a Siva Linga established by Brahma Himself for long and Bhagavan Siva modified the curse of Daksha that Chandra would lose his sheen from Purnima onward till the end Krishna Paksha or the second half of the dark fortnight and gradually become brighter by each night subsequently from Amavasya of the dark month to Purnima again. The Place where the boon was granted by Siva to Chandra to partially reverse Daksha's curse (to brighten up the first half and darken up the second half by each night) was Prabhasa derived from the word 'Prabha'. Chandra requested Viswakarma, the Architect of Devas to design and develop the Prabhasa Region as also construct Someswara Linga Temple and appointed Priests to carry on the daily rituals of worship attend to the devotees. The name of Someswar had become synonymous with Eswara as Chandra. Siva came to adorn His Head with Chandra eversince he was born at the time of churning the Ocean, keeping the 'Halahal' (Poisonous flames) in His throat and Devi Mohini's distribution or Amrit, Rahu Graha's cheating into the queue of Devas, Chandra's complaint and Rahu's chase to Chandra and Siva's rescue to Chandra. Further, Chandra being the nearest luminous Planet to Earth, Lord Brahma bestowed special dispensations to him viz. to provide various 'beejas' (seeds) and

'Aushadhis' (medicines and medicinal plants). The beeias facilitate the production of rice, wheat, oils, grams etc.while plants enable to produce fruits, vegetables, sugar and such edibles besides medicines of innumerable variety of life giving and life sustaining nature. Chandra is also the Chief Controller of Brahmanas. Devotees who observe Bhakti, Snaan, Daan and worship at Prabhasa are bestowed with all kinds of benefits, especially when they recite the Mantra: Om namo Devadevaya Siti kanthaya Dandine, Rudraya Vaamahasthaya Chakriney Vedhase namah/ Sarasvati cha Savitri Devamata Vibhavari Sannidhaney Bhavatwatra Tirthey Paapapranashiney/ This Mantra is common to any devotee performing 'Snaan' at any Tirtha. To the South of Somnath is situated the *Padma Tirtha*. One should take a resolve even at Somnath that a devotee would resort to have the head tonsured and after the 'mundan' take bath and then enter the Padma Tirtha for a sacred bath in the Ocean as one should not enter it otherwise. It is the belief that the head hair carries all sins and thus needs to be removed before the Tirtha. For women however tonsure is not prescribed but making a symbolic cut would suffice. The following Mantra needs to be recited before a dip in the Ocean: Om Namo Vishnu Guptaya Vishnurupaya the namah, Saannidhye Bhava Devesha Saagare Lavanaambasi / The devotees are then required to perform Tarpan to Devas, Rishis and Ancestors of three generations. Brahma is stated to have commanded Samudra Deva (the Ocean) that the salt water be converted as of Amrita Tatva. Near Agni Teertha, flows the Sacred River Saraswati which comprised Five Streams viz. Harini, Vajrini, Nyanku, Kapila and Sarasvati. Lord Vishnu instructed the River Sarasvati to carry out 'Badabagni' (Submarine Fire) from North of Bharat to Prabhasa Kshetra Westward into the Ocean. But Samudra was frightened as Badabagini was carried by Saraswati and high tides appeared as a result. Lord Vishnu advised that Badabagni should be sucked into the Ocean in very small quantities as through a needle's eye; thus the same continues to be sucked in slowly and hence the fury of the tides due to the exhalation of Badabagni at Prabhasa. Besides the Someswar and Siddheswar, Agni Tirtha and Padma Tirtha and River Sarasvati, Prabhasa Kshetra also possesses Kapardeswar, Kedareswar, Bhimeswar, Navagraheswar, Eleven Rudras and Balarupadhari Brahma, Sweteswar, Bhaireswar, Kalkaleswar, Ukthunkeswar, Vaidyanareswar, Gauthameswar, Yogeswar, Pandaveswar, Pratyushewar, Anileswar, Prabhaseswar, Rameswar, Lakshmaneswar, Bhuteswar, Lomeswar, Ratneswar, Vainateneswar and so on as also Eleven Rudras and Brahmarupadhari Brahma. The visit of Prabhasa Kshetra is stated to be incomplete without the worship of three major Devis, viz. Mangla, Visalakshi and Chatvar: representing three types of Power that is, the Power of Will, the Power of Action and the Power of Knowledge respectively. Mangala Devi represents Brahma Shakti; Visalakshi represents Vishnu Shakti and Chatvar the Siva Shakti. Chandra performed rigid Tapasya to the Shakti of Will for thousand years and since Chandra's will power was on test to secure propitiousness, the Devi was called Mangala. In a fierce battle between Devas and Danavas, the tricky Demons were elusive and Vishnu remembered Mahamaya called Visalaakshi or the Shakti with large eyes to overcome the Danavas. The Goddess called Chatvara Priya who was the embodiment of Knowledge with the 'Amsa' (Feature) of Siva was another Devi worshipped without fail at the Prabhasa. Most importantly, devotees to Prabhasa are blessed to perform Shraaddha / Tarpan at the Sacred Goshpada Tirtha. It has been stated that Pirtu Devas jump with joy that their sons, grand sons and great grand sons who arrived at the Tirtha expect that they would satisfy them with 'Shraaddhas' with wheat / rice, til, honey, akshatas (rice with turmeric) and 'kheer' to quench their thirst and hunger: The Mantra says: Pita Pitaamahschaiva Prapitaamaha eva tu, Maata Pitamaheechaiva thathaiva prapitamahe/ Matamahastaspita cha prapita maha kaadayah, tesham pinde mayadattho hyaksharyamupatishthatu, Om namo Bhagavatey Bhatrey Somabhaumejya rupiney/ Right from Brahma and all Devas anticipate that the devotee would perform Tarpanas in their favour but also Rishis, Pitras, and deceased Parents of two generations.

### Dwaraka 'Mahatmya'

Having recounted in brief the events that happened in Dwapara Yuga and its Central Figure Sri Krishna as the Avatar of Maha Vishnu, his various childhood miracles of killing several cruel Demons, his magnificent role in Maha Bharata culminating in the Historic Battle of Pandavas and Kauravas

vindicating Virtue and Truth against Vice and Falsehood and finally the mortal end of his incarnation, Maha Muni Shaunaka faced the inevitable apprehension of Rishis as to how human beings would redeem themselves from the grave sins that would be committed in Kali Yuga without the presence of Lord Krishna! Some of the prominent Sages of that time approached Lord Brahma and posed the question that in the impending Era of Sin, how could the virtuous and God-fearing devotees in a rather minority existence vis-à-vis the majority of the wicked or at any rate the escapist human beings of Kali Yuga would survive, let alone worship the Almighty! Lord Brahma directed the Sages to Patala Loka to meet Bhakta Prahlada (who caused of the death of his father, the Demon Hiranyakasipu, by Narasimha the Avatar of Lord Vishnu) and King Bali (who gave away three Worlds in charity to Lord Vamana in another Avatar of Vishnu). Both Prahlada and Bali were distressed about the impending dark days of Kali Yuga when moral and spiritual standards would be eroded from bad to worse with the passage of time. However, they revealed that by the Grace of Bhagavan Vishnu there was a Sacred Place on the Western Coast of Bharat called Kushasthalipuri where the Holy River Gomati flowed and submerged with the Ocean. There was the hallowed Temple of Dwaraka with the benign presence of Tribhuvan Vishnu in the form of Krishna with four hands with Shankha, Chakra, Gada and 'Abhaya Mudra' (the Protective Hand); before leaving the mortal World, Krishna left behind sixteen of His 'Kalas' or Divine Powers which were imbibed into the Idol. Bathing in Chakra Tirtha in Dwaraka would have far reaching benefits to wash off sins and confer boons of fulfillment, Peace and excellent health. While approaching the Temple, devotees are advised to recite 'Vishnu Sahasranama', 'Bhishmastatvaraj', 'Gajendra Moksha' etc. as also sing hymns of 'Krishna Leelas' or 'Vishnu Avataras'. At the outset, they pray to Ganesha to ward off any impediments in the 'Yatra' and Darshan of Krishna, pray to the elder brother of Krishna viz. Balarama and then proceed to have the Vision of Shyama Varna (Blue coloured) Krishna, even a glimpse of whose 'darshan' destroys the sins committed during their childhood, youth or elderly age of the current and earlier lives. It is said and firmly believed that each step in the Temple is as fruitful as performing an 'Aswamedha Yagna'. A Pilgrimage to Dwaraka is as propitious as reaching 'Vishnu Dham'. Afer worshipping Bhagavan Krishna, the devotees visit the Holy River Gomati whose mere vision brings in auspiciousness. Prahlada narrated the tale as to how Sage Vasishtha was responsible to bring Gomati from Heaven to Earth. After Pralaya or the Great Dissolution, Lord Vishnu was in Yoga Nidra and from His navel sprouted a Lotus on top of which sat Lord Brahma; Vishnu commanded Brahma to undertake the task of 'Srishti' (Creation). Brahma created His Ten 'Manasa Putras', including Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanat Kumaras with the hope of helping in the task of Creation, but they were more interested in performing 'Tapas' instead of being householders; they chose the West Coast to execute the meditation for several years and fortunately had the vision of 'Sudarshana Chakra' and asked the Manasa Putras to offer 'Arghya' (water) to welcome Maha Vishnu who was about to arrive. But there was no water to tender Arghya; Lord Brahma asked Ganga to flow down to Earth from Heaven with the name of Gomati and to follow Sage Vasishtha to follow as a daughter to a father. The Manasa Putras thanked Ganga and Vasishtha and desired the Sage to father the Sacred Gomati, with whose waters the Sages performed Arghya on the arrival of Bhagavan Vishnu. The Sacrosanct Spot where Sudarshan Chakra made its appearance was since called as Chakra Tirtha. A devotee is to certainly go to the River, do 'Sashtanga' or prostration, clean the hands, take up Kusha grass and 'Akshatas' or rice grains mixed with Turmeric powder and provide 'Arghya' by reciting the Mantra: Brahmalokat samayatey Visishtatanaye Shubhe, Sarva paapa vishuthaartha dadamarghya cha Gomati / Vasishtha duhitaddevi Shaktijyeshthe Yashaswini, Thrailokya vandithy Devi Paapam me hara Gomati! (Gomati! You arrived here from Brahma loka as the daughter of Vasishtha; may you clean up my sins as I offer 'Arghya'to you; Your Shakti is mighty Gomati Devi, the great destroyer of my failings). After saying this, the devotee needs to apply 'mrittika' or the mud of the River bank on the body parts, perform 'Snaan' with Veda Mantras, offer Tarpanas to Devas, Rishis and Pitras and charities especially of Cows to redeem from 'Pitru Runa' of indebtedness to forefathers. From the River Gomati to Chakra Tirtha, a similar procedure is followed with the following Mantra before taking the bath: Om Namo Vishnu Rapaaya Vishnu chakrayathey namah, Gruhaanaarghya maa dattham Sarva kaama prado bhavah. (My Greetings to You Vishnu Chakra who is Vishnu Himself; do accept my 'Arghya' and fulfil my desires). 'Vishupaadotbhava

Tirtha' in Dwaraka is the Sarovar which Lord Krishna materialised by asking Ganga to arrive to facilitate Devi Rukmini's bathing and is also called Vaishnavi since it generated from Lord Vishnu's feet; this Tirtha's Snaan by devotees followed by Pitru Tarpans, Shraddhas, and charities especially to 'Anga viheen' or those who are blind or otherwise defective of any limb are considered vital. *Gopi Sarovar* symbolises the arrival of Gopikas and Gopas from Vraja Bhumi to Dwaraka to personally meet Krishna and desired to stay back as they went in raptures on meeting Him; Lord Krishna was asked by Gopis whether He missed them too and Krishna replied with a smile that He always resided not only in the hearts of Gopas and Gopikas but all the human beings, the entire 'Charachar' (mobile and immmobile) beings as He was the Creator and Sustainer. As He bestowed the Brahma Gyan to Gopikas, they decided to live there always and Bhagavan desired 'Maya'the Architect of Daithyas that a significant Tirtha built as the abode of all Gopikas. Devotees visiting the Gopi Saraovar are advised to offer Arghya by reciting the Mantra: Namasthey Gopa Rupaya Vishnavey Paramaat -maney, Go Prachaara Jagannatha Gruhaarghya namosthutey. Similarly, other Tirthas of distinction include Brahma Kund, Chandra Sarovar, Indra Sarovar, Mahadeva Sarovar, Gauri Sarovar, Varuna Sarovar and Panchanadi Tirtha. Those who are not able to visit Dwaraka may atleast read the details of this extraordinary Kshetra, especially on Dwadasi Tithis of each month and definitely on Krishna Ashtami days of every Year. Sitting at one's own home, one would have access to the most merciful Sri Krishna who always cares for those who cares for Him. Each minute that is spent in His Glorious Memory is certain to be rewarded. Each step taken toward Him for His vision is a step to Vaikunthadham. 'Jagarans' or Awakenings of Night by taking Krishna's name, constant vision of His Swarup (Idol), 'Kirtans' about Him, reading the Sacred Gita Vachan, hearing about His Leelas, dedicating to Him wholly as though nothing else matters in life are all the deeds to take those small, firm but steady steps to Vishnu dham!

OM PURNAMADAH PURNAMIDAM PURNAAT PURNAMUDUCHYATEY

PURNASYA PURNAMAADAASYA PURNAMEVAVASHISYATEY

#### ANNEXURE ON VISHNU SAHASRANAMA

Shuklaambara dharam Vishnum Shashivarnam Chaturbhujam, Prasanna Vadanam Dhyaayet Sarva Vighnopashantaye/ Laabhastheshaam Jayastheshaam Kruthasthesham Paraajahayah, Eshamindiravashyamo Hridayastho Janaardanah/

**Viniyogah:** Om Asya Shri Vishnu Sahasranaama Stotra Maha Mantrasya Brahma Rishi Vishnurdevata Anushthup chhandah Sarva Kaamaavaapyatrtha Jape Viniyogah. (In this Vishnu Sahasranaama Stotra, Brahma is Rishi, Vishnu is Devata, Chhanda is Anushthup; to fulfil all desires, this Japa / Recitation is being rendered.)

**Dhyanam:** Sajalaladaneelam darshithodaara sheelam, Karatalaghrutashailam Venuvaadye Rasaalam/Vrajajana kulapaalam Kaaminikelilolam, Tharunathulasimilaalam naimi Gopaalavaalam. (I greet Gopala whose appearance was blue like the radiance of fresh water, whose essential nature was of kindness, who lifted the Mountain of Govardhana with His hands, who played a big sonorous flute, who administered the People of Vraja with care, who was in the habit of performing childish pranks for the entertainment of the women of Vraja and whose neck adorned the highly attractive garland of Tulasi leaves). Following is the Vishnusahasra Nama Stotram:

Om Vishnur jishnur hrishikeshah Sarvaatma Sarva Bhavanah, Swargah Sharvareenatho Bhutagramashayaashayah/ Anaadinidhano Devah Sarvagnah Sarva sambhavah, Sarva –vyapee Jagatdhaataa Jaganmayah/ Sarvaakritidharah Sarvey Viswaruupee Janaardanah, Ajaatma Sashvatho Nithyo Vishvaadhaaro Vibhuh Prabhuh / Brahmarupaika rupascha Sarva rupadharo Harah, Kaalaagni Prabhavo Vaayuhu Pralayanthakarokshayah / Mahaarnavo Maha Megho Jala budbuda Sambhavah, Samskruto vikruto Matsyo Maha Matsyo thimingalah / Anantho Vaasukih Sesho Varaaho Dharaneedharah, Payaksheera Vivekaadyo Hamso Haimagiri sthitah / Hayagreevo Vishaalaaksho Hayakarno Hayakruthih, Manthano Ratnahaari cha Kurmodhyaraadharah / Vinidro Nidritho Nandi

Sunando Nandanapriyah, Naabhi naala mrinaali cha Swayambhuschaturaanah / Prajaapati paro Dakshah Srishtikarthaa Prajaakarah, Marichih Kashyapo Vatsah Surasura guruh Kavih/ Vaamano Vaamabhaagi cha Vaamakarma Brihadyupuh, Trilokakramano Deepo Baliyagna Vinaashanah / Yagna Hartho Yagna Kartho Yagnesho Yagnabhuk Vibhuh, Sahasranshu Bhago Bhaanurviviswan Raviramshumaan /Thigmatejasvalpatejah Karma Saakshi Manuryamah, Devarajah Surapatir daanavaarih Sachipatih / Agnirvaayusakho Vahnir varuno Yadasaampatih, Nairruto Naadanonaadi Raksho Yaksha dhanaadhipah/ Kubero Vitthavaan Vego Vasupaalo Vilaasakruth, Amrithashravanah Somah Somapaana -karah Sudhih/ Sarvoushadhikarah Srimaannishaakaro Divaakarah, Vishaarirvishahartha cha Vishakanthadharo Girih/ Neelakantho Vrushi Rudro Bhalachandrohumaapatih, Sivah Shanto Vashi Veero Dhyani Mani cha Maanadah/ Krimikeeto Mrigavyadho Mrigaha Mrigavatsalah, Vatuko Bhairavo Baalah Kapaali Dandavigrahah/ Smashaanavaasi Maamsaashi Dhushta naasi Samaanthakruth, Yoginistrasako Yogi Dhyanastho Dhyana -vaasanah / Senaanih Sainyadah Skando Mahakaalo Ganaadhipah, Adidevo Ganapathir -vighnaha Vighnanaashanah / Ruddhisiddhiprado Danti Bhalachandro Gajaananah, Nrisimha Ugradamshtrascha Nakhi Daanayanaashakrit / Prahlada posha kartha cha Sarya daitya janeswarah, Salabha Saagarh Saashi Kalpadruma Vikalpakah / Hemaado Hemabhagi cha Himakartho Himaachalah, Bhudharo Bhumido Meruh Kailaasa Sikharo Girih / Loka -lokantaro Loki Biloki Bhuvaneswarah, Dikpaalo Dikpathirdivyo Divyakaayo Jitendriah / Virupo Rupavan Ragi Nrithya Geetavisaaradah, Haha Huhu Chitraratho Devashi Naradah Sakha / Viswadevah Saadhya Devah Grithaasheeschalochalah, Kapilo Jalpako Vaadi Duttho Haihayasangharaat/ Vasishto Vaamadevascha Saptarshipravaro Bhriguh, Jaamadagnyo Mahaveerah KshatriyantakaroRishih/ Hiranyakashipuschaiva Hiranyaksho Harapriyah, Agastih PulahoRakshah Paulosthyo Ravano Ghatah/ DevaariTapasastapi Vibhishana Harapriyah, Tejasvi Tejassteyji Eesho Rajapathih Prabhuh/ Daasarathi Raaghavo Ramo Raghuvamsa vivardhanah, Seetaapathih Pathih Srimaan Brahmanyo Bhaktavatsalah/ Sannadah Kavachi Khadgi Cheeravaasa Digambarah, Kireeti Kundali Chaapi Shankha chakri Gadadharah/ Kausalyonandanodaro Bhumishaayee Griha Priyah, Saumithro Barato Baalah Shatrughno Bharataagrajah / Lakshmanah Paraviraghnah Stree Shahaayaka Kapeeswarah, Hanuman Ruksha Raajascha Sugreevo Balinaashanaha/ Dutapriyo Dutakaarihyangado Gadatham Varah, Vanadhwamsi Bani Vegee VaanaroVaanaradhvajah/ Laanguli Nakhi Damshtree hahakaro varah, Bhayasetur mahasethu bhaddha Setu Rameswarah/ Jaanaki Vallabhah Kaami Kireeti Kundali Khagi, Pundareeka Visaalaaksho Mahabaahur ghanaakrutih/ Chanchalchapalah Kaami Vaami Vaamankavasalah, Streepriyah Streeparah Strainah Striyo Vaamankavasakah/ Jithavairi Jitakaamo Jitakrodho Jitendriyah, Shantho Daantho Dayaraamohyekastreevratha dharakah/ Saatvikah Satvasamsthano Madahaa Krodhaha Kharah, Bahuraakshasa samveethah Sarva Raakshsa naashakrut/ Raayanaaree Ranakshudra dasa mastaka chhedakah, Raajyakaari Yagnakaari Daata Bhokta Tapodhanah/ Ayodhyadhipatih Kaantho Vaikunthokuntha vigrah, Satyavrato Vrati Surastapi Satyaphalapradah/ Sarva Saakshi Sarvagascha Sarvapraanaharovyayah, Praanaschyapaanaascha Vyanodanah Samaanakah/ Naagah Krukalah Kurmischa Devadattho Dhananjayah, Sarvapraanivido Vyaapi Yogadharaka –dharakah/ Tatvavidstatvadas tatvi Sarva Tatva Visharadah, Dhyanasto Dhyanashaali cha Manasvi Yoga vitthamah/ Brahmajno Brahmado Brahmajnaata cha Brahma sambhaya, Agnaatyayith vido topo Jyoti Rupo Niranjanah/ Jnaanado Jnaanah Gyani Guruh Sishyopadeshikah, Susishyah Sikshitah Shaali Sishya Sikshaa Visharadah/ Mantrado Mantraha Mantri Tantri Tantri Jantri Sanmantro Mantravid mantri Yantra mantraika bhanjanah/ Maarano Mohano Mohi Stambhocchatana krut Khalah, Bahumaayo Vimaayascha Mahamayaa vimohakah/ Mokshado Bandhako Vandihyakarshanah, Hreenkaaro Beeja Rupeecha Kleenkarah Keelakaadhipah / Saunkaara Shaktimaancchaktih Sarva Shakti Dharo dharah, Akarokaara Omkaarascchando Gayatra Sambhavah /Vedo Vedavido Vedi Vedadhyayi sadaa Sivah, Rukyajur Saamaarthaveshah Saamagaana –karokari/ Tripado Bahupaadi cha Satpathah Sarvatomukhah, Praakrutah Samskruto Yogi Geetagrandha prahelikah/ Saguno Vigunashcchando Nissango Viguno guni, Nirguno Gunavaan Sangi Karmi Dharmicha Karmadah/ Nishkarma Kamakaami cha Nissangah Sanga Varjithah, Nirlobho Nirahankaari Nishkichana Jana Priyah/ Sarva Sangakaro Raagi Sarvathyagi Bahiswarah, Ekapaado Dwipaadascha Bahu paadolyalpa paadakah / Dwipadastripadah Paadi Vipaadi Padasangrahaha, Khecharo Bhucharo Bhraami Bhrungakeeta madhupriyah/ Ruthuh Samvatsaro Maasoyanah Pakshoharnishaha, Krutha Tretha Kalischaiva Dwaparaschaturaakrutih / Deshakaalakarah

Kaalah Kula dharmah Sanaatanah, Kalaa Kaashthaa Palaa NadyoThaamah Pakshah Sithasithah/ Yugo Yugandharo Yogyo Yuga dharma pravartakah, Kulaachaarah Kulakarah Kula Daivakarah Kuli/ Chaturashramachari cha Gruhastho hyathithipriyah, Vanastho Vanachaari cha Vaanaprastha ashramashrami / Vatuko Brahmachaari cha Shikhasutri Kamandali, Trijati Dhyanavaan Dhyaani Badrikaashrama yaasakruta/ Hemaadri Prabhayo Haimo Hemaraashi -himaamkarah, Mahaaprasthanako Vipro Viraagi Raagavaan Gruhi/ Naranarayano Naagi Kedaarodarvigrahah, Gangadwara Tapassarastapovana Taponidhi/ Nidhiresha Maha Padmah Padmaakara shriyalayah, Padmanabhah Pareetatma Parivrat Purushotthamah/ Paraanandaha Puraanascha Samradraja viraajakah, Chakrastha Chakravaalasya Chakravarthi Niradhipah/ Ayurvedavido Vaidyo Dhanvantarischa Rogahaa, Aushadhi beejasambhuto Rogi Roga Vinashakrut / Chetanaschetakoyachintya Chittha Chinta Vinashakruth, Ateendrayah Sukhasparshascharaachari Vihangamah / Garudah Pakshirajascha Chakshusho Viataatmajah, Vishnu yaana Vimaanastho Manomaya –turangamah / Bahuvrishti karo Varshi Airavanaviraavanah, Ucchauhshrava Hayogami Haridashvo Haripriyah / Pravrusho Meghamaali cha Gajaratnam Purandarah, Vasudo Vasudharascha Nidraaluh Pannagaasanah/ Seshashaayi Jaleshahi Vyasah Satyayati sutah, Veda Vyasakaro Vaagmi Bahushaakhaa Vikalpakah / Smritih Puraana dharmaarthi Paraavara vichakshanah, Sahasra sheersho Sahasraakshah Sahasravadanojjvalah / Sahasrabahuh Sahasranshuh Sahasra Kiranonnatah, Bahusirshekasirsha cha Trishira Vishirah shikhi/ Jatilo Bhasmaragi cha Divyambaradharah Suchih, Anurupo Brihadrupo Virupo Vikarakrithih/ Samudramaadhako Maathi Sarvaratnaharoharih, Vajra vaiduryako Vajri Chintamani mahamanih/ Anirmulyo Mahamulyo Nirmulyah Surabhih Sukhee, Pitaa Maatha Shishurbandhurdhata Twashtararymaa Yamah / Anthahstho Bahyakari cha Bahih -stho vai Bahiswarah, Paavanah Paavakah Paki Sarva Bhakshi Huthashanah/ Bhagavan Bhagahaa Bhaagi Bhavabhanjo Bhayankarah, Kayasthah Karyakari cha Karyakartha Karapradah/ Eka Dharma Dwidharma cha Sukhi Dutyopa jeevakah, Palakas tarakas -thraatha Kaalo Mushaka bhakshakah / Sanjeevano Jeevakartha Sajeevo Jivasambhavah, Shadvimshako Maha Vishnuh Sarva Vyapi Maheswarah / Divyangado Muktamaali Srivatso Makaradhwajah, ShyamamurthirGhanashyamah Peetavaasah Shubhaanananh/ Chiravaasa vivaasaascha Bhuta Daanava Vallabhah Amrithomritha bhaagi cha Mohini Swarupa Dharakah /Divyadrishtih Samadrushtiddeva danava vamchakah, Kabandhah Kethukari cha Swarbhaanuschandra taapanah / Graharaajo Grahi Graahah Sarvagraha Vimochakah,daanamaanajapo homah Saanukuulah Shubhagrahah / Vighnakartha apahartha cha Vighnanasho Vinayakah, Apakaaropakaari cha Sarva Siddhi Phala Pradah / Sevakah Samadaani cha Bhedhi Dandi cha Matsari, Dayavaan Daanasheelascha Daani Yajva Pratigrahi / Haviragnicharusthaali Samidascha Tilo Yavah, Hotovuddhata Shuchih Kundah Saamago Vaikruthih savah / Dravyam Paatraani Sankalpo Musalo Haaranih Kushah, Deekshito Mandapo Vediryajamaanah Pashuh Krathuh / Dakshina Swastimaan Swasthihaasheervadah Shubhapradah, Adivruksho Mahavruksho Devavruksho Vanaspathih /Prayaago Venimaan Veni Nyagrodhaakshayo vatah, Sutirthastirthakaari cha Tirtharajo Vrathi Vrathah / Vrittidaata Prudhuh Patro Dogdha Gorvatsa evacha, Ksheeram Kshiravahah Ksheeri Ksheera bhaga vibhaga vith / Rajyabhaagavido bhaagi Sarva bhaaga vikalpah, Vaahano Vaahako vegi paadachari Tapaswarah / Gopano Gopako Gopi Gopakanyayiharakrit, Vaasudevo Visaalaakshah Krishno Gopijanapriyah/ Devakinandano Nandi Nandagopa grishaasrayi, Yashodanandano Dami Damodara Ulookhali / Putanaari Trinaavartahaari Shakataprabhanjakah, Navanitapriyo Vaagmi Vatsapaalaka baalaah/ Vasurupadharo Vatsi Vatsaha Dhenukaanthakrit, Vakaarirvanavaasi cha Vanakreeda visaradah/ Krishavarnaakrutih Kantho Venuvetra vidhaarakah, Gopamokshakaro Moksho Yamunapulinaturah / Mayavatsakaro Maayi Brahma mayapamohakah, Atmasaara viharaksho Gopadarakadarakah / Gochari Gopatirgopo Govardhanadharo Bali, Kaaleeya –mardanah Kaali Yamunaa hrada vihaarakah / Sankarshano Balashalyadhyo Baladevo Halaayudhah, Laangali Musali Chakri Ramo Rohininandanah / Yamunaararshanodwaro Neelavaasaa Hali thadha, Revati ramano, Lololo Bahumaanakarh Parah / Dhenukaari Mahaviro Gopakanya Vidushakah, Kaama maana harah Kaami Gopivaasopa taskarah/ Venu vaadi cha Naadi cha Nritya geetavisharadah, Gopimohakaro Gaano Raasako Rajanicharah / Divyamali Vimaalicha Vanamaala vibhushitah, Kaitabharischa Kamsaarimadhuha Madhusudanah / Chaanuramardano Mallo Mushti Mushtaka Nashaka krit, Muraha Modako Modi Madghana Narakanthakrit / Vidyadhyayi Bhumishayi Sudaamascha Sakha Sukhi, Sakalo Vikalo Vaidyah Kalitovai

Kalanidhih / Vidyashaali Vishaalicha Prtru Matru Vimokshakah, Rukmini ramano ramyah Kaalindipatih Shankhaha/ Panchajanyo Maha Padmo Bahunayaka nayakah, Dundhumaaro Nikumbaghna Shambara anto Rati Priyah / Pradumna Aniruddhischa Saatvataampatir arjunah, Phalgunascha Gudakeshaha Savyasaachi Dhananjayah / Kiriticha Dhanushpaanirveda visharadah, Sikhandi Saatyakih Shaivyo Bhimo Bhimaparakramah / Paanchaala abhimanyus cha Saubhadro Draupatipathih, Yudhishtaro Dharmaraajah Satyavaadi Suchivratah / Nakulah sahadevascha Karno Duryadhano Ghrini, Gaangeyosya Gadaapaanir Bhishmo Bhiradhi sutah / PanchaakshurDhritaraashtro Bhaaradjoshya Gautamah, Asvatthama Vikarnakar -nascha Jahuryu dhavisharadah / Shamantiko Gadi Gaalyo Vishwamitro Duraasadah, Duryaasa Durvinitischa Markandeyo Maha Munih / Lomasho Nirmalo (A)lomi Dhirghayuscha Chiro(A)chari, Punarjeevamritho Baavi Bhuto Bhavyo Bhavisyakah / Trikaalosya Trilingascha Trinethrar Tripathipathih, Yaadavo Yaagnyavalkyas cha Yadurvamsava vardhanah / Shalyakridi Vikridascha Yadavaantha Kalih Kalih, Sadyo Hridayo Daayado Dayabhaakdayi Dayi / Mahodadhirmahipushto Neela Parvata Vaasa krit, Eakavarno Vivarnascha Sarva varna bahischarah / Yagna Nandi Veda Nandi Vedabaaho Balo Balih, Vaidyari Baadhako Bhaago Jannadho Jagatpathih / Bhaki BhagavatoBhaagi Vibhakto Bhagavatpriyah, Trigramosya Navayaranyo Grihopanishadaasanah / Shaalagraama shilatayukto Vishalo Gandakaasrayah, Ritudevah Shruthah Shraavi Shrutabodhaha Shritashravaah / Kalkih Kaalakalah Kalki Dushta mleccha vinaashakrit, Kunkumi Dhavalo Dhirah Kshamaakaro Vrishakapih / Kinkarah Kinnarah Kanvaha Keki Kimpurushadhipah, Ekaroma Viroma cha Bahuroma Brihatkavih/ Vrajapraharano Vajri Brihaghno Vaasavaanujah, Bahutirtha karastirthah Sarva Tirtha Javeswarah/ Vyatipaato paraagascha Daana Vriddhikarah Shubhah, Asankheyoprameyascha Sankhyakaaro Visankhyahah / Mihikottharakstaro Balachandrah Sudhakarah, Nirlokascha Nirakaari Brahma kaaraika kaarakah / Dauhitrakah Putrakah Poutro Napta Vamsadharo dharah / Dravibhuto Dayaluscha Sarva Siddhi prado manih, Aaadhaaropi Vidhaarascha Dharaasunuh Sumangalaha / Mangalo Mangalaakaaro Mangalyaha Sarva Mangalah/ Naamnaam Sahasram Naamedam Vishnortulatejasah, Sarva Siddhi karam Kaamyam Punyam Hariharatmakam/ Yah Pathethpratruddhya Shuchi bhutva Samaahitah, Yaschedam Shrunuyannityam Naro Nischala Maanasah, Trisandhyam Shraddhayah yuktah Sarva Paapapaih Pramuchyatey/

The above Vishnu Sahasranaama bestows all kinds of 'Siddhis' (Accomplishments) and fulfills all desires. Those who read or hear the 'Stotra' with concentration and earnestness during Three Sandhyas a day would for certain become free from past and present sins. After reading the Stotra, a Devotee should sincerely greet Bhagavan Vishnu and read: Sahasraakshah Sahasraanghrih Sahasravadanojjvalah, Sahasranaamanthaakshah Sahasrabhuja the Namaha / (Source: Avanti Khanda of Skanda Purana)

#### ESSENCE OF VAMANA PURANA

*Trailokya Rajyamaakshipya Balerindraaya yo dadao, Shridhayaya Namastasmai Chhatra Vaamana Rupine!* (My salutations to Shridhara Bhagavan assuming the Mayamaya Rupa of Vamana and retaining Lakshmi in his heart always secured and restored the Trilokas to Indra).

Brahmamarshi Narada requested Maharshi Pulastya to narrate the details of Vamana Purana and the latter commenced the narration with the account of Devi Sati and Parama Shiva as during the Varsha Ritu the latter sat riding on the thick clouds on the sky and Deva Deva was called 'Jeemutakethu' or 'Jeemuta Vahana'. After the Sharad Ritu, Maha Deva and Devi Sati relaxed on the peak of Mandaraachala and Bhagavan Vishnu woke up from Yoga Nidra while Daksha Prajapati decided to perform a massive Yagna along his wife Ahimsa Devi and invited Indra and Devatas, Dwadasha Adityas, and Kashyapa Muni. He

invited a host of Maharshis and their wives like Vasishtha and Arundhati, Atri and Anasuya, Vishwamitra and Dhriti, Goutama and Ahalya, Bharadwaja and Amaaya and Angira and Devi Chandra. Arishtanemi was detailed to fetch Samidhas for the Yagna while Bhrigu Maharshi was asked to conduct the Yagna.

# Kapaali atones at Varanasi for Brahma's 'Panchamukha hatya'

But Daksha did not invite Mahadeva as he felt that the latter was a 'Kapaali'! Pulastya Muni explained to Narada that background of Shiva becoming a Kapaali; when Maha Vishnu fell into Yoga Nidra and at the end of the night, woke up and under the influence of 'Rajoguna' initiated 'Srishti' and materialised Panchamukha Brahma and Tamomaya Shankara. Both Brahma and Shiva confronted each other and asked them of their credentials and background. As their mutual 'Ahankaaraas' or egos came to the fore, they encountered in a one-to-one fight and as the fifth Face of Brahma heckled at Shiva saying that he knew Shiva who was naked and three eyed Vrishabha Vahana or Bull-carried Pralayakaari or the Destroyer of the World full of Tamoguna. Parama Shiva desired to open his Third Eye but nipped the fifth head of Brahma with the finger tip instead and there appeared, a huge illumination out of which emerged Vishnu who reprimanded Mahesha and asked him to clear away at once lest he would punish Shiva severely. Aa Shiva was ashamed of what he did, he left for Himalayas and reached the Ashram of Nara Narayana Maharshis at Badarikashrama on the banks of the Holy River Saraswati. Shiva requested Narayana Maharshi to hit his shoulder with Shiva's Trishula forcefully as an atonement which Narayana did and from the shoulder were materialised three water springs, one as Akaasha Ganga, another as a water fall on Earth as Maharshi Atri in the form of River Mandakini as also by Shivaamsha the Maharshi Durvaasa and the third water fall fell right on the frightful Kapaala. From out of the fallen Kapaala of Brahma came out a frightening Swarupa which was thick blue in colour with blood red eyes and dishevelled hair and demanded Maha Deva to absorb her into his body. Shankara tried to bathe in River Yamuna but the River'got dried up; River Saraswati too disappeared; he was able to bathe in the Tirthas of Pushkaraaranya, Dharmaaranya, and Saindhavaaranya for long but the Brahma hatya paapa did not vanish still; as the Jeemuta vahana or who could travel by clouds, Shankara bathed in several other Rivers, Tirthas, Ashramaas, and so on but to no avail. Finally, Shankara reached Kurukshetra and had the darshan of Chakrapani Vishnu and extolled him as follows: Namastey Devataanaatha Namastey Garudadhwaja, Shankhachakra gadaa paaney Vaasudeva Namostutey/ Namastey Nirgunaananta Apratakraaya Vedhasey, Jnaanaajnaana Niraalamba SarwaalambaNamostutey/ Rajoyukta Namastestu Brahma Murtey Sanaatana, Twayaa Sarvamidam Naatha Jagatsrashtam charaacharam/ Satvaadhishtit Lokeshaa Vishnu Murtey Adhokshaja, Prajaapaala Mahaabaaho Janaardana Namostutey/ Tamomurtey Ahamheysha twadamshakrodha sambhayah, Gunaabhiyukta Devesha Saryayyaapin Namostutey/ Bhuriyah twam Jagannatha Jalaambara hutaashanah, Vaayurbuddhirmanaschaapi Sharvari twam namostutey/ Dharmo Yagnastapah Satyamahimsaa Shouchamaarjavam, Kshamaa Daanam Dayaa Lakshmirbrahmacharya twam Ishwara/ Twam saangaaschaturo Vedaastwam Vedyo Vedapaaragah, Upavedaa bhavaaneesha Sarvosi twam Namostutey/ Namonamastyochyuta Chakrapaaney Namastestu tey Maadhaya Meena Murtey, Lokey Bhayaan Kaaruniko mato mey traayaswa maam Keshaya paapa bandhanaat/ Mamaashubham naashaaya vigrahastham yad Bramha hatyaabhavam babhuva, Dagdhosmi nastosya sameekshakaari puneeh teerthosi Namo Namastey/ (My salutations to you Devataaswami, Garudadwaja, Shankha-Chakra-Gadaadhaari, Vaasudeva, Nirguna, Ananta, Atarkaneeya Vidhaata or indisputable Supreme, Jnaana-Ajnaana Swarupa, Nmiraadhaara or Unclamped or holdles but the saviour of one and all; Rajo guna-Sanatana-Brahma Murti; the Supreme Scripter of the Universe in entirety; the Embodiment of Satwa Guna; Lokesha; Vishnu Murti, Adhokshaja, The Ultimate Adminisdtrator; Maha Baahu, Janaardana, Tamo Murti; I was born of your angry characeristics; Jagannaatha! You are the Pancha Bhutas, Buddhi, Mind, Darkness; You are the Dharma, Yagna, Tapas, Satya, Ahimsa, Pavitrata, Saralata, Kshama, Daana, Dayaa, Lakshmi and Brahmacharya -Virtue, Sacrifice, Meditation, Truth, Non-Violence, Purity, Softness, Forgiveness, Charity, Mercy, Wealth and Celibacy; the Embodiment of Veda Vedangaas, the Symbol of Learning, Vedopavada, Achyta, Chakrapaani, Matsyaavataara, Madhava, you are the most sympathetic and compassionate; I crave your indulgence to get me freed from the clench of Brahmahatya Paataka; I am humiliated and ashamed of my action as you are indeed the final asylum and

shelter as You indeed are the Maha Tirtha who only get me purified!). Vishnu Deva replied that at Prayaga, there was a Yogashayi of his 'Amsha' or Alternate Form was reputed to be present who was Avyaya and Vikara rahita and south of that place was a Sacred River called 'Varana' and to the left of Prayaga was another River called 'Ási' and the Place between the two Rivers was the most hallowed Place the like of which was not in existence in Prithvi, Aakash and Rasatala and that was the famed Varanasi; Vishnu thus advised Kapali to visit the Maha Tirtha which was the confluence of the two Rivers. Janardana further advised Shiva that nearby Varanasi there was a Sarovara full of divinely lotuses of extraordinary fragrance and in that Sarovara, he should bathe in and leave the Panchama Kapaala of Brahma in the Tirtha. By so doing, *Kapaali lokey cha khyaato Rudra bhavisyati, Kapaala mochaneytyevam Tirha chedam Bhavishyati/* (Shiva! You would then be named as Kapaali and the Sarovara would be popular as Kapaala Vimochana Tirtha. [Kapalamochana Tirtha is situated at a mile from Kasi called now as Bakariya Kunda].

# Sati Devi's self- sacrifice and destruction of Dakhsha Yagna

Meanwhile, Kumari Jaya the daughter of Maharshi Gautami and Ahalya dropped in at Devi Sati's residence and informed the latter that her parents went away to attend Daksha Yagna and wondered why Sati did not attend the Yagna; Jayaayaastadvachah shrutwa Vajrapaatasamam Sati, Manyunaabhiplutaa Brahman Panchatwamagamat tatah! (Pulastya Muni told Narada, that as soon as Kumari Jaya informed of this 'Vajrapaata Vaarta' or thunderbolt fall like news, Sati Devi swooned with anger and distress and collapsed to death!). On hearing this terrifying news, Rudra was startled and furious so much that his body hairs stood up and multitude of Rudra Ganaas who were ferocious like lions got manifested along with Veerabhadra, Chandika and the Ganaas were all lined up towards Vayavya direction shouting insolently and armed with Trishulas /Tridents towards the Daksha Yagna. Ganeswara too joined the Party with his four arms armed with Trushula, Dhanush, Baana and Gada. Yamaraja was the Dwarapalaka defending the Yagna and confronted the attacking Shivasena but the formidable Ganeswara was too powerful and Veerabhadra entered the Yagnashaala. The Ashtaavasus, Vishwadeva, Saadhyaganas, Siddha-Gandharva-Pannaga-Yaksha-Kimpurusha-Vaivaswata / Chandra Vamseeya Kings, Daitya-Daanayas ran helter-skelter. Vishnu himself defended the onslaught as Maharshis were frightened and controlled Veerabhadra. Shiva appeared on the scene and emitted three kinds of Agnis from his three eyes viz. Ahavaneeya, Garhapatya and Shaalaagni who displayed Dwandwa Rupas or two distinct Forms of Jataadhaari in the Yagnashaala and Kaala on the Sky! Jataadharah Haridrushtaa krodhaadaarakta lochanam/ Sthaanaadapaakramya Kubjaagrey antarhitah Sthitaha/ (As Jatadhaari Shiva looked ferocious with blazing eyes, Bhagavan Vishnu disappeared and hid himself at Kubiaagra or Hrishikesha). As Maha Deva went wild and berserk, Kashyapa and many illustrious sought to pacify him by reciting 'Shatarudreeyam' and Daksha's wife implored Shiva for mercy and devastation of Daksha Yagna was completed.

Explanation of Nakshatras and Rashis or Stars and Constellations in terms of Shiva's Body: In reality however, Maharshi Pulastya explained to Narada, Maheswara was of 'Mangalmaya Swarupa' and was spread all over the Sky to bless the Universe and all the Beings providing ready protection to one all. Nakshatras and 'Raashis' constituted the entire Physique of Maha Deva: the Stars Ashwini, Bharani and Krittika's first 'charana' or the first part of the four parts of Bhouma Kshetra (Planet) of Mesha Raashi (Constellation) constituted Maha Deva's head; Krittika Star's remaining three parts, Rohini, and Mrigaseersha's two Parts of Shukra Planet of Vrisha Raashi constituted Shiva's face; Mrigaseersha's remaining Parts, Ardra and Punarvasu's three Parts of Budha's Mithuna Raashi constituted Shiva's two 'bhujas' shoulders; Punarvasu's last Charana, Pushya and Aslesha of Chandra's Kshetra in the Karka Raashi constituted Shiva's 'parshvaas' or body sides; Magha, Purvaphalguni and Uttara Phalguni's first Charana of Surya's Simha Raashi constituted Shiva's heart; Uttaraphalguni's remaining three Charanaas, Hasta, and the first of two Paadaas of Chitra of Budha's Kanya Raashi comprised Shankara's 'Jathara'or stomach; Chitra's remaining two Parts, Swati and Vishakha's three Parts of Shukra of Tula Raashi was Shiva's navel; Vishakha's one Part, and Sampurna Anuraadha and Jeshtha Stars of Mangala and of

Vrischika raashi constituted the Kaala Rupa of Maha Deva; the full Stars of Moola, Purvaashaadha and Uttaraashaadhaa's first Charana of Dhanu Raashi being of Brihaspati Kshetra would be Maheswara's 'Vurus' or thighs; Uttaraashaadha's remaininig three Charanaas, Shravana and two parts of Dhanishta of Makara Raashi of Shani Kshetra constituted Shiva's Ghutanas or knee-caps; Star Dhanishta's earlier two Charanas, Shatabhisha and Poorvaa -bhaadraa's three Charanaas of Kumbha Raashi of Shani constituted 'janghaas' or buttocks; Poorvabhadraa's fourth harana, Uttaraabhaadra and Revati of Brihaspati's second Kshetra of Meena Raashi constituted Maha Deva's both the feet. Mesha Raasi has its movement in the circle of Nava Durgas, Dhana-Dhanya and Pushpa-Vanaspati Sarovaras; Vrishabha Rasi is in the Territory of Gokula Deva residing in the Karshaka Bhumi or the Provider of Farming Benefits, cool, convincing, and have an eye for details; Mithuna Raasi is a coexistent Place of Purushas and Strees /men and women alike engaged in music, dance and other fine arts as also sports and tourism; Karka Raashi or of the symbol of a crab of attractive features of detachment, loneliness and of maturity; Simha Raashi persons are fond of entreprise, public relations, mental agility and royal in gait and nature; Kanya raashi persons are courageous, highly sociable, intelligent, quick to learn, adapting and charming; Tula raashi persons are non- controversial, tolerant and adjustable; Vrischik Raashi persons are friendly, resourceful, adaptable and calculative; Dhanu raashi entreprising, skilled in military and daring activities, royal in behaviour and outlook. Thus Parameshwara is a multi-featured, multi- creative and multi-formed entity and at the same time an Omni-Present, Omni-Scient and Omni-Potent Symbol of Unity in Diversity!

## 'Shiva Lingodbhavana' (The origin of Shiva Linga) and its worship

Dharma was the ManasPutra of Brahma and the former who was married to one of the daughter of Daksha Prajapati named Murti gave birth to four sons viz. Hari, Krishna, Nara and Narayana.

Of these Hari and Krishna took to Yogaabhyaas while Nara and Narayana practised Tapas at Badarikaashrama. Indra was unnerved by the severe Tapasya of Nara- Narayana and deputed Rambha and some other Apsaraas along with Kama Deva and Vasanta Ritu. Kama Deva released an arrow named 'Unmadan' which literally meant frustrating or maddening. Shiva got restless with obsession and passion with feelings of great void in the absence of Sati Devi and like a lunatic went around bathing in Yamuna and many Rivers, Tirthas, Sarovaras, flower gardens, mountain peaks and enchanting forests, sometimes singing songs of sorrow missing Sati and sometimes crying for her. Finally he met the son of Yaksha King Kubera called Paanchaalika and asked him to take over the Unmadana Astra of Kama Deva as he only could absorb it since he had the history of resisting even more powerful Astras like Vijrumbhana, Santaapana and Unmadana; in return, Shiva said that he would bestow the boon to the Yaksha viz. in the Chaitra Month, all the Beings in the World including children, youth and the elderly would worship him as also sing, dance and play vocal and instrumental music and that he would be reputed as Panchakilesh everywhere. Having become free from the after effects of the attack by Kamadeva of the 'Unmadini' arrow, Bhaganan Shiva then moved freely from place to place, although avoiding another attack by Kamadeva. In the course of his wanderings, Mahadeva reached Vindhyachala and entered Daaruvana where the Ashramas of illusrious Maharshis existed. Except Pativratas like Anasuva and Arundhati, all the wives and daughters of Maharshis got infatuated with Parama Shiva who was naked and had such mesmerising body features and enchanting looks; in fact the females of Daaruvana followed him like lunatics. Maharshis of Daaruvana were in great rage: Tadastu Rishaye drishtaa Bhargavaangaraso Muney, Krodhhan -vitaabuvansarvey Lingosyapatataan Bhuvi! Tatah papaat Devasya Lingam Pruthveen Vidaarayan, Antardhaanam Jagaamaatha Trishul Nilalohitah/ (The Maharshis like Bhargava and Angirasa cursed Mahadeva to let his Linga fall on Earth; as soon as he received the Shaapa, Shiva disappeared to Rasatala and started creating havoc to the whole world and shook away the Earth, mountains, Rivers and Seas and commenced destroying Rasaatala upwards. Brahma by his Hamsavahana and Vishnu by his Garuda vahana ran to the Place where Shiva Linga Patana or his Linga fell and traced Shiva's presence in the Patalaas and extolled him as follows: Namostu tey Shuapaaney Namostu Vrishabhadwaja, Jeemutavaahana Kavey Sharva Traibaaka Shankara/ Maheshvara Maheshaana Suvarnaaksha Vrishaakapey, Daksha Yagna kshayakara Kaalrupa Namostutey/ Twamaadirasya

Jagatsarvam Madhyam Parameshwara, Bhayaanantascha Bhagayan Sarvagastwam Namostutey/ Haying eulogized Parama Shiva as above, both Vishnu and Brahma overruled the curse of the Maharshis of Daaruvana and requested Shiva to take back his Linga again. Shiva agreed to do so only on the condition that his Linga was worshipped by one and all and both Brahma and Vishnu readily agreed; in fact Brahma materialised a golden Linga called Jagat Pradhaana and performed puia to Shiva's feet at once as others followed suit viz. Krishna worshipped a black coloured Linga called Urjita and did puja to Shiva's head; Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanat Kumars worshipped Shiv's heart naned as named Jagadrati; Sapta Rishis called Darbhamayi Linga as Vishwa Yoni; Narada named the Linga called Jagatvija as 'Ákaasha'; Indra prayed to a Diamond Linga called Jagatvida; Surya worshipped a copper Linga called Vishwasruga; Chandra performed Puja to a Pearl Linga called Jagatpati and so on. [Details are provided in the Essence of Skanda Purana by the same Author in the Chapter of Shata Rudreeyam]. Shiva then acquired the names of Shaivaites, Pashupataits, Kaalamukhayaas and Bhairavas by different Shiva Bhaktas; Shakti Rishi, the son of Vasishta Muni as also Shaki's sishya named Gopayan spread the cult of Shaivism; Bharadwaja Rishi and Somashekhara King Rishabha were the pioneers of Maha Pasuupatya; Maharshi Apastamba initiated Kalamukha Sampradaaya; and Yaksha King Kubera venerated Shiya in the sampradaya of Kaapaalikas or Bhairavaas. Yet Kama Deva persisted his efforts to pester Maha Deva and used 'Santaapa Astra' named floral arrow and as he was enraged, Shiva opened his Third Eye as Kamadeva got burnt off and got re-materialised as 'Ananga Deva' thanks to the merciful It was that Ananga who was sent by Indra to disturb the attention of Rambha and other Apsaras like Rambha along with Kamadeva and the Vasanta Ritu referred to above so that Dhara Deva's sons Nara Narayana Munis. The smiling Narayana Rishi who was least disturbed by these so-called diversions ushered in by the Apsaras and others in the Troupe created from his thighs an astonishingly beautiful Apsara named Urvashi and asked Rambha and other Apsaras- who actually came to tempt Nara Narayana Rishis at the instance of Indra to treat Urvashi as a return-gift to Indra since Urvashi too was worthy of joining the corps of Apsaraas! The Apasaras returned to Indra and narrated the greatness of Nara Narayana Maharshis and Indra was felt too small since he foolishly under-estimated the magnificence of the Maharshis; Indra also felt bad that in this context he involved Kama Deva who provoked no less a Personality as Maha Deva himself and as a result lost his very existence but of the mercy of Shiva!

#### The legend of Nara Narayana and Prahlada

The Apsaraas further conveyed to Indra the memorable account of of Nara Narayana and Prahlada, the son of Hiranya Kashipu which was famed and discussed about among the Bhuloka, Patala and all the Ten Directions! As Prahlada became the King of the Patala Lokas, the Administration was fully according to the Principles of Dharma and Nyaya and the Varnashramas were in full observance: Brahmanas were engaged in Tapasya-Dharma Karyaas and Tirtha Yatras, Vaishyas were in Business, Farming and Pashu Paalana while Shudras were involved in performing sincere service to other Varnas. It was at this time that the illustrious Chyavana Maharshi took his bath at Nakuili Tirtha on the banks of the Sacred River Narmada but was caught a highly poisonous snake which dragged the Sage who at once memembered Bhagavan Srihari who rendered the sarpa as non-poisonous. The frightening serpent released the Maharshi in Rasatala and some of the Naga Kanyas found and venerated the Maharshi and eventually, King Prahlada came to know of the incident of a vicious Naga dragging the Maharshi and worshipped him. In course of his Dharmic discussions, the King enquired about the most important Tirthas and Chyavana singled out Naimisha in Prithvi, Pushkara in Antariksha and Chakra Tirtha in Paatala. Prahlada instantly asked the Daityas to get ready at once to visit Nimisha for the darshan of Bhagavan Achyuta. In Nimisha while moving about looking for deers as a prey for his food, he found a huge tree on which there were two pairs of oversized bows and arrows hung on and undre the tree there were two Maharshis in deep meditation. The King wondered that it was ridiculous to see two Maharshis in Mrigacharma or deer skin in deep meditation also sporting bows and arrows! The King ridiculed the Rishis that they were neither Rishis now warriors; Nara Narayanas were provoked and challenged the King. The mild fight with one arrow from Nara was replied by five arrows of Prahlada; three of Nara by five by six of the Kingand so

on till the fight turened out to be a mighty battle; Nara overshadowed the Prithyi, Akaash and Dishas. The Daitya took up Bhrahmaastra but Narayana released Maheswaraastra; on finding Brahmastra futile, Prahlada picked up his Gada / Mace and pounced on Narayana Maharshi; the latter's eyes rained fire as a result of which Prithvi started trembling and quakes caused unusual destruction. As this warfare continued and since Narayana Maharshi was not to be controlled, King Prahlada finally prayed to Bhagavan Vishnu whose unquestionable dedication was well-known since the times of Prahlada as a child when Vishnu killed Hiranya Kashipu in the Avatara of Maha Nrisimha. Vishnu appeared before the illustrious Prahlada and said: Durjayosau Mahaabaahustatyaya Prahlaada Dharmajah, Saadhyo Vipravaro Dheemaan mrudhey devaasutairapi/ (Prahlada! Mahabaahu Dharmaja Narayana Maharshi is invincible on battle front by Devas and Daityas alike!). Then King got worried as to what would happen to his vow and Vishnu replied: Soham Danava Shardula Lokaanaam Hitakaamyayaa, Dharmam pravartaapyayitum Tapaschyaam samaathitah/ Tasmaadyadichachushrusha Dharmajam/ (As a matter of fact, I am myself the Swarupa of Narayana Maharshi; I decided to perform Tapasya in this form for the welfare of the Universe; Prahlada! If you desire to win over Narayana, then worship to the Maharshi would be the only way. On hearing this truism from Bhagavan himself, Prahlada decided to renounce kingship, called Andhakaasura the son of Hirananyaaksha as his successor, prostrated before Nara-Narayana Maharshis requesting him for clemency and extolled him, even as the Narayana Maharshi taunted Prahlada as to why was he saluting them without defeating them, as follows: Karustwaam jetum Prabho shaktah kastatwah Purushodhikah, Twam hi Naraayanonantah Peetavaaso Janaardanah/Twam Devah Pundarikaaksham twam Vishnuh Shaankha chaapa dhruk, Twamavyayayo Maheshaanah Shasvatah Purushottamah/ Twam Yoganischintyayanti Chaarchayanti Maneeshinah, Japanti Snaanakaasaastwam cha jayanti twaam cha Yaajnikaah/ Twamachyutey Hrishikeshas chakra -paani dharaadharah, Mahaa Meeno Hayashiraastwameya Vara Kacchapah/ Hirnyaksharipuh Shriman Bhagavannasura Sookarah, Matpitru naashanakaro Bhavaanapi Nrukesari/ Brahmaatrinetromararaad hutaashahah Pretaadhipo Neerapatih Sameerah, Suryo Mrigaankochala jangamaadyo Bhavaan Vibho naatha Khagendraketo/ Twam Prithvi Jyotiraakaashah Jalam Bhutwaa Sahasrashah, Twayaa Vyaaptam Jagatsarvam kastwaam jeshyati Madhavah/ Bhaktyaa yadi Hrishikesha Toshameshi Jagadguro, Naanyathaa twam Prashakyosi jetum Sarvagataayaya/ (Prabho! Who could defeat you in the battles! Is there anybody beyond you! Your are the Ananta Narayana, Peetaambari Janaardana, Kamalanayana Dhanushdhaari Vishnu, Ayaya, Meheswara, Shashvata, and Parama Purushotthama. Yogi janas perform dhyana to you; Vidwan Purushas perform Puja to you; Vedajanaas perform japaas to you; Yaajnikajana execute Yajanaas to you! You are Achyuta, Hrishikesha, Chakrapaani, Dharaadhara, Maha Matsya, Hayagriva, Shreshtha Kurma, Adi Varaha, and the killer of my father Hiranyakashipu in the Avatara of Nrisimha! You are Prithvi, Agni, Akasasha, Jala and Vayu! You have spread all over with endless Forms; Madahava, Jagadguru, Hrishikesha, Sarvagata, Avinaashi! You could be only conquered by Bhakti alone and nothing else!). Thus Prahlada took to the sacred path of high devotion to Narayana for good. Meanwhile, the blind King Andhakasura took to severe Tapas to Maheswara and secured the boon of invincibility, defeated Indra and Devataas with the active help of Virochana, the son of Prahlada, despite the resistance put up by Devas especially Varuna, Agni and Vayu. Varuna specially faced Shambarasura; and Agni encountered Andhakasura but the latter overpowered Agni who fled away. Finally Andhakasura defeated Devas and controlled Tri Lokas!

#### Legend of Daitya Sukeshi, Dharmopadesha, reformation, Surya's action and reaction

Maharshi Pulastya imparted considerable knowledge of Dharma at the Naimisharanya's congreation of Munis as narrated to Brahmarshi Narada. The King of Daityas Sukeshi performed sincere Tapasya to please Maha Deva and secured a boon 'Akashachari Nagara'or a Flying Abode with a provision of Movement from Place to Place which could carry a large number of qualified Rakshasas practising lives of Virtue and Nyaya! In the course of his flights, he spotted a hallowed place in Magadharanya and descended from the Airship for a close encounter with a large gathering of Rishis and after exchanging pleasantries asked the Rishis to educate him and his followers about 'Dharma Lakshanas' or the features of Virtue. The Rishis explained that broadly speaking, the fundamental Principles applicable to *Devatas* 

were Yajna and such other deeds, Swaadhyaaya of self-recitation of Vedas and Scriptures; Bahubala or physical strength, Irshyaa bhava or jealousy and greed, Expertise in Yuddha Vidya and Niti Shastra or the Precepts of Morality would constitute the basic principles of *Daityas*; the Principles applicable to Siddhaas would be Yoga Sadhana or Practice of Yoga, Vedaadhyayana, Brahma Vignaana, and Achanchala Bhakti or Deep Devotion to Shiva or Vishnu; Gandharva Dharmas would include High Order of Upasana or Power of Concentration, profound devotion to Devi Sarasvati and excellence and expertise in Fine Arts, especially music and dance; as regards Vidyaadharas were concerned, the basic precepts were brilliance of Vidya or Knowledge, high degree of Memory Power, Purushaartha Buddhi or inclination to abide by the Principles of Dharma-Artha-Kaama and Moksha; the Dharmas of Kimpurushas would include Gandharva Vidya Jnaana, high devotion of Surya Deva and Shilpa Kalaa Kushalata or the Arts of Stone and such other subjects of Creativity and Originality; the Dharmas of *Pitru Devatas* would include Brahmacharya, Anaamitwa or Egotism and Self-Consciousness, high of Yogaabhyaas and free movement; the Dharma of Rishis were Brahmacharya, Nimitaahaara, japa, Atma Jnaana and Dharma Jnaana; and finally the General Principles applicable to *Human beings* should include: Brahmacharva or celibacy, daana or charity, Yajna, Udaarata or benevolence, Vishranti or cool mindedness, Daya or kindness, Ahimsa or Non-Violence, Kshama or tolerance, Dama / control, Jitendriyata or Self-Regulation, Shoucha or Cleanliness, Mangalya or Auspiciousness, and Nitya Bhakti of Vishnu, Shiva, Surya, Durga Having described the Dharmas of various kinds of and any other Deities. Beings, the Rishis prescribed other Dharmas which had the characteristics of human beings as follows: the Griha Dharmas include Dhana or acquisition of adequate Monetary Resources, Bhoga or sufficient happiness, Swadhyaya or Recitation of Scriptures by the Self, Ahamkara or Awareness of one's own standards, and Sowmyata or Coolness and Maturity of Mind; Raakshasa Dharmaas would be Para Stree gamana, Lolupta or avarice / narrow mindedness, and of course Shiv Bhakti; Paishaachika Dharmaas include Avivekata or appropriate level of intelligence, Agnaana or ignorance, Apavitrata or lack of cleanliness, Asatyata or Untruthfulness, and Sadaa Mamsa Bhakshana. Then the Rishis gave the Knowledge of Prithvi occupying an area of Fifty Crore Yojanas. The Earth comprised Sapta Dwipas viz. Jambu Dwipa of a lakh of Yojanas surrounded by Lavana Samudra of twice the size of the Dwipa; Plaksha Dwipa of twice the size of Jambu Dwipa surrounded by Ikshurasa Sagara of double the size of the same Dwipa; Shalmali Dwipa of twice the size of Plaksha surrounded by Mahodhadhi of double the size of the same dwipa; Kusha Dwipa of the size of Shalmali surrounded by Suraa saagara of double the size of the Kusha Dwipa; then the Krouncha Dwipa surrounded by Ghrita Saagara of appropriate sizes as above; Shaaka Dwipa surrounded by Ksheera Samudra and Pushkara Dwipa surrounded by Swaadu Saagara of corresponding sizes. The Residents of those from Plaksha to Shaaka Dwipas are not affected by Yuga Vyvastha of the regulations of Satya-Treta-Dwapara and Kali Yugas as they are stated to be of Permanance and are as good as Devatas since their lif span would be till Kalpaanta. Naraka Varnana: The Pushkara Dwipa was described as frightening and horrifying as that Dwipa hosts the Twenty one Narakas viz. Rourava of two thousand Yojanas which is Prajjvalita Angaramaya; double the size is Maha Rourava whose earth is made of copper of sizzling hot temperature further heated thereunder; then the Tamishra, Andhataamishra, Kaalachakra, Apratishtha, Ghati Yantra, Asipatravana, Tatkumbha, Kutashaalmila, Karapatra, Shwaanabhojana, Samdamsha, Loha pinda, Karambhasikta, Bhayankara Kshaara Nadi, Krimi Bhojana, and Ghora Vaitarani Nadi. There are other Narakas as well like Shonita-Puya bhojana, Ksuraagra dhaara, Nishita Chakraka and Samshoshana Narakas as Antargata Places! Those who denounce Vedas, Devatas, and Brahmanas or heckle Puranas and Ithihaasaas and their contents or blame Gurus or those who create hindrances in performing Yagnas, Daanaas, Vratas and such other virtuous deeds would be destined to reach Narakas. Those who create differnces of opinions among friends, husband and wife, brothers and sisters, Master and Servants, Father / Mother and sons/daughters, Gurus and their Masters are also destined to serve in Narakas. Those who partake in a Shraaddha but take food elsewhere or engage in 'Atyaachaars' with women and children are sure to get attacked and torn of their body parts by fearful Naraka Pakshis or birds with fierce beaks and iron-like nails in appopriate Narakas. Those who reject the moral pleas of parents, Gurus and elders are made to force down their throats of body rejects as they are hung upside down in Apratishta Naraka. Those who take bhojan before

Devatas, Atithis /Guests, children, Parents and respectable persons are forced to starve and as and when allowed to consume are provided poisonous and blood-mixed food in Vidabhojana Naraka. Those who touch Brahmanas, Agni and Cows with impure hands especially while eating are sent to Taptakumbha Naraka. Those who stare at Sun, or gaze for fun at Moon and Stars while drinking intoxicants and eating are treated by Yamadutas by piercing and scorching their eyes. Those who spoil water bodies, Temples, religious places, Tirthas, gardens, Sabhaas or Public Places are literally skinned alive by Yamadutas. Those who perform ablutions in the presence of Cows, Agni, Brahmanas, Surya and Idols of Devas are subjected to cut pieces of the private parts. Those who take bhojan at the time of Akaal or famine by way of Atma-Poshan, while ignoring family and servants, are despatched to Swenabhojana Naraka. Those who request for refuge in times of calamities and death-kind of situations ignore such genuine entreaties are sent to Yantra peeda Naraka to face similar or far worse siuations and also by brutally beaten by Yamadutas. Those who who mate on Sacred Days, Shraddha days, or days of menses of women or women other than one's own wife are made to embrace burning metal blocks. Those who carry tales, accept bribes, and create mutual misunderstandings, back bitings, false rumours, or spread misleading interprations are Vrika bhakshak Naraka. Those who steal gold or valuables, Brahmahatyaris, Madyapis or drunkards, Gurupatnigaamis, stealers of Bhumi, Cows, or for that matter any activities connected with cheating; rapings, or killings especially of women and children, or providers of false witnesses or those engaged in dark activities or ransoms are all sent to Maha Rourava Naraka. Those who indulge in black marketing, Veda Vikraya and consciously organising dark activities like hoarding, bettings, making money by multiple misdeeds are all sent to Tamishra, Andhataaishra, Asipatrayana, and such other suitable Narakas. Sadaachaara Swarupa (Profile of Ethical Living): Rishis explained to Sukesha Daitya that the Dashaanga Dharma as applicable to all the Chatur Varnaas were Ahimsa (Non-Violence), Satya (Truthfulness), Asteya (Non-Stealing), Daana (Charity), Kshama (Forbearance), Dama or Indriya Nigraha (Control of Physique), Shama (Forgiveness), Akaarpanya (non-retaliation), Shoucha (Cleanliness of External and Internal Nature) and Tapa (Meditation). But the Rishis distinguished separate duties to Brahmanas: Brahmachari Dharma: Brahmachari Brahmanas after Upanayana or formal initiation to Sandhya vandana and Gayatri Japa would have to stay at the Residence of his Guru with his duties as: Swaadhyaaya or reciting of Scriptures as taught by the Guru, daily 'Havana' or Agni Karya as prescribed, Snaana, soliciting Bhiksha and consume as instructed by Guru, carrying out Guru's instructions with readiness and sincerity, learning Vedas and Scriptures as taught by Guru and at the end of the training from the Gurukula to enter Grihastaashrama or other wise as per Guru's instructions. Grihastaashrama Dharma: As per Sadaachaara prescribed by Scriptures and adapted from time to time, Rishis explained to Sukesha: Dharmosya mulam Dhanamashya shaakhaa Pushpamcha Kaamah Phalamasya Mokshah/ (Sadaachaara has its roots in Dharma; Dhana or Money is the branch of the Sadaachara Vriksha or Tree; Kaama or Desire is the Pushpa or flower and Moksha is the Phala or Fruit). Brahmana Grihastaas need to wake up at the Brahma Muhurta or Early Morning and recite Suprabhata Stotra as its recital, hearing, reading or memorising would kick off the day with destruction of previous day's sins. The Stuti might be as follows: Brahmaa Muraaristripuraantakaaree Bhanuh Shashi Bhusuto Budhascha, Guruuscha Shukrah Saha Bhanujena Kurvantu Sarvey Mama Suprabhaatam/ Bhrigu Vasishtah Kratura -angireescha, Manu Pulustyah Pulah Sa Goutamah/ Rebhoy Mareechischyavano Ribhuscha Kurvantu Sarvey mama Suprabhatam/ Sanatkumarah Sanakah Sanandanah Sanaatopyasuri Pingalaocha, Satpta Swaraah Sapta Rasaachalaascha kurvantu Sarvey mama suprahatam/ Prithvi Sugandhaa Saraasthathaapah Sparshaascha Vaayururjjwalanah Satejaah, Nabhah Sashabdam Mahataa Sahaiva Yacchhantu Sarvey mama Suprabhaatam/ Saptaarnavaah Sapta Kulaachalaascha Saptarshiyo Dwipavaraascha Sapta/Bhuraadi krutwaa Bhuvanaani Sapta Dadantu Sarvey mama Suprabhatam/ (May Brahma, Muraari, Tripuranthakaari, Surya, Chandra, Mangala, Budha, Guru, Shukra, Shanaischara render my day-break auspicious; may all the Rishis like Bhrigu, Vasishtha, Kratu, Angira, Manu, Pulastya, Pulahja, Gautama, Ryaibhya, Marichi, Chyavana and Ribhu wish me auspiciousness this early morning; May Sanatkumara, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanaatana, Aasuri, Pingala Rishis, Sapta Swaras and Sapta Rasaatalas usher this Prabhata to me with Mangala / propitiousness; May Prithvi, Sweet Water, Pleasant Winds, Agni with Tejas, Akaasha with clearness and the Unique Maha Tatwa too bring in

excellent tidings this early morning; and let Sapta Samudras, Sapta Kula Parvataas, Saptarshis, and Sapta Dwipaas bless me with happiness and contentment at this auspicious 'Prabhata Samaya'). This Prabhata Gita may be rendered every day-break while leaving the bed early mornings with reverence and devotion to conduct the day ahead with satisfaction. Then leave the bed with Hari Smarana or the devout salutations to Ishta Devata. After morning ablutions, perform Sandhya Vandana, Puja, Havana etc. before taking up of the daily duties. While so doing, a Brahmana has to observe Deva Vihita Dharma and Kula / Gotra Dharma-as an under-current of daily dharma. **Normal Duties:** Never resort to 'Asatpralaapas'/ untrue chatter, 'Nishthuras'/ hurting and harsh talks and ill- justified statements about Veda-Aagama-Shastras, accusations against Sadhujanas or holy persons, and criticisms in respect of other religions. Never take to sex in Sandhyas / Sun-rise and Sun-sets nor enter into conacts with other women, homeless women, women in menses and much less on bare Earth and in water; avoid aimless travels, wasteful charities, and purposeless sacrifices of animals and birds; and wasteful travels would certainly result in upsets of daily duties. Paraswavey Paradaarey cha na karyaa Buddhirutthamaih, Paraswam Narakaayaiva Paradaaraascha mrutyavey/ (Para dhana gives Naraka and Para Stree causes Mrityu!). Never view a woman nude, nor talk or touch a woman in menses; never have bath or sleep in nakedness even alone, much less move about likewise; never have oil massages on Pratipada, Shashthi or Ekadashi Tithis called Nanda Tithis as also on Sundays and Tuesdays, besides in the Stars of Chitra, Hasta and Shravana; never take Kshura Karmaas or hair cuts on Rikta Tithis of Chaturthi, Navami and Chaturdashi as also on Fridays besides during Vishakha and Abhijit Stars; never resort to Stree Samparka on Purna Tithis viz. Panchami, Dashami and Purnima nor during Magha, Krittika and the three Uttaara Nakshatras of Uttaraphalguni, Uttaashadha and Uttaraabhadra; but do perform all constructive tasks on Bhadra Tithis viz. Dwitiya, Saptami and Dwadashi! Rishis told the Raakshasa King that one should not rest heads on North and West directions and take food facing East and West; one should perform Pradakshina around Deva Mandiras, Chaitya-Peepul trees, Parents, Gurus and Vidwaans; one should bathe in the nights excepting in the case of Grahanaas or Solar / Lunar Eclipses, deaths of close relatives or when one's birth star coincides with Chandra. But bathing would be a must in case a person touches a dog, a woman in menses, an expectant woman, a chandala, a person carrying or even touching a dead body. One should not cross blood or urine or defecation; one should not stay late nights alone in a garden. Even conversing much less touching those persons who blame Scriptures should be avoided and if done so by mistake, Surya Darshan would purify. The Rishis further clarified the broad duties of a person in the Vaanaprastha Ashrama or at the stage of retirement from active life when one should eat less, eat only such items that are easy to procure and digest ie. Satvika Bhojan, observe skipping one meal a day, sleep on the ground on a mat, observe Brahmacharya, perform daily pujas, havans, wear coarse dresses, perform Trikaala Sandhyas and basically follow a moderate and routinised life by spending more time in Reading Sciptures, Social Work and Dharmic activities. The Final Ashram of Sanyasa involves negation of any kind of worldly desires, attachments and acitivities related: Sarva sangaparityaago Brahmacharyamamaanita, Jitenndriyatwamaavaasey naikasmin vasatischaram/ Anaarambha – sthataahaaro Bhaikshaannam naatikopitaa, Atmajnaanaavabodhecchhaa tathaa chavaatmaava bodhanam/ (Denouncement of wishes, Brahmacharya, denial of Ahamkara or Self-consciousness, High control of Physical attractions, frequent travels, Bhikshaanna Bhojana, Krodha Tyaga, and all out endeavours to gain Atma Gyana.) While Brahmana Varnaasharama would thus be all comprehensive, Vaishyaas and Ksatriyas might not observe the Regulations beyond Vaana- prastha, and Shudras might not even cross the Garshatya Stage. As the Rishis explained the broad principles of Sadaachaara Swarupa, the Daitya King Sukesha and followers were enlightened and by the Akaashachari Nagari returned to his Kingdom.

**Reformation of Rakshasaas:** On return, he called his Rakshasa Praja and sensitised them about the utility of practising Dharma that he learnt from the learned Rishis of Magadharanya as that type of reformed life would definitely lead to immense 'Paraloka Sukha' or Eternal Happiness after death. He convinced the Praja that the temporary joy created by the evil ways of living would never ever match the Permanent and Perpetual Bliss that one could achieve by making sacrifices to be made in the current life

and adopting a changed life-style since the Rishis who learnt a lot from their Ancient Scriptures sought to make short-run inconveniences to secure Lasting Pleasure! Thus the Daitya King succeeded to brain wash the Rakshasaas to faithfully practise Dharma and said: Ahimsa Satyamasteyam Shouchamindriya Samyamam, Daanam Dayaacha Khaantischa Brahmacharyamamaanita/ Shubhaa Satyaa cha Mathuraa vangnityam Satkriyaaratih. Sadaachaaranishevitwam Paraloka Pradaayikaah/ (Ahimsa, Satya, Payitrata, Asteya, Indriya samyama, Daanam Dayaa, Kshama, Brahmacharya, leaving Ahamkaara, conversation style of sweetness, endearment and truthfulness, engagement in performing virtuous deeds and practising Sadaachara would accomplish Paraloka Sukha). Most favourably reacting to the Appeals of King Sukesha, the Daityas readily followed the new pattern of life and their families and progeny too practised it vigorously. This unusual development made radical changes in Universe; the Nishacha Nagari came to shine as moon in the day time and like Sun in the nights; the lustre of the Raakshasas increased manifold and that of Surya and Chandra got adversely affected; the timings and movement of Sun and Moon became confusing as Owls were noticed during mid days and Rishis were performing mid-night bathings, Sandhyavandanaas and Jala Tarpanas standing in the Holy Rivers besides Agni Karyasas, Yagnas, Pujas, and so on. Even lotuses started blossoming irrespective of Sunsets! Surva Deva got utterly confused at these unnatural developments and finlyy discovered the root cause of Daityas adopting the Dharma Vidhana. In great disgust and consternation, Surya Deva shot at multitude of Surya Kiranaas on the Rakshasaas and the Akasha Sanchari Nagari gifted by Maha Deva to the Daitya King Sukesha started sliding downward. Amid highly agitated shrieks, the King and the Daitya followers shouted at the top of their voices saying: Namo Bhavaaya Sharvaaya! The Omni -present and Omni-sient Maha Deva undertood the whole Episode of King Sukeshi approaching the Rishis of Magadhaaranya who preached the Rakshasaas of Dharma Pravartana and the consequences that followed climaxing with the gradual sliding of the Airship of Nishacha Nagari as Surya Deva became intolerant. Trilochana Shankara got furious and looked at Surya and the latter too commenced sliding from his axis towards Vayumandala and futher down to Antariksha. On witnessing this extraordinary happening, Maharshis went up to Surya Deva and the latter enquired as to where was the Sacred Kshetra of Vishnu Bhagavan on Bhumi! The Rishis suggested the Hallowed Place between the two Rivers Varuna and Asi. Meanwhile Rishi, aksha, Rakshasa, Naaga, Vidyadhara, Apsaras etc. approached Brahma and the latter accompanying Devas rached Maheswara to cool down his annoyance with Surya; Maheswara held Surya by his hand, named Surya as Lola, excused Surya's indiscretion and put back Surya Deva on the Suryamandala again and the Nishachara Sanchari Nagara was placed back in its original position. This was thus a vindication of Dharma whether pracised by Human Beings or Rakshasaas as Dharma practised by human beings, or Raakshasaas or any other Beings would have similar results, irrespective of their past actions or sins. Apparently, the Natural abnormalites that happened as a result of the sudden spurt of Dharmik deeds adopted by the Rakshasaas at the Sanchaara Nagari got stabilised in line with those of Manayaas and status quo was restored in the Universe without aberrations in 'Prakriti.'

# Vishnu Puja on Shukla Ekadashis and Vishnu Panjara Stotra

Perfomance of Vishnu Puja on every Shukla Ekadashi called Akhanda Vrata followed by the Recital of Vishnu Panjara Stotra is stated to be an important component of Dharmik Life. This routine requirement needs to be followed by men and women of any 'Varna' with fasting and 'Baahyaantara Shuchi' or cleanliness of body and mind and by Puja with 'Avahana' (Invocation) —Panchaamrita Snaana with Ghee, Gandhodaka, Fruit Pulp, Honey and Curd; Vastra, Yagnopa -veeta, Pushpa, Phala, Dhupa, Deepa, Naivedyas, Taambula, Vaadya, Mantra Pushpa, Sangeeta, Japa, Homa and Stotra. The Stuti should be by way of Vishnu Panjara Stotra as follows: Namostutey Padmanabha Padmaadhava Mahadyutey, Dharmaartha Kaama Mokshaani Twa -akhandaani Bhavantumey/ Vikaasi Padmapatraaksha Yathaakhandosi Sarvatah, Tena Satyena Dharmaadyaa Akhandaah Santu Keshava/ Namo namastey Govinda gruhya Sudarshanam, Praachyam rakshasva maam Vishno twaamaham sharanam gatah/ Gadaam Kaumodikeem gruhya Padmanaabhaamita dyutey, Yaamyaam rakhshaswa maam Vishno twaamaham sharanam gatah/ Halamaadaaya sounandam Namastey Purushotthama, Praateekshaam raksha mey Vishno bhavantam sharanam gatah/ Musalam Shaantanam gruhya Pundarikaaksha

rakshamaam, Uttarasyaam Jagannaatha bhavantam sharanamgatah/ Shaarangamaadaaya cha Dhanurastram Naraayanam harey, Namastey Raksha Rakshoghnam Ishanyaayaam sharanam gatah/ Panchajanyam Mahaashankhamantarbodhyam cha pankajam, Pragruhya rakshamaam Vishno Aagneyyaam Yagna sukara/ Charma Suryashatam gruhya khadgamchandramasam tathaa, Nairrutyaam maam cha rakshasva Divya Murtey Nrikesatin/ Vaijayanteem pragruhya twam Srivatsam kanthabhushanam, Vaayavyaam raksha maam Deva Ashvaseersha Namostutey/ Vainateyam samaaruhya Antarikshey Janaandana, Maam twam raksaajita sadaa Namas tey twa paraajita/ Vishaalaaksham Samaaruuha rakshamaam twam rasaataley, Akuupaara Namastubhyam Mahamoha Namotutey/ Karasheershaangaghni parveshu tathaashta baahu panjaram,Krutwaa rakshaswa maam Deva Namastey Purushottama/ (Salutations Padmmanabha Lakshmipati! With your blessings, may our Life's objectives of Dharma-Artha-Klama-Moksha be accomplished; as you are spread out in all the directions, our desires of Dharma-Artha- Kama-Moksha be fulfilled endlessly. Govinda! Do kindly take up your Sudarshana Chakra and protect me fromy Eastern Side as I am your refugee; Mahadyuti Padmanabha! Do kindly pick up your Koumudi Gada/ mace and save my Southern side as I seek your shelter; Purushottama! Do take up your Saunanda namak ' Hala'/ Plough and protect me from the western side; Pundarikaaksha! I beg you to save my Musala named Shaantana and safeguard my Northern side; do kindly select your Saaranga Dhanush and Narayanaastra to shield my Ishaana Kona as I am defenceless; Yagna Varaha Vishno! I implore you to take up the renowned Panchajanya Shankhu / conchshell as also your Lotus Flower and disperse my enemies from the Agneya Side; Maha Nrisimha! Please lift up your Chandra naamaka shield and Surya naamak Khadga and guard my Nirruti direction; Hayagriva Deva! Please sport your Garland named Vijayanti and Srivatsa naamaka necklace to defend my Vayavya Kona; Vainateya! Do alight your Garuda vahana and assure my safety from 'Antariksha'/ Sky; by assuming the Maha Kurma Rupa, Bhagavan! Kindly protect me from the Rasatala side too so that nothing untoward could happen to me from down-under; Vishaalaaksha! Maha Moha! Save me with Eight of Your endless hands, do create an Ashta-dasha or Eight Direction Safety Cage for me assuring Total Shield to me). This Sacred Vishnu Panjara was stated to have been recited by Mahadeva Shankara to provide a Total Cover of Protection to Devi Katyayani Durga in the context of the destruction of Mahishasura, Raktabeeja and other countless Asuras.

### Origin of Kurukshetra: Samvarna-Tapati Vivah, King Kuru and Kurukshetra Mahtmya

At the beginning of Satya Yuga, there was a King named Ruksha of Chandra Vamsha who begot King Samvarna. On assuming Kingship, Samvarna entusted his royal duties to his Guru Vasishtha and moved about carefree. While he was in a Forest named Vibhraja, he met a Deva Kanya called Tapati and both of them got mesmerised with each other. On return, Vasishta Maharshi learnt of the King's infatuation as the latter was neither eating nor behaving properly. Similar was the situation with the Deva Kanya Tapati. Vasishtha learnt from his Divadrishti that the Deva Kanya was the daughter of Suryta Deva, entered Surya mandala and requested Surya for the alliance and both of them were happily married to eventually beget a boy called **Kuru** who was eventually married to Devi Soudamini. After Kuru became the King, Kuru tried all possibilities of endearing his Praja and during his 'Dharma Paalana' or Virtuous Administration, there were no problems of poverty, thefts, misdirected judgments and health limitations and soon became a popular King. Then he travelled to become more and famous and victorious and entered Daitavana where he saw the Sacred River Sarasvati which was called Brahma Putri, Harijihva and Sudarshana Janani. He derived extreme happiness and satisfaction in the River and towards north of the River and decided to construct a 'Samanta Panchaka Dharmasthaan' spread over an Area of five yojanas width and length. It was learnt that there were five such 'Vedikaas' where Shambhu Deva performed Pancha Yagnas, of which the Uttara Vedi on the banks of River Sarasvati was known as the most renowned; the Madhya Vedi as popular at Prayaga Kshetra, Purva Vedi was at Gaya Tirtha, Dakshina Vedi was at Jagannatha puri and the Paschima Vedi was at Pushkara Kshetra. King Puru decided to add the Panchama Vedi to be constructed as Samantaka Panchaka Dharmasthana. He procured a golden plough and a pair of animals to commence tilling the land. Indra Deva approached the King Kuru as to what was he desirous of doing and the reply was that he haddecided to construct an 'Ashtaanga Bhumi' of Tapah Satyam Ksamaam Damaam Krushaami Shoucham Daanam cha Yiogamcha Brahmachaaritaam/ or Meditation - Truthfulness-Endurance-Mercy-Cleanliness-Charity-Yoga and Celibacy which should be called Ashtanga Farming! Indra further asked: Where would be a number of ploughs and how would you procure seeds from! The reply was that Indra should not make fun of an honest endeavour as Indra left quietly. The King himself commenced tilling some four to five vojanas of land daily. Then Lord Vishnu appeared and asked the same question of Indra as to where would he secure the seeds. The King said convincingly that the seeds would emerge from his body. Vishnu asked the King to extend his hand so that the former could plough and the King could spread the seeds. The King faithfully extended his right hand and at once Bhagavan cut off his hand with his chakra to several pieces! Kuru then extended his left hand and Vishnu sliced off that hand too to thousand pieces. The King offered his thighs one by one which too were cut. Finally King Kuru offered his head and then Vishnu was convinced that the King was very serious in his resolve and asked him to ask for a boon. Kuru replied: Yaavadetan -mayaa krushtam Dharmaksetram tadastucha, Snaataanaam cha mrutaaaamcha mahapunya phalam twiha/ Upavaasamcha Daanamcha cha snaanam japyam cha Madhava, Homayagna –dikam chaanyacchubham Vaapyashubham Vibho/ (May this Place which I had tilled be declared as Dharma Kshetra; may this Place become a Sacred one where bathing or even dying attain Maha Punya. May the virtuous deeds of Upavaasa-Snaaa-Daana- Japa-Havana-Yagna etc be paid for with multiplied fruits!) The King further prayed to Vishnu that he along with Parama Shiva should reside at this Kshetra always. Vishnu not only granted the boons asked by the King but also blessed the Hallowed Place to be called as Kuru Kshetra, that his fame and name would be eternal as long as the Universe would last, that this Kshetra called Kurujaangala would be protected by Chandra naamak Yaksha, Vaasuki naamak Sarpa, Shankukarna naamak Vidyaadhara, Sukeshi naamak Rakshseswara, Ajaavan naamak King, Mahadeva naamak Agni and so on. Some eight thousand arrows-men would ensure that sinners of extreme nature would be prevented to perform bathings in the Kshetra; there is a 'paapa vinaashaka' and Sacred Tirtha known as Pruthuudaka or Pohovaa Tirtha here and Brahma collected the waters of various Maha Samudras, Punya Tirthas, Rivers and Sarovaraas into it! Brahmasara Tirtha: Maharshi Lomaharshana stated that Brahmasara Tirtha was originally spread from Sannihita Sarovar at Rantuk Sthaana to Ojas Sthaana and further upto Chaturmukha Sthaana; but over passage of time, the Tirtha occupied the space from Viswasvara Shaana to Asthipura and from Vriddha Kanya to Oghavati River. Half way of the Tirtha, it was believed that Rudra attained 'Sthaanutva' or 'Sthiratwa' (Solidification). Meanwhile, Maha Muni Markandeya prayed to Devi Saraswati flowing in the form of the illustrious River obliged the Muni to accompany him wherever he wished him to lead and the Muni requested her to link up Brahmasira to Ramahlada to Kurukshetra and thus the latter assumed further significance; In the Kurukshetra Tirtha thus one secures the 'maha phala' of bathing and worshipping in Seven Vanaas viz. Kaamuaka Vana, Aditi Vana, Vyasa Vana, Phalaki Vana, Surya Vana, Madhu Vana, and Sheeta Vana; besides nine Sacred Rivers viz. Sarasvati, Vaitarani, Aapaga, Mandakini Ganga, Madhstra, Vaasu Nadi, Koushiki, Drushdyati or Kaggar, and Hiranyavati. Kurukshetra Thirtha Yatra needs to be intiated by obtaining the permission of the Yaksha called Rastuk, proceed to **Aditi Vana** where Devi Aditi was stated to have performed her Tapasya in favour of her sons viz. Devataas; proceed to Vishnu Sthaan called 'Savana', visit Vimala Tirtha to worship Vimaleswara to reap the fruit of attaining Rudra Loka; Kaushiki Sangama to wash off the blemishes stored thus far; Dharani Tirtha to seek relief for 'Aparadhaas' of devotees; Daksheswara Shiva in Dakshaashrama to attain the fruit of Ashvamedha Yagna; Shalukini Tirtha; then move on to Saptirdadhi to thrash up fears of serpents; then worship Rastuk Dwarapal for an overnight stay there for Kshama Prarthana and Abheestha Siddhi; then visit Panchanada Tirtha, Koti Tirtha, and Jwaalamaheswara. Pilgrims to Kurukshetra are advised to definitely perform 'Pitru Devaarchana' at the famed **Pushkara Tirtha** which was constructed by Parashurama Deva and it was believed that worship there would bestow fulfillment of wishes sought by the devotees. Surya Grahana Snaana at the nearby Sarovara called 'Saannihitya' is stated to provide access to Swarga after one's end of life.

# Bali defeats Indra, Origin of Vamana, Bali's donation of Three Feet and Bali's defeat (Stutis by Kashapa-Aditi and Brahma, Bali-Prahlada Samvada and Virata Varnana)

As King Bali of Daityas took over the reins of Trilokas from Virochana the son of Prahlada and the great Grand father of Hiranyakashipu, Devas lost power in Swarga and the mighty Mayasura and Shambara flew the Flag of Vijayanti too. Yet, the Daityas were steeply engaged in Dharmik deeds, and they were guarding the Sky providing stability all-around: *Abhaavey Sarva paapaanaam Dharma bhavey sadothitey, Chatush –paadey sthitey dharmey hyadharmey paada vigrahey, Prajaapaalanayukteshu bhraajamaa -neshu Raajasu, Sarva dharma samprayukteshu tadhaashrama nivaasishu/* (There was complete absence of sinnersw in the Kingdom and Dharma was predominate; Dharma was established on four feet except on one; all the Deputised Kings were performing Administration ideally and all the Four Varnaas of population were observing Dharma perfectly) It was at that opportune time that the Coronation of Bali Chakravarti took place amidst the chanting of Victory by all concerned. Devi Lakshmi appeared and congratulated at Bali's Elevation to Supremacy along with her 'Amsaas' like the Devis named Hreem,Kirti, Dyuti, Prabha, Dhruti, Kshama, Bhuti, Ruddhi, Divya, Mahamati, Shruti, Smriti, Ida, Shanti, Pushti, Kriya, and also select Apsaraas.

Meanwhile, Devataas were disillusioned at their discomfiture and the climax of Bali's high status especially because of Daitya King's unchallenged success owing to his Dharma Paalana and the lack of any record of Evil deeds by Daityas; they were also denied their shares of Yahna Phalaas. They approached their mother Aditi for solace and advice and in turn she reached her husband Kashyapa Muni. Kashyapa found the situation was delicate and even Brahma might find it difficult as strictly speaking the record of Daityas was above board! Brahma advised that the only way out would be that Tapasya and Aditi would perform strict Tapasya to Vishnu Deva and seek the most difficult boon of Vishnu taking birth as their son! The Couple reached the Banks of Kshira Samudra at a holy spot called Amrita, performed austere Tapasya and 'Kaamada Vrata' for thousand years by controlling their Indriyas, observing silence and chanting Veda Yukta Sukta called Parama Stuti as follows: Namastestu tey Devadeva Ekashringa Vrushaaarchey Sindhu Vrushaarchey Sindhuvrusha, Vrishaakapey Surayrisha Anaadisambhaya Rudra Kapila Vishyaksena/ Sarya Bhutapatey Dhruya Dharmaadharma Vaikuntha Vrishaavarta, Anaadimadhyanidhana Dhananjaya Shuchishravah Prushnatejah/ Nijajaya Amriteshaaya Sanaatana Tridhaama Tushita Mahaa Tatwa, Lokanaatha Padmanaabha Virinchey Bahurupa Akshaya Akshara/ Havyabhuja Khandaparasho Shakra Munjakesha Hamsa Maha Dakshina, Hrishikesha Sukshma Mahaaniyamadhara Viraja Loka pratishtha/ Arupa Agraja Dharmaja Dharma naabha Gabhastinaama, Shatakratunaabha Chandra ratha Surya Tejah Samudrayaasah Ajah/ Sahrashirah Sahasrapaad Adhomukhaha Mahapurusha Purushottama, Sahasrabaaho Sahasramurtey Sahastraasya Sahasrasambhayah, Sahasratvam Twamaahuh/ Pushpahaasa Charama twameva Voushat, Vashatkaram twaamaahu ragryam Makheshu Praashitaaram Sahasradharam/ Cha Bhuscha Bhuvascha Suwascha Twameva Vedavedya Brahmashaya, Brahmana priya twameva dhaurasi Maatarishvasasi Dharmosi/ Hota Pota Mantaa Netaa Homahetustwameva Agrya, Vishwathaamnaa twameva dikbhih Subhaanda Ijjyosi/ Sumedhosi Samidhastwameva matirgatirdaataa twamasi, Mokshosi Yogisi Srujaasi Dhaataa Parama Yagnosi/ Somesi Dikshitosi Dakshinaasi Vishwamasi, Sthavira Hiranyanaabha Naraayana Trinayana Adityavarna/ Adityatejah Mahapurusha Purushottama Adi Deva Suvikrama, Prabhakara Shambho Swayambho Bhutaadih Mahabhutesi/ Vishva bhuta Vishvam twameva Vishwagoptaasi Pavitramasi, Viswabhuva Urthvakarma Amrita Divaspatey Vaachaspatey Ghrutaarchey, Ananta Karma Vamsha Praagvamsha Vishvapaatastwamewa/ Vaarthinaam Varadositwam, Chaturbhischa dwaabhyaam Panchabhireva cha, Yhuyatey cha punar -dhaabhyaam tubhyam Hotraatmaney Namah/ (Deva Deva, Eka Shringa, Vrishaarchi, Sindhuvrusha, Vrishaakapi, Suravrisha, Anaadi Sambhava, Rudra, Kapila, Vishvaksena, Sarva Bhuapati, Dhruva, Dharmaadharma, Vaikuntha, Vrishaa Karta, Anadi -madhya nidhana, Dhanajaya, Shrutishraya, Prushna Teja, Nijajaya, Amriteshaya, Sanaatana, Tridhaama, Tushita, Mahaa Tatwa, Lokanaatha, Padmanaabha, Virinchi, Bahurupa, Akshaya, Akshara, Havyabhuja, Khandaparashu, Shakra, Munjikesha, Hamsa, Mahaa Dakshina, Hrishikesha, Sukshma, Mahaniyamadhara, Viraja, Lokapratishtha, Arupa, Agraja, Dharmaja, Dharmanaabha,

Gabhastunaabha, Shatakratunaabha, Chandra Ratha, Surya Teja, Aja, Sahasra shira, Sahasrapaada, Adhomukha, Maha Purusha, Purushotthama, Sahasrabaahu, Sahasra Murti, Sahasrasya, Sahasra Sambhava! I prostrate before you and touch your feet; You are commended as Sahasratva, Pushpahaasa, Charama / Sarvotthama; You are known as Voushta and Vashatkaara; You are Agrya or Sarvotthama, Yagna Praashita or Bhokta, Sahasra dhaara: You are the Bhur-Bhuya-Swah Swarupa: Veda Vedya or Recognisable through Vedas; Brahmashaya, Brahmanapriya; Dhyouh or Sarvavyapi like the Sky; Maatarishwa or Speedy like Vayu; Dharma, Hota, Potha / Vishnu; Mantaa, Netaa, Homa hetu or the Root Cause of Homa; Vishvateja, Agrya or Sarvasreshtha, Subhanda or like the Huge Patrarupa encompassing all Dishaas; You are worthy of Yajana or Ijya; Sumedha, Samidha, Mati, Gati, and Daataa; You are Moksha, Yoga, Srashta or the Supreme Creator; Dhata / Dhaarana and Poshana Karta; Parama Yagna, Soma, Dikshita, Dakshina and Vishwa; You are Sthavira, Hiranyanaabha, Narayana, Trinayana, Adityavarna, Aditya Teja, Maha Purusha, Purushottama, Adi Deva, Suvikrama, Prabhakara, Shambhu, Swayambhu, Bhugtaadi, Maha Bhuta, Vishwa Bhuta, and Vishwa; You are the Samsaara Raksha, Pavitra, Vishwa bhaya or Vishwa Srashta, Urthwa Karma or Uttama Karma, Amrita or Everlasting, Divaspati, Vaachaspati, Ghrutaarchi, Anantakarma, Vamsha, Pragvamsha, Vishwapa or Vishwa Paalaka, Varada or the Bestower of boons; and finally, You are the Hotraatma or who is responsible for producing Agnihotra by way of the seventeen counted Aksharaas or Letters viz. Four 'Aashraavayas' plus four 'Astu Shroushads' plus two 'Yajaas' plus five 'Yajaamahyes' and again two 'Vashats').

Devi Aditi also made a commendatory appeal to Janaardana seperately and said: krutyaarta naashaaya Namah Pushkara maaliney, Namah Parama Kalyaana Kalyaanaadi vedhasey/ Namah Pankajanertaaya Namah Pankaja naabhaey, Namah Pankaja Sambhuti sambhayaayaatma yonaey/ Shriyah Kaantaayaa daantaaya Daantadrushyaaya Chakriney, Namah Padmaasi hastaaya Namah Kanaka retasey/ Tathaatma Jnaana Yagjnaaya Yogi chintyaaya Yoginey, Nirgunaaya Visheshaaya Haraye Brahmarupiney/Jagaccha tishthatey yatra jagato yo na drushyatey, Namah Sthulaati Sukshmaaya tasmai Devaaya Shaaranginey/ Yam na pashyanti pashyanto Jagadapyakhilam Naaha, Apashyadbhirjagadyascha drushyatey hridi samshitah/ Bahirjyotiralakshyo yo lakshyatey Jyotisha parah, Yasminneva yataschaiva Hasyaitadakhilam Jagat/ Tasmai Samasta jagataamamaraaya Namo Namah, Aadyah Prajaapatih sopi Pitrunaam Pamam Patih, Patih Syraanaam yastasmai namah Krishnaaya Vedhasey/ Yah Pravrutthai Nivruttaischa Kamkabhistu virajjyatey, Swargaapavarga phalado Namastasmai Gadaabhrutey/Yastu sanchintyamaanopi Sarvam paapam vyapohati,Namastasmai Vishuddhaaya Parasmai Harimedhasey/ Ye pashyanthy akhikaadhaara meeshaana majama- yyayam, na punarjanma smaranam praapnuvanti Namaami tam/ Yaa yagney Yagnaparamairijj- yatey Yagnasamsthitah, Tam Yagna Purusham Vishnum Namaami Prabhumeeswaram/ Geeyatey Sarva Vedeshu Vedavidbhirvidaam gatih/ Yastasmai Vedavidyaaya Nityaaya Viushnavey Namah/ Yato Vishwam samrudbhutam yasmin Pralayameshyati, Vishvodbhava Pratishthaaya Namastasmai Mahaatmaney/ AaBrahma stambha paryantam Vyaptam yena charaacharam, Mayaajaala samunnaddhamtamupendram namaamyaham/ Yotra Toyaswarupastho bibharty –akhilameeshwarah, Vishwam Vishwapatim Vishnum tam Namaami Prajaapatim/ Murtim tamosuramayam taddhidho vinihanti yah, Raatrijam Surya Rupeecha tamupendram namaamyaham/ Yasyaakshini Chandra Suryo Sarvaloka Shubhaashubham, Pashyatah karma satatam tamupendram namaamyaham/ Yasmin Sarveshwarey sarvamSatyametanmayoditam, Naanrutam tamajam Vishnum Namaami Prabhavaavyayam/ Yadyetat Satyamuktam mey Bhuyaschaato Njanardana, Satyena tena sakalaah Puryantaam mey Manorathaah/ (Prabho! I am grieving with unimaginable anguish which could be destroyed only by you. My Salutations to You Bhagavan who sports lotus garlands and Pushakara malaas; You are the Adi Vidhata who is an embodiment of propitiousness! You are Kamala Nayana, Padmanaabha, the Creator of Brahma, Atmajanma, Lakshmi Pati, Indriya damana, worthy of darshan only by Samayama Yogis, Sudarshana and Khadga dhaari! Only those 'Atmagyanayuta' Yagnakartas, Yogadhyaanis and Yoga Saadhakaas could aspire to visualise your Gunarahita Brahma Swarupa! May I pay my obeisances to you Sharanga Dhari Deva! as you occupy the whole world in a Gross Form and yet possess the tiniest Form which is invisible! Those persons who do not make efforts to visualise you do not get your Darshan any way, but those who have no other desire in

life excepting you would readily witness you are blessed with your image in their hearts always for the asking! Your unbelievable Jyoti or extraordinary Radiance is all-pervading in the entire Universe in which you are present invisibly and contrarily the Universe is but an integral segment of You Parama Deva! In other words, You are all over the Universe, the Universe was created by you and in fact the Universe is of Yours! My humble greetings to you the original Prajapati! Pitara Sreshtha! Devata Swami! Shri Krishna! Here are my Pranaams again and again! You are the Supreme Objective of Pravritti and Nivritti Deeds (Ritualistic and Directly unswerving approach) and the Unique Decider of bestowing Swarga or Moksha the Eternal Bliss! My namashkaaraas to you Vishuddha Swarupa as even my taking your very name and memory would smash all my sins! You are the Avinaashi or Indestructible; Akhilaadhara or the Mighty Clutch of the Entirety; the Only Reliever of the Trap of Birth-Death Cycle! You are perceptible through Yagnaas, the Yagna Murti, the Yagna Sthita and Yagna Purusha! Vedas commend you, Vedajnaas sing your hymns, You are the 'Vidwadjanaashraya' or the one who is fond of the Company of Vidwadjanaas. My Most Revered Paramaatma! The whole Vishwa is your Creation, Sustenance and also the Termination thus You are the Vishva Kartha, Vishva Bharta and the Vishwa Harta! I pray to that Highest Magnificence who materialised Surva Swarupa and destroyed darkess for good. To that Sarveswara, the Ajanma, Avyaya, Srashta and Vishnu who is fully aware of the Truth about me and the transparency and earnestness of my Prayers that I am prostrating with humility craving him to grant my wish!) As both Kashyapa Muni and Devi Aditi made their Soul-full Prayers, the impossible Darshan of Bhagavan Vishnu appeared and granted the wish that he would indeed assume His Incarnation with a view to reinstate Indra and Devas to Swarga and Trilokas. As Aditi got conceived and Bhagavan Vishnu agreed to do so, Prithvi got tremored, Mountains were shaken, and Sapta Samudras were agitated with wobbles of waves and there was strangeness all-around! Bali Chakravarti felt that there were considerable changes in the Nature as mountians were trembling and high Sea tides were on new high and more than that the Daityas were experiencing paleness and loss of their normal instincts of courage, assertiveness and egoism. Bali approached his grand father Prahlada and asked for the causes of these omens and premonitions. Parama Bhakta Prahlada deeply meditated Bhagavan Srihari and visualised the latter in the Garbha of Devi Aditi and had fleeting scenes of Ashtaadasha Vasus, Ekadasha Rudras, Dwadasha Adityas, two Ashvini Kumaraas, Forty Nine Maruts, Sandhyas, Vishwa Devas, Gandharvas, Nagas, Rahkshasaas, his Son Virochana, Bali Chakravarti, Jambha, Kujumbha, Narakasura, Baana, and several other Daityas, Pancha Bhutas, Seas, Mountains, Rivers, Satpa Dwipaas, Brahma, Shiva, Nava Grahas, Daksha and other Prajapatis, Sapta Rishis and so on. Prahlada gave a heavy exhalation and conveyed the datails what all he visioned and said that the Greatest Narayana in would soon be descending on Earth in his incarnation as Vamana Deva! Bali could not comprehend the full import of what Prahlada underlined and expressed his surprise whether Vamana Deva coud be ever comparable with the Senior most Rakshasaas like Viprachitta, Shibi, Sankha, Ayamshanku, Hayashira, Ashwa Shira, Bhanghakaara, Maha Hanu, Kakkuraaksha and Durjaya. As Bali talked in such thoughtless comparisons with Paramatma and some examples of Danavas however mighty they might be, Parhlada got highly infuriated and shouted at Bali that there could not be bigger immature fool and hollow minded; he said that Bali's evil frame of mind would certainly lead the entire Vamsha of Daityas to doom:

Yeshaam twameedrusho Rajaa Durbuddhiravivekamaan, Devadevam Mahabhaagam Vaasudevamajam Vibhum, Twaamrutey Paapa sankalpa konya evam vadishyati/ Ya yeto bhavataa proktaah samasta Daitya daanavaah, Sa Brahmakaastathaa Devaah Staavaraantaa vibhutayah/ Twam chaaham cha Jagacchedam Saadridrumanadivanam, Samudradwipalokoyam yaschedam sacharaacharam/ Yasyaabhivaadya vandyasya vyaapinah Paramaatmanah, Ekaamshaamshi kalaajanma kastameyvam Pravikshyati/ Rutey Vinaashaabhimukham twaamekamavivekinam, Durbuddimajitaatmaanam Vgriddhaanaam Shashanaatigam/ Shochaneeyam yasya mey gehey Jaatastava Pitaadhamah, Yasya twamee -drushah Putro Deva devaavamaanakah/---Nindaam karoshi tasmistwam Krishney Guru Guror Gurow, Yasmaat tasmaadihaiva twamaishwaryaad bhramshameyshasi/ Sa Devo Jagataam Naatho Baley Prabhurjanaardanah, Nanvaham pratyavekshyastey Bhaktimaanatra mey Guruh/ Yetaanmaatramapyatra

ninditaa Jagato Gurum, Naapekshitastavyaa yasmaat tasnaacchaapam dadaamitey/ Yathaamey shirasacchedaadim gurutaram Baley, Twayoktamachutaakshepam Rajya bhrashtastathaa pata/ Yathhana Krishnaadaparah Paritraanam Bhavaarnavey, Tathaachirena pashyeyam bhavantam Raajjyavichutam/

Bali! I have not come across a King of this kind who is evil-minded and dull-witted that could blame the Devaadhi Deva, Maha Bhaga, Sarva Vyaapi Vaasudeva; the names of the Daityas that you have taken as the so-called Mighty as also of Brahma and Devas were all created by that Paramatma; indeed with just one 'Amsha' of myriad of his Amshaas, he created the whole Charaacharaas and Samasta Vibhutis or Manifestations including you, me, Daityas, Parvataas, Vrikshaas, Rivers, Forests, Samudraas, Sapta Dwipas, and so on and He is Sarva-Vandya, Sarva-Vyapi, and Sarva-Vidita; would there be a Vivekaheen-Murkha-Durbuddhi like you who would pass judgments on Him! What-ever are the reasons due to which you are faulting your Guru/ your father, or his father who is me or the Parama Guru who is Paramatma might be best known to you! Your talking slightingly against Narayana is by far the worst since it tantamounts to cutting my head and it is to set right those feelings of pride and egotism that I am giving you a 'Shaap' / Curse that soon you would be dislocated from your Kingdom, Aishwarya, and selfimage!) Chakravarti Bali was distraught and distressed at this most unforunate happening of Prahlada's curse and was ashamed of himself for his rash, thoughtless and sinful belittling of Bhagayan's uniqueness which had understandably stirred up the anger of a legendary Bhakta of the unparalelled stature of Prahlada. He confessed that there was a total loss of his mental faculties when he conversed at that time due to superciliousness and over-enthusiasm of having defeated Devas which propelled his traits of arrogance; indeed his remarks had correctly hurt his grand father who was fully justified in giving him an irreparable curse but far worse than the curse, his behaviour which hurt the elders, especially of Prahlada, who built a reputation of the family as Narayana Bhaktas, was sullied in the memory of future generations. This indeed was humiliating to the Vamsha that he was squarely responsible! He begged of Prahlaadaa's forgiveness which he did not deserve and would ignite his repentance for ever day in and day out. Prahlaada appretiated Bali's remorse and said that he was incensed up at that moment and the anger led him to obsession; he also lost his mentral equilibrium that caused the pronoucement of the curse, for which he felt exremely sad. But a lesson was provided to Bali and completely converted him as a Parama Bhakta of Narayana. Mean while, Devi Aditi deliverd a lovely male child in short stature when Nature assumed a blossomed freshness that was rare, the Gagana Mandala was clean without any trace of pollution and Vayu was pleasantly soft and nicely odoured quite unfamiliar in the human world. The proud parents invited Brahma to perform Jaatakarma and Namakarana as Vamana Murti. It was at that time when Brahma could not suppress his emotions and broke in his ecstasy into an instant Eulogy as follows:

Jaadheesha Jayaajeya Jaya Vishwa Guro Harey, Janmamrityu jaraateeta Jayaananta Jayaachyuta/
Jayaajita Jayaasesha Jayaavyakta sthitey Jaya, Jagatojagadantesha sthitey Jaya, Paramaarthaartha
Sarvajna Jnaanajeryaartha nihsuta/ Jayaasesha Jagatsaakshir Jagagatkartrur Jagat Guro,
Jagatojagadantesha sthitou paalayatey Jaya/ Jagaakhila Jayaasesha Jaya Sarvahridistitha, Jagaadi
madhyaantamaya Sarvajnaana mayottama/ Mumukshubhinirdeshya Nityahrashtha Jayeswara,
Yogibhirmukti kaamaistu Damaadi guna bhushana/ Jayaatisukshma Durjeya Jaya sthula Jaganmaya,
Jaya Sukshmaati sukshma twam Jayaanindriya sendriya/ Jaya Swaamaayaa yogastha Seshabhoga
Jayaashara, Jayaikadamshtra praaptena samuddhita Vasumdhara/ Nrukesarin Suraataati Vakshahsthala
vidaarana, Saamopratam Jaya Viswaatman Mayaa Vaamana Keshava/ Nija maayaa paricchhinna
Jaddhaatarjanaardana, Jayaachintya Jayaaneka Swapupaika vidha Prabho/ Vruddhiswa Vardhitaaneka
Vikaara Prakrutey Harey, Twayyeshaa Jagataameesho samshtitaa Dharma paddhatih/ Na twaamaham
na cheshaano Neindraadyaastri dashaa Harey, Jaatumeeshaa na Munyah Sanakaadyaa na Yoginah/
Twam maayaapata samveeto Jagatyatra Jagatpatey, Kastwaam vetsyati Sarvesha twaprasaadam vinaa
Narah/ Twamevaaraadhito yasya Prasaada sumukhah Prabho, Sa yeva kevalam Devam vetti twam

netaro janah/ Tadeeshwareshwarey -shaana Vibho Buddistwa bhaavana, Prabhavaayasya Vishwasya Vishwaatman Pruthulochana!

(Victory to you Adheesha, Ajeya, Vishwa Guru Hari, Ananta who is devoid of Birth and End; Achyuta, Ajiota, Asesha, Avyakta Sthita Bhagavan, Paramaartha Purti Nimita, Sarvajna who distinguishes Jnaana and Jneya, Asesha Jagat Saakshi, Jagat Kartaa, Jagat Guru, Jagat-Ajagat Sthita or Existent in Charaachara; Paa lana-Pralaya Swami, Akhila, Asesha, Sarva Hridaya Sthita; Adi-Madhyama-Anta Swarupa; Samasta Jnaana Murti, Uttama, Visualisable only by Mumukshaas, Mukti Sadhana by Yoga sevitaas, Nitya Prasanna and Parameshwara who is ornamented by Dama, Kshama and such other qualities; Atyanta Sukshma Swarupa, Durjeya or realisable with great difficulty; Sthula (Gross) and at the sametime AtiSukhsma (Tiniest); Indriya Sahita and Indriya Rahita; Mayaayuta yogastitha; Sesha shaayi Avinaashi; Bahurupa dhaari; Ekadamshtra Prithvyoddhaara Varaha Rupa or Varaha Rupa who lifted Earth with a single tusk; Hiranyakahipa vakshasthala vidirna Nrisimha; Maya Vaamanarupa dhara; Mayaavruta Samsaara dharana Parameswara or the Holder of Samsara surrounded by Maya; Dhyaananeka Swarupa dhaarana karaa; Eka Vidhi Vibho! You are the epitome of Buddhi / Intellect; Jagaddharma marga Sthita Prabho! Myself, Shankara, Indra, Sanakaadi Munis and Maha Yogiganaas had failed to understand about you as we are all shrouded by Vishnu Maya; who else could gauge your personality excepting your self! Only those who are dedicated to you and are ever-engaged with your constant 'Araadhana' could have a chance of pleasing you and none else. Ishwareshwara! Ishaana! Vibho! Bhavana! Vishwatma! Pruthulochana! Vishwa Prabhava or Srishti kaarana! Vishnu! May you grow from strength to strength! Victory to you Paramatma!) As Bhagavan Hrishikesha was prayed to by Brahma, the former smiled and said that in the past Indra and Devas and Kashyapa Muni as also Devi Aditi paid their homges and recited Stotras to him and he assured that he would assume the incarnation of Vamamna Murti; he further assured that he would have Indra and Devatas reinstated as Trilokaadhipatis soon. In course of time Brahma offered Krishna Mriga charma to Bhavan and Brihaspati performed Upanayana and Yagnopaveeta dharana; Marichi Maharshi gifted Palaasha danda, Visishtha gave kamandalu, Angira Muni gave a Silk Vastra, Pulaha Muni gave a mat as Aasana, and various other Munis taught the Vatu the purport of Omkaara, Vedas, Shastras, Sankhya Yoga, Darshana Yuktis etc. Having been trained in all these disciplines, Vamana Deva had one fine morning left for the Yagna Shaala of Bali Chakravarti as the latter was executing a SacredYagna while carrying his mat, danda /stick, chhatra / umbrella and kamandulu / water vessel. Danava Guru Shukracharya was aware that Vishnu Deva in the form of Vamana Murti was arriving at the Yagna and briefed Bali Chakravarti to be extremely careful as Vishnu was a sauve and highly talented person to put words in the mouths of the opponents. The Guru reminded Chakravarti that the latter denied the age-old practice of rights to yagna's shares to Devataas and that Vamana Murti might as well ask for the revival of the practice but those shares were now enjoying by Danava Chiefs. Bali replied to Danava Guru that in case Vishnu in the incarnation of Vamana Murti came and requested for any thing then how could a King say 'no' to it! Bali told the Danava Guru:

Brahman katha -maham bruyaamanyapi hi yachitah, Naastiti kim Devasya Samsaarasyaaghahaarinah/ Vratopa- vaasairvividhairyah Prabhurgrunhatey Harih, Sa mey vakshyati deheeti Govindah kimatodhikam? Naasteeti yanmayanoktamanyeshaamapi yaachataam, Vakshyaami kathamaaya -tey tadadya chaamarechutey/Shlaagha eva hi veeraanam Daanaacchaapt samaagamah, Na badhaakaari yadyaanam tadanga Balavat smrutam/

(Brahmanaachaarya! How could I deny any body requesting me for a favour! And if that Supreme Deva asked me for a charity, then what else would be the alternative! While Parameswara received the fruits of Vrataas, Upavaasaas, and so on from one and all, and if that Parameswara himself asked a boon from me,

could there be a greater fortune to me! When even an ordinary person approached me for a favour, then too that could not be denied by a King; then when Narayana himself asked for it, could such an opportunity presented itself, this chance could never indeed be missed. Even if there are difficulties in executing a charity, the value of charity would get multiplied and 'Veerapurushaas' would never deter from performing the deed) Having said the above, Bali asked Shukraachaarya: *Yatagjnaatwaa Munisreshtha!Daanavighna karenamey, Naiva Bhavyam Jagannaathey Govidey samupastithey!* (By understanding the above, Munisreshta! Please do not create 'Daana Vighnaas' or hurdles in the execution of the Charity!). As Vamana Deva arrived at the Yagna shaala, Bali welcomed him, offered 'Arghya', 'Aasana', Puja and offered him limitless gold, jewellery, elephants, horses, cows, women, clothes, bunches of villages or townships or whatever would be his wish! Vamana Deva replied smilingly: *Mamagnisharanaarthaaya dehi Rajan Padatrayam, Suvarnagraamaratnaadi tadarthibhyah pradeeyataam*/

(Raja! Please provide to me three feet of land to enable me to set up an Agni- Shaala). Bali said that after all three feet would be nothing as he could ask for a lakh of feet which could be given away, but Vamana Deva replied that he was indeed satisfied with that much of Bhumi and if the King were to offer more he might as well provide to the other needy! Bali Chakravarti readily agreed not understanding the implication and as the deed of Daana was being executed and Vamana Deva extended his hand to the King and expanded his Vamana Rupa gradually immediately:

Sarva Devamayam rupam darshayaamaasa tatkshanaat/ Chandra Suryoutu nayaney dyouh shirascharanou Kshitih, Paadaangulyah Pishaachaastu Hastaangulya -scha Gruhakaah/ Vishvedevaascha jaanusthaa janghey Saadhyaah Surottamaah, Yakshaa nakheshu sambhutaa rekhaapsaraastathaa/ Drushtirrukshaanya seshaani keshaah Suryamshvah Prabhoh, Taarakaa romakupaani romeshu cha Maharshayah/ Baahavo vidishatasya Dishaah Shrotrey Mahatmanah, Ashvinou Shravaney tasya naasaa Vayurmahaatmanah/ Prasadey Chandramaa Devo Mano Dharmah samaashritah, Satyasyaabhavad Vaani Jihvaa Devi Saraswati/ Greevaarditirdeva mataa Vidyaastadvalayastathaa, Swargadwaaramabhunmaitrah twashtaa Pushaa cha vai bhruvou/ Mukhe Vaishvaanarschaascha vrushanou tu Prajaapatih, Hridayamcha Param Brahma Pumstwam vai Kashapo Munih/ Prushthesya Vasavo Devaa Marutah Sarva saandhishu, Vakshasthaley tathaa Rudro Dharryachaasya Mahaarnavah/ Udarey chaasya Gandharvaa Marutascha Mahaabalaah, Lakshmirmedhaa Dhrutih Kaantih Sarv Vidyaascha vai Katih/ Sarvajyoteesham Yaaneeha Tapascha Paramam mahat, Tasya Devaadhi Devasya tejah prodbhutamuttamam/ Tanou Kukshishu Vedaascha jaanuni cha Mahaamakhaah, Ishtayah pashavaschaasya Dwujaanaam cheshtitaanicha/ Tasya Devamayam rupam drushtaa Vishnormahaatmanah, Upasarpanti tey Daityaah patangaa iya paavaakam/ Chakshurastu Mahaa Daityaah Paadaangushtham gruheetavaan, Dantaabhyaam tasya vai greevaa mangushtheynaahana dharih/ Prathamya Sarvaansuraan Paadahastathalairvibhuh, Krutwaa Rupam Mahaakaayam Samjahaaraashu Modineem/Tasya Vikramato Bhumim Chandraadityaou stanaantarey, Nabho Vikramamaanasya sakthidesho stitathaarvibhou/Param Vikramaanasya jaanumuley Prabhaakarou, Vishnoraastaam sthitasyaitow Devapaalana jkarmani/ Jitwaa Lokatrayam taamscha hatwaachaasura pungavaan, Purandaraaya Trailokyam dadou Vishnururukramah/

(Instantly, Vamana Murti displayed his Virat Swarupa: Chandra and Surya were his two Eyes,Shy was his head, Prithvi his feet, Pishachaas were his foot-fingers, Gruhyakaas were his hand fingers, Vishwa Deva Ganaas were in his jaanus /knees,Sadhyas were his janghaas, Yakshaas were his nails, Apsarsaas were his palm lines, Nakshatras were his Eye sight, Surya kiranas were his hairs, Stars were his body hairs, Maharshiganaas were in the hair roots, Vidishas were his hands, Dishaas were his ears, Ashwini Kumars were his faculty of hearing, Vayu was his nose, Chandra Deva was his joking faculty, Dharma Deva was his thinking capacity, Satya was his voice and Saraswati was his tongue, Deva Mata Aditi was his neck,

Vidya was his valiyaas or long poles; Pushas were his eye brows, Swarga dwar was his anus, Vaishvanara his face, Prajapati his vrushanaas, Param Brahma was his heart, Kashyapa Muni was his Pumstwa, Vasu Devata was his back, Marutganaas were his Sandhis, Rudra was his Vakshasthala, Mahaarnavaa was his Dhairya, Gangharvas were in his stomach; Lakshmi, Medha, Dhruti, Kaanti and all Vidyaas were in his 'Kati Pradesha'; the luster and radiance in the total Universe as also the Tapo teja or the power of meditation was the reflection of the magnificence of Natayana; Vedas and Sciptures and the huge Yagnaas and the Sacred Deeds of the Virtuous like Maharshis and Brahmanas were all inside in his 'kukshi' or belly. On viewing the Paramatma's 'Virat Swarupa', the so called 'Mahaasuraas' referred to earlier in ignorance by Chakravarti Bali before Prahlada's curse to him got burnt off like flies before a gigantic out berak of Fire! Having thus occupied the Universe in totality including the sub-terrain Sapta Paatalaas, Vamana Deva stated that since Bali took the water in his hand and donated the THREE FEET of Land, and blessed him to be the King of the Sapta Paatalaas and granted him long life till the and of Manvantara of the on-going Vaisawata Manu. He also blessed Bali that all the 'Homa Phalas' at the time of Shraddhas to be performed even by Brahmanas, besides incomplete and defective Vratas, Agni Kaaryaas without ghee, and Kusha grass roots as also the daanas without detachment would belong to Bali and his followers.

Ityetat kathitam asya Vishnor mahatmyamutthamam, Shrunuyaadyo Vamanasya Sarva Paapaih pramuchyatey/ Bali Prahlaada samvaadam mantritam Bali Shakrayo, Baleyrvishnoscha charitam ye smarishyanti Maanavaah/ Naadhayo Vyadhayesteshaam na cha Mohaakulam Manah, Chuturaajye nijam Raajyamishta- praptim Viyogawaan/ Samaapnoti Mahabhaagaa Narah shrutwa kathaamimaam/ Brahmano Vedamaapnoti Kshatriyo Jayatey Mahim, Vaishyo Dhana Samruddim cha Shudrah Sukhamaampunuyaat, Vaamanasya Matmyam shrunvan Paapaih pramuchyatey/

(Whosoever hears of this narration of Vamana Charitra and Mahatmya would have no 'Adhi-Vyadhis' or exteral and internal problems and be freed from sins; Brahmanas would attain Veda Prapti, Kshatriyas of Victories, Vaishyas of Dhana Samruddhi and Shudras enjoy happiness; As they read or hear of Prahlada-Bali Samvada or of Bali and Vishnu Charitra, one would aviod situations of Official hindrances and achieve the desired goals of life.)

### Parvati's wedding with Shiva, Devi Kaali's Tapasya led to Gauri and birth of Ganesha

Hamavan and Devi Mena begot three daughters viz. Ragini with red eyes, red complexion and red vastraas too, Kutila who was of medium complexion and bright and the youngest was Kaali of deep blue complexion, blue eyes and most beautiful. Even at the age of eight, the three maidens took to Tapasya and Devas took them one by one to Brahma starting from the middle one Kutila; they asked Brahma whether she would be able to beget a son who could kill Mahishasura! Brahma replied: She might not be able to withstand the brilliance of Mahadeva, leave her! But she replied that she had the ability to win over by the severity of her Tapasya even Janardana and even severe Maha Deva's head! Brahma got furious by her impetuous nature and tuned her into a water flow which joined the forceful rivers of Brahmaloka. After some time, Devas took away Ragini the eldest daughter of Himavan and Mena and made her face Brahma; when Devas asked the same question to her and she too gave a brash reply that for sure she could beget a son who could kill Mahishasura in an angry and provocative tone and Brahma was upset that she had the audacity of talking to Devas like that and punished her to become Sandhya waiting for the arrival of Krittika yoga. As this happened twice before, Devi Mena prevented the third daughter Kaali to perfom Tapaswya further! She named her UMA( 'U' for This or Tapasya and 'Ma' or do not do; thereby meaning 'Do not do this Tapasya'). But as time passed, Uma got intensely devoted to Shankara and ignored her mother's warning and resumed severe Tapasya. Understandably, Brahma asked Indra and Devas to bring Kaali but the radiance and heat of her Tapasya was such that Indra could not reach anywhere near her and accordingly reported this to Brahma who understood that this was the one who

was indeed worthy of marrying Parama Shiva who could not only demolish Mahishasura but als beget a son that could annihilate Tarakasura! Thus Brahma was satisfied and stopped searching further for Kanyaas! Meanwhile Himavanta brought Kaali home from further Tapasya and Maha Deva coincidentally took up to a severe RoudraVrata called Niraashraya roaming from forest to forest and mountain to mountain. During these wanderings, Himananta invited Shiva to settle on Himalaya to perform the Vrata without hindrance and the latter agreed to do so. Uma Devi happened to see Maha Deva in the course of the Vrata and so did Maha Deva noticed her for a second as he was instantly reminded of Sati Devi his earlier wife but slipped back to his concentration again. As Uma's Sahachaari friends knew of her intense liking for Maha Deva gifted her an Earthern Idol of his and having accepted the Murti commenced worshipping it with flowers and incense. One day suddenly a Vatu / Brahmachari with danda, yagnopaveeta, chhatra (umbrella), Kamandalu and ash ridden body entered Uma's Ashrama and introduced himself that he was a resident of Varanasi and was travelling from Tirthas like Prayaga, Kubjaagra, Jayanta, Chandikeshwara, Bandhuvrinda, Kanakhala Tirtha, Saraswati, Agnikunda, Bhadra, Trivishthapa etc. He asked Uma as to why in this youthful stage was in the form of an ascetic! Then Uma's Sahacharini called Somaprabha replied that Uma decided to devotion to Maha Deva and would like to wed him. The Vatu expressed surprise as to who gave her this strange idea to her! He was a frightening mendicant always surrounded by goblins and piscachas with beard and dishevelled hair sporting snakes arould his neck and shoulders where as she was an extremely pretty girl of charm whom esteemed Devatas would like to marry. Devi Uma intervened and said 'don't you say that again Bhikshu! Shiva is 'Sarvagunaadhika';

Shivo vyaapyathavaa Bheemah Sadhano nirdhanopivaa, Alankruto vaa Deveyshaastathaa vaapyanalankrutah/ Yaadrushastaadrusho vaapi sa mey naatho bhavishyati, Nivaaryataamayam Bhishurvivakshuh sphritaadharah, Na tathaa nindakah Paapi yathaashrunavan Shashi Prabhey/

(Whether He was rich or poor, ugly or unornamented, the Bhikshu should know that Shiva was my Swami; Sashi Prabha! Do not encourage this Bhikshu, lest he would blabber something else; a person who blamed thoughtlessly about others would continue to argue in circles; so throw him out!) Then Parama Shiva appeared before Parvati in his real Swarupa and said: Dear Parvati! You may now go back to your home; I shall depute Maharshis to your Father's house; since you have commended this form of mine now would be known to posterity as Bhadreshwara and Deva, Danava, Yaksha, Kinnara, Uraga and Manavaas would worship me in this very Rupa of Bhadreswara. Then the Saptarshis viz. Kashyapa, Atri, Bharadwaaja, Vasishtha, Goutama, Angira and Vishwamitra were summoned and recalled about the past incident of Sati and said that Parvata Putri Parvati had returned again and they should request Himavaan to agree for the alliance. The Saptarshis accompanied by Arundhati reached Himavaan's residence, even as the Co-Mountains, Gandharvaas, Kinnaraas, Yakshaas, and other illustrious guests were already in position there. Himavaan welcomed the Saptarishis most humbly and the Spokesman Angira said:

Shruyataam Parvata Sreshtha yena Kaaryena vai vayam, Samaagataastwatsadana marundhatyaa samam Girey/ Yosow Mahatmaa Sarvaatmaa Dakshayagna ksayankarah, Shankarah Shuladhruk Sharvastrinetro Vrusha vaahanah/ Jeemutaketuh Shatrughno Yagna bhoktaa Swayam Prabhuh, Yameeshwaram Maheshaanam Mahadevam Pashih Patim, Vayam teyna proshitaah smastwatsakaasham Girishwara/ Iyam yaa twatsutaa Kaali Sarvalokeshu Sundari, Taam praarthayati Deveyshastaam Bhavaan daatumarhati/ Sa eva dhanyo hi Pitaayasya putri Shubham Patim,Rupaabhijana sampatya prapnoti Girisattama/ Yaavanto Jangamaamyaa Bhutaah Shaila Chaturvidhaah, Teshaam Maataa twiyam Devi proktah Pitaa Harah!

( Parvata Raja! We along with Arundhati have arrived here is to convey to you that Mahatma Sarvatma who was Daksha Yagna's destroyer, Shula dhaari, Sharva, Trinetra, Vrusha Vahana, Jeemutaketu, Shatrughna, Yagna bhokta, Swayamrabhu Shankara Ishrara who was also called by some as Shiva, Sthaanu, Bhava, Hara, Bhima, Ugra, Maheshaana, Maha Deva and Pashupati had asked us to request you to propose him as his husband to Devi Kaali as his Dharma Patni; the father of this Rupavaan, Nishkalanka and Kuleena Kumari would indeed be happy to the mother of the Charaachara Beings since Shankara was their father). Devi Kaali blushed as Angira Maharshi completed his statement. Himavan sought the endorsement of his wife Devi Menaka and the clearance of his co-Mountains as they were all his close relatives and confirmed the acceptance of the Sacred Alliance. The Day of wedding arrived and the 'Who is Who' of the Invitees were in position at the Holy Platform of the Univere's Supreme got ready too with Maharshis awaiting the arrival of the bride groom's party. Deva Maata Aditi, Surabhi, Surasa and other eminent ladies decorated Maha Deva, with a Mundamaala around his neck, tiger skin around hiswaist, Kaala Sarpa Kundalaas as his Ear-rings, Maha Sarpras with shining Manis on their hoods as his Kankanaas or wrist-ornaments, shoulder ornaments, neatly dressed up Jataajuta on his head along with half-moon and Ganga, Gorochana Tilaka on the forehead and Trishula in his right hand. He was seated in the Vrishabha as accompanied with his Pramatha Ganaas. As the Party moved on, Vishnu and Lakshmi too moved on by Garuda, Brahma and Saraswati on the Swan Chariot, Indra and Sachi Devi on Irayata Elephant, other Devas on their respective Vaahanaas and spouses, the Six Rithus (Seasons), Tumbura and other Gandharvas were singing, Kinnaras were playing musical instruments and Apsaraas were in ecstatic dances; Ekadasha Rudras, Ashtaavasus, Twelve Adityas, Sixty six Ganas, twentyfour Urthwa-reta Rishis, Yakshas, Rakashasaas and Piscachas were all excited awaiting the momentous Muhurta. Himavaan welcomed the bride groom and his Party most respectfully and made them seated comfortably. As the bride arrived, the Maharshis commenced the formal procedures with Vedic Mantras and at the most auspicious Muhurta, Himavan announced:

Matputreem Bhagavan! Kaalim Poutreem Pulahaagajey, Pitrunaamapi Dauhitreem Prateecchemaam mahodyataam/ (I am hereby parting Devi Kaali, the grand daughter of Pulaha and my daughter in wedding; Kindly accept. Parama Shiva replied: Na mesti Maataa na Pitha tathaiva, Na Jnaato vaapi cha Bandhavaascha/ Niraashroham Giri shring vaasi, Sutaam prateecchaami tavaadri Raja! (I neither have a mother or father and not even relatives; as I a have no home, I shall keep her on the Mount of Kailasha Mount and agreeher as my wife). Brahma then asked Devi Kaali to accompany Shiva to perform three Pradakshinaas around the Agni Kunda and the guests were treated with excellent bhojan and gifts before departing after the festivities.

Parvati's Tapasya led to reappearance as Gauri: After the Sacred Wedding, Shankara and Parvati moved around freely in enjoyment and asked Vishwakarma to build a glorious home for them, performed Yagna worthy of Grihastaashrama and the couple were nicely settled down. One day out of fun, Parama Shiva addressed Devi Parvati as Kaali or of dark complexion. She felt that his fun was unbearable and left for serious Tapasya to Brahma deva and secured golden complexion. As she discarded her earlier Form, Indra requested her to give away the earlier Form to him and since she was materialised from Krishna Kosha or of deep blue nature, she was named as **Katyayani**; she was also called as **Koushiki** since she was materialised from Brahma kosha and since Indra called her as his sister, Indra too was known as Koushika. Indra then asked Katyayani /Koushiki to reach Vindhya Parvata and thus she became **Vindhyavasini** and Indra gifted a Lion as her Vahana /Carrier.

After this incident, Devi Uma who discarded her earlier Rupa now replaced with Suvarna Rupa and identified herself as **Gouri.** Maha Deva was too pleased and both the couple spent some thousand years in Garhastya all by themselves ignoring the out side contacts, which had terribly distressed Devatas and the entire Universe was upset too. Indra and Devatas were concerned about fresh threats of Indratwa as there were forebodings to that effect and approached Brahma who wished that Mahadeva's continued immersion in the stage of 'Manmoha' for Gauri would contitinue before Daityas would gain strength; this

concern got Indra and Devas worried and tried to somehow manage an entry to Shiva's abode but found that sneaking into the adode would not be possible as Maha Nandi was holding the security. Even while Indra and Devatas were waiting outside the Abode, Agni took the form of a Swan and sneaked in and having assumed a Sukshma Rupa conveyed to Parama Shiva that Indra and Devas were waiting outside to desperately meet him. Maha Deva stepped out and let Indra and Devas come inside; he said that since he was actually enjoying Devi Gauri he was disturbed and any of the Devatas should take over the weight, radiance and power of Parama Siva's 'Shukra' (Semen)! Surya and Chandra felt that they might be unable to do so but Agni Deva emboldened himself and asked Shiva to release the Sukra so that he could consume it. Shiva did so and then he asked Indra as to what was the emergency about! Indra had respectfully entreated to terminate the period of enjoymernt so that he could very kindly concentrate on many tasks pending. As Maha Deva agreed to do so, Indra and Devas returned to Swarga and he narrated the incident to Parvati and the latter got furious that the disturbance caused by Indra and Devas was indeed frustrating and cursed Indra and others that since they did not allow to let her bear a child at the nick of time, they too would become childless!

Ganeshotpanna: In that angry and vexatious mood, Gauri entered the Snaana shaala and asked her maid Malini to massage her body and as the maid applied flavoured milk cream the sweat of her angry body; when massaged Gauri's body collected body dirt and made a figure viz. Ganesha with four hands, broad chest and handsome and later on resumed her bath and left later to Puja Mandir to worship Maha Deva. Thereafter, Parama Shiva entered the same Abhyagana Griha (bath room), and noticed the Ganesha Pratima apparently made by Parvati's body dirt during her Abhyangana. Maha Deva added his body dirt too to the Pratima and made an addition of an elephant trunk to the Murti which as he took his Snaana got washed his own sweat, bhasma and sacred water. The Pratima came alive as the combined body dirt, sugandhas and water and Shiva told Parvati that he was their own son! Gauri was surprised to see their child with an elephant face and excellent features and embraced him:

Yattadangamalaadwiyam krutam Gajamukham Naram, Tatah preetaa Girisutaa tam putram parishashvajey/ Murdhina chaina —mapuraaghnaaya tatahxSarvobraveedumaam, Naayakena vinaa Devi tava Bhutopi Purtakah/ Yasmaajjatastato naamnaa bhavishyati Vinaayakah, Yesha vighna sahasraani Suraadeenaam harishyati/ Pujayishyanti chaivaasya lokaa Devi charaacharaah, Ityava muktatwaa Devaastu Dattavaamstanayaaya hi/ Sahaayantu Gana Sreshthamnaamnaa khyaatam Ghatodaram, Tathaa Matruganaa ghoraa bhutaa Vighna karaaschaye/Tey Sarvey Paramoshena Devyaah preetyopapaadinah, Devi cha Sasutam drustwaa paraam mumadavaapacha/

(Maha Deva asked Shailaja Devi to find her own son and the latter embraced him who was materialised by the body dirts of hers and his as the child was a charming boy with an elephant face; Shiva said that the child was born without any 'Nayaka' and thus would be called **Vinayaka**, who could forestall thousands of Vighnaas of Devas. The entire Universe would worship Ganesha said Parvati who created Ghatodara Ganaas to assist him as also Matru Ganaas and Vighna Bhutaas to destroy who did not worship him. Devi Parvati felt exremely happy and contented with the arrival of Ganeswara!

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# Vamana Purana Vaachana-Shraavana / Shravana- Pathana Phala Shruti ESSENCE OF VAMANA PURANA

Narayanam Namaskrutya Naram chaiva Narottamam, Deveem Saraswateem Vyasam tato Jaya-mudeerayet/ (The Purana is to be recited after greeting Bhagavan Narayana the Supreme of all Beings as also Devi Bhagavati Saraswati and Vyasa Deva)

*Trailokya Rajyamaakshipya Balerindraaya yo dadao, Shridhayaya Namastasmai Chhatra Vaamana Rupine!* (My salutations to Shridhara Bhagavan assuming the Mayamaya Rupa of Vamana and retaining Lakshmi in his heart always, secured and restored the Trilokas to Indra).

Brahmamarshi Narada requested Maharshi Pulastya to narrate the details of Vamana Purana and the latter commenced the narration with the account of Devi Sati and Parama Shiva as during the Varsha Ritu the latter sat riding on the thick clouds on the sky and Deva Deva was called 'Jeemutakethu' or 'Jeemuta Vahana'. After the Sharad Ritu, Maha Deva and Devi Sati relaxed on the peak of Mandaraachala and Bhagavan Vishnu woke up from Yoga Nidra while Daksha Prajapati decided to perform a massive Yagna along his wife Ahimsa Devi and invited Indra and Devatas, Dwadasha Adityas, and Kashyapa Muni. He invited a host of Maharshis and their wives like Vasishtha and Arundhati, Atri and Anasuya, Vishwamitra and Dhriti, Goutama and Ahalya, Bharadwaja and Amaaya and Angira and Devi Chandra. Arishtanemi was detailed to fetch Samidhas for the Yagna while Bhrigu Maharshi was asked to conduct the Yagna.

# Kapaali atones at Varanasi for Brahma's 'Panchamukha hatya'

But Daksha did not invite Mahadeva as he felt that the latter was a 'Kapaali'! Pulastya Muni explained to Narada that background of Shiva becoming a Kapaali; when Maha Vishnu fell into Yoga Nidra and at the end of the night, woke up and under the influence of 'Rajoguna' initiated 'Srishti' and materialised Panchamukha Brahma and Tamomaya Shankara. Both Brahma and Shiva confronted each other and asked them of their credentials and background. As their mutual 'Ahankaaraas' or egos came to the fore, they encountered in a one-to-one fight and as the fifth Face of Brahma heckled at Shiva saying that he knew Shiva who was naked and three eyed Vrishabha Vahana or Bull-carried Pralayakaari or the Destroyer of the World full of Tamoguna. Parama Shiva desired to open his Third Eye but nipped the fifth head of Brahma with the finger tip instead and there appeared, a huge illumination out of which emerged Vishnu who reprimanded Mahesha and asked him to clear away at once lest he would punish Shiva severely, Aa Shiva was ashamed of what he did, he left for Himalayas and reached the Ashram of Nara Narayana Maharshis at Badarikashrama on the banks of the Holy River Saraswati. Shiva requested Narayana Maharshi to hit his shoulder with Shiva's Trishula forcefully as an atonement which Narayana did and from the shoulder were materialised three water springs, one as Akaasha Ganga, another as a water fall on Earth as Maharshi Atri in the form of River Mandakini as also by Shivaamsha the Maharshi Durvaasa and the third water fall fell right on the frightful Kapaala. From out of the fallen Kapaala of Brahma came out a frightening Swarupa which was thick blue in colour with blood red eyes and dishevelled hair and demanded Maha Deva to absorb her into his body. Shankara tried to bathe in River Yamuna but the River'got dried up; River Saraswati too disappeared; he was able to bathe in the Tirthas of Pushkaraaranya, Dharmaaranya, and Saindhavaaranya for long but the Brahma hatya paapa did not vanish still; as the Jeemuta vahana or who could travel by clouds, Shankara bathed in several other Rivers, Tirthas, Ashramaas, and so on but to no avail. Finally, Shankara reached Kurukshetra and had the darshan of Chakrapani Vishnu and extolled him as follows: Namastey Devataanaatha Namastey Garudadhwaja, Shankhachakra gadaa paaney Vaasudeva Namostutey/ Namastey Nirgunaananta Apratakraaya Vedhasey, Jnaanaajnaana Niraalamba SarwaalambaNamostutey/ Rajoyukta Namastestu

Brahma Murtey Sanaatana, Twayaa Sarvamidam Naatha Jagatsrashtam charaacharam/ Satvaadhishtit Lokeshaa Vishnu Murtey Adhokshaja, Prajaapaala Mahaabaaho Janaardana Namostutey/ Tamomurtey Ahamheysha twadamshakrodha sambhavah, Gunaabhiyukta Devesha Sarvavyaapin Namostutey/ Bhuriyah twam Jagannatha Jalaambara hutaashanah, Vaayurbuddhirmanaschaapi Sharvari twam namostutey/ Dharmo Yagnastapah Satyamahimsaa Shouchamaarjavam, Kshamaa Daanam Dayaa Lakshmirbrahmacharya twam Ishwara/ Twam saangaaschaturo Vedaastwam Vedyo Vedapaaragah, Upavedaa bhavaaneesha Sarvosi twam Namostutey/ Namonamastyochyuta Chakrapaaney Namastestu tey Maadhava Meena Murtey, Lokey Bhayaan Kaaruniko mato mey traayaswa maam Keshaya paapa bandhanaat/ Mamaashubham naashaaya vigrahastham yad Bramha hatyaabhavam babhuva, Dagdhosmi nastosya sameekshakaari puneeh teerthosi Namo Namastey/ (My salutations to you Devataaswami, Garudadwaja, Shankha-Chakra-Gadaadhaari, Vaasudeva, Nirguna, Ananta, Atarkaneeya Vidhaata or indisputable Supreme, Jnaana-Ajnaana Swarupa, Nmiraadhaara or Unclamped or holdles but the saviour of one and all; Rajo guna-Sanatana -Brahma Murti; the Supreme Scripter of the Universe in entirety; the Embodiment of Satwa Guna; Lokesha; Vishnu Murti, Adhokshaja, The Ultimate Adminisdtrator; Maha Baahu, Janaardana, Tamo Murti; I was born of your angry characeristics; Jagannaatha! You are the Pancha Bhutas, Buddhi, Mind, Darkness; You are the Dharma, Yagna, Tapas, Satya, Ahimsa, Pavitrata, Saralata, Kshama, Daana, Dayaa, Lakshmi and Brahmacharya -Virtue, Sacrifice, Meditation, Truth, Non-Violence, Purity, Softness, Forgiveness, Charity, Mercy, Wealth and Celibacy; the Embodiment of Veda Vedangaas, the Symbol of Learning, Vedopavada, Achyuta, Chakrapaani, Matsyaavataara, Madhava, you are the most sympathetic and compassionate; I crave your indulgence to get me freed from the clench of Brahmahatya Paataka; I am humiliated and ashamed of my action as you are indeed the final asylum and shelter as You indeed are the Maha Tirtha who only could get me purified!). Vishnu Deva replied that at Prayaga, there was a Yogashayi of his 'Amsha' or Alternate Form was reputed to be present who was Avyaya and Vikara rahita and south of that place was a Sacred River called 'Varana' and to the left of Prayaga was another River called 'Ási' and the Place between the two Rivers was the most hallowed Place the like of which was not in existence in Prithvi, Aakash and Rasatala and that was the famed Varanasi; Vishnu thus advised Kapali to visit the Maha Tirtha which was the confluence of the two Rivers. Janardana further advised Shiva that nearby Varanasi there was a Sarovara full of divinely lotuses of extraordinary fragrance and in that Sarovara, he should bathe in and leave the Panchama Kapaala of Brahma in the Tirtha. By so doing, Kapaali lokey cha khyaato Rudra bhavisyati, Kapaala mochaneytyevam Tirha chedam Bhavishyati/ (Shiva! You would then be named as Kapaali and the Sarovara would be popular as Kapaala Vimochana Tirtha. [Kapalamochana Tirtha is situated at a mile from Kasi called now as Bakariya Kunda].

#### Sati Devi's self-sacrifice and destruction of Dakhsha Yagna

Meanwhile, Kumari Jaya the daughter of Maharshi Gautami and Ahalya dropped in at Devi Sati's residence and informed the latter that her parents went away to attend Daksha Yagna and wondered why Sati did not attend the Yagna; *Jayaayaastadvachah shrutwa Vajrapaatasamam Sati, Manyunaabhiplutaa Brahman Panchatwamagamat tatah!* (Pulastya Muni told Narada, that as soon as Kumari Jaya informed of this 'Vajrapaata Vaarta' or thunderbolt fall like news, Sati Devi swooned with anger and distress and collapsed to death!). On hearing this terrifying news, Rudra was startled and furious so much that his body hairs stood up and multitude of Rudra Ganaas who were ferocious like lions got manifested along with Veerabhadra, Chandika and the Ganaas were all lined up towards Vayavya direction shouting insolently and armed with Trishulas /Tridents towards the Daksha Yagna. Ganeswara too joined the Party with his four arms armed with Trushula, Dhanush, Baana and Gada. Yamaraja was the Dwarapalaka defending the Yagna and confronted the attacking Shivasena but the formidable Ganeswara was too powerful and Veerabhadra entered the Yagnashaala. The Ashtaavasus, Vishwadeva, Saadhyaganas, Siddha-Gandharva-Pannaga-Yaksha-Kimpurusha-Vaivaswata / Chandra Vamseeya Kings, Daitya-

Daanavas ran helter-skelter. Vishnu himself defended the onslaught as Maharshis were frightened and controlled Veerabhadra. Shiva appeared on the scene and emitted three kinds of Agnis from his three eyes viz. *Ahavaneeya, Garhapatya and Shaalaagni* who displayed Dwandwa Rupas or two distinct Forms of Jataadhaari in the Yagnashaala and Kaala on the Sky! *Jataadharah Haridrushtaa krodhaadaarakta lochanam/ Sthaanaadapaakramya Kubjaagrey antarhitah Sthitaha/* (As Jatadhaari Shiva looked ferocious with blazing eyes, Bhagavan Vishnu disappeared and hid himself at Kubjaagra or Hrishikesha). As Maha Deva went wild and berserk, Kashyapa and many illustrious sought to pacify him by reciting 'Shatarudreeyam' and Daksha's wife implored Shiva for mercy and devastation of Daksha Yagna was completed.

Explanation of Nakshatras and Rashis or Stars and Constellations in terms of Shiva's Body: In reality however, Maharshi Pulastya explained to Narada, Maheswara was of 'Mangalmaya Swarupa' and was spread all over the Sky to bless the Universe and all the Beings providing ready protection to one all. Nakshatras and 'Raashis' constituted the entire Physique of Maha Deva: the Stars Ashwini, Bharani and Krittika's first 'charana' or the first part of the four parts of Bhouma Kshetra (Planet) of Mesha Raashi (Constellation) constituted Maha Deva's head; Krittika Star's remaining three parts, Rohini, and Mrigaseersha's two Parts of Shukra Planet of Vrisha Raashi constituted Shiva's face; Mrigaseersha's remaining Parts, Ardra and Punaryasu's three Parts of Budha's Mithuna Raashi constituted Shiva's two 'bhujas' shoulders; Punarvasu's last Charana, Pushya and Aslesha of Chandra's Kshetra in the Karka Raashi constituted Shiva's 'parshvaas' or body sides; Magha, Purvaphalguni and Uttara Phalguni's first Charana of Surya's Simha Raashi constituted Shiva's heart; Uttaraphalguni's remaining three Charanaas, Hasta, and the first of two Paadaas of Chitra of Budha's Kanya Raashi comprised Shankara's 'Jathara'or stomach; Chitra's remaining two Parts, Swati and Vishakha's three Parts of Shukra of Tula Raashi was Shiva's navel; Vishakha's one Part, and Sampurna Anuraadha and Jeshtha Stars of Mangala and of Vrischika raashi constituted the Kaala Rupa of Maha Deva; the full Stars of Moola, Purvaashaadha and Uttaraashaadhaa's first Charana of Dhanu Raashi being of Brihaspati Kshetra would be Maheswara's 'Vurus' or thighs; Uttaraashaadha's remaininig three Charanaas, Shravana and two parts of Dhanishta of Makara Raashi of Shani Kshetra constituted Shiva's Ghutanas or knee-caps; Star Dhanishta's earlier two Charanas, Shatabhisha and Poorvaa -bhaadraa's three Charanaas of Kumbha Raashi of Shani constituted 'janghaas' or buttocks; Poorvabhadraa's fourth harana, Uttaraabhaadra and Revati of Brihaspati's second Kshetra of Meena Raashi constituted Maha Deva's both the feet. Mesha Raasi has its movement in the circle of Nava Durgas, Dhana-Dhanya and Pushpa-Vanaspati Sarovaras; Vrishabha Rasi is in the Territory of Gokula Deva residing in the Karshaka Bhumi or the Provider of Farming Benefits, cool, convincing, and have an eye for details; Mithuna Raasi is a coexistent Place of Purushas and Strees /men and women alike engaged in music, dance and other fine arts as also sports and tourism; Karka Raashi or of the symbol of a crab of attractive features of detachment, loneliness and of maturity; Simha Raashi persons are fond of entreprise, public relations, mental agility and royal in gait and nature; Kanya raashi persons are courageous, highly sociable, intelligent, quick to learn, adapting and charming; Tula raashi persons are non- controversial, tolerant and adjustable; Vrischik Raashi persons are friendly, resourceful, adaptable and calculative; Dhanu raashi entreprising, skilled in military and daring activities, royal in behaviour and outlook. Thus Parameshwara is a multi-featured, multi- creative and multi-formed entity and at the same time an Omni-Present, Omni-Scient and Omni-Potent Symbol of Unity in Diversity!

#### 'Shiva Lingodbhavana' (The origin of Shiva Linga) and its worship

Dharma was the ManasPutra of Brahma and the former who was married to one of the daughter of Daksha Prajapati named Murti gave birth to four sons viz. Hari, Krishna, Nara and Narayana.

Of these Hari and Krishna took to Yogaabhyaas while Nara and Narayana practised Tapas at Badarikaashrama. Indra was unnerved by the severe Tapasya of Nara- Narayana and deputed Rambha

and some other Apsaraas along with Kama Deva and Vasanta Ritu. Kama Deva released an arrow named 'Unmadan' which literally meant frustrating or maddening. Shiva got restless with obsession and passion with feelings of great void in the absence of Sati Devi and like a lunatic went around bathing in Yamuna and many Rivers, Tirthas, Sarovaras, flower gardens, mountain peaks and enchanting forests, sometimes singing songs of sorrow missing Sati and sometimes crying for her. Finally he met the son of Yaksha King Kubera called Paanchaalika and asked him to take over the Unmadana Astra of Kama Deva as he only could absorb it since he had the history of resisting even more powerful Astras like Vijrumbhana, Santaapana and Unmadana; in return, Shiva said that he would bestow the boon to the Yaksha viz. in the Chaitra Month, all the Beings in the World including children, youth and the elderly would worship him as also sing, dance and play vocal and instrumental music and that he would be reputed as Panchakilesh everywhere. Having become free from the after effects of the attack by Kamadeva of the 'Unmadini' arrow, Bhaganan Shiva then moved freely from place to place, although avoiding another attack by Kamadeva. In the course of his wanderings, Mahadeva reached Vindhyachala and entered Daaruvana where the Ashramas of illusrious Maharshis existed. Except Pativratas like Anasuya and Arundhati, all the wives and daughters of Maharshis got infatuated with Parama Shiva who was naked and had such mesmerising body features and enchanting looks; in fact the females of Daaruvana followed him like lunatics. Maharshis of Daaruvana were in great rage: Tadastu Rishaye drishtaa Bhargavaangaraso Muney, Krodhhan -vitaabuvansarvey Lingosyapatataan Bhuvi! Tatah papaat Devasya Lingam Pruthveen Vidaarayan, Antardhaanam Jagaamaatha Trishul Nilalohitah/ (The Maharshis like Bhargava and Angirasa cursed Mahadeva to let his Linga fall on Earth; as soon as he received the Shaapa, Shiva disappeared to Rasatala and started creating havoc to the whole world and shook away the Earth, mountains, Rivers and Seas and commenced destroying Rasaatala upwards. Brahma by his Hamsavahana and Vishnu by his Garuda vahana ran to the Place where Shiva Linga Patana or his Linga fell and traced Shiva's presence in the Patalaas and extolled him as follows: *Namostu tey Shuapaaney Namostu* Vrishabhadwaja, Jeemutavaahana Kavey Sharva Traibaaka Shankara/ Maheshvara Maheshaana Suvarnaaksha Vrishaakapey, Daksha Yagna kshayakara Kaalrupa Namostutey/ Twamaadirasya Jagatsarvam Madhyam Parameshwara, Bhavaanantascha Bhagavan Sarvagastwam Namostutey/ Having eulogized Parama Shiva as above, both Vishnu and Brahma overruled the curse of the Maharshis of Daaruvana and requested Shiva to take back his Linga again. Shiva agreed to do so only on the condition that his Linga was worshipped by one and all and both Brahma and Vishnu readily agreed; in fact Brahma materialised a golden Linga called Jagat Pradhaana and performed puja to Shiva's feet at once as others followed suit viz. Krishna worshipped a black coloured Linga called Urjita and did puja to Shiva's head; Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanat Kumars worshipped Shiv's heart naned as named Jagadrati; Sapta Rishis called Darbhamayi Linga as Vishwa Yoni; Narada named the Linga called Jagatvija as 'Ákaasha'; Indra prayed to a Diamond Linga called Jagatvida; Surya worshipped a copper Linga called Vishwasruga; Chandra performed Puja to a Pearl Linga called Jagatpati and so on. [Details are provided in the Essence of Skanda Purana by the same Author in the Chapter of Shata Rudreeyam]. Shiva then acquired the names of Shaivaites, Pashupataits, Kaalamukhayaas and Bhairavas by different Shiva Bhaktas; Shakti Rishi, the son of Vasishta Muni as also Shaki's sishya named Gopayan spread the cult of Shaivism; Bharadwaja Rishi and Somashekhara King Rishabha were the pioneers of Maha Pasuupatya; Maharshi Apastamba initiated Kalamukha Sampradaaya; and Yaksha King Kubera venerated Shiva in the sampradaya of Kaapaalikas or Bhairayaas. Yet Kama Deva persisted his efforts to pester Maha Deva and used 'Santaapa Astra' named floral arrow and as he was enraged, Shiva opened his Third Eye as Kamadeva got burnt off and got re-materialised as 'Ananga Deva' thanks to the merciful Mahadeva. It was that Ananga who was sent by Indra to disturb the attention of Rambha and other Apsaras like Rambha along with Kamadeva and the Vasanta Ritu referred to above so that Dhara Deva's sons Nara Narayana Munis. The smiling Narayana Rishi who was least disturbed by these so-called diversions ushered in by the Apsaras and others in the Troupe created from his thighs an astonishingly beautiful Apsara named Urvashi and asked Rambha and other Apsaras- who actually came to tempt Nara Narayana Rishis at the instance of Indra to treat Urvashi as a return- gift to Indra since Urvashi too was worthy of joining the corps of Apsaraas! The Apsaras returned to Indra and narrated the greatness of

Nara Narayana Maharshis and Indra was felt too small since he foolishly under-estimated the magnificence of the Maharshis; Indra also felt bad that in this context he involved Kama Deva who provoked no less a Personality as Maha Deva himself and as a result lost his very existence but of the mercy of Shiva!

# Nara Narayana and Prahlada

The Apsaraas further conveyed to Indra the memorable account of of Nara Narayana and Prahlada, the son of Hiranya Kashipu which was famed and discussed about among the Bhuloka, Patala and all the Ten Directions! As Prahlada became the King of the Patala Lokas, the Administration was fully according to the Principles of Dharma and Nyaya and the Varnashramas were in full observance: Brahmanas were engaged in Tapasya-Dharma Karyaas and Tirtha Yatras, Vaishyas were in Business, Farming and Pashu Paalana while Shudras were involved in performing sincere service to other Varnas. It was at this time that the illustrious Chyavana Maharshi took his bath at Nakuili Tirtha on the banks of the Sacred River Narmada but was caught a highly poisonous snake which dragged the Sage who at once memembered Bhagavan Srihari who rendered the sarpa as non-poisonous. The frightening serpent released the Maharshi in Rasatala and some of the Naga Kanyas found and venerated the Maharshi and eventually, King Prahlada came to know of the incident of a vicious Naga dragging the Maharshi and worshipped him. In course of his Dharmic discussions, the King enquired about the most important Tirthas and Chyavana singled out Naimisha in Prithvi, Pushkara in Antariksha and Chakra Tirtha in Paatala. Prahlada instantly asked the Daityas to get ready at once to visit Nimisha for the darshan of Bhagavan Achyuta. In Nimisha while moving about looking for deers as a prey for his food, he found a huge tree on which there were two pairs of oversized bows and arrows hung on and undre the tree there were two Maharshis in deep meditation. The King wondered that it was ridiculous to see two Maharshis in Mrigacharma or deer skin in deep meditation also sporting bows and arrows! The King ridiculed the Rishis that they were neither Rishis now warriors; Nara Narayanas were provoked and challenged the King. The mild fight with one arrow from Nara was replied by five arrows of Prahlada; three of Nara by five by six of the Kingand so on till the fight turened out to be a mighty battle; Nara overshadowed the Prithvi, Akaash and Dishas. The Daitya took up Bhrahmaastra but Narayana released Maheswaraastra; on finding Brahmastra futile, Prahlada picked up his Gada / Mace and pounced on Narayana Maharshi; the latter's eyes rained fire as a result of which Prithvi started trembling and quakes caused unusual destruction. As this warfare continued and since Narayana Maharshi was not to be controlled, King Prahlada finally prayed to Bhagavan Vishnu whose unquestionable dedication was well-known since the times of Prahlada as a child when Vishnu killed Hiranya Kashipu in the Avatara of Maha Nrisimha. Vishnu appeared before the illustrious Prahlada and said: Durjayosau Mahaabaahustatvaya Prahlaada Dharmajah, Saadhyo Vipravaro Dheemaan mrudhey devaasutairapi/ (Prahlada! Mahabaahu Dharmaja Narayana Maharshi is invincible on battle front by Devas and Daityas alike!). Then King got worried as to what would happen to his vow and Vishnu replied: Soham Danava Shardula Lokaanaam Hitakaamyayaa, Dharmam pravartaapyayitum Tapaschyaam samaathitah/ Tasmaadyadichachushrusha Dharmajam/ (As a matter of fact, I am myself the Swarupa of Narayana Maharshi; I decided to perform Tapasya in this form for the welfare of the Universe; Prahlada! If you desire to win over Narayana, then worship to the Maharshi would be the only way. On hearing this truism from Bhagavan himself, Prahlada decided to renounce kingship, called Andhakaasura the son of Hirananyaaksha as his successor, prostrated before Nara-Narayana Maharshis requesting him for clemency and extolled him, even as the Narayana Maharshi taunted Prahlada as to why was he saluting them without defeating them, as follows: Karustwaam jetum Prabho shaktah kastatwah Purushodhikah, Twam hi Naraayanonantah Peetavaaso Janaardanah/Twam Devah Pundarikaaksham twam Vishnuh Shaankha chaapa dhruk, Twamavyayayo Maheshaanah Shasvatah Purushottamah/ Twam Yoganischintyayanti Chaarchayanti Maneeshinah, Japanti Snaanakaasaastwam cha jayanti twaam cha Yaajnikaah/ Twamachyutey Hrishikeshas chakra -paani

dharaadharah, Mahaa Meeno Hayashiraastwameya Vara Kacchapah/ Hirnyaksharipuh Shriman Bhagavannasura Sookarah, Matpitru naashanakaro Bhavaanapi Nrukesari/ Brahmaatrinetromararaad hutaashahah Pretaadhipo Neerapatih Sameerah, Suryo Mrigaankochala jangamaadyo Bhavaan Vibho naatha Khagendraketo/ Twam Prithvi Jyotiraakaashah Jalam Bhutwaa Sahasrashah, Twayaa Vyaaptam Jagatsarvam kastwaam jeshyati Madhavah/ Bhaktyaa yadi Hrishikesha Toshameshi Jagadguro, Naanyathaa twam Prashakyosi jetum Sarvagataayaya/ (Prabho! Who could defeat you in the battles! Is there anybody beyond you! Your are the Ananta Narayana, Peetaambari Janaardana, Kamalanayana Dhanushdhaari Vishnu, Ayaya, Meheswara, Shashvata, and Parama Purushotthama. Yogi janas perform dhyana to you; Vidwan Purushas perform Puja to you; Vedajanaas perform japaas to you; Yaajnikajana execute Yajanaas to you! You are Achyuta, Hrishikesha, Chakrapaani, Dharaadhara, Maha Matsya, Hayagriva, Shreshtha Kurma, Adi Varaha, and the killer of my father Hiranyakashipu in the Avatara of Nrisimha! You are Prithvi, Agni, Akasasha, Jala and Vayu! You have spread all over with endless Forms; Madahava, Jagadguru, Hrishikesha, Sarvagata, Avinaashi! You could be only conquered by Bhakti alone and nothing else!). Thus Prahlada took to the sacred path of high devotion to Narayana for good. Meanwhile, the blind King Andhakasura took to severe Tapas to Maheswara and secured the boon of invincibility, defeated Indra and Devataas with the active help of Virochana, the son of Prahlada, despite the resistance put up by Devas especially Varuna, Agni and Vayu. Varuna specially faced Shambarasura; and Agni encountered Andhakasura but the latter overpowered Agni who fled away. Finally Andhakasura defeated Devas and controlled Tri Lokas!

### Dharmopadesha to Daitya Sukeshi, his reformation, Surya's action and reaction

Maharshi Pulastya imparted considerable knowledge of Dharma at the Naimisharanya's

congreation of Munis as narrated to Brahmarshi Narada. The King of Daityas Sukeshi performed sincere Tapasya to please Maha Deva and secured a boon 'Akashachari Nagara'or a Flying Abode with a provision of Movement from Place to Place which could carry a large number of qualified Rakshasas practising lives of Virtue and Nyaya! In the course of his flights, he spotted a hallowed place in Magadharanya and descended from the Airship for a close encounter with a large gathering of Rishis and after exchanging pleasantries asked the Rishis to educate him and his followers about 'Dharma Lakshanas' or the features of Virtue. The Rishis explained that broadly speaking, the fundamental Principles applicable to Devatas were Yajna and such other deeds, Swaadhyaaya of self-recitation of Vedas and Scriptures; Bahubala or physical strength, Irshyaa bhava or jealousy and greed, Expertise in Yuddha Vidya and Niti Shastra or the Precepts of Morality would constitute the basic principles of Daityas; the Principles applicable to Siddhaas would be Yoga Sadhana or Practice of Yoga, Vedaadhyayana, Brahma Vignaana, and Achanchala Bhakti or Deep Devotion to Shiva or Vishnu; Gandharva Dharmas would include High Order of Upasana or Power of Concentration, profound devotion to Devi Sarasvati and excellence and expertise in Fine Arts, especially music and dance; as regards Vidyaadharas were concerned, the basic precepts were brilliance of Vidya or Knowledge, high degree of Memory Power, Purushaartha Buddhi or inclination to abide by the Principles of Dharma-Artha-Kaama and Moksha; the Dharmas of Kimpurushas would include Gandharva Vidya Jnaana, high devotion of Surya Deva and Shilpa Kalaa Kushalata or the Arts of Stone and such other subjects of Creativity and Originality; the Dharmas of Pitru Devatas would include Brahmacharya, Anaamitwa or Egotism and Self-Consciousness, high of Yogaabhyaas and free movement; the Dharma of Rishis were Brahmacharya, Nimitaahaara, japa, Atma Jnaana and Dharma Jnaana; and finally the General Principles applicable to Human beings should include: Brahmacharya or celibacy, daana or charity, Yajna, Udaarata or benevolence, Vishranti or cool mindedness, Daya or kindness, Ahimsa or Non-Violence, Kshama or tolerance, Dama / control, Jitendriyata or Self-Regulation, Shoucha or Cleanliness, Mangalya or Auspiciousness, and Nitya Bhakti of Vishnu, Shiva, Surya, Durga and any other Deities. Having

described the Dharmas of various kinds of Beings, the Rishis prescribed other Dharmas which had the characteristics of human beings as follows: the Griha Dharmas include Dhana or acquisition of adequate Monetary Resources, Bhoga or sufficient happiness, Swadhyaya or Recitation of Scriptures by the Self, Ahamkara or Awareness of one's own standards, and Sowmyata or Coolness and Maturity of Mind; Raakshasa Dharmaas would be Para Stree gamana, Lolupta or avarice / narrow mindedness, and of course Shiv Bhakti; Paishaachika Dharmaas include Avivekata or appropriate level of intelligence, Agnaana or ignorance, Apavitrata or lack of cleanliness, Asatyata or Untruthfulness, and Sadaa Mamsa Bhakshana. Then the Rishis gave the **Knowledge of Prithv**i occupying an area of Fifty Crore Yojanas. The Earth comprised Sapta Dwipas viz. Jambu Dwipa of a lakh of Yojanas surrounded by Lavana Samudra of twice the size of the Dwipa; Plaksha Dwipa of twice the size of Jambu Dwipa surrounded by Ikshurasa Sagara of double the size of the same Dwipa; Shalmali Dwipa of twice the size of Plaksha surrounded by Mahodhadhi of double the size of the same dwipa; Kusha Dwipa of the size of Shalmali surrounded by Suraa saagara of double the size of the Kusha Dwipa; then the Krouncha Dwipa surrounded by Ghrita Saagara of appropriate sizes as above; Shaaka Dwipa surrounded by Ksheera Samudra and Pushkara Dwipa surrounded by Swaadu Saagara of corresponding sizes. The Residents of those from Plaksha to Shaaka Dwipas are not affected by Yuga Vyvastha ot the regulations of Satya-Treta-Dwapara and Kali Yugas as they are stated to be of Permanance and are as good as Devatas since their lif span would be till Kalpaanta.

Naraka Varnana: The Pushkara Dwipa was described as frightening and horrifying as that Dwipa hosts the Twenty one Narakas viz. Rourava of two thousand Yojanas which is Prajjvalita Angaramaya; double the size is Maha Rourava whose earth is made of copper of sizzling hot temperature further heated thereunder; then the Tamishra, Andhataamishra, Kaalachakra, Apratishtha, Ghati Yantra, Asipatravana, Tatkumbha, Kutashaalmila, Karapatra, Shwaanabhojana, Samdamsha, Loha pinda, Karambhasikta, Bhayankara Kshaara Nadi, Krimi Bhojana, and Ghora Vaitarani Nadi. There are other Narakas as well like Shonita-Puya bhojana, Ksuraagra dhaara, Nishita Chakraka and Samshoshana Narakas as Antargata Places! Those who denounce Vedas, Devatas, and Brahmanas or heckle Puranas and Ithihaasaas and their contents or blame Gurus or those who create hindrances in performing Yagnas, Daanaas, Vratas and such other virtuous deeds would be destined to reach Narakas. Those who create differnces of opinions among friends, husband and wife, brothers and sisters, Master and Servants, Father / Mother and sons/daughters, Gurus and their Masters are also destined to serve in Narakas. Those who partake in a Shraaddha but take food elsewhere or engage in 'Atyaachaars' with women and children are sure to get attacked and torn of their body parts by fearful Naraka Pakshis or birds with fierce beaks and iron-like nails in appopriate Narakas. Those who reject the moral pleas of parents, Gurus and elders are made to force down their throats of body rejects as they are hung upside down in Apratishta Naraka. Those who take bhojan before Devatas, Atithis /Guests, children, Parents and respectable persons are forced to starve and as and when allowed to consume are provided poisonous and blood-mixed food in Vidabhojana Naraka. Those who touch Brahmanas, Agni and Cows with impure hands especially while eating are sent to Taptakumbha Naraka. Those who stare at Sun, or gaze for fun at Moon and Stars while drinking intoxicants and eating are treated by Yamadutas by piercing and scorching their eyes. Those who spoil water bodies, Temples, religious places, Tirthas, gardens, Sabhaas or Public Places are literally skinned alive by Yamadutas. Those who perform ablutions in the presence of Cows, Agni, Brahmanas, Surya and Idols of Devas are subjected to cut pieces of the private parts. Those who take bhojan at the time of Akaal or famine by way of Atma-Poshan, while ignoring family and servants, are despatched to Swenabhojana Naraka. Those who request for refuge in times of calamities and death-kind of situations ignore such genuine entreaties are sent to Yantra peeda Naraka to face similar or far worse siuations and also by brutally beaten by Yamadutas. Those who who mate on Sacred Days, Shraddha days, or days of menses of women or women other than one's own wife are made to embrace burning metal blocks. Those who carry tales, accept bribes, and create mutual misunderstandings, back bitings, false rumours, or spread misleading interprations are Vrika bhakshak Naraka. Those who steal gold or valuables, Brahmahatyaris, Madyapis or drunkards, Gurupatnigaamis, stealers of Bhumi, Cows, or for that matter any activities connected with cheating; rapings, or killings especially of women and children, or providers of false

witnesses or those engaged in dark activities or ransoms are all sent to Maha Rourava Naraka. Those who indulge in black marketing, Veda Vikraya and consciously organising dark activities like hoarding, bettings, making money by multiple misdeeds are all sent to Tamishra, Andhataaishra, Asipatravana, and such other suitable Narakas.

**Sadaachaara Swarupa** (**Profile of Ethical Living**): Rishis explained to Sukesha Daitya that the *Dashaanga Dharma* as applicable to all the Chatur Varnaas were Ahimsa (Non-Violence), Satya (Truthfulness), Asteya (Non-Stealing), Daana (Charity), Kshama (Forbearance), Dama or Indriya Nigraha (Control of Physique), Shama (Forgiveness), Akaarpanya (non-retaliation), Shoucha (Cleanliness of External and Internal Nature) and Tapa (Meditation). But the Rishis distinguished separate duties to Brahmanas: **Brahmachari Dharma:** Brahmachari

Brahmanas after Upanayana or formal initiation to Sandhya vandana and Gayatri Japa would have to stay at the Residence of his Guru with his duties as: Swaadhyaaya or reciting of Scriptures as taught by the Guru, daily 'Havana' or Agni Karya as prescribed, Snaana, soliciting Bhiksha and consume as instructed by Guru, carrying out Guru's instructions with readiness and sincerity, learning Vedas and Scriptures as taught by Guru and at the end of the training from the Gurukula to enter Grihastaashrama or other wise as per Guru's instsructions.

Grihastaashrama Dharma: As per Sadaachaara prescribed by Scriptures and adapted from time to time, Rishis explained to Sukesha: Dharmosya mulam Dhanamashya shaakhaa Pushpamcha Kaamah Phalamasya Mokshah/ (Sadaachaara has its roots in Dharma; Dhana or Money is the branch of the Sadaachara Vriksha or Tree; Kaama or Desire is the Pushpa or flower and Moksha is the Phala or Fruit). Brahmana Grihastaas need to wake up at the Brahma Muhurta or Early Morning and recite Suprabhata Stotra as its recital, hearing, reading or memorising would kick off the day with destruction of previous day's sins. The Stuti might be as follows: Brahmaa Muraaristripuraantakaaree Bhanuh Shashi Bhusuto Budhascha, Guruuscha Shukrah Saha Bhanujena Kurvantu Sarvey Mama Suprabhaatam/ Bhrigu Vasishtah Kratura -angireescha, Manu Pulustyah Pulah Sa Goutamah/ Rebhoy Mareechischyavano Ribhuscha Kurvantu Sarvey mama Suprabhatam/ Sanatkumarah Sanakah Sanandanah Sanaatopyasuri Pingalaocha, Satpta Swaraah Sapta Rasaachalaascha kurvantu Sarvey mama suprahatam/ Prithvi Sugandhaa Saraasthathaapah Sparshaascha Vaayururijwalanah Satejaah, Nabhah Sashabdam Mahataa Sahaiva Yacchhantu Sarvey mama Suprabhaatam/ Saptaarnavaah Sapta Kulaachalaascha Saptarshiyo Dwipavaraascha Sapta/Bhuraadi krutwaa Bhuvanaani Sapta Dadantu Sarvey mama Suprabhatam/ (May Brahma, Muraari, Tripuranthakaari, Surya, Chandra, Mangala, Budha, Guru, Shukra, Shanaischara render my day-break auspicious; may all the Rishis like Bhrigu, Vasishtha, Kratu, Angira, Manu, Pulastya, Pulahja, Gautama, Ryaibhya, Marichi, Chyavana and Ribhu wish me auspiciousness this early morning; May Sanatkumara, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanaatana, Aasuri, Pingala Rishis, Sapta Swaras and Sapta Rasaatalas usher this Prabhata to me with Mangala / propitiousness; May Prithvi, Sweet Water, Pleasant Winds, Agni with Tejas, Akaasha with clearness and the Unique Maha Tatwa too bring in excellent tidings this early morning; and let Sapta Samudras, Sapta Kula Parvataas, Saptarshis, and Sapta Dwipaas bless me with happiness and contentment at this auspicious 'Prabhata Samaya'). This Prabhata Gita may be rendered every day-break while leaving the bed early mornings with reverence and devotion to conduct the day ahead with satisfaction. Then leave the bed with Hari Smarana or the devout salutations to Ishta Devata. After morning ablutions, perform Sandhya Vandana, Puja, Havana etc. before taking up of the daily duties. While so doing, a Brahmana has to observe Deva Vihita Dharma and Kula / Gotra Dharma-as an under-current of daily dharma. **Normal Duties:** Never resort to 'Asatpralaapas'/ untrue chatter, 'Nishthuras'/ hurting and har talks and ill- justified statements about Veda-Aagama-Shastras, accusations against Sadhujanas or holy persons, and criticisms in respect of other religions. Never take to sex in Sandhyas / Sun-rise and Sun-sets nor enter into conacts with other women, homeless women, women in menses and much less on bare Earth and in water; avoid aimless travels, wasteful charities, and purposeless sacrifices of animals and birds; and wasteful travels would certainly result in upsets of daily duties. Paraswavey Paradaarey cha na karyaa Buddhirutthamaih, Paraswam Narakaayaiva Paradaaraascha mrutyavey/ (Para dhana gives Naraka and Para Stree causes Mrityu!).

Never view a woman nude, nor talk or touch a woman in menses; never have bath or sleep in nakedness even alone, much less move about likewise; never have oil massages on Pratipada, Shashthi or Ekadashi Tithis called Nanda Tithis as also on Sundays and Tuesdays, besides in the Stars of Chitra, Hasta and Shravana; never take Kshura Karmaas or hair cuts on Rikta Tithis of Chaturthi, Navami and Chaturdashi as also on Fridays besides during Vishakha and Abhijit Stars; never resort to Stree Samparka on Purna Tithis viz. Panchami, Dashami and Purnima nor during Magha, Krittika and the three Uttaara Nakshatras of Uttaraphalguni, Uttaashadha and Uttaraabhadra; but do perform all constructive tasks on Bhadra Tithis viz. Dwitiya, Saptami and Dwadashi! Rishis told the Raakshasa King that one should not rest heads on North and West directions and take food facing East and West; one should perform Pradakshina around Deva Mandiras, Chaitya-Peepul trees, Parents, Gurus and Vidwaans; one should bathe in the nights excepting in the case of Grahanaas or Solar / Lunar Eclipses, deaths of close relatives or when one's birth star coincides with Chandra. But bathing would be a must in case a person touches a dog, a woman in menses, an expectant woman, a chandala, a person carrying or even touching a dead body. One should not cross blood or urine or defecation; one should not stay late nights alone in a garden. Even conversing much less touching those persons who blame Scriptures should be avoided and if done so by mistake, Surya Darshan would purify.

The Rishis further clarified the broad duties of a person in the **Vaanaprastha Ashrama** or at the stage of retirement from active life when one should eat less, eat only such items that are easy to procure and digest ie. Satvika Bhojan, observe skipping one meal a day, sleep on the ground on a mat, observe Brahmacharya, perform daily pujas, havans, wear coarse dresses, perform Trikaala Sandhyas and basically follow a moderate and routinised life by spending more time in Reading Sciptures, Social Work and Dharmic activities.

The Final Ashram of **Sanyasa** involves negation of any kind of worldly desires, attachments and acitivities related: *Sarva sangaparityaago Brahmacharyamamaanita, Jitenndriyatwamaavaasey naikasmin vasatischaram/ Anaarambha –sthataahaaro Bhaikshaannam naatikopitaa, Atmajnaanaavabodhecchhaa tathaa chavaatmaava bodhanam/ (Denouncement of wishes, Brahmacharya, denial of Ahamkara or Self- consciousness, High control of Physical attractions, frequent travels, Bhikshaanna Bhojana, Krodha Tyaga, and all out endeavours to gain Atma Gyana.) While Brahmana Varnaasharama would thus be all comprehensive, Vaishyaas and Ksatriyas might not observe the Regulations beyond Vaana- prastha, and Shudras might not even cross the Garshatya Stage. As Rishis explained the principles of Sadaachaara Swarupa, King Sukesha and followers were enlightened and by the Akaashachari returned to his Kingdom.* 

**Reformation of Rakshasaas:** On return, he called his Rakshasa Praja and sensitised them about the utility of practising Dharma that he learnt from the learned Rishis of Magadharanya as that type of reformed life would definitely lead to immense 'Paraloka Sukha' or Eternal Happiness after death. He convinced the Praja that the temporary joy created by the evil ways of living would never ever match the Permanent and Perpetual Bliss that one could achieve by making sacrifices to be made in the current life and adopting a changed life-style since the Rishis who learnt a lot from their Ancient Scriptures sought to make short-run inconveniences to secure Lasting Pleasure! Thus the Daitya King succeeded to brain wash the Rakshasaas to faithfully practise Dharma and said: *Ahimsa Satyamasteyam Shouchamindriya Samyamam, Daanam Dayaacha Khaantischa Brahmacharyamamaanita/ Shubhaa Satyaa cha Mathuraa vangnityam Satkriyaaratih, Sadaachaaranishevitwam Paraloka Pradaayikaah/* (Ahimsa, Satya, Pavitrata, Asteya, Indriya samyama, Daanam Dayaa, Kshama, Brahmacharya, leaving Ahamkaara, conversation style of sweetness, endearment and truthfulness, engagement in performing virtuous deeds and practising Sadaachara would accomplish Paraloka Sukha). Most favourably reacting to the Appeals of King Sukesha, the Daityas readily followed the new pattern of life and their families and progeny too practised

it vigorously. This unusual development made radical changes in Universe; the Nishacha Nagari came to shine as moon in the day time and like Sun in the nights; the lustre of the Raakshasas increased manifold and that of Surya and Chandra got adversely affected; the timings and movement of Sun and Moon became confusing as Owls were noticed during mid days and Rishis were performing mid-night bathings, Sandhyavandanaas and Jala Tarpanas standing in the Holy Rivers besides Agni Karyasas, Yagnas, Pujas, and so on. Even lotuses started blossoming irrespective of Sunsets! Surva Deva got utterly confused at these unnatural developments and finlyy discovered the root cause of Daityas adopting the Dharma Vidhana. In great disgust and consternation, Surya Deva shot at multitude of Surya Kiranaas on the Rakshasaas and the Akasha Sanchari Nagari gifted by Maha Deva to the Daitya King Sukesha started sliding downward. Amid highly agitated shrieks, the King and the Daitya followers shouted at the top of their voices saying: Namo Bhavaaya Sharvaaya! The Omni-present and Omni-sient Maha Deva undertood the whole Episode of King Sukeshi approaching the Rishis of Magadhaaranya who preached the Rakshasaas of Dharma Pravartana and the consequences that followed climaxing with the gradual sliding of the Airship of Nishacha Nagari as Surya Deva became intolerant. Trilochana Shankara got furious and looked at Surva and the latter too commenced sliding from his axis towards Vayumandala and futher down to Antariksha. On witnessing this extraordinary happening, Maharshis went up to Surya Deva and the latter enquired as to where was the Sacred Kshetra of Vishnu Bhagavan on Bhumi! The Rishis suggested the Hallowed Place between the two Rivers Varuna and Asi. Meanwhile Rishi, aksha, Rakshasa, Naaga, Vidyadhara, Apsaras etc. approached Brahma and the latter accompanying Devas rached Maheswara to cool down his annoyance with Surya; Maheswara held Surya by his hand, named Surya as Lola, excused Surya's indiscretion and put back Surya Deva on the Suryamandala again and the Nishachara Sanchari Nagara was placed back in its original position. This was thus a vindication of Dharma whether pracised by Human Beings or Rakshasaas as Dharma practised by human beings, or Raakshasaas or any other Beings would have similar results, irrespective of their past actions or sins. Apparently, the Natural abnormalites that happened as a result of the sudden spurt of Dharmik deeds adopted by the Rakshasaas at the Sanchaara Nagari got stabilised in line with those of Manavaas and status quo was restored in the Universe without aberrations in 'Prakri'.

## Vishnu Puja on Shukla Ekadashis and Vishnu Panjara Stotra

Observance of Vishnu Puja on every Shukla Ekadashi called Akhanda Vrata followed by the Recital of Vishnu Panjara Stotra is stated to be an important component of Dharmik Life. This routine requirement needs to be followed by men and women of any 'Varna' with fasting and 'Baahyaantara Shuchi' or cleanliness of body and mind and by Puja with 'Avahana' (Invocation) -Panchaamrita Snaana with Ghee, Gandhodaka, Fruit Pulp, Honey and Curd; Vastra, Yagnopa -veeta, Pushpa, Phala, Dhupa, Deepa, Naivedyas, Taambula, Vaadya, Mantra Pushpa, Sangeeta, Japa, Homa and Stotra. The Stuti should be by way of Vishnu Panjara Stotra as follows: Namostutey Padmanabha Padmaadhava Mahadyutey, Dharmaartha Kaama Mokshaani Twa -akhandaani Bhavantumey/ Vikaasi Padmapatraaksha Yathaakhandosi Sarvatah, Tena Satyena Dharmaadyaa Akhandaah Santu Keshava/ Namo namastey Govinda gruhya Sudarshanam, Praachyam rakshasva maam Vishno twaamaham sharanam gatah/ Gadaam Kaumodikeem gruhya Padmanaabhaamita dyutey, Yaamyaam rakhshaswa maam Vishno twaamaham sharanam gatah/ Halamaadaaya sounandam Namastey Purushotthama, Praateekshaam raksha mey Vishno bhavantam sharanam gatah/ Musalam Shaantanam gruhya Pundarikaaksha rakshamaam, Uttarasyaam Jagannaatha bhavantam sharanamgatah/ Shaarangamaadaaya cha Dhanurastram Naraayanam harey, Namastey Raksha Rakshoghnam Ishanyaayaam sharanam gatah/ Panchajanyam Mahaashankhamantarbodhyam cha pankajam, Pragruhya rakshamaam Vishno Aagneyyaam Yagna sukara/ Charma Suryashatam gruhya khadgamchandramasam tathaa, Nairrutyaam maam cha rakshasva Divya Murtey Nrikesatin/ Vaijayanteem pragruhya twam Srivatsam kanthabhushanam, Vaayavyaam raksha maam Deva Ashvaseersha Namostutey/ Vainateyam samaaruhya

Antarikshey Janaandana, Maam twam raksaajita sadaa Namas tey twa paraajita/ Vishaalaaksham Samaaruuha rakshamaam twam rasaataley, Akuupaara Namastubhyam Mahamoha Namotutey/ Karasheershaangaghni parveshu tathaashta baahu panjaram, Krutwaa rakshaswa maam Deva Namastev (Salutations Padmmanabha Lakshmipati! With your blessings, may our Purushottama/ Life's objectives of Dharma-Artha-Klama-Moksha be accomplished; as you are spread out in all the directions, our desires of Dharma-Artha- Kama-Moksha be fulfilled endlessly. Govinda! Do kindly take up your Sudarshana Chakra and protect me fromy Eastern Side as I am your refugee; Mahadyuti Padmanabha! Do kindly pick up your Koumudi Gada/ mace and save my Southern side as I seek your shelter; Purushottama! Do take up your Saunanda namak 'Hala'/ Plough and protect me from the western side; Pundarikaaksha! I beg you to save my Musala named Shaantana and safeguard my Northern side; do kindly select your Saaranga Dhanush and Narayanaastra to shield my Ishaana Kona as I am defenceless; Yagna Varaha Vishno! I implore you to take up the renowned Panchajanya Shankhu / conchshell as also your Lotus Flower and disperse my enemies from the Agneya Side; Maha Nrisimha! Please lift up your Chandra naamaka shield and Surya naamak Khadga and guard my Nirruti direction; Hayagriya Deva! Please sport your Garland named Vijayanti and Srivatsa naamaka necklace to defend my Vayavya Kona; Vainateya! Do alight your Garuda vahana and assure my safety from 'Antariksha'/ Sky; by assuming the Maha Kurma Rupa, Bhagavan! Kindly protect me from the Rasatala side too so that nothing untoward could happen to me from down-under; Vishaalaaksha! Maha Moha! Save me with Eight of Your endless hands, do create an Ashta-dasha or Eight Direction Safety Cage for me assuring Total Shield to me). This Sacred Vishnu Panjara was stated to have been recited by Mahadeva Shankara to provide a Total Cover of Protection to Devi Katyayani Durga in the context of the destruction of Mahishasura, Raktabeeja and other countless Asuras.

## Origin of Kurukshetra: Samvarna-Tapati Vivah, King Kuru and Kurukshetra Mahatmya

At the beginning of Satya Yuga, there was a King named Ruksha of Chandra Vamsha who begot King Samvarna. On assuming Kingship, Samvarna entusted his royal duties to his Guru Vasishtha and moved about carefree. While he was in a Forest named Vibhraja, he met a Deva Kanya called Tapati and both of them got mesmerised with each other. On return, Vasishta Maharshi learnt of the King's infatuation as the latter was neither eating nor behaving properly. Similar was the situation with the Deva Kanya Tapati. Vasishtha learnt from his Divadrishti that the Deva Kanya was the daughter of Suryta Deva, entered Surya mandala and requested Surya for the alliance and both of them were happily married to eventually beget a boy called **Kuru** who was eventually married to Devi Soudamini. After Kuru became the King, Kuru tried all possibilities of endearing his Praja and during his 'Dharma Paalana' or Virtuous Administration, there were no problems of poverty, thefts, misdirected judgments and health limitations and soon became a popular King. Then he travelled to become more and famous and victorious and entered Daitavana where he saw the Sacred River Sarasvati which was called Brahma Putri, Harijihva and Sudarshana Janani. He derived extreme happiness and satisfaction in the River and towards north of the River and decided to construct a 'Samanta Panchaka Dharmasthaan' spread over an Area of five yojanas width and length. It was learnt that there were five such 'Vedikaas' where Shambhu Deva performed Pancha Yagnas, of which the Uttara Vedi on the banks of River Sarasvati was known as the most renowned; the Madhya Vedi as popular at Prayaga Kshetra, Purva Vedi was at Gaya Tirtha, Dakshina Vedi was at Jagannatha puri and the Paschima Vedi was at Pushkara Kshetra. King Puru decided to add the Panchama Vedi to be constructed as Samantaka Panchaka Dharmasthana. He procured a golden plough and a pair of animals to commence tilling the land. Indra Deva approached the King Kuru as to what was he desirous of doing and the reply was that he haddecided to construct an 'Ashtaanga Bhumi' of Tapah Satyam Ksamaam Damaam Krushaami Shoucham Daanam cha Yiogamcha Brahmachaaritaam/ or Meditation - Truthfulness-Endurance-Mercy-Cleanliness-Charity-Yoga and Celibacy which should be called Ashtanga Farming! Indra further asked: Where would be a number of ploughs and how would you

procure seeds from! The reply was that Indra should not make fun of an honest endeavour as Indra left quietly. The King himself commenced tilling some four to five yojanas of land daily. Then Lord Vishnu appeared and asked the same question of Indra as to where would he secure the seeds. The King said convincingly that the seeds would emerge from his body. Vishnu asked the King to extend his hand so that the former could plough and the King could spread the seeds. The King faithfully extended his right hand and at once Bhagavan cut off his hand with his chakra to several pieces! Kuru then extended his left hand and Vishnu sliced off that hand too to thousand pieces. The King offered his thighs one by one which too were cut. Finally King Kuru offered his head and then Vishnu was convinced that the King was very serious in his resolve and asked him to ask for a boon. Kuru replied: Yaavadetan –mayaa krushtam Dharmaksetram tadastucha, Snaataanaam cha mrutaaaamcha mahapunya phalam twiha/ Upavaasamcha Daanamcha cha snaanam japyam cha Madhava, Homayagna –dikam chaanyacchubham Vaapyashubham Vibho/ (May this Place which I had tilled be declared as Dharma Kshetra; may this Place become a Sacred one where bathing or even dying attain Maha Punya. May the virtuous deeds of Upavaasa-Snaaa-Daana- Japa-Havana-Yagna etc be paid for with multiplied fruits!) The King further prayed to Vishnu that he along with Parama Shiva should reside at this Kshetra always. Vishnu not only granted the boons asked by the King but also blessed the Hallowed Place to be called as Kuru Kshetra, that his fame and name would be eternal as long as the Universe would last, that this Kshetra called Kurujaangala would be protected by Chandra naamak Yaksha, Vaasuki naamak Sarpa, Shankukarna naamak Vidyaadhara, Sukeshi naamak Rakshseswara, Ajaavan naamak King, Mahadeva naamak Agni and so on. Some eight thousand arrows-men would ensure that sinners of extreme nature would be prevented to perform bathings in the Kshetra; there is a 'paapa vinaashaka' and Sacred Tirtha known as Pruthuudaka or Pohovaa Tirtha here and Brahma collected the waters of various Maha Samudras, Punya Tirthas, Rivers and Sarovaraas into it! Brahmasara Tirtha: Maharshi Lomaharshana stated that Brahmasara Tirtha was originally spread from Sannihita Sarovar at Rantuk Sthaana to Ojas Sthaana and further upto Chaturmukha Sthaana; but over passage of time, the Tirtha occupied the space from Viswasvara Shaana to Asthipura and from Vriddha Kanya to Oghavati River. Half way of the Tirtha, it was believed that Rudra attained 'Sthaanutva' or 'Sthiratwa' (Solidification).

Meanwhile, Maha Muni Markandeya prayed to Devi Saraswati flowing in the form of the illustrious River obliged the Muni to accompany him wherever he wished him to lead and the Muni requested her to link up Brahmasira to Ramahlada to Kurukshetra and thus the latter assumed further significance; In the Kurukshetra Tirtha thus one secures the 'maha phala' of bathing and worshipping in Seven Vanaas viz. Kaamuaka Vana, Aditi Vana, Vyasa Vana, Phalaki Vana, Surya Vana, Madhu Vana, and Sheeta Vana; besides nine Sacred Rivers viz. Sarasvati, Vaitarani, Aapaga, Mandakini Ganga, Madhstra, Vaasu Nadi, Koushiki, Drushdyati or Kaggar, and Hiranyavati. Kurukshetra Thirtha Yatra needs to be intiated by obtaining the permission of the Yaksha called Rastuk, proceed to **Aditi Vana** where Devi Aditi was stated to have performed her Tapasya in favour of her sons viz. Devataas; proceed to Vishnu Sthaan called 'Savana', visit Vimala Tirtha to worship Vimaleswara to reap the fruit of attaining Rudra Loka; Kaushiki Sangama to wash off the blemishes stored thus far; Dharani Tirtha to seek relief for 'Aparadhaas' of devotees; Daksheswara Shiva in Dakshaashrama to attain the fruit of Ashvamedha Yagna; Shalukini Tirtha; then move on to Saptirdadhi to thrash up fears of serpents; then worship Rastuk Dwarapal for an overnight stay there for Kshama Prarthana and Abheestha Siddhi; then visit Panchanada Tirtha, Koti Tirtha, and Jwaalamaheswara. Pilgrims to Kurukshetra are advised to definitely perform 'Pitru Devaarchana' at the famed **Pushkara Tirtha** which was constructed by Parashurama Deva and it was believed that worship there would bestow fulfillment of wishes sought by the devotees. Surva Grahana Snaana at the nearby Saroyara called 'Saannihitya' is stated to provide access to Swarga after one's end of life.

# Bali defeats Indra, Vamana's Avatara and Bali's Donation of Three Feet Stutis by Kashyapa, Aditi and Brahma and Virat Purusha Varnana)

As King Bali of Daityas took over the reins of Trilokas from Virochana the son of Prahlada and the great Grand father of Hiranyakashipu, Devas lost power in Swarga and the mighty Mayasura and Shambara flew the Flag of Vijayanti too. Yet, the Daityas were steeply engaged in Dharmik deeds, and they were guarding the Sky providing stability all-around: *Abhaavey Sarva paapaanaam Dharma bhavey sadothitey, Chatush –paadey sthitey dharmey hyadharmey paada vigrahey, Prajaapaalanayukteshu bhraajamaa -neshu Raajasu, Sarva dharma samprayukteshu tadhaashrama nivaasishu/* (There was complete absence of sinnersw in the Kingdom and Dharma was predominate; Dharma was established on four feet except on one; all the Deputised Kings were performing Administration ideally and all the Four Varnaas of population were observing Dharma perfectly) It was at that opportune time that the Coronation of Bali Chakravarti took place amidst the chanting of Victory by all concerned. Devi Lakshmi appeared and congratulated at Bali's Elevation to Supremacy along with her 'Amsaas' like the Devis named Hreem,Kirti, Dyuti, Prabha, Dhruti, Kshama, Bhuti, Ruddhi, Divya, Mahamati, Shruti, Smriti, Ida, Shanti, Pushti, Kriya, and also select Apsaraas.

Meanwhile, Devataas were disillusioned at their discomfiture and the climax of Bali's high status especially because of Daitya King's unchallenged success owing to his Dharma Paalana and the lack of any record of Evil deeds by Daityas; they were also denied their shares of Yahna Phalaas. They approached their mother Aditi for solace and advice and in turn she reached her husband Kashyapa Muni. Kashyapa found the situation was delicate and even Brahma might find it difficult as strictly speaking the record of Daityas was above board! Brahma advised that the only way out would be that Tapasya and Aditi would perform strict Tapasya to Vishnu Deva and seek the most difficult boon of Vishnu taking birth as their son! The Couple reached the Banks of Kshira Samudra at a holy spot called Amrita, performed austere Tapasya and 'Kaamada Vrata' for thousand years by controlling their Indriyas, observing silence and Kashyapa chanted Veda Yukta Sukta called Parama Stuti as follows: Namastestu tev Devadeva Ekashringa Vrushaaarchev Sindhu Vrushaarchev Sindhuvrusha. Vrishaakapev Suravrisha Anaadisambhava Rudra Kapila Vishvaksena/ Sarva Bhutapatey Dhruva Dharmaadharma Vaikuntha Vrishaavarta, Anaadimadhyanidhana Dhananjaya Shuchishravah Prushnatejah/ Nijajaya Amriteshaaya Sanaatana Tridhaama Tushita Mahaa Tatwa, Lokanaatha Padmanaabha Virinchey Bahurupa Akshaya Akshara/ Havyabhuja Khandaparasho Shakra Munjakesha Hamsa Maha Dakshina, Hrishikesha Sukshma Mahaaniyamadhara Viraja Loka pratishtha/ Arupa Agraja Dharmaja Dharma naabha Gabhastinaama, Shatakratunaabha Chandra ratha Surya Tejah Samudravaasah Ajah/ Sahrashirah Sahasrapaad Adhomukhaha Mahapurusha Purushottama, Sahasrabaaho Sahasramurtey Sahastraasya Sahasrasambhayah, Sahasratvam Twamaahuh/ Pushpahaasa Charama twameva Voushat, Vashatkaram twaamaahu ragryam Makheshu Praashitaaram Sahasradharam/ Cha Bhuscha Bhuvascha Suwascha Twameya Vedayedya Brahmashaya, Brahmana priya twameya dhaurasi Maatarishyasasi Dharmosi/ Hota Pota Mantaa Netaa Homahetustwameva Agrya, Vishwathaamnaa twameva dikbhih Subhaanda Ijjyosi/ Sumedhosi Samidhastwameva matirgatirdaataa twamasi, Mokshosi Yogisi Srujaasi Dhaataa Parama Yagnosi/ Somesi Dikshitosi Dakshinaasi Vishwamasi, Sthavira Hiranyanaabha Naraayana Trinayana Adityavarna/ Adityatejah Mahapurusha Purushottama Adi Deva Suvikrama, Prabhakara Shambho Swayambho Bhutaadih Mahabhutesi/ Vishva bhuta Vishvam twameva Vishwagoptaasi Pavitramasi, Viswabhuva Urthvakarma Amrita Divaspatey Vaachaspatey Ghrutaarchey, Ananta Karma Vamsha Praagvamsha Vishvapaatastwamewa/ Vaarthinaam Varadositwam, Chaturbhischa dwaabhyaam Panchabhireva cha, Yhuyatey cha punar -dhaabhyaam tubhyam Hotraatmaney Namah/ (Deva Deva, Eka Shringa, Vrishaarchi, Sindhuvrusha, Vrishaakapi, Suravrisha, Anaadi Sambhaya, Rudra, Kapila, Vishyaksena, Sarya Bhuapati, Dhruya, Dharmaadharma, Vaikuntha, Vrishaa Karta, Anadi -madhya nidhana, Dhanajaya, Shrutishrava, Prushna Teja, Nijajaya, Amriteshaya, Sanaatana, Tridhaama, Tushita, Mahaa Tatwa, Lokanaatha, Padmanaabha, Virinchi, Bahurupa, Akshaya, Akshara, Havyabhuja, Khandaparashu, Shakra, Munjikesha, Hamsa, Mahaa Dakshina, Hrishikesha,

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Sukshma, Mahaniyamadhara, Viraja, Lokapratishtha, Arupa, Agraja, Dharmaja, Dharmanaabha, Gabhastunaabha, Shatakratunaabha, Chandra Ratha, Surya Teja, Aja, Sahasra shira, Sahasrapaada, Adhomukha, Maha Purusha, Purushotthama, Sahasrabaahu, Sahasra Murti, Sahasrasya, Sahasra Sambhava! I prostrate before you and touch your feet; You are commended as Sahasratva, Pushpahaasa, Charama / Sarvotthama: You are known as Voushta and Vashatkaara: You are Agrya or Sarvotthama. Yagna Praashita or Bhokta, Sahasra dhaara; You are the Bhur-Bhuva-Swah Swarupa; Veda Vedya or Recognisable through Vedas; Brahmashaya, Brahmanapriya; Dhyouh or Sarvavyapi like the Sky; Maatarishwa or Speedy like Vayu; Dharma, Hota, Potha / Vishnu; Mantaa, Netaa, Homa hetu or the Root Cause of Homa; Vishvateja, Agrya or Sarvasreshtha, Subhanda or like the Huge Patrarupa encompassing all Dishaas; You are worthy of Yajana or Ijya; Sumedha, Samidha, Mati, Gati, and Daataa; You are Moksha, Yoga, Srashta or the Supreme Creator; Dhata / Dhaarana and Poshana Karta; Parama Yagna, Soma, Dikshita, Dakshina and Vishwa; You are Sthavira, Hiranyanaabha, Narayana, Trinayana, Adityavarna, Aditya Teja, Maha Purusha, Purushottama, Adi Deva, Suvikrama, Prabhakara, Shambhu, Swayambhu, Bhugtaadi, Maha Bhuta, Vishwa Bhuta, and Vishwa; You are the Samsaara Raksha, Pavitra, Vishwa bhaya or Vishwa Srashta, Urthwa Karma or Uttama Karma, Amrita or Everlasting, Divaspati, Vaachaspati, Ghrutaarchi, Anantakarma, Vamsha, Pragvamsha, Vishwapa or Vishwa Paalaka, Varada or the Bestower of boons; and finally, You are the Hotraatma or who is responsible for producing Agnihotra by way of the seventeen counted Aksharaas or Letters viz. Four 'Aashraavayas' plus four 'Astu Shroushads' plus two 'Yajaas' plus five 'Yajaamahyes' and again two 'Vashats').

Devi Aditi also made a commendatory appeal to Janaardana seperately and said: Namah krutyaarta naashaaya Namah Pushkara maaliney, Namah Parama Kalyaana Kalyaanaadi vedhasey/ Namah Pankajanertaaya Namah Pankaja naabhaey, Namah Pankaja Sambhuti sambhavaayaatma yonaey/ Shriyah Kaantaayaa daantaaya Daantadrushyaaya Chakriney, Namah Padmaasi hastaaya Namah Kanaka retasey/ Tathaatma Jnaana Yaginaaya Yogi chintyaaya Yoginey, Nirgunaaya Visheshaaya Haraye Brahmarupiney/Jagaccha tishthatey yatra jagato yo na drushyatey, Namah Sthulaati Sukshmaaya tasmai Devaaya Shaaranginey/ Yam na pashyanti pashyanto Jagadapyakhilam Naaha, Apashyadbhirjagadyascha drushyatey hridi samshitah/ Bahirjyotiralakshyo yo lakshyatey Jyotisha parah, Yasminneva yataschaiva Hasyaitadakhilam Jagat/ Tasmai Samasta jagataamamaraaya Namo Namah, Aadyah Prajaapatih sopi Pitrunaam Pamam Patih, Patih Syraanaam yastasmai namah Krishnaaya Vedhasey/ Yah Pravrutthai Nivruttaischa Kamkabhistu virajjyatey, Swargaapavarga phalado Namastasmai Gadaabhrutey/Yastu sanchintyamaanopi Sarvam paapam yyapohati,Namastasmai Vishuddhaaya Parasmai Harimedhasey/ Ye pashyanthy akhikaadhaara meeshaana majama- vyayam, na punarjanma smaranam praapnuvanti Namaami tam/ Yaa yagney Yagnaparamairijj- yatey Yagnasamsthitah, Tam Yagna Purusham Vishnum Namaami Prabhumeeswaram/ Geeyatey Sarva Vedeshu Vedavidbhirvidaam gatih/ Yastasmai Vedavidyaaya Nityaaya Viushnavey Namah/ Yato Vishwam samrudbhutam yasmin Pralayameshyati, Vishvodbhava Pratishthaaya Namastasmai Mahaatmaney/ AaBrahma stambha paryantam Vyaptam yena charaacharam, Mayaajaala samunnaddhamtamupendram namaamyaham/ Yotra Toyaswarupastho bibharty -akhilameeshwarah, Vishwam Vishwapatim Vishnum tam Namaami Prajaapatim/ Murtim tamosuramayam taddhidho vinihanti yah, Raatrijam Surya Rupeecha tamupendram namaamyaham/ Yasyaakshini Chandra Suryo Sarvaloka Shubhaashubham, Pashyatah karma satatam tamupendram namaamyaham/ Yasmin Sarveshwarey sarvamSatyametanmayoditam, Naanrutam tamajam Vishnum Namaami Prabhavaavyayam/ Yadyetat Satyamuktam mey Bhuyaschaato Njanardana, Satyena tena sakalaah Puryantaam mey Manorathaah/ (Prabho! I am grieving with unimaginable anguish which could be destroyed only by you. My Salutations to You Bhagavan who sports lotus garlands and Pushakara malaas; You are the Adi Vidhata who is an embodiment of propitiousness! You are Kamala Nayana, Padmanaabha, the Creator of Brahma, Atmajanma, Lakshmi Pati, Indriya damana, worthy of darshan only by Samayama Yogis, Sudarshana and Khadga dhaari! Only those 'Atmagyanayuta' Yagnakartas, Yogadhyaanis and Yoga Saadhakaas could aspire to visualise your Gunarahita Brahma Swarupa! May I pay my obeisances to you Sharanga Dhari Deva! as you occupy the whole world in a Gross Form and yet possess the tiniest Form which is invisible! Those persons who do

not make efforts to visualise you do not get your Darshan any way, but those who have no other desire in life excepting you would readily witness you are blessed with your image in their hearts always for the asking! Your unbelievable Jyoti or extraordinary Radiance is all-pervading in the entire Universe in which you are present invisibly and contrarily the Universe is but an integral segment of You Parama Deva! In other words, You are all over the Universe, the Universe was created by you and in fact the Universe is of Yours! My humble greetings to you the original Prajapati! Pitara Sreshtha! Devata Swami! Shri Krishna! Here are my Pranaams again and again! You are the Supreme Objective of Pravritti and Nivritti Deeds (Ritualistic and Directly unswerving approach) and the Unique Decider of bestowing Swarga or Moksha the Eternal Bliss! My namashkaaraas to you Vishuddha Swarupa as even my taking your very name and memory would smash all my sins! You are the Avinaashi or Indestructible; Akhilaadhara or the Mighty Clutch of the Entirety; the Only Reliever of the Trap of Birth-Death Cycle! You are perceptible through Yagnaas, the Yagna Murti, the Yagna Sthita and Yagna Purusha! Vedas commend you, Vedajnaas sing your hymns, You are the 'Vidwadjanaashraya' or the one who is fond of the Company of Vidwadjanaas. My Most Revered Paramaatma! The whole Vishwa is your Creation, Sustenance and also the Termination thus You are the Vishva Kartha, Vishva Bharta and the Vishwa Harta! I pray to that Highest Magnificence who materialised Surya Swarupa and destroyed darkess for good. To that Sarveswara, the Ajanma, Avyaya, Srashta and Vishnu who is fully aware of the Truth about me and the transparency and earnestness of my Prayers that I am prostrating with humility craving him to grant my wish!) As both Kashyapa Muni and Devi Aditi made their Soul-full Prayers, the impossible Darshan of Bhagavan Vishnu appeared and granted the wish that he would indeed assume His Incarnation with a view to reinstate Indra and Devas to Swarga and Trilokas.

As Aditi got conceived and Bhagavan Vishnu agreed to do so, Prithvi got tremored, Mountains were shaken, and Sapta Samudras were agitated with wobbles of waves and there was strangeness all-around! Bali Chakravarti felt that there were considerable changes in the Nature as mountians were trembling and high Sea tides were on new high and more so Daityas were experiencing paleness and loss of their normal instincts of courage, assertiveness and egoism. Bali approached his grand father Prahlada and asked for the causes of these omens and premonitions. Parama Bhakta Prahlada deeply meditated Bhagavan Srihari and visualised the latter in the Garbha of Devi Aditi and had fleeting scenes of Ashtaadasha Vasus, Ekadasha Rudras, Dwadasha Adityas, two Ashvini Kumaraas, Forty Nine Maruts, Sandhyas, Vishwa Devas, Gandharvas, Nagas, Rahkshasaas, his Son Virochana, Bali Chakravarti, Jambha, Kujumbha, Narakasura, Baana, and several other Daityas, Pancha Bhutas, Seas, Mountains, Rivers, Satpa Dwipaas, Brahma, Shiva, Nava Grahas, Daksha and other Prajapatis, Sapta Rishis and so on. Prahlada gave a heavy exhalation and conveyed the datails what all he visioned and said that the Greatest Narayana in would soon be descending on Earth in his incarnation as Vamana Deva! Bali could not comprehend the full import of what Prahlada underlined and expressed his surprise whether Vamana Deva coud be ever comparable with the Senior most Rakshasaas like Viprachitta, Shibi, Sankha, Ayamshanku, Hayashira, Ashwa Shira, Bhangha kaara, Maha Hanu, Kakkuraaksha and Durjaya. As Bali talked in such thoughtless comparisons with Paramatma and some examples of Danavas however mighty they might be, Parhlada got highly infuriated and shouted at Bali that there could not be bigger immature fool and hollow minded; he said that Bali's evil frame of mind would certainly lead the entire Vamsha of Daityas to doom: Yeshaam twameedrusho Rajaa Durbuddhiraviyekamaan, Deva devam Mahabhaagam Vaasudevamajam Vibhum, Twaamrutey Paapa sankalpa konya evam vadishyati/ Ya yeto bhava -taa proktaah samasta Daitya daanavaah, Sa Brahmakaastathaa Devaah Staavaraantaa vibhu -tayah/ Twam chaaham cha Jagacchedam Saadridrumanadivanam, Samudradwipalokoyam yaschedam sacharaacharam/ Yasyaabhiyaadya yandyasya yyaapinah Paramaatmanah, Ekaam -shaamshi kalaajanma kastameyvam Pravikshyati/Rutey Vinaasha abhimukham twaameka mavivekinam, Durbuddimajitaatmaanam Vriddhaanaam Shashanaa -tigam/ Shochaneeyamyasya

-mey gehey Jaatastava Pitaadhamah, Yasya twamee -drushah Putro Deva devaavamaanakah/---Nindaam karoshi tasmistwam Krishney Guru Guror Gurow, Yasmaat tasmaadihaiva twamaishwa -ryaad bhramshameyshasi/ Sa Devo Jagataam Naatho Baley Prabhur janaardanah, Nanvaham pratyavekshyastey Bhaktimaanatra mey Guruh/ Yetaanmaatra mapya -tra ninditaa Jagato Gurum, Naapekshitastavyaa yasmaat tasnaacchaapam dadaamitey/ Yathaa-mey shirasacche -daadim gurutaram Baley, Twayoktamachutaakshepam Rajya bhrashta stathaa pata/ Yathhana Krishnaadaparah Paritraanam Bhavaarnavey, Tathaachirena pashyeyam bhavantam Raajjya -vichutam/ (Bali! I have not come across a King of this kind who is evil-minded and dull-witted that could blame the Devaadhi Deva, Maha Bhaga, Sarva Vyaapi Vaasudeva; the names of the Daityas that you have taken as the so-called Mighty as also of Brahma and Devas were created by that Paramatma; indeed with just one 'Amsha'of myriad of his Amshaas, he created the whole Charaacharaas and Samasta Vibhutis or Manifestations including you, me, Daityas, Parvataas, Vrikshaas, Rivers, Forests, Samudraas, Sapta Dwipas, and so on and He is Sarva-Vandya, Sarva-Vyapi, and Sarva-Vidita; would there be a Vivekaheen-Murkha-Durbuddhi like you who would pass judgments on Him! What-ever are the reasons due to which you are faulting your Guru/ your father, or his father who is me or the Parama Guru who is Paramatma might be best known to you! Your talking slightingly against Narayana is by far the worst since it tantamounts to cutting my head and it is to set right those feelings of pride and egotism that I am giving you a 'Shaap' / Curse that soon you would be dislocated from your Kingdom, Aishwarya, and ego.)

Chakravarti Bali was distraught and distressed at this most unforunate happening of Prahlada's curse and was ashamed of himself for his rash, thoughtless and sinful belittling of Bhagavan's uniqueness which had understandably stirred up the anger of a legendary Bhakta of the unparalelled stature of Prahlada. He confessed that there was a total loss of his mental faculties when he conversed at that time due to superciliousness and over-enthusiasm of having defeated Devas which propelled his traits of arrogance; indeed his remarks had correcrly hurt his grand father who was fully justified in giving him an irreparable curse but far worse than the curse, his behaviour which hurt elders, like Prahlada, who built a reputation of the family as Narayana Bhaktas, was sullied in the memory of future generations. This was humiliating to the Vamsha that he was squarely responsible! He begged of Prahlaadaa's forgiveness which he did not deserve and would feel repentant ever day and night. Prahlaada appretiated Bali's remorse and said that he was incensed up at that moment and the anger led him to obsession which lost his mentral equilibrium that caused the pronoucement of the curse, for which he felt exremely sad. But a lesson was provided to Bali and fully converted him as a Parama Bhakta of Narayana.

Mean while, Devi Aditi deliverd a lovely male child in short stature when Nature assumed a blossomed freshness that was rare, the Gagana Mandala was clean without any trace of pollution and Vayu was pleasantly soft and nicely odoured quite unfamiliar in the human world. The proud parents invited Brahma to perform Jaatakarma and Namakarana as **Vamana Murti.** 

Brahma Stuti to Vamana Deva :It was at that time when Brahma could not suppress his emotions and broke in his ecstasy into an instant Eulogy as follows: Jaadheesha Jayaajeya Jaya Vishwa Guro Harey, Janmamrityu jaraateeta Jayaananta Jayaachyuta/ Jayaajita Jayaasesha Jayaavyakta sthitey Jaya, Jagatojagadantesha sthitey Jaya, Paramaarthaartha Sarvajna Jnaanajeryaartha nihsuta/ Jayaasesha Jagatsaakshir Jagagatkartrur Jagat Guro, Jagatojagadantesha sthitou paalayatey Jaya/ Jagaakhila Jayaasesha Jaya Sarvahridistitha, Jagaadi madhyaantamaya Sarvajnaana mayottama/ Mumukshubhinirdeshya Nityahrashtha Jayeswara, Yogibhirmukti kaamaistu Damaadi guna bhushana/ Jayaatisukshma Durjeya Jaya sthula Jaganmaya, Jaya Sukshmaati sukshma twam Jayaanindriya sendriya/ Jaya Swaamaayaa yogastha Seshabhoga Jayaashara, Jayaikadamshtra praaptena samuddhita Vasumdhara/ Nrukesarin Suraataati Vakshahsthala vidaarana, Saamopratam Jaya Viswaatman Mayaa Vaamana Keshava/ Nija maayaa paricchhinna Jaddhaatarjanaardana, Jayaachintya Jayaaneka Swapupaika vidha Prabho/ Vruddhiswa Vardhitaaneka Vikaara Prakrutey Harey, Twayyeshaa Jagataameesho samshtitaa Dharma paddhatih/ Na twaamaham na cheshaano Neindraadyaastri dashaa Harey, Jaatumeeshaa na Munyah Sanakaadyaa na Yoginah/ Twam maayaapata samveeto Jagatyatra

Jagatpatey, Kastwaam vetsyati Sarvesha twaprasaadam vinaa Narah/Twameyaaraadhito yasya Prasaada sumukhah Prabho, Sa yeva kevalam Devam vetti twam netaro janah/ Tadeeshwareshwarey shaana Vibho Buddistwa bhaavana, Prabhavaayasya Vishwasya Vishwaatman Pruthulochana! (Victory to you Adheesha, Ajeya, Vishwa Guru Hari, Ananta who is devoid of Birth and End; Achyuta, Ajiota, Asesha, Avyakta Sthita Bhagavan, Paramaartha Purti Nimita, Sarvajna who distinguishes Jnaana and Jneya, Asesha Jagat Saakshi, Jagat Kartaa, Jagat Guru, Jagat-Ajagat Sthita or Existent in Charaachara; Paa lana-Pralaya Swami, Akhila, Asesha, Sarva Hridaya Sthita; Adi-Madhyama-Anta Swarupa; Samasta Jnaana Murti, Uttama, Visualisable only by Mumukshaas, Mukti Sadhana by Yoga sevitaas, Nitya Prasanna and Parameshwara who is ornamented by Dama, Kshama and such other qualities; Atyanta Sukshma Swarupa, Durjeya or realisable with great difficulty; Sthula (Gross) and at the sametime AtiSukhsma (Tiniest); Indriya Sahita and Indriya Rahita; Mayaayuta yogastitha; Sesha shaayi Avinaashi; Bahurupa dhaari; Ekadamshtra Prithvyoddhaara Varaha Rupa or Varaha Rupa who lifted Earth with a single tusk; Hiranyakahipa vakshasthala vidirna Nrisimha; Maya Vaamanarupa dhara; Mayaavruta Samsaara dharana Parameswara or the Holder of Samsara surrounded by Maya; Dhyaananeka Swarupa dhaarana karaa; Eka Vidhi Vibho!You are the epitome of Buddhi / Intellect; Jagaddharma marga Sthita Prabho! Myself, Shankara, Indra, Sanakaadi Munis and Maha Yogiganaas had failed to understand about you as we are all shrouded by Vishnu Maya; who else could gauge your personality excepting your self! Only those who are dedicated to you and are ever-engaged with your constant 'Araadhana' could have a chance of pleasing you and none else. Ishwareshwara! Ishaana! Vibho! Bhavana! Vishwatma! Pruthulochana! Vishwa Prabhava or Srishti kaarana! Vishnu! May you grow from strength to strength! Victory to you Paramatma!)

As Bhagavan Hrishikesha was prayed to by Brahma, the former smiled and said that in the past Indra and Devas and Kashyapa Muni as also Devi Aditi paid their homges and recited Stotras to him and he assured that he would assume the incarnation of Vamamna Murti; he further assured that he would have Indra and Devatas reinstated as Trilokaadhipatis soon. In course of time Brahma offered Krishna Mrigacharma to Bhagavan and Brihaspati performed Upanayana and Yagnopaveeta dharana; Marichi Maharshi gifted Palaasha danda, Visishtha gave kamandalu, Angira Muni gave a Silk Vastra, Pulaha Muni gave a mat as Aasana, and various other Munis taught the Vatu the purport of Omkaara, Vedas, Shastras, Sankhya Yoga, Darshana Yuktis etc. Having been trained in all these disciplines, Vamana Deva had one fine morning left for the Yagna Shaala of Bali Chakravarti as the latter was executing a SacredYagna while carrying his mat, danda /stick, chhatra / umbrella and kamandulu / water vessel. Danava Guru Shukracharya was aware that Vishnu Deva in the form of Vamana Murti was arriving at the Yagna and briefed Bali Chakravarti to be extremely careful as Vishnu was a sauve and highly talented person to put words in the mouths of the opponents. The Guru reminded Chakravarti that the latter denied the age-old practice of rights to yagna's shares to Devataas and that Vamana Murti might as well ask for the revival of the practice but those shares were now enjoying by Danava Chiefs. Bali replied to Danava Guru that in case Vishnu in the incarnation of Vamana Murti came and requested for any thing then how could a King say 'no' to it! Bali told the Danava Guru: Brahman katha -maham bruyaamanyapi hi yachitah, Naastiti kim Devasya Samsaarasyaaghahaarinah/ Vratopa- vaasairvividhairyah Prabhurgrunhatey Harih, Sa mey vakshyati deheeti Govindah kimato -dhikam? Naasteeti yanmayanoktamanyeshaamapi yaachataam, Vakshyaami kathamaaya -tey tadadya chaamarechutey/Shlaagha eva hi veeraanam Daanaacchaapt samaagamah, Na badhaakaari yadyaanam tadanga Balavat smrutam/ (Brahmanaachaarya! How could I deny any body requesting me for a favour! And if that Supreme Deva asked me for a charity, then what else would be the alternative! While Parameswara received the fruits of Vrataas, Upavaasaas, and so on from one and all, and if that Parameswara himself asked a boon from me, could there be a greater fortune to me! When even an ordinary person approached me for a favour, then too that could not be denied by a King; then when Narayana himself asked for it, could such an opportunity presented itself, this chance could never indeed be missed. Even if there are difficulties in executing a charity, the value of charity would get multiplied and 'Veera purushaas' would never deter from performing the deed) Having said the

above, Bali asked Shukraachaarya: Yatagjnaatwaa Munisreshtha!Daanavighna karenamey, Naiva Bhavyam Jagannaathey Govidey samupastithey! (By understanding the above, Munisreshta! Please do not create 'Daana Vighnaas' or hurdles in the execution of the Charity!). As Vamana Deva arrived at the Yagna shaala, Bali welcomed him, offered 'Arghya', 'Aasana', Puja and offered him limitless gold, jewellery, elephants, horses, cows, women, clothes, bunches of villages or townships or whatever would be his wish! Vamana Deva replied smilingly: Mamagnisharanaarthaaya dehi Rajan Padatrayam, Suvarnagraamaratnaadi tadarthibhyah pradeeyataam/ (Raja! Please provide to me three feet of land to enable me to set up an Agni- Shaala). Bali said that after all three feet would be nothing as he could ask for a lakh of feet which could be given away, but Vamana Deva replied that he was indeed satisfied with that much of Bhumi and if the King were to offer more he might as well provide to the other needy! Bali Chakravarti readily agreed not understanding the implication and as the deed of Daana was being executed and Vamana Deva extended his hand to the King and expanded his Vamana Rupa gradually immediately: Sarva Devamayam rupam darshayaamaasa tatkshanaat/ Chandra Suryoutu nayaney dyouh shirascharanou Kshitih, Paadaangulyah Pishaachaastu Hastaangulya –scha Gruhakaah/ Vishvedevaascha jaanusthaa janghey Saadhyaah Surottamaah, Yakshaa nakheshu sambhutaa rekhaapsaraastathaa/ Drushtirrukshaanya seshaani keshaah Suryamshvah Prabhoh, Taarakaa romakupaani romeshu cha Maharshayah/ Baahavo vidishatasya Dishaah Shrotrey Mahatmanah, Ashvinou Shravaney tasya naasaa Vayurmahaatmanah/ Prasadey Chandramaa Devo Mano Dharmah samaashritah, Satyasyaabhavad Vaani Jihvaa Devi Saraswati/ Greevaarditirdeva mataa Vidyaastadvalayastathaa, Swargadwaaramabhunmaitrah twashtaa Pushaa cha vai bhruvou/ Mukhe Vaishvaanarschaascha vrushanou tu Prajaapatih, Hridayamcha Param Brahma Pumstwam vai Kashapo Munih/ Prushthesya Vasavo Devaa Marutah Sarva saandhishu, Vakshasthaley tathaa Rudro Dharryachaasya Mahaarnavah/ Udarey chaasya Gandharvaa Marutascha Mahaabalaah, Lakshmirmedhaa Dhrutih Kaantih Sarv Vidyaascha vai Katih/ Sarvajyoteesham Yaaneeha Tapascha Paramam mahat, Tasya Devaadhi Devasya tejah prodbhutamuttamam/ Tanou Kukshishu Vedaascha jaanuni cha Mahaamakhaah, Ishtayah pashavaschaasya Dwujaanaam cheshtitaanicha/ Tasya Devamayam rupam drushtaa Vishnormahaatmanah, Upasarpanti tey Daityaah patangaa iva paavaakam/ Chakshurastu Mahaa Daityaah Paadaangushtham gruheetavaan, Dantaabhyaam tasya vai greevaa mangushtheynaahana dharih/ Prathamya Sarvaansuraan Paadahastathalairvibhuh, Krutwaa Rupam Mahaakaayam Samjahaaraashu Modineem/ Tasya Vikramato Bhumim Chandraadityaou stanaantarey, Nabho Vikramamaanasya sakthidesho stitathaaryibhou/Param Vikramaanasya jaanumuley Prabhaakarou, Vishnoraastaam sthitasyaitow Devapaalana jkarmani/ Jitwaa Lokatrayam taamscha hatwaachaasura pungavaan, Purandaraaya Trailokyam dadou Vishnururukramah/ (Instantly, Vamana Murti displayed his Virat Swarupa: Chandra and Surya were his two Eyes, Shy was his head, Prithvi his feet, Pishachaas were his foot-fingers, Gruhyakaas were his hand fingers, Vishwa Deva Ganaas were in his jaanus /knees,Sadhyas were his janghaas, Yakshaas were his nails, Apsarsaas were his palm lines, Nakshatras were his Eye sight, Surya kiranas were his hairs, Stars were his body hairs, Maharshiganaas were in the hair roots, Vidishas were his hands, Dishaas were his ears, Ashwini Kumars were his faculty of hearing, Vayu was his nose, Chandra Deva was his joking faculty, Dharma Deva was his thinking capacity, Satya was his voice and Saraswati was his tongue, Deva Mata Aditi was his neck, Vidya was his valiyaas or long poles; Pushas were his eye brows, Swarga dwar was his anus, Vaishvanara his face, Prajapati his vrushanaas, Param Brahma was his heart, Kashyapa Muni was his Pumstwa, Vasu Devata was his back, Marutganaas were his Sandhis, Rudra was his Vakshasthala, Mahaarnavaa was his Dhairya, Gangharvas were in his stomach; Lakshmi, Medha, Dhruti, Kaanti and all Vidyaas were in his 'Kati Pradesha'; the luster and radiance in the total Universe as also the Tapo teja or the power of meditation was the reflection of the magnificence of Natayana; Vedas and Sciptures and the huge Yagnaas and the Sacred Deeds of the Virtuous like Maharshis and Brahmanas were all inside in his 'kukshi' or belly. On viewing the Paramatma's 'Virat Swarupa', the so called 'Mahaasuraas' referred to earlier in ignorance by Chakrayarti Bali before Prahlada's curse to him got burnt off like flies before a gigantic out berak of Fire! Having thus occupied the Universe in totality including the sub-terrain Sapta Paatalaas, Vamana Deva stated that since Bali took the water in his hand and donated the THREE FEET of Land, and blessed him

to be the King of the Sapta Paatalaas and granted him long life till the and of Manvantara of the on-going Vaisawata Manu. He also blessed Bali that all the 'Homa Phalas' at the time of Shraddhas to be performed even by Brahmanas, besides incomplete and defective Vratas, Agni Kaaryaas without ghee, and Kusha grass roots as also the daanas without detachment would belong to Bali and his followers.

Ityetat kathitam asya Vishnor mahatmyamutthamam, Shrunuyaadyo Vamanasya Sarva Paapaih pramuchyatey/ Bali Prahlaada samvaadam mantritam Bali Shakrayo, Baleyrvishnoscha charitam ye smarishyanti Maanavaah/ Naadhayo Vyadhayesteshaam na cha Mohaakulam Manah, Chuturaajye nijam Raajyamishta- praptim Viyogawaan/ Samaapnoti Mahabhaagaa Narah shrutwa kathaamimaam/ Brahmano Vedamaapnoti Kshatriyo Jayatey Mahim, Vaishyo Dhana Samruddim cha Shudrah Sukhamaampunuyaat, Vaamanasya Matmyam shrunvan Paapaih pramuchyatey/ (Whosoever hears of this narration of Vamana Charitra and Mahatmya would have no 'Adhi-Vyadhis' or exteral and internal problems and be freed from sins; Brahmanas would attain Veda Prapti, Kshatriyas of Victories, Vaishyas of Dhana Samruddhi and Shudras enjoy happiness; As they read or hear of Prahlada-Bali Samvada or of Bali and Vishnu Charitra, one would aviod situations of Official hindrances and achieve the desired goals of life.)

### Parvati weds Shiva, Devi Kaali's Tapasya led to Gauri Swarupa and birth of Ganesha

Hamayan and Devi Mena begot three daughters viz. Ragini with red eyes, red complexion and red vastraas too, Kutila who was of medium complexion and bright and the youngest was Kaali of deep blue complexion, blue eyes and most beautiful. Even at the age of eight, the three maidens took to Tapasya and Devas took them one by one to Brahma starting from the middle one Kutila; they asked Brahma whether she would be able to beget a son who could kill Mahishasura! Brahma replied: She might not be able to withstand the brilliance of Mahadeva, leave her! But she replied that she had the ability to win over by the severity of her Tapasya even Janardana and even severe Maha Deva's head! Brahma got furious by her impetuous nature and tuned her into a water flow which joined the forceful rivers of Brahmaloka. After some time, Devas took away Ragini the eldest daughter of Himayan and Mena and made her face Brahma; when Devas asked the same question to her and she too gave a brash reply that for sure she could beget a son who could kill Mahishasura in an angry and provocative tone and Brahma was upset that she had the audacity of talking to Devas like that and punished her to become Sandhya waiting for the arrival of Krittika yoga. As this happened twice before, Devi Mena prevented the third daughter Kaali to perfom Tapaswya further! She named her UMA( 'U' for This or Tapasya and 'Ma' or do not do; thereby meaning 'Do not do this Tapasya'). But as time passed, Uma got intensely devoted to Shankara and ignored her mother's warning and resumed severe Tapasya. Understandably, Brahma asked Indra and Devas to bring Kaali but the radiance and heat of her Tapasya was such that Indra could not reach anywhere near her and accordingly reported this to Brahma who understood that this was the one who was indeed worthy of marrying Parama Shiva who could not only demolish Mahishasura but als beget a son that could annihilate Tarakasura! Thus Brahma was satisfied and stopped searching further for Kanyaas! Meanwhile Himavanta brought Kaali home from further Tapasya and Maha Deva coincidentally took up to a severe RoudraVrata called Niraashraya roaming from forest to forest and mountain to mountain. During these wanderings, Himananta invited Shiva to settle on Himalaya to perform the Vrata without hindrance and the latter agreed to do so. Uma Devi happened to see Maha Deva in the course of the Vrata and so did Maha Deva noticed her for a second as he was instantly reminded of Sati Devi his earlier wife but slipped back to his concentration again. As Uma's Sahachaari friends knew of her intense liking for Maha Deva gifted her an Earthern Idol of his and having accepted the Murti commenced worshipping it with flowers and incense. One day suddenly a Vatu / Brahmachari with danda, yagnopaveeta, chhatra (umbrella), Kamandalu and ash ridden body entered Uma's Ashrama and introduced himself that he was a resident of Varanasi and was travelling from Tirthas like Prayaga,

Kubjaagra, Jayanta, Chandikeshwara, Bandhuvrinda, Kanakhala Tirtha, Saraswati, Agnikunda, Bhadra, Trivishthapa etc. He asked Uma as to why in this youthful stage was in the form of an ascetic! Then Uma's Sahacharini called Somaprabha replied that Uma decided to devotion to Maha Deva and would like to wed him. The Vatu expressed surprise as to who gave her this strange idea to her! He was a frightening mendicant always surrounded by goblins and piscachas with beard and dishevelled hair sporting snakes arould his neck and shoulders where as she was an extremely pretty girl of charm whom esteemed Devatas would like to marry. Devi Uma intervened and said 'don't you say that again Bhikshu! Shiva is 'Sarvagunaadhika': Shivo vyaapyathayaa Bheemah Sadhano nirdhanopiyaa, Alankruto yaa Deveyshaastathaa vaapyanalankrutah/ Yaadrushastaadrusho vaapi sa mey naatho bhavishyati, Nivaaryataamayam Bhishurvivakshuh sphritaadharah, Na tathaa nindakah Paapi yathaashrunavan Shashi Prabhey/(Whether He was rich or poor, ugly or unornamented, the Bhikshu should know that Shiva was my Swami; Sashi Prabha! Do not encourage this Bhikshu, lest he would blabber something else; a person who blamed thoughtlessly about others would continue to argue in circles; so throw him out!) Then Parama Shiva appeared before Parvati in his real Swarupa and said: Dear Parvati! You may now go back to your home; I shall depute Maharshis to your Father's house; since you have commended this form of mine now would be known to posterity as Bhadreshwara and Deva, Danava, Yaksha, Kinnara, Uraga and Manavaas would worship me in this very Rupa of Bhadreswara. Then the Saptarshis viz. Kashyapa, Atri, Bharadwaaja, Vasishtha, Goutama, Angira and Vishwamitra were summoned and recalled about the past incident of Sati and said that Parvata Putri Parvati had returned again and they should request Himavaan to agree for the alliance. The Saptarshis accompanied by Arundhati reached Himavaan's residence, even as the Co-Mountains, Gandharvaas, Kinnaraas, Yakshaas, and other illustrious guests were already in position there. Himavaan welcomed the Saptarishis most humbly and the Spokesman Angira said: Shruyataam Parvata Sreshtha yena Kaaryena vai vayam, Samaagataastwatsadana marundhatyaa samam Girey/ Yosow Mahatmaa Sarvaatmaa Dakshayagna ksayankarah, Shankarah Shuladhruk Sharvastrinetro Vrusha vaahanah/Jeemutaketuh Shatrughno Yagna bhoktaa Swayam Prabhuh, Yameeshwaram Maheshaanam Mahadevam Pashih Patim, Vayam teyna proshitaah smastwatsakaasham Girishwara/ Iyam yaa twatsutaa Kaali Sarvalokeshu Sundari, Taam praarthayati Deveyshastaam Bhayaan daatumarhati/ Sa eya dhanyo hi Pitaayasya putri Shubham Patim,Rupaabhijana sampatya prapnoti Girisattama/ Yaavanto Jangamaamyaa Bhutaah Shaila Chaturvidhaah, Teshaam Maataa twiyam Devi proktah Pitaa Harah! ( Parvata Raja! We along with Arundhati have arrived here is to convey to you that Mahatma Sarvatma who was Daksha Yagna's destroyer, Shula dhaari, Sharva, Trinetra, Vrusha Vahana, Jeemutaketu, Shatrughna, Yagna bhokta, Swayamrabhu Shankara Ishrara who was also called by some as Shiva, Sthaanu, Bhava, Hara, Bhima, Ugra, Maheshaana, Maha Deva and Pashupati had asked us to request you to propose him as his husband to Devi Kaali as his Dharma Patni; the father of this Rupavaan, Nishkalanka and Kuleena Kumari would indeed be happy to the mother of the Charaachara Beings since Shankara was their father). Devi Kaali blushed as Angira Maharshi completed his statement. Himavan sought the endorsement of his wife Devi Menaka and the clearance of his co-Mountains as they were all his close relatives and confirmed the acceptance of the Sacred Alliance. The Day of wedding arrived and the 'Who is Who' of the Invitees were in position at the Holy Platform of the Univere's Supreme got ready too with Maharshis awaiting the arrival of the bride groom's party. Deva Maata Aditi, Surabhi, Surasa and other eminent ladies decorated Maha Deva, with a Mundamaala around his neck, tiger skin around hiswaist, Kaala Sarpa Kundalaas as his Ear-rings, Maha Sarpras with shining Manis on their hoods as his Kankanaas or wristornaments, shoulder ornaments, neatly dressed up Jataajuta on his head along with half-moon and Ganga, Gorochana Tilaka on the forehead and Trishula in his right hand. He was seated in the Vrishabha as accompanied with his Pramatha Ganaas. As the Party moved on, Vishnu and Lakshmi too moved on by Garuda, Brahma and Saraswati on the Swan Chariot, Indra and Sachi Devi on Iravata Elephant, other Devas on their respective Vaahanaas and spouses, the Six Rithus (Seasons), Tumbura and other Gandharvas were singing, Kinnaras were playing musical instruments and Apsaraas were in ecstatic dances; Ekadasha Rudras, Ashtaavasus, Twelve Adityas, Sixty six Ganas, twentyfour Urthwa-reta Rishis, Yakshas, Rakashasaas and Piscachas were all excited awaiting the momentous Muhurta. Himavaan

welcomed the bride groom and his Party most respectfully and made them seated comfortably. As the bride arrived, the Maharshis commenced the formal procedures with Vedic Mantras and at the most auspicious Muhurta, Himavan announced: *Matputreem Bhagavan! Kaalim Poutreem Pulahaagajey*, *Pitrunaamapi Dauhitreem Prateecchemaam mahodyataam*/ (I am hereby parting Devi Kaali, the grand daughter of Pulaha and my daughter in wedding; Kindly accept. Parama Shiva replied: *Na mesti Maataa na Pitha tathaiva, Na Jnaato vaapi cha Bandhavaascha*/ *Niraashroham Giri shring vaasi, Sutaam prateecchaami tavaadri Raja!* (I neither have a mother or father and not even relatives; as I a have no home, I shall keep her on the Mount of Kailasha Mount and agreeher as my wife). Brahma then asked Devi Kaali to accompany Shiva to perform three Pradakshinaas around the Agni Kunda and the guests were treated with excellent bhojan and gifts before departing after the festivities.

Parvati's Tapasya led to reappearance as Gauri: After the Sacred Wedding, Shankara and Parvati moved around freely in enjoyment and asked Vishwakarma to build a glorious home for them, performed Yagna worthy of Grihastaashrama and the couple were nicely settled down. One day out of fun, Parama Shiva addressed Devi Parvati as Kaali or of dark complexion. She felt that his fun was unbearable and left for serious Tapasya to Brahma deva and secured golden complexion. As she discarded her earlier Form, Indra requested her to give away the earlier Form to him and since she was materialised from Krishna Kosha or of deep blue nature, she was named as Katyayani;, she was also called as Koushiki since she was materialised from Brahma kosha and since Indra called her as his sister, Indra too was known as Koushika. Indra then asked Katyayani /Koushiki to reach Vindhya Parvata and thus she became Vindhyavasini and Indra gifted a Lion as her Vahana /Carrier. After this incident, Devi Uma who discarded her earlier Rupa now replaced with Suvarna Rupa and identified herself as Gouri. Maha Deva was too pleased and both the couple spent some thousand years in Garhastya all by themselves ignoring the out side contacts, which had terribly distressed Devatas and the entire Universe was upset too. Indra and Devatas were concerned about fresh threats of Indratwa as there were forebodings to that effect and approached Brahma who wished that Mahadeva's continued immersion in the stage of 'Manmoha' for Gauri would contitinue before Daityas would gain strength; this concern got Indra and Devas worried and tried to somehow manage an entry to Shiva's abode but found that sneaking into the adode would not be possible as Maha Nandi was holding the security. Even while Indra and Devatas were waiting outside the Abode, Agni took the form of a Swan and sneaked in and having assumed a Sukshma Rupa conveyed to Parama Shiva that Indra and Devas were waiting outside to desperately meet him. Maha Deva stepped out and let Indra and Devas come inside; he said that since he was actually enjoying Devi Gauri he was disturbed and any of the Devatas should take over the weight, radiance and power of Parama Siva's 'Shukra' (Semen)! Surya and Chandra felt that they might be unable to do so but Agni Deva emboldened himself and asked Shiva to release the Sukra so that he could consume it. Shiva did so and then he asked Indra as to what was the emergency about! Indra had respectfully entreated to terminate the period of enjoymernt so that he could very kindly concentrate on many tasks pending. As Maha Deva agreed to do so, Indra and Devas returned to Swarga and he narrated the incident to Parvati and the latter got furious that the disturbance caused by Indra and Devas was indeed frustrating and cursed Indra and others that since they did not allow to let her bear a child at the nick of time, they too would become childless! Ganeshotpanna: In that angry and vexatious mood, Gauri entered the Snaana shaala and asked her maid Malini to massage her body and as the maid applied flavoured milk cream the sweat of her angry body; when massaged Gauri's body collected body dirt and made a figure viz. Ganesha with four hands, broad chest and handsome and later on resumed her bath and left later to Puja Mandir to worship Maha Deva. Thereafter, Parama Shiva entered the same Abhyagana Griha (bath room), and noticed the Ganesha Pratima apparently made by Parvati's body dirt during her Abhyangana. Maha Deva added his body dirt too to the Pratima and made an addition of an elephant trunk to the Murti which as he took his Snaana got washed his own sweat, bhasma and sacred water. The Pratima came alive as the combined body dirt, sugandhas and water and Shiva told Parvati that he was their own son! Gauri was surprised to see their child with an elephant face and excellent features and embraced him: Yattadangamalaadwiyam krutam Gajamukham Naram, Tatah preetaa Girisutaa tam putram parishashvajey/ Murdhina chaina -mapura aghnaaya tatah Sarvobraveedumaam, Naayakena vinaa Devi tava Bhutopi Purtakah/ Yasmaajjatastato

naamnaa bhavishyati Vinaayakah, Yesha vighna sahasraani Suraadeenaam harishyati/ Pujayishyanti chaivaasya lokaa Devi charaacharaah, Ityava muktatwaa Devaastu Dattavaamstanayaaya hi/ Sahaayantu Gana Sreshthamnaamnaa khyaatam Ghatodaram, Tathaa Matruganaa ghoraa bhutaa Vighna karaaschaye/Tey Sarvey Paramoshena Devyaah preetyopa- paadinah, Devi cha Sasutam drustwaa paraam mumadavaapacha/ (Maha Deva asked Shailaja Devi to find her own son and the latter embraced him who was materialised by the body dirts of hers and his as the child was a charming boy with an elephant face; Shiva said that the child was born without any 'Nayaka' and thus would be called Vinayaka, who could forestall thousands of Vighnaas of Devas. The entire Universe would worship Ganesha said Parvati who created Ghatodara Ganaas to assist him as also Matru Ganaas and Vighna Bhutaas to destroy who did not worship him. Devi Parvati felt exremely happy and contented with the arrival of Ganeswara!

# Katyayani destroys Chanda-Munda, Raktabeeja, and Shumbha-Nishumbha

Among Kashyapa Muni's wives was Devi Danu from whom were born innumerable Danavas among whom Namuchi, Shumbha-Nikumbha brothers, Dhumralochana, Chand Munda brothers and so on. Namuchi the younger brother of Shumbha-Nishumbha could not face Indra Deva and entered Surya's chariot and sought to take it down to Patala but on Indra's promise that the latter would not hurt by the Danava's Astra - Shastra, he jumped out of Surya's chariot. On way to Patala, Namcuchi bathed in the Samudra and gleefully said to himself that after all, the foam of Samudra would not hurt him and played with it, but cleverly enough Indra hid in the foam and killed the Danava. On coming to know of this, the elder brothers of Namuchi viz. Shumbh Nishumbha went wild and having taken a large army defeated Devas and Indra and threw them out of Swarga, besides forcefully took away Indra's Vahana Iravata Elephant, Buffalo of Yama, Varuna's glittering Umbrella, Vayu's Mace and Shankha. On Earth, the Danava brothers met Daitya brothers viz. Raktabija the Minister of Mahashasura. The latter told the Danavas that two other Ministers of Mahishaasura named Chanda and Munda were hiding under water as Vindhya -Vasini Koushiki exterminated Mahishasura. As Raktabija gave an assurance about the prowess of his new friends Shumbha and Nishumbha who defeated Indra and Devas, the hiding Chanda and Munda came out of water and decided to face Koushiki Devi with the help of Shumbha and Nishumbha. The latter sent an emissary named Sugriva on behalf of Shumbha and Nishumbha brothers to Devi Koushiki and praised about the two brothers as the Swamis of Three Lokas and either of them, would be worthy of wedding her. Devi replied smilingly and said: Kintu twasi durvineeyataaya hriday mey manmorathsah, Yo maam Vijayatey yuddhey sas bhartaa syan mahaasura/ (Who ever seeks my hand in marriage would have to defeat me). This reply enraged the Shumbha-Nishumbhas and deputed Dhumraaksha with six hundred Akshouhinis of army which went up Vindhyaparvata. [ Each Akshouhini comprises 109350 Foot-Soldiers, 65510 horsemen, 21870 charioteers and 21870 Elephant Riders] On approaching Devi, Dhumraaksha misbehaved with her with offensive threats as surrounded with his army came running to her with his mace, then Devi made a 'Humkaar'sound and by her fiery looks burnt off the army like dry firewood turned into ash when the surrounding regions went into frightened 'Hahaakaars' and the resoundings of the huge sound of the hunkaars were heard by Shumbha and Nikumbhas too! As this initial debacle took place, the Daitya brothers despatched Chanda-Munda brothers as also their own strongman Ruru with fresh consignment of Akshouhinis. As soon the Senas moved near the Place, Devi's Vaahana a ferocious Lion leapt out of the mountain cave and attacked the army with multitude of elephants, horses, chariots and soldiers and slaughtered them helter-skelter as mammoth masses of dead beings and over-flowings of blood rivers got collected and the survivors fled away to the refuge of the Asura Chiefs who were exasperated with rage; as they advanced towards Ambika Devi with garlands of skulls, since she represented Kaushiki who was sitting inside the Mountain Cave, frowned her and three distinct lines of her forehead and the resultant Devi Kaali displayed such sweltering balls of Agni and in quick succession threw smashing torrents of rain of Astraas of Ankushas,

Mudgars, Dhanush and Yantras as a full display of Mrityu Devata! Koushiki Devi then asked Devi Ambika to bring the Danava Brothers Chanda and Munda who fled and disappeared in the sky and the latter sitting on her donkey chased them and instructed Garuda Deva to discover the Danavas on the run and the Giant Bird enlarged his body and caught the brothers by their necks and brought them before the Devi who sliced their necks and hung their heads with blood as her ornaments! Undaunted by the total destruction of Chanda-Munda Danavas, Shumbha-Nikumbhas despatched Raktabeeja along with thirty Akshouhinis of army as Chandika flew by a Vimana, as Braahmani was materialised as Hamsa Vahini from Devi Koushiki's Akshamala and Kamandulu, Vrishabhaarudhini Maaheswari from her bangles and earrings, Mayura Vahini Kaumari from her neck, Garuda Vahini Vaishnavi from her shoulders, Sesha Naaga Sthita Vaarahi from her back, Gajaraja Vahini Maahendri from her breasts and Sharp nailed Naarasimhi from her heart. Raktabeeja entered the Matru Shaktis and instantly he was killed, but there was a surprise as each drop of his blood created another Raktabeeja and the Raktabeejas so materialised and killed multiplied further Raktabeejas! Devi Kaushiki asked Ambika to magnify her face and strech her tongue as one lip of her mouth was raised sky high and the lower lip down to earth and the blood spills of millions of Raktabeejaas got dried up at once and besides the original specimen the entire army was annihilated too.

Even as the greatest support of Kumbha-Nishumbha viz. Raktabeeja was terminated, the desperate Asuras were still proud and bragged to Devas that their might was supreme and invincible and finally at the close of their one-to-one fight, they would most certainly make the Kaushiki Devi crawl on ground and beg us to marry both of them since she asserted that she would marry either of the survivors! Soon on shouting like that, Nisumbha sprang up from his feet and jumped at her with sharp swords drawn. Devi Kaushiki smiled and used six of her 'Mayuri Pankhayuta baanaas' or peacock feathered arrows and smashed their swords; as they lifted their maces, Devi sliced off the strong hands and shoulders of the Daitya. Even as Marikaas and the entire Devas shouted big screams of Victory and showered mild and fragrant flowers as there were overjoyed, Shumbha jumped up on his elephant with nervousness and fright besides anger along with his 'paasha', Devi lifted Artha Chandraakara Baanaas or half-moon shaped arrows and in a sportful manner smashed the 'Kumbhasthala' of the elephant with one arrow and another with the proud, vainglorious and swollen head of Shumbha.

At the extermination all the enemies by Devi Katyayani, Devas led by Indra had no bounds of joy and with suppressed feelings of elation at the restoration of their lost glory, broke out with spontaneous their sincere commendation as follows: Namastestutey Bhagavati Paapanaashini Namastestu tey Suraripudarpa shaantani, Namastestutey Harihara Rajyadaayani Namastestutey Makhabhuja karyakaarini/ Namastestutey Trisasharipukhayankari Namastestu tey Shatamakha paada pujitey, Namastestutey Mahishavinaasha kaarini Namostutey Harihara Bhaskara dyutey/ Namostu teshtaadasha baahu shaalini Namostutey Shumbha Nishumbha ghaatini, Namostu Lokaartiharey Trishulini Namostu Naraayaneeya Chakradhaarini/Namostu Vaaraahi sadaa Dharaadharey twaam Naaraarasimhi pranataa Namostutey, Namostutey Vajradharey Vajradharey Gajadhwajey Namostu Kaumaari Mayura Vaahini/Namostu Paitaamaha Hamsa Vaahaney Namostu Maalaa vikatey Sukeshini, Namostutey Raasabhaprishta Vaahini Namostu Sarvaarti harey Jaganmaye/ Namostu Vishweswari Paahi Vashyam Nishudayaarina Dwija Devataanaam, Namostutey Sarwamayi Trinetrey Namo Namastey Varadey praseeda/ Brahmaani twam Mrudaani Varashikhi gamanaa Vaishnavi twam Sashaangkaam, Duyrdrushyaa Naarasimhi Ghura ghurita ravaa Twam Tayendri sa Vajraa Twam maari Charmamundaa Shaavagamanarataa Yogini Yoga Siddhaa/ Namastey Trinetrey Bhagavaiti tawa charanaanu – shitaa ye Aharaharnata shirasovanataah/ Nahi Nahi Paribhayamastyashubham cha Stutibali kusuma karaah satatam ye/ Yadi Varadaa Bayati Tridashaanaam Dwija Shishu Goshu Yataswa Hitaaya, Punarapi Devaripunaparaastwam Pradah Hutaashana tulya sharirey/ (Our humble salutations to you Bagavat, Extinguisher of Sins, the destroyer of the envy and enemity of Devas, the bestower of glory to Vishnu and Shankara; the benefactor of Devas by distributing their shares of Yajna phalaas, the terminator of the foes of Devas, she whose sacred feet are ever worshipped by Indra, the exterminator of Mahishasura, She who is always implored by Vishnu, Shiva and Surya; she who is

decorated by Eighteen Holy Hands; the chopper of Shumbha and Nishubha's heads; The eliminator of the sorrows of the entire Universe: Chakra dharini Narayani; Vaaraahi; The Unique Holder of Bhumi; Naarasimhi, Gajadhwaji, Kaumari, Mayura Vahini, Hamsa Vaahini, She the wearer of the frightening garlands of skulls; wearer of charming hair style; the seater on the back of a donkey! The destroyer of all kinds of problems and hardships; Jagnamayi, Vishweshwari, Vishwa akshaakari; Brahmana Deva Shatru Samhaarini; Trinetri! Sarvamayi, Varadaayini; Brahmaani, Mridaani, Vara Shikhigamamna, Shakti Hasta, Kumari! Vaaraahi, Garuda Vahini, Shaaranga Dhanusha dhaarini, Vaishnavi, Naarasimhi, Ghurghura Shabda Kaarini, Aindri, Mahamari Chamunda, Shava viharini, Charma Munda, Siddha Ygini, Trinetri, Bhagavati! Who so ever takes refuge in you with devotion and dedication withb heads down and flowers in hands would never ever be let down but would most certainly be sucessful and victorious with happiness and contenment!)

## Kartikeya's birth and his killings of Asuras like Taraka, Mahisha and Baana

As Agni Deva consumed 'Suvarnareta' or the Golden Semen of Bhagavan Mahadeva (vide earlier chapter on Parvati's wedding to Shiva), Agni became pale gradually losing lustre and Devas approached Brahma for a solution and as advised by the latter, Agni parted the immense weight of the Suvarnareta to Mahanadi Kutila and retained it with her waters and preserved the embriyo of the child; As Agni bore the brunt of the reta for long time, his every body part turned to golden colour and thus gained the epithet of Hiranya reta. As per the instruction of Brahma again, Kutila Nadi changed its course to Udayaachala and in a huge forest of hundred yojanas full of Sharavanas / Sarpatis, left the child on the Sharvana Grass; Bhagavan Kumara started crying like a thunder on the Sky and six Krittika Devis who found the child competed with each other to feed the child from their chests and since they were all competing the child assumed six faces to let them all feed simultaneously with his six mouths thus becoming Shanmukha and as the Six Krittikas brought up the child together attaining the epithet of Kartikeva. Meanwhile Agni and Kutila entered into a controversy and claim about the parentship of the child. Brahma in consultation with Vishnu took the child to Mahadeva who indeed was the Originator of the child who got escatic and called Parvati of their son. As regards the aspect of controversy, Devi Parvati suggested that the best solution would be to ask the child himself and thus as the boy was taken round to Shiva-Parvati-Agni-Kutila-Sharvana-Krittikaas. The child considered the claim of each one of them and assumed the Rupas of Shiva Kumara, Vishakha, Guhya and Skanda by Parvati, Shakha by Kutila, Mahasena by Agni, Kartikeya, Shadaanana and Shanmukha by Krittikaas, and Sharadwata and Sharavana by Shravana.

Bhagavan Shiva then suggested to Brahma to perform 'Abhisheka Snaana' at Kurukshetra in the River Saraswati and name the child as **Senapati, Devasena** and Parama Shiva appointed four Pramatha Ganaas viz. Ghanta- Karna, Lohitaaksha, Nandisena and Kumudamalini; Brahma provided Sthaanu from his own Ganaas and Vishnu gave Samkrama, Vikrama and Parakrama; Indra provided Utkesha and Pankaja, Ravi gave Dandaka and Pingala, Chandra gave Mani and Vasumani, Ashvini Kumaaraas provided Vatsa and Nandi, Agni donated Jyoti and Jjvalajjihva; Dhatu Deva gave Kunda Kusunda and Kusuma; Twashta gave Chakra and Anuchakra; Vedha gave Atisthara and Susthira, Pusha granted Parityajya and Kaalaka Devis and so on. Likewise, Himaalaya, Vindhyachala, Varuna, Samudra, Ambika, Pavana, Amshumaan, Yamaraja, Yaksha Raja, Kaalindi, Narmada, Godavari, Mandakini, Gandaki, Mahanadi, and many such Rivers; Tirthas, Rishis and so on gifted away men, material, Arms, and several other items useful for the Great Battles ahead with Asuraas and took over the status of Senapati while Janaradana himself was present along with Shiva, Brahma, Indra, Agni, Surya, Chandra,Nakshatras, Grahaas and so on along with their spouses, as also Dikpalakas, Sapta Rishis, Yaksha, Kinnara, Apsaras, Ekadasa Rudras, Dwadasha Adityas, Aswini Kumaras, Marudganas, Vasus and Nagas.

The news of Kartikeya's assuming the status as Deva Senapati reached Patala Lokas got spread out even as Skanda instructed his Ganaas to descend to Prithvi; as the Ganas came down, huge noises were heard and the highly valiant Asura Viraas like Mahisha, Taraka, Virochana, Jambha, Kujambha and others heard the same and assembled at the place of Andhakasura to discuss about the development. Just at that time, a Sukara Rupa Daitya named Patalaketu came into the Conference and reported that a Manava Rupa chased him with his arrows shouting 'Stop Stop' and there were innumerable such Rupas around on Prithvi; Patalaketu jumped in the Dakshina Samudra and through a hole entered Patala and arrived at the Conference. As this was heard from the Asura, some of the members felt that Manavas and Devas were seeking to target Mahishasura and Tarakasura. Even as the discussions were going on, Kartikeya Ganas and Matrikas attacked when Asuras were taken aback completely caught unawares. The huge influx of Devas entered with Sthaanu Deva in the lead and started killing the Asuras in all directions. Quickly grouping their Army, the Asuras defended initially and took up the battle in right earnestness and decided to attack. But the Ganaas sliced the necks of countless Asuras; Shadkukarna dragged Danavaas in sizeable number; the Gana Swami Pushpadanta cut off the bodies of Danavas into two or four or mulitple parts; Shakatachakraaksha and Panchasikha were engaged in drubbing 'Mushtighaats' or powerful fisfulls with both their powerful arms to pound elephants and turning chariots to smithereens; Shodasaaksha chased Mahishasura for a while but the latter having taken a vantage point retalliated and ended him up. Similarly Taraka took to offensive and tormented Pramathas and Matru Shaktis; Mahishaasura then defeated and even hurt many Pramathas and having spared and ignored them proceeded fast towards Kumara but Suchakraaksha Ganeswara encounterd Mahisha and having lifted his chariot wheel intercepted the mighty Asura. However, Banaasura with his thousand hands overpowered Suchakra and tied him to his own chakra but with Suchakra saved himself; Makaraakhsha of the Ganaas too got defeated at the hands of Banasura.

Meanwhile Tarakaasura lifted his enormous sword and ran behind Ganeswara ganaas who in turn took refuge from Skanda Deva; as Tarakasura attacked Kumara face to face in a direct confrontation, Skanda Deva lifted up his Maha Shakti which directly hit Taraka's heart and the most deadly Asura who plagued the Suras for centuries fell to ground with a thud. This great extermination of **Tarakasura** the notorious and one of the cruellest enemies of the World against Virtue and Justice was unbelievable to Mahishasura ran for life to Himalayas, while Banasura too got demoralised and shocked and retreated towards the Sea displaying his back to the battle field. Eventually, Skanda Deva alighted his Mayura Vahana and left for Krouncha Parvata. The spiteful Mahishasura too left Himalayas and reached Krouncha Parvata where he hid himself in a cave and as soon as Kumara arrived, Brahma- Vishnu -Maheswara as also Indra arrived there too. Indra asked Kartikeya to complete the task of killing Mahishasura too but Skanda hesitated since Mahisha was his cousin brother, but Indra tried to convince Skanda and there was a difference of opinion and there was even a bet as to who could take a faster pradakshina of the mountain by foot; since again there was an argument about who did the pradakshina first, Vishnu gave the judgment that Indra did it first; then Kumara out of anger more due to his defeat rather than anger for the Daitya, pulled up the Shakti Astra and killed Mahishasura.

As Skanda was remorseful to have killed **Mahishasura**, Vishnu advised Kartikeya to atone, if the boy's conscience was hurting, to perform Tirtha Yatra and take bath in the Pradyuka Sarovara which like a Kuthaara or axe would demolish his sins especially of committing of the murder of a cousin brother. Vishnu further advised Skanda that he could as well secure his father Shankara's darshan there. As advised Kumara did the Tirtha Yatra, secured Maheswara's darshan as also the boon of bestowing Shakti to cut off the thousand hands of **Banaasura**. Having decimated Banaasura too along with Ganesha,both the brothers prostrated before Shiva.

Andhakasura's passion for Gauri and her retalliation: On hearing the momentous news in the Paatala Lokas that Maha Deva Putras named Skanda and Ganesha killed Mahaasuraas like Tarakasura, Mahishasura and Banaasura, Andhakasura got rattled and infuriated; he mobilised an army towards Devalokaas and on way in Prithvi sighted Gauri Devi moving about in a flower garden and conveyed to

Daitya that his life would have no meaning or motive to live if he could not secure her somehow! Prahlada who too was in the Battle-Party conveyed to Andhaka that Devi Gauri was none else than Maha Deva's Dharmapatni and that he should not even to think on such sinful lines! Prahlada stated: Varam Praanaastyaajya na cha pishunavaadeshyabhirati, Veeram mounam kaaryam na cha vachana muktam yadanrutam/ Varam kleebairbhaaryaam na cha parakalatra –abhigamanam. Varam bhikshaarthitwam na cha paradhanaaswaadamasakrut! (It would be better to commit suicide but one should be interested on the illegal possesions of others; it would be better to keep dumb than speak lies; it would be better to become impotent rather than desire a woman of others; it would be better to beg rather than steal other's money again and again!) But Andhakasura was fired up the passion and fixation and replied angrily that after all, she might be the mother of his Shatrus of enemies and ran away towards her even as his soldiers pelted stones from their yantraas or machines but an alert Nandi Deva hurled them back and retalliated with his parighaas as Daityas like Mayasura ran away, but Andhakasura attacked Nandi and made him unconscious. On finding this occurrence, Devi Gauri assumed thousand Rupas and shattered the stronghold of the Daitya infantry. Andhakasura wondered as to who this beautiful yet dreadful woman was and pat came the reply: Na parijnaatavaamstatra kaa tu saa Girikanyakaa, Naatraascharya na pashyanti chatvaaromi Sadaiva hi/ Na pasyatih Jaatyandho Raagaandhopi na pashyati, Na pashyanti Madonmattho lobhaakraanto na pashyanti, Sopashyamaano Girijaam Pashyannapi tadaandhakah! (As thousand faces of Gauri Devi were displayed suddenly, Andhaka got confused as to who precisely was Gauri Devi among these; the reply was that in the World, there could be four kinds of blind fools: some were bornblind, some owing to infatuation, some others were out of arrogance and conceit and yet others were highly narrow-minded! And that was why Andhakasura was disabled to identify Maha Devi!) Gauri Devi gave a mighty punch to Andhaka and he fell down unconscious. While his entire army got prepared to attack, Ganeshwara appeared at once along with Gauri Devi with her several Rupaas as he touched the feet of his mother joined the thousand strong Devis in the fray; as the Asuras were mercilessly slaughtered, a frightened Andhasura ran for his life to Paatala but continued still to be tormented with the crush and passion for the Devi!

# Kedara Kshetra, Muraasura Vadha, Shivabhisheka, Oneness of Shiva-Vishnu (Upadesha of Dwadasha Narayana Mantra included)

As Maha Deva decided to perform deep and extensive Tapasya on the top of Himalayas not only to refresh himself but to promote Loka Kalyaana or ensure Propitiousness to the entire Universe, there were fiery sparks from his skull emerging through his Jataajuta or thick layers of his hairs and fell as heavy boulders on Earth: *Tato veetaa vidaaryaiva Kapaalam Parameshthinah, Saarchismatin Jataa madhyaannishannaa Dharanitaley/ Veetioyaatu patatyadrirdaaritah Kshmaasamo bhavat, Jaatasteertha varah Punyah Kedaara iti vishrutah/ Tato Hartam Varam pradaat Kedaaraaya Vrishadhwajah, Punya vriddhi karam Brahman Paapaghnam Moksha Saadhanam/ Ye Jalam taavakey Tirthey peetwaa samyaminmo Naraah, Madhu maamsa nivrutta ye Brahmachari Vratey sthitaah/ Shanmaasaad dhaarayishyanti nivruttaah Parapaakatah, Teshaam Hrutpankajeshyava Mallingam bhavitaa dhruvam/ Nachaasya paapaabhiratir —bhavishyati kadaachana, Pitrunaamakshayam Shraaddham bhavishyatyi na samshayah/ Snaana daana Tapaamseeha homajapyaadi kriyaah bhavishyantya kshayaa Nrunaam Mrutaanaama punarbhavah/* 

(From the boulders that fell on Earth **Kedara Tirtha** got materialised and those who commenced residing there had been virtuous seeking Salvation without food practising celibacy and intense meditation for six months a year as the Tirtha was not worthy of residence due to snow and cold; by the grace of Parama Shiva a big and memorable Shiva Linga got materialised and all the Sevas or Services performed by devotees like fastings, Snaanas, Daanaas, Tapasyas, Homas, Japaas, and Pitru Shraaddhaas

would all result in multiplier effects.) As per the instructions of Mahadeva, Devas came to worship the Shiva Linga after taking holy baths in the Kalindi River (Yamuna), the daughter of Surya. After the formation of Kedarnath Tirtha, Maha Deva proceeded to the neighbour-hood of Kedara to visit a few more Kshetras and reached the Holy River of Saraswati and deep inside the River to perform Tapasya for over a Year. Since he did not emerge from the depths of the River for long time, there was panic as to his whereabouts the Lokas and Samudras got disturbed and even Nakshathras started dropping from the Sky. As Devas approached Brahma the latter along with Indra and Devas desired to visit Murari Vishnu.

Daitya Murari: Pulastya described to Sage Narada as to the background of Murari as follows: A Danava named Mura was the son of Kashyapa Muni and Danu the daughter of Daksha and the Danava having secured a boon from Brahma that as and when Mura would touch with his hands any being, be it a human, Yaksha, Kinnara or Devas would face death. Powered by this boon, Mura challenged Indra for a fight but the latter did not agree. As a King named Raghu of Surya Vamsha was stopped to perform one Yagna by the Danavaas as Murasura gave an offer of fight otherwise. Vasishta Muni the Raja Guru of the King said that Human Beings were too insignifcant for him and he might really fight Yamaraja the God of Death. When Mura encountered Yama the latter sought refuge from Vishnu and Jagannatha asked Yama to send the Asura to him. Mura wanted to know from Yama as to who this Jagannatha was! Yama directed Mura to reach Kshira Sagara to see Chatur MurtiVishnu relaxing on the bed of Ananta the Mammoth Serpent. Mura resolved to see and touch whosoever that Jagannatha Chatur Murti was and tried to reach the Kshira Sagara. As the discussion of Yama and Murasura was narrated by Pulastya to Narada, the latter enquired at this juncture as to how a devotee could realise that Chatur Murti Vaasudeva who was stated to be Avyatam (Unknown), Ajeyam (Invincible), Shuklam (Spotless), Shanti Yuktam (Ever Tranquil) and 'Dwadashapatrakam' or Dwadasha- akshara Mantra Swarupam viz. Om Namo Bhagavatey Vaasudevaaya/ Pulastya further informed Narada that Brahma Deva gave this Mantra to Sanat Kumara Brothers, the four sons of Dharma Deva viz Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanaatana and Sanat Kumaraas; the Kumaras requested Brahma to teach (Upadesha) the Mantra as they were his Sishyas and more importantly his Putras as the latter were responsible for redeeming any parent from Punnama Naraka. While describing the kinds of Putras who could save their parents from such dispensations, Pulastya told Narada as follows: A Putra has the distinction of being a six-type of relatives viz. Óaurasa, Kshetraja, Datta, Krutrima, Goodhotpanna, and Apaviddha who were stated to be Daayaadas; these would have the rights or duties of Runa or indetedness, Pinda, Dhana Kriya or property and money transactions, Gotra Samya or coordination of similar clan, Kulavriddhi or additionality of the same family group and Sthira Pratishtha or Stability of the Family Prestige; in addition, there might be six other kinds of 'Daayaada bandhavaas' or relationships of Putras viz. Kaaneena, Sahodhja, Kreeta, Pounarbhava, Swayamdatta, and Paarahava and in their cases, they could redeem all other duties excepting Pinda pradaana and Runa Vimochana; such Putras might also not be eligible for Gotra / Kula Vriddhi but mighty carry the Surname. Auosaras are those directly born to a father and mother and they are the Prati Swarupas of the parents; Kshetragnaas are those born to a mother whose husband was a napumsakn(impotent) or mentally disturbed, or permits his wife to give birth to a child through another male; Dattak is a Putra by adoption; Putra given by a friend is a Kritrima; Goodha Putra is one whose origin of birth is uncertain; Apaviddha putra is one who is brought by outside unknown. Additional types of Putras are Kaaneen or born out of unwed mothers, Sahoddhas are those born by kanyas after marriage, Kreeta Putras are those who were bought by monetary transactions, Punarbhava Putras are those transferred from one father to given away by force to another father; or Swayamdutta Putras are those who declare separate parenthood for whatever reason.

**Brahmopadesha of Dwadasha Narayana Mantra:** Sanat Kumara brothers pleaded Brahma to give the Upadesha to them to realise the Chatur Murthi Janardana and Brahma Deva obliged as follows: The first word of **Omkara** is situated on Bhagavan Vaasudeva's Shikha or Tuft as in Mesha Raasi and Vaishakha Maasa; the second word '**Na**' is situated in the face of Janardana in Vrishabha Raasi and Jyeshtha

Maasa; the third Akshara is **Mo** as settled in both the Bhujaas or Hands as in Mithuna Raasi and Ashadha Maasa; the fourth Akshara Bha is Narayana's two eyes as in Karka Raasi and Shraavana Maasa; Ga is the fifth word representing Vishnu's Hridaya as in Simha Raasi in Bhadrapada Maasa; the sixth Akshara Va stands for Keshava's Kavacha as in Kanya Raasi in Ashwin Maasa; the seventh word tey stands for Tula Raasi and Kartika Maasa representing the Astra Samuha of Madhusudana; the next eight letter Vaa symbolises Trivikrama's naabhi or navel signifying Vrishika raasi and Margasirsha Maasa; the Sacred letter **Su** being the ninth Akshara is smybolic of Vaamana Deva's jaghana pradesha and stands for Tula Raasi and Kartika Maasa; the tenth Akshara De represents the thighs of Govinda as the Makara Raasi and Magha Maasa; the penultimate word Vaa stands for both the ghutanaas of Achyuta Deva as representing Kumbha Raasi and Phalguna Maasa; Madhusudana's feet stand for the last and the Twelfth Akshara Ya as in Meenma Raasi and Chatra Maasa: thus the Dwadasha Mantra states Om Namo Bhagavatey Vasudevaaya. This Parameswara is of one Unique Rupa with twelve chakras or circles and twelve 'Aaraas' or spokes and by reciting this Sacred name there would not be another birth. The Mantra's second Rupa is Satvamaya, Srivatsa dhaari, Avinashi Swarupa with Chatur Varna, Chatur Mukha, Chaturbahu, and Udara. The third Rupa is of thousand feet and thousand visages with Tamoguna Sesha Murti who causes Pralaya. The fourth Swarupa is of Raajasa guna having Rakta Varna (blood red colour) , Chaturmukhas, two hands wearing garlands who is the Adi Purusha. Thus the Trimuthis of Satwa-Tamo- Raajasaka Rupas are the personified Murtis!

As the Daitya Muraari confronted the Chaturmurti Rupa, he got utterly confounded and as Vaasudeva asked Mura whether he would like to wage a battle with him, the Asura muttered the words 'how, where and who' and as the stupified Mura was lost in introspective thoughts Srihari's Sudarshana Chakra sliced the head of Murari most uncerimoniously. Devas heaved a sigh of great relief at Murari's end as he dislodged from Swarga pursuant to Brahma Deva's gift of destruction by his mere touch and finally got killed by Vishnu by his Sudarshana Chakra.

Shivaabhisheka: Having destroyed Murari, Vasudeva along with Devas decided to visit Maha Deva but could not vision him at Shiva's Abode, since neither Parvati, Vrisha, nor Nandi knew about it. As directed by Narayana, Devas performed **Tapta Kruucha Vrata** to ascertian Parama Shiva's where- abouts by Abhishekas to Shiva Linga with sixty five pichers full of curd, thirty two pitchers of Ghee, sixteen full of pitchers of Panchagavya, eight ghadaas of honey, two hundred pitchers of Sacred water, one hundred and eight pitchers of Gorochana, Kumkuma and Chandana, followed by Malaya chandana or milk cream as also worship by lotus flowers, bilwa patra, dhattura and Harichandaana, besides puja by fully opened Mandara, Harashringara, Agaru, Keshara, Chandana dhupa etc. Recitation of Rigvedaantargata pada and krama of Shata Rudreeya Japa must be performed too. For three days, one might consume only hot water, three days hot milk only, three days hot ghee and another three days only consume only Vayu.

**Oneness of Shiva and Vishnu:** Devas and Indra performed the Tapta Kruccha Vrata on the above lines and Devas found in their minds the **Shiva Vishnu Swarupa** as described:

Suraanaam chintitam jnaatwaa Vishva- murtirbhudvibhuh, Sarvalakshana samyuktah Sarvaayudha dharovyayah/ Saardham Trinetram Kamalaahikundalam Jataagudaakesha khagarshabha dhwajam, Sa Maadhavam haara bhujanga vakshasam peetaajinaachha kati pradesham/ Chakkraasi hastam hala shaaranga paanim pinaaka shulaajagavaanvitam, Kaparda khatwaangakapaalaghantaa Sashankha tankaara ravam Maharshey/ Drushtaiva Devaa Harishankareytam Namostutey Sarvagataavyayeti, Proktaa pramaanam Kamalaasana -adyaachakrurmatim chaikataraam niyujjya/( As Devas wondered that Vishnu was essentially of Satva Guna and Shiva of Tamoguna but how was it that one could see a common Swarupa; was it not strange that the Avinasha and Sarva Vyapaka was visioned with the typical

arms of both Keshava and Hara displayed simultaneously in the same 'Shareera': with Sarpa kundalaas, jatujuta, Pinaka, Serpents, Ajagava dhanush, Kahatnvaanga, Shiva Ghanta, Sarpa haara, Shula, Trinetra and Vrisabha dhwaja Mahadeva as also Kamalakundala, Garudhadwaja, Pushp Haara, Pitambhara, Chakra, Asi, Hala, Sharanga Dhanush, Shankha, Gudaakesha Vishnu! Then Devas and Brahma greeted Sarva Vyapi Avinasha and realised that Shankara and Vishnu were one and the same!).Having realised their folly that Shiva and Vishnu were different entities, Brahma and Devas moved back to Kurukshetra and discovered Parama Shiva inside the water at the Tirtha and hailed the **Sthanudeva** and requested him to withdraw from the Tapasya and Maha Deva accepted their request and blessed them all.

There after he gave the boon of **Sanjivini Vidya** to **Shukracharya** who was engaged in severe Tapasya for hundreds of years; the Danava Guru aimed at reviving the lives of Daityas who would die in battles. Further, Maha Deva proceeded to Sapta Saarasvata and realised that there were disturbances in Nature as Samudras, Mountains, Rivers and big trees were in tremors as **Maharshi Manduka** was in a furious dance as Maha Shiva too in the form of a Dwija started dancing. Then the Brahmna asked the Maharshi as to why he was dancing in such frenzy and further said that he also had been practising Maha Natya for long time now and from his fingers white ash was oozing out always. Manduka Muni realised that Parama Shiva was himself standing before him and prostrated before him.Bhagavan directed the Maharshi to set up Sarasvata Kshetra with a Shiva Linga there which would be worthy of worship by Suraasura-Gandharva-Vidyaadhara Kinnara –Manavaas, and that Kshetra would be the Sangama of Rivers viz.Suprabha, Kaanchanaashri, Suvenu, Vimalodaka Manohara, Adhovati, Vishaala and Saraswati.

#### Andhakaasura's obsession and Prahladaa's Dharma bodha

On reaching Pataala [ ref. previous chapter on Andhakasura's passion for Gauri and her retalliation] Andhakasura was unable to control her infatuation for Gauri Devi but his Advisor Prahlada told him that Gauri was as good as his mother and should never ever entertain sinful ideas or hopes of a mother-figure; in fact, Hiranayaksha the father of Andhaka did most austere Tapasya to Maha Deva desirous of a son and Maha Deva while about to give the boon, Devi Parvati closed Shiva's trinetras for fun and hence was born Andhakasura. Shankara also gave a qualified boon to Hiranyaksha that when Andhaka would become a King, the latter would get infatuated with Gauri as also harass Brahmanas and other Virtuous and that he himself would destroy the Asura. Prahlada while cautioning Andhaka also asserted not to misjudge the magnificence of Parama Shiva who was an invincible Supreme and yet extremely merciful. He also asserted: Parastree Kaamavaan Mudhah Saraashtro naashamaapavaan/ (Even otherwise, one would be a stupid King desirous of another person's wife).

In this context Prahlada narrated an incident regarding Danava Guru Shukracharya's daughter Aaraja and King Danda who came to Shukracharya's Ashram in a forest and as the Acharya was away wanted to talk his daughter and got attracted at once and proposed to her. She was surprised and prevented him to overact and said that her father could in no time destroy him from his passionate onslaught despite the intervention of the Ashrama Vasis and also the King's own aids! Aaraja pleaded to the King to please await the arrival of her father as she was not independent by herself to yield to him or not. The King in turn cited an example of Vishwakarma's daughter Chitrangada who when bathing in Nimisharanya fell for a King Suratha who was passing by and asserted that since she was grown enough did not have to wait for her father a Sage to their Ashram as in similar circumstances and despite the King's reprimand surrendered to him. As the incident was conveyed, Araja told King Dandaka: 'You fool Danda! You also should narrate the further story about Chirangada that on return Vishwakarma punished Chitranga with a

curse that the act of immorality was not to be construed as a wedding and hence that she would not get any happiness from the so called wedding as she would secure the further company her husband nor would beget a child from the wedding! King Dandaka hecklingly told the further part of the Story to Aaraja that Chitrangada having recieved the curse of her father and abandoned her, leapt into the River Sarasvati. Having known her antecedents, Sarasvati diverted her coures and got her live body merged with River Gomati and the latter pushed Chitranga near the banks of a forest infested with cruel animals. A Guhyaka / Yaksha named Anjana flying on the Sky saw the woman in a helpless stage, approached her, woke her up and heard her entire bakground of Chitranga and suggested that she should pray to Shri Kantha Muni who would soon be bathing in the River Kalindi and the Yaksha left Chitranga there. On narrating her sad story which ended with her father Vishwakarma's cruel curse, the Muni cursed Vishwakarma to become a monkey as Chitranga since his daughter cursed and disabled to her to either enjoy her husband's company nor beget a child as her support. Then Shri Kantha Muni asked Chitranga to visit Sapta Godavari and be engaged in the worship of Hatakeshwara and after some time she woud meet Devavati the daughter of Daitya Kandaramaliand a Yakshini named Nandayanti. While continuing her worship to Shri Kantha, a Rishi wrote on a stone near the Temple: 'Is there a Devata or Asura or Yaksha or Manava or Rakshasa who could possibly help this hapless Chitranga?' Meanwhile, Vishwakarma who was turned into a monkey came down from Meru to Bhumi near Shalukini River in thick forests and remained there for a very long number of years. The monkey caught hold of the hands of Devavati and the Daitya Kandara got very angry and with his sword in hand and ran after the monkey; the latter took away Devavati to Himalayas and from there both reached the banks of Yamuna, prayed to Shrikantha Mahadeva and having deposited Devavati in an Ashram nearby and as Kandara Daitya was noticed on the banks of Yamuna drowned in the River Vishwakarma in the Rupa of monkey. The Daitya thought the the monkey and Devavati might have got drowned in the River and as having the entire happening left back to Patala. The monkey Swarupa Viswakarma then swam the River and reached another bank of the River and felt like entered into a forest full of fruits. There the monkey saw a Kanya called Nandayanti the daughter of one Yaksha called Anjana and mistook her as Devavati and tried to chase her but in the chase she leapt into a River Hiranyavati; the Yaksha too thought that Nandayanti and the monkey got drowned in that River and disheartened left back to Yakshaloka. But Nandayanti swam and reached Koshaladesha and sat under a Vata Vriksha or Banyan Tree; there came a voice to say there was a boy was tied on top of the Banyan Tree and as she looked up and found a boy tied up; she asked the boy as to who did the nasty deed, the boy replied that a monkey did it, that he was the son of Maha Tapasvi Rithudhwaja, that his name was Jaabali, that his father predicted his future to spend his Balyadasha for thouand years, ten thousand years as Kumara, and so on and as such he was now he was tied up by a monkey which was too predicted by his father! As his father informed Jaabali when he was of five years, he left his house for an outing and a monkey took him away and tied him to the tree top. Jaabaala requested Nandayanti to inform about him to his father Rithudwaja to rescue him; Nandayanti reached the Temple of Shri Kantha and to her pleasant surprise found Devavati and they embraced erach other and as Ritudwaja came out of the Temple Nandayanti conveyed the details of Jaabaali and the Muni who with the help of King got Jaabali released. In an encounter with the monkey, Vishwakarma narrated as to how he became a monkey and Ritudwaja predicted that when an Apsara Ghritachi and the Vishvakarma would beget a child. In course of time Ghritachi having known the background of the monkey engaged themselves in mutual relationship and gave birth to a chiild when the Shaap of Viswakarma got terminated! Then Nandayanti and Devavati were restored back to their respective positions. At the end Shukracharya returned to his Ashram after achiving Sanjeevini Vidya and gave a Shaap to King Danda for harassing and making advances to Araja the daughter of Shukracharya.

Thus citing the example of King Danda and Chitrangada, Prahlada continued his advice to Andhaka thus: Yo Dharmasheelo jitamaana rosho Vidyaavineeto na paropataapi, Swadaaratushtah Paradaara varjitaa na tasya lokey bhayamaasti kinchit/ (A person who possesses Dharma Nishtha or Self discipline, Self respect, peaceful demeanor devoid of Anger, modesty arising from good eduction, causing no concern or

hindrances to fellow beings, and most essentially contented with one's own legal spouse always has fear in life). Prahlada further continued: *Yo Dharma heenam Kalahapriyah Sadaa Paropataapee Shriti Shastra varjitah, Paropadaareypsuravarna samyogi Sukham na vinteta paratra cheha/* (A person who is without Virtue and is always involved in quarrels, provider of torment to others, unused to Veda Shastra Adhayana, avaricious of other's money and woman and regular breaker of Varaashrama Regulations would never be happy either in this or other births).

Prahlada gave the great examples of Surya for his eternal observance of Dharma, Vasishtha left his anger for good, Agastya was contented with his wife and none else, and he (Prahlada) himself never deviated from Dharma and Nyaaya, where as King Vena followed Adhrma and Anyaaya while Namuchi was jealousy of others and Nahusha was desirous of Indra's wife when original Indra absconded due to fear of the blemish of Brahma Hatya. This was the caution that one must always observe since Dharma would always vindicate itself and Adharma would result in doom. Twaajyam Dhamaannityam Nityam Paradaaropasevanam, Nayanti Paradaaraa hi Narakaaneka vimshitam, Sarveshjaamapi Varnaanaameva vimshitam, Sarveshaamapi Varnaanaamesha Dharmo Dhruvontaka/ Paraartha paradeaareshu yadaa vaamcchaam Karishyati, Sa yaati Narakam Ghoram Rouravam Bahulaah Samaah/ (Those who observe Dharma Nishtha ought to refrain from Para Stree Vyamoha atvany cost, lest they pave way for the frightful Rourava Naraka!).

The arrogant reply to Prahlada from Andhakaasura was that he could not care less for Dharma and ordered Shambaraasura to go to Mandara Mountain and question Shiva as to how he wasc staying in a cave of the Mountain without his permission as after all, Andhaka was the Supreme Lord of Trilokas! If he (Shiva) requested him then he would get the permission only if his wife should gift to Andhaka! Both Maha Deva and Devi Parvati sent calm but curt replies to Andhaka that the latter should fight with them to deserve Parvati to be gifted to the stupid Daitya! Incensed by the replies, Andhaka called Daitya Duryodhana to lead an offensive along with a strong force comprising several Akshouhinis of Sena along with Mahaabala Rakshasaas including Jambha, Krujambha, Hunda, Tuhunda, Shambara, Bali, Baana, Kaartaswara, Hasti, Suryashatru, Mahodara, Shibi, Shaalva, Vrishaparva, Virochana, Kalanemi, Hayagriva, Samhlaad, Kalanaashana, Sharabha, Shalabha, Viprachitti, Paaka, Vipaaka, and Kaala.

# Shivaya Vishnu Rupaaya Shiva Rupaaya Vishnavey, Shivasya Hridayagum Vishnuh Vishnorhridayagum Shivah/

Nandideva organised Rudra Sena and Vishnu Sena since the fool Andhaka never realised the identity of Shiva and Vishnu and even the Trilokaas were in utter ignorance that both the Swarupas were just one and the same! In this connection Rudra Deva clarified once for all: Bhavadbhirbhakti Samyukttair Harobhaavena pujitah, Ahamkaara vimudhayaischa nindadhir Vaishnavam padam/ Tenaajnaanena bhavatonaandruthyaanu virodhitaah, Yohamsa Bhagvan Vishurvishnuryah sohamavyayah/ Naavanorvai visheshostu ekaa Mutrirdwhidhaa sthitaa, Tadamorbhirnavyaaghair bhakti bhaava yutairganaaih/ Yathaaham vai parijnaato na bhavaddhistataa dhruvam, yenaahi nindito nityam bhavardhirmudha buddhibhih/ Tena Jnaanamhi vai nashtam Nataswaalingitaa maya, Yityeva muktey vachano ganaah prochyar- Maheswaram/ Katham bhavvan yathaikyena samshitosti Janardanah, Bhavaan Nirmalah Shuddhah Shaantah Shuklo Niranjanah/ (You are all obsessed with my devotion to me and tend to blame Vishnupada in that extreme dedication to me; in this blind faith of denounciation of Vishnu you did not please me but on the contrary I was highly upset! Whatever is there in me is what Vishnu possesses and what ever Vishnu has in me too is replete in me too and there is no basic difference in both of us excepting that one imagines we possess two Forms. Those devotees of mine who are confident of what I

possess, do not really realise me fully. As the Ganaas were reprimanded by Shiva as above, they wondered as to how Janardana and Mahadeva could be identical! After all, Shiva is Nirmala / Clean, Shuddha /Pure, Shukla / White and Nirdosha/ Blemishless.) Parama Shiva replied smilingly that whoever indulged even in indirect references against Vishnu would surely go to Narakas. The Shiva Ganas then requested Mahadeva to display his real Swarupa. Tato Eka Mukham Bhuyo dadrushuh Shankaram Ganaah, Roudraischa Vaishnavaischaiva vrutam chihnaih Sahasrashah/ Ardhaina Vaishnava Purandraina Haravigrahah, Khagadhwajam Vrishaarudham Khagaarudham Vrishadhwajam/ Yathaa Yathaa Trinayano rupam dhatrey gunaagranih, Tathaa tathaa twajaayanta Mahaa Paashupata Ganaah/ Tatobhavacchaika rupee Shankaro bahurupavaan, Dwirupaschaa bhavad yogi Ekarupopya rupavaan, Kshanaacchaitah kshanaad raktah peeto neelah khanaadapi/ Mishrako Varna heenascha Mahaapaashupatastathaa, Kshanaad bhavati Rudraindrah Kshanaadcchambhuh Prabhakarah/ Khanaartharcchankaro Vishnuh Kshanaarccharvah Pitaamahah, Tadast -adbhutamayam drushtwaa Shaiyaadayo ganaah/ Yadaabhinnamanyanta Deva devam Sadaa Shiyam/ Tadaa Nirdhuta paapaastey Samayaajanta Paarshadaah, Teyshvevam Dhuta paapeshu Abhinneshu Harishwarah/ (The Ganaas then visioned a Single Faced Vishnu-cum- Shiva Swarupa with thousand 'chinhaas' or symbols indicating same Swarupas, of which half was Rudra and another half Vishnu; one half was Vrishabhadhwaja Garudhaarudha and another half was Garudhadhwaja Vrishaarudha. Just as one visualised, so did that person visioned the Rupa of Bhagavan. The same Shankara assumed various forms each time changing his colours of white, red, yellow, blue, mixed or colourless; some times as Rudra, of Indra, Surya, Vishnu, or Brahma. As this most surprising and swift changes happened, the Ganas were then convinced that Paramatma was indeed one and only one!)

# Andhakasura's extermination by Maha Deva and appearance of Ashta Bhairavas Andhaka's eulolgies to Shiva and Gauri included)

As Maha Ganesha informed Parama Shiva about the arrival of several Akhouhinis of Daithya Sena led by Andhakasura on Mandaragiri, Mahadeva took leave of Gauri Devi asking Aprasas in charge of Gauri's security to be vigilant even as Tundasura came running towards Ganesha and his army. The Gana Sena halted Tundasura and one of the Ganeswaras snipped the Asura's head with ease. Kundodara and Ghatodara attacked from two sides Shailoda a strong Ganeswara ended one and Nandi another. Krujumbha and Duryodhana met with similar fates by Nandi. As several Danava Chiefs appeared simultaneously the Ganas and Ganeswaras made deadly counter attacks and annihilated the overflowing Asura Senas in hundreds and thousands. As Andhaka was highly disturbed and disheartened at the merciless killings of Asura Sena, he approached Danava Guru Shukracharya for guidance and the latter assured that he possessed Sanjivini Vidya and revived all the dead Asuras. Following this, Danavas made massive and multi-sided attacks by quite a few most cruel Generals of Asuras like Jambha, Bala, Vitra, and Shira mobilising sea-like Daitya Sena of thousands of Akshouhini; Lord Brahma then instructed Indra to join the Deva Sena at once in counter attacks. As Nandi saw Shukracharya among the Danavas, he picked him up and brought him to Maha Deva who in turn threw the Guru onto his own face and the latter entered Maha Deva's stomach and visioned the entire Brahmanda comprising the Charaachara Srishti including Adityas, Rudras, Vishva Devas, Yaksha- Kimpurusha- Gandharva- Apsaras. The Danava Guru spent a Divya Varsha in the 'Udara' of Shiva and got utterly confused and lost moving around all over inside. Finally, Shukra prayed to Mahadeva with great helplessness, humility and reverence and said that he was tired and would like to return. Then Shiva released him through his 'Shukra' and when he went back to the Asuras, they were very happy. Then there was an all out battle: Jambha versus Indra, Shambha against Brahma, Krujambha against Vishnu, Shalava-Surya, Trishira-Varuna, Dwimurtha-Varuna Deva, Rahu-Soma, Ashtaavasus versus Sarabha, Shalabha, Paaka, Pura, Viprutthu, Pruthu, Vataapi, and Ilval, besides Kalanemi against all Vishwadeva ganas like Vishvaksena; Vidyunmaali against Ekadasha Rudraas; Shambara against Dwadasha Adityas; Naraka against Ashvini

Kumaras; Maha Deva created Jrumbhaayika who slowly but steadily demolished the fighting spirit of the opponents who ever released the Astras. Mahadeva then performed his Snaana in the River Sarasvati and having prayed to Surya Deva got ready for his attack when Andhaka deputed Sunda the Senapati to engage Shiva; he took the form of Maha Deva and entered the Abode of Gauri. She understood the falsity of Andhaka and disappeared along with her personal aids into a garden and he chased her for a while and returned to the battle field. Meanwhile, Shiva killed Sunda, Vishnu destroyed Kujumbha and Jambha. Andhaka covered the opponents like Indra, Vishnu, Maheswara and the rest of the Devas with his arrows as Vishnu asked the Devas to continue their fights and asked them to kill the Sarathi or the Charioteer of Andhaka, destroy the charoit so that Shankara could turn the entire personal belongings of Andhaka. Then Vishnu destroyed the horses with his mace. Devoid of his chariot, Andhaka shouted at Mahadeva and said that he was alone and without his chariot would still defeat Shiva; Maha Deva then decided Devas and Ganas to withdraw excepting his Nandi Vahana. He assumed a mammoth Bhairava Swarupa with the extraordinary radiance and heat of crores of Suryas, wearing Tiger Skin, Sarpa-haraas, Ten Hands and Three Burning Eyes and pierced his Trishula right into the Asura's heart and hit his head with his mace and tossed his body up high in the air that got dropped on Earth with a thud. From all the sides of his huge body, there were streams of blood as Ashta Bhairavas were surfaced: from the Eastern direction emerged a Bhairava akin to Agni called 'Vidya Raaj' with his neck adorned with lotus flowers; from the Southern direction appeared 'Kala Raaj' Bhairava looking like a 'Preta' with dense black colour; from the Western direction was materialised a Bhirava named 'Kamaraj'; from the Northern direction was caused a fourth Bhairava named 'Soma Raaj'; a fifth Bhairava emerged from the wound near the demon's heart where Maha Deva pierced his Trishula and his name was 'Swacchanda Raja' with the resemblance of Indra Dhanush (Rainbow); the Sixth Bhairava was 'Lalit Raaj' who appeared from the gush of the Asura's blood on Earth; the Seventh Bhairava was 'Vighna Raaj' and including Maha Bhairava there were thus Ashta Bhairavas. As there was sweat from Maha Deva's forehead after the extermination of the Asura, especially since his body was covered with armoury, a Kanya got formed from his sweat and spills of the Rakshasa's blood and Maha Deva named her 'Charchika' and gave her the boon of a Symbol of Propitiousness to be worshipped by Devatas, Rishis, Pitaras, Yaksha, Vidyaadhas etc as also Sarpas, and Manavaas. There was also a boy who appeared from the sweat drops which were like sparks of fire dropped on Bhumi and Maha Deva named him 'Kuja' or 'Mangala' and made him a Senior of 'Grahas' (Planets) with the responsibility of providing 'Shubha' or Auspiciousness and 'Ashubha' or Inauspiciousness.

**Andhakaasura's eulogy to Maha Deva:** As Parama Shiva revealed his real Swarupa to the Daitya, the latter greeted him reverentially and paid homage as follows:

Namostu tey Bhairava Bhima Murtey Trilokagoptrey Shitashuladhaariney, Vimshaardha baaho Bhujageshahaara Trinetra maam paahi vipanna budhim/ Jayaswa Sarveswara Vishwa Murtey Suraasuravandita paada peetha, Trailokya Maathurguravey Vrishaangka Bheetah Sharanyam Sharanaagatosmi/ Twaam Naatha Devaah Shivameerayanti Siddhhaaharam Sthaanum Maharshyascha, Bheemam cha Yakshaa Manujaa Maheshwaram Bhutaascha Bhutaadhipamaamayanti/ Naishaacharaa Ugramupaarrchayanti Bhaveti Punyaaha pitaro namanti, Daasosmi tubhyam Hara paahi Mahyaam Paapakshayam mey kuru Lokanaatha/ Bhavaamstridevastriyugastridharma Tripushkaraschaasi Vibho Trinetra, Traiyyaarunistri Shrutiravyayaatman Puneehi Maam twaam sharanam gatosmi/ Trinaachiketastripada pratishthah Shadangavit twam vishayeshwa lubdhah, Trilokanaathosi puneeha Shambho Daasosmi bheetah Sharanaagatastey/ Krutam macchankara teyparaatham Mayaa Mahaabhuta patey Gireesha, Kaamaarinaa nirjita maanasena Prasaadayo twaam Shirasaa natosmi/ Paapoham Paapa karmaaham Paapaatmaa Paapa sambhavah Teaahimaam Deva Ishaana Sarva paapa haro bhava/ Maa mey krudhyaswa Devesha twayaa chaitaadrushosmyaham, Srashtah paapa samaachaaro mey prasanno Bhaveswara/ Twam Kartaachaiva Dhaataacha twam jayastwam Mahaajayah, Twam Mangalastwa

momkaarastwa meeshaano dhruvovyayah/ Twam Brahmaa Srushtikrunnaathastwam Vishnustwam Maheswarah, Twamindrastwam Vashat- kaaro Dharmastwam cha Surottamah/ Sookshmastwam Vyakta rupastwam twamavyayas —twameeshwarah, Twayaa Sarvamidam Vyaaptam Jagat Sthaavara jangamam/ Twamaadiranto Madhyasca TwamanaadihvSahasrapaat, Vijayastwam Sahasraaksho Virupaaksho Mahaa Bhujah/ Anantah Sarvago Vyaapi Hamsah Praanaadhipatochyutah, Geervaana patiravyagro Rudrah Pashupatih Shivah/ Traividyastwam Jitakrotho Jitaarirvijitendriah, Japasha Shula paanistwam traahi maam sharanaagtam/

(Namastey Maha Bhairava, Bheema Murti, Trailoka Rakshaakarey, Shula dhaariney! Ten handed, Naagesha Haara dhaariney! Kindly bestow Raksha or safety to me as I had been a lost person without perspective; Sarveswara who was worshipped by Devas and Asuraas alike at your lotus feet, may Victory be with you always. Vrishanga! In the present situation I feel miserable, full of fear and shame and am at your feet seeking your mercy and shelter! You are an embodiment of auspiciousness as Siddhaas hail you as Hara or Paapahari; Maharshis address you as Sthaanu or Ever Steady; Yakshas call you as Bhima; Manushyas pray to you as Maheswara; Bhutas consider you as Bhutapati; Nishaacharaas or Rakshasaas worship you as Ugra; Pitruganaas realise you as Bhava and supplicate you; Hara! I am your servant and devotee; Kindly demolish my sins and provide me succour. Sarvasamartha Trinetra! You are Trideva, Tridharma, Triyuga, Tripushkara, Traiyyaruni, Trishruti, Trinaachiketa and Tripada Pratishtha or of Trilokaas; You are the Embodiment of Shadvedangaas or Six Vedangaas of Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakarana, Nirukti, Chhanda and Jyotisha. Hey Shambho! I am your Daasaani-Daasa having reached my final destination with extreme repentance and remorse for having committed irredeemable and shameful sins for forgiveness. Kindly exonerate and save me., as I was a victim of Kama of the meanest kind: I am Paaapi, Paapakarma, Paapaatma, and Paapa Sambhava. Maha Deva! You are the Creator, Administrator and Preserver; You are the Emblem of Victory, the Eternal Fund of Virtue, Sacrifice and Mercy! You are Mangalamaya, Ishaana, Avyaya and Dhruva; Yor are Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara, Indra, V ashatkaara, Dharma, Sarva Sreshtha, Sukshma Swarupa, Vyakta Rupa, Aprakatahasya, Avyakta, Ishvara, Jaraachara Jagat Vyapta; yet Unravealed; Adi-Mandhyaata Rahita; Adyanta Rahita, Sahasrapaada, Adytanta Rahita, Sarvagata, Sarva Sthita, Sarva Vyapi, Hamsa, Prana Swami, Achyuta, Devadhi Deva, Shanta, Rudra, Pashupati, Shiva, Trivedi, Krodhajita, Shatru vijita, Indria jayi, Jaya and Shulapaani; do very kindly save me Maha Deva!)

Andhakaasura's **Stuti to Ambikla Devi** is as follows: *Namasye Bavaanim Bhuta Bhavyapriyaam*Lokadhaatri Janitrim, Skanda maaturam Mahaadeva priyaam Dhaarinim Sasyandinim Chetanaam,
Trailokya Maataram Dharitrim Devamaatara mathejjyaam Shrutim Smritim, Dayaam Lajjaam
Kraantimagnayaamasuyam Matim Sadaa Paavanim, Daitya Sainya kshaya -karim Mahaa Maayaam
Vaijayantim Sushubhaam, Kaalaraatrim Govinga bhagineem Shaola Raaja putreem
Sarvadevaarchitaam, Sarva bhutaarchitaam Vidyaam Sarasvatim Trinayana Mahaharshim, Namasyaami
Mridaaneem Sharanyaam Sharanamupaagateham Namo Namastey/

### Bhakta Prahlada's Tirtha Yatras and legends related to some Tirthas

In the course of several Tirtha yatras undertaken by Bhakta Prahlada, he visited Manasa Tirtha to worship Matsyaavatari, performed Pitru- Deva Tarpanaas; worshipped Kurma avatari Vishnu at Kaushiki River; and did puja at Devahlada River to Hayagriva. After taking Sacred Bath in River Yamuna, he prostrated before Trivikrama who measured three feet for his Tapasya and thus Vamana Deva secured the epithet of Trivikrama. Maharshi Pulastya narrated the bakground as follows:

### **Dundhu and Trivikrama:**

Devi Danu's son Dundhu was a close associate of Hiranya Kashipu -the son of Diti- who conquered Swarga Loka; both the friends were in the habit of moving about Swarga happily. After Hiranya Kashipu, Dundhu conquered Deva Loka. But since Devas took refuge in Brahmaloka, Dundhu desired to reach there but came to know that Brahmaloka was very very far away. By about thousand Yojanas was Maharloka the residence of Rishis whose mere sight would destroy the Rakshasaas; then there was Janaloka far away by crores of yojanas where cows stayed predominantly and from where even sand particles could badly hurt the Rakshasas; the Tapoloka was away again by six crores of Yojanas farther, the residence of Sadhyaganaas whose mere 'Nishvaasa' or exhalation could wipe out the Daitya-Danava Kulas; and finally the Satya loka of Brahma was thirty crore yojanas away which was impossible to reach by Daitya-Danavas! But the resolute Dundhu asked Danava Guru Shukracharya and the latter cited the example of Vritrasura who sincerely performed hundred Ashwamedha Yagnas and so did Indra Deva to have free movement to Brahmaloka. Dundhu resolved to perform the Yagnas likewise while appointing Danava Guru as the Dikshit, Bhargava Vamsha Vidwans as Ritwiks and Sadasyas and Daitya-Danavas as Rakshkas; the Yagna Bhoktas were Danavas instead of Devas; Asiloma Danava was sent as the Securityin-Chief along with the Yagna horse. Devas approached Bhagavan Vishnu who assured that he would frustrate the efforts of Dundhu Danava and his mighty followers even in the first Yagna. Vishnu took the form of a wooden board with a Brahmana tied up in the river nearby the place of the Yagna; the Brahmana was drowning and floating on the water surface struggling to balance himself tied to the wooden plank. This attracted the attention of the Sadasya, Ritviks and the Yagna Karta Dundhu; they all ran to save the Brahmana, untied him and pulled him out of the water surface. They asked as to who threw him into the River and why. The Brahmana told his story that as his father died, he and his elder brother performed the rites and after some time he asked for the share of property but the elder brother bundled him and having tied him to a wooden plank threw him into the river and along with the plank he had been balancing it eversince! Dundhu took pity on the Brahmana and offered lot of money, property and riches. But the Brahmana replied politely that he would be satisfied with a small piece of land of merely three feet since not only he was covetous and greedy but was also incapable of protecting big property! As the King Dundhu granted those three feet of land, Vishnu Deva started measuring the three feet:

Kramatrayam taavadavekshya dattam Maha Surendrena Vibhur Yashaswi, Chakrey tato langhayitum Trilookeem Trivikramam Rupamananta Shaktih/ Krutwaa cha Rupam Ditijaamscha hatwaa pranamya charsheena Prathamakramena, Mahim Maheeghnaih sahitaam sahaarnavaam jahaara ratnaakara pattanairyutaam/ Bhuvam sanaakam Tridashaadhivaasam Somaarkarukshairabhi manditam nabhah/ Devo dwiteeyena jahaara vegaat kramena Devapriyameepuureeshwarah/ Kramam triteeyam na yadaasya puritam Tataadikopaada Danurpungavasya, Papaata prushthey Bhagavaamstrivikramo Meru pramaanena tu vigrahena/ Patataa Vaasudevena Daanavopari Narada!Trimshadyojana saahastri Bhumeyr gartaa dridheekrutaa/ Tato Daityam samutpaatya tasyaam prakshipya vegatah, Avarshat sikataavrushthya taam gartaapa puritam/ (As Dundhu bestowed three feet to the Brahmana, the latter assumed Virat Swarupa with a view to measuring the Three Lokas, greeted the Rishis, as the first foot measure counted the totality of the Prithvi; as the second measure counted Swarga and Bhuvarlokas, Planets, Nakshatra Mandali, the Sky and so on and since could not measure the third step, gor extremely angry and shook up his body far beyond Meru Parvata as huge chunks fell on the back of the Danava who was pushed down under creating resounding tremors beneath thousand and odd more yojanas deep). Subsequently, Indra and Devatas were restored of their respective positions of status as before.

### The background of King Pururava

After praying Bhagavan Shankara at Kedaranatha and Vishnu in the Swarupa as Hrishikesha near Badarikashrama, Bhakta Prahlada recalled the Legend of Pururava as recounted by Pulastya Maharshi to Brahmarshi Narada. During Tretayuga, there was a Shaakala Nagari in Madra Desha where there was a rich Vyapari or businessman called Sudharma who was proceeding to Surashtra and on way had to stay back for a night near a cremation ground under a Shami Vriksha. As he was too tired fell asleep and found that he was looted by thieves and started moving about helplessly when he sighted a few Prethaatmas (Apparitions) and the Chief of the Pretas enquired of the Vanika's whereabouts. The Vyapari conveyed his helplessness as he was looted and he was hungry and thirsty and cursed his fate. The Chief of Pretas provided the much needed solace to the Vyapari and asked his colleagues to treat the Vyapari as their special guest and gave him good bath and bhojan even in that god-forsaken jungle. The Vyapati was moved by the hospitality and asked the Preta Chief about their background. The Chief gave his account: ' I was a Brahmana named Somasharma in Shalaka Nagar whose neighbour was a rich Vanika named Somashrava who was a great Vishnu Bhakta and virtuous person. But I was evil minded and avaricious not used to Pujas and Danaas. On one auspicious Shravana Ekadashi, I obsereved a day long Upavasa and on the subsequent Dwadashi, many of the Nagara Vaasis took bath in Sacred River Irayati and I too had a dip there and for once gave charities of umbella, footwear, Jalapatra, Mrishtaanna bhojan, curd, sweets etc. to well studied and reputed Brahmanas. That was one only one singular occasion when I gave a daana in my seventy years of mean and wasteful life; after my death, I became a 'Pretatma' but the umbrella which I gave as charity turned out to be this Shami Vriksha, the pair of footwear that I gave in charity became my Vahana or my carrier, and the tasty and sumptuous meal has been shared by my follower Pretatmas also at noon daily-since they never did a charity in their lives'. Having narrated the story of the Preta Chief, he requested the Vyapari Sudharma to visit Gaya Tirtha and after taking bath perform Pinda Daana in the name of the Preta Chief to redeem his soul; the Vyapari did exactly the same and redeemed his soul on Bhadrapada Shukla Shravana Nakshathta at Gaya Kshetra and in his next birth became the famed King Pururava.

### Shiva and Vishnu killed Jalodbhava-Origin of Sudarshana Chakra and Trishula

Bhakta Prahlada reached River Iravati to take sacred bath, then to Kurukshetra, Sudarshana Chakra Tirtha, Devika Tirtha Snaana and worship of Nrisimha Deva, Gokarna for Kameswara Darshana, Pundarika Darshana, followed by Payoshini Snaana and Akhandeswara puja, Shambhu Puja at Devahlada, and made a six day halt at Madhunandini to vision Chakradhari Shiva and Suladhari Govinda! It was in this context that Pulastya Maharshi narrated the background of the pauranik story to Narada Muni. Daitya Jalodbhava secured invincibility from Brahma; neither the curses of Brahmarshi nor Agni/ Water could demolish him. The Daitya tormented the Beings of the Srishti, especially Maharshis and there was an over-all threat to their existence. Devas approached Vishnu Deva and the latter accompanied by Mahadeva attacked the Demon who hid himself in the deep waters of Madhumati. As both the Bhagavans arrived at the banks of the River, Jalodbhava disappeared and scaled the heights of Himalayas; having scented the presence of the Daitya on the Himalayan peaks, Vishnu and Shankara destroyed the Daitya instantly and thus maerialised the Sacred River Vitasta in Kashmira Region and that was where Bhakta Prahlada worshipped: Yatreshwaro Devasarasya Vishnoh praadaadrathaanga pravara ayudham vai, Yena prachiccheda Tridhaiva Shankaram Jignaasa maanostra balam Mahatma/ (It was at the Bhrungatunga Tirtha that Bhagavan Shambhu gifted a Mahaastra Chakra to Vishnu and the latter assessed its supreme power sliced the Astra into three parts creating a Trishula or a Trident).

Pulastya Maharshi informed Narada about the background of Sudarshana Chakra and Trishula as follows: A Veda Vedanga Brahmana called Veetamanyu and his virtuous wife Aayetri gave birth to Upamanyu; the couple were so poor that Aatreyi administred ground rice powder and water as milk to the son for

years together and as one day in another Brahmana's house Upamanyu tasted real milk as 'Ksheeraanna' and insisted in the house too to have it daily; the mother replied with tears in her eyes: *Umapatou* Pashupatou Shuladhaarini Shankarey, Aprasannow Virupaashey krutam Ksheerena bhojanam/ Yadeecchasi payo bhoktum sadyah pushtikaram suta, Tadaaraadhya Devesham Virupaaksham Trishulinam/ Tamsmitushtey Jagadvyaamni Sarvakalyani daayini, praaptemruta- paayityam kimpunah (Son! Since Maha Deva Shankara who is also Ksheeera bhojanam/ called Umapati, Pashupati, Shuladharini and Virupaksha was not kind to us, how could we get Ksheeraanna /real milk and rice? If you insist so, then you have to sincerely worship Virupaksha. My lad! If you could please him, then why only Ksheeraanna; even Amrit would be available to all of us!). Then Upamanyu asked his mother as to who that Virupaksha was! She explained that there was a Mahasura King called Shridaama who created havoc to the World killing Munis, Brahmanas and even children; he defeated Devas and threw them out of Swargaloka, harassed Devi Lakshmi and even chased Vishnu to forcefully take away his Srivatsa Jewel. Vishnu prayed to Virupaksha and the latter gifted Sudarshana Chakra with which was like a fiery Kalachakra: Kaalachakranibham chakram Shankaro Vishnumabraveet, Varaayudhoyam Devesha Sarvaayudha nibharhanah, Sudarshanou dwaadashaarah Pashnaabhi dhruyugo javee/ Aaraasamthaaswamee chaasya Devaa Maasaascha Raashayah, Sishtaanaam rakhsanaarthaaya samshitaa rutavascha shat/ Agnih Somastatha Mitro Varunotha Shacheepatih, Indraagnee chaapuatho vishvey Prajaapataya eva cha/ Hanumaamchaatha Balayaan Devo Dhanyantarastithaa, Tapaschaiya Tapasyascha Dweaadashoutey pratishthitaah, Chaitraadyaah Phaalgunaantascha Maasaastatra pratishthitaah/

(The Sudarshana Chakra was like the frightening Kalachakra that Shankara gifted to Vishnu which had twelve compartments, six 'naabhis' or hinges, two Yugas of validity, top speed and instant smasher of any kind of 'Aaudhaas' of enemies. The Chakra was essentially to rescue virtuous Beings and in the compartments were situated Devatas, Rashis, Six Ritus or Seasons, Agni, Soma, Varuna, Mitra, Indra, Vishvadeva, Prajapati, the mighty Hanuman, Dhanvantari Deva, Tapasya and the Twelve Months from Chaitra to Phalguna). As Shankara described the Chakra as 'Amogha' or Singularly Ehhective, Vishnu liked to test its Uniqueness and Effectiveness and thus made a test-run on Maha Deva himself! Then Vishnu let the chakra aiming Maha Deva, who no doubt escaped but sliced off Visvesha, Yagnesha and Yagna yaajaka; as Vishnu was stunned that the sliced Shiva'Amshas' or Alternate Shaktis viz. Hiranyaksha, Suvarnaaksha and Virupaksha since these Amshas of Mahadeva were only Kalyana Karini Shaktis or of auspicious features, but not of destroying features; therefore the Chakra was fundamentally of destruction mode and would not adversely affect Shiva's propitious charecteristics in any way! Having assured Vishnu thus, Mahadeva asked Janardana to act forthwith and destroy the Asura Sridaama and as he did so the entire Universe secured relief fromAlso, Upamanyu took his mother's advice to worship in right earnest and Parama Shiva blessed the boy to drink not only Ksheeraanna but Elixir too!

### Gajendra Moksha

Maharshi Pulastya narrated futher to Brahmarshi Narada further that Bhakta Prahlada extensive tours of Tirthas like Naimisharanya, Brihadhwaja, Maha Nadi, Soma Tirtha, Mangunika, Ashwa Tirtha, Varanasi, Avimukteshwara, and so on and reached **Trikuta Mount** which was the residence of Rishis anf Yogis. He worshipped Sarvya Vyapi Pundarikaaksha and sighted the famed **Gajendra Moksha Sarovara** which was the legendary and Sacred Tirtha encircled by the Mountain Range. Nearby the Sarovara was a thick jungle inhabited by cruel animals, birds, and vegetation inhabited by large groups of wild elephants too. The chief of a herd of elephants Gajendra entered the Sarovara for a bath of cool water along with its group and a huge crocodile caught hold of one of the feet of Gajendra dragged into deep waters as the Elephant struggled but could not escape the sharp and powerful grip of the crocodile, even as Gajendra

and its companions made desperate efforts for thousand years while Devas were witnessing the prolonged suffering of the Elephant King. The Elephant was stated to be the King of Pandya an extreme and dedicated Narayana Bhakta and the crocodile was a Gandharva called Huhu who was cursed by a Sage; when implored by the Gandharva, the Muni forecast that Narayana Himself would slice the crocodile head and qualify him for Salvation. As Gajendra was desperate and distressed, he remembered the Script of a Vishnu Stotra in his erstwhile birth and frantically chanted the Prayer by offering a 'Pushpamaala' with his lifted trunk and imagining the Swarupa of Artaa- Janardana with tears in his eyes as as follows:

Om Namo Mulapratrutaey Ajinaatha Mahatmaney, Anaashritaaya Devaaya Nispruhaya Namostutey/Nama Aadyaaya Beejaaya Arshayaaya Pravartiney, Anantaraaya Choukaaya Avyataaya Namo Namah/ Namah Shivaaya Shantaaya NischitaayaYashaswiney, Sanaatanaaya Purvaaya Puraanaaya Namo Namah/ Namo Deyaadhi Deyaaya Swabhaayaaya Namo Namah, Namo Jagat Pratishthaaya Govindaaya Namo Namah/ Namostu Padmanaabhaaya Namo Yogoddbhavaayach, Vishveswaraaya Devaaya Shivaaya Harayey Namah/ Namotu Tasmai Devaaya Nirgunaaya Guptaataney, Narayanaaya Vishvaaya Devaanaam Paramaatmaney/ Namo namah Karanayamanaya Naraayanaayamita vikramaaya/ Shrishaankha charaasi Gadaadhaaraaya Namostu tasmai Purushottamaaya/Guhyaaya Vedanalayaaya Mahodaraaya Simhaaya Daityanidhanaaya Chaturbhujaaya, Brahmendra Rudra Muni chaarana Samtutaaya Devottamaaya Varadaaya Namochyutaaya/ Nagendra deha Shayanaasana supriyaaya Goksheera Hema Shukhaneela ghanopamaaya, Peetaambaraaya Madhu Kaitabha naashanaaya Viswhaaya Charumukutaaya Namojaraaya/ Naabhiprajaata Kamalastha Chaturmukhaaya Kshirodarakaanavaniketa Yashodharaaya, Naanaa Vichitra Mukutaangada Bhushanaaya Sarveshwaraaya Varadaaya Namo Varaaya/ Bhaktipriyaaya Varadeepta Sudarshanaaya Phullaravinda Vipulaayata lochanaaya, Devendra vighnashamanodyata pourushaaya Yogeshwaraaya Virajaaya Namo Varaaya/ Brahmaayanaaya Tridashaananaaya Lokaadhi naathinaathaaya Bhayaapanaaya, Mahaa Varaahaaya Namaskaromi/ Kutasthamavyata -machintya rupam Naarayanam Kaaranamaadidevam, Yugaanta sesham Purusham Puraanam tam Devadevam Sharanam prapadey/ Yogeshwaram Charuvichitra mouli magneyamagrayam Prakruteyh parasthatam, Kshetrajnamaatma prabhavam Varenyam tam Vaasudevam sharanam prapadye/Adrushya mavyata machintya mavyayam Mahashiyo Brahmamayam Sanaatanam, Vadanti yam vai Purusham Sanaatanam tam Deva guhyam sharanam prapadye/ Yadaksharam Brahma vadanti Sarvagam nishamya yam Mrutyu mukhaat pramuchyatey, Tameehwaram truptamanuttamaigunaaih paraayanam Vishnumupaimi shaswatam/ Kaarya Kriyaa Kaarana maprameyam Hiranyabaahum Varapadmanaabham, Mahaabalam Vedanidhim Suresham Vrajaami VishnumSharanam Janaardanam/ Kireeta Keyura Mahaarha nishkairmanyuktamaa -lankrita sarva gaatram, Peetaambaram Kanchana Bhakti Chitram Maalaadharam Keshava mabhyupaimi/ Bhavodbhavam Veda vidaam Varishtham Yogaatmanaam Saamkhyavidaam Varishtham, Aditya Rudraashvasuprabhaavam Prabhum prapadyechuta maavatmavantam/ Shrivatsaankam Mahadevam Devaguhyamanoupamam, Prapadye sukshmamachalam Varenyamabhayapradam/ Prabhavam Sarva bhutaanaam Nirgunam Parameshwaram, Prapadye muktamamkaanaam yateenaam Paramaam gatim/ Bhagayantam Gunaadhyakshamaksharam Pushkarekshanaamc Sharanyam Sharanam Bhaktya Prapadye Bhaktavatsalam/ Trivikramam Trilokesham Sarvesham Prapitaamaham, Yogaatmaanam Mahaatmaanam pradyeham Janaardanam/ Adidevamajam Shambhum Vyaktaavyaktam Sanaatanam, Naraayana – maneeyamsam prapadye Brahmana priyam/ Namo Varaaya Devaaya Namo Sarvasahaayacha, Prapadye Deva Deveshamaneeyaamsa manauh sadaa/ Ekaaya Lokatatwaaya Paratah Paramaatmaney, Namah Samahsahasra shirashey Anantaaya Mahaatmaney/ Twaameya Paramam Devamrishayo Vedapaaragaah, Keertayanti cha yam Sarvey Brahmaadeenaam Paraayanam/ Namstey Pundareekaaksha Bhaktaanaamabhayaprada, Subrahmanya Namastostu traahimaam Sharanaagatam/

(My salutations to you Mula Prakriti Swarupa, Invincible Mahatma Vishnu who is Nirashraya or free to act in your own voiltion; You are the Adyabija Swarupa or the Primeaval Germinator, Aradhya Deva or

the Principal Target sought to be achieved by Rishis and Yogis and the Unique and Unknown powerhouse of the Kalachakra or the Supreme Time Machine; You are indeed the Sarva Vaapi or All-Pervasive; the Undisclosed Guna Swarupa and at the same time the Nirguna or Featureless; You are beyond the barriers of reasoning and logic, impossible to achieve by rationality or prudence, the Immesurable: the Foremost Form of auspiciousness, Ever Peaceful, Decisive, the Embodiment of Eminence and Fame and the Origin of Knowledge and the Ageless and Timeless! Devadi Deva, Swabhavarupa, Jagat Pratishtha Kaaraka, Govinda, Padmanabha, Yogodbhava, Vishveswara, Deva, Shiva, Hari, Nirguna and Gunatma alike; Viushwatma, Narayana, Deva's Paramatma, Karanavasha Vamana -rupa or of the Form of Vamana owing to Exigencies; Atula Vikrama; You are the Holder of Shankha, Chakra, Sword, and Mace and Purushottama; You are the Mysterious and the Unidentified; the Emitome of Vedas; Mahodara readily assuming Leonine Form to eradicate the race of Daityas, the Chaturbhuja or the Four Handed Swarupa; You are the Dheya or the Worshippable by Brahma, Indra, Rudra, Maharshis, and one and all. You lie comfortably on the Sesha Naga's Unique Body as your Bed; wearing vastras of different colours; the annihilator of Madhu-Kaitabha Daityas; the wearer of a charming Kirita or head gear; who has always youthful and never has old age; has Brahma seated on a lotus top that sprouted from his nave; has residence on Ksheera Sagara or the Ocean of Milk; he is multi ornamented on his various body parts; the provider of boons and the Emblem of Boons; Bhakta Premi or the Beloved of devotees; the Eternal Embodiment of Radiance; with eyes resembling fully bloomed Lotus flower; the trouble shooter of Devendra; and the provider of boons to him; The 'Aadhaara Swarupa' or of the Murti worshipped by Brahma and all the Devas; Triloka Naatha; Bhava Hatha; Maha Varaaha Swarupa; I seek refuge in Kutastha, Avyakta, Achintya Swarupa; Kaaranaswarupa; Adi Deva Narayana; the Great Survivor Maha Swarupa at the End of Yugas; Ajeya; Sarva Sreshtha; The One who exists far beyond Prakriti; the Kshetrajna; Atmaprabhava; Varenya, Vaasudeva; Adrushya, Ayakta, Achityaneeya, Ayaya, Brahma maya and Sanatana Purusha and Deva guhya my Pranaams / greetings; I was at the Mrityu Mukha or at the Devouring Point of Death; I seek protection and safety from you Bhagavan; You are Atmatrupta or Self-Saisfied; Shaswata Ashraya Swarupa; Karya-Kriya-Karana Swarupa; Agamya; Hiranuabaahu; Mahabala shaali; Veda nithi; Sureshwara-Janardana-Vishnu; I seek asylum from that Jishnu who was ornamented by Kireeta-Kayura-Atimulya Mani malaas; Peetaambara Dhaari; Swarnima Patra Racaha naalin -krita; Mala Dharana Keshava; Samsaarotpannakara; Vedavidsreshtha; Yogatma; Sankhya Shastra Jnaata Sreshtha; Aditya-Rudra-Ashvini Kumara-Vasu Prabhavaachyuta; Atma Swarupa Prabho! Shri Vatsa Dharanakara; Maha Deva; Devataaguhya; You are the Unparalelled one defying descriptiton, with the Epithet of Nirguna, Nissanga, Niyama Paalaka; My I seek refuge in you Gunaadhyaksha, Akshara, Kamala Nayana, Ashraya Karana Yogya Swarupa, Sharana Pradata and Bhakta Prema kara. I prostrate before you Bhagavan as the measurer of Three Feet covering the the Trilokas, Prapitamaha, Yoga Murti, Mahatma Janaddana, Adi Deva, Ajanma, Shambhu, Vyaktaavyakta Swarupa, Sanatana, Parama Shukshma, Brahmana Priya Narayana! I bend my knees before you Sreshta Deva, Sarva Shaktimaan, Sukshmaati Sukshma Devadevesha, Lokatatwa Swarupa, the Unique Paratpara Paramkatma, Sahasraseersha Paranatma, Ananta, Dedaparagami Rishi sannuta! You are the final shelter to Brahmadi Devaas; Pundarikaaksha, Bhuaktaabhaya Pradata, Subrahmanya, Sharanu, Sharanu (Save me, Save me)!

As Vishnu Deva was pleased with the heartfelt and desperate supplication of Gajendra appeared in his full glory with four arms adorned with Shankha, Chakra, Gadaa and Saranga descended from Garuda and sliced off with his Sudarshana Chakra the neck of the crocodile and relieved from the curse of Devala Muni to the Gandharva Huhu and simultaneously rescued Narayan Bhakta King of Pandya.

**Phala Shruti :** Brahma Deva affirmed- *Ya idam shrunuyaa nityam Praatarutthhaaya Manavah, Prapyuyaat Paramaam siddhim duhkha prastasya nishyati/ Gajendra mokshanam Punyam sarva Paapa pranaashanam, Kathitena smrutey naatha Shrutena cha Tapodhana, Gajendra mokshaneneha sadyah* 

paapaat pramuchyatey/ Yasmin kiloktey bahu paapa bandhanaat labhyet Moksho Dwiradena yaddhat, Ajam Varenyam Varapadmanaabham Narayanam Brahmanidhim Suresham/ Tam Devaguhyam Purusham Puraanam Vandaamyaham Lokapatim Varenyam/

(Whosoever reads, hears or cogitates about the Gajendra Moksha Stuti with purity of body and mind in the mornings would be relieved of difficulties of the day and the cumulative sins of the past; Its Pathana-Shravana-Manana would dissolve the sins and provide liberation as in the case of Gajendra. May I salute Vishnu Bhagavan who is Ajam or birthless, Varenya or the Supreme, Sreshtha or the Topmost, Padmanabha or Lotus-navelled, Narayana or Existent on Water, Devaguhya or absorbed among Devas, Purana Purusha or the Most Ancient, and Loka Swami or the Super Lord of Lokas!)

## Vishnu Panjara, Saarasvata and Paapa Prashamana Stotras by Shiva and Agastya Muni

Maharshi Pulastya narrated the happening of a cruel, mean and sinful Kshatriya who disregarded Brahmanas, Rishis and Devas who got turned into a Rakshasa during his subsequent birth and was in the habit of lifting up and eating humans; he came across a holy person deeply engaged in Tapasya and rendering Vishnu Panjara Raksha Mantra Stotra as follows to ward off evil influences in the forest where he was engaged in Tapasya: Vishnum Praachyaam Sthitaschakri Vishnur Dakshinato Gadee, Praticheeyaam Shaaranagadhrugvishnu Khadgi mamottarey/ Hrishikesho vikoneshu tatchaadreshu Janardanah, Krodarupi Harirbhowmou Naarasimhemba -rey mama/ Kshuraantamamalam chakram bhramatyetat Sudarshanam, Asyamshumaalaa drusprekshya hantum pretanishaacharaan/ Gadaacheyam Sahasraarchirudviman paavako yathaa, Rakshobhuta piscaachaanaam Daakininaam cha shaatani/ Sharangam Visphurjitam chaiya Vaasudeyasya madripuun, Tiryanga Manushya Kushmaanda Pretaadeen hantwa seshatah/ Khadgadhaaraajjwalajjotsnaa nirdhutaa ye mamaahitaah, Tey yaantu sowmyataam sadyo Garudeneva pannagaah/ Ye kushmaandastathaa Yakshaa Daityaa ye cha Nishaacharaah, Preta Vinaayakaah kruraa Manushyaa Jrumbhakaah Khagaah/ Simhaadayo ye Pashavo Danda- Shukaascha Pannagaah, Sarvey bhavantu mey sowmyaa Vishnuchakraravaahataah/ Chittavrutti -haraayecha ye janaah smritihaarakaah, Baloujasaam cha hartaarashchhayaa Vidhvamshakaas chaye/ Ye chopabhogahartaaro yecha lakshana naashakaah, Kushmaandaastey pranashyantu Vishnu Chakra ravaahataah/ Buddhiswaasthyam Manah swaasthyam swasthya maindrikam tathaa, Mamaastu Deva Devasya Vaasudevasya kirtinaat/ Pushtey Purastaadatha Dakshino -ttarey vikonataschaastu Janaardano Harih/Tameedyameeshaana manantamachyutam, Janaardanam pranipatito na seedati/ (Hey Vishnu Bhagavan! Do guard me from the Eastern side with your Chakra; from my Southern side with your Gadaa; from the westeren side with your Sharanga Dhanush; and from the northern side with your Khadga. In the Dishaakonaas or the Konaas (Angles) of Agneya, Nirruti, Vayavya and Ishaana, may Hrishikesh and Janardana save me in the regions in between; May Varaha RupaVishnu protect me from Bhumi Devata's side and Nrisimha Bhagavan shield me from above viz.the Akaasha /Sky. May Sudarshana Chakra keep a Raksha (Vigilance) from all around me encircling me with safety! May Bhagavan's highly radiant and unvisionable rays of his mace destroy Rakshasaas, Bhutaas, Piscaachas, and Dakinis. May Vaasudevaa's lightning luster of his Sharanga Dhanush demolish violent Pashu-Pakshis, cruel Manayaas, Danayas and Pretaas be uprooted for good; Just as ferocious snakes and such other poisonous reptiles get frightened away at the very sight of Mahatma Garuda, may Vishnu's Khadga's extraordinary splendour subdue the hissings of such species; may the severity and speed of Sudarshana save me the totality of Kushmaandaas, Yakshaas, Daityas, Nishacharaas, Pretaas, Vinayakas, Harsh and ruthless Manavas, Jumbhakaas, Harmful Pakshis, Lions and such other ferocious animals while slicing them off instantly; May all the root causes which create mental tribulations, memory lapses, physical ailments, weaknesses and all other kinds of psychological distresses be rescinded and may the Vaasudeva Kirthanas and Stutis enhance my mental sharpness, equanimity of behaviour, maturity of

judgment, performance of deeds and over all virtuosity.) As the golden screen of Safety and the impregnable Kavacha or shield was installed around the Brahmana Tapaswi, the Rakshasa became highly subdued and weakened and could not reach anywhere near the great halo around the Sage. The placated Rakshasa then realised and confessed his previous deeds of inexcusable blunders and 'Patakaas' and begged his spiritual advice. But the Brahmana refused to do so as the mountain like sins of the Rakshasa could never be demolished out of feeble realisation of his Maha Patakaas! This had indeed annoyed the Rakshasa who did not basically change much and his cruelty returned along with his hunger as the dusk time arrived. The Brahmana replied that he was no doubt ready to surrender to the Rakshasa on his own volition but he had to first of all carry fruits to his Guru. The Rakshasa said that he was even prepared to free the Brahmana if only he would be shown a way to reform himself. The Brahmana realised that the Raakshasa would not leave him unless he taught him the way of self-realisation although his conscience did not agree; thus he approached Agni Deva to advise him to show a way out. Then Devi Saraswati appeared as prompted by Agni Deva and assured the Brahmana that he needed not to worry and that he could teach the Raakshasa the way to a virtuous path. Thus the Brahmana decided to teach **Saarasvata Stotra** to the Rakshasa as follows:

Shruyataam tava yachhreyastathaanyeshaam cha paapinaam, Samasta paapa shuddhharthyam Punyayopachayadam cha yat/ Pratarutthhaaya Japatvam Madhyaahnehnah Kshayepi vaa, Asamshayam sadaa japyo japataam pushti shaantidah/ Om Harim Krishnam Hrishikesham Vaasudevam Janaardanam, Pranatosmi Jagannaatham sa mey Paapam Vyapohatu/ Shankhinam Chakrinam shaaranga dhaarinam snagdharam param, Pranatosmi patim Lakshmyaah sa mey Paapam vyapohatu/ Daamodara -mudaaraaksham Pundareekaakshamachyutam, Pranatosmi stutam stutyaih sa mey paapam vyapohatu/ Naaraayanam Naram Shourim Maadhavam Madhusudanam, Pranatosmi Dharaadhaaram sa mey paapam vyapohatu/ Shrivatsa Vakshasam Shreesham Shridharam Shriniketanam, Pranatosmi Shriyah Kaantam sa mey Paapam Vyapohatu/ Yameesham Sarvabhutaanaam dhyaayanti yatayoksharam, Vaasudevamanirdeshyam tamasmi sharanam gatah/ Samastaalambanebhyo yam Vyavrutya manasogatim, Dhyaayanti Vaasudevaakhyam tamasmi sharanam gatah/ Sarvagam Sarvabhutam cha Sarvasyaadhaarameeshwaram, Vaasudevam Param Brahmaa tamasmi sharanam gatah/ Paramaatmaayyaktam yam prayanti sumedhasah, Karmakshayekshayam Deyam tamasmi sharanam gatah/ Punyapaapa vinirmuktaa yam pravishya punarbhavam, Na Yoginah Praapruvanti tamasmi sharanam gatah/Brahmaabhutwaa jagat sarvam sa Devaasuramaanusham, Yah srujatyachyuto Devastamasmi sharanam gatah/ Brahma rupadharam Devam Jagadyonim Janaardanam, Strasthatvey samdhitam srashtou pranatosmi sanaatanam/ Srashthaa bhutwaa sthito yogi sthitaavasura suudanah, Tamaadi Purusham Vishnum pranatosmi Janaardanam/ Dhrutaa mahi hataa Daiyaah paritraataastahaa Suraah, Yenatam Vishnumaadhyesham Pranatosmi Janaardanam/ Yajnairyajanti yam Vipraa Yagnesham Yagnabhayanam, Tam Yagna Purusham Vishnum pranatosmi Sanatanam/ Pataala yeethibhutaani tathaa lokaan nihantiyah, Tatpurusham Rudram Pranatosmi Sanaatanam/ Sambhakshitwaa sakalam yathaa srishtimidam Jagat, Yo vai nrityati Rudraatma pranatosmi Janaardanam/ Suraasuraah Pitruganaah Yaksha Gandharva Raakshasaah, Sambhutaa Yasya Devasya Sarvagam tam namaamyaham/ Samasta Devaah Sakalaa Manushyaanaam cha jaatayah, Yasyaamsha Bhutaa Devasya sarvagah tam Namaamyaham/ Vriksha gulmaadayo yasya tathaa Pashu Mrigaadayah, Ekaamsha bhutaa Devasya Sarvagam tam namaamyaham/ Yasmaannaanyat param kinchiyasmin Sarvam Mahaatmani, Yah Sarvamadhyagonantah sarvagam tam namaamyaham/ Yathaa sarveshu Bhuteshu gudhogniriva daarushu, Vishnurevam tathaa paapam mamaasesham pranashyatu/ Yathaa Vishnumayam sarvam Brahmaadi sa charaacharam, Yaccha Jnaana paricchedyam paapam nashyatu mey tathaa/ Shubhaashubhaani karmaani Rajah Satva Tamaamsicha, Aneka Janma karmotthyam paapam nashyatu mey tathaa/ Yannishaayaamcha yatpraataryan madhyaahnnaaparaahnniyoh, Sandhyayoscha krutam paapam karmanaa manasaa giraa/ Ajnaanato Jnaanato vaa madaacchalita maanasaih, Tat Kshipram vilayam yaatu Vaasudevasya keertanaat/ Paradaara paradravya vaanchhidrohodbhavam cha yat, Para peededbhavaam nindaam kurvataa yanmahaatmanaam/ Yaccha bhojey tathaa peye bhakshey choshey vilehaney, Tad yaatu Vilayam toyey yathaa lavana bhaajanam/ Yad baalyeyaccha Kaumaarey yat paapam Youvaney mama, Vayah parinatou yaccha janmaantarey krutam/ Tannaaraayana

Govinda Hrishikesha keertanaat, Prayaatu Vilayam toyey yathaa lavana bhaajanam/ Vishnavey Vaasudevaaya Haravey Keshavaayacha, Janaardanaaya Krishnaaya Namo bhuyo namo namah/

Bhavishyaanarakaghnaaya namh Kamsa vighaatiney, Arishta Keshi Chaanuura Devaari kshaniyo namah/ konyobalervanchitaa twaamrutey vai bhavishyati, Konyo naashyati balaad darpam Haaihaya Bhupateyh/ Kah Karishyatathaanyoh vai Saagarey Shetu bandham, Vadhish yati Dashagreevam kah Saamaatmapurah saram/ Kastwaamriteynyoh Nandasya Gokule rati meshyati, Pralamba Putaanaa Dinaam twaamrutey Madhusudana, Nihantaapyathavaa Shaastaa Devadeva bhavishyati/ Japannevam Narah punyam Vaishnavam Dharmamuttamam, Ishtaanishta prasangebhyo Jnaanatojnaana topi vaa/ Krutam tena tu yat paapam Sapta janmaan —taraani vai, Mahaa Paataka samjnam vaa tathaa chaivopa paatakam/ Yagnaadeeni cha Punyaani Japa homa vrataanicha, Naashayed Yoginaam Sarva maamapaatramimaambhasi/ Narah Samvatsaram purnam tila paatraani shodasa, Ahanyahaani yo dadyaat pathattechha tasmamam/ Avilumpatam Brahma charyam Sampraapoya smaranam Hareyh, Vishnuloka mavaapnoti Satyametanvayoditam/ Yatthaaitat Satyamuktam mey na hyaalpamati mey Mrushaah, Raakshasastrastat Sarvaangam tathaa maameshu mricchyatu/

(Hey Raakshasa! I would now like to preach to you and your kind of persons who faltered in their lives, a highly propitious Discourse which should wash off your earlier immorality and depravity as also encourage to follow a life of Virtue and quality. As one rises up from bed from the sleep of the previous night, or at the noon-time or at the evening, the following Stuti be read or heard:

'OM Hari, Krishna, Hrishikesha, Vaasudeva, Janardana, Jagannaatha! My Salutations to you. Do kindly keep me away from blunders. You are the Guru of Moving and Immobile Beings, resting on the cozy bed of Sesha Naaga, Parama Deva Govinda, may I pray to you to keep me away of sins; my sincere reverences to you Sharanga Dhara, Chakradhara, Shankha Dhara, Maalaadhaari, Lakshmipati, Damodara, Udaaraaksha or of benign looks, Pundarikaaksha, Achyuta who is extolled by one and all! Do mercifully lead me on right path! I beseech Narayana, Nara, Shouri, Madhava, Madhusudana, Dharaadhara! Do pity me and let me refrain from wrong-doings. Paramatma! You possess Surya and Chandra as your eyes to punish the evil and encourage virtue; You are the demolisher of Kamsa and Keshi the notorious 'paapis'; do kindly put me on the right track and desist me from infamy and evil-doings. Shri Vatsadhara, Shreesha, Shidhara, Shri Niketana, Shri Kaanta and Shripati: my most humble homage to you; do save me from the shacles of delusion. You are Sarva Praana Swami, and the Akshara, Anirdeshya, Vaasudeva, may I surrender myself and put me on the path of contentment and fulfillment. Do bless me Bhagavan! to take me from the road of decadence and decay to the pathway of Dharma and Nyaaya. May I bend and beseech Sarvagata, Sarva Bhuta, Sarvaadhaara and Parabrahma to indicate the narrow but sure way of Dharma, Nyaya and Punya. I seek refuge to Adrushta, Avinaashi, Paramatmadeva, Punya Paapa Rahita, and Srashta of Brahma down to Deva, Danava, Manushya and Charaachara Jagat! May I commend that Brahma Swarupa the fountain-head of Vedas, Sanatana Jajadyoni, Janardana, Yogi Rupa Vidyamaan, Adi Purusha Maheswara-Vishnu, that Maha Kurma who pulled up Bhu Devi, that Daityahaari, Devata rakshaakara, Yagna Purusha, Yagna Bhavana, Yagnesha, and Sanatana Vishnu. I crave the indulgence of that Jagat Srashta who created Suraasuraas, Pitruganaas, Yaksha, Gandharva, Raakshasas and also that Maha Rudra who terminates Srishti and having destroyed the Universe enjoys a Maha Tandava or the Supreme Dance before 'Punah Srishti'! I seek protection from the Sarva Vyaapi Maha Vishnu whose 'Amshaas' or Formulations are Vrikshas, Pashu-Mriga-Vastu- Padaarthaas! May Paramatma burn off my most heinous sins like Agni scorches fire-wood into ash. May Vishnu Deva be merciful to eradicate all my evil deeds of vice and wickedness; these were due to the mix of previous acts as generated by the interplay of Satwa-Rajo-Tamasika Gunas of the erstwhile births. May this earnest prayer emerging from the depths of my inner self, my body, soul, heart, deed and voice at early mornings, mid-days, evenings or dead of nights, while in movement, or being seated, or in sleep, in full awareness or involuntarily, bring

about total transformation of my existence! May all my evil actions anchored on feelings of other's women, wealth and properties; or due to deceipt, pressures / temptations from within or without; or due to shortcomings of avoidable consumption of Bhakshya, Bhojya, Lehya, Peya, Choshya varieties of food be excused and pave the way for my liberation. May I prostrate before that Unique and Singular Paramaatma called by endless names like Narayana, Govinda, Hari, Krishna, and Maheswara bestow his compassion on me and extinguish my wrongs of small or huge proportions committed during my childhood, teenage, youth and old age just as earthen vessels dissolve in violent gushes of waterfalls! My most respectful obeisances to you Hari, Vishnu, Vaasudeva, Keshava, Janardana, and Krishna the annihilator of Kamsa, Arishta, Keshi, and countless other evil forces! Who else could suppress and tick off the Triloka Swami Maha Bali? Who else could terminate the unconquerable Kartaveeryarjuna the Super Lord of Haihayas? Who else could build a Setu or a gigantic bridge from shore to shore of a Grand Ocean and exterminate the invincible Ravanaasura? Who else could perform Rasaleela by dividing himself in endless Krishna Swarupaas to entertain Gopis! Who else as a child nip the gigantic Demons like Pralamba, Shakatasura and Pothana in split seconds as baby pranks?'

Phala Shruti: Who so ever recites the above Dharma-maya Vaishnava Mantra with keenness or disinterest, with full awareness and sincerity or in a casual or even complete ignorance would indeed destroy the sins of previous seven births irrespective of their volume, severity or magnitude. Side by side, the Vaishnava Mantra bestows fresh accounts of Punya or the fruitiful results of performing Yagnas, Homaas and Vrataas. The Maharshi emphasised to the Raakshasa that the recitation of the Sarasvata Vaishnava Mantra every day by observing celibacy and offering charity of sixteen vessels of Tila Seeds and water would definitely qualify access to Vishnu Loka at the termination of his or her life! The Maharshi further advised the Raakshasa that Devi Saraswati the Goddess of Learning and Knowledge who was prompted by Agni Deva sharpened the tip of his tongue to emerge a flow of the Vishnu Stotra. Accordingly, the Raakshasa recited the Saarasvata Mantra and attained Vishnu Loka!

**Paapa Prashamana Stotra:** Maharshi Pulastya quoted to Brahmarshi Narada the Sanctified Paapaprashamana Stotra as bestowed to the ensuing generations by **Maheswara** as follows:

Namastestu Jajannaanta Deva Namostutey, Vaasudeva Namastestu Bahurupa Namostutey/ Ekashringa Namastubhyam Namastubhyam Vrishaakapey, Srinivasa Namastestu Namastey Bhuta Bhaavana/ Vishvaksena Namastubhyam Narayana Namostutey, Dhruvadhwaja Namastestu Satyadhwaja Namostutey/ Yagnadhwaja Namastubhyam Dharmadhwaja Namostutey, Taaladhwaja Namastestu Namastey Garudadhwaja/ Varenya Vishno Vaikuntha Namastey Purushotthama, Namo Jayanta Vijaya Jayaananta paraajita/ Krutaavarta Mahaavarta Mahadeva Namostutey, Anaadyaadyanta Madhyaanta Namastey Padmajapriya/ Puranjaya Namastubhyam Shatrunjaya Namostutey, Shubhanjaya Namastestu Namastestu Dhananjaya/ Srushthi garbha Namastubhyam Shuchishrayah Pruthushrayah, Namo Hiranya- garbhaaya Padmagarbhaaya tey Namah/ Namah Kamala Netraaya Kaalanetraaya tey Namah, Kamalanaabha Namastubhyam Mahaanaabha Namo Namah/ Vrushtimula Mahaamula Mulaavaasa Namostutey, Dharmaavaasa Jalaavaasa Shrinivaasa Namostutey/ Dharmaadhyaksha Prajaadhyaksha Lokaadhyaksha Namo namah, Senaadhyaksa Namastubhyam Kaalaadhyaksha Namostutey/ Gadaadhara Shrutidhara Chakradhaarin Shriyodhara, Vanamaalaa dhara Hbarey Namastey Dharanidhara/ Aarchishena Mahaasena Namastestu Purushthuta, Bahukalpa Mahaakalpa Namestey Kalpanaamukha/ Sarvaatman Sarvaga Vibho Virinchey Shweta Keshava, Neela Rakta Mahaa neela Aniruddha Namostutey/ Dwaashaatmaka Kaalaatman Saamaatman Paramaatmaka, Vyomakaatmaka Subrahman Bhutaatmaka Namostutey/ Harikesha Mahaakesha Gudaakesha Namostutey, Munjakesha Hrishikesha Sarvanaatha Namostutey/ Sukshma Sthula Mahaasthula Mahaasukshma Shubhankara, Sweta peetaambara dhara Neela vaasa Namostutey/ Kushoshaya Namastestu Padmeshaya Jaleshaya, Govinda Preetikartaa cha Hamsa Peetaambarapriya/ Adhokshaja Namastubhyam Seera dhwaja Janaardana,

Vaamanaaya Namastestu Namastey Madhusudana/ Sahasra seershaaya Namo Brahmaseershaaya tey Namah, Namah Sahasra netraaya Soma Suryaanilekshana/ Namaschaatharva shirasey Mahaaseershaaya tey namah, Namastey Dharma netraaya Mahaanetraaya tey Namah/ Namah Saharsa paadaaya Sahasrabhujamanvaye, Namo Yagna Varaahaaya Mahaa Rupaaya tey Namah/Namastey Vishwa Devaaya Vishvaatman Vishwasambhava, Vishwa Rupa Namastestu twattho Vishwama bhudidam/

Nyagrodhastwam Mahaashaakastham Mulakusumaarchitah, Skandha patraankara lataapallavaaya Namostutey/ Mulam tey Brahmanaa Brahman Skandastey Kshatriyaa Prabho, Vaishyaah Shaakhaa dalam Shudraa Vanaspatey Namostu tey/ Brahmanaah Saagnayo vaktraah Dordandaah Sayudhaan Nripaah, Paashvaad Vishacheru yugaajjaataah Shurascha Paadatah/ Netraad Bhaanurbhuta tubhyam Padbhyaam Bhuh Shotayordishaah, Naavbhaahya Bhudantirishah Shashaanko manas- tatwa/ Praanaada Vaayuhu Samabhavat Kaamaada Brahma pitaamahah, Kridhaat Trinayano Rudrah Sheershanyoh dhouh Samavartata/ Indraagni Vadanaat tubhyam pashavo Malasambhavaah, Aushadhyo roma sambhutaa viraajastwam Namostutey/ Pushpa haasa Namastestu Mahaahaas Namostu tey, Omkaarastwam Vashatkaaro Voushat twam cha Swadhaa Sudhaa/ Swaahaakaara Namastubhyam Hantakaara Namostutey, Sarvaakaara Niraakaara Vedaakaara Namostutey/ Twam hi Vedamayo Devah Sarva Deva mayastathaa, Sarva Tirthamayaschaiya Sarva Yagna mayastathaa/

Namastey Yagna Purusha Hagna Bhaaga bhujey Namah, Namah Sahasra dhaaraaya Shatadhaaraaya tey namah/ Bhurbhuvaswah swarupaaya Godaayaamritamrita daayiney, Suvarna Brahmadaatrey cha Sarvba daatrey cha tey Namah/ Brahmeshaaya N amastubhyam Brahmaadey Brahmarupa dhruk, Parabrahma Namastestu Shabda Brahama Namostutey/ Vidyaastwam Vedya rupastwam Vedaneeyastwamevacha, Buddhistwamapi bodhyascha Bodhastwamcha Namostuey/ Hotaa Homascha Havyam cha Humamaanascha Havyavaat, Paataa Potaa cha Putascha Paavaneeyascha Namah/ Hantaacha Hanyamaanascha Hruyamaanastwamevacha, Harthaa Netaacha Neetischa Pujyograyo Vishva dhaaryasi/ Struka struvou paradhaamaasi Kapaalo- lukha lorinah, Yagna paatraaraneyastwamekadhaa bahudhaa tridhaa/ Yagnastwam Yajamaana- stwameedyastwamasi Yaajakah, Jnaataa Jneyastathaa Jnaanam Dhyeyo Dhyaataasi cheswara/ Dhaanayogascha Yogeecha Gatirmoksho dhrutih sukham, Yogaangaani twameeshaanaha sarvagastwam Namostutey/ Brahmaa Hotaa tayodraataa Saama yupotha dakshinaa, Dekshaa twam twam Purodaashastwam Pashuh Pashumaahyasi/ Guhyo dhaataa cha paramah Shiyo Naraayanastatha, Mahajano Nirayanah Sahasraarkendu rupavaan/ Dwaadashaarotha shannaabhis- trivyuuho dwiyugastathaa, Kalachakro Bhavaaneesho Namastey Purushottamah/ Paraakramo Vikramastwam Hayagreeyo Hareeshwarah, Nareswarotha Brahmeshaha Suryeshastwam Namostutey/ Ashwa vaktro Mahaamedhaah Shambhuh Shakrah Prabhanjanah, Mitraayaruna murtistwama murtiranaghah parah/ Praagyamsha kaayo Bhutaadir mahaabhuto -chyuto Dwijah, Twamurthva kartaa Urdhwascha Urthwaretaa Namostutey/ Mahaapatakahaa twam cha Upapaatakahaa tathaa, Aneeshaha Sarvapaapebhyastwaamaham sharanam gatah/ Ityetat paramam stotram Sarva paapa pramochanam, Maheshwarena kathitam Vaaraanasyaam purey Muney/Keshayasyaagrato gatwaa snaatwaa Tirthey sitodakey, Upashaantastathaa Jaato Rudrah paapavashaat tatah/ Etat Pavitram Tripuraghna bhaashitam pathan Naro Vishnuparo Maharshey, Vimukta paapo Khupashaanta murtih Sapujyatey Deva varaih prasiddhaaih/

(My salutations to you Jagannaatha, Deva Deva, Vaasudeva, Ananta Rupadhara, Ekashringa, Vrishaakapi, Shrinivaasa, Bhutabhaavana, Vishvaksena, Narayana, Dhruvadhwaja, Satyadhwaja, Yagnadhwaja, Dharmadhwaja, Taaladhwaja, Garudadhwaja, Varenya, Vishnu, Vaikunthga, Purushottama, Jayanta, Vijaya, Jaya, Ananta, Paraajita, Kritaavarta, Mahaavarta, Maha Deva, Anaadi-Aadi-Anta-Vidyamaan, Madhyaanta, Padmajapriya, Puranjaya, Shatrunjaya, Shubhanjaya, Dhananjaya, Srushthigarbha, Shuchishravah (even by hearing a Stuti would purify the person concerned); Pruthushravah (intently listens to the moanings of the needy devotees); Hiranyagarbha, Padmagarbha,

Kamala netra, Kaala netra, Kaalanaabha, Mahaanaabha, Vrishtimula, Mahaa mula, Mulaayaasa, Dharmaavaasa, Jalaavaasa, Shrinivaasa, Dharmaadhyaksha, Prajaadhyaksha, Lokaadhyaksha, Senaadhyaksha, Kaalaadhyaksha, Gadaadhara, Shritidhara, Chakradhara, Sridhara, Vanamaali, Prithvidhara, Harey, Archishena, Mahaasena, Purustuta, Bahukalpa, Mahaakalpa, Kalpanaamukha, Sarvaatman, Sarvaga, Vibho, Virinchi, Shweta Keshaya, Neela, Rakta, Mahaaneela, Aniruddha, Dwadashjaatmaka, Kaalaatma, Samaatma, Paramaatma, Subrahman, Bhutaatma, Harikesha, Mahaakesha, Gudaakesha, Munjakesha, Hrishikesha, Sarvanaatha, Sukshma, Sthula, Mahaasthula, Mahaa Sukshma, Shubhankara, Sweta Peetaambaradhara, Adhokshaja, Neelayaasa, Kushaashaana, Padmashayana, Jalashayana, Govinda, Preeti kartaa, Hamsa, Peetaambara priya, Seeradhwaja, Janaardana, Vaamana, Madhusudana, Sahasra sirsha, Brahma sirsha, Sahasra netra, Chandra Suryaagni netra, Atharvasirsha, Mahaa sirsha, Dharma netra, Mahaanetra, Sahasrapaada, Sahasra bhujaayukta, Sxahasra Yagna kartaa, Yagna Varaaha, Mahaarupa, Vishwa Deva, Viswaatma, Vishwa sambhava, Vishwarupa, Vishvyotpanna, Nyagrotha, Mahaashaakha, Mula Kusuma -archita, Skandha / Scrub - Patra-Ankura-Lataa-Pallava Swarupa, my reverential 'pranaamas' to you! Parama Deva! As compared to a MahaVriksha or Huge Tree, Brahmana is your root; Kshatriya is your shoulder; Vaishya is your branch and Shudra is your leaf; Agni-Sahita Brahmana or with Fire-obeisance is your Mukha / Face; Sastra sahita Kshatriya is your hands; Viashya is your janghas or thighs; and Shudras are born of your feet; Surya was born of your eyes; Bhumi was created from your feet; Dishas or Directions were materialised from your ears; Antariksha or the entire Sky was formed from your navel; Moon was born of your mind; Vayu Deva was created from Paramatma's breathing; Pitamaha Brahma emerged from your desire; Trinetra Rudra was formed out of your anger and the Trilokaas were produced from your head; Indra and Agni surfaced from his countenance, Pashus or the Animal-Bird-Reptile and similar species came out of your excreta and Auoshadhis were formulated from your 'Romas' body- hairs! My sincere greetings to you Viraaja, Pushpahaasa, Mahaahaasa, Omkara Swarupa, Vashatkaara, Aoushat, Swadhaa Swarupa, Sudhaa Swarupa, Swaahaa Swarupa, Hantakaara, Sarvaakara, Niraakaara, Vedaakaara, Vedamaya Deva, Sarva Deva maya, Sarva Tirtha maya and Sarva Yagnamaya! You are Yagnabhaaga Bhokta, Sahasradhaara, Shatadhaara, Bhur-Bhuvah- Swah Swarupa, Godaata, Amrita daataa, Suvarna, Brahma the Creator and the Preserver; Brahmasha, Brahmadi, Brahmarupa dhaarina, Para Brahma, Shabda Brahma, Vidya, Vedya Rupa, Buddhi-Bodhya-Bodha Rupa; You are the Hota-Homa-Havya-Huyamaana Dravya-Havyavat; Paataa- Potaa-Puta-Pavaneeya Omkaara! You are Hanta- Hantamaana- Hriyamaana- Hartaa-Neta- Neeti-Pujya-Sreshtha and Samsaara Dhaarana Swarupa. Devadhideva! You are Shukra, Struva, Paradhaama, Kapaali, Ulukhala, Arani, Yajnapaatra, Aaraneya, Ekadhaa, Tridhaa, and Bahudha. You are the Yagna and Yajamaana alike; the Stutya and yhaajaka; You are the Jnaataa-Jeya-Jnaana-Dheya-Dhyata and Dhyana; the Dhyanayoga, Yogi, Gati, Moksha, Dhruti, Sukha, Yogaanga, Ishaana and Sarvaga! You are Brahma, Hota, Udraataa, Saama, Upa, Dakshina and Diksha; You are Purodasha, Pashu, Pashuvaahi, Guhya, Dhaata, Parama, Shiva, Narayana, Mahajana, Niraashraya, and Sahasra Surya-Chandra Samaana Swarupa! You constitute the Kalachakra or the Wheel of Time, comprising twelve 'Araas' or compartments, six naabhis, three Vyuhaas, and two Yugas and the cart-drivers viz. Isha and Purushottama, You are the Parakrama, Vikrama, Hayagriya, Harishwara, Nareshwara, Brahmesha, and Suryoshwara. You are Ashwa vaktra, Mahamedha, Shambhu, Shakra, Prabhanjana, Mitraavaruna Murti, Amurti, Nishpaapa, Shreshta, Praagvamshakaaya or Mula Purusha, Bhutaadi, Mahaa Bhuta, Achyta, Dwija, Urthva kartaa, Urthva, Urthwaretaa, Maha Pataka Vinaasha, Upapaataka nashaka; Paapopari Nirlipta, Devaadhi Deva! I am in your safety zone seeking your protection!

That was the Maha Stotra rendered by Maheshwara himself at the Maha Punya Kshetra of Varanaasi as he bathed in the Sacred Ganga. Whosoever recites this Maha Stuti with 'Bhahyaantara Shuchi' or of External and Internal Cleanliness would accomplish Vishnu Loka, and be eligible of worship by Devas even!)

**Paapa Prashamana Stotra by Agastya Muni:** Having rendered Paapa Prashamana Stotra blessed by Maha Deva himself as above, Maharshi Pulastya gave another Stotra to Bramhmarshi Narada as recited

by Agastya Maha Muni as follows: [ Great care has been taken in this Agastya's Stuti to firm up the Identity of Shiva and Vishnu].

Matsyam Namasye Devesham Kurmam Govindameyvacha, Haya seersham Namasyeham Bhavam Vishnum Trivikramam/ Namasye Maadhaveshaanou Hrishikeshakumaarinou, Narayanam Namasyeham Namasye Garudaasanam/ Urthwakesham Nrisimham cha Rupadhaaram Kurudhwajam, Kaama paala makhandam cha Namnasye Brahmana priyam/ Ajitam Vishwa karmaanam Pundareekam Dwijapriyam, Hamsam Shambhum, Namasyecha Brahmaanam Suprajaapatim/ Namasye Shula baahum cha Devam Chakradharam tathaa, Shivam Vishnum Suvarnaaksham Gopatim Peetavaasasam/ Namasyecha Gadaapaanim Namasyecha Kushoshayam, Artha Naareeswaram Devam Namasye Paapanaashanam/ Gopaalam cha Savaikuntham Namasye chaaparaajitam, Namasye Vishva Rupam cha Sougandhim Saravadaa Shivam/ Paanchaalikam Hayagreevam Swayambhuva Maheshwaram, Namasye Pundareekaaksham cha Payogandhim cha Keshavam/Avimuktamcha Lolamcha Jyeshthesham Madhyamam tathaa, Upashantam Namasyeham Markandeyam Sajambukam/ Namasye Padma kiranam Namasye Vadavaamukham, Kaartikeyam Namasyeham Braahmeekam Shikhinam tathaa/ Namasye Sthaanumanagham Namasya Vanamaalinam, Namasye Longaleesham cha Namasyeham Shriyah Patim/ Namasyecha Trinayanam Namasye Havya yaahanam, Namasyecha Trisouvarnam Namasye Dharaneedharam/ Trinaachiketam Brahmesham Namasye Shashibhushanam, Kapardinam Namasyecha Sarvaamaya vinaashanam/Namsye Shashinam Suryam Dhruvam Roudram Mahowjasam, Padmanaabham Hiranyaaksham Namasye Skandamayyayam/ Namasye Bhima Hamsou cha Namasye Haatakeshwaram, Sadaa Hamsam Namasyecha Namasye Praana tarpanam/ Namasye Rukma Kavacham Mahaa Yogi- nameeshwaram, Namasya Shriniyaasam cha Namsye Purushotthamam/ Namasyecha Chatur -baahum Namasye Vasudhaadhipam, Namasye Sarvamanagham Goureeshwaram Nakuleeshwaram/ Manoharam Krishna kesham Namasya Chakrapaaninam, Yashodharam Mahabaahum Namasye cha Kushapriyam/ Bhudharam chaadhita Gadam Sunetram Shula Shaankhinam, Bhadraaksham Veerabhadram cha Namasye Shankhakarnikam/ Vrishadhwajam Mahewsham cha Vishwamitram Shashiprabham. Upendram chaiya Govindam Namasye Pankaja - Priyam/ Sahasrashirasam Devam Namasye Kundamaalinam, Kaalaagnim Rudra Devesham Namasye Krittivaasasam/ Namasye Chaagalesham cha Namasye Pankajaasanam, Sahasraaksham Kokanadam Namasya Harishankaram/ Agastyam Garudam Vishnum Kapilam Brahmavaadyamayam, Sanaatanamcha Brahmaanam Namesye Brahmatatparam/ Apratarkyam Chaturbaahum Sahasraamshum Tapomayam, Namasye Dharmaraajanam Devam Garuda Vaahanam/ Sarva Bhutagatam Shaantam Nirmalam Sarvalakshanam, Mahaayoginamavyaktam Namasye Paapa naashanam/ Niranjanam Niraakaaram Nirgunam Nirmalam padam, Namasye Paapa hantaaram Sharanam Sharam Vrajey/ Etat avitram Paramam Puraanam proktam twagastyena Maharshinaacha, Dhanyan Yashasyam Bahupaapa naashanam Samkeertanaat Smaranaat Samshravaaccha/ (My salutations to Govinda Bhagavan who had assumed the Matsya and Kurmaayataaraas! My greetings to Hayasirsha, Hrishikesha, Kumara Deva, Narayana, Garudaasana, Urthwakesha, Nrisimha Rupa, Kurudhwaja, Kaamapaala, Akhanda, Brahmaadi Deva Priya, Brahmana Priya, Ajita, Vishwakarma, Pundarika, DwijaPriya, Hamsa, Shambhu, Prajapati Sahita Brahma, Shula Baahu, Chakradhara deva, Shiva, Vishnu, Suvarnaaksha, Gopati, Peetavaasa, Gadaadhara, Kusheshayana, Paapa naashaka, Arthaneereshwara, Vaikuntha sahita Gopala, Aparaajita, Vishwarupa, Sougandhi, Saadaashiya, Paanchaalika, Hayagriya, Swayambhuya, Amareshwara, Pushkaraaksha, Payogandhi, Keshava, Avimukta, Lola, Jyeshthesha, Madhyama, Upashaanta, Jambuka sahita Madkandeya, Padmakirana, Badabaamukha, Kartikeka, Braahmeeka, Shikhi, Sthaanu, Anagha, Vanamaali, Laangaleesha, Lakshmipati, Trinetra, Havyavaahana, Trisouvarna, Dharanidhara, Trinaachiketa, Brahmesha, Sashibhushana, Sarva roga haari, Kapardi Bhagavan, Chandra, Surya, Dhurva, Ojaswi, Rudra Bhagayan, Padmanaabha, Hiranyaaksha, Avyaya, Skanda, Bhima, Hamsa, Haatakeshwara, Sadaahamsa, Tripta kaarana, Rukma Kavacha, Maha Yogi, Ishwara, Purushottama, Shri Nivaasa, Chaturbhuja dhara, Prithivipati, Pashupati, Ayaya, Shri Kantha, Vaasudeva, Danda sahita Nilakantha, Sarva, Anagha, Girisha, Nakuleshyara, Krishna kesha, Chakrapaani, Yashodhaari, Mahabaahu, Kusha

Priya, Bhudhara, Kshaaditagada, Sunetra, Shulashankhi, Bhadraaksha, Virabhadra, Shankhakarnika, Vrisha dhwaja, Mahesha, Vishvaamitra, Shashi prabha, Upendra, Govinda, Pankaja priya, Sahasra sirsha, Kundaamaali, Kaalaagni, Rudra Deva, Kritthavaasa, C haagalesha, Pankajaasana, Sahasraaksha, Kokanada, Harishankara, Agastya, Garuda, Vishnu, Kapila, Brahma Vaangmayam, Sanaatana, Brahma, Brahma Tatpara, Anumaanswra Pare! Chaturbhuja, Devadi Deva, Sahasraamshu, Tapo Murti, Dharma Raja, Garusdavaahana, Vyaapta, Shanta Swarupa, Nirmala, Samasta Lakshana Yukta, Mahaayodgi, Avyakta, aapa Naashaka, Niranjana, N iraakaara, Gunarahita, Nirmala pada Swarupa, Paapa Naashaka, Sharanaa gata Rakshaka)! Maharshi Agastya underlined that the Kathana-Smarana- Shravana of the Stuti would demolish the huge stock of Paapaas and bestow health, prosperity, fame and all-round success).

#### Vamana Deva leaves Rasaatala for Brahma Loka and Brahma's worship to Vishnu

After suppressing Bali Chakravarti and restricting him only to the Pataala Lokaas and reinstating Indra and all other Devas to their erstwhile positions, a highly pleased Bhagavan Vishnu discarded his Vamana Swarupa and flew to Brahmaloka by his Garuda Vaahana. As Brahma desired Vishnu to display his Virat Swarupa measuring ten thousand yojanas of elevation and an equal width, Brahma was overjoyed and could not but break into ecstasy and acclaimed the Virat Purusha as follows: Om Namastey Devadhi Deva Vaasudeva Eka shringa Bahurupa Vrishaakapey Bhuta bhaavana Suraasura vrisha Suraasura Mathana Peetavaasah Srinivaasa Asuranirmitaanta Amita nirmita Kapila Mahaakapilka Vishvaksena Naraayana/ Dhruvadhwaja Satyadhwaja Khadgadhwaja Taaladhwaja Vaikuntha Purushottama Varenya Vishno Aparaajita Jaya Jayanta Vijaya Kritaavarta Mahaadeva Anaadey Ananta Aadyaanta madhya nidhana Puranjaya Dhanaanjaya Shuchishrava Prushnigarbha/ Kamala garbha Kamalaalayataaksha Shripatey Vishnu mula Mulaadhiyaasa Dharmaadhiyaasa Dharmayaasa Dharmaadhyaksha Prajaadhyaksha Gadaadhara Shridhara Shrutidhara Vanamaalaadhara Lakshmidhara Dharanidhara Padmanaabha/ Virinchey Aarshtishena Mahaasena Senaadhyasha Purushtuta Bahukalpa Mahaakalpa Kalpanaamukha Aniruddha Sarvaga Sarvaatman Dwadashaatmaka Suryaatmaka Somaatmaka Kaalaatmaka Vyomaatmaka Bhutaatmaka/ Rasaatmaka Paramatman Sanaatana Munjakesha Harikesha Gudaakesha Keshava Nila Sukshma Sthula Peetha Rakta Shweta Shwetaadhivaasa Raktaambara Priya Preetikara Preetivaasa Hamsa Nilavaasa Seera -dhwaja Sarvalokaadhivaasa/ Kushoshaya Adhokshaja Govinda Janaardana Madhusudana Vamana namastey/ Sahasra sheershosi Sahasradrugasi Sahasra paadosi twam Kamalosi Mahaa Purushosi Sahasra Baahurasi Sasramurtirasi twaam Devaah Praahum Sahasra Vadanam tey Namastey/Om Namastey Vishwadevesha Vishwabhuh Vishwaatmaka Vishwarupa Vishwa sambhaya twatto Vishwamidam bhayad Brahmaanaastwan mukhebhyobhayan Kshatriyaa doh Sambhutaah Urugmaad Vishobhaan Shudraascharana Kamalebhyah/ Naabhyaa Bhavatontarikshamajaayata Indraagni Vakrato netraad bhaanurabhunmanasah Shashaankah Aham Prasaadajastwa krodhaat Traimbakah Praanaajjaato bhavato maatarishvaa Shiraso dyuora -jaayata netraadi disho bhuriyam charanaadbhuta Shrotrodbhavaa disho bhavatah Swayambho Nakshatraasteyjodbhavaah/Murtayaschaaamrutayascha Sarvey twattaha Samudbhutaah/ Ato Vishwaatmakosi Om Namastey Pushpahaasosi Mahaahaasosi paramosi Omkaarosi Vashatkaa -rosi Swaahaakaarosi Aoushatkaarosi Swadhaakaarosi Vedamayosi Tirthamayosi Yajamaana mayosi/ Yajnamamayosi Sarvbadhaataasi Yagnabhoktaasi Shukradhaataasi Bhurda Bhuvarda Swarda Swarnada goda Amritadoseeti/ Om Brahmaadirasi Brahmamayosi Yajnosi Vedakaamosi Vedyosi Yajna dhaarosi Mahaameenosi Mahaasevaasi MahaashiraaAsi/ Nrukesaryasi Hotaasi Homyosi Havyosi Huyamaanosi Hayamedhosi Potaasi Paayayitaasi Putosi Pujyosi Daataasi Hanyamaanosi Hriyamaanosi Hartyaaseeti Om/ Neetarasi Netaasi Agneyaasi Vishwathaamaasi Shrumbhadosi Dhruvosi Aaraneyosi/ Dhyaanosi Dhyeyosi Sheyosi Jnaanosi Yashtaasi Daanosi Bhumaasi Yeekshesi Brahmaasi Hotaasi Udgaataasi Gatimataam Gatirasi Jnaaninaam Jnaanamasi Yoginaam Yogosi Mokshigaaminaam Mokshosi Shreemataam Shrirasi Guhyosi Paataasi Paramasi/Somesi Suryosi Deekshaasi Dakshinaasi Narosi Trinayanosi Mahaanayanosi Aditya prabhavosi Surotthamosi Shuchirasi Shukrosi Nabhosi Nabhasyosi

Ishtosi Urjosi Sahosi Sahasyosi Taposi Tapasyosi Madhurasi/Maadhayosi Kaalosi Sankramosi Vikramosi Paraakramosi Ashyagreevosi Mahaamedhosi Shankarosi Hreeshwarosi Shambhurasi Brahmeyshosi Suryosi Mitraavarunosi Praagvamshakaayosi Bhutaadirasi Mahaabhutesi Urthwakarmaasi Kartaasi Sarvapaapa vimochanaasi Trivikramosi Om Namastey/ (Om Namastey Devaadhideva, Vaasudeva, Ekashringa, Bahurupa, Vrishaakapev, Bhutabhaayana, Suraasura Sreshtha, Deyaasura mathana kaara Peetavastra dhaari, Srinivasa, Asuranirmitaanta, Amita nirmita, Kapila, Mahaa Kapila, Vishvaksena, Narayana, Dhruvadhwaja, Satyadhwaja, Khadgadhwaja, Taala Dhwaja, Vaikuntha, Prushottama, Varenya, Vishno, Aparaajita, Jaya, Jayanta, Vijaya, Krutaavarta, Mahadeva, Anaadev, Ananta, Aadyanta, Madhyanidhana, Puranjaya, Dhananjaya, Shuchisrava, Prushnigarbha, Kamalagarbha, Kamalaayataaksha, Shripatey, Vishnu mula, Mulaadhiyaasa, Dharmaadhiyaasa, Dharmayaasa, Dharmaadhyaksha, Prajaadhyaksha, Gadaadhara, Shridhara, Shrutidhara, Vanamaalaadhara, Lakshmidhara, Dharanidhara, Padmanaabha, Virinchey, Aashtishena, Mahasena, Senaadhyaksha, Purushtuta, Bahukalpa, Mahakalpa, Kalpanaamukha, Aniduddha, Sarvaga, Sarvaatman, Dwadashaatmaka, Suryaatmaka, Somaatmaka, Kaalaatmaka, Vyomaatmaka, Bhutaatmaka, Rasaatmaka, Paramaatman, Sanaatana, Munjakesha, Harikesha Gudaakesha, Keshaya, Nila, Sthula, Sukshma, Peeta, Rakta, Shweta, Shwetaadhiyaasa, Raktaambarapriya, Prretikara, Preetivaasa, Hamsda, Nilavaasa, Seeradhwaja, Sarvalokaadhivaasa, Kusheshaya, Adokshaja, Govinda, Janaardana, Madhusudana, Vaamana, Sahsraseersha, Sahasranetra, Sahasrapaad, Kamala, Maha Purusha, Sahasrabaahu, Sahasra Murti, Sahasravadana as addressed by Devas, Om Vishwadevesha, Vishwabhu, Vishyatmaka, Vishwarupa, Vishwa Sambhava, Vishvotpannakaari! From your face were born Brahmanas, Kshatriyas from your hands, Vaishyas from both of your thighs, Sudraas from your feet. Swayambho! Fron your navel emerged Antariksha or Sky, from your face came Agni and Indra, Surya from your eyes, Chandra from your mind, Brahma from your self Bhagavan! Fromm your anger appeared Trinetra Shankara, Vayu Deva from your life / existence, from your head was materialised Swargaloka, Dishaas or Directions from your ears, the Stars from your brightness, and the entire Murta or Amurta (Seen and Unseen) Beings were created by You Vishwaatmaka! You are Pushpahaasa, Mahaa haasa, Parama, Omkaara, Vashat -kaara, Swaahaakaara, Aoushatkaara, Swadhaa kaara, Veda maya, Tirthamaya, Yajamaanamaya, Yajnamaya, Sarvadhaata, Yajna bhoktaa, Shukradaataa, Bhurda, Bhuvarda, Swarda, Swarnada, Goda, Amritada; Om You are Brahmaadi, Brahmamaya, Yajna, Vedakaama, Vedya, Yajnadhara, Mahaa Meena, Mahaa sena, Mahaa Shira, Nrukesari, Hota, Homya, Havya, Huyamaana, Hayamedha, Potaa, Paavayitaa, Puta, Pujya, daataa, Hanyamaana, Hriyamaana and Hartaa! You are Niti, Netaa, Agnya, Vishwadhaama, Shubhaanda, Dhruva, Aaraneya, Dhyaana, Dhyeya, Jneya, Jnaana, Yashtaa, Daana, Bhumaa, Ikshya, Braham, Hota, Udgaataa, Gati for Gatimaanaas, Jnaana for Jneyaas, Yoga for Yogis, Moksha to Mokshagamis, Shri to Shrimans, Guhya, Paataa and Parama. You are Soma, Surya, Deekshaa, Dakshina, Nara, Trinayana, Mahaanayana, Adityaprabhava, Surottama, Shuchi, Shukra, Nabha, Nabhasya, Isha, Urja, Saha, Sahasya, Tapa, Tapasya, Madhu, Madhava, kaala, Sankrama, Vikrama, Paraakrama, Ashyagreeva, Mahameda, Shankara, Harishwara, Shambh, Brahmesha, Surya, Mitraavaruna, Praagvamshakaaya, Bhutaadi, Mahaabhuta, Urthwakarmaa, Kartaa, Sarva PaapaVimochana, and Om Trivikrama)! As Vishnu Deva was pleased by the 'Stuti' of Brahma Deva, the formed asked Brahma to bless him with a boon and Brahma desired that Vishnu should reside in Brahmaloka in the Swarupa of Brihad Vamana and as Vishnu bestowed the boon, there had been daily worships to Vamana Deva, enjoined by all the Devas, while Apsaras danced with ecstasy, Gandharvas praised the Vamana Deva with soulful and tuneful hymns, Vidyadharaas played memorable instrumental extravaganzas, and Asuras and Siddhas displayed group sessions of frenzied singings!

Bali Daanava in Patala Lokas and worship to Maha Vamana (Sudarshana Stuti and Prahlada's preaching to King Bali included) As Vamana Deva who occupied the totality of the Universe pursuant to the illustrious charity of mere Three Feet by Bali Chakravarti, Maha Vamana Murti bestowed the boon of long life to King Bali to administer the Sapta Lokas beneath the Bhumi and Oceans viz. Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talaatala, Mahatala, Rasaatala and Paataalas. As Vishvakarma constructed a luxurious palace and Bilwa Swarga of the Underworld with no comforts and desires unfulfilled, the cozy life to the hilt, Bali was fully contented with his family and Praja. One day suddenly, the Sudarshana Chakra of Vaikuntha made its appearance and King Bali prostrated before the Chakra and reverentially prayed to it as follows: Namasyaami Hareshchakram Daityachakra vidaaranam, Sahasaamshum Sdahasrtaabham Sahasraaram Sunirmalam/ Namasyaami Hareshchakram yasya naabhyaam Pitaamahah, Tundey Trishula dhruk Sharva Aaraamuley Mahaadrayah/ Aareshu smamstitaa Devaah Sendraah Saarkaah Sapaavakaah, Javey yasya sthito Vaayuraapognih Prithivi nabhah/ Aarapraateshu Jeemutaah Soudaaminuruksha taarakaah, Baahyato Muniyo yasya Baalakhilyaadayashathaa/ Tamaayudhavaram Vandey Vaasudevasya Bhaktitah, Yaney Paapam Sharirottham Vaagjam Manasamevacha/ Tanmey dahaswa Deeptaamsho Vishnoschakra Sudarshana, Yanmo Kulodbhavam Paapam Paitrukam Maatrukam tathaa/ Tanmey Haraswa gtarasaa Namastey Achutaayudha, Aadhayo mama nashyantu Vyaadhayo hyaantui Samkshayam/ Iktevamuktwaa matimaan Samabhyacchaartha B haktitah, Samsmafran Pundareekaasham Sarva Paapa pranaashanam/ Pujitam Balinaa Chakram krutwaa Nistejasosuraan, Nischakraamaatha Paataalaad vishuvey Dakshiney Muney/ Sudarshaney nirgatey tu Balirviklabvataam gatah, Paramaapadam praapya sasmaara Swa Pitaamaham/ (My salutations to Vishnu Sudarshana Chakra which smashes the multitudes of Daitya enemies by its endless and most powerful sparkles of extraordinay rays with thousands of spokes and compartments within. I pray most reverentially to the Chakra in whose axis exists Brahma, its periphery resides Trishladhaari Maha Deva, spoke-ends are embellished with mammoth Mountains, inside the compartments are Indra, Surya, Agni, and other Devaas, its speed and velocity likened to Vayu Deva, and its other inhabitants are Varuna, Agni, Bhumi, and Akaasha; its compartment ends are clouds, Vidyut or Electricity, Nakshatraas, etc and in the peripherry of the Chakra Bakakhilyas and Munis. May the Chakra destroy greatest sins of the devotees on account of physical, vocal, and antarika or mind-born blemishes; may the Chakra punch and blow the sins of Vamsa Vaasis of the present and previous generations! As Bali extolled the Chakra and visioned it travelling away southwards, he wondered as to what was the need for its visit to the Bilwa Swarga, prayed to Bhagavan Vamana and remembered his grand father to ascertain the forebodings of the surprise appearance of the Sudarshana). Bhakta Prahlada met the King at once and congratulated Bali at the timely, prognostic and propitious appearance of Sudarshan to remind him and his 'Praja' about the need and urgency for worshipping Bhagavan Vishnu and his incarntion as Vamana Deva!

Prahlaada's exhortation to King Bali and his Subjects: Prahlada addressed the King and through him his entire population of Pataala Lokas as follows: Bhavajaladhigataanaam Dwandwavaataa hataanaam Suta duhitru kalatra traana bhaaraarditaanaam, Vishamavishayatoye Majjataama -playaanaam bhayati sharanameko Vishnupoto Naraayaam/ Ye samshritaa Harimanantamanaadi –madhyam Naaraayanam Suragurum Shubhadam Varenyam, Shuddham Khagendragamanam Kamalaalyesham tey Dharmaraaja karanam na vishanti Dheeraah/ Swapurushamabhiveekshya Paashahastam, Vadati Yamah kila tasya karnamuley, Parihara Madhusudana prapannaan Prabhurahamanya nrunaam na Vaishnavaanaam/ Tathaanyaduttam Narasattamena Ikshvaakunaa Bhaktiyutena nyunam, Ye Vishnu Bhaktaah Purushaah Pruthivyaam Yamasya tey nirvishayaa bhavanti/ Saa jihvaa yaa Harim stutoti tacchhit yattadarpitam, Taaveva kevalam Shlaaghyou yow tatpujaakraou Karou/ Nunam na tou karou proktou Vriksha shaakaagrapallavou, Na yow Pujayatum shaktou Haripaadaambuja dwayam/ Nyunam tat kantha shaalookamathavaa prati jihvakaa, Rogovaanyo na saa jihvaa yaana vakti Hareygunaan/ Shochaniyam sabandhu -naam Jeeyannapi mruto Narah, Yah Paada pankajam Vishnorna pujayati Bhaktitah/ Ye Naraa Vaasudevasya satatampujaney rataah, Mritaa api na shocchastey Satyam Satyam mayoditam/ Shareeram Maanasam Vaagjam Mritaamurtam charaacharam, Drushyam sprushyamadrushyam cha tatsarvam Keshavaatmakam/ Ye naarchitohi Bhgavaan Chaturthaa vai Trivikramah, Tenaarchitaa na samdeho

Lokaah saamara daanayaah/ Yathaa ratnaani jaladhera samkhye -yaani putraka, Tathaa gunaa hi Devasya twasamkhyataastu Chakrinah/ Ye Shankha Chakra -abjakaram sa Shaaranginam Khagendra ketum Varadam Shriyah Patim, Samaashrayantey Bhavabheeti naashanam Samsaaragartena patanti tey punah/ Yeshaam Manasi Govindo Nivaasi Satatam Baley, Na tey paribhavam yaanti na Mrutyoruddijanti cha/ Devam shaarangadharam Vishnum ve praopannah paraayanam. Na teshaam Yamasaalokyam na cha tey Naakoukasah/ Na taam gatim praapruvanti Shruti Shastra Vishaaradaah, Vipraa Daanava shaardula Vishnu Bhaktaa vrajaanti yaam/Yaa Gatirdaithya shaardula hataanaam tu Mahaahayey, Tatodhikaam gatim yaanti Vishnu bhaktaa Narotthamaah/ Yaa Gatirdharma sheelaanaam Saathvikaanaam Mahaatmanaam, Saa Gatirditaa Daitya Bhagavatsevinaamapi/ Sarvaavaasam Vaasudevam Sukshmamavyakta Vigraham, Pravishaanti Mahaatmaanam tad Bhaktaa naanyachetasah/ Ananya manaso Bhakatyaa ye Namasyaanti Keshavam, Shuchayastey Mahaatmaanasteertha bhutaa Bhavanti tey/ Gacchhan tishthan swapancha jaagrut pibannashwanna bheekshanashah, Dhyaanam Naraayanam yastu na tonyosti Punya bhaak, Vaikuntham khadga parashum bhava- bandha samucchidam/Pranipatya Yathaanyaayam Samsaarey na punarbhavet, Kshetreshu vasatey nithyam kreedaannaasteymita dyutih/ Aaseenah Sarvadeheshu Karmabhirna sa badhyatey, Yeshaam Vishnum Priyo nityam tey Vishnoh Satatam Priyaah/ Na tey punah sambhavanti tad Bhaktaastatparaayanaah, Dhyaayed Damodaram yastu Bhakti namrorchayet vaa/ Na sa Samsaara pankesmin majjatey Daanaveshwara, Kalyamutthaaya ye Bhaktyaa smaranti Madhusudanam, Stuvantyapyabhi shrunvanti Durgaanyati taranti tey/ Yeshaam Chakra gadaa paanou Bhaktiravyabhichaarini, Tey Yaanti Niyatam sthaanam yatra Yogeshwaro Harih/ Vishnu karma prasaktaanaa \Bhaktaanaam yaa paraagatih, Saa tu Janma sahastrena na tapobhiravyaapyatey/ Kimjapyestasya Mantrarvaa kim Tapobhih kimaashramaih, Yasya naasti paraa bhaktih satatam Madhusudaney/ Vrithaa Yagnaa Vrithaa Vedaa Vrithaa daanam vrithaa shrutam, Vrithaa Tapascha Keertischa yo dweshti Madhusudanam/ Kim tasya bahubhir mantrair bhaktiryasya Janardaney, Namo Naraayaneti mantrah sarvaarthta saadhakah/ Vishnureva gatiryeshaam krutasteshaam paraajayah, Yeshaamindeevara shyaamo hridayastho Janardanah/ Sarva maangala maangalyam Varenyam Varadam Prabhum, Naraayana Namaskrutya Sarva karmaani kaarayet/ Vishtayo vyatipaataascha ye nanye durneeti sambhavaah, tey naama smaranaad Vishno naasham yaanti Mahaasura/Tirtha koti sahastraani Tirtha Kotishataanicha, Naraayana pramaanasya kalaam naarhanti shodasheem/Prithivyaam yaani Tirthaani Punyaanyaya tanaani cha, Taani Sarvaanavaapnoti Vishnor naamaanu kirtanaat/ Praapnuvanti na taamllokaan vratino vaa Tapaswinah, Praapyantey ye tu Krishnasya Namaskaara parairnareyh/ Yopyanya Devaataa bhakto Midhyaarchayati Keshayam, Sopi gacchati Saadhunaam sthaanam Punyakritaam mahat/ Saatatyena Hrishikesham puja itwaa tu Sumedhasah, Tey labhyantupavaasasya phalam naasyantra samshayah/ Satatam Shastra drushtena karmanaa Harimarchaya, Tatprasaadaat Paraam Siddhim Baley Praapsyasi shaashvatim/ Tanmanaabhaya tadbhaktastadhyaaji tam Namaskuru, Tameyaashritya Devesham Sukham Praapyasi Putraka/ Aadyam hyanantamajaram Harimavyayam cha ye vai smarantya harahanruvaraa Bhuvisthaah, Sarvatragam Shubhadam Brahma mayam puraanam tey yaanti Vaishnavapadam dhruvamakshayancha/ Ye Maanayaa Vigataraaga paraaparaginaa Naraayanam Suragurum satatam smaranti, Tey Dhouta paanduraputaa iya Raaja hamsaah Samsaara Saagara jalas ya taranti paaram/ Dhyaayanti ye satatam achyutameeshitaaram Nishkalmasham Pravara Padma dalaayataaksham, Dhyaanena tena hata kilimbasha Veda naastey Maatuh Payodhara rasam na punah pibanti/ Ye Kirtayanti Varadam Vara Padma –naabham Shankaabja chakra vara chaapa gadaa si hastam, Padmaalayaavadana Pankaja shatpadaakhyam nyunam praayanti sadanam Madhughaatinastey/ Shrunvanti ye Bhaktiparaa Manushyaah Samkeertyamaanam Bhagavantamaadyam, Tey Mukta paapaah sukhino bhavanti yathaamruta praashana tarpitaastu/ Tasmaad Dhyaanam smaranam keertanam vaa Namnaam Shravanam pathataam Sajjanaanaam, Kaaryam Vishnoh Shraddhaanairmanushyaih Pujaatulyam tat Prashamsanti Devaah/Baahyaaistathaantah Karanairaviklavairyo naarchayet Keshavameeshitaaram, Pushpaischa Patrairjala pallavaadhibhi nyunam sa mushto Vidhitaskarena/ (Danava Sreshtha! To those persons who are all drawn into the depths of Samsara Samudra, buffeted by mighty and cruel winds of perils at every mode of life carrying the heavy loads of wife, children and dependents and exposed to daily hazards and threats, the only support and relief is the Unique Ship of Vishnu Bhagavan! He is

devoid of a beginning, midway or termination providing auspicious encouragement to one and all who would approach him with faith ad devotion. He is an epitome of benevolence and compassion, the Prime Source of Magnanimity and Radiance, Garuda vaahana, Lakshmikanta, Pavitra, Deva Guru, Narayana and the Ultimate Point of Refuge far above the Rule of Yama Dharma Raja, who swears that he is the Administrator of all Beings but certainly not for Vaishnaya Bhaktaas! Also, the God of Death confirms that those tongues which extol Hari, those sincere hearts which are absorbed in the meditation of Shri Hari, and those hands which are engaged in performing worship to Hari are never in the purview of Dharma Raja! Those hands which are devoid of worship of Hari are as good as handless likened to useless and dried up leaves of a tree and those 'jihvas' without describing and cherishing the enormous quailities of Hari are just guttural gruffs like the dead wood trunk of a desiccated tree! Those who are not engaged in Hari Seva are as good as dead and those who are committed to the devotion are alive even if dead and continue to be celebrities! For, the totality of physical, mental, psychological and actionreaction impulses are all Vishnu Swarupas; and the Jangama- Sthaavara- Drushya- Sprushya- Murta and Amurta Elements are all indeed of Vishnu Swarupas! Those Suraasura / Manavas who are devoted to Trivikrama Bhagavan in all the four ways of Stuti-Dhyana- Puja and Manana would have performed worship to the whole Universe. There are as many unaccountable 'Rathnaas' (jewels) in the depths of Oceans as the Parama gunaas and Rupaas or the countless features and forms of Narayana Bhagavan! But to anchor one's imagination about that Supreme Being, one could conjecture that the Virat Swarupa of Maha Vamana possesses Shankha, Chakra, Kamala and Sharanga Dhanush in his four arms and is also Garudadhwaja, Bhava Bheeti Vinashaka or the Destroyer of all fears and troubles, Varada or the Provider of boons, Lakshmi Pati and the Saviour of Deep Troubles. Those who keeps Govinda in his heart and Soul is never rejected in life nor is haunted by Mrityu and even experience Naraka. Brahmanas who are well versed with Vedas and Shastras are not recognised as Well as Vishnu Bhaktaas; similarly persons who die in battles and become eligible to Veera Swarga are not superior to Vishnu Bhaktaas. Those who are proven Mahatmas of extraordinary piety and virtue are indeed not rated better than Vishnu Bhaktaas! In fact such Bhaktas get readily absorbed into the Physique of Sarvavaasa, Sukshma, Avyakta, Ananta, Tirtha Swarupa Vaasudeva! There is no parallel to a person who takes the name and fame of Govinda while walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, eating and awake who is esteemed superior to any body else! As one worships in the prescribed manner that Vaikuntha Deva, he or she would indeed accomplish Moksha and would not be subject to rebirth! Even being in Samsaara, a typical Krishna Bhakta is not greatly influneced in his normal profession, since he or she is completely in love with Bhagavan and vice-versa. Those who wake up in the morning and surrender to Narayana every day and keeps the consciousness aligned to the latter is indeed unaffected by mundane affairs or Samsara bandhanaas. As the Bhakta is fully dedicated to Chakra-Gadaadhaari Govinda, that person would indeed carve a niche far ahead of Yogeshwaras for thousand previous lives. Why should persons waste precious time of their lives with Yagnas, Vedas, daanaas, jnaana, Tapas and Kirti! Why should one learn so many Mantras and clutter their minds with mental confusion instead of merely reciting the simplest and unique Maha Mantra of **Om Namo Narayanaaya!** Could there be a defeat in one's life if only that person recites always recite the MahaMantra and firmly establish the Swarupa of that Mangala Murti, Varenya, Varadaprada prabhu Narayana! Even the worst evils like Vishtis, Vyaktipaataas, and other physical and mental aberrations fall flat and get smashed with Narayana Smarana which is equivalent to the sevas of crores of Tirthaas! Persons desirous of organising mammoth Bhagavat Sevas for securing 'Kirti' and public recognition as also for displaying their wealth and might end up with nothing tangible whereas a modest, quiet and sincere appeal to Janardana of an individual with total submission to Hrishikesha is by far the most effective and fulfilling! Therefore King Bali! Do perform those prescribed deeds of virtue and worship Hari always. Do get fully engaged in the service of that Saadya, Ananta, Ajara, Sarvatragaami Shubhadaataa, Brahmamaya, Purana, Avyaya Hari day and night like the illustrious Dhruva who was blessed with an Eternal Position among Vaishnava Padaas! That ought to be the way to Narayana. Do always recite hymns of Madhusudana. Do always execute Dhyana, Smarana, Keertana, Paatha, Naama Shravana, and Manana. Those who regulate their Swasthya-Baahya-Aantarika Indriyas or Physical Parts

and worship Keshava with Pushpa- Patra-Jala- and Pallavaas always avoid the onslaughts of Vidhi Rupa Taskaraas or Fate-determined robbers!)

#### Vamana Purana Vaachana, Shraavana /Shravana, Pathana Phala Shruti

Maharshi Pulastya who narrated Vamana Purana to Brahmarshi Narada assured that the Purana's Kathana and Vaachana (recitation) would bestow lofty fame, Bhakti and Vishnu Loka Praapti. The Purana Shraavana-Shravana would cleanse the body and soul of the Presentor and the Listener just as the Sacred Ganagaajala Snaana. The Purana Shravana assures that the person concerned and his / her clan would be shielded against physical ailments and 'Abhichara Karma Prayogaas' like Maarana, Mohana, Ucchaatanaadi base-categories of Applcations by Evil and Unscrupulous and Jealous persons. Sincere and virtuous human beings taking interest in the Purana would be freed from their accounts of Sins and upgrade their accounts of Punya to the extent of performing Ashwamedha Yagna and Daanaas of Gold, Bhumi, Ashwa, Gou, Ratha and even Elephants. Even the Shravana of a Chapter even of Vamana Purana would attain purity of mind and clarity of thought. Navagraha Shanti is assured to the person reading or expaining the meaning and purport of even portions of the Purana. Worship of Surya- Chandra Eclipse times and Daanas especially Anna Daanaas and Brahmana Sevas would be highly beneficial while reciting the Purana. But care must be taken not to recite the contents of the Purana to non-believers, Achaara heena Vyaktis, and confirmed arguers and hecklers. Those who read or listen to the Purana must first assume the best possible disposition of mind and attitude by invoking Narayana with devotion and then only proceed to the Pathana and Manana of this Sacred Account of the Avatara of Vamana Deva as it also firmly establishes the Advaita Siddhanta of the Uniqueness and Oneness of Bhagavan Vishnu and Parama Shiva!

<u>Namo Namah Kaarana Vamanaaya Narayanaamita Vikramaaya</u> <u>Shri Shankha Chakraasi Gadaadharaaya</u> <u>Namostu tasmai Purushottamaaya</u>/

#### ESSENCE OF VARAHA PURANA

By assuming the incarnation of Varaha, Lord Vishnu salvaged Earth (Bhu Devi) from being sunk into the under-world of 'Rasatala' by the fierceful demon Hiranyakasipu. The Great Boar lifted up Earth by His 'damshtra' (Jaws) even as the demon was annihilated. Bhu Devi was stupified in bewilderment but after recovering from the shock, she was emboldened to pose a volley of queries to Varaha Deva as to how the entire Universe got dissolved, how the process of Creation was revived after each Kalpa, how 'Dharma' (Virtue) and 'Adharma' (Vice) were balanced and in which kind of extreme situations that Lord Vishnu would incarnate in various forms. Lord Varaha outlined Bhu Devi's difficult queries in a brief manner:

### **The Origin of Creation**

The Supernatural Power is indeed singular and eternal. Once this fundamental fact is recognised, explanations on the above queries would not be far to seek. At the commencement of Creation, the Supreme Energy created 'Pancha Bhuthas' (The Five Elements) of Air, Sky, Fire, Water and Earth; 'Ahamkara' (Ego or the Sense of Self or Personality); the Maha Tatva (The Great Element); Nature; the Collective and Individual Consciousness reflected in the 'Tri-Gunas' or Three Aspects or qualities of Behaviour viz. 'Satva' (Pure as coloured white), 'Rajas' (Passion as coloured red) and 'Tamas' (Ignorance as coloured dark) in varying permutations and combinations; the 'Atman' or 'Kshetrajna' (Soul) and 'Prakriti' or Maya (Illusion); the 'Tanmatras' or the subtle forms of Matter as produced by the interaction of the Three Gunas; the 'Pancha- Indriyas' (Sense Organs) which are created by Tanmatras viz. Eyes, Ears, Nose, Tongue and Skin; the extensions of the Five Sense Organs or the 'Jnanendriyas' (Cognitive) as perceived in the forms of Vision, Sound, Smell, Taste and Touch as also the further extensions viz. the 'Karmendriyas' or the Active Expressions of Speaking, Grasping, Moving, Eliminating and Reproducing. (Together, the Jnanendriyas constitute the Entrance Doors of the Sense Organs and the Karmendriyas constitute the Exit Doors).

Before the conception of the basic canons of Creation as described above, the Supreme Force manifested as Lord Narayan-'Nara' meaning water and 'ayan'denoting abode- who in turn created Earth. Together, Narayan and Earth produced an Egg and from the navel of the Lord, who was lying in yogic sleep, sprouted a lotus; on the top of the lotus stem appeared Lord Brahma who was asked to commence Creation. Lord Brahma could not succeed and out of anger and frustration appeared Lord Rudra who too entered water to perform penance. Brahma executed severe penace too and eventually attained the powers of Creation. He created Prajapathi from the left toe of his right foot and also created the latter's consort from the right toe of his left foot. The copulative action of Prajapati and his consort had thus paved the way of 'Srishti' in a formal manner. Swayambhu Manu who was born from the Prajapathis had thus launched the creation in a regular manner.

While Creation was initiated at the end of each Kalpa, there were more of such steps in the Process. For instance, there were five kinds of 'Avidyas' (False Knowledge) produced by Lord Narayana viz. 'Tamas' (Darkness), 'Moha' (Attachment), 'Maha Moha' (Extreme attachment), 'Tasmira' (Jealousy) and 'Andha Tasmira' (Anger). Thereafter, there was the 'Mukhya Sarga' or the principal creation of immovable objects like mountains and trees. Also, there was 'Thiryaksrota' related to animals (quadruped);

the sixth creation was called 'Satvik Sarga' or of Deities with Virtuous nature; the Seventh creation was called 'Arvaaksrota Sarga' related to human beings; the Eighth creation viz. 'Anugraha Sarga' pertaining to Sages and hermits and finally the ninth creation was of 'Kaumara Sarga' related to Eternal Adolescents

like Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana, and Sanat Kumara; then emerged the Ten Manasa Putras viz.Marichi, Angira, Atri, Pulah, Kratu, Pulasya, Pracheta, Bhrigu, Narad and Vasishtha. But, the foremost creation of Lord Rudra was as 'Artha Nareeswara'; collectively there were Eleven Rudras, viz. Maha Deva, Shiva, Maha Rudra, Shankara, Neelalohita, Esana Rudra, Vijaya Rudra, Bheema Rudra, Deva Deva, Bhavodbhava and Adityatmika Sri Rudra; their corresponding consorts are Dhee Devi, Dhriti Devi, Ushna or Rasala Devi, Uma Devi, Neeyut Devi, Sarpi Devi, Ela Devi, Ambika Devi, Iravati Devi, Sudha Devi and Deeksha Devi.

# Exemplary Devotion of Priyavrata, Ashvasira, Vasu and Raibhya (Pundarikaksha and Gadadhara Mantras included)

In the context of balancing the forces of Dharma and Adharma, instances of exemplary devotion displayed by Illustrious Kings and Sages through the ages were cited by Bhagavan Varaha to Prithvi. King Priyavrata, son of Swayambhu Manu, relinquished his Kingdom to his sons and Sage Narada visited his hermitage once. The Sage narrated his own interesting experiences. In one case, he passed by a lake in Swethadvipa and found a highly attractive and lonely damsel when he felt infatuated and lusty. Soon he discovered that she was Devi Savitri Herself- the embodiment of Virtue- and felt an unpardonable sense of shame for his sin. From Her body emerged three male figures, viz. the three Vedas of Rik, Yajur and Sama. However, Devi Savitri pardoned Narada's momentary indiscretion and embarrassment and blessed him with his knowledge of past lives. In one of his earlier lives, Narada was a rich and virtuous youth in a Brahmin family, became a Scholar, donated lot of his wealth for several noble causes, performed pilgrimages, Sacrifices, penances etc; constantly recited 'Om Namo Narayana' and finally secured Lord Vishnu's 'Darshan' (Direct Appearance). But the Lord declined 'Mukti' (Eternal Bliss) to Narada as he was to play important roles through many births ahead till he became a Brahma Manasa Putra (Lord Brahma's mind-born son). Exhorted by Narada, King Priyavrata decided to emulate the example of Narada through out his remaining life.

King Ashvasira was another example of a highly righteous and worthy devotee of Lord Vishnu who performed several donations, Sacrifices and an Aswamedha Yajna. Sage Kapila, accompanied by Sage Jaigishvya visited Ashvasira's Court and the King received the Sages with great veneration and devotion. The King desired to know from the Sages as to how best he could attain 'Sayujyam' or oneness with Lord Vishnu. They replied that they were the Lord Vishnu themselves! The King replied politely that the Sages were indeed most revered and memorable no doubt but how could they claim to be Vishnu himself; for one thing the Supreme Lord is unique and singular! The Sages created a make believe situation by the help of illusion that they were Vishnu and His Carrier Garuda. They taught a lesson to the King that Lord Vishnu resided in each and every being and the Pure Soul in each object is as good as Lord Vishnu among all. The Sages had thus helped the King's 'Jnananethra' or the Eye of Wisdom open up to witness that Lord Vishnu was all pervasive and Omni Present and that he should be able to witness Lord Vishnu all over! The King was apparently convinced, yet had raised a doubt that the Sages should please clear up: 'who is able to realise Almighty?-a Knowledgeable person or a person who does his rightful deed or duty?' In reply,the Sages Kapila and Jaigishvya narrated a story to the King that Sage Raibhya and King Vasu too sought a reply on a similar query from Deva Guru Brihaspati. The Guru explained that who ever would perform his duty with a sense of complete detachment would also have access to Salvation. To illustrate this, Deva Guru described an incident: There was a Brahmana, named Sanyaman, who was a descendent of Sage Atri. While he was taking bath in a river, he met a person named Nishthoor who was a fowler, killing birds and animals for his living. The Brahmana scolded the fowler for his evil deeds, but the latter did not show any signs of remorse; instead he justified the acts. He said that whoever sought salvation ought to keep in mind that the doer was God, the act was His own and the reason for doing the act too was God Himself-'Karanam, Kaaranam and Kartha!' The moment ego came to play while

performing the act, the doer would be called cruel, but when he did it with perfect detachment and as a duty, then the situation would be different. Thus spoke Brihaspati that anybody could certainly aspire for salvation, be he a householder or a hermit or a seeker of knowledge. King Ashvasira was thus convinced about his doubts from the Sages Kapila and Jaigishvya, moved on to Naimisharanya for the rest of his life and in the course of several Yagnas that he conducted he found a sheet of effulgence approching him and got engulfed into Lord Vishnu finally.

**King Vasu** and Sage Raibhya were totally convinced by the preachings of Deva guru as mentioned above. The King renounced his kingship in favour of his son and left for Pushkar Teertha always reciting 'Pundarikaksha Mantra.'

Pundarikaksha Mantra: 'Namastey Pundarikaksha Namastey Madhusudana, Namasthey Sarva lokesha Namasthey Thigmachakriney, Vishvamurthi Mahabahum Varadam Sarvatejasam, Namami Pundarikaksham Vidyaavidyatmakam Vibhum, Adidevam Mahadevam Veda Vedangapaaragam, Gambhiram Sarva Devaanam Namami Madhusudanam, Vishva Murthi Maha Murthi Vidya Murthi Trimurthikam, Kavacham Sarva Devaanam Namasye Vaarijekshanam, Sahasrasirshinam Devam Sahasraaksham Mahabhujam, Jagat- samvyaapya Thishthanthim Namasye Parameswaram, Sharanya Sharanam Devam Vishnum Jishnum Sanatanam, Neelamegha pratikamsham Namasye Chakrapaaninam, Suddham Sarvagathim Nityam Vyomarupam Sanaatanam, Bhavaabhava Vinurmuktam Namasya Sarvagum Harim, Naanyat kinchit prapashyami Vyatiriktam thvada-Achuta, Tvanmayamcha prapashyami Sarvametatcharacharam'.

The Mantra means: 'I greet Pundarikaksha, I greet Madhusudan, I greet 'Sarva Lokesha' or the Lord of all the Worlds, I greet 'Tigmachakrinam' or He who carries a fearful and glowing wheel; You are Visva Murthi, Maha bahu (mighty armed), Varadam (Giver of boons), Sarva Tejo Swarupa or All Radiant Figure, I greet Pundarikaksha, 'Vidyaavidyatmikam' (The Embodiment of Learning and Ignorance alike), 'Vibhum' or the Super Lord, 'Adi Devam' or the Original God; Maha Devam( The Greatest Deity), 'Veda Vedanga Paaranam' (The Supreme Sourcer of Vedas and other Scriptures), 'Gambhiram' (The Complex), 'Sarva Devaanam' ( All in one of Devas), I greet Madhusudanam ( Destroyer of The Demon Madhu), Viswa Murthim, Maha Murthim, Vidya Murthim, Tri Murthikam or The Union of Three Gods of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara; Kavacham Sarva Devanam or the Safeguard of all Devas, I greet 'Varijekshanam' or He who is Lotus Eyed, 'Sahsrasirsham Devam' or He who has Thousand (countless) Heads, 'Sahasraaksham' or countless Eyes; 'Maha Bhujam' (Great Shoulders), 'Jagasamvyapya' (All Pervasive); I greet 'Parameswaram', (Supreme God); 'Sharanyam Sharanam' (Protect me, hey Vishnu, Jishnu, Sanatanam or Omni Present, Omni Scient and Ageless), 'Nilameghapratikasham' or He who is likened to blue clouds, 'Chakrapaninam' or He who carries the famous and all powerful Sacred Wheel; 'Suddham' or Pure, Sarvagatam or All Present, 'Nityam' (Permanent), 'Vyomarupam' or Resembler of Sky; Bhavabhava nirmuktam (He who is devoid of materialistic feelings or otherwise); 'Namaste Sarvagum Harim'or I greet Hari who is replete all over; 'Naanyat kinchit Prapasyaami Vyatiriktam Twadaachyuta' or I cannot visualise any thing else other than You Achyuta! You are all over the Universe comprising all movable and immobile objects!)'

While the King was chanting the Mantra, a blue human form emerged from the King's body and conveyed that in an earlier birth he (Vasu) was a King too who killed a Brahmin in disguise as a deer and as a penance performed Eakadasi Vrathas, donated cows and many other austerities. But at the time of death uttered his wife's name Narayani instead of the name of Narayan. In his next birth too, King Vasu was a King of Kashmir but then again he no doubt did Yagnas and many other virtuous deeds but not heeded to chant the name of Lord Vishnu; out of vengence the soul of the Brahmin in the form of the dead deer continued to haunt the King of Kashmir. Since in the current birth as King Vasu continued the chanting of the Pundarikaksha Mantra at Pushkar Teertha, not only the tormented soul of the Brahmin dead as a deer got relieved but the King Vasu got rid of the sin of killing a Brahmana and eventually reached Vishnu Loka.

Sage Raibhya decided to emulate the example of King Vasu in the quest of Salvation. He left for Gaya to perform the 'Shraddh' (Annual Ceremony) of his ancestors. One of Brahma Manasa Putras-Sanat Kumara was pleased with the 'Shraddha' or complete dedication with which the Sage Raibhya performed by the Ceremony. Sanat Kumara complimented the Sage and confirmed that visiting the Sacred Place of Gaya and performing 'Pindapradan' to the ancestors in a systematic manner ought to be considered as highly significant; what is more, Gaya is the the abode of Gadadhar Sri Hari Himself and the Ceremonies performed with sincerity and devotion to Gadadhar would yield immense results to the 'Kartha' or the Performer and the ancestors of three generations as well. In this connection, Sanat Kumara gave the example of King Vishal who was greatly perturbed as he had no son and thus called for a Conference of Brahmanas to suggest a solution. The advice received was that the King was cursed by his ancestors and their souls were being tormented in the abscence of the Annual Ceremonies which were never performed in the past. Hence he should perform a Shraddha Ceremony at Gaya. During the course of the Ceremony, the King found three elderly Brahmanas and introduced themselves as the deceased of three generations viz. the Father, Grand Father and the Great Grand Father. Thus as a result of the success of the function performed at Gaya by the King, the souls of the deceased three generations were liberated. Sage Raibhya continued to stay at Gaya till the end of his life and prayed to Lord Gadadhar till he joined the league of Vaikuntha. The *Gadadhara Mantra* with the power of which Sage Raibhya was blessed to attain Vaikuntha is as follows:

(1) 'Gadadharam Vibhudhajanaira- bheeshtitham dhrutakshamam kshuditha janaarthi nashanam, Shivam Visalaasurasainya mardanam, Namaamyaham hatasakalaasubham smruthou' (I pray to Lord Gadadhara who is praised by all the Devas for the fulfillment of their desires; who is ever-kind to respond to the wails of human beings and demolish their needs; who is a lasting source of propitiousness as also a merciless destroyer of Demons and Evil Forces); (2) 'Puranapurvam Purusham Purushottamam Puratanam Vimalaamalam Nrinam Gatim, Trivikramam Dhrutadharanim Bleham Gadadharam Rahasi Namami Kesavam' (I bow to Gadadhar Kesav who is Originless, Existent far before the Universe, Most Ancient, Pure, Spotless, Capable, Trend setter to Humanity, Trivikram, the Holder of Earth, and Appointer of Bali); (3) 'Susuddha bhavam Vibhavirupavritam Shriyavrutam Vigataamalam Vichakshanam, Kshithiswarair- apagata kilbishaih Stutam Gadadharam Pranamati yah sukham vaset' (I implore Gadadharam who is charming, pure hearted, highly prosperous and flourishing, immaculate, featureless, scholarly, bright, sinless, Ever eulogized and blissful); (4) 'Surasurairarchita pada pankajam Kaiyura haaraangada mouli dharinam, Abdhou Shananam cha rathanga paaninam' ( I revere Him whose lotus-like feet are worshipped, wears hand-jewellery, necklace, body part adornments and headgear, relaxes comfortably on milk-ocean, and holds Sudarshan wheel and mace); (5) 'Sitam kruthey Tretayugerunam Vibhum tatha Tritiye peetha varnamachyutam, Kalou Ghanaalipratimam Maheshwaram Gadadharam pranamati yah sukham vaseth' ( I beseech the blessings of Maheswara Gadadhara who is happily coloured white in Kritha Yuga, crimson in Treta Yuga, yellow during Dwapara Yuga and cloudlike in Kali Yuga); (6) 'Bijoddhvo yah Sujathey Chaturmukhastayaiva Narayana Rupathojagat, Prapaalayet Rudra vapurastathantakrut Gadadharo Jayatu Shadartrimurthiman' (Victory to Gadadhara who assumed three forms of Lord Brahma born out of the former's seed being responsible for the task of Creation, Lord Narayana being responsible for Administration and Lord Rudra for Universal destruction); (7) 'Satva Rajaschiva Tamo Gunaastraya sthayeteshu naanyasya samudbhayah kila, sa chaika eya thrividho Gadadharo dadhatu dhairya mama Dharma mokshiyoh'; (There are Satva, Rajas and Tamo Gunas and beyond these three Gunas there are none else; Hey Gadadharo, kindly bestow me strength and courage to secure Dharma/ Virtuousness and Moksha / Salvation to obtain a proper mix of these Gunas);(8) 'Samsara thoyarna vadum khatanthubhi viyogana kramakramanih subheeshanaih, Majjanthamujjaih sutaraam Mahaplayey Gadadharo mamu dadhaatu pothayat'; (May Gadadhar pull me up from the frightful Ocean of 'Samsara' and from the strong ropes of attachments like the body, family and constant fear of death); (9) 'Swayam Trimurthih Svamivatmanaatmani Svashaktitah anda midam sasarjaha, thasmijjalothaasanam arya thejasam sasarja yasthah pranatosmi Bhudharam' ( I salute

Gadadhar as He holds Earth and the Trimurthis by His own might, created the Universe and the highly radiant Kamalaasan Brahma);(10) 'Matsyadi namani jagatsu kevalam Suraadi samrakshanato Vrushakapih, Mukhya swarupena smanthato Vibhu Gadadharo me Vidudhaatu sadgatim' (May Incarnations of Gadadhar like Matsya meant only to protect Devas and the Virtuous be kind to lead me to Salvation!)

#### Overview of Lord Vishnu's Incarnations

To one of the queries of Bhu Devi about the instances when Lord Vishnu assumed various forms as extreme situations were faced by the Universe, especially when injustice and evil forces reached a point of no return, the reply from Lord Varaha was quite positive. In an earlier case, Lord Vishnu assumed the form of 'Matsya' or a Giant Fish. As the Lord found in His Yoga Nidra at the time of 'Pralay' that The Four Vedas were being destroyed, He took the very first Incarnation to rescue the Sciptures. Even Dieties were frightened to find the collossal form of 'Matsya' and after the retrieval of the Vedas from the Ocean bed, euloguised and entreated the Lord to reduce the size of the Fish. On another occasion, Lord Vishnu assumed various other forms such as 'Kurma' (Tortoise) at the time of Ocean-churning to balance the Manthara Mountain by using the Great Serpent Vasu as the huge string as both 'Devas' and 'Danavas' toiled to fetch 'Amrit'

(Ambrosia). On occasions following the 'Varaha Avatar', Lord Vishnu incarnated as 'Narasimha Avatar' (The Man-Lion form) to destroy Demon Hiranyaksha and save the highly dedicated devotee of Vishnu. The Lord assumed 'Vamana Avatar' (The Dwarf) to control the ambitions of King Bali and threw him down under the Sub-terranian world. In a conscious effort to obliterate the clan of 'Kshatriyas' or Rulers who oppressed and tormented the contemporary world and became tyrannical, Lord Vishnu incarnated as 'Parasurama' and vindicated Virtue against Vice. Bhagavan Vishnu incarnted as 'Shri Rama' - a 'Maryada Purusha' or a Model Man of Dignity and Valour who established bench- marks to humanity and annihilated the clan of Demons in Lanka headed by Ravana who not only terrorised the world but trampled all limits of decency by abducting Lady Sita and performing endless acts of cruelty. In Dwapara Yuga, the most charismatic was the Avatar of Sri Krishna, the Central Figure of the momerable Epic Maha Bharata who declared: Yada Yadahi Dharmasya glanir bhavati Bharata! Abhyuthana madharmasya tadatmanam srijamyaham/ (As and when Virtue is trampled and Wickedness dominates, I incarnate myself to correct the balance); Paritranaya Sadhuunam vinasaayacha dushkrutam Dharma Samsthapanaardhaaya Sambhavaami Yuge Yuge/ (I make my presence felt in various Yugas to save the Virtuous and root out the Wicked). In the earlier phase of Kali Yuga, Lord Buddha was born to preach the triumph of Dharma (Virtue), Nyaya (Justice) and Ahimsa (Non-Violence) and popularised Buddhism as a powerful tool in the quest of Truth and Self-Realisation. The tenth incarnation of Lord Vishnu at the termination of Kali Yuga is to be that of Kalki Avatar brandishing a sword on a horse back to herald a New Age of Dharma.

### Rituals of Shraddha (Amavasya Tarpana Mantra included)

Once Maharshi Markandeya visited Sage Gomukh in Naimsharanya and discussed matters related to Pitras and Rituals for venerating the deceased souls. First about the **Pitras**: While Lord Narayana is the Adi Guru and created Brahma, the latter created Sapta Rishis or Seven Sages (Brahma Manasa Puthras) and instructed them to worship him but instead they worshipped themselves and disobeyed Brahma's oders. They were cursed that the knowledge acquired by them be forgotten. Eventually, the Seven Sages known as 'Vimaniks' procreated a number of sons. Pursuant to the death of the Seven Sages, the progeny

performed Shraddhas by way of 'Pindadaan' mantras to the deceased and the latter attained Swarga Loka. Of the Sapta Rishis, four of them such as Marichi were entitled to 'Amrit'. The remaining three were not; some were sent to the Santanak Loka or Bhaswar Loka residents of which were 'Amurthis' or without Bodies ie. Chinmatra or Abhouthik category. Sages Sanatana, Kashyap, Vasu and so on belong to this classification. Some Pitras belong to another category viz. 'Vairaj', named after Prajapati Viraj and so on. [Sapta Rishis are stated to vary as per Manvantaras: The First Manvantara Group is mentioned as Marichi, Atri, Angirasa, Pulaha, Kratu, Pulasthya and Vasistha; in the Current Seventh Vaivasvata Manvantara, the Group is stated as Kashyapa, Atri, Vasishtha, Viswamitra, Gautami, Jamadagni and Bharadwaja]

Appropriate days for performing **Kamya Shraddha** include: the days when Uttarayan or Dakshinayan commence, during Solar/Lunar eclipses, if apprehended or experienced by evil influences of specific planet or constellation, when Sun changes its course from zodiac to another and so on. Days falling with Stars Anuradha, Visakha and Swati especially coinciding with Amavasya are considered auspicious. Similarly Shraddhas on Amavasya days coinciding with Stars of Pushya or Punarvasi are extremely auspicious to the ancestors and the Karthas (those who perform the Ceremonies). The third day of the bright half of Vaisakha month, the Ninth day of the bright half of Kartik, the thirteenth day of the dark half of Bhadrapad and Amavasya of Magha month are also commended for performing Kamya Shraddhas. Tarpana (Libation) to Pitras and Forefathers of three generations at least constitutes as an essential component of Kamya Shraddha, besides physical and internal cleanliness. The Pitrugan keep expecting anxiously as to when would Rainy Season arrive in Makha Star, or when would Magha month's Amavasya would come soon to quench the thirst of the departed souls! The Kartha ought to observe distinct mind, affordable charity, ample time and attention, devotion, Shraddha or Patience and dedication to satisfy the tormented souls!

[Amavaasya Tarpana Vidhaanam: Achamya....Punya tithou...preethyatham...Prayukta Punya kaaley Devarshi Pitruunuddhishya Devarshi Pithru Preethyartham Devarshi Pitru Tarpanam karishye (Ithi Samkalpva): Note: Recite 'Tarpayami' once at the end of each Mantra; twice or thrice as indicated in each category below; leave spoonful of water each time after saying Tarpayami:Brahmodayo ye Devah thaan Devagumstrapayami-Sarvaan Devaganaagum strapayami-Sarvaan Devaganaagum strapayami-Sarvaan Deva patneestharpayami-Sarvaan Deva Putraagumstarpayami-Sarvaan Deva poutragumstarpayami-Bhuur Devaagumstarpayami-Bhuvardevaagumsturpayami-Suvardevaagumstarpayami-Bhurbhuvassuvardevaagum starpayami [ Now wear Yajnopaveetham as a Maala] Atha Krishna dwaipaya naadayo ye Rishaah: Thaan Risheegumstarpayami Tarpayaami (2)-Sarvaan Rishi ganaagumstarpayami Tarpayami (2)-Sarvah Rishi Patneestrapayami tarpayami (2)-Sarvaan Rishigum Putraamstarpayami tarpayami(2)-Sarvaan Risheegum Poutraamstarpayami Tarpayami (2)-Bhur Risheegum starpayami Tharpayami (2)-Bhuvar Risheegum starpayami Tarpayami (2)-Suvar Risheegumstarpayami Tarpayami(2)-Bhurbhuvassuvar Risheegum starpayami Tarpayami (2)-Kaandarshi Tarpanam:-Prajapatim Kaanda Rishim-Starpayami Tarpayami (2)-Somam Kaanda Rishim Tarpayami Tarpayami (2)-Agnim Kaanda Rishim Tarpayami Tharpayami (2) Sarvaan Devaan Kaanda Risheegum Tarpayami Tarpayami (2) Saagumhiteer devata Upanishada Tarpayami Tarpayami (2)-Yaajnikir Devataa Upanishada Tarpayami Tarpayami (2) Vaarunir Devata Upanishada Tarpayami Tarpayami (2)-Havyavaaham Tarpayami Tarpayami (2)-Viswaan Devaan Kandarsheegum Tarpayami Tarpayami (2)-Brahmaanagum Swayam Bhuvam Tarpayami Tarpayami (2)-Vanaspatim Tarpayami Tarpayami (2)

NOW Tarpanam to Pitarah (Note: Yagnopaveetam to be turned left as 'Praacheenaaveeti)

Somah Pitruman Yamom Girasvanagnisshaatvaagni kavyavaahanaadayo ye thaan

Pitarah Pitruun Swadhanamastarpayami Swadhanamastarpayami (3)

Punarvisvaan Devan

Kaandarsheegum	-Do-	-Do-	-Do-
Arunaan Kaandarsheegum	-Do-	-Do-	-Do-
Sarvaan Pitruugum	-Do-	-Do-	-Do-
Sarvaan Pitruganaagum	-Do-	-Do-	-Do-
Sarvah Pitru Patnee	-Do-	-Do-	-Do-
Sarvaan Pitru Putraagum	-Do-	-Do-	-Do-
Sarvaan Poutraagum	-Do-	-Do-	-Do-
Bhuh Pitruugum	-Do-	-Do-	-Do-
Bhuvah Pitruugum	-Do-	-Do-	-Do-
Suvah Pitruugum	-Do-	-Do-	-Do-
Bhurbhvassuvah Pitruugum	-Do-	-Do-	-Do-

Anena Devarshi Pitru Tarpanena Bhagavan Sarvaatmakah Sri Parameswarah Preeyataam

Yetat Phalam Sri Parameswara arpanamasthu.

#### Pitru Tarpanam:

Achamya, Evam ....Preetyartham Pituh Pitruunaam Akshayya Punyalokaphala vaapartham Darsa Prayukta Maha Punya Kaley Thila Tarpanam karishye (Praacheenaa -veeti, Daksinaamukhah Savyam Jaanvaachya or facing South with left knee bent seated). While performing Tarpan Brahmanas recite 'Sharmaanam', Ksatriyas say 'Varmaanam' and Vysyas say 'Guptam').

The seriatim of the departed souls for the purpose of performing Tarpanam is as follows by taking care of those who are alive should not, repeat not, be included in the process as the list is only suggestive; The Tarpana Vidhanam or Procedure is to recite (A) the relationship of the Karta (Performer) to the Concerned Departed Soul, (B) His/Her Gotram, and (C) the Name of the Soul and then perform the Tarpanam three times by saying the Mantram thrice viz. Svadhanamaha Tarpayami.For example:

Pitaram-Haradasa Gothram-Narayana Murti Sharmanaam-Swadhaanamah Tarpayami (The last word to be uttered thrice and simultaneously tarpanam be left thrice as well)

Note: Tila or Sesame / Ginjelley seeds must be mixed with the water to be utilised for Tarpanam)

Pitaram-Father, Pitamaham- Grand Father, Prapitamaham-Great Grand Father, Mataram-Mother, Pitamahim- Father's mother, Prapitamahim- Father's Grand Mother, Sapnatimataram- Father's another wife if applicable; if Karta (Performer) was adopted to another family then to his adopted parents viz. Janaka Pitaram and Janaka Mataram; Matamaham- Mother's Father, Mathuh Pitamaham- Maternal Grand Father, Mathuh Prapithamaham-Mother's Great Grand Father, Matamahim- Mother's Mother, Mathuh Pitamahim-Mother's Grand Mother, Mathuh prapitamahim- Mother's Great Grand Mother, Atma Patnim-Wife, Sutham- Sons, Bhrataram- Brothers, Pitravyam-Father's Brothers, Mathulam- Maternal Uncles and their Wives, Duhitaram-Daughters, Bhagineem-Sisters, Dauhitram-Grand Sons, Bhagineyam- Nephews, Pitru Bhagineem- Father's Sisters, Matru Bhagineem- Mother's elder/younger Sisters, Jamatharam-Son in laws, Bhavukam- Brothers in laws and their wives, Snushaam-Daughter in law, Swasuram / Swasrum-Wife's father/ mother, Syalakam-Wife's brothers and their wives, Guru and Rikthinam- the Main Shop Keeper (in fact, wherever not mentioned tarpanam may be done as Sapatneekam or Sabhartreekam as the case may be, if the departed Souls are devoid of wives/husbands. As a round up-Evam Tarpanam kuryat: Echasrutkuley Jaata Aputhro gotrinomrutah, they gruhnanthu maya dattam sutra nishpeedanodakam

(May my Tarpanas be please accepted on behalf of those in our Vamsam, the Sagotras or those who died without sons by way of sqeezing water from my Yajnopaveeth; this Mantra be recited by wearing the Holy Thread as a mala or long necklace and be left in the Tarpana Plate)]

#### Regular Annual Shraddha

Maharshi Markandeya emphasised to Sage Gomukha about the best suitability of Brahmanas to execute Shraddh. He quoted Brahma Putra Sanandana that Brahmanas who are experts in Mantras related to 'Trinachiket' (Adhrvyu Yajna), 'Trimadhu' (Madhuvvata) and 'Trisuparna' or expert in Vedic Dicsiplines like Siksha, Chhand, Vyakaran, Jyotish and Shat Vedanga as also in Vedas would please Brahma Himself! Contrarily, those Brahmanas who are cheaters of friends, crooked-hand nailed, black teethed, ignorant of Vedas and Agni, thieves, Gram yachaks or beggars, Salaried persons, remarried, those who abandoned parents, Temple Priests, or those who have married Sudras be certainly disqualified to partake in Shraddhas. The Ceremony be performed by any of the close relatives of the deceased apart from a son, such as maternal nephew, grand son of daughter, father in law, son in law, maternal uncle, failing which a Tapasvi Brahmana. Scriptures had prescribed the number of Brahmins as odd numbers, say one, three, five etc.But the Shraddh involving deities be engaged in even numbers, unless however there is a limitation in obtaining the even number. In other words, at least one Brahmin repesenting Devas and one repesenting Pitrugan might be in order. The Brahmins invited for the Ceremony be invited atleast one day ahead. While performing the Pitru Shraddh, especially involving Deities, it is mandatory to invoke Vaishva Deva. The invocation to Agni Deva is to be performed thrice with 'Anna' (Cooked Rice) by the Mantras: 1) 'Agnaye Kavyahanaya Swaha' 2) 'Somaya Pitrumatey Swaha' and 3) 'Vaivasvataya Swaha'. Then, Brahmanas (Bhoktas) are welcomed formally by relevant Mantras by washing their feet and with the request of taking Food with Bhakshya (Special Recipes, Snacks and Sweets), Bhojya (Main Course with Vegetables, Dals, and Chutneys), Lehya (Preparations which are licked with tongue), Choshya (Items which are sucked) and Paniyas or a variety of drinks with 'Mouna' (Silence) and comfort. There after Shraddha- Karta is to be conveyed through Rakshodhana and other Mantras recited by the Brahmanas that Bhumi is cleansed by Tilas and that the Bhokta Brahmanas are of the form of Pitaras (the departed three generations) and Deities. Tarpanas are a part of the Ceremony in favour of those deceased as detailed above. One another significant ritual relates to Pinda Daan; 'Pindas' made of Cooked rice or Wheat Flour along with black Sesame (Tila) seeds and water, each rounded in equal size placed on Kusa all facing South are worshipped by Dhup, Deep and Naivedyas. The Pindas represent the forefathers of three generations, viz. Father, Grand Father and Great Grand Father; in case of Shradda for mother, the two other gerations would be father's mother and father's grand mother 'Bali Vaishva Deva Rituals' mark the end of Shraddha and 'Prasad' as the remains of what Bhoktas and other Brahmanas had eaten is consumed. The Kartha/s should not leave the Shraddha Ceremony at any point of time till the end nor get destracted. The Entire Ceremony as a composite and uninterrupted Sacred Duty and any infringement is considered as a wanton Sin. Not only are the Forefathers affected but more importantly the Kartha and the Brahmanas responsible for the success or otherwise of the Ceremony attract the blame or the benefit.

#### Origin of some Deities, specific days for worship and fruitful results

There lived a noble King during Satya Yuga by name Prajapal who met a Sage Mahatapa in the latter's hermitage during a hunting session in a forest. During the meeting, the

King enquired about the prominence of specific Deities and their importance. The Sage underlined that all the Deities are of the manifestation of Lord Vishnu and the fruits of worship to each and every Deity belong to the Lord. Prajapal asked sage Mahatapa as to how various Deities like Agni, Ashvini Kumars, Gauri, Gajanan, Seshnag, Kartikeya, Aditya, Chandrama, Durga, Ashta Matrikas, Dishatey, Kuber, Vayu, Yama, Rudra, Dharma, Pitra Ganas etc.were created, what is the Sanjna (Number) and the Tithi.

#### Creation of Agni Deva, his several names and implication of worship

When Maha Vishnu created 'Panchabhutas' Five Elements) and Loka Pitamah Brahma and commanded the latter to initiate creation, Brahma could not do so and he was extermely confused and hence angry and the rage created thousands of flames called Agni who became extremely thirsty. When Agni asked Brahma as to how his thirst could be quenched, Brahma showed three types of satisfying it viz.sharing the 'Dakshinas' received by Devas and hence Agni was known as 'Dakshinagni'; the second way of Agni's thirst was by carrying the Havans (Homas and Yajnas) performed in the Trilokas (Three Worlds) in favour of various Deities as their 'Vahan', thus becoming Agni popular as 'Havyavahan'; the third way is that since Agni is present in each 'Griha' or household, he is known as 'Garhapatyagni'. Brahma further named Agni as 'Vaisvanara' as the latter provides the means of bestowing 'Sadgati' (Salvation) to the virtuous beings performing havans and other good deeds. Agni is 'Jataveda' or protector of both Known and Unknown material; 'Naaraa Prashamsa'-'Naar'or people, especially 'Dwijas'or twice born Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vysyas do 'Prashamsa' or praise; Known as 'Dravinoda'as Agni provides money power. The other popular names accorded by Brahma to Agni are 'Tanunpath' (Agni protects Sharir/Asharir), 'Prapurna' (full of everything) and many other names. Agni desired to Brahma to designate a day of each Month so that all concerned would perform worship to Him. Since this was a unique request made by any Deity for the first time, Brahma confirmed Pratipada as a day of significance for Agni. Brahma blessed Agni that Pratipada be popularised among all the Lokas and worship to Agni by way of fasting (Upavas) or at the most by taking milk would quality a devotee to acquire prosperity and Tejas (radiance) during the current birth and to secure Kingship in the next birth and certainly please the Pitru Loka.

# Origin of Aswini Kumars and their worship on 'Dviteeya' (Narayana Mantra included)

Sage Mahatapa explained to Prajapal how Aswini Kumars were born. Marichi was Brahma's son and Kashyap was the son of Marichi. Kashyap and Aditi begot Twelve 'Adityas' (Suns). [According to Vishnupurana the Adityas were Amsa, Aryaman, Bhaga, Dhuti, Mitra, Pusan, Sakra, Savitur, Twastha, Varuna, Vishnu/Vamana, Vaivaswat; Martand too was known as one of these, but Aditi appeared to have disowned him?] Martand wedded Viswakarma's daughter Sangya and begot two children-Yama and Yami. Sangya was unable to bear the extreme heat of Martand, thus created her shadow counterpart with instructions to serve her husband in all ways and left for a place known as Uttarkuru. Eventually Martand came to know the truth, discovered her in the form of a mare, married her and gave birth to two **Aswini Kumars!** Martand instructed the sons to dedicate themselves in the worship of Narayana and after severe 'Tapasya'by incessantly uttering 'Narayana Mantra' which was taught by Martand, Prajapati Narayan was finally pleased to appear Himself before them. When King Prajapal desired to learn the Mantra from the Sage Mahatapa, the latter obliged and recited it.

*The Text of the Narayana Mantra is as follows:* 

'Namastey Nishkriya Nishprapancha Nirashraya Nirapeksha, Niralamba Nirguna Niraloka Niradhara Nirjara Nirakara-Brahman Maha Brahman Brahmanapriya Purusha Maha Puroshottama-Deva Maha Devottam Sthano Sthitasthapaka, Bhuta Maha Bhuta Bhutadhipati Yaksha Maha Yaksha Yakshadhipatey-Griha Maha Grihatipatey Sowmya Maha Sowmya Sowmyadhipathey, Pakshi Mahapakshapathey Ditya Maha Dityadhi pathey-Rudra Maha Rudradhipathey Vishnu Maha Vishnupathey, Parameswara Narayana Prajapathaye Namah-Evam Stuthastada Thabhyama Sivabhyam sa Prajapathih, Thrutosha Paramapreetya Vakyamcheda mukhavachah-Varam Varayatham Sheeghram Daivaih Paramadurlabham, yena me varadaaney charathastridivam Sukham'.

Aswini Kumars had 'Darshan' of Narayana and were blessed with boons of securing portions of Yajna, the authority of obtaining Amrit along with Devas, handsome figures, radiance and knowledge of medicine. As the Aswini Kumars are two in number, Brahma designated the second day of month or 'Dviteeya' as the day of worship to them. Whoever reads or hears the story of Asvini Kumars and recites Narayana Matra would be blessed with noble sons and be relieved of sins.

## Significance of Triteeya as the day of worship to Devi Gauri /Devi Parvati (Rudra Stuti included)

Brahma created Lord Rudra and instructed Him to organise Creation, but Rudra being extremely spiritual executed penance. Meanwhile **Devi Gauri** was born to Daksha Prajapati and was known as Dakshayani. Rudra got disturbed in His 'Tapasya' as Daksha initiated one Yagna which was supported by Lord Vishnu. There was an altercation between Rudra and Vishnu but Brahma intervened as both of them were imperative in the context of Universal Existence and thus declared that both Hari and Hara would be equally crucial. To appease Rudra, Brahma offered a major portion of 'Havis' or the oblations to Agni for distribution to various Devas who sought to cool down Rudra by extolling Him:

Rudra Stuti: 'Bhaganetra haram Devam Pushno danta vinasanam, Stutim kuruth ma Seeghram Geetyirethesthu Namamih-Namo Vishama netraya Nameste Triambakayacha, Namah Sahsara netraya Namasthe Suulipaanine-Namah Khatvanga hasthaaya Dandabhrutey kare, Tvam Deva Hutabhungjwala kotibhanu samaprabahah-Adarshaneyat Deva Mridavijnanatodhuna, Krutamasmabhirevesha Thadatra kshayataam Prabho-Namah Trinetrayatriharaya Shambho, Trisulapaney Vikritasya rupa- Samasta Deveswara Suddha bhava, Praseeda Rudrachyuta Sarvabhava- Pushnosya Dantatmaka Bhima rupa Pralambabhogindra lulinthakanthah, Vishala Dehachyuta Neelakantha Praseeda Visweswara Viswamurthih- Bhagakshi Samsphotana Dakshakarma, Grihanabhagam muhatah pradhanam, Praseeda Deveshvara Neela kantha Prapahinah Sarvagunopapannah-Sitangaraga pratipanna murthyem Kapaladhaarim Tripuraghna Deva, Prapahinah Sarva Bhayashu chaiva Umapathey Pushakaranala janma-Pashyamte Dehagatan Suresh Sargadayo Vedavaraanananta,Saangaan Savidhyan Sapadakramancha Sarvaan Nileenaamsthvayi Deva Deva-Bhava Sarva Mahadeva Pinaakin Rudra the Hara, Natah sma Sarvam Viswesa Aaahinah Parameswara'.

Rudra was pleased with Devas who prevailed on Rudra to wed Devi Gauri eventually. As time passed on, Daksha Prajapati planned another Yagna but did not invite either his daughter or Rudra who ought to have occupied the Prime Seat being eligible for the major portion of the 'Havis'! More than Rudra who was immune from such lapses as not inviting Him, Devi Gauri felt insulted and despite Rudra's protests attended her father's Yagna Ceremony uninvited. Daksha was not only cool at his daughter but started abusing Rudra; she could not control Herself and immolated Her life in Yoga Agni. As a sequel to this most unfortunate development, Rudra created Veerabhadra, got the 'Daksha Yagna' devastated and severed the head of Daksha. Later on, Rudra was reconciled and as Devas sincerely entreated to forgive Daksha in the interest of Universal Governance as he was Prajapati, revived the latter by refixing the head of the Goat meant for Sacrifice at the Yagna. As time rolled on, **Devi Parvati** was born to the King of

Himalayas viz, Himayanth and since Her childhood yearned to wed Lord Siya, A powerful 'Asura' (Demon) named Tarakasura secured boons from Brahma that none in the Universe could kill him except Lord Siva's son, presumably since Lord Siva would never marry, especially after the Daksha incident of Devi Gauri. Brahma and Vishnu accompanied by all the Devas and related Deities approached Lord Siva to marry but Maha Deva was in Tapasya. Devi Parvati in Her firm resolve to wed Siva approached Him to perform services like timely provision of flowers and such other material such as fruits, Dhoop and 'Arthi' (Light) to Siva for enabling worship by Himself to the Supreme Power. Devas utilised the services of 'Mammadha'-son of Lord Narayana- and his wife Devi Sati to somehow draw Siva's attention to Devi Parvati and change Siva's attitude in favour of Devi Parvati and pave the way for their wedding so that Siva would beget a son who could kill the Demon Tarakasura. But unfortunately the desires of Devi Parvati, Devas and indeed the whole world misfired and Siva opened His third eye to punish Manmadha by converting him as Ashes! As time passed, Lord Siva married Devi Parvati and was blessed with Son, Lord Subrahmanya who annihilated Takasura the dreaded Demon. Since the birth and wedding of Devi Gauri as also of Devi Parvati coincided on the *Thriteeya day of a month*, Lord Brahma declared that this day is worthy of special worship and austerity to Devi Gauri / Devi Parvati. Both men and women ought to avoid consumption of salt or salted material and those who observe this practice would certainly become prosperous, healthy and famous.

## Birth of Gajanana, Priority Invocation and adoration on Chaturthi (Ganesha Vrata Vidhana included)

As Devas faced a strange problem of recurring failures as and when they take up a fresh assignment whereas Demons seemed to be going ahead with novel operations, they approached Lord Siva and Devi Parvati to provide a solution. In reply Bhagavan Siva started thinking that among the Panchabhutas (Five Elements), there was an identifiable personification of a Deity among Prithvi (Earth), Varun (Water), Tejas (Fire) and Vayu

(Wind God), but how was it that 'Akash' (Sky) did not have? By so thinking Lord Siva laughed loudly and Devi Parvati could guess by her Jnana Shakti (Power of Knowledge) what Bhagavan was laughing boisterously about. From that energetic hilarity with an open mouth emerged a replica of Siva who was strong, handsome and powerful whom Devi Parvati kept gazing and got mesmerised. Lord Siva got annoyed by the instant reaction of Devi Parvati, became jealous of the Super Boy and infact got angry and cursed him saying that he would possess an elephant face, disproportionate belly and serpented Yagnopaveeth (Holy Thread). Siva was still angry and from His body hair roots kept on multiplying innumerable Vinayaks resembling the original and Lord Brahma flew over the Sky and as 'Akashvani' (a loud announcement from the Sky) declared that Devas should be grateful to Lord Siva to have provided the solution to the problem posed by them and that the various forms of Vinayak which got materialised would indeed ensure that as and when Devas (and human beings) initiated a task they should invoke the blessings of Vinayak foremost. As the announcement from Brahma was heard, Siva was by then cooled down and addressed Vinayaka endearingly; Ganesh Puja:

'Vinayako Vighnakaro Gajasyo Ganesha naamaacha Bhavasya Putrah, Yethecha Sarvam thava yanthu Bhruthya Vinayakayaah Kruura drishtah Prachandah-Vucchushma daanaadi vuvruddhva dehaha Karyeshu siddhim prati paadayanthah, Bhavaamsva Deveshu thadha makeshu kaaryashu chanteshu Mahanubhavat-Agreshu Pujam Labhatenyatha cha Vinashayishyastatha kaarya siddhim' (Hey Putra! Vinayaka, Vighnakara, Gajavadana, Ganesha, Shankara Putra; all these cruel-eyed, harsh and angry Vinayaks will be your servants; those who are desirous of giving well earned materials as 'daanas' or alms be provided with Siddhis or boons. At Yajnas or various Propitious Tasks, all the devotees shall be provided the highest veneration, lest their tasks or worships be discounted').

As Devas performed 'Abhishek' (Sacred Bath to Ganesha, they extolled him as follows:

'Namasthe Gajavaktraya Namasthe Gananayaka, Viyayaka Namastestu Namaste Chanda Vikrama-Namastestu tey Vighna kartha Namaste Sarpa Mekhala Namaste Rudra Vaktrotha Pralambajatharaasrita-Sarva Deva Namaskaaradavighnam kuru Sarvada ('We greet you Gajavadan, Gananayak, Prachanda Vikram, Vighna kartha, Naga bhushana, Rudra Mukha Utpanna, Lambodhara, Avighna Karak, Kalyan Pradata; Sarva devas are greeting you, Kindy ensure that we enjoy Avighnam always). Since Ganapati was born on Chaturthi, this day of each month is worthy of His worship; but Bhadrapada Sukla Paksha Chaturdhi is the most auspicious day for a fulfledged worship with 'Shodasa Upacharas' or Sixteen Services of Avahana (Welcome), Asana (Seating), Padyam (water for washing feet), Arghya (water for sipping), Snana or body wash, Gandham (Sandal wood paste), Dhupam (Incense), Deepam (offering lights), Naivedyam (Food and Fruits) Tambula (betel leaves and nuts), Paneeya (coconut water), Vastram (clothing), Alankaram (Decoration), Abharanam (Jewellery), Stotram (Extolling) and 'Arati' (Camphor lighting).

#### Adulation of 'Nag Devatas' on every 'Panchami' day

Before Sage Mahatapa's explanation to King Prajapal about the significance of Panchami Puja every month, he first narrated the origin of the Serpents. In Lord Brahma's creation, Sage Marichi gave birth to Kashyap and the latter's wife Kadru begot mighty sons like Ananth Nag, Vasuki, Kambal, Karkotak, Padma, Maha Padma, Shankh, Kulik, and Aparajit. No doubt some of these serpents were illustrious and were utilised for Deva Karyas (or tasks entrusted to them by Devas) like Vasuki used for churning the Ocean to secure Amrit, Sesha Nag underneath Lord Narayana as his bed and a few more exceptions, but by virtue of their nature and nurture, the majority of the race of serpents was ferocious, vengeful and crooked utilising their natural tendency of producing poison most of which being ued for killings. In fact some of the notorious leaders of serpents as mentioned above kill for kicks, some out of spite and some for self-defence. Lord Brahma was approached by Devas and Great Sages that the untimely, indiscriminate and defenceless deaths especially among human beings were very frequent, unprovoked and unnatural. Lord Brahma called for a large gathering of Serpents and threatened them for dire consequences and warned them severly; He commanded them to migrate to their abodes permanently to the lower regions of the Universe like Rasatala, Patala and so on. He threatened them that if they did not mend their ways, He would have the immoral serpents exterminated in the ensuing Vaivasvata Manvantara and encourage 'Sarpa Yagnas' as King Janamejaya would indeed execute when only the virtuous ones might manage to survive. In response to the warning by Brahma, most of the venomous serpents did migrate to the lower regions, barring a very few still moving surreptitiously causing sporadic incidents of poisonous killings. Brahma advised the serpents as a race to refrain from the areas where herbs, medicinal plants and Kites fly on the Sky which have a powerful eyesight from far off distances. Unfortunately, even the well meaning serpents of non-poisonous type are hunted out and killed by human beings. But those remaining type are venerated especially girls desirous of marrying good husbands and women craving for children by providing milk and eats. Come Naga Panchami, especially in the week following Deepavali celebrations, women observe fast and refrain from eating sour and milk praparations of food in several parts of Bharat till date.

#### Kartikeva's worship on 'Shasthi' and its auspiciousness

In a ferocious battle between Devas and Demons once, Devas were defeated severely and the lack of a suitable Commander-in- Chief was realised as the major cause for the defeat. Devas and Brahma

approched Maha Deva Siva for a quick solution. It was realised that in the union of Siva and Devi Parvati, an unknown power was created called 'Ahamkar' a Personality Ego or Self-Image. It was this 'Ahamkar' which was personified and created as Lord Kartikeya. Maha Deva declared that Kumar would be the best choice for the position of **Deva Senapati** or the Commander-in-Chief of the Deities. He was named after 'Krittikas' who fed the boy with their breast-milk. Infact, as Sage Mahatapa explained to King Prajapaal, Krittikas, Agni, other Matru Gana, and Devi Parvati, aside from, of course, Maha Deva the Principal Cause and the 'Ahankar' were all responsible for the Genesis of Kartikeya. ['Krittikas' were the the Six wives of Sapta Rishis-named the Pleides or the Nymphs in modern Astronomy; when Lord Siva and Devi Parvati were enjoying conjugal happiness at Kailasa, all the Devas, Brahma and Vishnu sought an emergency audience with Lord Siva who in a hurry spilt his semen on the ground and Agni Deva transformed as a pigeon pecked up the drops but could not bear the inflammation. Maha Deva Himself advised the pigeon to inject the drops into a woman of unparalelled virtue. Agni identified Six Womensupposed to be the Six wives of Sapta Rishis- and injected the drops into the pores of hairs of their body; the Six women too could not bear the extreme effervescence and relocated the drops into the violent flow of River Ganges which in turn carried to the bushes of the reed (Sarkanda) and there appeared a boy of mysterious magnificence. Devi Parvati came to learn of the incident and cursed all the Devas who disturbed Her privacy with Siva and cursed their wives to become barren. Sage Visvamitra appeared at the bushes and named the boy as

**Guha** and bestowed him the totality of Vedic Knowledge and the title Brahmarshi; the Six Krittikas tried to breast feed and the boy solved the problem by assuming six heads and mouths and is called **Shanmukha**.]

Lord Siva gifted Kumar two significant 'toys' to play with, one a live 'Kukkut' (rooster) and branch of Tree as also a play mate named 'Visakha'. All the Devas who present congratulated Kumar and commended ('Stuti') him as follows:

'Bhavasva Deva Senani Maheswarastuta Prabho Shanmukha Kanda Visvesha kukkutadwaja Paavake-Kampitare Kumaresha Skanda Balagrahnuga Jitaare Krounchavidhvamsa Krittikasuta Matruja-Bhutagrahapati sreshtha Paavaki Priya Darshana, Maha Bhutapateh Putra Trilochana Namostutey- Yvam Stutastada Devaihi vavardha Bhavanandanah, Dwadasaadithya samkaso vabhuvaadhuta Darshanah Trilokyamapi tattejasthaapayamaasa Parthiva!'

The birth of Kartikeya at the Krittika Star on the Sixth day of the bright fortnight of Margasira month (Krittika Nakshatra of Shashthi Tithi of Suddha Paksha of Margasirsha Month) brought relief to the Universe, immense joy to the Siva Couple, sense of liberation to all Devas who were indeed the direct beneficiaries since Brahma's boon was that only Siva's son could terminate the Demon Tarakasura and finally great fear and apprehension to Tarakasura and followers! Brahma had formally declared Shashthi of every month would be a day of austerity and fast only with 'Phalaahar' or fruits as food. Those who are deviod of sons, prosperity and status ought to observe the fast and recite the above Karikeya Stuti for instant results.

### Devotion to 'Surya' on 'Saptamis' (Text of Adithya Hridayam included)

The unparalelled and ageless Jnana Shakti of the Supreme Energy is but a token sign on the Sky in the form of Surya's everlasting luminosity and heat, constantly reminding human beings of the wonder of Creation. The unique radiance of Surya on the Sky providing fleeting glimpses of 'Mahan Atma' is named **Ravi.** Surya is also called **Bhaskar** or **Prabhakar.** As he is visible during daytime, Surya is called **Diwakar.** Since He is the known Deity from the beginning, one calls Him **Aditya.** Although the presence of Surya was a matter of immense happiness initially, Devas started to feel the excessive illumination and heat and as such prayed to Him to tone down these to bearable levels; They said that He was too sizzling and literally burning Devalokas; the glow emerging from the Chariot is too dazzling to look at; that He was always invited to share the oblations of Ghee ( Classified butter) in Yagnas and they were grateful to do so; but He must become far less blistering and radiant to limits of tolerance and that they would sincerely beseech Him to do so. Sun God responded to the requests of Devas and since that day of 'Saptami' became visible at Prithvi also initially. Those human beings on Earth sincerely worship Surya Deva along with recitation of 'Aditya Hridayam' on this day would certainly have their desires fulfilled.

Aditya Hridayam: 'Thato Yuddha parishrantham Samare chinmayaasthitham, Raavanam chaagratho dhrushtva Yuddhaya Samupasthitham / Daivathescha samaagamya drashtumaabhayagato ranam, Upagamya braveedrama magastyo Bhagavan Rishih/ Raama Raama mahabaho, Shrunu Guhyam Sanaathanam, Ena sarvaanareenyathsa Samere vijayashasi. Aditya Hridayam Punyam Sarva Shathru vinaasanam, Jayaavaham Japennithyam akshayyam pramam Shivam / Sarva Mangala maanganglyam sarva paapa pranasanam chintashoka prashamana mayurvardhhana muttamam / Rashmimantham Samudyantam Devasura Namaskrutam, Pujayaswa vivaswantham Bhaaskaram Bhuvaneshwaram/ Sarva Vedaanthako heysshas Tejasvi rasmibhaavanah yesha Devaassura gananlokan paathi gabhastibhih / Esha Brahmecha Vishnuscha Shiva Skanda Prajapathih, Mahendro Dhanadah Kaalo Yama Somohyapaampathim/ Pitaro Vasavassaadhya Hyashvino marutomaruh, Vaayurvahnih Prajaaprana ritukartha Prabhakarah/ Aaditya Savithassuryah khagah pushaa Gabhastiman, Suvarna sadruso Bhaanuh vishva retha Divaakarah/ Hardasyva ssahasararchi Sapta Saptir Marichiman / Timironmadhana Shambhustwasthta Martandam Anushman/ Hiranyagarbhas sisirahstapano Bhaskaro Ravih, Agnigarbhodite putrah sankhassisira naashanah/ Vyomanathahstamo bhedi Rig yajur Saama paaragah Ghanavrishtirapam mitro vindhya Veedheeh plavangamaha/ Aatapee mandalir mrutyur pingalah sarva thaapanah, Kavirvisvo Maha Tejah rakta sarva ssabodbhavah/ Nakshatragana Taaraana madhipo Viswa bhaavana, Tejasamapi Tejasvi Dwadashatma namosthutey/Namah purvaya giraye paschimaadrayenamah, Jyotiragaanam dinadhi pathaye namah/ Jayaya Jaya Bhadraya Haryasvaya namonamah, Namo namassahasramso Adityaya nomonamah/ Namah Ugraya Veeraya Saarangaya namonamah, Namah Padma Prabhodaya Marthaandaya namah / Brahmeshanaachuteshaya Suryaadithya varchase, Bhaaswate Sarva bhakshaya Roudraya Vapushe namah / Tamoghnaya Himaghnaya Shatrughnaya amithatmanye Krithaghna hanyaya Devaya Jyotishampathaye namah/ Taptachaamika rabhyaya Haraye Vishvakarmane, Namasthamobhignaya Ruchaye Loka Saakshiney/ Naasayatyesha vibhutam tha Deva srujatih Prabhuh, Payatyesha Tapatyesha yarshatyesha gabhasitih/ Esha Supteshu Jaagarti Bhuteshu parinishthithah, Esha evagnihothramcha phalam chaivagnihotrinam/ Vedantha kratavaschiva Kratuunam Phalamevacha, Yani krutyani lokeshu Sarva esha Ravi Prabhuh/ Yena maapathsyu krushcheshu kanthareshu bhayeshucha, kirthayan Purusha kaschinnavaseedhati Raghaya/ Pujasvinamekagro Deva Devam Jagatpatim, ethah Trigunitham jatva Yuddesh vijaishyasi/ Asmin kshane Maha Baaho Rayanam twam Vadhishyasi, Evamuktwa Agasthyo jagam yadhagatham/ Edhat srutwa Maha Teja nashta shoka abhavat tada, Dharayamasa Suptreetho Raghava prayathtmaavan/ Adithya preksha japtwa thu pavan Harsha mavaptavaan, Thriraachamya Suchirbhuthva dhanuraadhaaya Viryavan/ Ravanam preshya hrushtatma yuddhaya samupagamat, Sarva yathnena Mahata vadhetasya dhruto bhavat/ Adhaaraveera vadha

nireekshya Ramam, Muditamana paramam prahurshyamana/ Nisicharapathi Samakshyam vidhitwa, Suragana madhyo vachaswarethi/

(A meditatve Lord Rama was about to commence the battle with Ravana and an all-knowing Sage Agasthya who joined Gods to witness the Great Battle assured that the victory would indeed be Lord Rama's for sure!

This Sacred Hymn 'Adithya Hridayam' dedicated to Sun God is highly propitious, extinguishes all enemies, ushers Glorious Victory and is worthy of reciting always ensuring eternal bliss. This Holy Prayer is a guarantee to achieve Prosperity; destroys sins, anxieties and wavering thoughts as also secures long life with contentment. We pray to Sun God as He has fully risen on the sky and is revered by Devas for the high splendour providing to the entire Universe. He embodies the totality of Celestial Deities and is self-radiant nourished by His own rays and heat, energising the whole world with its inhabitants including all the Objects of God's creation. He is Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Skanda, Prajapathi, Mahendra, Kubera, Kala, Soma, and Varuna. He is Pitras, Vasus, Sadhyas, Asvini Kumars (Physicians of Gods), Marud Ganas responsible for breeze, Manu, Vayu, Agni, Prana, the Season Maker and Prabhakara, the Provider of radiance. He is the son of Aditi, Savitha, Surya, Traversor of Sky, the Energy to perform various things, the cause for rains, the One to create shining Golden rays and the Maker of the Day. He has propitiously green horses, emits innumerable rays, rides seven horses, dispels darkness, destroys life, enables rebirth and provides unending effulgence. He is the Sourcer of Gold, imparts coolness, provides heat, causes illumination, has fire within, praised by one and all, melts off snow and enjoys sky-wide rides. He is the Lord of the Sky; Master of Rig, Yajur and Sama Vedas; cause of heavy rains, friend of water and rapid traveller over Vindhya Mountains. He originates heat, causes death, provides shape to the Universe, assumes colour of gold, heats up everything, connoisseur of knowledge, loved universally, Manager of the Universe and Great Organiser. Our Salutations to Him who has Twelve Forms, is the Chief of Stars, Planets and Zodiac and the Great Illuminator. Our reverences to Him who rises from the East and sinks in the West, the Master of Jyotirganas, the Sovereign of the Days and the Lord of Objects that shines. Our veneration to Him the embodiment and basis of Victories and Eternal Rider of the memorable Green Horses, the immortal personality of Thousand Rays and the Illustrious Son of Aditi Devi. Greetings to Him, who is a terror to the Vicious, a hero to the admirers, a prompt and fast voyager of the Sky, an efficient opener of Lotus and an efficient Energiser of lives. Our worship to Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva as also Surya who is blessed with Aditi; He is ever shining, consumes everything and has a formidable form of Rudra! He destroys darkness, snow and enemies; has a huge body, devastates the ungrateful and the Lord of everything that shines. Our Salutations to Him who is yellow like molten gold, has the form of Fire, is the Creator of the World and the demolisher of ignorance; He endears one and all, and the ready witness to all! This God facilitates everything to grow and also demolishes; with His powerful rays, He generates extreme heat and also causes heavy rains! He is awake and active when everybody is fast asleep without even our knowing about it; He is the Fire Sacrifice Himself and also the one who performs the Sacrifice too. All the pious tasks carried on in the Universe related to Vedas, Yagnas and Yagas are Lord Surya Himself. Hey Raghava, any one who recites this Hymn in praise of Adithya in times of danger or suffering or in wild forests, and in times of fear shall indeed cross over the problems for sure. Do worship this Lord of the Universe with single minded devotion and faith thrice and indeed the Victory shall be yours. Sri Rama, the Her of Heros, you shall annihilate the Demon Ravana in a second, thus said Sage Agasthya and left his way. On hearing this, Lord Rama became free from any sorrow and prepared Himself to execute the Prayer with utmost devotion; He cleaned Himself, did 'Achamana'thrice, lifted the bow towards Sun God and was excited with happiness to commence the Battle. He faced Ravana with the firm resolve to destroy the Demon. The Lord of Skies Bhagavan Adithya, along a bevy of Gods, blessed Rama to kill the Demon forthwith.]

#### Manifestations of 'Ashta Matrikas' and worship on 'Ashtami'

The entire Universe was upset by the wickedness and glaring transgression of morals by the uninterrupted evils displayed by Demon Andhakasura [Siva Purana states that Devi Parvati was playful with Maha Deva by closing His eyes tightly and from the Lord's perspiration on His forehead a boy of muscular strength was created.] Eventually Andhakasura became the Unconquered King of the Lower Regions like Patala and tormented the entire Universe. After a series of battles were won with Devas who were driven away from the Heaven, Indra approached Brahma and Vishnu who too were ineffective to conquer the Demon as he was fortified with the boons of Brahma. They had finally approached Maha Deva and to His utter surprise He too could not conquer him as each time Maha Deva applied His trident against the Demon, blood streams of the Demon's body created endless number of Andhakasuras with each drop of his blood. Lord Rudra became so infuriated that from His face produced a mighty conflagration or an inferno-like flame viz. the **Yogishwari** Shakti. Vishnu too created a highly powerful Shakti named Devi Vaishnavi and other Deities followed suit by creating their Shakti counter-parts viz. Brahmi from Brahma, Kaumari from Kartikeya, Mahendri from Indra, Yami or Poushunyam from Yama, Varahi from Varaha Deva and Maheswari from Narayana. The Eight Matrikas represented the Eight Mind born Enemies viz. Kama or Desire from Yogeswari, Krodha or fury from Maheswari, lobha or avarice from Vaishnavi, Mada or Ego from Brahmani, Moha or infatuation from Kaumari, Poushunya or wickedness from Yamadharani, Matsarya from Indrani and Jealousy from Varahi. The blood streams from Andhaka's body got dried up by the Matrikas; the Rakshasa Maya or the illusion created by the Demon was terminated and Andhaka too got exterminated. The combined strengh of Marikas is an exraordinary might of Eight Shaktis providing security and propitiousness to devotees and Lord Brahma declared 'Ashtami Thithi' in the Monthly Calendar. Those who observe this particular day with fast by eating 'Bel patra' with devotion are blessed with excellent health, well being and contentment.

# Devi Durga's carnage of Vetrasur and Her 'puja' on Navami (Durga Stuti included)

As a King of vore called Sindhudweep carried out a relentless 'Tapasya' to avenge the killing of his son by Indra, a beautiful woman approached him introducing herself as Vetravati (a River), the wife of Deity Varuna, since she was infatuated with the King. The King obliged and she was blessed with a boy instantly who was named Vetrasur who became a powerful King of Pragjyotishpuram, eventally the Lord of Sapta Dwipas and conquered all the Deities and Indra. Brahma wondered as to how a single Demon and followers could control the Deities and succeed to pierce through the ever potent and Universally spread out net of 'Maya' or the Adi Shakti! Even as Brahma was seriously thinking on these lines, there emerged from water a figure with white robes, bejewelled, head-geared, sheet of astonishing brightness, and eight arms wearing Chakra (Wheel), Saranga (Conchshell), Gada (Mace), Paasha (chord), Khadga (Sword), Dhanush (bow) and Thuuneer (to keep arrows). It was child's play for **Devi Durga** as seated on a lion to slay the potent followers and of Vetrasura with ease and Maha Deva Shankara Himself complimented and praised as follows: 'Jayasva Devi Gayatri Maha Maaye Maha Prabho, Maha Devi Mahabhaage Maha Satve-Divyagandhanu liptanga Divyastragdhama bhushithey, Vedamatar namastubhyam Tryaksharasthey Maheswari, Trilokasthey Tri-tatvasthey Trivahnisthey Tri Sulini-Trinetrey Bhouma Vaktre cha Bhimanetre Bhayanake-Kamala asanaje Devi Sarasvati Namostutey, Namah Pankaja patrakshi Mahamayamrutastravey-Sarvagey Sarva Bhuteshu Swaahakaarey Swadembikey, Sampurnam Purnachandraabhey Bhasvaraangey Bhavodbhavey-Maha Vidye Maha Vaidye Maha Daityavinasini, Mahabuddhiryudbhave Devi Veetashoke kiratini-Tvam nitistvam Mahabhaage Twam Gostvam Goustva- maksharam, Tvam Dhirastwam Sristatvam omkarastatve chapi

Paristhitha'. (Hey Maha Maya, Mahaprabha, Mahabhaga, Mahotsava, Maha Devi Gayatri-My Greetings-your body parts smeared with Sandalwood paste and decorated with Divinely 'Mala', hey Veda Mata or Mother of Vedas and Maheswari, My Greetings! Hey Trilokastha, Tritatvastha, Tri vahnistha, Tri Sulini, Trinetra, Bhima Vaktra, Bhima netra, Bhayanaka, Kamalasan's daughter Sarasvati, My Greetings! Hey Maha Maya with Lotus like eyes, Omnipresent, Sarva Bhuteswari, Svahakara and Svadhakara Rupini Ambika; With Full Moon like Face and Illuminated Body, an embodiment of Knowledge and Medicine, Great Annihilator of Demons, Fund of Maha Buddhi, Sorrowless, Devi Kiratini, Mahabhaga, You are the personification of Morality, Sarasvathi, You are the origin of Sound and Undiminishing wisdom, you are the Courage, Omkarasthita and The Provider of Boons, I greet you).

Lord Brahma requested Devi Durga to shift to Himalayas and let all the Deities worship Her. The Navami of each month should be celebrated with sincere dedication to Devi Durga by consuming only material made of wheat flour after observing day long fast till the evening and by reciting Durga Sukti as given above. For sure, men and women who keep this as a regular practice on Navami days would attract Devi Durga's kind attention.

#### Reverence to 'Dasa Dishas' (Ten Directions) on 'Dashami'

Concerned about the population of the Universe and their mind-set of Directions so that orderliness should prevail to let them realise where they were, Lord Brahma devised a Plan. He created from His ears Six Devis viz. Purvi, Dakshina, Prathichi, Uttara, Urdhva, and Adhara- East, South, West, North, Above and Below respectively. The four other Devis thus created viz. Shobhaniya, Rupavati, Maha Bhagya Shalini and Gambhira Yukta represented the intermittent Four 'Directions'. These virgins who were created requested Lord Brahma to name Lokpals also who would be the male counterparts and Brahma named them too viz. Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirruti, Varun, Vayu, Kubera and Eshana; Brahma Himself agreed to man Urdhva and the remaining Tenth Dasha (Direction) was spare. The Devi-Lokanayak equation was determined by Brahma. He also selected Dashami to observe the day for penance and eat only 'Dahi' or curd to protect human beings from movement of Grahas, changes of 'Ayanas'or Solar Progress and transformations of 'Ritus' or Seasons and astrological and astronomical aberrations.

#### Kubera the Lord of Wealth worshipped on 'Ekadasi' Days

In the process of Creation, Brahma happened to bellow and the wind inside His body got momentarily disconnected when a Divine Figure was materialized from the gush of air from His mouth. Brahma named the Figure as Kubera and assigned him the task of protecting the material prosperity and possessions of all the Deities. He also made Kubera the Head of the Yaksha Clan to execute the assignment of Brahma. Also, worship of Kubera on Ekadashi day by cooking eats with the help of clean Agni- preferably by the person who eats himself after day-long fast would instantly make him eligible for wealth and also protection of wealth so earned.

### Adoration to Bhagavan Vishnu on Dwadasi Day destroys sins

Super Power Paratpar Narayan was concerned that to facilitate the process of Creation there ought to be a personified Primary Murthi who should also look after the administration of the Universe and thus manifested Himself as Vishnu. He entrusted the tasks to Goddess Yoga Nidra for the time being and fell into meditative sleep Himself when a lotus sprouted from His navel on top of which sat Lord Brahma

who would now on assume the duty of Creation. The Supreme Narayan was happy with these developments and blessed Vishnu to oversee Creation by Brahma and be responsible for the upkeep of the Universe by himself. Almighty Narayan then fortified with Vishnu with several powers in various forms; He blessed Vishnu to dispel all kinds of ignorance all over the Universe with a Sword gifted by Almighty; He gifted a Kaal Chakra or the Sudarhan Wheel to terminate all the Evil Forces sprouting their heads from time to time; He desired that the sins of the Worlds be destroyed by a mace provided to Vishnu; He also strengthened one of the hands by the energy of Vayu- the Wind God- by a conchsell as also decorated by a Vyjayanti mala. Almighty Narayan instructed Sun and Moon to decorate Vishnu's figure in the forms of Srivatsa and Kaustubh and redouble the Power of Vishnu. Almighty further coached Garuda as Vishnu's Carrier and Goddess Lakshmi as His Consort. Thus Supreme Narayana strengthened Lord Vishnu physically, mentally and spiritually as the Personification of Himself to assume the tasks ahead. He also made an arrangement that from then on, Vishnu's worship all over the Three Worlds would be observed on Dwadasis during every month and those human beings-be they men or womenwho keep fast till the dusk while reciting 'Vishnu Stotras' and eat 'Ghrita-pura Bhojan' or meals with Ghee (Classified butter) are destined to reach Heavens after death and enjoy peaceful and contented life therebefore! Those who read or hear about Vaishnavi Srishti or Vishnu's Glories should qualify themselves for better times ahead.

#### Dharma (Virtue), its profile over Yugas and worship on Trayodasis

As Paramatma set the process of Creation, He felt that there was need for forming an Entity to sustain Virtue and set off the forces of the Evil and instantly, there appeared a Bull-shaped 'Purush' from the right ear of Almighty with white ear-rings and white garland and the latter asked to maintain and promote Virtue, Justice, Penance, Purity and Charity. The Dharma Purush so manifested by the Almighty as a Bull would have four legs in Satya Yuga, three legs in Treta Yuga, two legs in Dvatar Yuga and with just one leg in Kali Yuga. The four legs of Dharma Purush are 'Dravya' (Prosperity), 'Guna'

(Characteristic), 'Kriya' (Industriousness / Sincerity) and 'Jaathi' (Caste). The mix of these four ingredients of Dharma's feet denotes the strength of these legs Yuga after Yuga. In fact, Brahma was impressed by the way that Dharma Purush solved a controversy raised by Moon God in enticing Devi Tara the wife of Brihaspati (the Deva Guru was a mother figure to Moon as well as all Devas! [There was an impending war between Devas and Demons since Sage Sukracharya the Guru of Demons sought revenge against Brihaspati and thus espoused the cause of Moon by assuring the help of Demons to wage a war. Dharma Purush used his good offices among Moon / Devi Tara, Sukracharya and Demons on one side and Brihaspati, Indra and Devas on the other. The delicate issue was settled by restoring Devi Tara back to Brihaspathi's residence, even though Tara was carrying a child of Moon and thus averted Deva-Danava war!] Lord Brahma who flew down to Swarga Loka from Satya loka by his Swan chariot, complimented Dharma Purush and commended that from then onward human beings should observe 'Trayodasi' Day, perform Shraddh and offer 'Ksheer' (Sweet Milk and cooked Rice) to fore fathers to ensure that their past sins are demolished and longevity and well-being assured.

### Manifestation of Rudra Deva and penance on Chaturdasis

Unable to commence the task of Creation at the beginning, Brahma got frustrated, angry and even failed to contol emotions by crying away, when a Powerful Manifestation of the Supreme Energy evolved as an incredible Illumination appearing gradually as a 'Puran Purusha' entreating Brahma not to cry; '*Twam ma Rudd*! Hence the Maha Purusha was named 'Rudra'. Brahma desired that Rudra should take up the task

of Creation but the latter jumped into water to execute penance. He got disturbed by the 'Yagna' being performed by Daksha Prajapati and was enraged as the flames from His mouth created

Ghosts and Goblins. He destroyed the Yagna but at the intervention of Brahma was cooled down; He was pleased when a major part of the fruits of the Yajna was offered to Him and as Devas eulogised Him as follows: 'We salute you Devadeva, Jatajutadhari, Blood red Trinetra; you are worshipped by Bhutas and Bethals sporting ferocious serpents all over your body, especially as your Yagnopateeth (Sacred Thread); Your visage is ferocious, Your laughter is frightening; You are Maha Bhutapathi, Kapardi, Sthanu, Pushna danta Vinasaya, Bhaga Netraya; in future you are going to annihilate the most dreaded Tripura and Andhaka demons; We salute Kalisavasi, Gajacharma dhari, Vikaral Urdhvakeshava Bhairava, Fire like Bhayankar, Chandramastak dhari, destroyer of Daruvana, Trisuladhari, Wearer of Sarparaja Kankana, Neelakantha, Badavagni mukha, Vedantha Vedya, Yagna Murthi, Daksha Yagna Dhvamsi, Visweswara Deva, Siva, Shambhu, Bhava, Devadi Deva, Bestow to us the Secrets of Vedas and Shastras!'

Thereafter Brahma declared that worship of Rudra Deva on the 'Chaturdasi Day' of a month by sincere devotion and austerity would be blessed.

#### Reverence to Pitras on 'Amavasya' day and benefits

As Lord Brahma was engaged in the serious task of Creation, He became aware of 'Tanmatras' or the subtle forms of matter viz. interaction of the Three 'Gunas' or characteristics viz. Satvik, Rajasik and Tamasik as also 'Panchendriyas', 'Jnanendriyas' and 'Karmendriyas'. The Tanmatras displayed themselves in 'Dhumra Varna' or ash colour and evinced interest to reach Heavens. But Brahma convinced them that the entire community of Tanmatras belonged to the Pitras and whatever veneration was provided by 'Grihasthies' (householders) would belong to Tanmatras too, For instance, Brahmanas execute reverences to Pitras through 'Agni'by way of 'Nitya' (regular), 'Naimittika' (as per needs of functions to be prformed) and 'Kamya' (as per desires of the householders) or Parvana Shraddhas; similarly Kshatriyas and Vaisyas too perform 'Agni Karyas' or reverences to Pitras through Fire-oriented tasks. Likewise 'tarpans' or libations are performed periodically. In all these cases whatever benefits would accrue to Pitras would be accumulated to Tanmatras also. Brahma thus indicated 'Dakshinayan' route to Pitras as also to Tanmatras. Moreso, He designated 'Amavasya' as the most important day for worship to 'Pitras' and Tanmatras as well. Human beings perform Tarpanas along with 'Kusha' and 'Tilas' on Amavasyas falling in each month which would indeed provide contenment to Pitras as well as Tanmatras. Thus Amavasya is required to be the special day when fast is observed and 'tildaan' is performed without fail, and that would not only give satisfaction to Pitras but the Kartas or the Performing Devotees who are provided 'Iham' or during the current birth of prosperity, peace, health and longevity but also 'Param' or post life. (Details of Amavasya Tarpana given elsewhere in this Write-up)

#### Daksha's curse to Moon, reappearance and worship on Pournamis

One of Lord Brahma's distinguished Manasa Putras named Sage Atri begot Soma

(Moon) who too was illustrious. Prajapati Daksha married off all his twenty seven daughters to Soma. But the latter was ignoring all the daughters, excepting Devi Rohini. The rest of them complained to their father Daksha who reprimanded Soma to behave but Soma ignored the repeated warnings of Daksha. Out of exasperation, Daksha cursed Soma to gradually decline and finally disappear. In the absence of Soma, there were far reaching adverse effects in the Universe. Devas including Vanaspati felt Soma's absence and so did human beings, trees, animals and worst of all medicinal plants, herbs and so on. The Sky was dark and the Stars too lost the shine. As Devas approached Vishnu, He advised the solution of Churning

the Ocean by both Devas and Danavas and latter too agreed to the proposal for the lure of securing 'Amrit'. In the process of churning, Moon was given birth again. This had brought great relief to Devas, human beings whose 'Ekadasha Indriyas' (Eleven Body parts), 'Pancha Bhutas' (Five Elements), Solah Kshetra Devatas, Trees and Medicines. Even Rudra's head was without Soma and so did water. Lord Brahma blessed Pournima thithi and selected the day for worship to Chandra Deva when fast is viewed propitious along with token amount of money and material as charity. That specific day 'Yava' Bhojan (Barley food) or barley made material is considered to bless a person with Gyan (Knowledge), radiance, health, prosperity, foodgrains and salvation.

#### Concepts of 'Bhakti' (Devotion) and 'Aradhana' (Worship) Explained

After Sage Mahatapa explained to King Dharmapal about select Deities, their origin, brief procedure of worship as also the specific days appropiate of worship to the Deities, Devi Prithvi sought to know from Deva Varaha as to who said that 'Bhay' or feeling leads to 'Sadhana' or practice; in other words, a seed helps to germinate a plant. Varaha Deva also clarified that wealth or 'Jap' (meditation) were not the suitable means of Realisation but 'Bhakti' (Devotion) would certainly be. Bhakti could be of various forms based on the 'Kayak way' or Physical action such as fasting, one meal a day, or 'Jagarans' (or waking up through night) and so on; or the 'Manasic' way such as observance of Truth, Non violence, 'Asteyam' or non stealing, Brahmacharyam, Dharma Pravartana etc; or the 'Vachaka' way including observance of silence, 'Adhyayan' or reading Scriptures, 'Kirtan' (Singing Hymns) etc. In this context, Varaha Bhagavan cited an example of a great Brahmana 'Tapsvi'named Aruni who was emerging from river after bathing and faced a 'Vyagh' (Hunter) with his arrows drawn in search of a kill. The Hunter had indeed decided to kill the Brahmin but changed his mind and instead saved the Brahman from a pouncing tiger nearby. In fact the tiger too got frightened by the loud and desperate shout of the Brahmin saying 'Om Namo Narayana'. Suprisingly, the tiger died and out came a handsome male figure who was a King in his previous birth but was cursed by Brahmanas since he became arrogant thinking that he knew all the Scriptures known to all the Brahmanas put together. The curse was to be revesed when the tiger would hear a sincere chanting of Om Namo Narayana. The Vyagh who witnessed the chain of events became an instant convert from his hunting profession and begged of the Brahmana to reveal a way out from his erstwhile sinful way of life. Tapasvi Aruni blessed the Vyagh, directed him to perform a twin action of 'Vrath' (Worship) viz. refraining from eating cut and impure items and telling lies and left. As the Vyagh desired to at least eat dried leaves from trees, a shout from the Sky (Akashvani) barred from eating 'Apavitru' or impure food! Thus the Vyagh could not eat anything remembering the instructions of his Brahmana Guru. Meanwhile Maha Muni Durvasa arrived and demanded good food like cooked rice/wheat and accompanying items as he was hungry. This led to further misery to the Vyagh and wondered as to how the situation could be saved. In despair he saw up to the sky and prayed to his Guru and as though the Guru responded and to his surprise there fell a golden container from the sky! The Vyagh requested Durvasa Muni to wait for a while to beg / borrow from the well- to- do men and women nearby. After returning with food, the Vyagh requested Sage Durvasa to wash his feet before eating. But Durvasa was too tired to go back to the river and there was no vessel to fetch water from. The Vyagh remembered the Guru again, and an idea was provided; he prayed to the River and brought it upto Durvasa's feet! Durvasa was amazed and blessed the Vyagh to become a Sage, a Great Gyani and an erudite Veda expert to be named Satvatapa! Durvasa told him that the features and 'Purva Gyan' or past awareness of Vyagh were destroyed especially as he performed penance by fasts literally upto death and as such his earlier body resumed a 'Tapomaya' and pure body eversince. Satyapal desired to know the fine distinction of the two bodies. Durvasa corrected Satyapal that actually there were three such Physiques: the first body belonging to a cruel and sinful Vyagh, the second one of a 'Dharmic and Vratayukth'- a Virtuous and penanceful- body and the third body would be of 'Atindriya' stage (viz. Adharmatmika, Dharmatmika and Dharma Dharmatmika). When a human is stated to be immune of

Pancha Tanmatrikas, Pancha Gyanendriyas, and Pancha Bhutas, that would be the stage of 'Brahma Tatva'! That Supreme Consciousness is of Pundarikaksha Himself. As this was explained by Durvasa, Satyapal had a genuine doubt that those who possessed adequate money could only intiate the process of Dharma through Yagnas and charity. Durvasa corrected him at once that money or charity are no doubt the initial steps depending on the affordability and willingness provided the Performers concerned are not indulging in display or show; but a devotee has more effective ways open in the Bhakti Marg, which invariably leads to the 'Aradhana' Marg. It was in this context that Sage Durvasa emphasised on devotion and worship by performing **Vratas.** 

## Effectiveness of 'Dwadasi' Vrathas related to Vishnu's 'Dasavataras' ['Shodasopachara Vidhana' or Procedure of Sixteen Services included]

Sage Durvasa outlined the 'Vrata Vidhan' of 'Sukla Dwadasi' Vratas to Satyapal, which mostly related to the importance of Lord Vishnu's Ten Incarnations.

Matsya Vrata related to the rescue of Devi Bhumi by Lord Vishnu from Rasatala in the Incarnation of Matsya is to be performed in the month of *Margaseersha*. On Dashami day itself, Deva Puja and Havan to Agni are executed and Havan Prasad be consumed. On the following Ekadasi day, one should perform fast and worship to Pundarikaksha by the 'Sankalpa' or resolve pleading Him that just as He rescued Prithvi, He should rescue him too and recite Om Nano Narayana Manthra. Next morning, Prithvi and Varun (Earth and Water) be invoked and Ashtanga Narayana Puja be performed by touching the concerned limbs of the Deity's Murthi and reciting the Mantras as follows: Om Keshavayanamah (charanam Pujayami / feet), Damodarayanamah (katim / waist), Narasimhayanah (vurum or two thighs), Srvatsadharinenamh (kantham / throat), Sripathayenamah (Vakshasthal / chest), Trilochanayanamah (Bahum / hands), Swaminenamah (Shiram / head), Rathangadharinenamah (chakra), Shankarayanamah (Shankha), Gambhirayanamah (Gada), and Shantamurthayenamh (Kamal). Then the Puja commences by offering Garland and Chandana to the Kumbha with water.

**('Shodasopacharas'** (Sixteen Services) to be performed to the Deity installed would be as follows: 'Avahayami' (Welcome); 'Suvarnarathna simhasanam samarpayami' (offering a Golden Throne as improvised); 'Padayoh Paadyam Samarpayami' (washing the feet of the Deity); 'Hastayorarghyam Samarpayami (providing water to clean hands); 'Achamaneeyam Samarpayami' (offering water for sipping); 'Abhishekam'or 'Suddhodaka Snanam' (Bathing) while reciting the following Mantra: 'Om aapohishtha mayo bhuvah thaa na urjey dadhatana Maheranaya chakshasey, Yo vassivatamo rasah thasya bhajayateha nah, usateeriya maatharah, thasma aranga maamayah, yasya kshayaya jinyathaha aapo janaatha cha nah; Snaananatharam Shuddhaachamaneeyam Samarpayami; Vastra yugmam samarpayami ( two pieces of Cloth); wear Yagnopaveetam or the Sacread Thread by reciting the Mantra: 'Om Yagnopaveetam Paramam Pavitram, Prajaapateryat sahajam purastath, Aaayushyamagryam pratimuncha Shubhram Yagnopaveetam balamastu Tejaha'; offer next Gandham (Sandal paste) by reciting the Mantra: Om Gandhadwaraam duradharshaam nityapushtham kareeshineem Eswareegum sarva Bhutanaam tha mihopahvaye shriyam; then a short Puja of Sixreen names with flowers; Dhupam (Incense) by reciting the Mantram 'Vanasthyudbhavaihi divyaih naanaa Gandhiih samyutaha Aaghreyah Sarva Devaanam Dhupoyam pratigruhyataam; then Deepam darsayaami (Oil soaked vick lighting) by uttering 'Saajyam Trivarti Samyuktam vahnina yojitham Priyam, Grihaana Mangalam Deepam Thrilokya thimiraapaham Bhaktya Deepam Prayacchaami Devaaya Paramaathmane thrahimam narakaadghoraat Divya Jyotirnamosthuthe'; offer Pushpam (flowers); then Naivedyam (Offering Full Meal) with the following

Mantra: 'Om bhurbhavah suvah thatsavithurvarenyam Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi Dhiyoyonah prachodayat satyam tvarthena parishinchaami, Amritamastu Amrithopasmtarana masi, Om Praanaya swha, Om Apaanaya swaha, Om Vyanaya swaha Om Samaanaaya swah, Madhye madhye Paaneeyam samarpayami, uttaraaposanam samarpayami- hastha prakshaalanam samarpayami paaada prakshhalanam Samarpayami, Suddhaachamaneeyam samarpayami (by sprinkling water and cirle round the items meant for 'Naivedyam' and say 'Satyam tvarthena parishinchami' during day time or say 'Rutamtva Satyena Parishinchami' if the offering is in night; then comes Tambulam (betel and nuts) by reciting the following Mantra: 'Puugiphalaissa Karpuriah Nagavalleedalairyutham Muktaachurnena samyuktam Thaambulam prathiguhyataam'; therafter there should be 'Karpura Aaarathi'/ Neerajanam ( camphor lit lighting with hands by showing to the Deity while bells are sounded along with the following Mantra: 'Om Gaanaam tya Ganapatigum havamahe kavim Kaveena mupamasravastamam, Jyeshtha rajam Brahmanaam Brahmanaspata Aaa naha srunvannnuthi bhih seeda saadanam'; then Mantra Pushpa Mantram and Veda Pathanam etc. are offered by reciting the relevant Mantras. Then follows 'Anyadha Sharanam naasti Mantram' along with three circumambulations by reciting: 'Yanikaanicha paapani Janmamtara krithaanicha thani thani Pranasyanthi pradakshina Padey Padey, Paapoham Paapakarmaham Paapaatma Paaapa Sambhavaha, Trahi maam kripaya Deva Sharanaagatavatsalaha, Anyadha Sharanam naasti thyameva Sharanam mamah thasmat kaarunya bhaavena raksha raksha Janaardana. Om Maha Vishnayey Namah, Atma Pradakshina Namaskaran Samarpayami, Chhatram Aachhadayami, Chamaram Veejayami, Nritthyam Darsayami, Geetham Sraavayaami, Andolika marohayami, Ashvaanaanaarohayami, Gajaanaarohayami, Samasta Raajopachaara Shaktyukapachaara Bhaktyupachaara Mantropachaara Pujaam samarpayami; Mantriheenam kriyaaheenam Bhaktiheenam Janardana, Yatpujitam maya Deva paripurnam tha dasthute]

Thereafter, Brahmanas be satisfied with full meal and Dakshina (Charity).

The execution of the Vrath as above would provide longevity, good children, 'Dhan' and Dhanya (Prosperity and fame).

**Kurma Vrata** is on the basis of the Lord Vishnu's enormous role in His Incarnation as Tortoise to stabilise the massive mountain of Manthara in the context of churning the Great Ocean to produce several holy objects and finally the 'Amrit' on Shukla Dwadashi of *Pousyha* month. The procedure of the Vrata is similar as in the case of Matsya Vrata, excepting the Ashtanga Puja Mantras of Lord Janardana would be 'Om Kurmayanamah'

(feet), Om Naranayanamah (katim), Om Sankarshanayanamh (abdomen), Om Vishokayanamah (chest), Om Bhavayanamah (throat), Om Subahavey Namah (two hands), and Om Vishalayanamah (Chakra). The fruits of executing the Vrata with faith and diligence would help yield instant obliteration of sins, excellent family life and salvation.

**Varaha Vrata** is to celebrate the victory of Lord Keshava over the killing of Demon Hiranyakasipu and uplifting Prithvi. The Vrata is prformed on Shukla Dwadashi of *Magha* month. The relevant Ashtanga Mantras are: Om Varahayanamah (feet), Om Madhavaya namah (katim), Om Khetrajaya Namah (Stomach), Om Vishvarupayanah

(Chest), Om Sarvajnayanamah (throat), Om Prajapataye namah (Head), Om Pradyumnayanamah (hands), Om Divyastrayanamah (Sudarshan Chakra), and Om Amrithodbhavanamah (Sankham). The 'Vrata Phal' or the benefits of performing the Vrath are immediate Sowbhagya, Laksmi and Tripti (contentment).

Nrisimha Vrata is to signify the appearance of Narasimha Deva in the dual form of Man-Lion to liberate Devotee Illustrious Prahlada from the extreme cruelties of Demon Hiranyaksha and is achieved on Shukla Dwadashi of *Phalguna* month. Other details of the Puja procedure being as in Matsya Vrata indicated above, the Ashtanga Mantras to the Deity's Murthi would be as follows: Om Narasimhaya Namah (feet), Om Govindaya Namah (Thighs), Om Viswabhujenamah (katim), Om Aniduddhayanamah (chest), Om Sithikanthayanamah ( throat), Om Pingakeshayanamah ( head), Om Asuradhvanshanaya namah (

Chakram), and Om Tayotmane namah (Sankham). Maharshi Durvasa told Satyapal that once a King Vatsa got badly defeated in a war by enemies and took refuge in the Ashram (hermitage) of the renowned Vasishtha. The Sage asked the fugitive King to observe the Narasimha Vrata and taught him about the method of accomplishing it. Lord Narasimha made a rare appearance and pleased King Vatsa, notably due to the perfection with which the Vrat was fulfilled under the best possible of guidance of the famed Vasishtha himself. Even as the Lord appeared before the King, all his enemies fled away and the Kingdom was restored. The Vrat restores one's confidence, overcomes enemies and vindicates the Victory of devotion and faith.

Vamana Vrata is performed to remind that Deva Deva incarnated as a Dwarf Brahmachari and tricked and humbled the mighty Demon King Bali, not by valour but by wits, by seeking merely three feet of Bhumi for His Tapasya. The Vrata is scheduled on every Shukla Dwadasi of *Chaitra* Month. The Puja procedure being as above in the Matsya Vrat, the Ashtanga Mantras are to be: Om Vamanayanamaha (feet), Om Vishnavey namah (katim), Om Vasudevayanamaha (abdomen), Om Sampurnakaya namah (Chest), Om Viwakruthenamah (throat), Om Vyomarupineynamah (head) and Om Vishwajiteynamah (Sankham). There was a King named Haryashwa who accomplished a 'Putra Kameshthi' Vrat and an old Tapasvi Brahmana came as a Guest who was Narayana Himself. The Brahmana desired that the King should implement Chaitra Sukla Dwadasi Vrat sincerely as per prescribed procedure and Vamana Deva would definitely bless a powerful and memorable Chakravarthi (Emperor) as a son, Kuvaleshvaya; by so predicting the Old Brahmana disappeared. The Vrata would certainly fructify a multi-desired boon by Narayana to those who attain it with devotion and dedication.

**Jaamadagnya** (**Parasurama**) **Vrata** is achieved to illustrate the outstanding son of Sage Jamadagni, incarnated as **Parasurama** who annihilated countless haughty and arrogant 'Kshatriayas' in utter disregard to the Virtuous and helpless subjects with special reference to Brahmanas, Sages and the Pious. This Vrata occurs on Shukla Dwadasi of

*Vaisakha* month and is performed with veneration by the Ashtanga Matras viz. Om Jaamadagnyaya Namah ( feet), Om Sarva dharinenamah (Abdomen), Om Madhusudhanaya namah (katim pujayami), Om Srivatsadhaariney namah (Uram / Chest pujayami), Om Kshtrranthakayanamah ( Baahum Pujayami), Om Manikanthayanamah

(Kantham Pujayami), Shankhayanamah (Shankham pujyami), Chakrayanamah

(Chakram Pujayami) and Brahmanda dhariney namah (Siram pujayami). The worship of Parasurama was indicated by Sage Yagynavalka to King Virasena who had earlier completed several Yagnas but his desire to beget a child was not fulfilled. When the Sage taught the method of the Vrat and the King did it with full dedication, he was blessed with the birth of the famous Nala who along with Damayanti immoralised human history as the Greatest Lovers!

Taraka Rama Vrath is accomplished on Suddha Dwadashi of *Jeyshtha* month. Sage Vasistha taught the Vrata Vidhan to King Dasaratha first. King Dasaratha made a firm resolution to do the Vrat in the name of Maha Vishnu and the result was indeed unbelievable as the Supreme Lord Himself incarnated as Shri Rama along His accompanists Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna. The procedure of the Vrath is to commence with 'Shubh Sankalpa' and Ashtanga Puja: Om Namo Ramaabhiramaya (feet), Om Trivikramaya (kati), Om Dhrita Vishvayah Namah (Udaram), Om Samvatsarayanamah (Chest), Om Samvarthakaya Namah (kantham Pujayami), Om Sarvastradharineynamah (Chakra and Padma), and Sarva sirasey namah (head). Therafter, perform 'Kumbha Sthapana' or Setting-up of Kumbha, 'Vastra acchaadana' (covering with cloth) of Rama Lakshmana Murthi Puja with Shodasa upacharas (Sixteen Services) and charity of the Murthis to Brahmanas. The fruits of the Vrata are self- evident since sons of immense virtue, valour, fame and dignity are bound to be born as a result of this incomparable Vrat! Moreover, those who partake in this auspcious Vrat woud be blessed with all the above qualities and be assured of access to Vishnu loka.

**Sri Krishna Vrath** is scheduled on Shukla Dwadashi of *Ashadha* month. The origin of the Vrath was that Vasudev and Devi Devaki together did it as advised by Sage Narada since they were childless. Narada attended a Devasabha (Congregation of Devas) and Devi Prithvi complained that she was no longer be able to withstand the evil deeds of Demons in the form of cruel Kings and their associates such as Sheva, Kamsa, Jarasandha, Naraka, Kuru, Panchala and Bhojas. They all approached Lord Vishnu who no doubt agreed to incarnate Himself but virtuous couples like Vasudeva and Devaki should perform Vratha on the specific day; Narada taught the procedure to carry out the entire function with dutifulness and conviction. After a firm resolve, the Vrath was accomplished with 'Ashtanga'puja as follows: Om Vasudevaya namah (charanam pujayami), Om Sankarshanayanamah (katim pujayami), Om Padmanabhayanamah

(Udaram pujayami), Om Aniruddhayanamah (Urasthalam pujayami), Om Chakrapaaninenamah (bhujaam pujayami), Om Bhupatayenamah (kantham pujayami), Om Krishnayanamah (Shanka Chakram Pujayami) and Om Purushayanamah (Siram Pujayami). After sucsessfully completing the Vrath as prescribed, the Lord confirmed that a boy of His traits would be blessed soon.

**Buddha Vrath** is to be performed on Suddha Dwadasi of *Shravan* month in the name of Lord Vishnu as He assumed the form of Buddha during a critical stage of Kali Yuga when Violence and Sinfulness were rampant in the World. Lord Buddha preached the principles of 'Ahimsa' (Non-Violence), 'Satyam' (Truth) and 'Dharmam' (Virtue) world-wide and as He mustered substantial support from 'Sangham' (Society) He created a great following of majority of people. As a young Prince, He decided to renounce luxurious life and wandered like a commoner. It was at that time that He strayed into jungles by horse back and rested under a tree through a night, when He attracted attention by several jungle men for His ornaments and cruel animals for His flesh. As He was being attacked, a Devi Shakti protected Him and killed the thieves and animals seeking to kill Him. A Sage in the forest explained to Buddha Deva that the Devi Shakti protecting His body was an inherent power safeguarding His body always as in His earlier birth he was a Sudra but witnessed the entire proceedings of the Vrata and thus imbibed the strength in His body as a result of the 'Punya' or the propitiousness accrued. This was the far reaching impact carried foward to the current birth of Buddha, told the Sage. It was against this background that the Buddha Vrat should be performed for protection and success. The Puia procedure includes the 'Ashtanga' Mantras as follows: Om Damodarayanamah (Charanam pujayami), Om Hrishikeshayanamah (Katim), Om Sanatanayanamah (Udaram), Om Srivatsadharine namah (Vakshasthal), Om Chakrapaninenamah (hands), Om Harayenamah (throat), Om Manju keshayanamah

(Head) and Bhadrayanamah (Sikha or tuft). Therafter, Shodasopacharas are to be performed and Bhojan (Meals) and charity to Brahmanas would complete the Vrath which ought to be effected as per Regulations for the best benefits.

Kalki Vratha is observed in Sukla Dwadasi of *Bhadrapad* month. Before he outlined the broad method of carrying out the Vratha, Sage Durvasa told Satyapal that a King of Kasipur named Vishal who was a virtuous person doing several Spiritual activities like Yagnas and was widely liked by his subjects. But his own close relatives planned a coup and assumed power of the kingdom. The fugitive King wandered incognito and landed on the mountain slopes of Badari when he came across two ever-shining Sages viz. Nara and Narayana. Sage Nara enquired about Vishal's background and suggested to worship Maha Vishnu by means of any of the various Dwadashi Vrathas occuring in the Sukla Pakshas of most of the Months.

Sage Nara commended the Vrathas as follows:

Pujyathe Matsyarupena Sarvajnathvamabhipsubhih, Svavamshoddharanarthaya Kurmorupi tu pujyathe/Bhavodadhi nimagnena Varahah Pujyathe Harih, Narasimhena rupena thaddhat Papabhaatraihi/ Vamanam mohanaashaya Vitharthe Jamadagnidam, Krurashatru Vinashaya yajed Daasaradhim Budha/ Bala Krishnou Yajeda Dhiman Putra Kamo na samsasayah, Rupakamo yajeda buddhim Kalkinam Shatrughataney/

(Those who wish to become 'Sarvajnas' or Jnanis worship Matsya Deva;

Those who are desirous of strengthening their own 'Vamsa' or Clan pray to Kurma Deva; To those that worldy ends like prosperity and fame are dear, they wish to worship Varaha Deva; Those who are afraid of facing difficulties pray to Narasimha; the persons who are detached from the worldly affairs wish to worship Vamana Deva; those who have the lure of money and possessions worship Parasurama; Whoever wants to destroy the evil and cruelty tend to Sri Rama; Putrabhilashi or those who love to enjoy the happiness of children and family life would certainly like to worship Krishna and finally those who like to take vengence do definitely worship Kalki Deva.) In response to Sage Nara's description as above, the fugitive King instantly decided to perform Kalki Vratha by worshipping Kalki Deva with the Mantras: Om Kalkinenamah ( charanam pujayami), Om Hrishikeshayanamah ( katim pujayami), Om Mlechhavidhvamsanaya namah (udaram pujayam), Om Sithikanthayanamah (kantham pujayami), Om Khadgapaninenamh

(Bhujam pujayami), Om Chaturbhujayanamah (hastam pujayami) and Om Viswamurthaye namah (Siram pujayami). In this manner, the worship was accomplished along with 'Shodasopacharas', and charity to Brahmanas. He proceeded to his own Kingdom, rearranged his loyalists, defeated his enemies and regained power with the blessings of Kalki Deva.

#### Padmanabha Vrata

After describing the Vrathas related to 'Dasavataras' (Ten Incarnations) of Lord Vishnu, Maha Muni Durvasa outlined the Vratas of a few other Deities as also those for the fulfillment of certain human desires. The beneficiary of the illustrious Sage's narrations was the erstwhile Vyagha (Hunter) turned subsequently as a Mahatma, now under the name Satyapal (Refer to the Chapter on Concepts of Bhakti and Aradhana). The Pamanabha Vrata is best performed on Shukla Dwadasi of Aswin or Asvayuja month. The background of this Vrath was that there was a King named Bhadrashva and once Maha Muni Agastya visited the Palace and said that he would like to stay there for a few days. The Sage met the Queen along with the King and immediately recognising her expressed great but pleasant shock as though he recognised her and exclaimed that the King and Queen were blessed in their previous births. Each day the Sage met the royal couple, he kept on repeating the same. One day the couple asked the Sage as to what happened in their previous births. There was a 'Veshya' (Prostitute) named Hardatt in Vidishanagar and the King and Queen were the servant- couple of the Veshya. On a Sukla Dwadashi in the month of Aswin, the Veshya lit a few lights in a Narayana Mandir in her house and worshipped Lord Vishnu for a while and left the house. She asked the servant couple to keep awake and ensure that the lights were on until she returned home. Since they did so sincerely, they became a King and Queen in the current birth! That was why the Sage exclaimed: how much the couple was blessed! How must have been the Veshya blessed by Lord Narayana! Indeed how much the blessing would be to perform the Vratha fully!

Padmanabha Vrat puja after installing the idol of Padmanabha and the warm-up Puja, the Shadanga Puja stipulates as follows: 'Om Padmanabhaya namah ( charanam pujayami), Om Padmayonayenamah (Katim Pujayami), Om Sarva Devayanamah ( udaram pujayami), Om Pushkarakshayanamah ( Urasthalam pujayami), Om Avyayayanamah

(Dakshina hasta- astram Pujayami), and Om Prabhavayanamah (sirah pujayami)'. After the Puja, 'Shodasopacharas' as prescribed in earlier pages, Charities and Bhojans to Brahmanas, the Padmanabha Vrata is stated to have been accomplished.

**Dharani Vrata** is scheduled on Shukla Dwadasi of *Karthik* month. After making 'Sankalp' (Resolution), a devotee performs the Vratha by way of 'Shadanga' puja of Narayana as follows: Om Sahasra Siraye namah (Sirah pujayami), Om Purushayanamah

(Bhujayanamah), Om Viswarupinenamah (kantham pujayami), Om Jnanastrayanamah

(Astrou Pujayami), Om Srivatsayanamh (Vurahsthala pujayami), Om Jagat grashismane namah (Udar Pujayami), Om Divyamurthayenamah (Katim Pujayami), Om Sahasra padaayanamah (Charanam Pujayami) and Om Damodarayanamah (Sarvangaaya namah). Four 'Ghatas' (pots) be set containing the waters of four Oceans (symbolically) and next morning give away in charity each with Pratimas (made of gold and other metals) and 'Dakshinas'. In the past, Great Personalities like Prajapati who attained Sashvata Brahma, Rajarshi Yavanashva secured a person named Mandhata who became a Chakravathi of three worlds, Krutaveerya begot the universal figure Kartiveerya, and Shakunthala begot Bharat. The Vrata's 'mahaphal'is so far reaching that it materialised several Emperors, or Glorious personalities or Maharshis all being illustrious in their own ways. In a way, it had been the luck of only those who were able to perform the Vratha.

## Vratas for fulfillment of human desires

As the above Vrathas aimed at worshipping Lord Vishnu in various incarnations were outlined, certain other Vrathas are practised to fulfil the normal wish-list of men and women, each aiming a specific human desire. Sadbharta Vrath was suggested by Sage Narada to 'Apsarasas' or Heavenly Maidens since their desire was to become the wives of Devaadi Deva Vishnu on Sukla paksha Dwadasi in *Vasanta* month. Shubha Vratha is scheduled on *Margasirsha* month during the Shukla Paksha commencing from Pradham to Dashami by taking single meal for four months by reciting the name of Hari Krishna and on the concluding day by worshipping Lord Vishnu and Prithvi and on Ekasdashi donate barley as also a cow, apparels, ornaments, umbellas etc. as presribed and satisfy good Bhojan to twenty four Brahmanas. Dhanya Vrata is executed as a 'nakta' vratha or fasting upto the evening and eating thereafter for a year from the month of *Margasirsha* on Sukla Pratipada Tithi by worshipping and 'havans' to Agni swarup Vishnu as Vaishvaanaraaya, Agni, Havirbhuja, Dravanodaya, Samvarthaaya, Jwalaaya and so on to seek blessings of instant Dhana (Money), Dhanya (Food grains), and Sowbhagya (Prosperity). Agni would burn off the sins of the current and previous births once this Vrata is achieved. Kubera was stated to have washed off his previous sins likewise.

**Kanthi Vrata** was achieved by Chandra on a *Karthik* Sukla Dwiteeya night by worshipping as per regulations Lords Baladeva and Krishna since he was diminishing in his radiance every night owing to a curse by Daksha Prajapathi; Bhagavan reversed the curse after 'Samudra Manthan' (Churning of Ocean) and brought back 'Kanthi' (sparkle) by curing Chandrra's Yakshamarog to Amritha yoga! Since then the Vratha became popular as the curse reversing and sin-destroying boon to those who perform it with utmost devotion. **Sowbhagya Vratha** is also a year long Vratha from Tritiya night and Chaturthi of Bright *Phalgun* and a devotee has an option of worshipping the pair of Shiva Parvathi or Srihari Lakshmi. Every month on these days 'homams' are performed with ghee and honey and through out the year, dietary restrictions are observed by eating saltless wheat- made insipid material. At the end, charity of six vessels containing honey, ghee, til or sesame oil, gud or jaggery, salt and cow milk along with adequate 'dakshina'.

The idols made of gold or any other metal are donated too. This Vrath is stated to bless the devotee with prosperity for seven births in a row!

**Avighna Vratha** commences on Chaturthi of Shukla *Phalguna* for four months with the dietary restriction of 'tilanna' (rice mixed with sesame seeds after daily fast and tilanna homam as well as tila

daana to Brahmanas with dakshina. On the fifth Sukla Chaturthi after four months, homams in the name of Ganesha be made reciting Om Suraya namah, Om Dheeraya namah, Om Gajaananaaya namah, Om Lambodaraya namha, Eka Damshtraayanamah, Om Ganeshaya namah etc. After the Puja, five vessels made of Gold or any other material along with tila seeds is given away to Brahmanas as charity along with dakshina. A number of Kings did the Vrath before performing Aswamedha Yagnas. Lord Rudra did the Vrath before proceeding to take on the task of killing Tripurasura. Agasthya said that he also executed the Vrath before holding the entire Sea in his palm! This Vrath blesses who ever carries out the Vrath with sincerity and devotion is protected from Vighnas or obstacles.

**Shanti Vratha** is observed on Shukla Panchami of *Kartik* month again for a year without sour food but after fasting day long and worshipping Pratimas of both Vishnu and Seshanag by reciting Ananthaya namah, Vasuvakaye namah, Takshakaya namah, Karkotakaya namah, Padmaya namah, Maha Padmaya namah, Sankha palaayanamah and

Kutilaya namah by way of Shadanga puja to charan, kati, udar, kantha, bahu, mukha, and shira respectively. The two Idols are bathed in milk and use in tila and milk in homams. Charity, Bhojan and Dakshinas to Brahmanas are an integrated part of the procedure. Whoever does the Vratha earnestly would have no fear of serpents and enjoy peaceful life.

Kama Vratha or Kamnaya Vratha to fulfill desires is observed by worshipping Kartikeya on *Poushya* Shukla Chaturthi for a year's day long fast on 'phalahar' (fruits) and Shuddha Bhojan in the night, till the Shashthi of the next year of the same month. The essential feature of the Vrath is to keep mouna Vrath (silence) during the fast time and daily 'Agnikarya' or homams. At the conclusion of the Vrath, Brahmanas be provided all the possible Sevas like Bhojan, Vastras and Dakshina, besides donating the idol of Karthikeya to a deserving Brahmana. The fruits of the year long penance would yield prosperity, good progeny, and regain of kingdoms lost earlier and so on.

**Arogya Vratha** is scheduled from *Magha* Shukla Saptami for a year to worship Surya Deva. The Puja is preceded by Shashthi Bhojan, fast on the next day and Bhojan on Ashtami Bhojan again. The series of Bhojans are irrespective of daily worship to Aditya, Bhaskar, Ravi, Bhanu, Diwakar, Prabhakar and other names as also by recitals of Surya Kavachas, Aditya Hridaya and so on. Year long worship on these lines would ensure blessings from Surya Deva in respect of the devotee's health, wealth, contentment and salvation finally.

Many more Vrathas were mentioned by Sage Durvasa to Mahatma Satya Pal such as Puthra Prapti Vrata, Shourya and Sarva Sarvabhama Vrata, Vhaishnava Vrata, Dharma Vrata, Indra/Rudra Vrata and many more as per the dates, procedure and Specific Deities to be worshipped.

## Bhakti in seeking Lord Vishnu-relevance of 'Pancha Ratra' Gyan

In the context of Padmanabha Vratha mentioned above, Maha Muni Agasthya preached on several Spiritual Issues to King Asvaashva. He gave the example of Devarshi Narada who having worshipped Lord Vishnu for thousand years visited 'Sweta Dwipa' and was stunned to visualise the Maha Purusha Vishnu with His armoury and ornaments like Shankham, Chakram, Padmam, and Koustubh and prayed to Him literally non stop. Lord Vishnu replied that those Brahmanas who followed '*Purusha Suktam*' or the Original 'Samhita' describing 'Varnashrama Dharma' and worshipped Him with devotion would indeed realise Him.[ Purusha Suktam states 'Sahasra Sirsha Purushah, Sahasraksha Sahasrapaat, Sabhumim Visvatho vruttva Athyathishtha Dasaasngulam ( The Immortal Purusha has thousand or countless heads, Thousand Eyes and Thousand Feet, He spreads all over the Earth that ten fingers cannot count)—'Braahmanosya Mukhamaseeth Bahoo Raajanyakruthah, Uruthathasya yadh Vaisya Pathbyaagum Shudro Ajaayatha ( His mouth formed the Brahmana, His arms made Rajaaya or Kshatriya, His two thighs the

Vaishyas or traders/agriculturists, and from His feet the Shudras] Bhagvan said further those devotees who observed the 'Pancha Rathra Shastra' too would attain me. Those who were dominated by Rajas and Tamas features would not be able to even gauge me, let alone attain me. So saying Bhagavan bestowed to Narada the greatest gift of the composite knowledge of Pancha Rathra Sastra with the mission of preaching its contents and explanations to posterity. [Bhakti is Amrit and righteousness or the bliss of Almighty; notwithstanding the turmoil of 'Samsasra'or worldly wisdom, a bhakta has to promote a parallel force in the name of virtuousness and alignment with Narayana and the strength of that alignment determines the distance from the Bhakta and Narayana. The driving force named Devi Radha is Bhakti and in fact Radha Devi Herself is the embodiment of Bhakti. Hence the union of Radha and Krishna is 'Moksha' or Salvation. Narada confirms in Pancha Rathra as follows: *Satyam Satyam punah Punah Satyameva Punah Punah Radha naamna Vinalokena matprasado na Vidyatey* (I tell you the truth and I repeat that this is the truth; one who does not pray Radha will not secure my kindness or blessings.)]

# Concept of Unity in Diversity-Maha Vishnu manifests in Triple Forms

At a Sacred Yagna being performed to worship Maha Vishnu various Devas including Indra and Brahma attended and so did Bhagavan Siva. Since there was the question of worhipping the seniormost Deitis present, Sage Agastya asked Lord Rudra Himself as to who should be declared as the Chief Guest at the Yagna. Lord Rudra replied that since the Yagna was devoted to Vishnu and as such it was most appropriate that Vishnu be the Cief Guest. Moreover, Satva Swarup Parama Narayana displayed Himself in three Forms. With the complex mix of 'Rajas' and 'Tamas' Gunas Maha Vishnu created from His navel the Lord Brahma seated on Lotus top and Satva Guna predominated Brahma; with the mix of Rajas and Tamas Gunas, Deva Deva created Shiva with Tamo Guna dominating; and finally, with the mix of Rajas and Satva Gunas, He created Vishnu with the predominance of Satva Guna! Having stated that but for the predominance of Gunas, all the three forms of Adi Deva are equally important, Rudra Deva declared:

Yo Vishnum Sa Svayam Brahma Yo Brahma sohamevacha, vedatrayopi Yajnosmin Yajyam Vedeshunischayah<u>Yo bhedam kurutheysmaakam thrayaanam Dwijasotthama Sa paapakari dhushtaatma</u> durgatim gatimaapnuyat/

(Whoever is Vishnu, He is Brahma Himself, and whoever is Vishnu He is Myself or Rudra! Hey Sreshtha Dvija, the decisive view of Vedas is that whoever makes a distinction among the Trinity that sinner among human beings goes down to Durgati or to Evil Ways.) Rudra said further to Sage Agastya: I am the Three Yugas, the Trimurties, Three Vedas, Three Agnis like Garhapatmaya, Three Lokas, Three Gunas, Three Sandhyas and Three Varnas.

## Genesis of Gautami River and benevolence of Lord Rudra to Sage Gautam

Sage Gautami was blessed by a boon from Brahma after a severe Tapasya in Dandaka forest that he should have abundant supply of 'Dhanya' (food grains) and provide good food to Guests daily. As there was 'Akal' (famine) once, several Brahmanas were fed with food. Some of the 'Sapta Rishis' (Seven Great Sages) like Marichi were not happy of Gautami's popularity and created an illusory cow (Maya Cow) and left it moving around the kitchen and Gautami threw some water on the cow and the latter pretended death. The Sapta Rishis wantonly left the place as they alleged the killing of a cow as a pretext. Repenting the 'Gohatya' which was actually never done, Gautami performed penance to Rudra Deva and requested Him to release a piece of His 'Jatajut' (twisted hair) so that Bhagirathi was created and revived

the 'dead' cow. The Sapta Rishis were surprised at the tenacity of Gautam and addressed the Sage as: 'Sadhu' 'Sadhu' as a gesture of admiration to the long penance to Rudra. Gautam was indeed not amused as the jealous and flippant action of Sapta Rishis' creating a Maya Cow, made him feel that he did a crime and as a result he had to perform Tapasya for long time. Gautam cursed the Sapta Rishis that they would lose all the knowledge of Vedas and would be unfit for Vedic tasks. The off-shoot was that Sacred River Godavari was born. As regards the curse of Gautam to Sapta Rishis, the latter said that this time the curse might not materialise, but in Kaliyug the curse would indeed become true, since there would be many fake Sages, doers of Kshudra karma (evil acts) to destroy others, smokers, liquour consumers, womanisers and such other unscrupulous persons. But there would be a few virtuous devotees who bathe in Pavitra Godavari and perform Pitru Tarpan especially when Brihaspati Graha enters Simha Rasi and that they would certainly attain salvation to the Pitras as well as themselves after their end. Such was the assurance of Lord Rudra Himself!

# Rudra Deva's realisation of 'Maha Purush' (Adi Deva Stuti by Rudra Deva included)

As Lord Rudra was performing 'Tapasya' deep inside water to Maha Purush, He saw that Eleven Entities of outstanding splendour emegring from water and even when enquired as to who they were, they sped away in hurry without replying. Later on Rudra visualised a Thumb-like Figure who was by far the most resplendent of the Eleven Entities who flashed earlier. Rudra introduced Himself as 'Bhava' and asked the new Personality as to Who He was. The reply was that a new vision would be provided to Rudra so that the realisation was better and that He was the 'Jalasayi Narayan Deva'. The Eleven Entities who hurried away without replying to Rudra were the 'Ekadasa Adityas' or the Eleven Suryas and they were asked to hurry up to execute Tapasya. Rudra then comprehended the Premordial Maha Purusha and prayed to Him as follows:

My greetings You, You are Eternal, Pure and incredibly Huge Bodied, with Thousand Hands and Thousand Rays; Your actions are pure; You are the redeemer of all human tribulations, Shambho! You possess the unimaginable luminosity of several Suns and speed and severity of several Vayus; You are the possessor of all kinds of 'Vidyas' and knowledge; You are Greeted and worshipped by all Deities; You have neither beginning nor end nor you are destructible; You are the small symbol of Seshanag who is the holder and supporter of the entire Universe; You are the Supreme Lord of the Universe, Bhutapathi, Maheswara, Marutpathi, Sarvapathi, Jagatpathi, Prithvi pathi, Loka pathi: I am ever grantful to You; You are 'Jalesha' of Super Lord of Water, Narayana, Vishva Shankara, Kshitisha, Vishweswara, Vishwalochana, Manifestation of Sun and Moon, Achyuta, Veera, Vishvavyapi or Omni Present, Amrita murthi, the Opposite of blistering flames of Fire God in the form of pleasant coolness; Universally multi faced, Oh Narayana, do protect me as I am in Your complete control; You are engaged in the full swing of 'Samsara Chakra' or preserving the balance of Universe, yet no miniscule matter could escape Your consideration; little wonder that all Jnanis with clean and clear mind leave to you to perform, correct and obey without the least hesitation; How could I commend or comment about you! You have the unique and accurate assessement of infinitesimally small as well as mammoth and unsolvable issues; You are speechless, heartless and emotionless; You are devoid of attachments; even Brahma could not fathom Your Inner Self, excepting that Tapasya might provide You a feeling of nearness to you.

As Rudra Deva prayed to Maha Purush Vishnu, the latter confirmed that both of the two Entities were the same. He said: Varam Varaya Bhadram the Deva Deva Umapathey, Na Bhedaswavayo Deva ekavavaamubhavapi (Oh Umapathi, Do ask for a boon from me; may you be blessed; We have no difference and are both the same) He affirmed further:

Devakaryavitaareshu Manushatvamupagathah, Thvomeva araadhiyashyami thvam cha me varado Bhava / Yat thvayoktim bahesvethi Deva Dva Umapathye, Svoham vahaami thvaam Devam Megho Bhutva shatam samah (Oh Umapathi! In order to perform the tasks of Devas I take to various Incarnations and execute Tapasya for you. I shall take the form of clouds and take out water from them for your sake!). Maha Vishnu gave two further dispensations viz. the Ekadasa Adityas-the Prakritik Purushas- would spread all over Prithvi to stay there and Vishnu's incarnation as Varaha would worship Rudra Deva.

(The Sanskrit base is: 1) Namostvanantaaya Visuddha chethasey Swarupa rupaya Sahasrabaahayey, Sahasra Rashmipravaraya Vedhasey Vishaladehaya Vishudda karminey/2) Samasta Visvaarti haraya Shambhavey Sahasra Suryaanilathigma tejasey, Samasta Vidyaavidhutaya Chakriney Samasta Govarninuthey Sadaanagha / 3) Anaadi Devotchyuta Sesha Sekhara Prabho Vibho Bhutapathey Maheshwara, Marutpathey Sarvapathey Jagatpathey Bhuvah Pathey Bhuvana Pathey Sada namah/ 4) Jalesha Narayana Vishavashankara Kshitisha Vishveswara Visva lochana, Shashanka Suryarchyuta Vira Vishvaga pratakyamurtye Amrithir- avyaha/ 5) Jwaladhahutaashanchi virudha mandala prapahi mam Sharanagatam Sada achyuta / Vakranyanekani Vibho Tavaaham ma Pashyami Madhyasthagatam Puranam 6) Brahmanameesham Jagataam Prasutim Namosthu thubhyam Pitaa Mahamahaya, Samsarachakra bhramaniranekah kvachit Bhavan Deva Varaadi Deva 7) Sanmargibhiinana vishuddha tatyaihryupaasyase ki pralapaamyaham tyaam Ekam Bhayantam Prakruteh parastaad yo yethyasou Sarvavidadibodha/ Gunana theshu Prasambha Vibhedya Vishala murthihi Susukshma rupam 8) Nirvakyo Nirmano Vigathendriyosi Karma bhavanno vigathika Karma, Samsaravamsthva hi na thadrushosi punah katham Deva varasi Vedhyah 9) Murthamurtha tvathulam labhyate thye the param Vapu Devah Vishuddha Bhavaih, Samsara vicchhitthi karairyajadbhirato vasisayet Chaturbhujaswam/ Param na jaananthi yato vapusthe Devadayopyadadbhutakaranam tat, Atovataarokti thanum Puranamamadhayeyuh Kamalasanadyah/ 10) Na the Vapu vishwa srugabja yonirekanthato Ved Mahanubhayah, Param tvaham Vedya Kavih puranam Bhavanthamadyam Tapasa vishiddhim/ 11) Chaturmukho yo yadi Kota vaktro Bhavennarah kvapi Vishuddha chetah, Sa tho Guna naamayuthi ranekaihr vadet tada Devarara Praseeda/ 12) Samadhiyuktasya Visuddha Buddhehstayad bhaya bhayaikamanonrugasya, Sada Hridisthosi Bhavannamaste na Sarvagasyaasthi Pruthagavyavastha 13) Iti Prakasham Krutamethadeesha Stvam maya sarvagatham Vibuddhva, Samsara Chakra kramanana Yukthya Bheetim puneerhyachuta kevalatvam.).

## Manifestation of 'Tri Shaktis'-Brahmi, Vaishnavi and Rudrani

Lord Brahma led a delegation of Devas and reached Kailash when Rudra Deva and Devi were sharing a lighter moment. The reason of the visit was that a Demon named Andhaka defeated Devas badly and ousted them from Swargaloka. Brahma requested Narayan too to join at Kailasa to face the emergency. As the Trinity pondered over the crisis rather seriously and their vision crossed each others' eyes, there appeared a Tri Shakti whom the Trinity named as Tri Kala who would administer the entire Universe. Since She was the embodiment of Tri Gunas of Satva, Rajas and Tamas, She would be known by that name as Tri Guna; since Her physique and appearance alternate with the three colours of white, red and black, She would be called Tri Varna also. Among the Tri Shaktis so manifested, one Swarupa was extremely beautiful and benevolent as a personification of propitiousness to be engaged in the task of 'Brahma Srishti' as **Brahmi Devi.** Another characterizasion of Tri Shakti was endowed with the quality of an administrator in the most dignified and poised demeanor, signifying valour and Vishnu Maya was named Vaishno Devi. With a fearful visage and physique, ready to pounce on the wicked and the Evil, the third Image with a Trident seated on a tiger was called Rudrani Devi as 'Vishva Samharini'or the Destroyer of the Universe. Brahmi Devi who was Svetha Varna or fair complexioned, lustrous and lotus eyed became a 'Yogini' with the permission of Brahma on 'Sveth Parvat' or the White Mountain. Eventually this Devi of Satva Guna became popular as Saraksharamayi, Ekakshara, Vageesha, Sarasvati, Vidyeshvari, Vedavati, Amritakshara, Jnanavidhi, Vibhavari Devi, Vishalini, and Soumya. Vaishno Devi who manifested from Vishnu too left with His consent for Mandarachal for Tapasya. Rudrani left for Neel Parvat or Blue Mountain to perform Tapasya after Rudra Deva's approval. The Tri Shatkis were thus ready for facing exigencies whenever they were recalled from the respective Lords such as when Sarasvati was asked to help in the task of Creation etc. More than the normal duties as were assigned to them, the Tri-Shakties were ever ready to supplement the efforts of their respective Lords as collective endeavors were called for, such as the destruction of mighty Demons as Andhaka.

# Significance of 'Vaishno Devi' (Devi 'Stuti' included)

Symptomatic with Rajoguna and Vishnu Maya, Vaishno Devi entered a cave named Vishala Teertha atop Mandara Mountain for executing Tapasya. After considerable time gap of years, She felt highly disturbed and out of that feeling of stress emerged several 'Kumaris' (Young Virgins) who were bluish in complexion, with curled hair, attractive lips, broad eyes, slim waists and ornamented. Simultaneously a massive number of grown up women too materialized. Innnumerable palaces and houses with all possible facilities with luxurious living appeared to accommodate the Kumaris and women. Renowned among the Kumaris were Vidyutprabha, Chandrakanthi, Suryakanthi, Para, Gambhira, Charukeshi, Sujata, Ghritachi, Urvashi, Shashini, Sheilamanditha, Charu Kanya, Visalakshi, Dhanya, Peenapayodhara, Chandraprabha, Girisutha, Suryaprabha, Amrita, Swayamprabha, Charumukhi, Shivadooti, Vibhavari, Jaya, Vijaya, Javanti, Aparajita and many others housed in Sreshthapuri, All the Maids of Devi wearing 'Ankush' and 'Paasha' surrounding Her as seated on a Golden Throne were fanning Her with white 'Chamaras'. Vaishno Devi was fully ornamented and garlanded with various fragrant flowers and was seated comfortably when Sage Narada called on Her for 'Darshan' and left. His purpose was to convey to Demon Mahishasur about the unparalelled beauty of Vaishno Devi. The puffed up arrogant Demon tormented the whole world, especially Devas, Sages and all the virtuous since he attained boons of invincibility from Brahma except from women. He called his Maha Mantri 'Alamsharma' and select other Mantris like Praghas, Vighas, Shankukarna, Vibhavasu, Vidyunmali, Sumali, Parjanya and Kruur and instructed them to request Her to marry him politely and if necessary utilise the other means of 'Daana' or tempt with gifts; 'Bheda' or divide and try; and finally as a last resort to 'Danda' or punish or even kidnap or if need be to destroy Her! As the road map plan of approaching Her was finalised, a highly accomplished person named Vighas was commissioned to negotiate. As all means of cajoling and threatening were not fruiful, the Demon had to declare war. Senapati Virupaksh led the Demon's side and quite a few of the Danavas were capable of defeating the Mighty Indra who carried the Vajrayudha! Among these 'Daithyas' were stalvarts like Lomavarshak, Anjan, Nilakukshi, Udraksh, Meghavarna, Balahak, Lalataksh, and Subhim. While Rahu challenged 'Ashtavasus' or Eight Vasus, mighty Demons like Bhayankar, Dhwanksh, Dhvasta Karna, Shanka Kukarna, Vajra Kaya, Ati Veerya, Vidyunmali, Rakthaksha, Bhimadamshtra, Vidyutjihva, Atikaya, Mahakaya, Dirghabahu, Krithantak etc.attacked the Eleven Adithyas by turns. Kaal, Kritanth, Raktaksha, Haran, Mitrah, Aanitya, Yajaha, Goghna, Stridhan and Parakrami fought Eleven Rudras. Thousands of Asuras were destroyed and in the process Devas too got defeated and fled without a scar but for the fact that they consumed Amrit. Sage Narada alerted Kumaris of Vishno Devi that the so-called invincible Mahisahasur had moved towards Devi Bhagavati to wage a battle. As a final effort of demanding Devi to wed Mahishasura was personally conveyed by the Special envoy, called Vidhyutprabha; indeed Vaishno Devi was fully aware of Mahisha's background but gave a patient hearing: there was a demoness named Mahishmati who took the form of a Mahisha (Shebaffalo) and tried to forcibly occupy the Ashram of Sage Ambar who by his Divine Vision found the real form of the demoness and cursed her that she would take the birth of a Mahisha (buffalo). As she fell on the feet of the Sage, he had kindly agreed that if she begot a son then she would be back to normalcy. After a time lag, another Sage named Sindhudveep who was performing Tapasya on the banks of Narmada river witnessed the attractive physique of a Devakanya without clothes and the Sage dropped

his semen in the water, when the Mahisha saw the scene. She drank up the semen water and thus begot Mahishasura who was unconquerable. "Therefore oh Devi, this would be a last chance to marry the Mighty Mahisha and be happy for ever", said the Emissary Vidyutprabha. As this was stated, Vaishno Devi laughed like a roar of a Lioness so much so, the Trilokas in her belly were shaken and from that vibration came out Devi Jaya, the Dwarpalika of the Goddess and said: 'You stupid, your head is as thick as your Lord Mahishasura's! Do you not realise that Vaishno Devi is a Kumari and is the Supreme Goddess of Kumaris and the Boon Giver to those who perform this Great Vrata; do run back soon as the rules of 'Dharma Yuddha' (Battle of Dharmic Rules) prohibit killing an emissary. As this conversation was going on, Sage Narada appeared and was so mirthful that the final moment of Mahisha's annihilation had arrived. A multitude of Mahisha's army was butchered by Kumaris and there was tremendous 'hahakars' of death all around. Vaishno Devi assumed a mammoth form with twenty hands each carrying a weapon of mass destruction like arrows and bow, sword, Shakti, mace, axe, damaru, huge bell, Shatagni, Mudgara, Bhushundi, Jhala, Musal, Chakra, Bhindipal, Danda, Pasha, Dhwaja and Padma. As the entire army of the Asura was floored totally, the Lion on which was seated by Devi made such a howl that the Universe was frightened as though that was the signal to jump. The Asura Maya which sought to be spread by the Demon jumping from mountain to mountain was targetted with Vishnu Maya with such precision that the Trisul went right through the wretched body of Mahisha, the Greatest menace of the World, fell with a terrific thud which pierced through the ears of the entire humanity. Headed by Lord Brahma, Indra and all the Devas extolled Vaishnavi Devi for saving them as also the World from the peril of the Asura as follows:

Devi Vaishnavi Stuti: Namo Devi Mahabhagey Gambheerey Bhima Darshiney, Jayasthey Stithi Siddhantey Trinetrey Vishvatomukhi /Vidyavidye Jaye yajey Mahishasuramardini, Sarvagey Sarvadeveshi Vishwarupini Vaishnavi / Veethashokey Dhruvey Devi Padma Paptra Shubheykshaney, Suddhasatva vrathasthey cha Chanda Rupey Vibhavari / Ruddhi Siddhipradey Devi Vidyey Vidyomrutey Shivaey, Shankari Vaishnavi Brahmi Sarva Deva Namaskrutey / Ghanthaahastey Trishulaastrey Maha mahisha madrdini, Ugra Rupey Virupakshi Mahamayemritusravey / Sarvasatva hithey Dhruvey, Vidyaapurana shilpanaam Janani Bhutadharini / Sarva Deva Rahasyanaam Sarva Sattvavathaam Shubhey, Tvameva Sharanam Prapadyanthey e Devi Parameswari / Na theshaam Jaayathey kinchithasumbha rana sankatey, Yashva Vyaghra bhayey ghorey chorarajabhaey tatha / Stvamennam sada Devi Pathishyati Yataatmavaan, Nigadasthopi yo Devi twam Smarishyati Manavah/ Sopi Bandhairvimuktasthu Sumukham vasatey sukhi/ (Hey Mahabhagyashalini, Gambheera, Bhayankara Darshini, Vijayashalini, Sthitha Swarupa, Three Eyed Devi, Universe Faced One, Our sincere Greetings to you;

Hey Vidya and Avidya Rupi, Jaya, Fit for performing Yajnas, Mahishasura Mardini, Omni Present, Swamini for all Devas, Vishwarupini, Devi Vaishnavi: our Greetings; You are devoid of sorrows, Everlasting, Beautiful and Lotus Eyed, You are embodiment of Pure Satva Gunas and at the same time ferocious, brutal and night like darkness; You are the benevolent Devi bent on enhancing Virtuous mindsets; You are Vidya, Avidya and Amrit in the same wavelength; You are Shankar, Vishnu, Brahma and Shakti in one go; You carry a Ghanta (Bell), Trishul and many other Items signifying several aspects simultaneously; You are the force to destroy Maha Mahishi, Ugraswarupa, Virupakshi and Maha Maya; Sarva Satvamaya, Dhruvasva Rupini, Mother of Puranas, Vidyas and various Skills; Ambika, Virupakshi, Shantai Swarupa, Dosharahita or Sinless, Akshaya, Avyaya,; I am in Your 'Sharan' or safe custody; Those who read this Stuti with a clean thought and mind shall never be troubled by ferocious animals, thieves, or those in authority and nothing untoward would ever occur to them! Even shackled by iron chains, those who read this Vaishavi Stuti would instantly be free and fearless!

Tri Shakti Devi Rudrani (Chamundi Stuti included)

Deva Varaha enlightened Devi Prithvi about the materialization of Tri Shakti as Rudrani Devi at the Nilgiri mountain Range as the symbol of Tamoguna. It was at this time that Brahma gave away boons to Daitya Ruru of impregnability by any species obviously ignoring the women power. In a battle with Devas, Ruru created thousands of Ruru-alike Danayas out of the Oceans and distressed Devas, Sages and the Righteous. Devas started running away helter-skelter and there was an all round bewilderment when a loud voice came from the Skies saying: 'do not be afraid and be panicky'. Simultaneously there were lakhs of Devis with armoury who appeared from nowhere and showered ankushas, arrows, swords, maces etc. on the Daithyas in such numbers as were manifold compared to those of Demons. Emboldened by the presence of lakhs of Devis, the Devas, Adithyas, Vasuganas, Rudraganas and Ashvini kumars fought boldly and in response, Ruru spread his Maya which lulled Devas and others to sleep. Devi Rudrani threw away Her Trishul and pierced through the body of Daithya Ruru; but from that body came out two furious Asuras, called Chanda and Munda who were slaughtered instantly and thus Devi's another Name was Chamunda. As She was Roudriya Samharini, the Devi was known as Kalarathri. As She was surrounded and devoted by thousands of 'Anucharikas' (Servants), She was called Mahabhaga. Since the Anucharikas were ever hungry and were ever after to feed, Rudrani requested Rudra Deva to show a way out to appease their hunger amd Rudra Deva did indicate the ways to satisfy them: if women were in the family way and wear the clothes of other women or worse still touch the clothes of men, then the Anucharikas could satisfy their hunger; or babies who are neglected lying on earth could be considered as 'Bali'or sacrifice; the remains of a child's delivery in the delivery house could be taken as food to the Anucharikas; or just born babies too could be the food for these women; in certain other cases those women getting satisfied by their husbands while thinking of other men would also be preys to their bodies due to sinful thoughts and thus become the food to the Anucharikas!

Chamundi Stuti: Jayaswa Devi Chamundey Jaya Bhuthapaharini, Jaya Sarvagathey Devi Kaalarathri Namosthuthey / Vishwamurthi Shubhey Shuddhey Virupakshi Trilochaney, Bheema Rupey Shivey Vidyey Mahamaye Mahodaye / Manojavey Jaye Jrumbhey Bheemakshi Kshubithakshaye, Mahamaari Vichitraangey Geyanrithyapriye Shubhey /Vikaraley Mahakaali Kaalikey Paapahaarini, Paashahasthey Dandahasthey Bheemarupey Bhayanakey / Chamundey Jwalamaanaasye Teekshnadamshtrey Mahabaley, Shiva yaanasthithey Devi Prethaasanagathey Shivey / Bheemakshi Bheeshaney Devi Sarvabhuta bhayankari, Karaaley Vikaraaley cha Mahaakaaley Karaalini / Kaali Karaali Vikrantha Kaalaraathri Namosthuthey , Vikaraala Mukhi Devi Jwalaamukhi Namosthuthey / Sarvasatwa hithey Devi Sarva Devi Namosthuthey, Iti Sthuta tadah Devi Rudreyna Parameshtina / Thuthosha Parama Devi Vakyam chedamuvaavacha ha, Varam Vrushneeva Devesha yatha they Manasi Vakthrathey/

Stothraanena ye Devi twam sthuvanthi Varaananey, Theyshaam twam Varadaa Devi Bhava Sarvagati Sati/ Yashchemam Triprakaaram thu Devi Bhaktya samanvitha, sa Putra Poutra Pashuman Samruddhimupagacchati / Yashchemam Srunuyad Bhaktya Trishaktyastu Samudbhavam, Sarva paapa vinirmuktaha padam Gacchhatyanamayam /

(Victory be with you, Chamunda Devi, Bhutaapaharini, All Pervading Devi, Kaalarathri, Vishwa murthi Swarupa, Embodiment of Propitiousness, Essence of Purity, Virupakshi, Three Eyed, Personification of Terror, Arch-type of Auspiciousness, Source of Knowledge, The Great Illusion; You are as fast as mind, Victorious by nature, berserk by behavior, Strange by demeanour, Lover of Music and Dance, Vikaral, Maha Kali, Sin expunger, Kalika, Sporter of 'Pasha' (rope) and club by hands, Originator of ferocity and panic; You are highly illuminated by face, Maha Balavati, seated on dead bodies, Prethas and images of Pisachas, horror-eyed, Bhayankar, Vikaral Kaala Swarupa, Archtype of gallantry and ferociousness, Blazing Faced One, My Greetings, You are the Universal Benefactor! Rudra commended Chamundi Devi

with the above Stuti or eulogy; He said that whoever reads or hears it would be blessed by Him and Devi as well.)

Those who pray to the Tri Shaktis in the Three Profiles with sincerity and mental application would secure boons for excellent well being, offspring and prosperity. Observance of Tri Shakti Vratha on Ashtamis, Navamis and Chaturdasis by fast and worship would help retrieve even lost Kingdoms or secure Kingdoms anew and similarly retrieve or gain great opportunities of life. *There would be no threat of fire, theft, serpents or any such untoward occurrences by merely preserving the Tri Shakti Stothras in any household.* Reading the Stothras would certainly help secure the following: *Pasum, Puthram, Dhanam, Dhanyam, Varastriyah, Rathnaashva Gajaa yanaaswashu bhavanthuta yasyedam thishathey gehe thasyedam jaayathey dhruvam* ( Cattle, Sons, Money, Beautiful women, Jewellery, horses, elephants, servants and Vaahanams would be possessed in those houses and this is certain).

# 'Kapala Vimochan' and Rudra Vratha

Varaha Deva narrated the background of Rudra Vratha to Devi Prithvi. At the time of Creation, Brahma created Rudra and the 'Pingala Varna' (red colour) of Rudra became 'Nilalohit' (blue colour). Out of fun, Brahma carried Rudra on His shoulders; Rudra found the fifth head of Brahma uttering an 'Atharva Veda Mantra' including a word 'Kapala' which irritated Rudra and He nipped off the Fifth Head of Brahma. As the Kapala of Brahma's Head got stuck in Rudra's hands, apparently due to the sin of 'Brahman Hathya' (Killing of a Brahmana), Rudra enquired of Brahma as to how to get rid of the skull and the reply was that Rudra should perform Kapala Vrath. Rudra left for Mahendra Mountain and split the skull into three parts; the first part having thick hairs which was converted as Yajnopaveeth of Rudra; holding the second and third parts of the skull on hands, Rudra wore the broken parts and used them as 'jatajut' of Himself and the third remainder was taken from 'Tirthas after Tirthas' for Body Purification and penance for twelve years among Sapta Dwipas. In the first year He bathed in the Ocean first and in Ganga; in the subsequent years, He bathed in Sarasvathi; in the Sangam of Yamuna, Ganges and Sarasvathi Rivers; there after in the Rivers of Shathadu, Chandrabhaga, Gomati, Sindhu, Thungabhadra, Godavari and Gandaki. Thereafter, Lord Rudra bathed with the skull in hands at Udveg Theerth, Rudramahalaya Theerth, Daruvan, Kedarnath, Bhadreswar Theerth, and Gaya Theerth where Pitru Tarpan was performed. In the sixth year, while performing 'Vishva Bhraman' or Universal Circumambulation, Rudra's Koupeena Vastra along with the 'Kati Sutra' (waist string) fell in a river and since then He had been bathing as 'Nagna Murthi' ( or Naked Deva). Thus in the pretext of Kapala Vimochana, Rudra Deva was bathing in nude eversince till the Tirtha Vrata was taken up. At Varanasi, after bathing in Ganges which was indeed the starting point of the Vratha, Kapala Vimochan (relief of the skull) was accomplished and hence the Kasi Theerth was declared as the Kapala Vimochana Theertha; incidentally Rudra Deva's complexion changed from Neela Varna back to Pingala Varna. The propitious Vratha of Rudra had come to be known as Nagnakapaal Vratha, Vyabhrava Vratha (since the complexion of Rudra got transformed) and Shuddha Shaiya Vratha eversince.

## Procedure of Maha Vishnu Vratha

Varaha Deva explained to Prithi Devi that even the worst kind of Sins, (including the 'Pancha Pathakas' or the Five Worst Sins viz. killing Brahmana, Wine drinking, falsehood, committing thefts, and incest with Guru's wife) could be destroyed, progeny and prosperity are blessed, health and fame are assured and longevity and contentment are augmented, provided Vishnu Puja is carried out with purity of body

and soul. The Vrath to be executed in the Month of Kartika during the Bright fortnight on Dwitheeya or Samkranthi Dwadasi or during Chandra Grahan or Surya Grahan (Lunar or Solar Eclipses). As per prescribed Procedure in the Varaha Purana, Lord Vishnu and Devi Lakshmi are installed in the midst of sixteen or atleast nine petals of Lotus as directed by Guru (Preceptor). Intiation of the Vratha should be on Kartik Shukla Dashami itself by taking fruits and milk and rest overnight in the presence of the Installed Deities and the Guru. Now, the nine (or sixteen) mandals be arranged in bright colours installing Loka Palas first viz. Indra in East and worship him; Agni in his direction or Agnikona or Agneya and worship him; Yamaraja in South and Nirruti; Varun in West, Vayu in Vayavya kona; Kuber in North and Rudra in Ishanya. Likewise, install in the middle of the Lotus, Lord Vishnu. Also, Balaram be worshipped on the Eastern Patra; Pradyumna on the Southern Patra; on the West Aniruddha and on the North the sindestroyer Vasudeva. In the Eshana Kona be installed Shankha and in Agni kona the Chakra, Dakshin side the Mace (Gada), Vayavya kona Padma; in Ishaan kona Musalam be worshipped and in the South Garuda; on the left side of Maha Deva be installed Devi Lakshmi; facing the Chief Deity of Vishnu be installed Dhanush, Khadga, Sri Vatsa and Koustubh. Subsequently, eight Kumbh or pots be arranged in ten dishas (Directions); of these Vishnu-related nine kumbhs be installed and perform bathing to any one Murthi as convenient. In the same way, bathe Indra's Ghat in the name of Ishvarya or Prosperity; those devotees who are keen on money and valour might bathe the Agni-related kumbh; those desirous of victory against death would bathe Yamadharmaraja; seekers of peace of mind might bathe into the Ghata of Varun; for instant erasure of sins, bathe the pot of Vayu; for immediate money bathe the pot of Kubera; for Gyan to Rudra. After these preliminaries, the Guru would advise all the Sishyas either of Self or of Guru that Brahmanas should be respected always as they were of Vishnu Swarup! Then would commence the 'Homas' or oblations to Agni by uttering the Shodasakshara Mantra: Om Namo Bhagavatey Sarva Swarupiney hum phat Swaha / [After the Homas are executed, then follows the chapter of 'Dakshinas'. While those who could afford such as Kings and rich persons of the clans of Kshatriyas and Vaisyas engaged in business, the middle class persons might satisfy the Gurus and Brahmanas according to the proven levels of knowledge as also the affording capacity of the devotees concerned, without overcharging by the receivers as per demand and supply forces nor underpaying the learned despite affordability.] Performing the Vratha, participating directly or otherwise, or observing the Proceedings with keenness or atleast having a 'Darshan' of the 'Mandala' Area and of the Deities would all yield proportionate blessings and boons!

## 'Go daan' (Charity of Cows) in various forms

Ensuring the credibility and merit of the Brahmanas concerned, offering of cows in reality or symbolically in the form of Idols by the donors would indeed derive far reaching 'Punya' or the fruit of meritorious action. Quite a few kinds of Dhenu Daan have been in vogue: Til Dhenu Daan is performed with specified quantity of Sesame Seed along with the Idol made of gold or silver or copper, even stone or any other material along with the same kind of calf Idol with the prayer to Goddess Dhenu that the donor should never experience non availability of any essential material in the life of himself or his family members. The Brahmana receiving the donation in all humility should bless the donor and pray to Maha Vishnu to grant boons to the donor. The procedure of donating **Jal Dhenu** is to first clean up and purify an area with cow dung, place two pots representing a cow and a calf, made of any material as above, fill up the pots with sandalwood, camphor and water of holy rivers preferably and donate it to a worthy Brahmana and pray for happiness and abolition of sins and the receiver would bless like-wise. A donor of Rasa Dhenu should sanctify an area and place two decorated pots of bigger and smaller size on kusa grass filled up with sugar cane juice as also place sugar canes on four sides to effect the donation; the donor should pray to the Rasa Dhenu to make his life sweet and happy and the Brahmana too would pray to Vishnu to provide contentment in the donor's life and bless him to attain Vishnu loka after life. Dhenus are similarly donated with other materials like Sharkara Dhenu donating Sugar, Madhu Dhenu

donating honey, **Kheer Dhenu** for donating rice, milk and sugar mix, **Dhadhi Dhenu** with curd, **Navaneeth** (Butter), **Lavan** (Salt), **Kapas** (cotton) **Gud** (Jaggery) and so on. Indeed whatever may be the material donated, the charity of cows should attract Almighty's boons as per the donor's wishes and forms.

Among the various types of Go-Daans mentioned above, **Kapila Dhenu Daan** is considered as the most outstanding. A virtuous person waking up early morning and washes a Kapila Dhenu with water flowing down from its head and neck to its feet with devotion daily would most certainly washes off his sins for years. Charity of a Kapila Dhenu in reality would secure the 'Punya' of performing Gomedha Yajna, besides fetching maximum benefits of any such charities put together!

## Varaha Deva rescues Bhu Devi, His description, Stuti and Worship

As the entire Universe came to stand still when 'Dishas' (Directions), 'Grahas' (Planets), and Celestial Beings got stuck excepting Thri Murthies, Bhu Devi and Brahma appealed to Bhagavan Vishnu to uplift Her as She was sinking under deep Ocean and to save the Universe. Bhu Devi prayed to Vishnu desperately saying: 'Praseeda mama Devesha Lokanadha Jagatpathey, Bhaktayaam Sharanam aashraya praseeda mama Madhava':

'Hey, Jagatpathi Devesha Madhava, Kindly have mercy and save me and Devotees like me; You are Surya, Chandra, Yama, Kubera, Indra, Varuna, Agni and Vayu; You are the ephemeral and Eternal; You are the Dishas or Directions, Vidishas or Direction-less; You are the Ten Incarnations; You are the Constant despite passing Yugas; You are the Earth, Wind, Sky, Water and Fire; You are the Sound, Touch, Form, Taste and Smell; You are the Stars, Yama, 'Rasi Chakra' or the ever-moving Cycle of Raasis; You are the concept of Time like months, fortnights, weeks and days; days and nights, Years and Seasons and Six 'Rasas'; You are the Rivers, Oceans, Mountains and Maha 'Sarpas' (Giant Snakes); Meru, Mandhar, Vindhya, Malaya and Dardura Mountain, Himalaya, Nishidha; Sudarshan Chaka, Pinaka Dhanush, Yoga and Sankhya Shastra; You are the Srishthi, Sthiti and Laya Karaka; You are the Sukshma and Brihat Swarupa; You are the

'Maha Yajna', Embodiment of Vedas; Producer of Amrit with which the Deva Lokas are sustained; You are the Adi (Initial), Madhya (Middle) and Anthasswarupa or Antaryami;

You are the Medha, Buddhi and Smriti; You are the Griha Devatha and Griha Mangal Kara; Sarva Swarupa, Sarvesa, Sarva Vyapaka! Do save me from sinkng; thus prayed Devi Prithvi'! The 'Phala Sruti' of Vishnu Stuti by Bhu Devi would heal the sick, bless with progeny, grant a husband / wife, release from prison or legal entanglements and provide contentment in life.

In reply to the 'Stuti' by Bhu Devi, Maha Vishnu assured that as a result of Her Bhakti (devotion) He would lift Her up along with mountains, forests, Samudra, Rivers, Seven Dwipas and all the rest; He assumed a collosal manifestation of six thousand yojanas of height, three thousand yojanas of width and one thousand yojanas of Varaha Roop; He

liberated Prithvi by His left 'damshtra' (Jaw) along with the totality of mountains, forests, Sapta Dwipas and their contents including Oceans and Rivers all in tact!'

Bhu Devi was indeed excited at the unprecedented miracle that had happened and immediately requested Lord Varaha about the **Varaha Puja Vidhana**'. She posed innumerable queries on the method of Sthapana, Avahana, and Visarjana; the precautions to be observed on the preceding day of the Puja, the best timings to perform the Puja, restrictions of eating during the Puja time and so on. Bhagavan replied

that He might not be impressed by thousands of charities or several Yajnas, but even simple-minded persons with concentration and earnestness performed His Bhajan, although full of imperfections, would definitely deserved His consideration! All the same, since Bhu Devi asked certain questions, Varaha Deva gave suitable replies: Whoever prays to Him midnight, or at the time of dusk, or at mid-day and whoever observed fast on Dwadasi days would never be neglected. Merely performing 'Karma' or an act of Puja devoid of devotion and sincerity would not necessarily impress Bhagavan Vishnu. But if a devotee with detachment and concentration did the Dwadasi fast and offered water in his 'anjali'

(palms) facing Sun God reciting 'Om Namo Narayana' Mantra, he would be sure of 'Swargaloka Nivas' for as many drops of water as spilt out from his palms! Those devotees worshipping Narayana offered white **flowers** firmly trusting that Narayana was sitting to accept the offerings along with the Mantra: Sumanah Sumana Grihnna Priyo me Bhagavan Harih, Itena Mantrana Sumano dadat; the devotee offers next 'Gandham'

(Sandal wood paste) saying: 'Namosthu Vishnavey Vyaktavyaktha Sugandhi cha, Grahan Grahana Namo Bhagavatey Vishnavey/ Anena Mantreyna Gandham dadaatu'; **Dhupam** (scented incence sticks) saying: Pravishtey me Dhupadhupanam grihnath Bhagavan Achyutah Anena mantryena Dhupam dadathu. Bhagavan said further: Out of my affection oh Devi, I have outlined the 'Pujakram'; while performing 'Naivedyam' of

Bhakshya, Bhojya and such other material, devotees tend to ignore my accompaniments like Shanka, Chakra, and Gada and that should be avoided! Those who achieve the Dwadashi Puja with self-satisfaction and clear conscience are exalted and devoid of ill health, constant fear, mental confusion and discontent.

# Bhagavan Varaha's questionnaire to humanity about the roots of grief and Joy!

The reasons for fear, unhappiness and dissatisfaction among human beings were described by Bhagavan Varaha Himself by posing the following questions: Why should not human beings refrain from feelings of ego and possessive nature instead of turning to the Supreme? Why should persons resort to consuming and selling those prohibited and anti-social items ignoring awareness of the Supreme? Why do human beings turn away poor guests while taking food although they well afford without realising the feelings of the hapless? How could those who are deceitful, desirous of else's wives, always complaining, jealous, evil minded and anti-social be not afraid of the Supreme? Why do people act against their own inner conscience and allow death and disease chase them closely without even being mindful of the consequences, never even blinking an eye about Almighty's Omni- presence? How is it that some persons are beautiful but arrogant, smart but sadistic, outwardly virtuous but inwardly villainous not even with a remote sense of God's existence? Some persons are highly learned and intellectual but some are deaf and dumb; this discrimination is indeed a curse of fate. Is this not a cause of unhappiness? Which worse curse has befallen between two brothers, one with good progeny and one without? Blessed with a human life and not that of an animal or a bird, a person does not even think of Narayana; which worse misfortune does he have, causing unknown mental dissatisfaction? On the contrary, a devotee shares the limited food that he had, but decides to donate half of it to a deserving guest; what more pleasure that he gets! If a bhakta performs Tri Sandhya and worships Vishnu; which better satisfaction that he achieves! Every month comes one 'Amavasya' and a pious man makes it a point to perform Tarpana to his ancestors of three generations; what better mental contentment that he would possess! If a person's urge does not get disturbed even if several charming women fail to tempt him, what more happiness does the couple achieve together! A person with two wives whom he likes equally well and the wives too are accommodative, what more of an ideal situation there could be! If a person treats his aged parents with

respect and care and if the person's wife too is respectful and affectionate to them, could Lord Narayana bless them all in the family any better!

# Varaha Deva describes 'Aparadhas' (Offences) to be avoided

Having narrated the causes of grief or joy to Bhu Devi, Bhagavan Varaha described certain 'Aparadhas' to be avoided in one's mundane life. No doubt, symbolic eating of Bhagavan's Prasad by humans is not disapproved but offering 'Bhog' not suitable to be offered to Devas is unpardonable. In fact, offering of that kind of 'Bhojan' or food which is unfit for consumption to anybody is considered as an 'Aparadh'. Going near to a person without 'Dantadhavan' or cleaning teeth, tongue and face especially if the person is performing 'Dharmik Karma' or a Virtuous Deed is considered as second 'Aparadha'.

To approach near or touch the Idol of Varaha Deva is a third Aparadha. Approaching Varah Deva for His 'Darshan', let alone His worship, after seeing a female in the period of menses is noted as a fourth 'Aparadha'. Similarly, a person should perform 'Achanam' after seeing a dead body. Worse still, if a person touches a dead body, one should take head-bath, perform the 'Samskaras' and approach Divinity. The Seventh Aparadha is to perform ablutions during worship time and worse still not to purify the body and mind to resume the interrupted Puja with 'Kshamaapana' Mantra. Wearing a blue 'Vastra' or cloth to perform Vishnu Puja is the eighth 'Aparadha'. Telling lies during Bhagavan Puja is a ninth offence. Touching with impure hands the Puja Items meant for worship is a Tenth Aparadha. The eleventh offence is that an angry person engaged in unreasonable tasks and allowed to do so. The twelfth Aparadha is to use Vishnu's name in the Society to secure favours. The thirteenth offence is to wear a red cloth while performing Vishnu Puja. The fourteenth offence is that the puja is performed by wearing a black vastra. The fifteenth offence is that somebody touches the body of the devotee. A devotee feeding an 'Agnani'/ Unethical person by himself is the sixteenth blemish. Performing puja by wearing an uncouth cloth is a seventeenth offence. Worshipping the Deva after consuming fish and meat is considered as a grave mistake. Eating chicken meat before Deva Puja is the nineteenth fault. Touching 'Dipa' (light) and without 'Achaman' and touching Devas is the twentieth mistake. Having visited 'Smashanas' (burial ground) and seeking to touch Deva's Idol without purifying the self by bath etc. is a known blunder and constitutes a grave sin. If Bhagavan Puja is taken up, after consuming 'Pinyakam' (Pitthi), it would be construed as the twenty second offence. Worship after consuming pig meat, wine and kusumb flower are the twenty third, twenty fourth and twenty fifth offences. Whoever wears somebody elses' Vastra while performing the Puja of Deva is accused of a blunder numbered twenty sixth in the series of 'Aparadhas'. Consuming the 'Anna Prasada' (food) meant for offering to Devas and Pitras before the 'Naivedya' ('Mantrapurvak- offering) constitutes an abject blunder and is the twenty seventh in the series. Those who wear 'padarakshas' (chappals) and perform Deva's worship would have committed a grave error which is counted as the twenty eighth 'Aparadha'. Worship after massage is considered as an affront to Varaha Deva bearing number twenty ninth in the series of 'Aparadhas' .Performers of Deva Puja suffering from 'Ajeerthi' (Stomach upset) attract the thirtieth offence. Those worshippers of Vishnu Deva offering 'Dhoop' or incense would have made a mistake for the thirty first offence since that offer has a negative effect without Gandham (Sandal Paste) and Pushpam (flowers). Finally the Door of Deva's symbolic abode ought to be opened by the resounding sounds of Bheris, conch shells and big bells; else this Aparadha too would have been perpetrated as the thirty third one!

'Sa-mantrak Vishnu Puja' (Worship to Vishnu by Mantras)

Varaha Deva explained to Bhu Devi the 'Puja Vidhan' (Procedure of Worship) of Narayana supported by relevant Mantras. After taking bath and formulating a sincere 'Sankalpa' or mental resolve to complete Vishnu Puja successfully, the 'Karta' or the Performer should turn to the East with 'Jwalajwali' (Fire initiator) and 'Kusha'grass in folded hands and state that the Creator of all virtuous beings should bless that the Narayana Puja be accomplished. Then turning to the West the Performer recites the Mantra: Om Namo Narayana repeatedly. Also recites the Mantra: Yatha nu Devam Prathamadi Karta Purana kalpam cha yatha vibhutih, Divi sthita chaadimananta rupah Amoghamogham Samsara Mokshanam (I pray at the beginning the Original Creator or Adikartha, Puranakalpa, Embodiment of Enormous Opulence, Anantha Swarupa, Unfailing Decider and Provider of Mukti). Then facing North, the Karta keeps on reciting Om Namo Narayana and states the Mantra as follows: Yajamahe Divyaparam Purana manadi madhyanta mamantha rupam, Bhavodbhavam Samsara mokshanam / Tatastheynaiva Kaalenabhutva vai Dakshina-, mukhah Namah Purushottamayethyuktva imam Mantramudaarahet ( I worship to Divinely, Supreme, and Ageless Narayana, You have neither beginning, center, nor end; You are the Creator of the Universe as also its Destroyer; thus saying facing South, May I recite Om Namah Purushottamaya); The next Mantra states: Yajamahey Yajnamaho Rupajnam Kaalam cha Kalaadikamaprameyam, Anantharupam Samsaaramokshanam, Achutey th manah krutva imam Mantramudahareth (I pray to You, Rupajnam, Kaala Swarupa, Kaaladika, Aprameya, Yajna Swarupa, Anantha Rupa and Provider of Salvation from thee Universe).

Further the Karta becomes stable and motionless and states: 'Yajamahe Soma Pathena Bhaavey Thri saptalokanatham, Jagatpradhaanam Mrityu Swarupam Samasara mokshanam / Ethesham Thrishu Sandhyasu Karma chaiva Samaacharet, Buddhimaan Mathiman bhutva yadeecheth Paramam gatim/ Yogonaam Paramo Yogo Gruhaanaam Guhyaanam Guhyamutthamam Samkhyaanaam paramam Saankhyam Karanaam Karmachotthamam/ ('You are realisable by endless and selfless devotion about the Three Worlds viz. Urdhva or the Higher World, the Madhya or the Central World and Athah or the Lower World; Also You could be perceived about the Seven Lokas viz. Bhu, Bhuvah, Swah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah and Satyah; as also the Lower Lokas viz. Atal, Vithal, Sutal, talathal, Rasathal, and Patala; You are the Super Lord of the Universe, Mrityu Swarup and Mukti daata.' In case, the goal of Life is to reach 'Parama gati', the Karta has to strengthen his outlook to perform 'Tri Sandhya' or Sandhya Vandana thrice a day, acquire Jnaan, and practise Sankhya Yoga which is the best of Karmas or activities.')

'Enmarana kaalepi Guhyam Vishnu prabhaashitam, Buddhimaan Mathimaan bhutva vismaretra kadaachana/ Ya etat pathatey nityam kalyothyaya dhridhavrathah, mamaapi hridaye nithyam sthitah satva gunaanvithah/ ya thena vidhaanena Tri Sandhyam karma kaarayet, Trigyanyapi samprapya mama Lokaya gacchathi/ (If a person with good mind and consciousness at the time of death remembers the totality of the gist of the above Mantras, or Whoever reads the above Mantras in the morning and performs Tri Sandhya shall be fortified with the consciousness of Paramatma and shall take firm steps towards that goal). He shall indeed attain Vishnu loka!

# A few Illustrations of 'Vishnu Maya'

Bhu Devi was curious to learn about the oft-repeated refernces to 'Vishnu Maya' by Bhagavan Varaha in His discourses after He salvaged Her from sinking down under.

Bhagavan stated that even Brahma, Shankar, Indra and the entirety of Devas could not comprehend what Vishnu Maya was all about! He gave some telling demonstrations of Nature, Universe, Humans, Devas, Demons, and Sages as a few such occurences. For instance, the clouds on the Sky pour water on Prithvi at certain places and others are dry. Moon is bright at the commencement of a month but gradually wanes till the Sky gets completely dark by the month end. It is Vishnu Maya that the day/night temperatures

change by the Seasons as 'Greeshmas' present extreme heat and 'Hemants' the opposite. Surya emerges on the East early morning and disappears on the West by the dusk. It is from the same physique that red blood and white semen flow which is a form of Maya. During the period of pregnancy a baby has no reaction to materials or senses, but the moment it is out into the world gets to learn, react and act. It is Vishnu Maya that human body normally assumes identity of body parts like two feet, two hands, twenty fingers, two ears, two eyes, back, stomach, etc. Interestingly enough whichever material is consumed as food, water etc. is digested with the help of 'Jathara Agni' and the wastes are rejected out. Vishnu Maya is at work in creating sensory organs and senses and sounds are heard, vision is facilitated, tastes are discerned, odours are smelt, reactions are felt. It is Vishnu Maya doubt that every being of moveable or immobile nature facilitates creation and assumes millions of beings reproduced. Maya is noticeable as rain from Skies or water from underground remains adjusted with pluses here or minuses there, except at the time of 'Pralay' perhaps. Maya Shakti enables clouds to absorb salt water from Seas and turns to tasty water from clouds. Maya in action helps medicines to improve health and also to take away life at times. Indeed it is Vishnu Maya that after birth a child grows from stage to stage as a youth, as a married man, as an old man and finally at the door step of death. From a seed to an Ankur or small plant to a tree and a seed giving tree is again the action of Vishnu Maya. Vishnu Deva gave further illustrations of His lying in Yoga Nidra on 'Sesha Shayya' or Sesha Serpent Bed supported by Anantha Maya holding the entire Universe; it was Varaha Maya that lifted up Bhu Devi from the abysmal lower World. Basically, it is all Vishnu Maya that the negative factors of life are allowed to grow and Incarnations sport to terminate the negative forces! 'Karanam Kaaranam and Kartha' or the Action, Cause, and the Performer syndrome are Vishnu Maya all about.

## Tirtha Yatras' (Visits to Holy Rivers and Pilgrim Centers)

Deva Varaha narrated the importance of pilgrimages to select 'Thirthas' to Bhu Devi,

apparently as a component of human endeavour to realise 'Paramatma' in various ways and means through manifestations such as Deities, Holy Tirthas, Temples and Virtuous deeds. On the aspect of Holy Tirthas, He described the value of worship and faith as the two solid pillars of devotion as a firm stepping stone to realise the Almighty. Indeed there are any numbers of Pilgrim Centers, but made a selection of such Tirthas as have special reference to Vishnu-related ones:

## Kokamukha Tirtha:

Once a fisherman caught a massive fish in a big Lake called Kokamukha Tirtha and a kite lifted the prey but could not hold it properly and as the fish slipped on ground, a handsome prince emerged from the fish. Almost simultaneously the fisherman's wife brought pieces of meat to catch fish and as a kite took away the plate of meat the fisherman killed the kite with his arrows and there emerged a charming Princess claiming that she was from Chandrapur. The Prince and the Princess were married and as both of them had memories of their previous births recalled the strange story, thanks to the sanctity of the Kokamukha Tirtha. [The strong belief is that Kikhamukha was the confluence of Rivers of Koka and Kosi (Kousiki) running from Nepal on the Western District of Purnea in Bihar. The river is known in Nepal as Sun-Kosi (Swarna Kausiki). The ancient Kokamukhi Tirtha or Varaha Kshetra is situated on the banks of Sun Kosi now called Baraha Chhatra or the corrupted form of Varaha Kshetra]

Bhagavan Varaha depicted the prominence of Kokamukhi Tirtha to Bhu Devi: An overnight stay on the banks of a River 'Jalabindu' performing fast and worship to Vishnu would fetch the knowledge of previous births! An overnight stay and bath at the 'Vishnudhara' waterfall in the Khoka region would

yield the 'Punya' of performing thousand Agnishthomas'. Worship of Vishnu for three days and nights by fasting and Tarpans at 'Vishnupada Sthan' or area reserved at Krouncha Dweep. Early morning baths in a 'Sarovar' from where Bhu Devi was pulled up by the tusks of Varaha Deva would completely wash off the sins of persons of the current birth. A five night penance near the 'Pancha Shilas' or Five Rocks dedicated to Vishnu would reveal the path to 'Gomed Dwipa'. There was a Thunga-Kut named mountain with four 'Shikars' in the Koka Region and a night long stay and bath would pave the way for Kusha Dwipa. Likewise, there were several Punya Kshetras in and around the holiest Kokamukhi Tirtha; penance, prayers, river bathing and homams etc. would confer various blessings. Termination of life in the Holy Region would bestow life in 'Parama Lokas'. He who reads or hears about the Kokamukha Tirtha also confers effective means of attaining higher lokas.

#### **Badari Tirtha**

On top of Himalayas is situated the inaccessible Badari Tirtha which is the abode of Badarinath Narayana. It is at this Holy Place that the illustrious 'Brahmakund'is situated where a person bathing on three days on fast successively provides the benefit of executing 'Agnishtoma' or the 'Homa'/ oblation to Fire God. Performance of 'Krucchavrat' before 'Pranathyaag' or termination of life might qualify a person to attain Brahmalok or even Vishnu lok! At the Bararikashram, Tapsya at a place named Agnikunda would please Narayana Himself. At the Place famous as 'Pancha Shila'in the Tirtha, it is believed that Vishnu assumes the form of 'Himagni' and overnight fast and worship at the Agnikunda entitles the advantage of achieving Ashvemedha Yagnya. There are Five Shikharas at Badri Mountain and five waterfalls at a place known as Pancha Shikha. If one recites 'Panchakshari' at the Spot a devotee could enter Swarga Loka gardens for some time and if he dies there he would reside at that Place for good. Similarly there are many other Places of spiritual significance at Badri Kshetra like Chathustothra, Veda dhara where Brahma recited the Vedas first, Dwadasaadithya Kund, Lokpalak Kshetra where Vishnu appointed Lokpals; Sthulakund where Mountain Top is split and Bhagavan Narayana created Soma Deva as worship on Jyeshtha Sukla Dwadasi on that day is considered extremely propitious; also Meruvar was the Place where Vishnu created Meru Parvat; 'Panchashir' where Lord Brahma's Fifth Head was plucked as a punishment; 'Somabhishek' where Vishnu appointed as Soma the Chief of Brahmanas; and 'Urvasi Kund' where Apsara Urvashi was born from Vishnu's right thigh. Varaha Deva thus described the prominence of Badari Kshetra as one of the most Sacred Spots that Narayana Himself feels delighted to stay.

## **Mandara Tirtha**

Situated at the foothills of Vindhya Mountain, Mandara Tirtha has unique qualities. Named after the charming Mandara flower, its tree in the Tirtha is visible on Dwadasi and Chaturdasi days of a month. If one takes bath in a nearby waterbody and performs sincere meditation, the person concerned attains 'Mukti'. A sacred kshetra named 'Vaikuntha karak' to the north of the Tirtha leads one to a waterfall full of yellow colour like turmeric powder; it is believed that a night's stay after bath gives an experience of the company of 'Apsaras' (Celestial damsels). Some places nearby the Mandara Tirtha are Prapan, Modan and Vaikunthakaran; it is believed that stay and penance at these places till death blesses the persons with Swarga. Not far from the Mandara Mountain, a sacred place known as 'Syamanta Panchak', there are rock formations like Chakra (wheel), Gada (mace), Shankha (Conch) and Musal (plough)!

## **Shalagram Tirtha**

Sage Shanlankayan of Yadu Vamsa performed rigorous Tapasya to Rudra Deva to beget a son of Universal fame. Without realising that by the grace of Rudra and Vishnu, a boy of great brilliance named Nandiswara was already born since the Sage continued the Tapasya roaming from one place to another. Finally he settled for further Tapasya under a Sal Tree at Shalagram. On a Vaisakha month's Dwadasi, Vishnu blessed the Sage with His 'Saakshatkaar' (appearance) and conveyed that a highly virtuous boy named Nandiswara was already manifested with the combined grace of Himself and Rudra and was growing at 'Vraja' Bhumi near Mathura. The Sacred Tree and the Sacred Tirtha became renowned eversince then and the Sage was overwhelmed by the excellent and relentless Tapasya executed by him as Vishnu and Rudra both blessed him to immortality. In this Holy Region of Shalagram, there are fifteen Kshetras, but the best known is that of Varaha Deva. The other Sacred Places were Bilvaprabha, Chakraswami, Vishnupada, Kaalihrida, Swayambrabha, Gadakund, Agniprabha, Sarvayudha, Devaprabha, Vidyadhara, Punyanadi, Devahlaad and so on.

#### 'Go-Nishkramanak' Tirtha

Situated on the Himalayan range, Go Nishkraman Tirtha has ancient reputation. Bhagavan Vishnu arranged to bring down the progeny of seventy cows of Surabhi the celestial cow to bathe in their milk the Lord Shiva, as the latter was cursed by a Sage called Aurva to go about restless and extremely thirsty all over the world; Lord Shiva entered the Sage's Ashram (Hermitage) once and the trees and fruits turned into ash by the heat of Shiva's presence in the Ashram and hence the curse. Eventually, Lord Shiva's restlessness, body heat and thirst disappeared and the Sacred Place became illustrative. Devotees taking bath in the heavy waterfall which had five streams provides extraordinary freshness and mental peace; it is stated that a person who takes bath and observes fast for five nights achieves the 'Punya' of performing five Yajnas, apart from burning off the sins accumulated. In this very Tirtha, there is a hallowed Kshetra, called 'Panchapad' where there are five massive stones and another huge stone inside a sacred waterbody. Also there are other Kshetras reputed as Brahmapad, Vishnupad, Kotivati, Vishnusar and Gosthalak. On Karthika Sukla Dwadasi, devotees take bath and observe fast bestows the benefit of Three Vajapeya Yajnas near the water at Brahmapada. At Vishnusar and a nearby 'Agaath' (deep vallley) seen from the precipice of the mountain, there is a 'Mandalakar' (Rounded) place for doing 'Parikramas' (Circumambulation) and the number of steps taken in the last Parikrama before the death would ensure so many years of reverence in Brahmaloka! Most significantly, the pilgrims could disinctly hear the high pitched voices of cows at the Gosthalak Kshetra!

## Sthutaswami (Krishna) Tirtha

Varaha Deva prophesied to Bhu Devi that in Dwapar Yuga, Lord Krishna would be born to Devaki and Vasudeva and exterminates countless Danavas and Cruel Kings. Five Great Sages would be the Stuthaswami's (Krishna's) followers viz. Shandilya, Gaargil, Kapila, Upashayak and Bhrigu. Some five kosas from Mathura is situated the Sthutaswami Teertha and is famed to absolve the sins of devotees by bathing in it with earnestness. Besides the Five Sages aforementioned, the Sthutaswami would be prayed to by Baladev, Pradyumna and Anirudha. Varaha Deva also prophesied that by sheer force of unfailing faith and Bhakti (Devotion) the Virtuous would take firm steps to salvation, while sheer jealousy and ego would be the dominant factors among the vicious persons like Demons and demonaic Kings taking them to their ruin; indeed the most prominent feature of the Yuga Dharma of Tretha Age! The Stutaswami Tirtha has a 'Bhutagiri'mountain nearby where there are metal-made Idols of Lord Krishna of

indestructible nature; an interesting custom prevailing in the Region had been that the top (head) and bottom (feet) portions oft the Krishna Idols of Metals are woshipped in awe with flowers, Sandal paste and camphor lighting, where as the middle portion of the Idols, especially under the chin and neck are touched or fondled with affection and nearness of a family member! In the same Region, there are 'Pancharuna' kshetra, 'Bhrigu Kund', 'Manikunda' and 'Dhootpap', each one of these Places possessing their own sanctity and experiences of devotees.

#### Dwaraka Kshetra

In the entire Life Story of Dwapara Avataar Krishna, the Dwapara Kshetra occupies a vital role. Dwaraka was materialised by Vishvakarma on the architectural pattern of Indrapuri of Indra himself and the citizens of Mathura were stated to have been moved out in sleep into the luxurious beds of the glorious mansions of Dwaraka! [The overnight transfer was stated to have been caused to avoid Krishna / Balarama's clashes with Jarasandha and his associated Yavans of foreign origin, since Jarasandha was destined to die in Bhimasena's hands and Yavans were destined to be destroyed by Muchukunda, son of Mandhata] The heights of popularity of Dwaraka were witnessed under the Rule of Yadu Vamsies with the rock like support of Krishna and Bala Deva. At the same time, the termination of the Vamsa too had to be witnessed by Krishna and Bala Rama pursuant to the curse of Great Sage Durvasa as he was annoyed with the light-moment pranks of some misdirected Yadu youth as to whether a boy disguised as a girl would deliver a boy or a girl and pat came the Sage Durvasa's reply that he would deliver an iron rod. Even after converting the rod into particles submerged into the Sea, the members of the clan killed each other as a result of the curse excepting those who left Dwaraka for Prabhasa Kshetra. Besides Dwaraka, **Panchasar** is a reputed Kshetra where a stay of six days continuously would provide unprecedented enjoyment and death at that place is said to bless the soul to reach 'Swarga'. In the same Region of Panchasar, there is a famous Peepul Tree whose fruits are not available to each and everybody, but a person lucky to secure the fruit is stated to secure Parama Siddhi after his life. **Prabhasa** is the most significant Kshetra, where in the days of yore, or perhaps even now to some extent, it is difficult to meet those who are obsessed with passion and envy. Those who take bath in the Sea are never disturbed by thousands of crocodiles; more interestingly, if persons offer 'Pindas' to forefathers at this place and tender the Pindas to crocodiles, the latter accept the offerings from the Virtuous persons but reject from the others the same outright! There are other important Places too in the Dwaraka / Panchasar Kshetras like Panchakund, Brahmasangaman, Hamsakund, Kadamba, Chakra Tirth, Raivatak, Vishnusamkraman etc. all around Manipur Mountain.

## Mathura Kshetra

Varaha Deva was so fond of Mathura Kshetra that He told Bhu Devi: 'Na Vidyatey cha Pataaley Naantharikshey Na Maanushey, Samathvam Mathuraaya hi Priyam mama Vasundharey'! (Devi Prithvi! Neither the Human World, nor the Higher Worlds nor Patala could be compared with Mathura!) Whatever godsends are secured from the worships of Magha Amavasyas at 'Prayaga' are achieved every day at Mathura; the boons equal to penance and bathing at 'Kurukshetra' during Sun elipses is as good as a day's stay at Mathura; 'Varanasi's' stay a life time is like a day's stay at Mathura and the 'Punya' of penance and bathing at Pushkar Tirtha during the entire Karthik month is like a day's stay at Mathura! River Yamuna at Mathura is far more sacred than Ganga, said Varaha Deva and in the same vein He said that Yamuna at Prayag is hundred times more sacred than Ganga. Devotees taking bath at 'Avimuktha' Kshetra are blessed to reach Vaikuntha. Also those fortunate to take baths at 'Vishranthi' Kshetra are considered as worship-worthy in Vaikuntha. Indeed, the hallowed baths at Vishranti are far more superior

to Yajnas, Tapas, Dhyan and Samyam or control of Senses. Three sincere 'Pradakshinas' of Gathasram Deva at Vishranti are like a stay in Vaikuntha. Bathing at 'Kankhal' Tirtha in the vicinity of Mathura is like enjoying the undisclosed happiness of Indraloka. Likewise, Dhruva Tirtha is popular for performing 'Pitru karyas' or Shradhs and Tarpans; Rishi Tirtha, Moksha Tirtha, and Koti Tirtha are known for giving away charities. Bodhi Tirtha is well known for 'Pinda daans'. Evidently, Mathura's uniqueness is due to Krishna's birth at this consecrated land! In the days of yore, the entire area was the most hallowed place where Lord Krishna's escapades in childhood ought to have been lapped up in the contemporary period like the killings of countless Demons, lifting of Govardhan Mountain by a child's little finger, controlling Varuna Deva by providing shelter to the people around, besides His personal and mystifying charm, Rasaleelas, full display of Maya and all the rest. Little wonder that Vishnu Himself incarnated as Krishna and demonstrated how magnificent was the power of Almighty and how mean and low that humanity in some parts would have stooped to.

Around Mathura, there are twelve Sacred Tirthas viz. Madhuvan, Taalvan, Kundanvan, Kaamyakvan, Bahulavan, Bhadravan, Khadirvan, Mahavan, Lokajanghavan, Bilvavan, Bhaandiravan, and finally Brindavan. Each of these Tirthas has its one distinct and sacrosanct nature and popularity.

#### Gokarna Tirtha

There lived a 'Vaisya' (merchant) of virtue at Mathura with his wife Susheela, but they had no offspring. She was taking bath in 'Sangam' (Prayag) and found children playing with joy and happiness while swimming. She was overtaken by grief as she had no children, when a Sage asked the couple to worship Lord Siva of Gokarna. After a few years, the couple were blessed with a boy whom they named Gokarna. After Gokarna grew and was married, he also did not beget a child and was involved in charity for considerable time. He had then taken to his Vysya profession and decided to go out in search of fortune. On way, he found a Divine Parrot in a cage carried by its Master and was impressed by its knoledge. The parrot said that in his previous birth he was a learned person named Sukodar but was cursed by a Sage Sukhadev who had however agreed to let Sukodar to retain his memory and knowledge in his next birth aslo. The Master of the parrot agreed to give the bird away, provided Gokarna's virtues of past good deeds were transferred to the Master. Meanwhile, the ship got caught in a cyclone and wrecked in an island and the Captain and crew said that the person responsible was Gokarna and his sins. The parrot felt bad about its Master and flew away to perform worship at a Vishnu Temple where a few Divine birds along with Jatayu their Chief were present; the divine birds decided to help the Master. The parrot showed the way, rescued the Master and took Gokarna to the Vishnu Temple, where he did worship and Tarpans. There were Divine Women too in the Temple who were also sympathetic and allowed Gokarna to stay in the Temple as long as he wished. The parrot flew to Gokarna's parents and conveyed about the welfare of Gokarna. Meanwhile the wrecked ship too was repaired and set sailing again. But the Divine women were sad as the King of Ayodhya decided to destroy the gardens at Mathura; the Parrot tried to negotiate and the decision to destroy the beautiful Mathura Gardens was reversed. The parents of Gokarna were united with him who constructed a beautiful Suka Deva temple of Lord Shiva in the memory of the illustrious Parrot. A grand Yajna was performed and Go Daan as also many charities were performed and eventually a highly Sacred Gokarna Kshetra came to emerge as a renowned Tirtha.

Mayapuri (Haridwar) Tirtha-A glorious incident of Vishnu Maya

There was a highly religious Brahmana named Somasharma at Mayapuri who was an extremely dedicated devotee of Narayana. For a long time, the Brahmana executed uninterrupted Tapas, Karma, Bhakti and unique prayers to Bhagavan who had finally appeared before him and asked for any boon that he desired. The Brahmana said that one kept on hearing about Vishnu Maya in various ways and that he wanted to actually experience that 'Maya'. The Lord replied that if the Brahmana was so intensively enamoured of a glimpse of Maya, then he should go bathe at a Kubjamarak Tirtha in Ganga; Bhagavan said to Himself that He would furnish to him a Maya titled 'Lomaharshini Rohini'. As soon as Somasharma took a dip in the Ganges, he entered a Nishad girl's 'Garbha' (belly) and felt aggrieved that having carried out such Tapasya and accomplished the impossible Darshan (Vision) of Maha Vishnu, was it not a twist of fate to have insisted on Bhagavan to experience a glimpse of Vishnu Maya! What a miserable experience this that a wreched Nishad woman would be his mother after a detestable experience of nine months with three hundred bones through nine 'dwaras'

(doors), blood, excretion, horrible odour and physical hardship! 'Why did I ask a boon like this hey Madhava, after all my spiritual and devotional life?' After the delivery, the baby did not have any memory of Somasharma's past and grew up as a lovely Nishad girl, got married, begot children and after fifty years, by virtue of Vishnu Maya, took bath in Ganges one day and got converted as a hermit, sitting with the same form of Somasharma but got utterly confused as there was an identity crisis. A few Brahmanas told the hermit that they were searching him for the entire day and were happy to see him back. Then prompted by an inner voice, Somasharma went back to Kubjamarak Tirtha, pulled his head down, turned back to normalcy and got back his memory. Lord Vishnu appeared before Somasharma again and after the latter's 'Prana Tyag'he left for the 'Sweta Deepa'. Those who read this account of 'Vishnu Maya' would certainly avoid rebirths in the families of the vicious and despicable, but to a woman of high merit and blessing.

# **Kubjaamrak Tirtha (Hrishikesh)**

Varaharupa Vishnu described to Bhu Devi about the magnitude of Kubjaamrak Tirtha's greatness and the highly propitious baths in Ganga leading to indescribable merits. In the seventeenth Kalpa, Brahma granted boons of invincibility to two Demon brothers named Madhu and Kaitabha who were tricked to death by mutual destruction and created Prithvi afresh. He then looked around to see the most revered Maha Tapasvi Rebhya engrossed in meditation for thousand years with his hands held high. Being extremely pleased at the Sage's dedication, Vishnu leaned a hand on the branch of a Mangoe tree and the branch got bent by the weight of His hand; the Sage noticed the Lord's presence and broke into spontaneous euology instantly and performed 'Saashtanga Namaskar' with his entire body falling on the ground. He requested Narayana to bestow him the boon of making Hrishikesh a popular Tirtha. Kubjaamrak is of Kumudaakar or Lotus shaped. Bathing in Ganga especially in the months of Karthik, Margaseersh, and Vishakh is considered excellent. In this area, there is a Manasik Tirtha reputed for Devi Vishaalanetri and the belief is that after death, the person is born into a Vishaal vamsa with large family and long standing reputation and prosperity. Another Tirtha is named 'Maya' where bathing in Ganga would certainly bring in reputation and contentment. At 'Purnamukha' Tirtha, Ganga water is cool and transparent and visitors prefer bathing here in summer season, preferably on Marga Sukla Paksha Dwadasi. 'Karaveer' Tirtha's bathing in Ganges confers jumping kind of happiness, while Pundarika Tirtha bathing gives 'Yajna phal' or the fruit of executing Sacrifices. Penances at 'Agni Tirth' grant the boon of Ashvamedha Yajna. At 'Vayavya Tirtha', Pitra Karyas or Tarpanas to Ancestors are performed; also shaking off an Asvathh Tree on the banks of Ganges for its leaves provides Parameswar Gyan, if the tree branch shaking is performed on twelve Dwadashis, Ganga assumes different colours in Seasons at the 'Saptasaamudrik'Tirtha, some times in white like milk, some times yellow, yet another time blood red, or of 'Marakatha' Mani!

#### Gokarneshwar Tirthas of Rudra Deva

While Varaha Deva delineated the prominence of Vishnu oriented Tirthas as above to Bhu Devi, Sage Sanatkumar the 'Manasa Putra' (Mind-born son) of Lord Brahma approached the Lord and expressed happiness about the termination of Demon Tarakasura by Maha Deva as the whole World was rid of the menace, especially by Indra and Devas. But Sanatkumara felt that one mystery was still nagging in his mind as to why there were three Gokarneswara Tirthas, one the North Gokarna, another the Dakshina Gokarna and the third was Shringeswara. Lord Brahma explained the background in some detail: The Northern Peak of Mandarachal Mountain known as Munjavan is picturesque where a Nandana Garden existed with most alluring surroundings of glittering precious stones and heaven-like ambience of streams, flowers and fruits where Devas made their temporary resting places and so did Celestial Beings like Kinnaras who sang their sweetest tunes and performed their dances. Most significantly, Maha Deva used to often grace the Place in the form of 'Sthanu Parameswara'. In the subsequent Treta Yuga, a Maha Muni called Nandi carried out a rigorous Tapasya for thousand years experiencing icy cold and extreme heat and Parameswara having tested his steadfast fortitude and unnerving faith finally gave 'Sakshatkar' and asked boons to bestow; but Nandi never yielded for 'Prabhutva, Amaratva, Indratva, Brahmatva, Lokapaalatva -Royalty, Immortality, the position of Indra, Brahma, Lokapaala -but his Bhakti should be eternal, or else there should not be Bhakti at all! Very gladly, Shankara awarded the World's highest windfall that Nandi would be unique like Shiva Himself, that he would be the conduit between all Devas and Danavas, Indra and Brahma and all the Highest Powers that be as Shiva's own conscience! Thus Nandi the Head of Nandi Ganas became Trinetra, with Trishul, Danad, Pinaki, etc. like Second Shankara! In course of time, none could ever witness Shankara's physical form as He had turned Himself as a Deer in the Sleshmatak Forest, a fact not known to Nandi even! Led by Nandi, all the Deities including Indra made vigourous searches the World over but to no avail. Lord Brahma in His inner vision over Tapasya discovered Parameswara as a Deer in the Sleshmatak Forest not far from the renowned Pasupathinath Temple in Nepal. Indra, Brahma and Narayana reached the Forest and found the uni-horn Deer, chased it and nearly caught hold of the horn – Indra the top portion, Brahma the middle and Vishnu the lower portion. Unfortunately for them, the horn gave way into their hands as three parts and all the three cursed their own helplessness. A voice was then heard that the three of them were able to catch only the horn and that too in three pieces. If only the entire body were caught and installed then Dharma Dhenu (the Cow of Virtue) would have been on all four legs. Anyway, they should install their respective pieces of the hornthe upper portion as Uttar Gokarneswar, the middle portion as Dakshina Gokarneswar and the lower portion at Slesheswar. Lord Shiva further said that on the foot hills of Himalayas called Nepal, He would in any case emerge on His own with four resplendent faces in four directions which would be famous as 'Sariresh' (Pashupathinath); Sudarshan Chakra of Sri Krishna tore the Mountains enabling Indra to terminate several Demons like Daman and the place became occupied with Mlecchhas eventually but Surva Vamsa Kshatriyas uprooted Mlecchhas and established a Hindu Kingdom. It is at this Illustrious Place where the Sacred Bagamati River originating from Himalayas flows that Slesheshvar Param Guha or the Sancrosant Cave had surfaced. There are any numbers of streams flowing where even a touch of the waters would destroy sins. To the South of Slesheswar is situated the 'Anashak' Tirtha which allows firm steps towards Mukti. Another Tirtha called 'Bhrigu Prapatan' destroys 'Arishat Vargas' (Six Enemies) viz. Kama (Desire) and Krodha (Anger); Groups of 'Apsaras' (Celestial Dansueses) take off by Vimans from this Place to 'Swarga'. Lord Brahma Himself established 'Brahmodabhed' Tirtha which has the reputation of abolishing 'Rajo guna'if a devotee takes bath with Indriya-Nigrah or limb control for a year to qualify him to ascend to Brahma Loka. There is also a 'Gorakshak' Tirth a visit of which would bestow the benefit of 'Sahasra-Daan' or Charity of Thousand Cows. A Climb of Gauri Shikhar provides Devi- Sayujya. Down under the Mountain a bath in Baghmati River at 'Ratna Kund' blesses attainment of Skandalok. Even a simple bath at 'Panchanadi Tirtha' bestows the Punya of performing 'Agnishtoma'. To

North of Slesheswar is 'Pranthakapaniya' Tirtha where Gandharvas were renowned to worship Shiva. To North West, a sincere bath in 'Brahmodaya Tirtha'along with 'Sandhyopasana' would assure that there would be no visit to 'Mrityu loka' and that there would not be any difficulties for the rest of life. The devotees who perform Pitra Tarpana and Shraddha in the Sangam Place of Bhagmati and Manivati Rivers would most certainly accomplish the best of Shiva Devas' blessings!

Lord Indra situated the top portion of the 'Shringa' at Swarga itself. Brahma set up the middle portion of the Deer Horn at Gokarna and Lord Vishnu set it up at Shringeshwar. But Bhagavan's body without the Horn has infinite forms! For example, Ravanaasura secured one linga which got enrtrenched in Earth beacause of the trickstery of Ganesha and tried to pull it tight and gave up! [Gokarna in North Karnataka is a Siddha Linga at Mahabaleswar Temple; the coverings of the Atma Linga sought to have been brought by Ravana fell at Dhareswar, Gunavantheswar, Murudeswar and Sajjeswar Temples, as popularly believed]

# Sins and Remedies-Observance of Vamana Vratha as cures and preventives

A Brahmana of high virtues was travelling to Mathura on foot through dense, lonely and frightening forest and saw five 'Prethas' or skeleton-like goblin figures making fearful sounds standing on way, saying that they were hungry and thirsty and would like to satisfy themselves with the Brahmana's flesh and blood. Unnerved by the scene, the Brave Brahmana enquired of the Five of them to tell about them! The Prethas said that they were formed likewise as a result of curses and that their names respectively were: Paryushith (who ate fresh food but gave rotten food to others), Suucheemukh (who pointed and tempted many Brahmanas with attractive food but gave none), Sheeghra (who asked Brahmanas to come quickly but denied food) Rodhak (who prevented Brahmanas and ate all by himself) and Lekhak (who kept an account of those who were needy but did nothing to help them). These Prethas eat and reside in such households where there is no clealiness, no worship or Mantras of Devas, no respect for Gurus, womanisers, unkept houses devoid of order or regulation, where there is Apathra Daan or charity to undeserving, where good Brahmanas are insulted, evil deeds are done, etc. The virtuous Brahmana told the Prethas that no person could ever become a Pretha if persons observed Vrathas like Ekarathra, Trirathra, and Chandrayanas; or those who respectfully offer good food to the Respectable persons or Sanyasins; those who perform 'Agni homams' in the house; those who show consideration to widows, helpless and needy; those who perform regular pujas, care and respect for parents and elders and such acts of goodness. The Brahmana also affirmed that those who executed Shraddhas on Shukla Chathurthis especially Tuesdays; who did not get irritated often, be not jealous, be forgiving, be venerable to Brahmanas, learned, visited Tirthas, Holy Rivers, Pilgrim Centers, Temples and over all led a normally good life could never become Prethas. On the hand, when a Brahmana dies with food provided by low class person; when a Grihasti (house holder) indulges in extramarital relations; when a person robs donations to Devas, Gurus, and Brahmanas; when a person acquires bridal money in weddings; when a person leaves or cheats parents, brothers, sisters or children; when a person disables those to perform Yajnas or enable those who should not; if a person kills or abets killing of another person or a cow; a thankless person; a smuggler or dealer of land, women, money and material; an atheist, an anti religion and worst of all a person who has committed Five Mahapathakas have all qualified to turn into Prethas!

To safeguard any eventuality of becoming a Pretha, Maharshi Vasishtha prescribed a **Vamana Deva Vratha** to the illustrious King Mandhata. The best day for 'Snan' (bath), 'Daan' (Charity) and 'Havan' is Bhadrapada Sukla Paksha Dwadasi (preferably coinciding with Shravana Nakshatra). After 'Sangama' snan, a devotee needs to give away a 'Kalasha' and charity of a Kapila cow. The Vratha aims at

prevention of taking birth into a domonaic family and to ensure 'Swarga Nivas' after demise. At the same time the person performing the Vrath would be aiming at prevention of 'Punarjanma' or further birthlessness and achievement of Moksha. Thereafter a Ghata (Pot) with an Idol of Vamana Deva with cooked rice and accompaniments is to be presented along with an umbrella, footwear, a hand fan and a 'Kamandalu' or a vessel full of Ganga water be donated to a highly deserving Brahmana in the form of Vamana Deva Himself as per Mantras and prescribed manner; The relevant Mantras are:

'Aagaccha Varadaantha Shripathey madanugrahaath, Swarnopi nijaamshena Snaanametha dalam kuru (Aaavaahanam)-Yatatvam Nakshatra rupena Dwadasyam Nabhasi Sthithaha, Tannakshatramaham Vandey Mano vaanchita siddhaye

(Nakshatram)-Namah Kamalanaabhaaya Kamalaalaya Keshava, Kamurthem Sarvatho Vyaapi Naraayana Namosthutey (Snaanam)-Sarvavyapi Jagadyoney Namha Sarvamaacyuta, Shravana dwadashiyogey Pujaam kruheetva Keshava (Puja)-Dhyupeyam Deva Devesha Shankachakra Gadadhara, Acyutaanantha Govinda Vaasu Deva Namosthutey (Dhupam)-Tejasa tava Lokaascha vidhutah santhi thevyaya, Twam hi Sarvagatham thejo Janaardana Namosthutey (Deepam)-Adither garbhamaadhaya Vairochani shamaaya cha, Tribhih kramaijitaLoka Vaamanaaya Namosthuthey

(Naivedyam)-Devathanaam Sambhavastvam hi Yoginaam Paraagathih, Jalashayi Jaadyoney Argham me Prathigruhnataam (Arghyam)-Havyabhuk Havya kartha tvam hota Havyaschameva cha, Sarva murtha Jagadyoney Namasthey Keshavaaya cheti Swaha

(Homam)-Hiranyam annam thvam Deva Jalavastramayo Bhanaan, Chhatra daneyna preetho bhava Janaardana (Dakshina)-ParjanyoVarunah Suryah Salilam Keshavah Shivah, Agnimayo Vaishravanah paapah harathu mevyayah ( Vamana Stuti)-Annam thvashta Yamognischa Paapam harathu mevyayah ( Karaka or Ghata Daanam)-Vamano Buddhi daathacha Dravyastho Vamanah Swayam, Vamanastharako dvaabhyam Vamanaya Namosthutey ( Yajamano)-Vamanah pratigruhyati Vamano me prayacchati, Vamanastharako Dwaabhyaam Vamanaya Namo Namahc ( Dwija prathigrahe)-Kapilaangeshu thishthanthi Bhuvanaani Chaturdasha, Datva Kamadugdham Loka bhavanti saphalanrunaam ( Godaanam)-Namah Paapaachhidey tubhyam Devagarbha supujitha, maya visarjito Deva Snanam anyamalankuru ( Visarjanam)-Evam Vidvaamsthu Dwadashayam yo Narah Shraddavaanvithah, Yathra Tathra nabhasye thu krutva phalamaapnuyat /

(Briefly stated the Puja Vidhaan or Procedure of Vamana Deva Vrata is as follows:

Hey Vamana Deva, kindly bless me by being seated: Avaahan or Welcom- I salute the Shravana Star on this Bhadrapada Sukla Dwadasi: Greeting to Nakshatra- Jalaswarup Narayana, my Greetings: Bath- Sarva Swarupa Achyuta, at this auspicious time, kindly accept my worship(Puja)-Govinda Vasudeva, please accept the Dhupa or scented incense

(Dhup)-Janardana, do accept my illumination (Deepa)-Hey Vamadeva, having begotten of Adithi and conquered three lokas in one go, please agree to my food offering

(Naivedya)- Narayana, you are Jalashayi, consider my offer of water to quench the thirst

(Arghya)-Keshava, you are the Havya Kartha, Havya Bhoktha and Havya Swarupa, do accept my offering of Ghee in Agni (Homa)-You are food, gold, water and clothing; may I offer an umbrella and footwear as a token of my great devotion! (Dakshina)-You are the cloud, Varun, Sun, Water, Shiva Swarupa, Fire, Yama, Kubera and Anantha Deva; I am too insignificant to praise you (Stuti) - Keshava!Please destroy my sins (Ghata Daan);

Vamana Deva! You are the performer, the action and the act (Yajananey)-Hey Vishnu; you are the Giver, the Taker and the Taken, Vamana Deva, my repeated greetings

(Dwijapratigrahey)-Kapila Cow is considered as one of the Fourteen Worlds, may this Kamadhenu bless both the giver and taker (Go-daan)-Vamana Deva, I have completed this Vratha to the best of my capacity with full of inadequecies, do pardon me and help others in their tasks (Visarjan). As the Brahmana demonstrated the detailed procedure of the Vratha, the Prethas secured Mukti instantly. Whosoever reads or hears or atleast retains the text of the Puja Vidhan would never ever be afraid of the Prethas or Pisachas. If the Vrath is accomplished as instructed, the person concerned is sure to receive the blessings of Vamana Deva who had indeed conquered the Tri Lokas!

# Vishnu Puja-'Aparadha Prayaschyas' (Correctives for misdeeds)

'Karmana Manasa Vaacha ye Paaparuchayo janaah, Aparadhagruhaasthey thu viparithaastu Sadhava / Ajnaanaacha pramadaaccha esham Praaptamayantaram,

Praayasthittham dahet Savamaparadha malothitham / (Either due to ignorance or carelessness, quite a few 'Aparaadhaas' (blunders) are committed in the context of Vishnu's worship; Corrective steps be taken to burn off all the sins.)

The examples of such blunders are using harsh language; wearing unclean, blue coloured and bloodmixed clothes; disrespect for Gurus and the learned; eating spoilt and inedible food; eating while in Puja, entering Temples and Sacred Places with footwear; Puja of Deities with prohibited flowers; puja in a condition of anger or lust or inebriated stage; Puja in darkness without light, etc. Puja in improper clothing could be corrected by fasts on one day, two days or three days, followed by bath and 'Panchagavya' (or a mix of equal measure each of cow dung, cow urine, milk, ghee or butter and curd-all cow products) and finally food. Wearing of Blue dress should be preceded by aforesaid procedure plus Paajaapathya Vratha including 'homam'. Insulting or abusing Gurus or Men of Elders must be compensated by Chandrayana Vratha or eating fistful of food in an increasing scale from one fist on Partham day to Purnami and again from fourteen fists to Amavasya on a decreasing scale! The blunder of eating inedible food or 'Abhaksha Bakshana' would attract the Corrective of Chandrayan Vratha, Prajaapathya and Go Daan and 'Annadaan' or food to anybody after sancifying as Prasad to any Temple God / Goddess. The sins of Puja in an inebriated condition or wearing footwear in a Temple precinct should be treated with 'Panchagavya'. The indiscretions of performing Puja without flowers or Pushp Mala to Vishnu should be absolved by Mantroktak 'Panchamritha' to the Deity. 'Surapan' or far worse still, the performance of Vishnu Puja in an inebriated condition, the Brahmanas should execute four Chandrayan Vrathas in one hundred and twenty days. The rest of the sins ranging from bad stomach with gas to romance or passion with women or worse still Stree Sangam attract light to heavy punishments as per one's own conscience since the nature of 'Paschattapas' (High sense of remorse) and the 'Aparadha Prayastischyas' are to be determined by the norms afore mentioned as per one's own conscience or the Guidelines laid. In any case, the hidden or unnoticed 'Aparadhas' must be warded off with the following steps viz. external and internal cleanliness, concentration, kirthan, recitation, shravanam ('hearing), 'pathanam' (reading), 'mananam' (Retention), 'dhyanam' (meditation) and surrender.

# Regulations concerning Last Rites-Pitru Yagna

Varaha Deva told Bhu Devi about the significance of Pitra Yagna stating that it was Sage Nimi who started the practice of the Last Rites when the Sage lost his son, Sage Atreya. Nimi could not overcome the grief for three consecutive days and nights. Thereafter, he decided to surmont the sorrow by performing the last rites on the twelfth day ie the day of the 'Asuchi' or impurity after the death. He performed the rituals of Shraddha on one day which would have taken a week normally. He also executed 'Pinda Daan' by donating cereals, vegetables and fruits and with his hands along with kusa grass pointing

to South recited the departed soul of his son's name and Gotra. On that day, he invited Brahmanas and gave them a feast along with those food delicacies which his son would have liked to enjoy. But the sense of grief and guilt tormented Nimi who even contemplated a bid on suicide. Meanwhile Maharshi Narada arrived and assuaged the intense feelings of Nimi and confirmed that whatever was being performed was quite in consonance with the regulations approved by Brahma. As the person whose custody was being taken by Yamaraja and followers should be transferred to a kusha mat while chanting the Mantra 'OM'and Divya Gayatri and quikly wrap up over the body a 'Madhuparka' with the Mantra: Om Gruhana chemam Madhuparkamaadyam Samsaranashanakaram Tvamrutena Thulyam Narayanena Rachitam Bhagavatpriyanam Daahecha Shantikaranam Suraloka pujuyam (Om, take this Aaadya madhuparakam; this discards Samsaarik connections and connects with Amrit or eternal ties inspired and loved by Narayana Himself; your thirst would be quenched and grants Peace and is adorable in Devaloka!). After applying scented materials and oils, the permanent shine of the body and face be brought once and for all, place the head down towards Ganga and other Tirthas available and perform bathing, arrange head towards north and feet towards South on the 'chita' and whoever is the Kartha(s) should invoke Agni reciting the Mantra; 'Krutva Dushkaram Karma jaanatha vaapyajaanatha, Mritvu kaala vasham praapya Narah Panchatya maagahatah / Dharmaadharma samayuktho Lobha moha samaayrataha, Daheyam Sarva gaathraani Divya lokaani gatcchatu' / (Either knowingly or unknowingly, this person's soul may have committed sins and right now is in the grip of Mrithyu (death) and has been absorbed in 'Pancha Tatvas'; this body with Lobha (greed) or moha (attachment) as also Virtue or Vice is being consigned into flames and its Soul be transferred to Divya Lokas!). Having said this and made 'Pradakshina', the Kartha(s) should look at head down to Agni Deva and after taking bath return home. Since then as 'Ashuchi' commences and Deva karyas should not be carried out. This Procedure of 'Antima Samskar' (Last Rites) is applicable to all the Four Varnas. On the Third Day of the death, the Kartha(s) should take bath in a River or running waterbody and along with three 'Pindas' give away three 'Jalaanjalis'. On the fourth, fifth and sixth days, only one Pinda and three 'Jalanjalis' be repeated. On the Seventh and Eighth days the same be executed but at another place. On the Ninth day, those Brahmanas who were commissioned for the Pitru Karya should recite Puranas without taking cooked food; they would eat only on the thirteenth day. On the Tenth day, the Kartha (s) should have the head tonsured and wear new clothes. On the eleventh day, all the Sagotris take bath with oil and on the twelfth day would be performed 'Ekodishta Shraddah'. Pinda-Pradan is to be done as per procedure; the Pindas need to be considered as the departed souls themselves with unmitigated reverence and selflessness. On the Thirteenth day, a feast is arranged to Brahmanas, relatives and friends; 'Daanas' are also performed to liberate the deceased Soul and donations are made too in the form of cereals, umbrellas, and dakshina. Besides other Danas, Go-daan indeed acquires significance. The procedure is to be carried out every month till the arrival of the same day a year hence and till that time, the departed soul is not freed from the 'Pretavastha'. Thereafter, the Annual ceremony becomes a regular feature as long the Kartha lives.

## Nachiketa's visit to Hell and return

Nachiketa was the virtuous son of Sage Uddalak who in a fit of anger once told the son to go to hell and despite the father's apology later on, Nachiketa was bent on visiting Yamapuri and also returning back in his mortal body! When Nachiketa did come back, his father knew no bounds of joy as this was indeed a miracle that anybody could return from hell. The news spread out fast and innumerable Munis and Yogis left their daily routines and thronged Nachiketa with questions that remained complex through out their lives such as the description of hell, about Yama Dharmaraja and followers, the status of sinners and the treatment meted out to them, the dispensations provided to different kinds of sins by Chitragupta and so on. Having respectfully greeted the mighty Yamadharma Raja, Nachiketa narrated the following: All those who are liars; killers of men, women and children; killers of Brahmanas, the ungrateful, greedy, womanisers, rapists, non-believers of Vedas, who curse Vedas or obstructors of Vedic paths or

Brahmanas who get Sudras to execute Yagnas are all sinners. Those who are drinkers of wine; abandon or harass parents, loyal wife, children or Guru; who wilfully and wrongly secures property; destroys public utilities, hampers Vratas, Yagnas, or moral causes; and such sinners of small, medium or large sins have graded classification for the purpose of retribution of justice! Yamalok is thousand vojanas wide and of lengh twice over; made of gold and glittering buildings; of rivers and waterbodies of clear and tasty water; beautiful gardens full of flowers and fruits; well fortified walls impossible to scale or escape. There are two huge rivers 'Pushpodaka' and 'Vaisvathi' with divine waters. Two massive gates, one reserved for Sages, the Virtuous and devotees who might not stay there but visualise the fate of the Sinners and another one to let pass very huge crowd of sinners in continuous streams are the landmarks of Hell. Nachiketa also visualised ditches of massive magnitude, named 'Adoombar', 'Avirchiman' and 'Uchchavatch' meant for sinners to pass through. Sinners are also forced through flames to the west of Yamapuri. Nachiketa also witnessed the Great Assemby of Sages like Manu, Vyas, Atri, Gautam, Angira, and Bhrigu. He visioned the Goddess of Justice, worshipped by Yamaraja and controlling all the actions of the Sinners and found the fiery and powerful Goddess 'Kala' too known for retribution and revenge. Thousands of Yamaduts were on errands to fetch, classify, arrange and direct sinners and as there was no concept of time, rest, sleep or wake up; there was no respite but follow a continuous and rigorous workschedule. While lesser content of sins were being dealt with by the Yama 'dootas' by actions like beating, throwing into flames, treating them with icy winds and so on, the larger intensity of sins are to be directly dealt with by Yama Raja himself. Also, there is a classification of hells like, Tapta, Maha Taptha, Maha Rouray, Rouray, Saptataal Naraka, Kaalasutrak Naraka, Andhakar Narak, Andhatamisra Naraka and so on. In the language of hell, there are gradations of sins and corresponding punishments of varying descriptions and potencies upto eight levels. After death, when the 'Mritak Prani'or the Dead Being is brought to hell, the surroundings are peculiarly different; the Earth is molten like metal, sky looks like a fire ball; the experience would be of extreme hunger and thirst; food is too hot to eat and water is too cold to drink; the Prani is thrown into stenchy water ponds to be a target of huge fishes, crocodiles and waterborn snakes; by the time the Prani is able to escape to the banks, huge birds hit the target or so do the big flies! In 'Kareeshgarth' or Kumbhipak Naraks, there are Demons with big teeth making horrible sounds of biting and tearing the limbs of the Prani and after chewing, the limbs leap back again for another bite or tear! In 'Asipatra' or 'Shringatak' forests full of sharp edged thick leaves, the Prani is cut, pierced, twisted, or broken apart and 'sported' by dogs or worse still by giant scorpions. Then come the Kumbapalika Vana of Agni 'Jwalas' or flames; 'Vyalakirna' or serpent infested tanks, 'Vaitarani' Maha Nadi of fifty yojanas wide and fifty yojanas deep which is stated to let pass through by the grace of good deeds done only! One Yojana height of 'Kalgarah' mount, 'Shingatakavan' named forest and so on are such experiences that nothing else but the process of punishment would be wecomed by the Soul tormented fully by now; in other words, 'Karma paripak' or the fruition of karmas performed by the Prani would be welcome by now as would be proposed by Chitragupta on the basis of 'pluses and minuses' account and finally endorsed By Lord Yama Himself! If the Soul has an account of Virtue, he is sent to heaven; if the content of the sin is large then the dispensations vary for the Prani to become a tree, or an animal, or another human being of a lesser value.

### Lord Yama advises Narada as to how best to avoid Hell

During his mortal visit to Yama Lok and an audience with Yama Dharma Raja, Sage Nachiketa was present when Devarshi Narada had a Sacred Dialogue with Lord Yama as to how could a human being aviod sufferance at Naraka Loka after death. The reply of Yama Raja was as follows: 'Those who perform Agni Homam, has sons, gives away charity of Bhumi, has a straight forward nature, has knowledge and interest in Vedas shall not visit Hell. He should have affection for his wife and vice versa, be truthful, practise charity, be a Vishnu Bhakta, non-argumantative, Swami Bhakta, follower of Non-violence, and believer of Brahmacharya shall not visit hell. Those who should be respectful to Brahmanas,

have self control and restraint in respect of other women, be considerate and merciful to other human beings as his own, be mature and well-learned and be non-egoistic and deviod of resounding self image shall never go to hell. Those who are ready to perform sacrifice for Gurus, interested in helping others, be of service to Parents, and give away til-daan, cows, Gold and Bhumi are certain to avoid hell at any cost. Those who execute Yagnas as per laid up procedure for self or on behalf of others, follow the practice of 'Ahitagni' and 'Chaturmasya Vrata', follow Guru's foot steps, observe silence and control of senses are sure to qualify themselves to reach Almighty. Celibacy, desirelessness and control of Shatvargas are the essential features of 'Amaratva' or accomplishment of Eternity.

# Yama's Prescription to achieve Salvation

Yamadharmaraja advised Sage Narada that primarily whatever 'Karma' (action) is executed by a person is paid back in the same intensity and volume. It is one's own conscience that is his / her friend or foe. There is nothing else that is the deciding factor. A person is bound by his / her past actions. This is what 'fate' is all about. To oversimplify that fate or Maya is responsible for any happening is improper as that happening had its roots in one's erstwhile action. The cycle of action and reaction decides about the movement (as well as the speed and volume) of further action and reaction and these inner wheels specific to a particular human being decide the movement of the larger cycle of the current and subsequent lives. In other words: 'As you sow, so shall you reap' or what is sown is what is produced. Only the foolish human beings blame God for their miseries, little realising that actions need to be performed with total detachment as attachments in current life tend to get transferred to the next births. Narada intervened at this stage and asked Lord Yama that apart from what a person's conscience, action and past history reveals, is there any other Force which might mitigate or add the impact of 'Karma'or one's action? In reply, Lord Yama greeted 'Paramatma' or the Supreme Energy who has neither beginning nor end but is Everlasting, All Pervasive, and All-Knowing; it is that Paramatma who is the Creator, Preserver and also the Destroyer; indeed He is the only Force that could subtract or even remodel the impact of the person's actions! It is He who is impartial and treats all the beings of His Creation equally without favour or fear. It is He who realises Tatvartha, Prakriti and Purusha and is unaffected or influenced by a person's deeds or the values of these deeds. It is He who could make a precise assessment of a person's 'Dhyan' (meditation), its quality or quantum. It is He who could objectively decide the swing of joys and sorrows of any human being and choose to grant or not yet grant Salvation, keeping in view the totality of the person's 'Karma'. Be it a Saint or Sinner, a human being is given balanced evaluation by Paramatma without anger, prejudice or any preconceived notion, for perhaps a Saint might falter once or a Sinner might act with improvement! He might provide 'Mukti' to a person practising 'Pranayama' with concentration and by burning off lowly emotions and impulses. A person who is desireless, devoid of attachments, and leaves the Life ideally is blessed by Paramatma and grants Mukti. A person who is industrious, patient, balanced, angerless, devoid of jealousy and does not eye on possessions of others is qualified for attaining Mukthi. He, who is engrossed in doing service to his learned Guru, follows a non-violent way of life and keeps away from lowly deeds, performs only noble tasks and discards the wrong ones shall take forward steps to Salvation. When a person is not interested visiting such Tirthas as are not approved by his conscience such as pujas of questionable deities is not a sinner but a discreet being and is hence deserving of Salvation. As soon as one notices a venerable and learned person in a company and automatically approaches him and touches his feet, he is indeed on the right path towards Salvation.

Narada asked Yamaraja as to what would be the ways and means by which future births are ensured to perform virtuous deeds and to desist from doing vicious tasks. To this query, Yamaraja greeted the name of Brahma and suggested to follow the Holy Path of 'Sisumara Chakra' which stood for Para Brahma Himself; this Chakra which is within one's own body too represents various Planets like Jupiter, Venus, Mercury, Saturn, Mars etc. which are all worthy of Worship. The Sisumara Chakra or the Grand Wheel Establishment visible on the Sky is the image of Almighty Himself. Indeed the Portrait of Virat Purusha is impossible to vision even to Gods and Sages, but one could perhaps percieve similarity of God-head

with Sisumara and be contented with it at least. [The body of Sisumara which has the shape of a Dolphin is coiled with its head downward, the Pole Star at its tail, on the body of the tail are the Planets of demi-Gods viz. Prajapati, Agni, Indra and Dharma; the base of the tail being the Planets of Dhata and Vidhata; the hip position being of Sapta Rishis; the right side of Sisumara being the Consteallation of of fourteen Stars beginning from Abhijit to Punarvasu; the left side being the Stars of Pushya to Uttarshadha thus balancing the body of Sisumara with equal weight; on the back side of the body is the group of Stars known as Ajaviti and on the abdomen of the Sisumara flows Ganges; on the upper chin is Agasti; on the lower chin Yamaraja; on its mouth Mars; Genitals Saturn; Jupiter on the back of neck; on its chest the Sun; the core of heart is Narayana Himself; within its mind the Moon; navel the Venus; breasts Ahwini Kumars; within its life-air or Panapana is Mercury; neck Rahu; and all over the body the comets and the pores are innumerable Stars]. It is that Sisumara that a high devotee shoul greet and worship and attain Mukti! There are also other means like performing hundred times a day; engaging one self in the service of cows (which is as good as performing several pilgrimages) and observing fasts on all Ekadashi Days. Consuming 'Panchagavya', keeping cow's urine on one's head, taking bath in Cow's urine on rohini Nakshatra and greeting a learned Brahmana soon after the urine bath; greeting Stars Arundhati, Dhruva and Sapta Rishis with folded hands, observing fasts on Ekadashis and puja to Narayana; these are some of the means that Yamaraja suggested to Narada as stepping stones for achieving Salvation.

## **Phala Shruti**

Lord Brahma affirmed to His Illustrious Son Sanatkumar that reading or hearing the Sacred Varaha Purana bestows enlightenment, peace of mind, and maturity, besides the Golden Means of Dharma, Artha, Kama (fulfillment) and Moksha. The Purana confers prosperity, long life, victory, fame, propitiousness, and sin-extinguisher. A person who reads this Consecrated Text will not lead to misery and misfortune. Reading it especially in the early hours of the day will grant the benefit of bath in the Tirthas of Prabhas, Naimisharanya, Gangadhar, Pushkar, Prayag, BrahmaTirth and Amarkantaka. It yields the 'Punya' of giving away in charity of Kapila Cow to a virtuous Veda Pundit. Reading the Varaha Purana, chapter by chapter till the end, awards the fruits of executing 'Agnishtoma' and 'Atirathra'. Whoever listens the Purana with devotion furnishes the advantage of Yagnas, Charities, and 'Tirtha Snans'according to Varaha Deva Himself. Reciting this Scripture with faith on Dwadashi Days should accord the gain of 'Suputra Prapti' (Excellent Sons). Any household in the possession of the Varaha Purana and worships it would be the residence of Narayana Himself. Those who listen to the Chapters of the Purana frequently-even partially-would identify themselves with Bhagavan Vishnu.

## **Concluding Hymn**

Yajamahe Divyaparam Puranamanadi Madhyantamanantha Rupam

Bhavodhbhavam Sansara mokshanam/ Yajamahe Yagnamaho Rupajnam Kalaamcha Kalaadikamaprameyam Anantha rupam Samsara mokshanam

Yajamahe Somapathena Bhaave Trisaptalokanaatham

Jagatpradhaanam Mrutyuswarupam Samsaramokshanam

{Shri Varaha Purana Bhaghayatchhastra Ekonavimshatyadhika Shatatamodhayaha}

I worship Parameshwara who is Divine, the most Superior, Ageless, devoid of Beginning, Intermediate and Endless and the Creator and the Terminator of Universe; I extol Parameswara who is Rupajna, Kaala Swarup, Kalaadik, Aprameya, Yagna Swarupa, Anantha Rupa, and Bestower of Mukti; I commend Parameswara who is the executor of Somayagna and through it the Lord of Trilokas of Upper, Middle and Lower Regions and Seven Lokas of Bhu, Bhuva, Svah, Maha, Jana and Satya; the Chief of the Universe, Mrutyu Swarupa or the Profile of Death and the Provider of Salvation)

# ESSENCE OF VISHNU PURANA

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Avikaaraaya shuddhhaaya Nityaya Paramatmaney,

Sadaika Rupa Rupaaya Vishnaney Sarva Jishnavey/

Namo Hiranyagarbhaaya Haraye Shankaraayacha,

Vaasudevaaya Taaraaya Sargasthinyanta kaariney/

Ekaaneka Swarupaaya Sthula Sukshmaatmaney Namah,

Avyakta Vyakta Swarupaaya Vishnavey Muktihetavey/

Sargasthiti vinaashaanam Jagato yo Jagan-mayah,

Mulabhuto Namastasmai Vishnavey Paramatmaney/

AadhaarabhutamVishyasyaapya-neeyasaamaniyasaam,

Pranamya Sarvabhutaastha- machyutam Purushottamam/

Jnaanaswarupamatyantanirmalam Paramaarthatah,

Tamevaarthaswarupena bhraanti darshanah sthitam/

Vishnum Graasishnum Viswasya Sthitou Sarvey tathaa Prabhum,

Pranamya Jagataameesha majamakshayamavyayam/

(My salutations to Bhagavan Vaasudeva who was responsible for Brahma-Vishnu-and Shankara to create-preserve and terminate as also support all the Beings to swim across the 'Samsara Sagara'; he is also the Vikara Rahita or Featureless, Shuddha or Transparently Pure, Avinaashi or Indistructible, Paramatma or the Unique -Souled, the Singular Super-Entity, Sarva Vijayi or the Ever- Victorius Bhagavan; He is always of Singular Form yet present in Infinite Forms; he is of the Minutest yet the GrossestVirat Swarupa; Vyakta or Tangible and Avyakta or Imperceptible; and the Kaarana or the Supreme Cause and the Kaarya / the Causation or Action; Mukti Swarupa or the Facilitator of Salvation; Vishwa Rupa; Srishti-Sthiti-Samhaar Kaaraka; Vishnu; Sarvaadhara; Sarva Vyapi; Sukshmaati Sukshma, Akshaya; Achyuta; Avyaya; Purushottama, Jnaana Swarupaand Jagedeshvara).

# Vishnu Mahima, Kalpa Srishti, Tatwas and Brahma- Vishnu- Shiva Swarupa

Suta Maha Muni addresed the gathering of Sages at Naimisharanyaa and quoted Maha Muni Maitreya requesting Maharshi Parashara to describe about the Creation of Universe at the beginning of the Dwiteeya Kalpa and the latter recalled his grandfaher Vasishtha giving the account when Brahma Manasa Putra Pulastya was present too.Maharshi Parashara then intiated the delineation of Vishnu, Adi Srishti and Tatwaas:

Parah Paraanaam Parmah Paramaatmasamsthitah, Rupavarnaadi nirdesha viseshana vivarjitah/ Apakshya vinaashyaabhyam Parinaamarthijanmabhih, Varjitah shakyatey vaktum yah sadaasteeti kevalam/ Sarvatraasou Samastam cha vasayatreti vai yatah, Tatah sa Vaasudeveti Vidvadbhih Paripathyatey/ Tadbrahma Paramam Nityam Ajamakshaya- amavyayam, Eka Swarupam tu Sadaa heyaabhaavaachha Nirmalam/ Tadaiva Sarwamevai tadha Vyaktaavyakta Swarupavat, Tathaa Purusharupena Kaalarupena cha sthitam/ Parasya Brahmano rupam Purushaha Prathamam Dwija, Vyaktaavyaktey tathaivanye Rupey Kaalstathaa Param/ (That whosoever is beyond the 'Paraaa' or Prakriti, Parama Sreshtha, Paramatma within Antaraatma on Innermost Super Consciousness who is devoid of Rupa or Form, Varna or Colour,

Naama or Name, Viseshana or Adjectival features; that Paraapara who does not possess the six stages of Origin, Development, Evolution, Dacadence and Destruction; that Absolute Superlative 'IS' in the Present Indefinite Tense who is 'Sarvatra and Samasta' or 'All Over' and 'Everything'!) That is why Vidwans call him as Vaasudeva who is Karya or deed-Kaarana or cause-Nitya or eternal-Ajanma or Unborn-Akshaya or Evergrowing- Gunaabhaava or featureless- Maha Kaarana or the Great Cause-Prathama Purusha or the Prime Being-Paramaatma or the Supreme Soul- Ajara or Ever Youthful-Nischala or Contant- Shabda Sparshaadi Sunya or bereft of Sound, Touch and so on. It was at 'Pralaya' or the Time of Universal Destruction, there was no existence at all; neither it was day time nor night; no Akaasha or Prithivi; no darkness or light: there was only the absence of Indriyas and Buddhi but only a Supreme Parabrahma as Primary Purusha who manifested into two Rupaas viz.'Kaal' or 'Praakriti' and the Self!

**Maha Tatwa** (**The Supreme Manifestation**): That Parabrahma-Paramatma-Vishwa Rupa-Sarvavyaapi-Sarvabhuteshwara-Sarvatma-Parameshwara on its own volition who has no 'Vikaaraas' or traits manifested the Self into the Alternative Self with 'Vikaaraas':

Pradhaana Purushou chaapi pravishyaatmeychhayaa Harih,

Kshobhayaamaasa Sampraaptey Sargakaaley vyayaavyaou/

Tathaa Sannidhi maatrena Gandhah Kshobhaaya jaayatey,

Manaso nopakratruttwaattayasou Parameshwarah/

Sa yeva Kshobhako Brahman kshobascha Purushottamah,

Sa shankho cha vikasaabhyaam Pradhaanatvepi cha sthitah/

Vikaasaanuswarupaischa Brahma Rupaadibhistathaa,

Vyakta Swarupascha tathaa Vishnuh Sarveswareswarah/

Guna saamyaatta tasmaat tasmaat Khetrajnaadhishthaanaan Muney,

Guna vyanjana sambhutih Sarga kaaley Dwijottamaa/

( That Pradhaana Purusha transformed from the State of 'Nirvikaara' to that of 'Vikaara Pradhaana' or full of characteristics just as fragrance influences the fragrance-free Vastu or material! Thus Purushottama the Nirvikaara basically assumes traits and Paramatma assumed the Samashthi-Vyashthi Rupas or endless manifestations commencing from Brahma and so on and indeed this process of transformation is known as Maha Tatwa! ) This Maha Tatwa is of three major Attributes viz. Saatvika, Tejasa or Raajasa and Taamasa and accordingly of three kinds of Ahamkaaraas or Self-oriented egoistic feelings. The Tamasa Ahamkaara led to the emergence Pancha Bhutasas as follows: first by the Tamasa-based Ahamkara created **Tanmatras** (Subtle forms of Matter); first the *Shabda Tanmatra* or Guna Rupa/ feature of Sound leading to the Creation of Shabda Guna and its allied Aaakaasha or the Sky; the Shabda Tanmaatra represented by Sky created the Sparsha Tanmatra leading to the manifestation to Vaayu; the Taamasa Guna's Ahamkara which created Aakasha and Vayu from the Shabda and Sparsha Tanmaatraas respectively led to the emergence of Rupa Tanmatra which in turn led to the Tejo Bhuta; further on the Tamasika Guna having created the Sky- Air- Illumination and Heat or Fire furher went on to the emergence of Rasa Tanmatra and its allied Aapo Bhuta or Jala /Water; finally the Tamasika Guna having interacted with Shabda-Sparsha-Rupa-Rasa Tanmatras and created Sky-Air-Fire-Water, had further reacted with Gandha Tanmatra and materialised Prithvi or Earth. Thus the Maha Tatwa created: 'Prithivyaaas Tejo Vaayuraakaashaas' or Earth-Water-Radiance-Wind, and Sky. Maha Tatwa's Raajasaahankara Guna was responsible for the creation of Panchendriyas viz. Pancha Jnanendriyas and Pancha Karmendriyas all driven by Manasa (Mind). The Karmendritas are Paayu (anus), Upastha ( marmendriya), hasta, paada, and Vaak; the Jnaanindriyas are Twak (Skin), Chakshu (Eyes), Naasika

(Nose), Jihva (Tongue) and Shrotra (Ears). Together with the Pancha Bhutas as above, the Beings of Srishti are thus readied with their Indriyas or Physical Features to face their lives.

The Foremost tangible and practical Creation that the Maha Tatwa, as produced by the inter -action of Purusha and Prakriti viz. the Supreme Self and Alternative Shakti was that of the circular-shaped Brahmaanda or the Golden Egg and Paramatma Himself sat inside it as the Hiranyagarbha. It was in this Golden Egg, there were Sumeru and other Mountains, Sapta Samudraas, Nava Grahaas or Nine Planets, Trilokas, Deva-Asura-Manava Praanis and the extensive flora and fauna as also the ten multiplied Pancha Bhutas; indeed the Golden Egg is likened to a Huge Coconut with the kernel inside camouflaged with seven exterior layers of husk; Maha Vishnu Himself assumed the Swarupa of Brahma of Rajo Guna and was engaged in scripting the Creation of the Universe, took over the task of Satvika Guna in administering the Universe so created Yuga-after Yuga and by transforming himself with Tamo Guna destroys the Universe as Rudra Deva at the termination of each Kalpa! After taking to Yoga Nidra on the comfortable Sesha- Shayya or the bed of Sesha Naga, Vishnu would once again assume the Brahma Swarupa to create the Universe once again thus cycling and recyclingSrishthi- Sthiti- Samhaara:

Srishthi Sthityanta karaneem Brahma Vishnu Shivaatmikaam,

Sa Sanjnaam yaati Bhagavaaneka eva Janaardana!

(Bhagavan Janardana thus performs all the tasks of Creation, Preservation and Destruction as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara!

Sa yeva Srujyah sa cha Sarga Kartaa sa yeva Paatyatti cha Paalyatecha, Brahmaadywavasthaabhi rasesha Murtir Vishnur Varishto Varado Varenyah/

Bhagavan Vishnu alone scripts, secures and smashes the Samsara!)

# Concept of Time, Brahma Srishti and Lakshmi-Vishnu's 'Avinaabhavata' (Affinity)

To facilitate the measurement of Time, Kaala Swarupa Vishnu Bhagavan created the concept of 'Kaala' or Time beginnining from a Nimesha or blink of an Eye: fifteen Nimeshas make on Kashtha, thirty kashtaas make one Kala, thirty Kalas make one Muhurta, thirty muhurtas make a day-night, fifteen daynight make one one paksha (fortnight), two Paksahas-Sukla Paksha and Krishna Paksha make oneMaaasa, six months make one Ayana viz. Dakshinayana or the night of Devatas and Uttaraayana or their day, twelve months make one Varsha, one Varsha is a day-night to Devas, hundred years of human beings make a Divya Varsha, Satya Yuga comprises of Four thousand Divya Varshas, Treta Yuga comprises three thousand Divya Varshas, Dwapara Yuga comprises of two thousand Divya Varshas, Kali Yuga comprises of one thousand Deva Varshas; one Maha Yuga consists of the total of all the twelve Yugas, thousand Chatur yugas account for one day of Brahma andeach day of Brahma comprises of Fourteen Manyantaras. Approximately, each Manyantara consists of eight lakh fifty two thousand Divya Varshas and as per human years each Manvantara consistsof thirty crore sixty six lakh twenty thousand years. Fourteen such Manvantaras make a Brahma Day and after such time or at the end of each Brahma day, there would be a Naimittika Brahma Pralaya. Now, Prathama Paraarthaa of Brahma having been completed at Brahma's half age of Fifty years, the Dwiteeya Paraartha commenced as Varahaka Kalpa is in progress!

In the context of Sarga, Brahma first resorted to **Tamasika Srishti** of Pancha Avidyas viz. Tamas or Ajnaana( Ignorance), Moha (Passion), Maha Bhoga ( Obsession), Taamistra (Krodha / Anger), Andha Tamishra (Extreme and Blind Perversion). Then emerged Jnaana Shunya- Tamomaya and Jada Swarupa Srishti or Creation of Unenlightened, gloomy and desolate material of Five kinds of Vriksha or Trees-Lataa or creepers and Truna or grass forms of no consequence. As the first faltering steps in Srishti were inconsequential, Brahma performed Tapasya with concentration and resolve and created Tiryak- Shrota

Srishti in which Pashu-Pakshi-Mriga Swarupa humans or cattle, birds, animals and Stupid Human Beings full of Ahamkaara or ego- Abhimaan or misplaced self-respect and Avivekata or ignorance. Still dissatisfied with the second attempt, Brahma kept on sharpening his trials: the second trial resulted in Bhuta Sarga, the Third one led to Vaikaarika Sarga which essentially was Aindrayika or Indriya Sambandhi or related to attachment of Physical Parts; the Fourth one was of Prakrutika Nature or Buddhi-Purvaka quality which was a Mukhya Sarga related to Parvata-Vriksha-Sthavaraas; the fifth Sarga of Keeta-Patangaas or worms and birds; the sixth Sarga was called Deva Sarga, the seventh Sarga was of Manushya's Creation; the seventh and eighth Sargas were of Praakrita Sarga, the Ninth one was Kaumara Sarga which was both Prakritiha and Vaikritika Sarga. Then followed the Srishti of Deva-Asura-Pitrugana-Manushyas and of water for which Brahma utilised his body-parts: from his janghas emerged Asuras; from his face were created Sarva Pradhana Devatas; Pitruganas from his body-sides; then by quickly changing his bodies each and every time, created Jyotsna, Pratah kaala, Syamkaala, and in the nights created Rakshasaas and Yakshas, Sarpas and so on. As Brahma was enjoying singing Gandharvas were created. There after he created wolves from his Vaksasthala of chest, goats from his face, cows from his belly; horses, elephants, donkeys, camels and innumerable animals from his feet, and fruits and Aoushadhis from his body hairs. From Brahma's Prathama / Poorva Mukha emerged Gayatri, Rig Veda, Tivrut Soma Rathantara and Agnishtoma Yagna; from his Dakshina Mukha were materialised Yajur Veda, Traishthup Chanda, Pancha Dashastoma, Brihat Saama, and Ukthiki; from Brahma's Western Face came SaamaVeda, Jagati Chhanda, Sapta dashastoma, Vairupa, and Atiraatra and finally from his Uttara Mukha were materialised Eka Vimshati –stoma, Atharva Veda, Aaptoryaamaana, Anushthup Chhanda and Vairaaja. Thus, various body parts of Brahma were created Pishacha, Apsara, Kinnara, and innumerable Sthavara Jangamaas!Brahma then created Varnaashrayaas viz. Brahmanas from his face, Kshatriyas fromhis chest, Vaishyas from his knees and others from his feet; fulfillment of the prescribed duties of the Varnas were that Karma Nishtha Brahmanas would attain Pitru Loka, Kshatriyas who never leave the battle field and either win or get bruised or killed would attain Indraloka, Vaishyas following their Varna Dharma would secure Vaayu loka and others the Gandharvaloka. Gurukula vaasi Brahmacharis qualify for Urthvaloka Muni loka, Virtuous Grihastaas attain Pitruloka, Vanaprasthaas achieve Saptarshi loka and Sanyasis accomplish Brahma loka! Brahma's Maanasa Putras were Bhrigu, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Angira, Marichi, Daksha, Atri and Vasishtha considred as Nine Brahmas. Khyati, Bhuti, Sambhuti, Kshama, Preeti, Sannati, Urja, Anasuya and Prasuti were Brahma's daughters and were named as the wives of the above husbands respectively. Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanat Kumaras were also the Brahma Manasa Putras and refused to get married and beget progeny; Brahma got angry and frowned and thus Rudra Deva got materialised; half of Rudra's body was of male and another half was of a female; the male part got divided as eleven parts and the female part too got divided as Sowmya, Krura, Shanta, Ashanta, Shyama, Goura and such other Rupaas.Brahma also created Saamyambhu Manu as the Prajaapati and the latter married Shatarupa; together they gave birth to two sons Pravrata and Uttanapaada; they also begot two daughters viz. Prasuti and Aakruti who were married to Daksha and Ruchi Prajapatis respectively. Daksha and Prasuti begot twenty four Kanyas viz. Shraddha, Lakshmi, Dhruti, Tushti, Medha, Pushti, Kriya, Buddhi, Lazza, Vapu, Shanti, Siddhi and Kirti who were all married to Dharma; eleven more kanyas viz. Khyati, Sati, Sambhuti, Smriti, Preeti, Kshama, Santati and, Anasuya and these were married respectively to Bhrigu, Shiva, Maricha, Angira, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Atri and Vasishtha while Swaha and Swadha were wedded to Agni and Urija to Pitaras. Akriti and Ruchi Prajapati gave birth to twin girls viz. Yajna and Dakshina.

Having described Tamasika Srishti, Parashara Muni gave an account of **Roudra Srishti** at the Kalpa's beginning. As Brahma was desirous of creating a son like himself, he found a boy on his lap with Nilalohita Varna and as the child kept on crying non-stop, he said:

Kim twam rodishi tam Brahmaa rudantam praatyuvaachah,

Naama deheti tam sotha pratyu –vaacha Prajapatih,

Rudrastwam Deva naamnaasi maa ropdirdhairyamaavacha/

Ekamutmam punah sotha saptakrutyo rurodavai/

Tatonyaani dadou tasmai sapta naamaani vai Prabhuh,

Sthaanaani chaishaamashtaanaam parni putraamscha sa Prabhuh/

Bhavam Sharvameshaa -naam tathaa Pashupatih Dwija,

Bheemamugram Mahadevamuvaacha sa Pitaamahah

(Why are you crying away my child; the child asked: keep my name; Brahma said: your name shall be Rudra and now don't you cry again; but the child cried seven times again and thus Brahma gave the child seven more names and at those eight more places decided the names of the child's women and progeny too; the seven more names were Bhava, Sharva, Ishaana, Pashupati, Bheema, Ugra and Mahadeva) Brahma also decided their Positions along with Surya, Varuna, Prithvi, Vaayu, Agni, Aakasha, Yagna dikshita Brahmana and Chandra. Along side, the names of Surya's wives also were decided by Brahma and they were Suvarchala, Usha, Vikeshi, Apara, Shiva, Swaha, Disha, Diksha, and Rohini. Also Surya's sons names were also given as Shanaischara, Shukra, Lohitanga, Manojava, Skanda, Sarga, Santana and Budha. Bhagavan Rudra married Sati who was annoyed with her father Daksha and self-immolated in Daksha Yagna and subsequently got married to Uma Devi the daughter of Himavanta and Devi Mena.

**Mutual Affinity of Vishnu and Lakshmi**: The couple of Bhrigu Muni and Khyati gave birth to Devi Lakshmi who was wedded to Vishnu. In this context, Maitreya Muni interjected and sought an explanation from Paraashara Maharshi as to how Lakshmi Devi who surfaced at the time of Samudra Mathana by Deva-Danavaas for Amrita was supposed to have been born to Bhrigu-Khyati couple! Maharshi Parashara replied as follows in extolling Lakshmi:

Nithaivaishaa Jaganmataa Vishnoh Shriranapaayani,

Yathaa Sarvagato Vishnusthathai -veyam Dwijottama/

Artho Vishnuriyam Vaani neetireshaa nayo Hari,

Bodho Vishnuriym Buddhirdharmosou Satkriyaa twiyam/

Srashtaa Vishnuriyam Srushtih Shrir Bhumirbhudharo Harih,

Santosho Bhagavaam Lakshmistushti Maitreya Shaswati/

Icchaa Shrir Bhagavan kaamo Yagnesou Dakshinaa twiyam,

Aarjaarhutirasou Devi Purudaasho Janaaradanah/

Patneeshaalaa Muney Lakshmih Praagvamsho Madhusudanah,

Chitir Lakshmir Hariryupa Idhmaa Shrirbhagavaankushah/

Saama Swarupi Bhagananudgeetih Kamalaalaya,

Swahaarlakshmir Jagannatho Vaasudevo Hutaashanah/

Shankaro BhagavaancchorirGauree Lakshmirdwijottama,

Maitreya Keshavah Suryastatprabhaa Kamalaalaya/

Vishnuh Pitruganah Padmaa Swadhaa Shaswata Pushtidaa,

Dyouh Shreeh Sarvaatmako Vishuravakaashoti vistara/

Shashaankah Shridharah Kaantih Shristathaivaana paayani,

Dhrutir Lakshmeerjagaccheshtaa Vaayuh Sarvatrago Harih/

Jaladhidwija Govindastadwelaa Shrirmaha Muney,

Lakshmi Swarupamindraani Devendro Madhusudanah/ Yamaschakradharah Saakshaat Dhumrernaa Kamalaalayaa, Ruddhih Shtih Shridharo Devah Swayameva Dhaneshwarah/ Gauri Lakshmeermahaa bhaagaa Keshavo Varunah Swayam, Shrirdevasenaa Viprendraha Devasenaapatir Harih/ Avashtambho Gadaa paanih Shaktir Lakshmirdwijottama, Kaashthaa Lakshmir nimeshaasou kalaa twiyam/ Jyotsnaa Lakshmih pradiposow sarvah Sarveswaro Harih, Lataabhutaa Jagan maataa Shri Vishnurdruma sanjnitah/ Vibhavari Shrirdivaso Devaschakra gadaa dharah, Varaprado Varo Vishnurvadhuh Padmavanaalkayaa/ Nadaswarupi Bhagavaan-chhirnadi rupa samstitaa, Dwajascha Pundareekaakshah Pataakaa Kamalaalaya/ Trishnaa Lakshmir Jagannaadho lobho Narayanah parah, Rati Raagascha Maitreya Lakshmi Govinda yevacha/ Kim chaati bahurnoktena Sankshepyaadou muchyatey/ Deva tirya Manushyaadou Putraanaa Bhagavaan Harih,

Streemaani Shricha vigneya nanayorvidyatey param)

(Hev Dwijottama! Devi Lakshmi who never leaves Vishnu is as permanent as Vishnu and is Sarva Vyapi as Vishnu. Lakshmi is the meaning and definition of Vishnu, his voice, his descipline, his morality, his teachings, his mental status, his dharma or virtuosity, and his deeds. Vishnu is the Srashta or the Creator and Lakshmi is the Creation par excellence. Srihari is the 'Bhudhara' and Lakshmi is Bhumi, Bhagavan is Santosha or the Essence of Happiness and Lakshmi is the incarnation of Tushti or Contentment. Bhagavan is 'Kaama' or desire and Lakshmi is the goal of desire. He is Yagna and she is Dakshina. He is the Purodasha and she is Ajyaahuti or the offering of Ghee. Madhava is Yajamana Griha or the House of the Master and Lakshmi is the Patni shaala or the Private Residence of the wife. He is 'Yupa' or the Sacrificial Post and she is 'chita' or the Sacrifice herself; He is the Kusha or the grass used for all Sacred Deeds and she is the 'Idhma' (piece of Sacrificial wood); He is Saama Veda Swarupa andshe is the Udgati or the Cantor/ Mantra; and Bhagavan is Hutaashana or the receiver of Homa while Lakshmi is Swaha or the offering. Bhagavan Vishnu is Shankara while Lakshmi is Gauri. Keshava is Surya while Lakshmi is Prabha; Vishnu is Pitruganaand Lakshmi is Swadha; and He is Aakasha and She is Swargaloka! Hari and Lakshmi respectively are Chandrama and Kaanti; Vaya and Gati /Speed and Dhruti or Adhara /the hold; Samudra and Taranga or the wave; Indra and Indrani; Yama Dharma and Dhumorna; Kubera and Ruddhi; Kartikeya and Devasena; Gadadhara and Shakti; Nimesha-Kashtha; Muhurta-Kala; Deepaka and Jyoti; Vriksha and Lata; Dina-Ratri; Vara- Vadhu; Nada and Nadi; Dhwaja and Pataka; Lobha and Trishna; Rati and Raaga; in brief: he is the symbol of mansculinity and she is the emblem of femininity!).

### Samudra Mathana, Emergence of Lakshmi and Amrita (Vishnu and Lakshmi Stutis)

As Durvasa Muni gifted a fragrant garland to Indra who disrespected and gave it away to Iravata elephant which trampled it, the Muni went wildand cursed him that Rajya Lakshmi would desert Tribhuvanas and Indra's magnificance would disappear. Since Indra's grandeur was lost Daitya-Danavas occupied his throne and Devas bacame fugitives and approached Brahma Deva. Brahma in turn reached Ksheera Saagara along with Indra and Devaas and extolled Bhagavan Narayana as follows:

Namaami Sarvam Sarveshamanantamajamavyayam,

Lokadhaama Dharaadhaaramaprakaasha mabhedinam/

Naraayanamaniyamshamaseshaa-naamamaniyasaam,

Samastaanaam Garishtham cha Bhuraadeenaam Gareeyasaam/

Yatra Sarvam yatah Sarvamutpannam Matpurah saram,

Sarva Bhutascha yo Devah paraanaamapi yah Parah/

Parah Paramaatmaat Purushaat Paramaatma Swarupa dhruk,

Yogibhischintaye yo sowMuktihetor Mumukshibhih/

Satvaadayo na Santeesho yatra cha Prtaakrutaa ganaah,

Sa Shuddhaha Sarva Shudhyebhyaha Pumaanaadyah praseedatu/

Proachatey Parameshohi yah shuddhopyapuchaaratah,

Praseedatu sa no Vishnuraatmaa yah Sarva dehinaam/

Yah Kaaranamcha Kaaryam cha Karanasyaapi kaaranam,

Karyasyaapi cha yah Kaaryam praseedatu sa no Harih/

Karya Kaaryasya yatkaaryam tat Kaaryasyaapi yah Swayam,

Tat Kaarya Kaarya Bhuto Yastatascha pranataah sma tam/

Karanam Kaaranasyaapi tasya Kaaranakaaranam,

Tat Kaaranamnaam hetum tam pranataah sma Pareshwaram/

Bhoktaaram Bhogya bhutam cha Srashtaaram Srujyamevacha,

Kaarya kartu Swarupam tam pranataah sma param padam/

Vishuddha bodhavannityam ajam akshayamavyayam,

Avyaktamavikaaram yattadvishnoh paramam padam/

Na sthulamcha sukshmam yatra Viseshanagocharam,

Tatpadam Paramam Vishnoh pranamaam sadaamalam/

Yasyayutaam yutaam shaamsho Vishwashaktiriyam shtitaa,

Parabrahma Swarupam yat pranamaamstamavyayam/

Yadyoginaha Sadodyhuktaah Punya Papaapa/

kshayekshayam, Pashyanti Pranavo chintyam Tad- Vishnoh paramam padam/

Yatra Devaa na Munayo na chaaham na cha Shankarah,

Jaananti Parameshasya tad Vishnoh Paramam Padam/

Shaktayo yasya Devasya Brahma Vishnu Shivbaatmikaah,

Bhavantya Bhuta Purvasyha tad Vishnoh Paramam Padam/

Sarvesha sarva Bhutaatman Sarva Sarvaashrayaachyuta,

Praseeda Vishno Bhaktaanaam Vraja no drushtigocharam/

(My Salutations to you Narayana! You are an atom among the minutest of atoms and the heaviest by far the heavier than Earth; You are the Nikhilaloka Vishraama, Prithwi's Adhaara Swarupa, Aprakaashya, Amogha, Sarva Rupa, Sarveshwara, Ananta, Ajaya, and Avyaya. Inclusive of me Brahma the totality of Universal Existence is far beyond of our comprehension, even as you exist in it, created by you, preserved by you, and is Sarva Deva maya, SarvaBhutamaya, Sarva Mokshagami Munijanamaya, Paratma Swarupa, Adi Purusha! Do kindly be merciful! Be kind to us Shuddha Swarupa Shakti and Kala Swarupa ranging from Kalaa-Kaashtha-Muhurtaas to Maha Yugaas! Be pleased Shudda Swarupa Parameshwara or Parama/Maha Lakshmi Pati; be compassionate to us as you are the Kaarana, Karyarupa, Karanaa's Kaarana, and Karya's Karya. I bend my knees to you for benevolence as you are the Karya or Maha Tatwa, Karya as Ahamkara, Karya as Tanmatra panchaka, Karya as Brahmanda, Karya as Brahma-Dakshaadi Karyabhuta! You are the Jagat Karana (Brahmaadis), Brahmanda Karana, Bhuta Panchaka Karana, Pancha Tanmatra Karana, Mula Prakruti Hetu, Bhokta and Bhogya, Srashtaa and Srujya, Karta and Karya Rupa, and Parama and Paramapada, Vishuddha Bodha Swarupa, Nitya, Ajanma, Akshaya, Avyaya, Avyakta and Avikari, my prostrations to you. My reverential greetings to you who is neither Sthula (Gross) nor Sukshma (Minute), Nirmala-Nitya, and Paramapada!Indeed Your Ayutaamsha or of Ten thousandth Amsha is capable of Vishwa Rachana! Indeed the NityaYukta Yogi ganaas seek to realise even hazy glimpses of the vision of your 'Paada Padmaas' through their extended lives due to their Tapasyas! Indeed, Devaganaas, Maharshiganaas, Shankara and myself could never guage the magnitude and magnificenceof Your Reality! Sarveshwara, Sarva Bhutatma, Sarva Rupa, Sarvaadhaara, Achyuta, Maha Vishno do kindly respond to our supplications!)

To supplement the prayers of Brahma Deva, others like Brihaspati, Indra and Devaganaas further prayed to Bhagavan Vishnu along with Shankara and Rudras, Dwadasha Adityas, Ashvani Kumaras, Ashta Vasus, Marud Ganas, Sadhya Ganaas and so on as a final refuge point; and Bhagavaan was satisfied with the sincerity of their Stutis. He replied that they should have to undergo some hard work and sacrifice which only could help accomplish their ends. He required Devas to convince Daityas and Danavas to jointly perform Kshirasagara Mathana or churning of the Ocean of Milk to mataerialise Amrita (Nectar) besides Auoshadhis or herbs and medicines and so on with Mandharaachala as the huge stick, Vaasuki Naga as the string and any other asistance required could be prvided by himself; Daitya-Danavas would readily agree to the proposition, he assured. Vishnu further assured Devatas that the Amrita to be finally emerged would be meant for them alone. The Daitya-Danavas having been convinced keeping in view to the 'Catch' of Amrita, the operation commenced in Sharat Ritu when the Sky was clear and at an Auspicious Muhurta. Danava-Daityas out of self-pride opted for the huge Vaasuki whose mouth gave out poisonous fumes and many of them perished but Devas opted for the tail of the Vasuki. Vishnu asumed Kurmaavataara to provide stability to the process of churning by withstanding the heaviness of Mandhara Mountain and the churning speed. The first round of churning yielded Kamadhenu which opted for Siddhas; then emerged Kalpa Vriksha which was claimed by Devatas; Daanava-Daityas let it go to Devatas as they aimed at Amrita and nothing else! Then followed Apsaraas who were on their own but to serve Swarga loka; Chandrama was claimed by Mahadeva to adorn his head; Maha Lakshmi emerged as Muni Ganaas welcomed her by reciting 'Shri Suktam' of

Hiranya varnaam Harinim Suvarna Rajatasrajaam

Chandraam Hiranmayim Lakshmim Jaatavedo mavaavaha

and she readily ornameted Vishnu Deva's chest; [Incidentally, there was no mention in Vishnu Purana of the Creation of 'Haalaahala' or the huge sheet of poisonous flames across the sky which was retained in the throat of Maha Deva and hence got the epithet of Nilagreeva] Then finally emerged Dhanvantari along with his 'Kamandalu'the Akshaya Patra full of Amrita and Daitya-Danavas forcibly dragged the kamandalu from Dhanvantari. Vishnu Bhagavan assumed the dazzling Mohini Swarupa and spread over a thick screen of Maya over the Danava-Daityas and disrtibuted Nectar among Devas, who were fully contented with the Amrita and Daanavas fled back to Pataala while Indra and the Devas got reinstated to their lost glory.

**Lakshmi Stuti**: A highly satisfied Indra most humbly welcomed Devi Lakshmi as Rajya Lakshmi by commending her as follows:

Namasye Sarva lokaanaam Jananimabjasambhavaam,

vibhushanamShriyamunnidra padmaakshim Vishnu Vakshasthala -sthitaam/

Padmaalayaam Padmakaraam Padma patranibhekshanaam,

Vandey Padma -mukheem Devim Padmanaabha priyaamaham/

Twam siddhitwam Swadhaa Swaahaa twam Lokapaavani,

Sandhyaa raatrih Prabhaa Bhutirmedhaa shraddha Sarasvati/

Yajna Vidyaa Mahaa Vidya Guhya Vidyaa cha Shobhaney,

Atma Vidyaa cha Devi twam Vimukti phala daayini/

Aanveekshiki Trayivaartaa Danda neetistwameva cha,

Sowmyaasowmyair- jagadrupaistavaithaddevi puritam/

Kaa twanyaa twaamrutey Devi Sarva Yajnamayam vapuh,

Adhyaastey Deva Devasya Yogichintyam Gadaabhrutah/

Twayaa Devi Parityaktam Sakalam Bhuvana trayam,

Vinashta praayamabhavantwaye daaneem Samedhitam/

Daaraah Putraastathaagaara suhruddhaanya dhanaadikam,

Bhavatyetan mahaabhaago nityam twadeekshanaatrunaam/

Shareeraarogya maishwarya maripakshakshayah sukham,

Devi twadrushti drushtaanaam Purushaanaam na durlabham/

Twam Maataa sarvalokaanaam Deva Devo Harih Pitaa.

Twayyaidvishnunaa chaamba Jagadvyaaptam Charaacharam/

Maa na kosham tathaa goshtham naa gruham maa paricchadam,

Maa shariram kalatram cha thyajethaa Sarva paavani/

Mamaa putraanmaa suhrudvarga maa pashunmaa vibhushanam,

Twajethaa mama Devasya Vishnurvakshah sthalaalaey/

Statvena Satya shouchaabhyaam tathaa sheelaadi -bhirgunaih,

Tyajjantey tey Naraah Sadyah Santyakttaa ye twayamaley/

Twayaavilokitaah Sadyah Sheelaadvair -akhilairgunaih

kulaishwaryaischayujjyantey Purushaa Nirgumaa api/

Sa Slaaghyah sa gunee dhanyah sa kuleenah sa Buddhimaan,

Sa Shurah sa cha Vikranto yastwayaa Devi veekshitah/

Sadyo vaigunyamaayanti Sheelaaghah Sakalaa gunaah,

Paraangmukhi Jagaddhaatri yasya twam Vishnu vallabhey/

Na tey varnaantu shaktaa Gunaajihvaapi Vedhaah,

Praseeda Devi Padmaakshi Maasmaamstyaa-kshim kadaachana/

(My salutations to you Jagajjanani! You possess a magnetic face with charming eyes like of a lotus adorning the magnificent chest of Vishnu; you reside on a lotus, lotus alone is ornamented in your soft hands, lotus leaves are likened to your eyes, and lotus stem on your husband's navel thus fond of lotus again! You are Siddhi, Swadha, Swaaha, Sudha, Sandhya, Ratri / night, Prabha, Vibhuti, Medha, and Sarasvati. You are the Yajna Vidya of the Science of Karma- Kaanda, Maha Vidya or Upasana, Guhya Vidya or Mahendra jaalor mesmerism, Atma Vidya or route to Mukti, Tarka Vidya or the Scientific Art of Logic, Vedatrayi or the Expert in Three Vedas, Varta of Business and Danda niti or the exponent of Politics!You are all over the Universe to many with tensions due to lack of opportunities and to a select few withall facilities. Is there a person who among all the Tri Lokas could afford to ignore youand make good in their lives! It is only due to your kind vision that a person is blessed with all fulfillments including women, progeny, home, money, good food and happiness. It is only due to your revelation that any body is provided with physical health, prosperity, destruction of enemies, and contentment. You are the Loka Maata or the Mother and Bhagavan Vishnu is Loka Pita or the Father over whom the world is spread all over and dependent. May this Samsara be profuse with our properties, Pashu shaalaas, homes, articles of enjoyment, and over all well being. Please always never ever leave us from our families, well wishers, ornaments, joys and good health. All the human beings bereft of you lose our mental strength, body energy, truthfulness, cleanliness and all other laudable qualities of life. Those who secure your kindness instantly become Buddhimaan, Shaktimaan, Sura veeraas and Dhanavaans; the moment your absence is felt, life gets unworthy, eventless and purposeless. My Mother, never leave me and be ever with me!)

Thus Devi Lakshmi who was the daughter of Bhrigu and Khyati disappeared from Swarga and surfaced again after Samudra Mathana. As and when Vishnu Bhaagavan took to human forms, so did Devi Lakshmi as Prithvi along with Parashu Rama, Devi Sita along with Shri Rama, Devi Rukmini along with Shri Krishna!

Yaschhetchhrunuyaajjanma Lakshmyaa yaschja pathennarah,

Shriyo na vicchutistasyaGruhey yaavatkulatramam/

Pathyateyyeshu chaiveyam Shristutirmuney,

Alakshmiih Kalahaadhaara nateyshthaastey kadaachana/

(Hey Muney! Those homes in which Lakshmi Stotras are not recited daily become the victims of arguments, quarrels, and poverty; contrarily, Lakshmi Stotrass are heard, read out and recited silently become the abodes of opulence, delight and propitiousness.)

## 'Dhruvopaakhyana'

Of the two sons of Swayambhuva Manu viz. Priyamvrata and Uttanapaada, special reference was always made in the annals of Hindu Dharma about Dhruva the immortal. Uttanapada had two wives viz. Suneeti

whose son was Dhruva and the younger wife was Suruchi who dominated the King and her son was Uttama. As Dhruva desired to sit on the lap of the King since his cousin too sat, Suruchi insulted Dhruva and indirectly talked ill of Suneeti too and the King remained passive even as a hurt Dhruva walked off to his mother who expressed her helplessness and said only Bhagavan Narayana could help. The disgusted boy of four-five years entered a nearby forest where Sapta Rishis Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulastya, Pulaha,, Kratu and Vasishtha met him and asked for the reason of his sorrow and Dhruva replied innocently that he desired to sit on the lap of his father as his cousin brother did and nothing else! Maharshi Maricha told him convincinly that his wish could be fulfilled only by Achyuta Araadhana; Atri advised him to dedicate himself to Bhagavan Narayanaand confirmed

Parah Paraanam Purusho Yasya Tushto Janardanah,

Sa Praaprotyakshayam sthaanametassatyam Mayoditam

(The Truth is that the Parama Shakti of Paraa Prakruti is indeed inferior to the Supreme Parama Pursha Janardana and he alone could create miracles to place Dhruva on unimaginably higher plane than the least significant Dhruva's father's lap!) Pulastya Maharshi said:

Param Brahmaa Param Dhaama yosou Brahmaa tathaa Param,

Tamaaraadhya Hari yaati Muktimapyati durlabham

(Those human beings who perform 'Araadhana'/ worship to Parabrahma Paramdhaama and Paraswarupa Hari could very easily achieve Moksha Pada [let alone his father's lap!]. Angira Maharshi, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasishtha too expressed similar sentiments. Dhruva replied to the Maharshi Ganaas to teach him as to how to worship Narayana and they all affirmed in one voice:

Hiranya garbha Purusha Pradhaana avyaktaavyakta Swarupa Rupiney,

<u>Om Namo Vaasudevaaya</u> Shuddha Jnaana Swarupiney/

Yaitajjapaaya Bhagavan Japyam Swaaambhuvo Manuh,

Pitaamahastava puraa tasya tushto Janaardanah/

Dadou yathaabhilaashitaam siddhim Trailokya Durlabhaam,

Tathaa twamapi Govindam toshayaitastadaa Japan/

Following the 'Upadesha' of Maharshis as above, Dhruva entered a Forest named Madhu on the banks of River Yamuna; subsequently it got the epithet of Madhubanaas was occupied by Daitya Madhu later and his son Lavanasura was killed by Shatrughna of Ramayana as the Place was changed as Mathura eversince. As young Dhruva performed Dhyana and Puja of Narayana with enormous concentration and dedication for long long time, Prithvi got affected so much that a single-legged Dhruva did Tapsya leaning to the left, Bhumi too leaned left-ward and vice versa and in the process, Rivers, Samudras and Parvatas too got distrurbedand Indra utilised all kinds of gimmicks to advise, frighten and subdue the Child but to no avail. Finally Devas went in a delegation to Janardana and the latter assured that Dhruva had no ambitions to get into the positions of Indra, Surya, Varuna or Kubera and none of them needed to be afraid on that count; Bhagavan further promised to do the needful. He appeared before Dhruva and asked him to terminate the Tapasya; Dhruva no doubt prostrated before Janardanana but desired that the former should assume that kind of Form by which even Brahma and Maha Yogis would not have visualised and that he also should be blessed to possess that kind of Buddhi with which to make appropriate Stuti to Bhagavan. As Parama Deva appeared before Dhruva in his Brihad Swarupa, Dhruva was elevated to heights of trance and commended Paramatma as follows:

Bhumiraaponalo Vaayuh Swam Mano Buhhirevacha,

Bhutaadiraadi prakrrutisya rupam Natosmitam/

Shuddhaha Sukshmokhila vyaapi Prathaanaatparatah pumaan,

Yasya rupam Namastasmai Purushaaya Gunaashiney/

Bhuraadeenaam Samataanaam gandha dinaam cha Shasvatah,

Budhyaa dinaam Prathaana -sya Purushasya cha yah parah/

Tam Brahma bhutaatmaanaamasesha jagatah patim,

Prapadye sharanam Suuddham twadrupam Parameshwara/

Bruhatvaad brumhana twaavascha yuadrupam Bramha samjnitam,

Tasmai Namastey Sarvaatmanyogi Chintyaa –vikaariney/

Sahasra sheershaa Purushaha Sahasraakshah Sahasrapaat,

Sarvayyaapi Bhuvah Sparshyaadityan tishthatishthadyashaangulam/

Yadbhutam yaccha vai Bhavyam Purushottama tadbhavaan,

Twatto Viraat Swaraat Samraat Tvattaschaayappyabhi Purushah/

Atyaricchyat soddhascha Tiryagurdhwam cha vai bhuvah,

Twatto Vishvamidam jaatam Twatvo Bhuta Bhavishyati/

Tadrupa dhaarinaschatantarbhutam Sarvamidam Jagat,

Tatto Yagnah Sarvahutah Prushadaajyam Pashurdwidhaa/

Twaktah Ruchotha Saamaani Twaktascchandaamsi jijarey,

Tawatto Yajumshyajaayanta twattoschaaschaikato datah/

Gaavastwattah Samudbhutaastwattojaa Avayo Mrigaah,

Twadmukhada Brahmanaastwatto baahoh Kshatramajaayata/

Vaishvaastvorujaaha Shudraastwa Padbhyaam samudgataah,

Akshanoh Suryonilah Praanaaschandramaa Manastatwa/

Praanontah Sushiraajjaato Mukhaadagnirajaatata,

Naabhito Gaganam Dyouscha Shirasah Samavartata/

Dishah Shrotraatikshatih Padbhyaam twattah Sarvamabhudidam/

Nyagrodhah sumahaanalpey yathaa Beejo Vyavasthitah,

Samyamey Vishvamakhilam Beeja bhuto tathaa twayi/

Beejaankura sambhuto nyagrodhastu Samrittitah,

Vistaaram chayathaa yaati twatthah srushtou tathaa Jagat/

Yathaahi kadalee naanyaa twakpatraadapi drushyatey,

Evam Vishyasya naanyastwam twatsthayeeswarah drushyatey/

Hlaadini Sandhini Samvittvaiyeka Sarvsamsthitou,

Hlaadataapakaari Mishraa twayi no gunavarjitey/

Pruthak bhutaika Bhutaayaa Bhuta Bhutaaya tey namah,

Prabhutabhuta bhutaaya tubhyam Bhutaamaney namah/

Vyaktam Pradhana Purushou Viraat Samrat Swarat tathaa,

Vibhaavyentah karaney Prusheshavakshayo Bhavaan/

Sarvasmin Sarva Bhutastwam Sarvah Sarvasya rupadhtruk,

Sarvam twattastascha twam namah Sarvaatmanestu tey/

Sarvaatmakosi Sarvesha Sarva bhutastatho yatah,

Kathayaami tatah kim te Sarvam vetsi hladasthitam/

Sarvaatma Sarva Bhutesha Sarva satwa samudbhava,

Sarva Bhuto Bhavanvetti Sarva Satvamanoratham/

Yo mey Manoratho naama saphalah sa twayaa krutah,

Tapascha taptam saphalam yadrushtosi Jagatapatey/

(Bhagavan! Your varied forms are of Prithvi, Jala, Agni, Vaayu, Aakaasha, Manas, Buddhi, Ahamkaara, and Mula Prakriti. Parama Purusha! You are Shuddha, Sukshma, Sarvavyapakaand of such several such magnificent traits! May I seek refuge from Akhila Brahmanda Nayaka Shuddha Swarupaatma!as you are the controller of Prithivyaadi Pancha Bhutaas, Buddhyaadi Antahkaranagyata Gunaas and Sahasra Mastaka- Sahasra Netra - Sahasra Paada yuta Sanatana Purusha! You are the Bhuta- Vartamana-Bhavishya Jnaata! You are the Virat-Swarat-Samraat and the Creator of Brahmaadi Devas. You are the Supreme Srashta of SwarupaBhuta Brahmanda and its contents. You are the Origin of Ruk Yaju -Saama Vedas, Gayatyadi Chhandaas, You are the Srava Mriga- Pashu-Adi Sridhti-Karana! From your face were born Brahmanas, your shoulders and hands were materialised Kshatriyaas, Vaishyas from your thighs and others from your feet; from your eyes were produced Surya, Vaayu from your breathing, Chandra from your mind, Life to all Beings from your nose, Agni from your face, Aakasha fron your navel, Swrga from your head, Dasa Dishaas or Ten Directions from your ears, Prithvi from your charanaas, and thus the entire 'Charaachara Jagat' from your own Being. Just as a tiny seed is the origin for Maha Vrikshas, the Unique Samsara is created and at the Time of Pralaya gets absorbed back into the 'Beeja' taking shape again at the Time of Creation. You are the holding hingelike Hlaadini or the Source of Happiness and Sandhini or the Preserver. You are also the Samvita or Vidya Shakti, the Vishaya Janya or the Product of Samsara Gunas of Joys and Sorrows; although You are the Nirguna or Featurelss but again the Fountain of Satvika-Raajasika-Tamo Gunas! From the 'Karya Drishtata' or the view point of Actions, You assume myriad forms but from 'Kaarana Drishtata' or the view-point of cause and effect; you are just the Single Form. From one's own 'Antahkarana' or Inner Conciousness, You are the Maha Tatwa, Pradhana, Purusha and of Virat-Swarat-Samrat Rupas! You are the Akshaya, Sarva Bhuta Guna Swarupa, Samasta Guna Dharaka, Sarvatma, Sarveswara, Sarva Bhuta Vyapta, My Tapasya has been fulfilled as you have given me the 'Saakshaakaara' or Your Glorious Darshana as I am ever beholden to you fulfilling my lifeambition.) In response to Dhruva's sincere commendation, Bhagavan blessed Dhruva and stated:

Trailokyaadadhikey Sthaaney Sarva Taaraagrahaashrayah,
Bhavishyati na Sandeho Matprasaadaabhavaan Dhruva/
Suryaatsomaatathaa Bhowmaat Soma Putraad Brihaspateyh,
Sitaarkatanayaadeenaam Sarvaksharnaam tathaa Dhruva/
Sapratashinaamaseshenaam ye cha aimanikaah Suraah,

Sarveshaamupari sthaanam tava dattam mayaa Dhruva/

Kechichaturyugam Yaavatke -chimanvantaram Suraah,

Tishthanti Bhavato dattaa mayaavai Kalpasamsthitih/

Sunitirapitey Maataa twadaasannithi nirmalaa,

Vimaaney Tarakaa Bhutwaa Taavatkaalam nivasyati/

Ye chatwaam Manayaah Praatah Sayam cha Susumaahitaah,

Keertishyanti teshaam cha Mahatpunyam Bhavishyati/

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

#### Prahlada Charitra- Nrisimhaavataara

Empowered by Brahma Deva's boon of invincibility by all species normal in the Creation of Paramatma, Daitya Hiranyakashipu conquered Three Lokas, threw out Devas and all Celestial Beings from their respective Positions and controlledthe totality of the Universe, harassing Maharshis and all the virtuous and religious devotees especially the Vishnu Bhaktas. His son, the famed Prahlada was admitted in a Guru Kula and the Guru triedto teach everything according to the principles that the King wishedincluding that the King was God! But the boy learnt nothing that the Guru sought to teach but strongly believed in relentless devotion to Narayana. Once Hiranyakashipu desired to test Prahlada that the Guru would have taught on the lines of the King's own philosophy, but his amazement the boy stated otherwise and said:

Anaadi madhyantamajama vriddhikshayamachutam,

Pranatosmya—manantasantaanam Sarva kaarana kaaranam/

(My salutations to that Achyuta who has no beginning, midway and termination, has no birthenhancement-and finality; He is also the Cause-Causation and the Conclusion.) The King bacame furious at Prahlada's statement and even desired to punish the Guru as his teachings were totally unacceptable and unpalatable. But Prahlada prevented his father that his Guru tried and made tremendous efforts to teach asper his father's instructionsbut not only he but the rest of the students also made him join Vishnu Bhajana. Hiranyam Kashipu cajoled, daunted, frightened and terrorised Prahlada but the deep dedication to Narayana was so intense that the boy was never brought under control; Prahlada argued with his father:

Shastaa Vishnurashesya Jagato yo Hrudisthitah,

Tamrutey Paramatmaanam Taatha kaka kena shasyatey!

(As the father asked Prahlada as to who taught this since the Guru swore thathe did not, Prahlada said: As Bhagvan Vishnu is right in my heart, who else needed to teach me!)

Na Shabda gocharam yasya Yogidhyeyam Param padam,

yato yasha Swayam Vishnum sa Vishnuh Partameshwara

(As Hiranyakashipu shouted as to who that Bhagavan was? You Stupid! Then Prahlada replied: Vishnu is Parameshwara who is worthy of meditation; he is not visible nor heard and certainly not assessed but could most definitely be visualised, heard or assessed through meditation and faith!)

Na kevalam taatha! Mama Prajaanaam sa Brahmabhuto Bhavatascha Vishnuh,

Dhaataa Vidhaataa Parmeshwa -rascha Pradeeda kopam kurushe kimartham/

( As father asked Prahlada as to he was the Supreme besides himself, Prahlada replied: Dear father, Maha Bhuta Vishnu was not only meant for me but to the whole World, its Praja, the Karta of Hiranyakashipu, his Administrator, and finally is his destroyer too.) Since, the King could not contain this nonsense any further, he ordered that this odd creature called Prahlada be tortured, cut into pieces and destroyed finally; as the Daitya resolved on these lines, Bhagavan despatched his Sudarshana Chakra to save the boy from the various deeds of unending violences: he had Prahlada trampled by elephants, bitten by snakes, sliced into body parts, thrown from mounatain tops, blown by fierce winds, burnt by Agni, but each act of cruelty that was executed to the child furthered his confidence and devotion. The Daitya King called his Ministers and the Chiefs of his Army and confessed:

Naagnirdagati Naivaayam Shastraircchinno nachoragaih,

Kshayam neeto na vaatena vishena na krutyaya/

Namaayaabhirna Chaivoyaatpatito na cha Diggajaih,

Baalotidrushtichitteyam Naaneynaarthomsti jeevitaa/

Tadesha toyamadhey tu samaakraanto Maheedharaih,

Tishthabdasataantram Praanaanan-hyayasti Durmatih!

(Lo, this hopeless son of mine was burnt by Fire, sliced by weapons, bitten by poisonous snakes, subdued by harsh winds, deceased by powerful poisons, destroyed by delusions, dead by throwing from mountain tops, and trampled by elephants; this monument of Evil has no use for me excepting hastening my restlessness and anxiety; hence, I want you to crush him between mountains and dip deep into fathomless Seas for thousand years and be perished into oblivion!) As Prahlada heard the above instructions of his Army of several 'Akshouhinis', Bhakta Prahlada strengthened himself and prayed to Paramaatma thus:

Namastey Pundarikaaksha Namastey Purushottama,

Namastey Sarva Lokaatmannamastey tigmachakriney/

Namo Brahmanya devaaya Go Brahmana Hitaayacha,

Jagaddhitaaya Krishnaaya Govindaaya namo Namah/

Bruhatvey Srujatey Vishwam Sthiyatou paalayatey punah,

Rudrarupaaya Kalpaantey Namastubhyam Trimurtaye/

Devaa Yakshaa Suraah Siddhaa Naagaa Gandharva Kinnaraah,

Pischaachaa Rakshasaaschaiva Manushyaah Pashavastathaa/

Pakshinah Sthaavaraaschaiva pippileeka sareesrupaah,

Bhumyaapognir Nabho Vaayuh Shabdah Sparshastathaa Rasah/

Rupam Gandho Mano Buddhiraatmaa Kaalstathaa Gunaah,

Yeteshaam Paramaarthascha Sarvametattwamachyuta/

Vidyaavidye Bhavaansatyamasatyam twamvishaamrutey,

Pravruttamcha Nivruttamcha Karmvedotim bhavaan/

Samasta karma bhoktaa cha karmopakaranaanicha,

Twameva Vishno Sarvaani Sarvakarmaphalamcha yat/

Mayyanyatra Tathaan yeshu Bhuteshu Bhuvaneshucha,

Tavaiva Vyaptiraishvaryaguna samsuchiki Prabho/

Twaam Yoginaschinthayanti twaam yajanti chaYaajakaah,

Havya Kavya Bhugekastvam Pitru Devaswarupadhruk/

Rupam Mahatthe Sthita matra Vishwam tatascha Sukshmam Jagadetadisha,

Rupaani Sarvaani cha bhutabhedaa steshvantaraatmaaravyamateeva Sukshmam/

Tasmaachha Sukshmaadi Viseshanaanaamagocharey Yatparamaatma rupam,

Kimapyachintyam tawa rupamasti Tasmai Namastey Purushotthamaaya/

Sarva Bhuteshu Sarvaatmanyaa Shaktiraparaa tawa,

Gunaashrayaa Namastassyai Shaswataayai Sureshwara/

Yaateeta gocharaa Vaachaam Manasaa chaaviseshana/

Jnaanijnaana pari- cchedya taam Vandey Sweshvareem paraam/

OmNamo Vaasudevaaya tasmai Bhagavatey sadaa,

Vyaktiriktam na yasyaasti Vyaktiriktokhilasya yah/

Namastasmai Namastasmai Mahaatmaney,

Naama Rupam na yasyaiko yostistveynopalabhyatey/

Yasyaava- taara rupaani samarchinta Divyokasah,

Apashyantah param Rupam Namastasmai Mahatmaney/

Yon tishthannasesashya pashyateeshah Shubhaashubham,

Tam Sarva Saakshinam Vishwam Namasye Pareshwaram/

Namstestu Vishnavey tasmai yasyaabhinna midam jagat,

Dhyeyah sa Jagataamaadyah sa praseedantu mey Harih/

Om Nano Vishnavey tasmai Namastasmai punah punah,

Yatra Sarvam yatah Sarvam yah Sarvam Sarva Samshrayah/

Sarvagatwaadanantasya sa yevaahamavisthitah,

Mattah Sarvamaham Sarvam mayi Sarvam Sanaataney/

Ahamevaakshayo nityah Paramaatmaatma samshrayah,

Brahmasanjnohamevaagney tathyaantey cha parah pumaan/

(Pundarikaksha, Purushottama, Sarva Lokaatman, Tikshana Chakradhaari, Go-Brahmana-Hitakaari Krishna, Vaasudeva, Jagaddita Govinda! My sincere prostrations you again and again. As Brahma Swarupa, you do the scripting of Srishti; as Vishnu administer and preserve it, and as Rudra you perform the samhara; thus you are the Trimurti-dhaari Parameswara! In reality you assume the myriad Swarupas

of Devas, Yakshas, Asuras, Siddhaas, Nagas, Gandharvaas, Kinnaraas, Piscachaas, Rakshasaas, Manushyas, Pashus, Pakshis, Sthaavaraas, Pipeelikaas or ants, Sariswarupaas, Prithivi, Jala, Akasha, Vayu, Shabda, Sparsha, Rupa, Rasa, Gandha, Manas, Buddhi, Atma, Kaala, Guna, and all other forms and indeed you are not only present in them but in fact you are all these yourself! You are the Vidya and Avidya, Satya and Asatya, Visha and Amrita, Vedokta Pravritti and Nivritti Karmaas; You are the Bhokta and Bhojya, and again the Karmaphala of Plus and minus variations; you are spread over among me and all others, among Bhutas and Bhuvanas, Gunas and Traits, Suchanaas or indications; all the Yogiganaas meditate you only, Yagnika ganas perform Yagnas only in your name, you are the Pitruganas and Devaganas receiving and forwarding Kavyaas and Havyas! Ishwara! The totality of Brahmanda is your Gross Form, of which a minute part is in the Form of Bhumi, and in that Sukshma Form of Earth are a staggering sub-forms of Beings and the 'Antaraatma' is the Sub- Conciousness; indeed far beyond is the 'Sukshmaatma Sukshma' 'Avishaya' or nothingness to whom my salutations! You are the Saguna-Nirguna Parashakti and Nitya Swarupini Shakti and it is that Para-Paraa Shakti which is even far interior or far beyond that Shakti is Vaasudeva. That 'Vastu'which is not material but is a huge question-mark that I pray with humility and extreme dedication! While the whole Universe is visible yet indivisible, may that Supreme Power who makes, maintains and mars it-as the Adi Kaarana, Akshara, Adhara Bhuta, Avyaya, and Adi Shakti save me and let me live so as to serve you again and again and ultimately get absorbed unto You! the Brahma Sanjnak Parama Purusha!)

As Prahlada's Naga Paasha was released, there was a commotion of Seas, the Nava Grahas were tottering from their alignments, and a series of Earth quakes occurred while the mountains which sought to crush Prahlada collapsed in smithereens and the powerful force of the depths of Seas into which Prahlada was submeged threw him out in the Sea-bed.No sooner that this happened than Hiranyakashipu was overcome with suppressed emotion for his son realising that Prahlada was indeed invincible and not himself as the Super Lord of Trilokas; almost immediatelythere was the grand appearance of Lord Narasimha who was neither man nor a lion as per Brahma's boon to Hiranyakashipu and the time too was dusky and propitious as it was neither day nor night. Even as Prahlada greeted his father, mother and Guru with veneration, the Unique Narasimha the immortal incarnation of Vishnu placed the greatest menace to the Universe in the form of Hiranyakashipu, pulled and rolled over across his mighty thighsand pierced his nails deep into the Daityas body to death. Bhakta Prahlada was unable to overcome his emotions and broke out into a memorable Stuti to the Avatara of Nrisimha as follows:

Om Namah Paramarthartha sthoola sukshma Kshara –akshara,

Vyaktaavyakta Kalaateeta Sakelesha Niranjana/

Gunaanjana Gunaadhaara Nirgunaatman Gunasthita,

Mahtaamurta Mahaa Murthi Sukshma Murtha Sphutaasphuta/

Karaala sowmyarupatman Vidyaavidyaa Mahaachyuta,

Sadasadrupa Sadbhaava Sadasd –bhava Bhavana/

Nityaanitya Prapanchaatmatannishprapanchaamalashritaa,

EkaanekaNamastubhyam Vaasudevaadi kaarana/

Yah Sthula sukshmah prakiata prakaasho yah Sarva bhuto na cha Sarva bhutah,

Vishwam yataschaitada Vishva hetor Namostu tasmai Purushottamaaya/

(Paramaartha! Artha or Drushya Rupa!Sthula Sukshma! Ksharaakshara! Vyaktaavyakta! Kaalaatita!Sakaleswara! Niranjana Deva! My obeisances to you! Gunaanu-rangita! Gunaadhaara! Nirgunaatma! Gunasthita! Murtaamurta! Maha Murta! Sukshma Murta! Prakaashaaprakaasha Swarupa! Vikaraala Rupa yet Sundara Rupa!Vidyaavidyaa! Achyua! Sadasat /Karyakaarana Rupa! Jagatudbhava Sthaana or the Origin of the Universe; Sadasat Jagat Paalaka or the Supreme Administrator of the the

world that be or the world that is not! Jnaanaashraya Swarupa! Ekanta Rupa! Adikaarana! Prakashamaya! Sarva Bhuta- Adhistana Deva! Vishva Kaarana! Samasta Jagotpanna!) As Jagannatha was pleased with Prahlada again and again with his extemporaneous and spontaneous commendations, Bhagavan asked him for a boon and Prahlada replied:

Dharmaartha Kaamaih kim tasya muktistasya karey shitaa,

Samasta Jagatam muley yasya bhaktih karey sthitaa,

Samasta Jagataam muley yasya Bhakatih sthitaa twayi!

(Of what avail are Dharma-Artha-Kaama –Moksha to me Janardana, since my unwavering Bhakti that you provided to me is in my tight grip for the Janaardana Swarupa!) Then on his own, Bhagavan granted Mukti much after his Dharma Prachara was assured from Prahlada! Any person fortunate in reading or hearing Prahlada Charitra would be instantly be purged of his sins of past or present. Mere reading or reciting the Chapters of Prahlada in Vishnu Purana, especially on Purnima or Amavashya or Ashtami or Dwadashi would enjoy the fruits of Go-Daana and would most definitely ovecome all kinds severe and close-trap tribulations as insurmoutable as in the case of Maha Bhakta Prahlada!

# Jagat Vyavastha (Planning of Universe) and Vishnu Vibhuti (All- Pervasiveness) (Vishnu Maha Stuti included)

Maharshi Parashara recalled the Legend of Dhruva and referred to King Vena in that long lineage who obstructed to Yagnas, Havans, Daanas and all such deeds of virtue as of the times of Vedas; he also resorted to Denunciation of Vishnu and declared that he was Vishnu himself and sported Vishnu Chakra himself. Maharshisand Tapasvis overpowered the King oneday and since he had no heir-apparent churned his hands and there appeared a youth with dhanush and arrows whom Maharshis called Pruthuand coronated him as the new King. Already fed up with the sinful activities of King, Bhu Devi ran away but Prithu chased and controlled her as she assumed the Form of a Cow and forced her to yield milk to all the Beings including Devas and all the others in Srishti as per one's own group wishes like Devas who opted for Amrita, Munis wished for more Tapasya, Daitya-Daanava-Raakshsas asked for blood; Parvatas desired for Vanaspatis, Gandharvas opted for tuneful singing, Yakshas for Maya Vidya, serpents for poison, Rishis desired for Yagnas and so on; each species arranged their own containers into which to fill up milks of their own desires and even arranged their own cowmen to milch along their respectivecalves too. This illustrious Prithu Chakravarti of Trilokas who thus facilitated the fulfillmemt of their own desires of the Species and Clans from the Kama Dhenu also invented the art of farming to cultivate food grains, pulses and many other types of farm-yields since human beings were unaware of grains, pulses, oils, and vegetables in the previous times as thy were content with fruits, herbs, milk and Kandamulaas or under ground vegetables. Bhu Devi thus gained the epithet of Prithvi eversince!

It was in that context of that lineage of Kings when Pruthu was being coronated, Brahma Deva entrusted duties and responsibilities as under: Chandra was in charge of Nakshatras, Grahas, Brahmanas, Vanaspatis / Auoshadhis, and Yagnas; Kubera for Kings; Varuna for any thing concerning water; Vishnu as in charge of Adityas; Agni as in charge of Vasu Ganas, Daksha for Prajapatis, Indra responsible for Marudganaas; Prahlada as responsible for Daitya-Danavas; Yama Dharma Raja in charge of Pitruganaas; Iravata in charge of Elephants; Garuda for all Pakhshis; Indra as the Over Lord of all Devas; Ucchaishwara born alongwith Amrita at the time of Churning of Samudra; Vrishabha as in charge of Cows; Simha /Lion as the Chief of all Vanya Pashus or Forest animals; Sesha Naga as in charge of Nagas; Himalayas for Sthavaraas; KapilaDeva as the one responsible for Munis; Mrigaas with damshtras and nails under the charge of Vyaghras or Tigers and so on. Brahma also appointed Dikpalakas: the Purva Disha or East was Vairaja Prajapati and his son King Sudhanva; Dakshina Disha: Kardama

Prajapati andhis Son Shankhapada; Paschima Disha: Ever Available Ketumaan; and in Uttara Disha: Parjanya Prajapati and his son King Atidurdarsha. All these are stated to be in power tilldate.

**Vishnu Vibhutis**: While all the above are of Vishnu Swarupas only, Janardana also assumes the Chatur Vibhaagas of Srishti-Sthiti and Laya: the first Amsha is of Brahma, the second one of Prajapatis like Marichi; the third is of Kaala and the final one is of Pranis; indeed creation and cremationof Manavaas occurs almost every minute! Maharshi Parashara thus addressed Sage Maitreya:

Yetey sarvey pravartasya shitow Vishnormahaatmanah,

Vibhuti Bhutaa Raajaaney ye chanye Munisattama/

Ye bhavishyanti ye Bhutaah Bhuteswaraa Dwijaa,

Teysarvey Sarva Bhutasya Vishno ramshaa Dwijotthamaa

(Hey Munisattama! These and various Administrators and Kings engaged in the Upkeep of their respective Territories are all Vishnu Vibhutis. Those Kings in the past and those who in future would be too of Vishnu Rupas! All the Devatas, Daityas, Danavas; all thePashus, Pakshis, Manavaas, Sarpaas, Nagas; and all the Vrikshas, Parvataas, Grahaas and so on are Narayana Vibhutis are Vishnu Rupas. The Past-Present-Futureare Vishnu Rupas. Thus

Yeva meshaa Jagatsrushtaa Jagatpaadaa tathaa Jagat,

Jagatbhakshayitaa Devaha Samastasya Janaardanah/

Srishtistityanta kaaleshu Tridhaivam sampravartatey,

Gunapravruthya paramam padam Samastasya Janaardanah/

Taccha Jnaanamayam vyaapi swasamvedya manoupamam,

Chathus prakaaram tadapi Swarupam Paramatmanah./

( As such, Janardana creates, maitains and finally destroys, he himself the Unique Jagat Swarupa; Bhagavan Vishnu is indeed responsible for Jagadutpatti, Sthiti, and Antaby assuming Tri-Gunas of Satwa-Rajo-Taamasa but basically is Nirguna or Featureless! Paramatmaa's Swarupa is of four kinds viz. Jnaanamaya (Embodiment of Knowledge), Vyapaka (All- Pervading), Swasamvedya or Swayam Prakaasha (Self-Illuminated) and Anupama (Unparalelled).

Then Sage Maitreya desired to know from Maharshi Parashara about an in-depth analysis of the 'Chatush-prakaara' characteristics of Bhagavan; the reply was: Just as Bhagavan is the <u>raison d'tre</u> or the cause of the material world, so is he the Sadhana or the 'means' too; the 'Siddhi' is the accomplishment; and 'Sadhya' is called a possibility! In other words, the Yogis aiming at Mukti could follow the 'Sadhanaas' like the Ashtaanga Yoga or the Eight-Limbed Yoga viz. 1)Yama (Yogik Principles), 2) Niyama (Personal discipline), 3) Asana (Yoga Posture), 4) Pranayama(Control of Breathing) 5) Pratyahaara (withdrawal of senses) 6) Dharana (Concentration of an object)7) Dhyana (Meditation) and 8) Samadhi (Mukti). Indeed, thus Parabrahma is Sadhya! This kind of Sadhana by means of Yoga is called *Swaadhana -alambana Jnaana*. There is another type of Jnaana viz. *Aalambana Vijnaana* which discards Samsara and seeks Paramatma by complete withdrawal and renunciation. Yet another type is *Advaita Jnaana* in which the Self seeks merger into the Totality, that is *Aham Brahmaasmi* or I am Brahma meaning thereby that the Inner Consience or Jeevatma is the same as Paramatma. The aim of the three types of Jnaana target the Supreme Experience of Atma Swarupa Parabrahma that is:

Nirvyaapaara manaakhyeyam Vyaaptimaatra manupa –mam,

Atmasambodha vishayam sattaamaatramalakshanam/

Prashaantamabhayam Shuddham Durvibhaavyamasamshrayam,

V ishnorjnaana mayassyoktamk tadjnaanam Brahma samjnitam/

[The Jnaana Swarupa Bhagavan Vishnu is Nir-vyaapaaram or devoid of activities of Samsara; Anirvachaneeyam or Undefinable; Vyaptamaatram (Omnipresent), Anupama or Unparalelled), Atmabodha Swarupa (Self-Realising), Alakshana (Featureless), Shanta(Ever Tranquil), Abhaya (Fearless and Protective), Shuddha (High Mark of Purity and Transclucent), Bhaavaateetam or beyond comprehension; Ashraya heenam or the Holdless since he is the Supreme Holder Himself; and indeed that is Brahma Jnaana]!

Evam prakaaramamalam Nityam Vyapakamakshayam,

Samasta heryarahitam Visdhnavaakhayam Paramam padam/

Tad Brahma Paramam Yogi yato naavaratey punah

Shriyatya punyoparamey kheenakleshoti nirmalah/

Dwey Rupey Brahmaanastasya Murtam chaa murtamevacha,

Ksaraakshara swarupo tey Sarvabhuteshthavasthitey/

Aksharam Tapp; aram Brahma Ksharam Sarvamidam Jagat,

Ekadeshasthitasyaagneyerjyotsnaa visteerani tathaa,

Parasyabrahmaanah Shaktistatheymadakhilam Jagat/

(In this way Vishnu Paramapada is percievable which is Nirmala-Nitya- Vyapaka-Akshaya-and Heya Guna varjita; this Unique Form devoid of Paapa- Punya and Samsara Kleshaas is such that would have no return as the Person concerned gets absorbed into Para Brahma! That Brahma has two manifestations of *Murta and Amurta!* And Akshara is the Everlasing Para Brahma and Kshara is the Transcient Universe. Brahma Shakti is akin to the all powerful Agni which spreads fast its heat and radiance and its impact is also according to the distance or closeness that the Practitioner Yogi concerned.

**Vishnu Maha Stuti**: Muni Maitreya requested Maharshi Parashara to portrayBhagavan Vishnu in his Complete Form and the Maharshi quoted Vasiththa Maha Muni as follows:

Namaskrutyaaprameyaaya Vishnavey Prabha Vishnavey,

Kathayaami yathaakhyatam Visishthena Mamaa bhavat/

Aatmaanamasya Jagato Nirlepamagunaamalam,

Bibharti Kaustubhamani Swarupam, Bhagavaan Harih/

Shri Vatsasamshaana dharamanantena samaashritam,

Pradhaanam Buddhirapyaastey Gada Rupena Madhavey/

Bhutaadimindri-yaadimcha Dwidhaahankaara meeshwarah,

Bibharti shankha rupena shaaranga rupena cha sthitam/

Chalatswa rupamayantam javeynaantaritaanilam,

Chakraswarupam cha Mano dhaattey Vishnukarey sthitam/

Pancharupaatu yaa Maalaa Vyajayanti Gadaabhrutah,

Saa bhuta hetu sanjaata Bhutamaalaa cha vai Dwijah/

Yaanindrayanya seshaani Buddhi karmaatmakaani vai,

Shararupaanyasheshaani taani Dhattey Janaardanah/

Bibharti Yacchaasiratnamachyutotyanta nirmalam,

Vidyaamayam tu tadjnaanamavidyaakosha samsthitam/

Ithyam Pumaampradhaanam cha buddhdyahankaarameva cha,

Bhutaani cha Hrisheerkesho Manah sarvendriyaanicha,

Vidyaavidye cha Maitreya Sarvametat samaashritam/

Astrbhushanaa samsthaana Swarupam Rupa varjitah,

Bibharti Maayaaruposou Shriyasey Praaninaam Harih/

Savikaaram Pradhaanam cha Pumaamsamakhilam Jagat,

Bibhrarti Pundareekaaksha Devam Parameshwarah/

Yaa Vidyaa yaa tathaavidyaa yatsadyacchaasadavyayam,

Tatsarvam Sarva bhutesho Maitreya Madhusudaney/

Kalaa kaashtaa nimeshaadidinartwayana haayanaih,

Kaala Swarupo Bhagavanpaapo Harivyayaha/

Bhurlokotha Bhuvarlokah Swarloko Munisattama,

Maharjana -stapah Satyam SaptaLokaa imey Vibhuh/

Lokaatma Murtih sarveshaam Purveshaamapi Purvajah,

Aadhaarah Sarva Vidyaanaam Swayameva Harihsthitah/

Deva Maanusha pashwaadi Swarupairbahubhih sthitah,

Tatah Sarveswaronanto Bhutamurtiramurtimaan/

Ruchi yajuumshi Saamaani tathaavaatharvnaani vai,

Itihaasopavedaaschavedanteshu tathoktayah/

Vedaangaani Samastaani Manvaadigaditaani cha,

Shaastraanyaseshaakhyaa- naanyanuvaakaascha ye kwachit/

Kaavyaalaapaascha ye kechidgeetakaanyakhilaani cha,

Shabdamurtidharasyaitadwipurvishnor mahaatmanah/

Yaani Murthaanyamurtaani Yaanyantraayantra vaa kwachit,

Santi vai Vastujaataani taani Sarvaani tadupuh/

Aham Harih Sarvamidam Janaardano naanyattatahb kaarana karya jaatam,

Idrungmano yasyana tasya bhuyo Bhavodbhavaa Dwandwagadaa bhavanti/

(Hey Muney! I saluteJagat palaka, and Aprameya Vishnu and narrate the samewhich Maha Muni Vasishtha described earlier: Srihari Bhagavan who is Nirlepa- Nirguna-Nirmala and Shuddha Kshetrajna Swarupa wears Kaustubhamani; Shri Ananta sought the company of Vishnu as Srivatsa Rupa and Buddhi adorned Madhava in the form of Gadaa; Vishnu is also ornamented by Shankha which is of Tamasa Swarupa and Shaaranga Dhanush of Raajasa Ahamkaara; the Chakra which out smarts the speed of Vayu is basically of Satvika Swarupa and adorns the lotus like smooth hands of Vishnu. Bhagavan also wears a Pancha Rupa Vijayanti Maalaa made of Mukta-Manikya-Marakata-Indraneela and Heeraas, representing Pancha Tanmatraas and Pancha Bhutaas. Bhagavan also keeps 'baanaas' or arrows which are the

embodiments of Jnaana and Karma! Further Vishnu wears a sharp Khadga or sword which pierces throughAvidya and brightens Vidyaamaya Jnaana.Muni Maitreya! In this manner, all kinds of features like Purusha, Pradhana, Buddhi, Ahamkara, Pancha Bhuta, Manas, Indriyas, Vidya and Avidya are all surrouned by Vishnu. Srihari who has basically no Form but in a Maya Swarupa keeps Astras and Ornaments to help and encourage various Praanis. This is how Parameshwara seeks to facilitate the deeds and thoughts of various Beings with the help of Vidya-Avidya, Sat-Asat, and such characteristics. Vishnu is also present as Kaala Swarupa in the form of Kala-Kaashtha- Nimesha- Dina- Ritu- Ayana-and Varsha! Bhagavan is spread all over the Bhurloka- Bhuvarloka- Swarloka-and Maha-Jana- Tapa-and Satyalokas! He is the Origin of Origin-Purvaja toPurvajas; Sarva Vidyaa Swarupa; Swayam Lokamaa Swarupa; Niraakaaa- Sarveswara- Ananta- Sarva Buta Swarupa inclusiveof Deva-Maanava-Pashu- Pakshi and so on; He is Ruk-Yajur- Sama-Atharva Veda Swarupa; Itihasa-Upavedaas like Ayurveda; Vedanta Vaakya; Vedaanga; Manvaadi krita Dharma Shastra; Purana-Aakhyaana- Anuvaaka (Kalpa Sutra)-Kavya Charha-Sarva Shabda Murti Dhaari-and so on. Whichever Murta-Amurta Padaardhaas exist are of Vishnu's Mighty Physique! He assures: I am the totality of the Universe and there is neither a Karana- Karya-Kaarana beyond me! A person who believes in this simple Truth would have conquered Dwandwa Rupaas and attains me!)

Having rendered the Vishnu Maha Stuti as above, Maharshi Parashara assured Maitreya Muni that who so ever reads or listens to it would be freed from sins. That person would be eligible for the Punya that daily Snaanaas and worship in Pushkata Kshetra could fetch by merely hearing the Stotra. This unique piece of homage to Maha Purusha Janardana describing the Creation of Deva-Rishi-Gandharva-Pitru-Yaksha and others is adequate to bestow the blessings of Narayana.

# Brief on Bhugola, Pataala and Narakaas (Ananta Deva Stuti included)

Of Swayambhu Manu's two sons, viz. Uttanapada and the illustrious Son Dhruva mentioned above; the second son Priyavrata married Kardama Muni's daughter and begot seven sons and distributed to seven of his sons to Seven Dwipas viz. Jambu Dwipa, Pkalsha Dwipa, Shlaamala Dwipa, Kusha Dwipa, Krouncha Dwipa, Shaka Dwipa and Pushkara Dwipa. While Kshaara Samudra divides Jambu and Plaksha Dwipas, Shlamala and Kusha Dwipas are stated to be divided by Ikshurasa Samudra; Shlamala and Kusha are surrounded by Madiraa Rasa Samudra; Kusha and Krouncha are divided by Ghrita Samudra; Krouncha and Shaka Dwipas are surrounded by Ghee Samudra and the divider Samudra of Shaka and Dwipas is of Ksheera. Maharshi Parashara also described the Sapta Pataalaas too viz. Atala, Vitala, Nitala, Gabhastimaan, Mahatala, Sutala and Pataala. Sage Narada commended Patala as far more beautiful and luxurious compared to Swarga!

**Ananta Deva Stuti**: Maharshi Parashara made a very special reference to Ananta Sesha while describingPataala:

Pataalanamaadhas -chaastey Vishnoryaa taamasi tanuh,

Sheshaakhyaa yadgunaan vaktrum na shaktaa Daitya Danavaah/

Yonantah pathyatey Siddhaairdevo Devarshi pujitah,

Sa sahasra shiraa Vyaktaswastikaamala Bhushanah/

Phanaamani Sahastrena yah sa Vidyo-tayandishah,

Sarvaankaroti nirveeryaan hitaaya Jagatosuraan/

Madaghurnita netrosou yah Sadaivaika kundalah,

Kiritisnigdharobhaati saamagrih sweta ivaachalah/

Nilavaasaa Madiotsiktah Swetahaaropashobhitah,

Saabhra Gangaa pravaahosou Kailaasaadririvaaparah/

Laangalaasakta hastaagro vibhranmusala-muttamam, Upaasyatey swayam kaantyaa yo vaarunyaa cha Murtayaa/ Kalpaantey yasya Vaktrobhyo vishaanala shikkhojjwalah, Sankarshanaatmako Rudro nishkramyaatti jaga-trayam/ Sa vibhracchekhari bhutamasesham kshiti mandalam, Aastey Pataala mulasthah Seshoshesha Suraarchitah/ Tasya Veeryam prabhaavascha Swarupam Rupamevacha, Na hi varneeyatum shakyam jnaatum cha Tridashairapi/ Yasyaishaa sakalaa prithvi Phanaamani shikhaarunaa, Aastey kusuma maaeyva kastdveeryam vadishyati/ Yadaa Vijrumbhyateynanto Mada ghurnita lochanah, Tadaa chalati Bhureshaa Saabhitoyaa sakaananaa/ Gandharvaa –psarasah Siddhaah Kinnaroraga chaaranaah, Naantam Gunaanaam gacchanti teynaantoya- mavyayah/ Yasya Naagavadhu hastairlipitam harichandanam, Muhurhuh Shvaasaanilaa -paastum yaati Dikshuvaasataam/ Yamaaraadhya Puraanaarshir Gargo jyoteeshim tatvatah, Jnaatavaan sakalam chaiva nimitta pathitam phalam/ Teyneyam Naaga Varenyam shirasaa vidhrutaa Mahee, Bibharti maalaam lokaanaam Sadevaasura maanusham/

(Bhagavan Vishnu's Sesha named Vigraha replete with Tamo Guna lies underneath Paataala Loka whom Daityas nor Danavas could ever describe or realise. Siddha ganaas who are always engaged in worship to Devas name Sesha Deva as Anantaa as he is adorned with Swastika Emblem on his hoods. Sesha Deva is also ornamented with invaluable and ever-sparkling diamonds on his thousand hoods which illuminate very far in the ten directions to the advantage of Lokas and also dissipate the might and strength of Asuraas. Sesha Deva is full of conceitand justified superiority and as such possessive of red and hot eyes dressed in blue clothing and wearing priceless white necklaces; he also has the speed of Ganga-Pravaha / flowakin to the huge Form of Kailasha Mountain! As in the Avatar of Bala Rama the brother of Shri Krishna, Sesha Deva also sports 'Hala' (plough) and Musala as his armoury being always worshipped by Varuni Devi in his presence. At the termination of Kalapaas, Sesha Deva assumes the Form of Sankarshana Tamasika Rudra and by spreading his thousand hoods and emitting wide spread poisonous flames all over the Universe tend to annihililate all the Beings! Staying in Patala Loka basically, Ananta Naga holds on the strength of his hoods the total weight of the Lokaas and is always worthy of one and all. His Bala-Veerya, Prabhava or Great Signifiance, Swarupa or Tatwa and Akaara or size and dimensions are unknown even to Debvatas. Who could indeed recognise the Bala-Veerya or Mightand Capacity of Sesha Deva excepting visualising the world-wide reach and dimensions of the red complexion emanated by the magnifinence of the 'Manis' on his hoods as materialised in the form of flower garlands spread all over the world! As and when the flip-flops of the countless eve movements of Sesha Deva occur, all the forests, mountains and Seas get into momentum and the whole Earth too gets vigourously activised. Those of Gandharvas, Apsaras, Siddhaas, Kinnaraas, Nagas and Charanaas who were clueless of the endless significance of Sesha Deva called him Ananta or Infinite! As his breathing gets spread to ten directions,

the most fragrant and alluring Harichandana that Naga maidens supplied and anointed on his body emanated far and wide. In the past, Maharshi Garg worshipped Ananta Deva and was bestowed the intricate knowledge and insight of Jyotirmandala or Astronomy or the movement of Nava Grahas and Stars as also of the fruits of Shakuna-Apashakuna /good omens or otherwise. Sesha Naaga also carries the brunt of Prithvi as also of the Pataalaas!)

Maharshi Parashara then went on describing the Narakaas under Prithvi and Seas where almost all Beings after death are destined to reach to atone and pay back the Sins committed on the basis of their immediate and earlier births. The main Narakaas include Rourava, Sukara, Rodha, Taala, Vishasana, Mahajjwaala, Taptakumbha, Lavana, Vilohita, Rudhiraambha, Vaitarina, Kurmeesha, Krumibhojana, Asipatravana, Krishna, Laalaa Bhaksha, Daruna, Puyavaha, Paapa, Vahnijjwaala, Adhoshira, Sandamsha, Kaalasutra, Tamasa, Aavichi, Swabhojana, Apratishtha, Aprachi, and many other Mayaa bhayankara Narakas. In fact, there are innumerable other Narakas depending on the type, degree and seriousness of 'Dushkrtutyas' perpetrated. For various sins committed, there are some 'Prayaschittaas' or atonements, provided there would be a feel of regret and determination not to repeat the same. Among the 'Paschatpaata prayaschitthaas' or the regretful atonements, there could be Tapasyatmaka and Karmatmaka (meditational or action oriented deeds like homas, Daanaas, Vratas, Japaas and such other means) but the best one possible is 'Krishna Smarana'.

Praatarnisha tathaaSandhyaa Madhyaahnaadishu Samsmaran,

Naraayanamavaapnoti Sadhyah Paapa Khayaantarah/

Vishnu samsmaranaateekshma samasta klesha samschayah,

Muktim prayaati Swargaaptistasya vighnornumiyatey/

Vaasudevo manoyasya Japahomaarchanaadishu,

Tasyantaraayo Maitreya Devendrat –yaadikam phalam/

Kka naakapushtagamanam punaraavritti lakshanam,

*Kka japo Vaasudeveti muktibeejamanuttamam/* 

(As and when persons recite or remember the Sacred name of Narayana either early morning, or evening, night or midday or ar any time, then and there the sins of small or big volumes get instantly thinned down or even cleared. Shriman Narayana smarana would certainly vanish sins and pave way for Swarga laabha or even Moksha Prapti and thus pit against any Vighna rupaas or impediments. Hey Maitreya! (as told by Parashara Maharshi) a person whose mind and deed are fully engaged in Japa-Homa-Archana and constant worship of Vaasudeva should not be merely content with Indraloka but aim at Moksha Prapti devoid of Punarjanma or relief from the cycle of death and re-birth!)

## 'Bhurbhuvassuwaadi' Lokaas, Surya, Sishumara Chakra and Navagrahas

Sage Maitraya requested Maharshi Paraashara to provide a brief account of the Upper Lokaas.

Panchaashatkoti vistaaraa seyamurvi Maha Muney,

Sahaivaanda kataahena Samantaatpara veshthitam/

(Hey Maha Muney! From the half size of the Golden Egg, inclusive of Dwipas, Samudras and Parvataah, the totality of Bhu Mandala is spread an area of five crore yojanaas). Bhuvarloka is as huge as Prithvi and its periphery. From Prithvi the Suryaloka is situated a lakh yojanas away and from Suryaloka the Chandraloka is situated by a further similar distance away while Nakshatras too are away by another one lakh yojanas. The distance from the Nakshatra Mandali to the Planet of Buddha is two lakh yojanas and by another such two lakhs yojanas each are Shukra, Mangala, Brihaspati, and Shanaischara. From the Planet of Sani /Saturn to the Saptarshi Mandali the distance of one lakh yojanas and from there an equal distance lies the 'Naabhi' / fulcrum of Jyotish Chakra which is Dhruva Mandali; from Surya to

Dhruvalokas is Swarloka. Some one crore Yojanas above Dhruva loka is Maharloka, where Siddha ganaas like Bhrigu reside till the Kalpaantara. From Maharloka by further two crore yojanas is Janaloka, where Brahma Manasa Putras like Sanaka- Sanandana- Sanatana and Sanat Kumaras reside. Eight crore yojanas away from Janaloka is Tapoloka where Vairaja naamaka Devaganass reside as they have no thirst at all. From Tapoloka to Satyaloka the distance is twelve crore yojanas where Lord Brahma stays. Thus the Region from Bhumi or Bhuloka to Surya is Bhuvarloka the residence of Siddha Ganas and Muni Ganaas; from Surya to Dhruva is Swarloka; from Dhruva to Siddha loka is Maharloka, from Maharloka to Janaloka and from Tapoloka and Brahma loka. The Urthwa lokaas thus are the Bhur-Bhuva, Swar-Mahar-Jana-Tapo-Satyalokas.

Having briefly described Brahmanda which was like the Kapittha /wood apple fruit with seeds inside its inside layers, Maharshi Parashara explained that the Brahmanda is surrounded with ten times of water around, and the water's surroundings are further encircled with Agni and Vayu; that thick enclosure is further rimmed with Ahamkara and Maha Tatwa further surrounded by Praakrti and indeed such interior features are present in each and every Brahmanda about such Brahmandas's are many more and several more!!Further, around such Brahmandas is Vishnu Shakti:

Sa cha Vishnum Prabrahma yata Sarvamidam Jagat,

Jagachha yo yatra chedam Yasmimcha layameshyati/

Tad Brahma Tat Paramdhama Sadasadparam padam,

Yasya Sarvamebhedena yataschaitaccharaacharam/

Sa yeva Mula Prakritirvyakta rupi Jagaccha sah,

Tasminneva layey Sarvam yaanti tatra cha tishthati/

Kartaakriyaanaam sa cha ijyatey kratuh,

Sa yeva tat Karma phalam cha tasya,

Strugaadi yatsaadhan madhya sesham Harerna kinchid vyatirikta masti/

(Where as the Universe is created by Parabrahma Vishnu Bhagavan is maitained by him himself, and is absorbed into him again, it is that Satyaasatya or Real and Unreal Forms that are generated by Him is the Mula Prakriti. He is the Yagna Karta- the Deed of the Yagna, the final result of Yagna, the facilitator of Yagnas and the Karma phala of Yagna. There is nothing beyond than Him at all.

**Surya Deva**: Surya Deva's chariot occupies an area of nine thousand yojanas and twice is the area of its 'Ishaa Danda' or the area between the 'Juuva' or Yugaartha and the 'Ratha'. The chariot is drawn by Seven Chhandas or Horses viz. Gayatri, Brihati, Ushnik, Jagati, Trishthup, Anushthup and Pankti. Actually, *Suryodaya and Suryastaya are mere concepts since he is constant and stable*; counting from the East of Manasottrara Mountain, the Kaala- Chakramoves on Eastward to Indra, Southward to Yamaloka, west weard to Varuna loka and northward to Chandraloka and the Head quarters of Indra, Yama, Varuna and Chandrarespectively are Vasvoukasaara, Samyamani, Sukhaa and Vibhavari. In otherwords, along with Jyotish Chakra, Bhagavan Bhanu is seen rushing Southward. By mid day, he is fully visible at Indraloka followed by the other lokas prescribedviz. Yama-Varuna and Chandra and by the next morning again repeats its course.

Udayaastamaney chaiva Sarvakaalam tu Sammukhey,

Vidishaasu twashyshasu tathaa Brahman dishaasucha/

Yairyatra drushyatey Bhaaswaansa teshaamudayah smrutah,

Tirobhavam chayatraiti tatraivaastamanam Raveyh/

(Sunrise and Sunset thus occur at the same position, since persons at the various Dishas-Vidishaas or Directions-Sub Directions witness the constant Surya Deva as they move and vision morning- mid day-evening-night and again morning and so on in the reverse movement!). Hence Sun Rise and Sunset are regulated to East and West; actually the manner in which Sun shines in the East, he also shines in the reverse; he is stated to stay put at Brahma Sabha and in the process of revolution of Kala Chakra, Dishas and Vidishas get lit or get dark and the lighten portion of the Universe become the day and the darkened areas get the night positions.

Kulaala chakra paryanto bhramannesha Divaakarah,

Karostahastathaa raatrim vimunmodineem Dwija/

(Hey Dwija! Just as a potter rotates a wheel, Sun and Earth witness parts of day and nights). From the time of Chakra's start of the revolution from the lowest point of the wheel towards the North is called Uttarayana and Surya is stated to be visible in Makara Raashi, followed by Kumbha Raashi and further on to Meena Raashi. As the three Raashis are over, the duration of day and night become equivalent or in other words, Sun passes through Bhu-Madhya Rekha. Thereafter, the duration of day time starts increasing and that of nights dwindling. Subsequently, Mesha, Vrisha and Mithuna Raashis pass over; at the end of Mithuna Raashi as Karka Raashi is entered into then Surya's direction changes from North to the Southern Direction and that phase is called Dakshinaayana. Just as a person tends to speed up descent from the top to the bottom, the speed of Kala Chakra gets picked up by the velocity of Vayu /wind and thus the duration of time quickens; during Dakshinaayana, the day time is stated to take thirteen and half revolutions of Nakshtras around Surya which is normally performed within twelve Muhurtas(thirty muhurthas make a day-night); but during the night time, the speed slows down and takes eighteen Muhurthas. During Uttarayana, Surya's speed quickens in the nights and slows down during the days and vice versa. Another conclusion is that during the Sandhya timings viz. Vyushti / Prabhat of day -breaks and Usha or night falls, the Vyashti time is of Brahma Swarupa Omkara and Gayatri and who ever worships Gayatri at that time with 'jala' would destroy the Rakshasaas; if they further recite the Mantra viz. Suryo Jyotih as the first Aahuti of Agnihotra they would be awakening and enlightening Surya Deva; thereafter:

OmkaaroBhagavanvishnustridhaamaa vachasaam patih,

Tadyucchaaranatastey tu yaanti Raakshasaah/

Vaishavomshah Parah Suryo yontarjyotirasaplavam,

Abhidhaayaka Omkaarastasya tatprerakah parah/

Tena SampreritamJyotiromkaaranaatha deeptimat,

Dahatya sesha Rakshaamsi Mandehaa-khyaanyadhaani vai/

Tasmaannollinghanam Kaaryam Sandhyopaasana karmanah,

Sa hanti Suryam Sandhyaayaa nopaastim kurtutey tu yah/

(The mere recitation of Omkaara Vishwam-Tejo Prajna Rupam-Tridhama Yuktam-Vishnum-Vedaadhipatim would destroy Raakshasaas. The Inner Radiance of Nirvikara Vishnu is Surya: Omkara is his Vaachaka and is the instant prompter of terminating Rakshasaas. Prompted by the Omkara, that Jyoti called Vishnu gets into full action in blistering Mandeha-called Rakshasas; that is the reason why the Sandhyopaasana Karma should never ever be neglected!)

**Sishumara Chakra / Jyotisha Chakra**: On the Sky, one could find a dolphin like formation of a Starry Design at the tail of which is Dhruva, who rotates on its own axis and also induces the rotation around Chandra, Surya, other Planets as also Nakshatras as well; in fact, all the Planets and Stars get hooked to Dhruva by the force of Vayu.Sishumara is the hinge of Sarveshwara Narayana tied on to Dhruva and further clutched to Surya.Sishumara is coiled with its head down, Ashvini Kumars at its feet,; Varuna and

Aryama are at thighs, Mitra at the anus; Agni, Mahendra, Kashyapa and Dhruva at its tail; on the top of the tail is Prajapati, Sapta Rishis at the hip position; body skin pores with Nakshatras; Upper chin as Agasti, lower chin as Yama; Mars as its mouth; genitals Saturn, Guru as neck back; Surya as chest; Moon as mind; Venus as navel; heart as Narayana Himself; life air as Mercury and so on. Rahu and Ketu the Sub-Heavenn Planets are right under Surya Deva.

Surya attracts water from various sources for eight months in a year and facilitates rains for four months a year and rains enable crops of food and fodder for all the Beings. Surya also enables the upkeep of Chandra and the latter in turn produces 'Abhra'by interacting with Vayu further creating Dhooma (Steam) produced by Agni and Sky leading to Meghas or clouds. As per the Time schedule prescribed by Vidhata, 'Abhra Jala' as preserved in the clouds is released pure water with the help of Vayu onto Bhumi. Surya Deva attracts water from four main sources viz. Rivers, Samudra, various water-bodies fron Bhumi, and Pranis. The Akasha Ganga attracted by Surya Deva would straight away release the water by way of rains from clouds without the process of transformation to 'Abhras' afore-mentioned. Needless to say that the water by way of rains as per the above process, is like Amrit or the Principal and Unparalelled source of Life for the production of food grains, Aoushadhis, Yagnas, and worships besides and countless varius deeds. Thus,

Aharabhutah Savitru Dhruvo Muni varotthama!

Dhruvasya Shishimaarosow sopi Narayanatmakah/

( The main Adhara of Surya is Dhruva and Dhruva is dependent on Narayana and Narayana is settled in Sishumaara!)

Maharshi Parashara then described that in each month, the occupants seated on the Chariot of Surya keep on changing; in each of the 'Maasaa' the representatives of one of the Dwadasha Adityas, and of different Rishis, Gandharvas, Apsaraas, Yakshaas, Sarpas, and Rakshasas are seated by turns. For instance in Chaitra Maasa, the combination is Ghaata named Aditya, Pulasya Rishi, Tumbura Gandharva, Krutasthala Apsara, Rathabhruta Yaksha, Vaasuki Sarpaand Heti Rakshasa. In Vaishakha Maasa the combination of the representatives are Aryama-Pulaha- Narada Gandharva- Radhouja Yaksha, Punjikasthata Apsara-Kacchaveera Sarpa and Praheti Rakshasa; in Jyeshtha Maasa the combinations are Mithraaditya, Atri Rishi, Takshaka Sarpa, Menakaapsara, Haha Gandharva, Rathaswana Yaksha and Pourusheya Rakshasa; in Ashadha Maasa, the occupants are Varunaaditya, Vasishtha Rishi, Naga Sarpa, Sahajanya Apsara, Huhu Gandharva, Ratha Rakshasa, and Ratha Chitra Yaksha; In Shravana Maasa, the occupants are Indraaditya, Vishvavasu Gandharva, Sneta Yakhsa, Ialaputra Sarpa, Angira Rishi, Pramlocha Apsara, Sarpi naamaka Rakshasa; in Bhadrapada, Vivisdwaan Adithya, Ugrasena Gandharva, Bhrigu Rishi, Aapurana Yaksha, Anumlocha Aprasa, Shankhapaala Sarpa and Vyaghra naaamaka Rakshasa;, in Ashvin Maasa,te chariot occupants are Pushaaditya, Vasuruchi Gandharva, Vaata Rakshasa, Gautama Rishi, Dhanjaya Sarpa, Syshena Gangharva and Ghritaachi Apsara; in Kartikia Maasa, the Aditya, Gandharva, Rishi, Yaksha, Sarpa, Apsaraand Rakshasaas respectively are Parjanya, Vishvayasu, Bharadwaja, Senajit, Iravata, Vishvachi, and Aapa. During Margasirsha, the occupants are Adhikari Asditya, Kashyapa Rishi, Taarkshya Yaksha,, Maha Padma Sarpa, Urvashi Apsara, Chitrasena Gandharva and Vidyut Raakshasa.In Pousha Maasa, the chariot is occupied by Kratu Rishi, Bhaga Aditya, Uurnayu Gandharva, Sphurja Rakshasa, Karkotaka Sarpa, Arishtanemi Yaksha and Purvachit named Apsara. The occupants of Sun Chariot during Magha Masa are Twashtaaditya, Jamadagni Rishi, Kambala Sarpa, Apsara Tilotthama, Brahmopeta Rakshasa, Rutijit Yaksha, and Gandarva called Drhitaraashtra. Finally in Phalguna Maasa, the occupants of Surya Rathab are Aditya named Vishnu, Ashwatara Sarpa, Apsara Rambha, Gandharva named Surya Varcha, Satyajit Yaksha, Rishi Vishwamitra and Rakshasa named Yajnopeta. This is how the occupants include Rishis performing Surya Stotras, Gandharvas facing Surya to sing Yashogaanas, Apsaras dance away to their glory, Rakshasa follow the chariot, Sarpas adorn the Ratha, Yakshas are at the beck and call of Surya and Nityasevaka Balakhilyas surround Surya for odd jobs. The Rishi Stutis are in the form of Veda Trayi Vishnu Rupa. This Veda Trayi is Vishnu's 'Anga' or Physique and Aditya is in

Vishnu Shakti; in fact Aditya is in Tri Murtis; at the time of Sarga, this Shakti is Brahma mayi in the mornings, Vishnu mayi during the day time's preservation and growth and Rudramayi in the evenings and hence the predominance of the respective Vedas of Ruk-Yajur-Saama!

Navagraha Varnana: Having explained about Surya Deva, Maharshi Parashara continued the description of Navagrahas further about Chandra with a Tricycle-Ratha in white colour whose left and southside have ten horses tied to it. With Dhruva as the focal point, the Chandra Ratha moves on along Naga veethi and illuminates Ashwini and other Stars. As in the case of Surya, the horses that were also born along with Chandra from Samudra, keep drawing the chariot till the Kalpaanta and Chandra always nourishes from the rays of Surya; just as Devaganaas draw the soothing rays of Chandra, Surya's rays supply the radiation of the water bases converted as the coolness to Chanda each day from the Shukla Pratipadika Tithis onward culminating on Purnima day; thus Devas enjoy the 'Amirita mayi' bhojan in an ascending manner from Patipada to Purnima and the number of such Devas is a staggering thirty three thousand thirtythree hundred and thirty three! From Purnima onward Chandra enters Suyamandala and the coolness gradually reduces and the illumination of Sun rays wanes too day by day till Amavasya; *It is generally considered that plucking leaves, flowers and roots or uprooting trees on Amavasya day is as serious as Brahma hatya!* 

Chinnanti veerudho yastu Veerusamstasye Nishaakaro,

Patram Vaa Paatayatyek Brahmahatyaam sa vindati/)

Again, in Sukla Paksha when Chandra is on ascent from Pratipadi till Purnima, Devas are happy and contented as also human beings but in Krishna Paksha, Pitruganaas are active and satisfied! Chandra's son Buddha rides overa Ratha made of Vayu and Agnimaya Dravyaand eight Vayu like horses of Pishanga Varna carry it. Shukra Deva, the Daitya-Daanava Guru, rides over horse made of Varutha or Metal made, Anukarsha or of bottom-spaced, Upasanga or with the carriage of Shastras and Pataka or of Flag, as born of Prithvi. Mangala Deva has a golden Ratha created by Agni, akin to Padma Raaga Mani, and of Red coloured eight horses.Brihaspati rides in a golden Ratha too drawn by Panduranga colour which is used up to the end of Rainy Season. Shani Maharaja rides over a Chariot materialised from the Akasa or Sky drawn by multi-coloured horses and moves on very slowly.Rahu Deva rides over eight horses of black colour which keep on moving once they are commanded so; at the time of Purnima, Rahu would overshoot Surya and almost reach Chandra and at the time of Amavasya, he would cross Chandra and reach Surya. In a similar manner, Ketu's chariot also of eight horses of ash-like dhumravarna as also red colour like lac would fly with the speed of Vayu.

In the final analysis, Maharshi Parashara concluded that the entirety of Taraaganaas, Tribhuvanaas, Vana-Parvataas, Dishaas, Rivers, Samudras, are all a manifestation of Vishnu only! Bhagavan Vishnu is of Jnaana Swarupa and is Sarvamaya and not a hidden matter! There in fact is nothing beyond Vijnaana which is defined as follows:

Vijnaana mekam nija karma bheda vibhinna chitthaairbahudhaabhyupetam, JnaanamVishuddham Vimalam vishokamasesha lobhaadi nirasta sangam, Ekam Sadaikam Paramah Pareshah sa Vaasudevo na yatonyadasti/

(There is no material that is superior to Vignaana; dependingon one's deeds, this Vignaana takes varied forms and that vignaana is pure, spotless, sorrowless, and deviod of feelings like greed and meanness; it is that charecteristic of Truthfulness <u>par excellence</u> which is Parameshwara Vaasudeva.

## Veda Vriksha, Veda Vyasaas, Veda Vibhajana, Vedangaas and Puranas

Maharshi Parashara presented an analysis of Vedas to Maitreya Maha Muni as to how various Veda Vyasaas of different Yugas attempted divisions of Vedas. He compared Vedas as a Maha Vriksha comprising Veda Shaakhaas (Branches) in thousands and it would be impossible to declare classifications as they vary by Yugas, Times and Situations. Even in Dwapara Yuga there were variations as noticed in

different Manvantaras. But one fact appeared to be clear that Bhagavan Vishnu created Veda Vyasaas of his own 'Amsha' or Alternatives who kept in viewthe contexts and exigencies of Loka Kalyana made the best possible variations from the Single Veda now in Four 'Shakhaas'. In the evolution of the twenty eight Dwapara Yugas, as many Vyasaas emerged from the positions of Brahma, Prajapati, Shukracharya, Brihaspati, Surya, Mrityu, Indra, Vasishtha, Sarasvata, Tridhama, Trishikha, Bharadwaja, Antariksha, Varni, Traiyaruna, Dhananjaya, Kratigjna, Jaya, Bharadwaja, Gautama, Haryatma, Vaajashravaa Muni, Somavamsha's Trina Bindu, Riksha, / Valmiki, Shakti, Jatukarna and the latest Krishna Dwaipayana (the son of Maharshi Parashara). The Maharshi stated that after his son Krishna Dwaipayana, the next Vyasa woud be Ashwatthaama. Having prefaced thus about the Evolution of Veda Vyasaas, Parasara Maharshi defined and conceptualised the 'Avinaashi Ekaakshara Mantra' OMas Brahma. This Pranava Brahma represents Bhuloka-Bhuvarloka-Swarloka; that Pranava Brahma also represents Ruk-Yajur- Saama and Atharvana Shakhas of the Paramaika Veda Vriksha.

Rig Veda Shakha: As prompted by Lord Brahma, Mahatma Krishna Dwaipaayana Vyasa took the assistance of four of his disciples to fully assimilate the Totality of the Single Veda and entrusted the task to Maha Munis viz. Paila in regard to Rig Veda, Vaishampayana to Yajur Veda, Jaimini to Saama Veda and Sumantu to Atharva Veda; besides Vyasa entrusted the task of Itihasas and Puranas to Maha Muni Lomaharshana. In the days of yore, there was only Yajur Veda and that was divided as four Vedas on the basis of 'Yagna-anushthana Vyavasta' or the Procedures of Performing Yagnas and the Chyatur hotra Vidhi was as follows: Yajur Veda Vidhi by Adhvaryu, Ruk Veda Vidhi by Hota, Sama Veda Vidhi by Udgata and Atharva Veda Karma by Brahma. Subsequently, Vyasa did the editing of Ruk and Yajur Vedas and part-scripting of Sama Veda; through Atharva Veda, Vyasa then established the Raja Karma and Brahmatwa. Thus Vyasa had done the distribution of the Chatur Vedas in the form of Four Veda Vrikshas from the Maha Veda Vriksha. As regards the Rig Veda Vriksha, Maharshi Paila divided this Veda into two Shaakhaas and made his Sishyas Indraprimiti and Bashkala responsible to read them. Bashkala made further division into four Upa Shakhaas which in turn were subdivided among four further Sishyas viz. Bodhya, Agni maadhak, Yajnyavalkyaand Parashara (ie the present Purana Karta of Vishnu Purana). Further on, Indraprimiti taught his son Manduka Muni. In this Parampara(link) of Sishya-Prasishyaas, Shakalya Veda Mitra scripted Samhitaas or Annotations and sub divided the same among five further sub-branches and taught these to Mudgala, Gomukha, Vaatsya and Shaaliya. Yet another of his upils called Shakapurna prepared three Veda Samhitas and a fourth Grandha on 'Nirukta'. And thus the Sishyas carried on the Samhitas further.

Yajur Veda Shakha: Maharshi Vaishampayana who was entrusted Yajur Veda by Veda Vyasa converted the Shakha into a Tree which got twenty seven Shakhas. One of the most intelligent Sishyas of the Maharshi was called Yagnavalkya. Once the Guru could not to reach a Meet of all the co-Students at an appointed time and date failing which the punishment was to be Brahma hatya pataka; the Guru and requested his Sishyas to perform a Vrata as an atonement. But the egoistic Yagnavalkya boasted that he alone was enough to perform the Vrata and the enraged Vaishampayana cursed Yagnavalkyaand asked him to vomit whatever was learnt by him since he talked as thoughhe was Supreme and others were useless !Yagnavalkya apologised no doubt but Guru did not relent; although the former said that he himself could do the Vrata out of veneration and devotion to his Guru but did not out of arrogance nor out of spite for his co-students! Any way, Yagnavalkya pulled out Yajurveda in the form of a blood-stained Murti and left the Guru. The Sishyas consumed the remains of what Yagnavalkya vomitted by assuming the forms of 'Tithiris' or partridges and hence that part of Veda is called Titthiriya! Yagnavalkya then extolled Surya Deva stating: Namassavitrey dwaaraaya Mukteyramita tejasey, Rugyajussaama bhutaaya Trayee dhaamney cha tey Namah/---and as the latter appeared before the Muni in the form of an 'Ashvya' horse and bestowed to him the Yajur Veda in Vajapa / form thus called Vajapa Yajur Veda, which even Vaishampayana was not conversant with!

(Yaagnyavalkyastadaa praaha pranipatya Divaakaram,

Yajumshi taani mey dehi yaani santi na mey Gurou!)

The Vaaja Shrutis that Kanva and other Maharshis realised were of as many as fifteen Shaakhaas which indeed were of Yagna-valkya's own 'Pravritti' or distinction.

Saama Veda Shaakha: Jaimini's son Sumantu and his son Sukarma dealt with one each of the branches of Sama Veda. Then Sukarma made thousand sub branches of Sama Veda and taught some to KausalyaHiranya Nabha and the rest to another Sishya named Paushpanji. Hiranyanabha had five hundred Sishyas and they learnt Udeechya Saamaga. Hiranya naabha also propagated Praachya Saamaga. Paushpanji had four main Sishyas viz. Lokaakshi,Naudhami, Kakshivaan and Laangali and these and their next generations popularised their own Samhitas. Hiranyanabha's yet another disciple Maha Muni Kriti and his pupils taught twenty four Samhitaas further.

Adharva Veda Shaakha: Sumantu Muni taught Atharva Veda to his pupil Kabandha and the latter taught one branch of Atharva Veda to each to Deva darsha and Patthya. Deva Darsha's sishyas were Megha, Brahmabali, Shoaulkaayani and Pippala. Pathya's students were Jaabaali, Kumudaadi and Shounaka and they were responsible to segregate Samhitaas. Shounaka sub-divided his Samhitas to Vibhru and Saindhava. The latter's sishya Munjikesha further distributed his Samhitaas into five Kalpaas named Nakshatra Kalpa, Veda Kalpa, Samhitaa Kalpa, Angirasa Kalpa and Shanti Kalpa; it is stated that the 'Ruchaas' or Hymns of these Kalpaas are among the popular Vikalpas.

Puranas: Purana Visharada Veda Vyasa made a format of various Purana Samhitas viz. Akhayana, Upaakhyaana, Gaathaa, and Kalpa Shuddhi. Lomaharshana Suta was the most acclaimed Sishya whom Vyasa made him study in depth. Suta's pupils were Sumati, Agnivarcha, Mitraayu, Shaamsapaayana, Akrutavarna, and Saavarni; Lomaharshana construted his works on their Samhitas. Parashara Maharshi stated that the Vishnu Purana Samhitaas were scripted on these bases. Among the Eighteen Puranas the foremost was stated to be Brahma Purana, followed by Paadmya, Vaishnava, Shaiva, Bhagavata, Naaradeeya, Markandeya, Agneya, Bhavishyata, Brahma Vaivarta, Lainga, Vaaraaha, Skanda, Vaamana, Kourma, Maatsya, Gaaruda, and Brahmanda Purana. Munis scripted several Upa-Puranaas too. Among all these, descriptions were invariably made about Srishti, Pralaya, Devataadi Vamshaas, Manvantaraas, Raja Vamsha Charitraas and so on. Sarga, Prati Sarga, Vamsha, and Manvantaraadi varnanaas are invariably covered in the Works of Vaishnava Orientation.

**Vidyas**: Maharshi Parashara enumerated fourteen Vidyas viz. Shat Vedangas, Four Vedas, Meemaamsa, Nyaya, Puraana and Dharma Shastra.In addition four more main Vidyas were to be included viz. Ayurveda, Dhanurveda, Gandhrva, and Artha Shastra. Among Rishis, there are three major categories viz. Brahmarshis, Devarshis and Rajarshis.

### Yama Gita- A Perfect Endorsement of Vishnu Bhakti

Muni Maitreya asked Maharshi Parashara whether there could be any escape route by which a human being could possibly avoid facing Yama Dharma Raja after the termination of one's life! Maharshi replied that Nakula of Pandava Brothers of Maha Bharata fame also enquired of a similar question from Bhishma the Grand Father of Pandava-Kaurava brothers. Bhishma's reply was in the form of an illustration about a Brahmana in Kaling Desha who met Bhishma once. The Brahmana cited the example of a Jatismara Muni who retained the knowledge of his previous birth. The Brahmana was convinced that the Jatismara Muni was genuine as he asked the Muni of searching questions and received correct answers. The Brahmana then quoted the Jatismara Muni about an incident when one Yama duta as taking away a just dead soul, Yama Raja secretly conveyed to his Yama Duta that if there were a Vishnu Bhakta he should not be taken into Yamaloka and that was the instruction received from his Authorities! Yama was reported to have stated that Brahma appointed him (Yama)as the authority to decide on the Paap-Punya account of all kinds of Beings except the devotees of Bhagavan Janardana. Yama was reported to have told the Yamaduta as follows:

Ahamamara varaarchinena Dhaatraa Yama iti Lokahitaahitey niyuktah,

Hariguruvashagosmi na swatantrah, prabhavati samyamena mamaapi Vishnuh/

(I was appointed by Vidhata as Yama to assess the accounts of Paapa-Punyas of various Beings, but am in the over-all control of Bhagavan Vishnu and certainly not independent to take actions on my own.) The Yamaduta argued with Yama as to why he should be reponsible for Vishnu! Yama Raja then replied:

Na chalati nija varna dharmato yah samamatiraatma suhrud vipaksha pakshey,

na harati na cha hanti kinchiducchhaih sitamanasam tamavehi Vishnu bhaktam/

Kalikalushamalena yasya naatmaa vimala matermalinikrutastamenam,

Manasi kruta Janaardanam Manushyam satatamavehi Harerateeva bhaktam/

Kanakamapi rahasyavekshya buddhyaa trunamiva yassamavaiti vai paraswam,

Bhavati cha Bhagatanyananya chetaah Purushavaram tamavehi Vishnu bhaktam/

Sphatika giri shilaamalah kka Vishnurmanasi Nrunaam kka cha matsaraadi doshah,

Na hi tuhini mayukha rashmi punjey bhavati Hutaashana deeptijah prataapah/

Vimalamatira matsarah prashaantashashuchi charitokhila satvamitra bhutah,

Priyahita vachanostamaanamaayo vasati sadaa hridi tasya Vaasudevah/

Vasati hridi sanaatanecha tasmin bhavati pumanjagatesya sowmya rupah,

Kshitirasamati ramyamaatmanonantah kathayati chaaruta yaiva shaalapotah/

Yamaniyamavidhuta kalmashaanaamanudina machyutasatthamaana maanasaanaam,

Apagatamadamaana matsaraanaamtwajabhatadooratarena Maanavaanaam/

Hridiyadi Bhagayaananaadiraastey Harirasi shankha gadaadharoyyayaatmaa,

Tadaghamagha Vidhaata katru bhinnamBhavatikathamsatichaandhakaaramarkai/

Haratiparadhanam-nihanijantun-vadati-tathaanruta nishthuraani yascha,

Ashubha janita durmadasya pumsah kalushamateyrmudasya tasya naasthanantah/

Na sahati paraspadam vinindaam kalushamatih kurutey sataama saadhuh/

Na yajati na dadaati yascha santam Manasi na tasya Janaardanoghamasya/

Parama suhrudi baandhaveykalatrey sutatanayaa Pitru Maatru bhrutyavargye,

Shathamatirupayaati yortha trishnaam-tamamaghachestamavehinaasya-Bhaktam/

Ashubhamatirasat-pravrutti saktta satatamanaarya kusheela sangamattah,

Anudina kruta paapabandha yuktah Purusha-pashoorna hi Vaasudeva bhaktah/

Sakalamidamaham cha Vaasudevah ParamaPumaanparameswarassa Ekaha,

Iti Matirachalaa bhavanyanantey hridaya gatey vraja taanvihaaya duraarat/

Kamalanayana VaasudevaVishno dharani dharaatyuchyuta shankha chakrapaaney,

Bhava sharanamitiryanti ye vai, twaja bhata dooratarena taanapaapaan/

Vasanti Manasi yasya sovyayaatmaa Purusha Varasya na tasasya drishtipaatey,

Tava Gati Ratha vaa Maamaasti chakra pratihata Veerya Balasya sonyalokyah/

(That person who does not leave his Varna Dharma, who treats one's own friend or foe on the same footing, who would never steal money or other's possessions, who would never harm nor hurt others, does not harbour extra favour or hatred on any person and retains equanimity in respect of one and all is defined as Vishnu-Bhakta. A person who keeps his conscience clear and is not ruffled by Kali-kalmasha or tainted thinking but keeps Janardana in his heart always steadily is called a Vishnu-Bhakta. After all where is a crystal-clear mind and where is a prejudiced mind full of likings and dislikes! Could the coolness of Chandra and the unbearable heat generated by Fire are ever comparable! It is in that person who has a clean conscience, devoid of jealousy and wrath, always peaceful, pure hearted, friendly and considerate to one and all, helpful with spontaneity, straight forward without being hurtful of others and being compassionate that Vaasudeva likes to reside always. It is in that person's heart that an objective feeling predominates just as a well structured and attractive Shaala Vriksha minimises its own beauty and impressiveness but sincerely appreciates the features and presentability of other trees around.

Yama Doota! Please keep off from that person who practises Yama and Niyama or Physical Control and Regulation seeking to minimise, if not uproot, the sins already committed; do keep aloof from whom who is not affected by superior feelings, social consciousness, and pride and prejudices. If a person who has always embedded the Grand Form of Vishnu with four hands, Gada-Sharanga-Chakra and Shankhu in his heart and soul should in fact be run away from. Could one ever think of a situation when Surva Bhagavan is existent in his glory and darkness could ever prevail! But never ever spare those Beings who steal, hurt others, converse ill of others, and practise evil deeds, cannot tolerate improvement of others, are critial of fellow beings, offend the virtuous, the poor, and helpless; insult Sadhus, women, children and the 'Anga Viheena' and mentally unsound. Also never ever spare the sinners who seldom perform charity to the needy. Run after those Durbuddhis who have no consideration to friends, relatives, women and children, servants, and even parents and family members out of concern for monetary consideration, social status, false dignity and selfishness! Those human beings who are seemingly righteous and upright but basically immoral and dishonest are worse than openly cruel and declared offenders and they are cunning and schemy and such pretentious fakes are more dangerous than straight criminals and Yamadutaas ought to be able to identify them with insight and discretion! Also there are 'Nara rupa Pashus' or Humans with animal instincts and they too should be segregated by Yamadutaas. At the same time, those who realise that the whole world is a reflection of Vaasudeva himself and worship Him with one's own inner consiousness must be kept far away from the Yamadutas as they are recognised by the shields of Vishnu Bhakti and such devotees hail Paramatma by their salutations saying: "Hey Kamala Nayana! Vaasudeva! Vishno! Dharanidhara! Achuta! Shankha Chakra paaney! Do save us!" Remember such sacred persons are distinct and distinguished and indiscretions on the part of Yamadutaas oy Yamadharma Raja would not be condoned easily as such Bhaktaas must be very carefully directed to Vaikuntha!)

Such was the explanation given by the Jaatasmira Kalinga Brahmana about his own experience of Dharma Raja conversing with Yama Dutaas and Bhishma quoted the Brahmana's serious and secret talk to Nakula of Pandavas; Maharshi Parashara thus replied to Muni Maitreya and assured that a genuine Vishnu Bhakta need not be unnecessarily rattled as to how he would avoid Naraka Darshana! *Kinkaraah paasha dandaascha na Yamo cha Yaatanaah, Samarthaastasya yasaatamaa Keshavaalambanassadaa!* (A devotee of Vishnu whose heart is saturated by Bhagavat Paaraayana would indeed be free from the fears of Yama, Yamadutaas, Yama paasha, Yama danda or Yama yatana!)

#### Chaturvarna - Chaturaashrama Dharmaas

As Sage Maitreya desired to perform Bhagavan Vishnu's worship in general, Maharshi Parashara confirmed that the best and easiest way do so would be to follow the Chaturvarna – Chaturaashraya Dharmas so thoughtfully designed by the Ancestral Maharshis for Maanavas all over the Bharata Varsha.

As a Preamble to such worship, the Maharshi quoted Bhrigu vamshi Mahatma Auorvi to King Sagara who laid stress on fundamental principles like refrain from Para Ninda or blaming others and loose conversation against others; desire for ParaStree, Para Dhan, Para Hani, Para Himsa and so on. Then as per the categorisation of the Four Varnas viz. Brahmana- Kshtriya-Vaishya-Shudras, each human being should follow certain established principles; Brahmanas should perform Daana, Yajana to Devaas through Yagnas, Nitya Snaana-Tarpanas and Agnyadhaan and such other deeds, as also facilitate others to execute Yagnaas, teach Vedas and other Scriptures, refrain from harming others, earn livelihood as per Nyaya; maintain good relations with every one; treat a stone and other's money as the same; and so on. Kshatriyasshould perform daanaas, Yagnaas, Adhyayana, Shastra Dharana, PrithvinRaksha, Prithvi Paalana, Dushta-Sikshana and Sishta Rakshana, practice of magnanimity and Dharma. Vaishyas are required to execute Pashu Palana or looking after cattle, trading and commerce and Krishi or farming. The deeds of Adhyanaya or reading of Scriptures, Yagna, Daana, 'Nitya Naimishthika Karma -anushthana'or Regular Daily Deva Karyaas / deeds are also to be practised by Vaishyas. The duties of others includeNamrata and Swami Seva or service to other classes, Mantraheena Yajna, Asteya / non- stealing, gratitude, Satsanga or keeping good company, and Brahmana –Raksha; they should also receive money from other classes in lieu of services to them and worship to Devas. In addition, each and every human being should observe kindness-patience-truthfulness, cleanliness, good conversational style, friendliness, friend ship with one and all, performing good deeds without expectations, non-greediness, and of adjustment and non-complaining narure. Brahmanas can perform the duties of Kshatriyasand Vaishyas; Kshatriyas could perform the duties of Vaishyas but not in the reverse manner.

Referring to Ashrama Dharmaas, Mahatma Ourva emphasised that after 'Upanayana' or Eligibility to Gayatri Mantra, boys need to adhere to Brahmacharya or Celibacy in Gurukula performing Guru Seva, Vedaadhyana, Sandhyavandana to Surya / Gayatri and Agni-Upasana, Guru Saha Pravartana, Guru Susrusha and at the end offering Guru Dakshina and Guru Ghriha Nishkramana. On entering Grihastaashram after wedding, Dravyoparjana or earning money according to one's capacity and needs migh be taken up, besides Pitrugana Pindadaanaas, Athithi (Guests) Sevas, Yagnaadi Deva Karyas, Anna Danasas, Atithi Sevas (Service to Guests), Swaadhyaaya / reciting Vedas, Putrotpatti (creation of sons), Vrata Dharana /performance of Vratas, Tirtha Yatras / visits to holy places, and so on. Grihasthas should refrain from ill-treating or talking harsh to elders, guests and well-read Brahmanas; avoid conversing with ego or bravado:

Yastu samyakkarottvevam Grihastah paramam vidham,

Sarvabandha vinirmukto lokaanaaprotyanuttamaan/

(As Grihataas perform their own duties properly, they would be eligible for achieving higher lokaas!). Thus having carried on their Grihasta duties and become grand fathers and grand mothers, persons should not hesitate to assume Vanaprastha Ashramand gradually de-link themselves with active life, eat frugally, avoid being attached to children and grand children, sleep on ground, be more and more detached, perform Deva Pujana, Agni Homa, Atithi Satkara, and Tapasya or more and more of devotionto Paramatma. The fourth Sanyasa Ashrama or Sat-Nyasa or active alignment of the Eternal Truth and the Self is called Bhikshu Ashrama in which onerelieves of oneself of Dharma-Artha-Kama principles and target on Moksha Sadhana only: he or she has to develop a mentality of fearlessness and readiness to face the inevitable end of life with a high realisation of the world being 'Midhya' or Falsity and the Final Goal is merger with the Supreme.

On the arrival of a human being, Muni Ourva described to King Sagara about the 'Shodasa Samskara' or the Sixteen Reforms of every person irrespective of the Fout Varnas. As a son is born, the primary deed is Jaata Karma besides Abhyudaya Shraaddha or for the Progress of the Child. On the tenth day of the birth of the child, the next Samskara is Naama karana. The name given to a child should have the following traits:

Naardhiheenam na chaashastam Naapashabdayutam tathaa,

Naamangalyam Jugupsyam vaa naama kuryaatsamaaksharam/

Naati hraswam naati deergham naati gurvaksharaanvitam,

Sukhocchraayah tu tannaamakuryaadtravanaaksharam/

Tatonantarasamskaara sumsruto Guruveshmani,

Yathotya vidhi- maashrityakuryaadwidhyaaparigraham/

(While giving a name to a new born, care must be taken to choose a name which should not be meaningless, unclear, bad-worded, unfavourable, inauspicious and blameworthy; it should not be too long and too short, and the name must be equally worded, and should not be difficult to pronounce; it should sound easy and comfortable to call or write and preferrably end up with a shortened name). The next Samskara would be 'Upanayana' enabling Vidyadhyayana and Gurukula Vaasa; after the Gurukula Vaasa, the native should be such as to be physically and mentally fit for Wedding and Samsara. There are eight kinds of marriage viz. Braahma, Daivika, Aarsha, Praajaapatya, Aasura, Gandharva, and Raakshasa, and Paishachika. Sadachara lakshanas of a Grihasti were defined by Mahatma Ourva as gaining both Iha Loka and Paraloka. A Buddhiman needs to wake up at Brahma Muhurta, think up about Dharma-Artha-Kama-Moksha, perform the morning ablutions including Snaana, Sandhya Vandana /Gayatri –Japa, Devaa-Rishigana -Pitrugana Tarpana, Ishta Devata Puja with Pushpa-Dhupa-Naivedya, followed by Agnihotra Homa to Brahma, Prajapati, Guhya, Kaashyapa, and Anumati and so on; the remainder havya to Prithvi and Megha; Balipradana to Dikpalakas at East, South, West and North viz. to Indra, Yama, Varuna, and Chandrama; as also to Dhanvantari in Purvottara or North-East, to Vayudeva in Vayavya Kona, and so on. Further on, Anna Bali be offered to Devatas, Manushya, Pashu-Pakshi-Siddha-Sarpa-Yaksha-Daitya-Preta-Piscacha-Keeta-Patangas etc. Then Sage Ourva narrated the Bhojana Vidhana of Grihastis in great detail.

Annam balaaya mey Bhumerapaagnyanilayasyacha,

Bhavetsetatparinatam Mamaastatvayahatam sukham/

Praanaapaana samaanaamudaanyanayostathaa,

Annam Pushtikaram chaastu mamaapyavyahatam sukham/

(May this Annam or or meals taken in by me strengthen the internally-situated Tatvas of Pancha bhutas of Earth-Water-Fire-Air and Sky in me and bestow me happiness and contentment; may this Anna satisfy my Pancha-Pranas or Five-Kinds of Prana-Apana- Samaana-Udaana-Vyaanas and make me healthy, strong and fit.)

Vishnurattaa tathaivaannam parinaamaascha vai tathaa,

Satyena tenamad- bhuktam jeeryatvamannamidam tathaa/

(It is Vishnu who consumes the bhojan, it is the bhojan or the one consumed is Vishnu and Vishnu again who is satisfied with the bhojan!) After spending the time after the bhojan, the Satpurusha spends time with 'pathana', 'shravana' and 'vishranti' till the Sayamkaala Sandhya Vandana, Puja, Atithi Seva, Swadhyayana and so on. Mahatma Ourya prescribed a number of do's and dont's concerning food regulations, marital relations, significant days of festivals, 'parva dinaas' like Chaturdhasi, Ashtami, Amavasya, Purnima, and Surya Samkranti and so on. The Mahatma stated further: Those who perform Deva-Rishi pujas regularly, Pitru Pindodakaas unfailingly and 'Atithi Satkaaras' always should achieve Punyalokas.

Hitam mitam priyam kaaley vashytmaa yobhibhaashatey,

Sa yaanti lokaanaahlaada hetu bhutaan nrupaakshayaan/

(A person who could control his physical senses and converse or behave as per circumstances as a wise, less-talkative and endearing one is a source of joy; a Buddhimaan or Intellectual one, Lajjavaan or a Modest one, Kshamaasheela or who could be forgiving, a Vinaya Vidwaan or well-read should indeed deserve Urthva Lokas or higher worlds.)

## Shraadha Prashamsa, Vivarana and Vidhi

Among the occasions when Abhyudaya Shradhhas are performed are when a person's daughter or son is married, Griha praveshas or House-Warmings, child's name-giving, chuda karma samskaras, seemantotsayaas and so on.

Shraddha karma is something which pleases Brahma, Indra, Ashwini Kumaras, Surya, Agni, Vasuganas, Marudganas, Vishva Devas, Pitruganas, Rishiganas and Bhutaganas and so on. Nitya Shraadhaas are performed every month on Krishna Paksha Amavasya, Hemanta and Sishira Ritu's four months on Suklasshtamis specifically. Kaamya Shaaddhas are performed on the days when Uttarayana and Dakshinayana commence, on Vishuva Samkrantis, Surya-Chandra Grahanas, when Surya enters a specified Raashi, or Nakshatra or Graha which is not favourable to a person, or when a person sees a bad dream or when new food crop arrives at home. Those who perform Shraaddha to Pitruganaas on Amavasya and Anuradha or Vishakha or Swati Nakshatra conjunction, the latter would be satisfied for eight long years; similarly when Shraadhaas are executed on Amavasya and Pushya-Ardra-or Punarvasu, Pitru happy and contented for twelve years; Shraaddhas on Amavasya in coincidence with Dhanishtha, Purvabhadra and Sathabhisha are considered as extremely joyous for Pitras; Shraaddhaas on Vaishakha Maasa Shukla Triteeya, Kartika Shukla Navami, Bhadrapada Krishna Trayodasi and Magha Amavasya are expected to be outstanding for Pitras as such Shraadhhas have the value of Yugaadi deeds and are stated to be the Providers Ananta Punya. Pitruganas keep wondering and constantly pondering:

Api dhanyaha kuley jaataadasmaakam matimaannarah,

Akurvannvittha shaathyan yah Pindaanno nirvapishyati/

(How I wish that in my vamsha, there could be one person even who might perform 'Pinda daana' without stinging for money)! Could there be one person even who might worship Brahmanaaas and give away charity of Ratnas, vastras, vehicles, and bhogaa vastus and have them contented! At least give them good bhojan and make them satisfied! If even that was not possible, let a member of the family who might give daana of raw dhanya or uncooked grains along with some dakshina or monetary tip! Even it that were not possible, let a good brahmana be venerated with a vandana or greeting along with a fistful of Tilas with water. In the absence of that much of facility, then a vamsheeya might just confess:

Na mesti vittam na dhanam cha naanyachhadropayogyam swapitrunnatosmi,

Trupyantu Bhaktyaa Pitaro mayaitou krutow bhujou vataurmani maarutasya/

(I have neither money nor any suitable object with which to provide the least possible veneration to my Pitrudevaas, excepting a sincere and humble salutation with my raised shoulders towards the sky!)

**Shraaddha Vidhi**: Care be taken in selecting Shrotriya Brahmanas as Ritviks or facing in the Shraadha Karmas of Vaishva Deva type. Depending on one's ability, Brahmanas be appointed in odd or numbers like one or three and so on as representatives of Pitru Devatas and in even numbers to represent Deva Paksha Brahmanas; Deva Paksha Brahmanas be seated as 'Purvaabhi -mukhas' or South faced and Pitru-

Matru Paksha Brahmanas are to be seated 'Utaaraabhi -mukha' or North faced . Both Pitru-Matru Paksha Brahmanas and Deva Paksha Brahmanas might be seated face to face on Kusha grass with Arghya daana, Avahana or Invocation followed by dhupa-deepa-gandha-maalaa-nivedana by way of kusha-graas while Pitru Paakshika Brahmanas are to be worshipped with yagnopaveeta worn as apasavya or 'Praacheenaaveeti', while all the Devakaryas be performed as 'Sayva' or normal. After securing the clearance of Brahmanas, the Kusha grass is divided into two halves, and validate one half by Apasavya of Yajnopaveeta offer to Pitru Devas along with 'tilodakaas'-all the deeds bing done in appropriate Mantras; then the Pitru Devas as represented by the designated Brahmanas are provided food. There after having the clearance of the Brahmanas, small quantities of 'Cooked Anna' is offered into Agni thrice with ghee but vegetables or salt; the first 'Ahuti' is offered with the Mantra: *Agnaye havyavaahanaaya swaahaa*; the second Ahuti is performed by the Mantra: *Somaaya Pitrumatey swaahaa*; the third offering is given by the Mantra: *Vaivasataaya swaha*/ Then the remainder Anna is served to the Brahmanas as they are requested to peacefully agree to take food while the 'Rakshoghna' Mantra is recited and tila seeds are sprinkled on the Shraddha Bhumi thinking of Pitru / Maatru Rupa; the Mantra is recited as follows:

Pita Pitaamahaaschaiva tathaiva Prapitaa -mahah,

Mama truptim prayaantvadya Vipra deheshu samsthitaah/

Pita Pitaamaschaiva tathaiva Prapitaamahah,

Mama truptim prayaantvadya homaapyaayita murthayah/

Pitaa Pitaamahaaschaiva tathaiva Prapitaamahah,

Ttruptyam Prayaantu Pindena maya datthena Bhutaley/

Pitaa Pitaamahaaschiva tathaiva Praputaamahah,

Truptyam prayaantu mey bhaktya mamaittasmudaahyutam/

Mataamahastruptimupaitu tasyahoktaatathaa pitaa tasya pitaa tatonyaha,

Vishwecha Devaah paramaam prayaantu, Truptim pranasyantu cha yaatu dhaanaah/

Yagneshwaro havyasamastakavya bhoktaavyayaatmaa harireeswarotra,

Tasminnidhaanaadapayaantu sadyo rakshaamsya seshaanya suraascha sarvey/

(May my father, grand father and great grand father enter the bodies of these brahmanas and be satisfied with my offerings; may they be satisfied with my homas; may they be satisfied by the Pindaas placed on the Bhumi; may my three paternal generations be satisfied with my sincere and devoted givings which indeed are insignificant; may also my maternal grand father, his father and the latter's father as also the Vishwadevaganas be contented and destroy the Rakshasa ganaas; may Yagneswara Bhagavan Hari be present here and thus all the evil forces of Rakshasaas and Asuras disappear at once. After this deed, the performer of Shraddha should sprinkle food grain morsels on the Prithvi and after 'Achamana' or sipping a little water, sprinkle water on the morsels. Then after securing the clearance of Brahmanas, perform pinda-daana of the food-globes and Tila with water; the remnant morsels of food be sprinkled around the three Pinda-globes and one by one place towards South on the Kushaa grass bed representing the Pitru Pinda, Pitamaha Pinda and Prapitaaha Pinda in a row and after smearing with the 'Anna sesha', the Pindas must be taken up on hand and placed back and together worshipped with gandha, pushpa, dhupa and naivedya and after giving achamana to the Brahmanas, give away Pinda Daana reciting Susvadhaa and after giving dakshina, seek the blessings of the Pitruganas and providing 'tathaastu' (So be it!). This would be followed by 'Paada Shoucha' or cleaning of feet, 'Preeti vachana' or sweet conversation and saying good bye to the Brahmanas with respect till they leave; thereafter, the bhojan be performed by other Brahmanas, relatives and family members.

Vishwa devassapitaarastathaa Mataa- Mahaa Nripa,

Kulam chaapyaayatey Pumsaam Sarvam shaaddham prakurvataam/

Somaadhaarah Pitrugano Yogaadhaaraascha Chandramaah,

Shaaddhey Yoginiyogastu Tasmaadbhulaala shayastey/

Sahasrasyaapi Vipraanaam yogichepturatah sthitah,

Sarvaanbhoktrustaarayati Yajamaanam tathaa Nrupa/

(Hey Raja! Those who perform Shraadhhaas sincerely have the Vishwadeva ganaas, Pitruganaas, Mataamaha and the entire Kulaa vaasis satisfied; Chandra is the hold of Pitruganaas; Yoga is the Adhaara of Chandra and that is why yogijanaas are appointed in Shraadhas; giving away bhojan to thousand Brahmanas is as good as one Shraadha Bhojana which would fetch far reaching beneficient impact!)

# Raja Vamsha Vivarana-Description of Surya and Chandra Dynasities

After describing the Ashrama and Varna Dharmas as well as Nitya-Naimittika Karma Vivarana, Parashara Maharshi explained the accounts of the lineage of Kings and recalled that Bhagavan Vishnu, the Original Ruk-Yajur-Saama Veda Swarupa created Brahmanda –maya Hiranyagarbha Brahma who materialised from his right thumb Daksha Prajapati, who in turn created Aditi and Aditi created Vivaswan and the latter generated Manu. Manu created Ikshvaku, Nriga, Dhrushtha, Sharyati, Narishyanta, Praamshu, Naabhaga, Dishta, Karusha and Prushaghna. Also, Manu decided to perform Yagna and appointed two Devatas named Mitravarunas but due to wrong Sankalpa a woman called Ila was materialised and Budha the son of Chandra married her and they begot a son called Pururava. The sons of Pururava got spread out far and became Kshatriyas. Prushaghna killed his Guru's cow and as a result of this was born in a lower vamsha. Naabhaga's progeny became Vaishyas. Manu's son Sharyati had a daughter named Sukanya and her husband Chyavana Rishi and the latter obtained youth by Ashvini Kumars in exchange of Amrita from Swarga loka by severe Tapasya to Indra. Sharyati's son was named Aanarta whose son was Raivata and the latter had a son named Raivata Kakudbhi.

Revati and Balarama: Raivata had a daughter named Revati and along with her visited Brahma to bless a suitable bridegroom, but Brahma was engaged in listening Gandharava gaana by the Gandharvas named Haahaa and Huhuu and by the time the singing was over and Brahma's attention was drawn by Raivata Kakudbhi, four Yugas were over and Brahma blessed Revati to marry Balarama in the next Dwapara Yuga who was the would-be brother of Shi Krishna! Thus the age difference of Balarama and Revati was of four yugas plus! As Brahma blessed the father and daughter, they headed for Prithvi and found human beings as very short, ugly, far less bright, unenergetic and unintelligent. As they reached their own Kingdom Kushasthali, they found themselves as strangers and Devi Revati assumed a shorter stature and Raivata offered her in wedding to Balarama.

**Ikshwaaku:** The progeny of Naabhaga included: Ikshwaku who was born of Manu's sneeze; Vikukshi who fetched deer meat for a Srhaaddha to be executed by his father Ikshvaku eaten by a rabbit (Shashak) and hence Sage Vasistha who was to perform the Shraaddha called Vikukshi as Shashak; Puranjaya the son of Shashak who defeated Danavas since Devas worshipped Vishnu and Vishnu entered Puranjaya's body while Indra—asked Puranjaya to assume the form of a bull so that he could hold the 'kakud' or hump on the back of the bull and destroyed Danavas thus Puranjaya securing the epithet of 'Kakutstha'; Kuvalashwa who was a great Vishnu Bhakta who attained the epithet of 'Dundhumara'as he killed Dundhu Daitya with the help of his twenty one thousand sons who dried up the Sea in which was hiding the Daitya by their 'nishvaasa' or exhaling and thus exposed and destroyed the Daitya; Yavanaashwa who performed 'Putrakameshti' yagna but during the course of the yagna the King drank up at a midnight out of extreme thirst the 'Mantrajala' or the water meant the Queen to conceive a child and in course of time

the King delivered a child from the right side of his abdomen which was cut open and the child thus born was named Mandhata who was given by milk by Indra's middle finger; Mandhata eventually became the Chakravarti or the Emperor of Sapta Dwipas who was noted as:

Yaavatsurya udetyastam yaavascha pratitishthati,

sarvam tadyouvanaashwasya Mandhaatuh kshetramuchyatey/

(From where Sun rises in the morning and again where Sun sets in the evening is the Empire of Mandhata, the son of Yuvanaashwa!); Puruktsa, Ambarisha, and Muchukunda were the sons of Mandhata besides fifty daughters.

Maharshi Soubhari: It was at that time of Mandhaata, there was a Maharshi called Soubhari who stayed under water for twelve years performing Tapasya and was impressed by a Matsya King and his large family; the Maharshi approached Mandhata and asked for one of his daughters to let him marry him; Mandhata was depressed at the idea of marrying off any one of the daughters to an old and ugly Maharshi but he was afraid of the Maharshi's curse and said that in his family there was a custom of 'Swayamvara' or the bride's choice of a husband; the Maharshi entered the 'Antahpura' or the Interior Chambers of Mandhata's daughters as an extremely handsome and strong youth and all the Kanyas were excited to marry the Maharshi; after some time, Mandhata visited the Maharshi to enquire about the state of their happiness and in one voice they confirmed that they were all extremely happy with the Maharshi! Meanwhile, the Maharshi who was completely immersed in the 'samsara' or endless family life and attachments and regretted that his Tapasya under water went as a huge waste as he got irretrievably ensnared in samsara, due to the attractive company of Matsya King whose example had fully spoilt his life of Tapasyayogi! He realised though late in his life and ruminated:

Nissangataa Muktipadam yateenaam sangaadasheshaah prabhavanti doshaah/

Arudha Yogo vinipaantyatedha-ssangena kimutaalpa buddhih!

(Indeed the lack of company would ensure Mukti to Yogis since it was the company that spoils endeavours of attaining Mukti; the wrong and misleading folly would demolish and debase the sincere efforts of even Yogis and indeed ordinary human beings are not to be mentioned anyway!) By so realising his foolishness of entrering Samsara, the Maharshi regretted and took to Vaanaprasthaa Ashrama and sought to make amends of his further part of life!

**Purukutsa and Narmada:** Mandhata's son Purukutsa married Devi Narmada and the latter was the sister of Nagaas of Rasatala. Nagaas were afraid of Gandharvas as some six crore Gandharvas resided in Rasatala tormenting Nagaas by hunting their 'Ratnas' (jewels) from their hoods. The Nagaas prayed to Bhagavan Vishnu and the latter assured that the son of Mandhata viz. Purukutsa would destroy all the Gandharvas at the instance of Narmada Devi. As professed, Purukutsa eradicated Gandharvas and the Nagaas gave a boon to Narmada that whosoever bathed in the River or even recited the following would be safe from 'sarpa-visha' or the poison of serpents; the relevant Shloka or stanza to be recited states:

Narmadaayai Namah Pratarnarmadaayai Namo nisha,

Namostu Narmadey tubhyam traahi maam Visha Sarpatah/

(Devi Narmada! My salutations to you in the day or night, do safeguard me from the fear of Serpents and their poisonous bites!) This recitation while entering dark places and eating food would safeguard from any kind of poisons as such is the power of the boon bestowed by Serpents to human beings, thanks to Purukutsa and Narmada! Satyavrata alias Trishanku: In the lineage of Purukutsa was the famed Satyavrata called subsequently as Trishanku who became a Chandala since he was banished by his father King Traiyaaruni for the offence of kidnapping a commoner bride from her Vivaha-Vedika or wedding place as prompted by the Royal Priest Vasishtha and Satyavrata adopted the ways of Chandala; as Vishwamitra went away on a long Tapasya and as there was a long drawn 'Anavrishti', Satyavrata provided food to the Sage's family for the entire period of twelve long years (although by cow meat of the

stolen cows of Vasishtha, who came to know of the theft as also of feeding the cow meat to a co-Sage's family); Vasishtha thus cursed Satyavrata on three counts or Trishanka viz. adopting the ways of a chandala, thieving Vasishta's cows and feeding cow's meat to Vishwamitra's family during the famine period without their knowledge. Yet, Vishwamitra on return from his Tapasya was extremely pleased to have supported his family by Satyavrata now converted as a full fledged Chandala in his form and habit; the Sage not only changed Satyavrata to his original profile but also fulfilled the latter's wish to reach Swarga in his mortal form; as the Devatas did not allow Trishanku to enter Swarga, Vishwamitra created a Trishanku Swarga just below the original Swarga and created a duplicate as wondereful as the original Swarga! Indeed, Vishwamitra had to utilise considerable portion of his Taposhakti to please Satyavrata alias Trishanku! Harischandra: The illustrious son of Trishanku was King Harischandra who stood for Satya or Truth, despite the unending harassment and distress caused to him and his family by the Sage Vishwamitra; the Sage got the King into the vicious circle of indebtedness to perform a Yagna and 'dakshinaas' or fees, made the King a pauper to such an extent of selling his wife and son Rohitasya as also selling himself as a bonded labour in a 'Smashaana' or a burial place; as a climax the dead body of Rohitasya was brought to the burial ground and his wife had to forfeit half of her saree to pay for the fees of the son's burial! All along Vishwamitra asked Harischandra to tell a small lie that he did not to owe any money to the Sage but Harischandra who was indeed a Symbol of Truthfulness never ever falter from Thuth but was prepared for extreme hardships! At the end, Truth conquered and Harischandra and his wife earned Salvation and the dead Rohitasya was revived and became the King; Harischandra was being tested by Vishwamitra and Lord Yama who indeed was the Keeper of the Burial Place! Sagara and Bhagiratha: Harischandra's son Rohitasya and his further generation included Ruru-Vruka and Baahu; the last King Baahu was weak and incompetent and was defeated by neighbouring Kings and the powerful King Haihaya occupied the throne; Baahu and his wife Yadavi left for forest life. Baahu died even as Yadavi was carrying a child and prepared for 'Sahagaman' or suicide by jumping into the pyre / fire of the husband's dead body; but Yadavi was already poisoned by Baahu's second wife. Ourva Muni of Bhrugu Vamsha prevented the Sahagamana and rescued her into his 'Ashram'. It was in the Ashram that Yadavi gave birth to Sagara or Sa + Gara. The latter was brought up by the Muni, taught him Vedas and Shastras, trained him in military skills and blessed him with 'Agneyastra' (The Mantrik arrow of Fire). The accomplished Sagara defeated Haihayas, as also other opponent enemies like Shakaas, Yavanaas, Kambojaas, Paaradas and Pahlava ganas; not only he regained his throne but annexed the Kingdoms of the enemies as well. He performed Ashvamedha Yagna to celebrate his victories and deputed his sons who were sixty thousand strong along with the horse (Maharshi Ourva offered two options to the two wives of Sagara viz. Keshini and Mahati, one with a fruit with sixty thousand seeds and another with just one seed- one full of warriors and another as a Ruler; the one who accepted the big number was given a pot full of embriyos and the other had normal delivery). On way the sacrificial horse was lost; Sagara's sons dug up the sea suspecting that the animal was hidden under the Sea and thus the epithet of Samudra as 'Sagara'. The sons discovered Maharshi Kapila and as the sons harassed the Maharshi, they were all burnt off as ashes instantly excepting four. The elder son Amshuman gave birth to Dilip and the latter was blessed with **Bhagiratha** who made an all-out effort to bring Ganga River from Swarga to Bharat and the place where the ashes were lying so that the souls of his fore-fathers were redeemed; in this exercise Bhagirath went through such insurmountable obstacles at each step of his Tapasya to gain the confidence of Ganesha, Vishnu, Shiva and Devi Ganga herself! Since Bhagirath was wholly instrumental in this most distinguishing deed, Ganga Devi was also known as Bhagirathi.

The lineage of Bhagirath included Shruta, Naabhaga, Ambarisha, Sindhudwipa and Soudasa or Mitrasaha; the last mentioned King went on hunting in a forest once and killed a tiger which actually turned to be a Raakshasa who cursed the King that he would avenge his death one day. After a few years, Soudasa performed one yagna and at the end of the deed, Vasishtha Muni went out and the Raakshasa appeared as Vasishtha and instructed the King to cook 'Naramaamsa' or human meat as Naivedya or offering to the Yagna; the King got human meat cooked and meanwhile the real Vasishtha returned and on realising the naivedya was to be of human meat, cursed the King to become a Raakshasa! On realising

the truth however in his Divya Drushti' (Celestial Vision), Vasishtha reduced the time-span of the curse to twelve years only. But the Queen requested the Muni that for no fault of his, the King was being punished. The kind Vasishtha no doubt sprinkled the 'shaapa-jala' or the cursing water on his own feet instead of throwing it up on the sky apparently to reduce the severity of the curse. Meanwhile, the King became a Raakshasa and while wandering freely sought to kill a Brahmana while he was in bed with his wife; the Brahmana's wife entreated the Raakshasa and reminded him that he was the King Mitrasaha of the famed Ikshvaaku Vamsha; but still the Raaksasa ate the Brahmana and the Brahmani cursed the Raakshasa that after the latter would regain his original King's form, he would die if he tried to sleep with his queen Madayanti. After the period of curse was over, the King was reminded of the 'Shaap' of Brahmani and abstained from meeting his wife. Since there was no heir to the throne, Vasishtha provided the 'garbhadaan' as an exigency approved by 'Smritis' but since there was no birth for seven years, the Garbha was operated by a few women and the son who was born as Ashmaka or Mulaka was also called 'Naari Kavacha'. It was in this Vamsha was born Khatvanga, who helped Devas in their battle with Asuras and at the end of the battle, Devaas asked Khatvanga to ask for a boon and the King asked the Devas to convey about his life span; when he came to know of his life was only a Muhurat away, the King prayed to Bhagavan Vishnu thus: 'If only I had not considered Brahmanas as far more important than my own self and of my family; if only I had ever infringed my Kshatriya Dharma to the full letter and spirit; if only my total attention was not paid to the entirety of Devas, human beings, Pashu-Pakshi-Vrikshas and if only I had ever faltered in the pursuit of Bhagavan Achyuta and the path of seeking him and nothing else, then may I get absorbed into him!'In this context, Saptarshis affirmed: 'There never was a King like Khatvanga on Earth, who did not miss to avail even a Muhurtha-long time of his last part of life and by using his mental agility prayed to Bhagavan and achieved glimpses of his vision of the After Khatvanga, the lineage of Kings included Deerghabaahu, Raghu, Aja, Dasharatha and Shri Rama Chandra the Epic Hero who firmly stood tall in reference to the immortal Ramayana, his valiant son Kusha and so on. Such was the most glorious chapter of Surya Vamsha and Ikshwaku Vamsha which dominated the Global Scene in the History of Mankind through the two significant Satya and Treta Yugas! Besides Shri Rama, there were the memorable Amshas of Bhagavan Vishnu in the forms of Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna. During his teen-hood itself, Rama provided security to the Yagna of Sage Vishwamitra, killed Raakshasi Tataki, swept away by his high-speed arrow another Raakshasa Maricha beyond the Seas and terminated vet another Raakshasa named Subahu; he liberated Devi Ahalya from the state of a Stone and declared her as sinless; destroyed Maha Deva's Dhanush or the Big Bow; wedded Devi Sita; smashed the ego of Parashu Rama; followed the instruction of his father and took to forest life along with Devi Sita and brother Lakshmana; during the Vana Vaasa, Rama killed Viradha, Khara, Dushana, Kabandha Raakshasaas; ended Vali; made friends with Sugriva and Hanuman; built a bridge across the Ocean to save Sita and destroy Daityas headed by Ravana-Kumbhakarna-Indrajit and so on; declared Sita as pure by making her enter into Agni; and on re-entering Ayodhya assumed the status of the Soverign to rule as the unquestioned Monarch for eleven thousand years. During his time, Bharat fought three crore Gandharvas and suppressed them; Shatrughna killed the Madhuputra the Demon Lavana and established the City of Mathura and thus administered the most ideal Rama Rajya in human history!

#### Chandra Deva and Chandra Vamsha

Maharshi Parashara initiated the description of the origin of Chandra and his Vamsha. Lord Brahma conceived Maharshi Atri who performed Tapasya for thousand Divya (Divya) years and pushed up his virility upward in his physique during that period; that magnificent deposit got materialised in the form of drops from his eyes and spread out the outstanding illumination all over the Ten Directions. Realising this unprecedented development, Brahma Deva enabled it to take the Swarupa of Chandra Deva who was provided a chariot to travel across the entire Universe. Chandra was seated in the chariot and made twenty

one full circles from Prithyi to the Great Samudra. In the process, the unique radiance when it touched Bhumi created 'Anna' (Food grains) and variations like seeds, 'Aoushadhis' (herbal medicines), water and Brahmanas whom he made the Chief. He also organised a mammoth Rajasuya Yagna, which was attended by the 'Who's Who' of the Universe, besides lakhs of Brahmanas to whom 'dakshinas'- Cash money and gifts were given in abundance; nine illustrious Women of universal repute arrived to serve to Chandra viz. Sini, Kuhu, Dyuti, Pushti, Prabha, Vasu, Kirti, Dhruti and Lakshmi. At the end of the Yagna, when Chandra was given 'Avabhruta Snaan' (Sacred bathing at the time of the Principal Sacrifice), he was worshipped by all the Devas and Rishis and he displayed extraordinary humility and honesty. But in course of time, he changed his attitude due to conceit, might and prosperity and committed the greatest sin of enticing his Guru's wife Devi Tara and both of them lived together, despite Brihaspati's warnings. Devas and Maharshis tried their best to prevent such an ugly siutation. Brahma himself chided his nasty and highly immoral activities and intervened but already Tara got pregnant; when confronted by Brahma, Tara confirmed that the child to be born was of Chandra's only. Brihaspati insisted that Tara's derlivery must not be in his residence and when born, Chandra named the child as Budha whom Brahma appointed as a ful-fledged Graha (Planet) as he was a highly accomplished Vidwan of Vedas and Shastras completely devoid of Chandra's arrogance and selfishness; Budha's placement on the Sky was right opposite that of Chandra and understandably so!

Budha's son was Pururava who was a highly virtuous King and Apsara Urvashi enticed him and gave birth to Ayu, Amaavasu and six other sons. In the lineage of Amaavasu was born Jahnu who performed Sarpa Yagna; Devi Ganga approached Jahnu with a proposal to wed him and flooded the Yagna Shaala but Jahnu desired to marry Kaveri the daughter of Yavanaashva. Since Ganga insisted to marry Jahnu, he got tired of her and drank her up; the Maharshis present begged of Jahnu who agreed to revive her as his daughter and that was why the River was known as Jahnavi. Pururava's another son was Ayu and Ayu's eldest son was the famed Nahusha, who performed ninty nine Aswamedha Yagnas and nearly got the eligibility to Indratva. In fact, Brahma appointed Nahusha as proxy Indra, since Indra killed Vritrasura a Brahmana with the help of the backbone of Maharshi Dadhichi converted as Vajraadutha and disappeared as a fugitive in a lotus stem in Manasarovara. Nahusha gradually became arrogant and egoistic and asked Sachi Devi to serve him as his keep. Sachi Devi wanted to escape Nahusha and on his insistence asked Nahusha to come to her house by his own carrier as Iravata used to go to her by Indra and thus Nahusha also should come to her by his own distinct Carrier. Nahusha pushed aside a Palki of Maharshis and commanded Agastya Muni to lift the Palki quickly; Nahusha said 'Sarpa Sarpa', meaning thereby 'Quick Quick'. Agastya Muni felt that not only Nahusha blatantly took away his Palki and even had the audacity to say Sarpa Sarpa to the Muni to reach Sachi Devi's home. Agastya Muni purposively misunderstood Nahusha's 'Sarpa Sarpa' and converted Nahusha as an Ajagara (python) and dropped and cursed the arrogant Nahusha from Indraloka to the thick forests in Bhuloka. On praying the Muni, Nahusha got a reprieve in the next Yuga when Yudhister would provide relief to the Ajagara'. When in Dwapara Yuga Pandavas were suffering 'Aranyavasa' following Yudhishter's losing fake chess game and one day in the Forest life Draupadi longed for a Saugandhika flower in a pond and asked Bhima to fetch to her; it was at that time the Ajagara coiled Bhima's body and when Draupadi ran for Bhima's rescue, Yudhistara gave correct replies to the difficult questions asked by the Ajagara, then Nahusha got Shapa Vimochana (Relief from Agastya's curse). As Nahusha got his python's form, Agastya helped Sachi Devi to search for Indra who hid himself in a lotus stem in Manasa Sarovara and brought Indra back to Swarga and sought Brahma's exoneration of committing Brahmahatya dosha, on the ground that though by birth Vritrasura was a Brahmana, he was an unpardonable demon responsible to commit countless killings of of innocent persons.

Nahusha and his wife Viraja gave birth to **Yayati** among four other brothers. Yayati became the famed Emperor who defeated all the Kings in the World. Shukracharya the Danava Guru gave his daughter Devayani to Yayati who also married Sharmishtha the daughter of Vrishaparva, a Rakshasa. Devayani gave birth to Yadu and Turvasu, while Sharmishtha had Druhya, Anu and Puru. Indra was pleased to have

gifted a divine chariot with such powerful horses that Yayati was able to cover the whole world within six days and nights. Having conquered the Earth, he divided the Seven Dwipas into five divisions and distributed among his sons. As he got a boon that he could regain his youth if any of his sons would agree to exchange their youth against his olde age, he was tempted to get back his youth again, since he was getting old already. He approached his edest son **Yadu** who declined the offer and so did all other sons except **Puru** who readily agreed. Yayati cursed Yadu and the others and accepted Puru's offer which enabled him to travel around and unravel the earthly pleasures for long. But finally he returned from his travels having found out that the ephemeral joys were endless like the Agni in a homakunda assuming larger proportions as per the ghee served into it, no human being could ever be satisfied with food, gold, ornaments and women and the more that a human being got lured into the whirlpool of life the worse that he would be dragged into it.

Najaatu kaamah kaamaanaamupa bhogena shaamyati,

Havishaa krishna vatmatmeva bhuya yaivaabhi vadbhutey/

Thus he realised that there could never be a better satisfaction than that of a spiritual life. By so confessing, he returned his youth to Puru and left for Vanaprastha / forest life in seek of Paramatma.

Kartaveeryarjuna who too became a powerful Chakravarti having secured thousand mighty hands from Indra Deva. He proved to be an ideal ruler providing shield and contentment to his citizens that was rare in human history. His valour was such that in an encounter with Ravanasura the Epic Villian of Ramayana, he imprisoned the Asura and Maharshi Pulastya had to request him to be released! But in course of time, Kartaveerya became too vainglorious and killed Jamadagni Maharshi since he did not give away his kamadhenu. Meanwhile, Agni Deva approached Kartaveerya to let him satisfy his thirst and gift a huge forest so that he could consume it; unfortunately for Agni and Kartaveerya the Ashram of Vasistha Maharshi was burnt off too and the Maharshi gave a curse to Kartaveerya that soon enough there would be an incarnation of Vishnu as Parashurama who would not only kill Kartaveerya but also exterminate the contempory Kshatriya Kings who had become so haughty and cruel towards Rishis, Brahmanas and the Subjects in general. Indeed the Curse of Vasishtha became a reality and Parashurama had uprooted the Kshatriya Kings in as many as twenty seven battles!

King Yadu's son was Kroshti and the latter's son was Shashabindu who was the famed foremost Chakravarti of Fourteen Maha Ratnas viz.

Chakram Ratho Manih khadgascharma Rarnam cha Panchamam,

Keturnidhischa Saptaiva Praanaheenaani chakshutey/

Bharyaa Purohitaschaiva Senaani Rathakruccha yah,

Pathyaswa kalaabhischeti Praaninah keertitaah/

Chaturdesheti Ratnaani sarveshaam Chakra -vartinaam/

( A Chakravarti is defined as one who possesses Chakra-Ratha-Mani- Charma (Shield)-Dhwaja -Nithi or Treasure, besides Stree-Purohitha-Senapati-Rathi or Charioteer-Padaati or Foot Soldiers-Ashwaarohi and Gajaarohi). Shashabindu had a lakh of wives and ten lakh sons!

It was in this lineage was born **Satrajit** who was an unparalelled worshipper of Surya Bhagavan and after considerable devotion of the Sun God, Satrajit was gifted 'Syamantakamani' by Surya Deva; the Dwarakavasis felt that Surya was descending in Dwaraka and such was the effulgence of the Syamantakamani as Satrajit returned to Dwaraka. The Shyamantaka yielded eight 'bhaaraas' (ten kg.) of gold a day. Its magnificence was such that in the entire Region in which it was situated, there was no fear of Roga-Anavrishti-Sarpa-Agni- Chora-Durbhiksha! Satyajit was overwhelmed and desired to share the

joy with Krishna whom he visited at His abode. Jokingly, Krishna asked Satrajit to spare the jewel for some time and the same was promptly declined.

Satrajit's brother, Prasena, wore the rare jewel and visited hunting to a forest. A lion killed him and 'Jambavanta' the illustrious Bear of Ramayana killed the lion in turn and took it to his cave to let his baby play with it. As Prasena did not return from the forest for a few days, Satrajit asked Krishna whether he knew any thing about Prasena as he did not return back. There were stray doubts expressed in the neighbourhood about Krishna's credibility in the context. Krishna desired to vindicate His position and proceeded to the forest visited by Prasena and found his dead body and also that of a lion. He traced the foot steps of an animal to a cave and heard a lullaby saying:

Simha prasenamavadhit –simho Jambavataa hatah,

Sukumaaraka Maa rodeesteva hyosha Syamantakah/

(A lion had killed Prasena and jambavaan killed the lion, Sukumara! this Syamantaka Mani is yours only!) As Krishna found a baby playing with the jewel, he entered the cave. A huge bear entered and a fierce battle ensued for twenty one days. As Krishna defeated the Bear, he felt that an ordinary human being could not be defeated against him and said: Bhagavan! You are invincible by Devatas, Asuras, Gandharvas, Yakshas and Rakshasaas and what are ordinary animals like us; indeed you are of the Amsha of Shri Rama who was the incarnation of Vishnu! Thus eventually Jambavan recognised Krishna and made intensive prayers with humility and devotion he returned to Krishna the precious jewel as also offered his beautiful daughter Jambavati in wedding. On return from the forest, Krishna returned the jewel to Satrajit, who felt humiliated by suspecting Krishna and as an atonement returned the Jewel and requested Him to accept Satyabhama too as His spouse. But, three suitors of Satyabhama, viz. Akrura, Kritavarma and Shatadhanvi who were for long desirous of wedding her were highly disappointed as Satrajit gave hopes; they conspired to kill Satrajit and also secure the Shamantakamani. Shatadhanvi killed Satrajit and stole the Mani. That was the time when Krishna was away when Duryodhana and the other Kauravas were hatching to kill Pandavas by burning them in a lac house and made plans to save them. Satyabhama at once left for Varanavata to convey the news of Satrajit's murder; Krishna assured his newly married spouse that for sure he would avenge Satrajit's death. Krishna took Balarama into confidence and along with the brother, Krishna chased Shatadhanvi. The latter approached Kritavarma and Akrura but both of them refused to help him for fear of Krishna and Balarama. Shatadhanvi then requested Akrura to at least hide the Syamantaka Mani and the latter agreed on the condition that Akrura should never claim the jewel back; having given away the Mani to Akrura, Shatadhanvi ran away and Krishna and Balarama chased despite Balarama's warning that Statadhanvi might not have stolen the Mani, after all! Krishna then stopped the chariot for a while and having asked Balarama to wait, ran by foot through lanes and byelanes and finally cought hold of Shatadhanvi and killed him. But the body search of Shatadhanvi could not reveal the Mani. On return to Balarama, Krishna told that he killed Shatadhanvi unnecessarily. Balarama became furious at Krishna for suspecting Sthatadhanvi and in anger left Krishna and instead of going to Dwaraka left for Videha nagara of Janaka and stayed there; during his stay there Balarama taught Duryodhana the 'Gada-Yuddha' or the Battle of Mace and relented to return to Mathura after three years. Meanwhile, Krishna was on the pursuit of Shyamanta Jewel: Krishna, Balaram and Ugrasena the Yadava elders consulted each other and wondered why the problems of diseases, serpents, and rainlessness were happening in the absence of the Syamantaka mani in Dwaraka, while where-ever Akrura's father the Bhoja King named Swyapalka was there, the Place was diseaseless, full of timely rains and of good crops! Yadava chiefs therefore invited Akrura and as soon as he arrived, there were rains, good crops and happiness. This gave the suspicion that Akrura was hiding the Mani and Krishna and other Yadavas confronted Akrura and the latter finally blurted out that the Mani was in his personal possession and Shatadhanva gave it to him before his death and who ever could claim it might as well take it! Yadava Chiefs argued that the jewel was basically the property of Satyabhama, but she said that she was the wife of Krishna but Krishna said that he was the husband of sixteen thousand and eight

wives after all and thus finally it was decided that the Syamantaka Mani might be awarded to Akrura; Shri Krishna was thus rid of the suspicion of stealing the Mani finally! Maharshi Parashara stated:

Ityetat Bhagavato midhyaabhishasti lakshanam yah smarati na tasya kadaachidalam paapi midhyaabhishastirbhavati avyaakhilendriyraschaakhila paapamoksha mavaapnoti/

(The unwanted suspicion which Krishna suffered led to a black mark on his character or even smaller or bigger such blames would never ever happen to any person reading about the above incident! Such persons would also be freed from charges and got rid of sins!)

In the illustrious Kuru Vamsha, King Pradip had three sons viz. Devapi, Shantanu and Baahmika and since Devapi went away to forests, Shantanu became the King who was acclaimed as the one who when an old person touched would became youthful; he was thus called Shantanu who bestowed Shanti Laabha or the Gain of Peace!

Yam yam karaabhyaam sprushyati jeernam youvanametishaha,

Shantim chaapnoti yenagruyaam karmanaa tena Shaantanuhu/

King Shantanu bemame a key figure in the long ancestry of Kuru Vamsha and bore the brunt of the dynasty. Even as he took over the Kingship, there was severe famine for several years but as the Brahmanas first asked Shantanu to step down and offered the Kingship to his elder brother as per Scriptures and as he refused then only the Kingship was re-conferred on him.

King Shantanu and Devi Ganga gave birth to Deva vrata, popularly called Bhishma Pitamaha. He was so named since took a unique vow of celibacy and against the institution of marriage to facilitate the wedding of his father's deep desire to wed Satyavati alias 'Matsyagandhi' renamed by Maharshi Parashara as 'Yojanagandhi'; there the Maharshi took fancy for her while crossing a River as she-a fisherwoman- yielded to the Maharshi's request and he granted the boons to her that her body smell of fish would change to that of a Yojana-wide fragrance, that her virginity would be intact and that she would be the Queen a famous King. As a result of this happening, a Vishnu Swarupa was born to Satyavati and Parashara as the most reputed Maharshi Veda Vyasa who had the singular distinction of scripting Ashtaadasha Maha Puranas, countless other Scriptures and of course the Immotal Epic, Maha Bharata. It was against this background that Shantanu fell for Satyavati who insisted that in the event of her wedding to the King Shantanu, neither his elderson Devavrata nor his progeny should claim rights of Kingship to the throne of Kaurava dynasty and thus the fierce vow taken by Satyavrata which got him the renown of Bhishma. Subsequently, Shantanu's son was named Vichitraveerya died an untimely death and as there was a threat of non-incumbency to the dynasty throne, Bhishma was invited to copulate his cousin's wives as per the exceptionally approved Nivoga Practice in vogue then; as a result, Vichitraveerya's widows Ambika and Ambalika begot Dhritarashtra (born blind as Ambika closed her eyes in the union out of fright of Veda Vyas) and Pandu (since Ambalika got pale out of horror at the sight of the Maharshi); both the women planned to depute their maid and normal and virtuous Vidura was born to her in the third attempt). Dhritarashtra married Gandhari and gave birth to hundred sons headed by Duryodhana and Pandu's wife Kunti gave birth to Yudhishtara from the Amsha of Yama Dharma, Bhima from the Amsha of Vasudeva and Arjun from the Amsha of Indra while Kunti bore a child even before her marriage by the Amsha of Surya Deva but out of fear left the child in a floating basket in a water flow which was found by a childless woman called Radha and brought him up thus known as Radheya or Karna since he was born with Karna-kundalas or ear-rings. As the Kauravas and Pandavas grew up with mutual ill feelings, fanned by Dhritarashtra on one side and Shri Krishna siding the virtuous Pandayas on the other, an inevitable Maha Bharata Battle climaxed and ended with bloodbath of Good and Evil forces with Krishna Bhagavan assumed a historic role, exemplifying his assurance of:

Paritraanaaya Saadhunam Vinaashaaya cha dushkrutaam,

Dharma Samsthaapanaarthaaya Sambhavaami Yugey Yugey!

### Shri Krishna Charitra: His birth, Miracles, account of his progeny and Niryana

As the most dreaded Daitya Kalanemi ruled over the entire Martyaloka and harassed the entire Public day and night, Bhagavan Vishnu terminated him but he came back in his next birth as Kamsha the son of Ugrasena; it was at that juncture there were a huge stock of Rakshasaas like Arishta, Dheniuka, Keshi, Pralamba, Naraka, Sunda, and Banasura the son of Bali Chakravarti and most of the Evil was spread over as Rulers of several Kingdoms. Devi Bhumi was unable to the bear the brunt of such Evil Forces and made a reverential appeal to all the Devas and through them to Brahma Deva and the latter made a powerful appeal to Bhagvan Vishnu to save the Earth which was being crushed by extraordinary pressure on account of the Evil as follows:

Dwi Vidye twamaamnaaya Paraa chai Paraa tathaa,

tha yeva Bhavato rupey Murthaamritaatmakey Prabho/

Dwi Brahmaani twanoyoti Sthulaatman sarva Sravavit,

Shabdabrahma param chaiva Brahma Brahmamasya yat/

Rigvedastwam Yajurvedassaama vedastwadharvanah,

Sikshaa Kalpo Niruktam cha Chaando Jyotisha -mevacha/

Itihaasa Puraaneycha tathaa Vyakaranam Prabho,

Meemaasam Nyayashaastram Cha Dharmashaastraanyadhokshaja/

Aatmaatma deha gunavadvichaaraachari yaduuchah,

Tadyapa dyapatey naanyadadhyaatma Swarupavat/

Twamavyakta nirdeshshyamachintya naamavarnavat,

Apaani paadarupamcha shuddham nityam paratparam/

Shrunoshya karnaha parisashyasi twama chakshureko bahu rupa rupah,

Apaadahasto javano graheetaa twam vetsi sarvam na cha Sarva Vedyah/

Anoraneeyaam samasataswa rupam twaam pashyato-jnaana nivrutti rugnayaa,

Dheerasya dheerasya bibharti naanyadwarenya rupaatparatah Paraatman/

Twam Vishwa naabhir bhuvanasya goptaa Sarvaani Bhutaani tawaantaraani,

Yadbhuta bhavyam yadanoraneeyah Pumaamstwamekah prakruteyh parastaat/

Ekaschardhvaa Bhagavaan hutaasho varchovibhutim Jagato dadaasi,

Twam Vishwataschakshurananta murtey tredhaapadam twam nidadhaasi dhaatah/

Yadhaagnireko bahudhaa samidhyatey Vikaara bhedairavikaara rupah,

Tathaa bhavaan sarvagatairavi- kaara rupah,

Tathaa bhayaan sarya gataika rupee Rupaanya seshaanyanrupushyatisha/

Ekam twamagryam paramam padam yatpashyanti twaam Surayo jnaanadrushyam,

Twattho naanyad kinchidasti swarupam yadwaa bhutam yaccha bhavyam Paraatman/

Vyaktaa- vyakta swarupastwam samashthi vyashthi rupavaan,

Sarvajnaassarvavitsarva shakti jnaana balardhimaan/

Anyunaschaapya vriddhischa swaadheeno naadimaanvashi,

Klamatan-draabhayakrodha kaamaadibhira samyutah/

Niravadyaha Parah Praapterniraadhi -shtoksharah kramah,

Sarveswarah paraadhaaro dhaamnaam dhaamaatmakokshayah/

Sakalaavaranaateeta niraalambana bhavana/

Maha Vibhuti samsthaana namastey Purushottama/

Naakaaranaatkaaranaadhwa Kaarana kaaranaatra cha,

Shareera grahanam vaapi Dharmatraanaaya kevalam/

(Prabho! You are beyond the reach of Veda's voice; you are 'Para'and 'Aparaa'as both these Vidyaas are yours; you are Murta or the Form and Amurta or Formless; you are the Tiniest and at the same time the most Enormous; the Sarva, the Sarvajna; you are both Shabda Brahma and Para Brahma; you are Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Saama Veda and Atharva Veda; You are the Vedangas like Siksha, Kalpa, Nirukti, Chhanda, Jyotisha Shaastra, the Itihasa, Purana, Vyakarana, Meemaamsa, Nyaaya and Dharma Shaastra; you are the Jeevaatma, Paramatma, Sthula-Sukshma Deha-Avyakta-Tatwamasi Vaakya; you are Anirvaachya, Naama varna rahita, Rupa rahita, Shuddha, Sanaatana, Paraapara; you are capable of hearing without ears, seeing without eyes; the Single but many; the speediest without feet and hands and unmindfully omni-scient; you are the gravitative power and saviour of the total Universe and the Universe itself is absorbed in you; the Unique Entity with minute knowledge of the happenings on your mental radar; you are the four faced Agni illuminating and facilitating Samsaara; you are the Trivikramaa keeping stakes / feet in the Three Worlds; Sarvajna, Sarva Saakshi, Sarva Shaktimaan, Sampurna Jnaana-Bala-Ishyraya; Ever-Cheerful and Joyous; Vridhhi rahita, Swaadheena, Anaadi, Jitendriya, deviod of fear, anger, desire, tiresomeness; you are Anindya or unrebukable, Niradhara, Avarana Shunya or limitless; and you are the root of Kaarana or the Cause and the Formless excepting for Dharma Raksha!). In response to the Stuti by Brahma, Bhagavan assured that two of his 'Keshas'-one Shewta or white one and another a Shyama or dark complexion would be pulled out to soon descend as his 'Amshas' or incarnations on Earth and lighten its weight by uprooting all the Evil Forces and advisedy the Devas also assume appropriate Rupas as human beings inn the task of destroying the Rakshasas and humans in the form of Rakshasas.Bhagavan further instructed Yoga maya to perform a series of deeds including the birth of six sons to Devaki [they were Kalanemi's sons devoted to Vishnu and the father cursed the sons that they would be be killed by them in his hands in the next birth as per 'Harivamsha'] As King Kamsa was obsessed with the warning of Sage Narada that the eighth child of Devaki would kill him, he imprisoned Devaki and his brother-in-law who agreed to deliver all his progeny as soon as they would be born, Kamsa spared killing them and merely imprisoned them. Now, the game plan that Vishnu explained to Yogamaya was as follows: She would transfer Devaki's seventh son who would be of Sesha's Amsha as an embriyo into the Garbha of Vasudeva's second wife Rohini so that the Public would believe that out of fear Devaki's seventh child was a miscarriage but that Sesha-amsha would be known as Samkarshana as he would be implanted or attracted to Rohini's garbha; the Ashtami Putra would be Bhagavan himself born to Devaki but Yogamaya would be conceived to Yashoda; there would be a transfer of Bhagavan Krishna by Vasudeva to Yashoda and the girl child Yogamaya would be brought back to Mathura in the prison of Devaki; as in the past, the Yoga maya, the so called Eighth child thus transferred would fly away and warn Kamsa that the real Bhagavan was already born and soon kill Kamsa.Bhagavan blessed Yogamaya to undertake the deeds assigned and Indra would take her as his own sister; she would kill a number of Rakshasaas like Shumbha and Nishumbha; she would be known as Bhuti, Sannati, Kshaanti, Kaanti, Akasha, Prithwi, Dhruti, Lajja, Pushti, Usha and various other Shaktis in the Universe.

As per the plan indicated by Bhagavan Vishnu, he was born to Devaki Devi and along with Vasudeva gave his appearance in his full glorious form with four hands armed with Shankha-Chakra-Saranga and Gada for a while before taking the form of a boy; the violent winds sweeping Mathura herebefore bacame cool and calm by the midnight hour; Gandharvas sang tuneful hymns; Devatas showered celestial flowers from the heavens; clouds made lightenings and mild thunders from the sky; Vasudeva transferred the child to Gokula into the house of Yashoda and Nanda wading across the River Yamuna making way during the rain while Sesha Naga provided cover; and Vasudeva brought the female child Yogamaya from the bed of Yashoda who was unconscious back to the prison in Mathura. Meanwhile, the Security personnel of the prison of Devaki-Vasudeva were lulled to deep sleep till the 'Operation of Child Transfers', ie Bhagavan Krishna to Yashoda's bed and of Yogamaya to that of Devaki's. Kamsa reached the prison and despite the wailing protests of his sister sought to toss the child against a stone as he did to seven other babies in the past, but the child flew from his hands and appeared on the sky as a Mayashakti with eight hands and shouted at Kamsa:

Kim mayaa kshiptayaa Kamsa jaato yastwaam vadhishyati?

Sarvaswa bhuto Devaanaamaaseen mrutyuh puraa sa tey,

Tadetat samrpadhaaryaashu hitamaatmanah/

(Hey Kamsa! What is the use of your wasted breath in trying to toss me; your death would take place with certainty soon as the incarnation of Vishnu has already been born and would kill you again as you were the Kalanemi Daitya in your previous birth; so better plan soon to save your skin!) Having said, Devi Maha Maya disappeared. Kamsa then thought that there was no point in keeping Devaki and Vasudeva in prison and called for an urgent conference of his Daitya Allies like Keshini, Dhenuka, Putana, Arishta and others to chalk out an action plan to the Boy was was born and addressed them as follows: 'Devas headed by Indra are seeking to kill me and us headed by Jarasandha; we had already witnessed the trials of Devatas in several of battles in the past, when they could never show their chests but only their backs! Had Indra forgotten the recent incident of his trial to stop rains in our Kingdoms and we forced the clouds to burst out and we had plentiful of rains and crops!

Amareshu mamaavajnaa jaayatey Daityapungavaah!

Haasyam mey jaayatey Veeraasteshu yatna pareshvapi/

Tathaapi khalu dushtaanaam teshaamapyadhikam mayaa,

Apakaaraaya Daityendra hyataneeyam Duraatmanaam/

(I feel sorry for the desperation with which the Devas are once again trying to challengey us; it is highly amusing that they desire to kill me! In any case we have to be alert any way and double up our efforts!)

In right earnest, the efforts of the Daityas to demolish Krishna even as a toddler were planned and executed; Kamsa first despatched Mayavi **Putana** in disguise as a pretty woman to breast-feed poisonous milk to Krishna but quite playfully Krishna bit her nipple as she was instantly killed; the entire Gokula was aghast as to how the Toddler had a miraculous escape and Nanda prayed to Bhagavan to save the child from all kinds of mishaps saying:

Twaam paatu dikshu Vaikuntho Vidiksho M adhsudanah,

Hrishikembarey Bhumow rakshatu twaam Maheedharah/

(May Bhagavan protect the child from all the directions of North-South-East and West; may Madhusudana save the child from the Vidashaas of North East-South East-SouthWest and North West; may Hrishikesha guard the child from the Sky and may Adi Sesha Deva shield the boy from Earth!)

There have been a series of miracles that followed the Putana incident from time to time as the two brothers were growing in Yashoda-Nanda's house. One day Madhusudana was kept under a **Shakata** 

(Cart) in the backyard of their house and the child apparently cried for milk and threw up his legs while lying down and the cart was pushed up and got broken into pieces; the children around witnessed that the child did threw up the cart with his feet! The parents wondered as to how a child could do it! They performed a Puja with flowers-fruits-curd and 'Akshatas' or rice grains to ward off any Evil eye! After a few days Gargaachaarya performed Namakarana; the younger one as Krishna and the elder as Balarama. In course of time, the boys were able to crawl and disappear amid the flock of cattle and apply cow dung on their bodies; both Yashoda and Rohini were fed up and tied to a heavy stone used for pounding grains which was kept in between two huge Yamalarguna Trees in the backyard and got busy with their houshold chores. Suddenly, there were heavy sounds as the two huge trees fell down and the neighbours witnessed that two Celesitial Beings emerged from the trees and flew away! Krishna was called Damodara as there was a scar around his waist due to the black mark of the rope with which Yashoda tied Krishna to the heavy stone.

As queer incidents like the killing of Putana, lifting of cart, sudden sand storm and uprooting of huge trees were happening, Nanda desired to shift to **Brindavana** from Gokula and made the entire population agree to the arrangement. All the 'Vraja vaasis' shifted to the new place and in course of time, the boys came of teen age, adopted distinct dress code, sported a golden headgear with peacock feathers and flute and excelled themselves as unique flutists especially as cowherds in the large company of Gopas and Gopikas exchaging practical pranks and mischief. One day, Krishna went with his friends without Balarama and while wandering came across a frightful water body known as the place in which Kaliya Serpent and its family stayed; the companions of Krishna suggested that the particular pond should be avioded as the water in it was highly poisonous as thirsty human beings, cattle and even birds would die instantly. But Krishna never heeded the warnings and from a tree top on the banks of the pond dived into it even with full awareness that the tree was burnt due to the poisonous flames that emitted from the pond. Gopala Ganas raised a hue and cry and informed one and all in Brindavan and the entire public got collected around the lake. Nanda Kumar was alost in dismay while Yashoda and quite a few Gopikas were readying to leap into the water, but Balarama cooled down the agitated relatives and the public stating that Krishna was not an ordinary human being and that he was Bhagavan Vishnu himself; he conveyed to Krishna as follows:

Kimidam Devadevesha bhaavoyam maanushastwayaa,

Vyajyatetyananta -maatmaanam kimanantam na vetsi yat/

Twameva jagato naabhiraraanaamiva samshrayah,

Kartaapahartaa paataa cha Trailokyam twam trayeemayah/

Jagatyartham Jagannaatha bhaaraavataraneycchayaa/---

Darshato Maanushyo bhaavo darshitam baalachaapalam,

Tadayam damyataam Krishna dushtaatmaa dasghanaayudhah/

(Hey Devadeveshwara! Are you not aware that you are Ananta; and if so why are you displaying the Manava Bhaava or the characteristics of human beings! You are yourself the ultimate refuge of the Universe as its Creator-Presever-Terminator just as the axis of a wheel and its spokes! Indeed you are the embodiment of Three Lokaas and Three Vedas; Jagannaatha! You have assumed human form to demolish the Evil Forces and lighten the burden on Earth. Krishna! It is time that you discard this childishness and human features and quickly control the poisonous teeth of the cruel serpent once for all!) There inside the poisonous pond the whole family of Kaliya surrounded Krishna and the enormous serpent sought to encircle his body; but Krishna smiled even as what Balarama said and fisted and pounded the most obnoxious creature in such a way that he held his tail with one hand and jumped up on its hoods and compressed them with mighty force; as Krishna brought the serpent in total control the latter obeyed Jagannatha and the unusual spectacle of floating and dancing Krishna atop the creature's hoods delighted

the entire Vraja Praja! The poisonous water of the pond was full of Kaliya's red blood and his wives and children begged of Krishna not to kill it. The humiliated Kalia realised the magnificence of Krishna and extolled him stating:

Yasmaad Brahmas cha Rudrascha Chandrendramarudashwinah,

Vasuvascha sahaadityaistasya stoshyaami kinvaham?

(Even Brahma, Rudra, Chandra, Indra, Marudganaas, Ashvini Kumaaraas, Vasuganas and Adityas could not commend you adequately, how could I pay tributes to your excellence!) Then Krishna instructed Kaliya and his large family to leave the pond at once and assured that his formidable enemy Garudmaan would recognise his footprints and let them pass to reach the Sea in which they could reside fearlesly for long time.

After the Kaliya incident, there were the exterminations of **Dhenukasura** who entered the group of cows which Krishna took out along with Balarama and other Gopas as also of **Pralambasura** who quietly joined the Gopas and participated in a game of carrying on his back the elder brother Balarama and flying him away but the latter suppressed the Asura by his ever increasing body weight and finally the Asura collapsed to death. There were quite a few other killings by Krishna of many Asuras in an exercise of lightening the evil forces on Earth; Vrishabasura was externinated, Daitya **Keshi** was despatched to hell and scores of other Daityas were slaughterd. Then there was the anger of Indra who was not traditionally worshipped by Vraja vaasis on the arrival of Sharat Ritu but as per the advice of Krishna they did not; Indra's fury resulted in torrential rains and washed out Vraja Bhumi but Krishna lifted **Govardhana Mountain** by his little finger to protect the Gokula Praja and provided shield to them all and there by destroying the ego of Indra. But Indra's fury was only to popularise Krishna's magnificence by creating an opportunity that Krishna indeed was Supreme. During the times that followed, the Gopikas of Vraja displayed intense attachment and infatuation for Krishna that culminated in Raasa-leelas or ecstatic dances in groups in which there were as many Krishnas as Gopikas on one to one count besides a Unique Krishna belonging to one and all!

Ramsa and made a friendly call to the King. He conveyed to Kamsa the various deeds of Krishna and Balarama who now entered the teens and that it might be a good idea to invite them to Mathura to meet their parents and celebrate their trip to Mathura. The evil-minded Kamsa felt that as the Vrja Brothers might become more powerful and difficult to destroy by the day, he planned for a friendly trip to Mathura and asked Akrura the Yadava Elder to personally visit Gokula-Brindavan and escort Krishna and Balarama, ostensibly to attend a Dhanush Yajna on the next Chaturdashi and also enjoy the celebrations like 'Malla Yuddhhas' (wrestling matches) by the notorious Chanura and Mushtikaas. Kamsa day-dreamt that after killing Balarama Krishnas followed by those of Nanda and Vasudeva and his foolish and timid father Ugrasena now in prison, he would annexe Gokula-Brindavan easily and enjoy the property of cows and grains! Akrura left for Brindavana and invited Krishna-Balarama to Mathura to attend the Yagna and Celebrations; their parents were grieved; Vrajavaasis were saddened; Gopaas were upset; Gopikas were alarmed at the absence. As he approached Gokula, Akrura took bath in River Yamuna and happened to meet Krishna and Balarama in person as they too were whiling on the river banks along with their pals; he was in trance in visioning Krishna and broke out in a spontaneous 'Stuti':

Sanmaarta rupeno -chintya Mahimney Parataney,

Vyaapiney naiakarupaika swarupaaya namo namah/----

Om namo Vaasudevaaya Namassankarshanaahya cha,

Pradyumnaaya Namastubhya maniruddhaaya tey Namah!

(My hearty salutations to you the Sanmaatra Swarupa, Achintya Mahima, Paramatma, Sarwavyaapi, Aneka Rupaa due to Karanaas / Causes but basically of a Singular / Unique Form--- Namo Vaasudeva, Namo Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha!).

As Bhagavan Krishna and Balarama entered Mathura, they asked Akrura to leave them alone as they preferred to walk up by the 'Raja Maarga' to enjoy their interaction with the Public; the passers by were seeing and conversing among themselves in small groups in low tones. Their first encounter was with a Rajaka or Washerman who happened to be from the Royal Palace of King Kamsa; as the brothers were attracted to the colourful dresses, they asked the Rajaka to give them a few nice dresses but the haughty washerman talked rudely and arrogantly which provoked Krishna to beat him and pulled him down on the ground and helped themselves a few dresses of their choice. A little ahead, another person kept on staring at the boys and asked them nicely as to where were they coming from; he said that he was a Maali or a flower seller and invited them to his home nearby and offered them nice flower garlands; Krishna was pleased at his pleasant conduct and gave him the boon that all along his life, the Maali would be happy, prosperous and well-contented! The next encounter was with a Kubja or a short and deformed girl and Krishna asked her as to where was she going and what was she carrying; as she said she was carrying Gandha or sandal wood paste, Krishna wished to provide the fragrant paste to him and in turn, he lifted up by her chin and straightened her up by pressing her feet and she was made straight and shapely at once! She invited the boys to visit her home nearby where she offered them nice scents and aromatic pastes; such were the memorable encounters that Krishna and Balarama had while proceding to the 'Yaga Shaala' at the end of the Raja Marga. Inside the Yaga shaala there was a massive **Deva Dhanush** and Krishna broke it playfully as the thundering sound was heard all over; as he heard this huge sound, Kamsa realised that the boys had arrived and that they would have broken the Dhanush! He called Chanura and Mushtika and said that the next evening Krishna and Balarama would invite at the Yaaga Shaala to a friendly wrestling and that they should somehow kill them by giving an impression to the Public that the killing was accidental. Next evening the boys arrived at the Yaga Shaala to participate the Royal Celebrations and the Trainer of a huge rouge elephant called **Kuvalkayapeeda** readied the animal to lift up the boys at the Entrance Gate and trample them; Krishna-Balaramas on arrival understood the intention of the elephant and as it lifted them up they landed on its back and pounded it with their fists, twisted its tail and trunk and felled the animal down with a thud and it breathed its last. The entire audience especially the Yadavas cheered up the boys with resounding applause and the men and women in the Sports Arena loudly chattered about the ecscapades of the Boys ever since their arrival at Mathura including their encounters with the Rajaka, Maali, Kubja, Dhanush and the Rougue Elephant; they kept on discussing about his miracle acts of killing various Asuras, lifting Govardhana Mountain and the juicy tales of Raasa Leelaas! Meanwhile Kamsa announced that the duo of Krishna an Balarama would participate in friendly wrestling matches with the fearful wrestlers like Chanura and Mushtika. There were mixed feelings in the audience that such 'Malla Yuddhas' between the untrained teens and expert wrestlers were not just good jokes but of evil intentions and a few others felt that such deeds were indeed meant for fun. The wrestling bouts looked funny and comical in the beginning but as Chanura and Mushtika looked serious, the atmosphere became tense and as the tiny boys were lifted by the mountainlike professionals, the instrumental music in the theatre stopped and every one in the audience were holding their breath. Balarama shouted to Govinda: Victory be with you Krishna! Kill Chanura at once! Krishna sat on the Danava's shoulders and gave a mighty blow on his head which was smashed and the tall and powerful Chanura lost his balance and crashed on the ground with a thud and died instantly! It was then the turn of Balarama to hit on Mushtika's head, stomach and knees and the latter too was shattered. Krishna then took full control of another Malla Raja called Toshkala and both the brothers surrounded him and simultaneously punched and whacked him and that colossal wrestler too went the same way to death; the pack of other werestlers in the arena ran for their lives and there were such shouts and hoots from the audience cheering and acclaiming Krishna and Balarama with victory. As there was ruckus and uproar in the Hall, Yadavas went wild with ecstacy and other citizens of Mathura too were confident that the last hour of the tyrant King Kamsa had arrived. Kamsa shouted at the soldiers that let

the 'Gwaala baalakaas' be chased and hounded; a smiling Vaasudeva leapt up on the Platform where Kamsa sat with his Security Chiefs, dragged him down to the Wrestling Arena and overpowered him; thus the most heinous villian of the Era was exterminated once for all.

Then Krishna and Balarama prostrated before Vasudeva and Devaki who were also in the audience and the latter embraced the dear sons with affection on one hand and unlimited devotion on the other. Vasudeva addressed Krishna as follows:

Praseeda seedataam datto Devaanaam yo varah Prabho,

Tathaavayoh prasaadena krutodhharassa Keshava/

Araadhito yadbhagavaan -avateerno gruhey mama,

Durvrutta nidhanaaryaaya tenanah paavanti kulam/---

Mayaavimohitadrushaa tanayo mameti Kamsadbhayam krutamapaasta bhayaatimteevram,

Neetesi Gokulamaraati bhayaakunena Vriddhim gatosmi mama naasti mamatvameesha/

Karmaani Rudramarudaswi shata krutaanaam Sadhyaani yasya na bhavanti nireekshitaani,

Twam Vishnureesha jagataamupakaara hetoh Praaptosi nah paragato vigato hi mohah/

(Prabho! Be kind to us; the benediction bestowed by you to Devataas that you would be born to us was amply fulfilled. You had recognised my worship and were born in our household to destroy evil forces on Earth and indeed my Vamsha had since been purified!---We have been in this Maya or Illusion that you are our son and was thus rattled from the fear of Kamsa and took you to Gokula; since you had grown up there and thus we now do not have that extreme obsession for you; so far we have witnessed such impossible deeds by you which were not conceivable of Rudra, Marudganas, Ashvini Kumars or Indra; Now my Moha / passion for you as a son is not there as now I realise you are Bhagavan Himself to protect the World from the Evil).

After prostrating before the parents and receiving their blessings, Krishna and Balarama greeted Yadava elders; consoled Kamsa's wives; released Kamsa's father **Ugrasena** from shackles and appointed him as the King; made Sudharma as the Raja Guru; requested Sandipa Muni to perform the 'Upanayana Samskara' of themselves; and entered into the house of Guru **Sandipa Muni** for tutelage for Veda Parayana, Astramantras and Astra prayoga, besides the nuances of Dhanurvidya -all in just forty six days!

Sandipanir –asambhaavyam tayoh karmaatimaanusham,

Vichintya tou tadaameyney praaptou Chandra Divaakarou!

(Sandipa Muni realised that such impossible and para-human abilities were displayed by Krishna-Balaramaas as though Surya and Chandra were their pupils in his house!). After their studies, Krishna and Balarama offered **Guru Dakshina** and the Muni wailed for their son dead in the Ocean at Prabhasa as he was devoured by a Demon Panchajanya ( who had the shape of a conch shell). The boys then entered the Ocean, killed the Demon and by blowing a conch shell made of the skeleton of the Demon entered 'Samyamani' the Abode of Yamadhararaja and brought the dead boy alive and gave the Guru Dakshina to the Muni and his wife!

There after they visited **Uddhava**, their childhood friend and nephew, requested him to visit the Vraja places and meet their parents and well wishers as also the Gopikas and narrate to them an account of their activities at Mathura. Uddhava on reaching the Places met them all, and narrated the happenings. He returned back, after an emotional and tearful send-off with return messages from all of them, especially Gopikas.

The two Queens of the deceased Kamsa, Asti and Prapthi, approached their father Jarasandha, the highly powerful Monarch of Magadha and asked for retribution for the 'misdeeds' of Balarama and Krishna.

With a huge army under him, **Jaraasandha** attacked Mathura with some twenty three Akshouhinis of infantry, cavalry and elephantry and challenged Krishna and Balarama. But as Krishna was fighting the massive opponents even with a minor number of Army, he asked for his (Vishnu's) Shaaranga Dhanush with limitless arrows and his Gada /Mace called Kaumudi while Blalarama recalled his Hala / plough and Musala; Jarasandha and his huge army was shattered into pieces, bur Jarasandha was spared so that he could return back by regrouping his men and material. Indeed he returned back again and again, getting routed for seventeen times. When Jarasandha was expected to attack for the eighteenth time, - his allies viz. Yavanas, the Mleccha foreign forces- headed by **Kalayavana** attacked Mathura with thirty million barbarian soldiers of desperation and cruelty. Krishna and Balarama felt that while they would fight with Yavanas, Jarasandha's army might simultaneously harm Yadus. Thus they planned to build a new place, named Dwaraka (with twelve Gates) and asked Visvakarma, the Architect of Devatas who created a beautiful and well structured fortress City touching the Western Sea. By means of His mystic Yoga Maya (Power of Illusion), the Citizens of Mathura got transferred, lock-stock and barrel-overnight to **Dwaraka** and found themselves in luxurious palaces.

Even as Balarama was defending Mathura, Krishna attracted the attention of Kalayavana, passing singly by foot, by the Main Gate of Mathura. Kalayavana followed Krishna closely but always unreachable with some distance apart and led the Mlechha into a mountain cave. Thinking that Krishna Himself assumed a new 'Rupa' (Body) as an old and haggardly person in the cave as Krishna was known for such powers, Kalayavana kicked the old man fast asleep. Indeed He was not Krishna but Muchukunda, the son of Mandhata of Ikshvaku dynasty. He was the defender of Demi-Gods from Daityas for long but since Lord Kartikeya became the Commander of Demi- Gods, the latter relieved Muchukunda of his duties and Kartikeya advised him of retirement and since then he was sleeping in the cave, unaware of hundreds of years passed by! By his very looks of fire, Muchukunda converted Kalayavana into ashes as per Indra's benediction that if anybody disturbed his slumber would be burnt to ashes! Muchukunda demanded Krishna to identify himself and the latter disclosed that he was the son of Vasudeva of Yadu Kula of Chandra Vamsha; Muchukunda then recalled Gargya Muni's statement that Krishna the son of Vasudeva and the Avatara of Vishnu would liberate him! He greeted Krishna and narrated Gargya Muni's statement and acclaimed him as follows: 'Bhagavan! Just as in the 'Devasura Maha Sangraam' when I helped Devatas to demolish Daiytas, the Daityas were unable to tolerate my radiance; but now I am similarly unable to withstand your extreme illumination of your Physique now! You are indeed the last and total shield against humanity:

Samsaarapatitastaiko jantoswam sharanam param,

Praseeda twam Prapananartihara naashaya mey ashubham/

Twam Panonidhayasshaaila saritastwam vanaani cha,

Modini gaganam Vaayuraapogniswtam ytathaa pumaan,

Pumsam parataram yaccha Vyaapyajanma vikaara vat/

Shabdaadi heenamajaramayevam Kshayabvarjitam,

Avruddhi naasham tubyha twamaadyanta vivarjitam/

Twattomaraassa Pitaro Yaksha Gandhava Kinnarah,

Siddhhaschaapsaraswattho Manushyaah Pashavah Khagaah/

Sarisrupaa Mrigaatsarvey tatthassarvey Mahiruhaah,

Yaccha Bhutam Bhavishyam cha kinchidatra charaacharam/

Murtaamurtam tathaa chaapi Sthulam Sukshmataram tathaa,

Tatsarvam twam Jagatkartaa naasti kinchitthavyaa vinaa/

Mayaasamsaara chakresminbhranmataa Bhagavan sadaa,

Taapatrayaabhi bhutena na praataa nivruthih kinchit/

Duhkhaanyeva sukhaaneeti Mriga trishnaa Jalaashayaa,

Mayaa Naatha grihitaani taani taapaaya meybhavan/

Rajyamurvee balam kosho Mitra pakshastathaatmajaah,

Bhaaryaa Bhrutyajano ye cha shabdaadyaa vishayaah Prabho/

Sukha buddhyaa mayaa sarvam griheetamidamavyayam,

Parinaamey tadevesha taapaatmakamabhunmama/

Devaloka gatimpraapto Naatha Devaganopih,

Mattassahaayya kaamobhucchaashwati kutra nirvutih/

Twan maayaa moodha manaso Janma mritujaraatmikaan,

Praapuvanti Naraa duhkha swarupavidastwa/

Ahamtyanti vishayi mohitastwa Maayayaa,

Mamatwa garva garnaantabhramaami Parameshwara/

Soham twaam sharanamapaaramaprameyam sampraaptim Paramam paam yato na kinchit,

Samsaara bhrama paritaapataptrachetaa Nirvaaney parinatadhaamni saabhilaashah/

(You are the unique safeguard of all the fallen beings and the eliminator of their distress, Paramatma! Kindly destroy my entire inauspisciousness. Indeed you are the Oceans, mountains, rivers, forests, Prithyi, Akaasha, Vaayu, Jala, Agni and the Manas or the Thinking capacity. You are the Buddhi, Praana, Praanaadhipati; indeed you are beyond the capacity of all beings; far beyond the life and death, even the Tatwaas and their total negation; you are devoid of Shabda; you are the Ajara-Ameya-Akshaya-Avinasha-Adyantarahita and Vriddhi rahita. You are Brahma-Devataas- Pitraganaas- Yaksha-Gandharva- Kinnara-Siddha-Apsaraagana; You are the Manushyas-Pashu-Pakshi-Sarisrupa-and Mrigaas. You are the Charaachara Jagat; the Bhuta-Bhavishya; the Murta-Amurta-Sthula-Sukshma; and indeed the Totality and there is nothing else! Bhagavan, as I have been a target of 'Tapatrayaas' afflicted in the Samsara-Chakra and always caught in the whirl-pool of life-death-and life again, I never had peace of mind; I have been always engaged in search of water getting involved in Mriga-Trishna or Mirages and hallucinations; I have been constantly fooled with illusions of joys which actually have been strings and circles of troubles and griefs. Devadhideva! I have been attracted by Kingdoms and Status-Positions, acquisitions of land, armies, properties, material possessions, progeny, friendships, women, servants, and all kinds of physical pleasures which are all ephemeral and highly temporary; Bhagavan, even Devas had no peace of mind and sought my assistance in battles with Asuras! Maha Deva! Is there a lasting peace without complete surrender and unsullied attachment to you; in there a remote possibility of escaping Yama darshana and muchless a relief from the breakaway of the cycle of life and death; for how long have I to swim and sink in the fathomless sea of delusions and deceipts of life! This is why seek your protection to reach that enduring and everlasting destination, which is stated to be: 'Avyatam, Shaswatam, Vishnum, Anantam, Ajam and Avayam'!

Subsequently Krishna granted a wish to Muchukunda to be reborn as a Sage from his Kshatriya's current birth. Muchukunda exited from the cave into a World transformed from what he knew and realised that Kali Yuga was on the anvil, as the size of humans, animals, birds and trees was reduced considerably. He proceeded to Gandhamadana mountain and reached Nara-Narayana Ashram and meditated for the rest his life.

Meanwhile, Krishna and Balarama found Mathura under the seige of Yavanas but with their Chief Kalayavana was found missing, they were shattered by a handful of Yadava soldiers and of course by Krishna and Balarama.

[Jarasandha imprisoned a number of Kings at Yudhishtar's Rajasuya Yaga since they agreed to Krishna becoming the Chief Guest; subsequently when Krishna, Bhima and Arjun visited Jarasandha's Palace in disguise as Bramanas to free the Kings, the three of them challenged him for a duel with any one of them and Bhima was chosen. Jarasandha was not getting killed for many days and Krishna hinted to tear the opponent's body by demonstrating the cutting of a branch of a tree and throwing up the pieces upside down in opposite directions; a Rishi blessed King Brihadhratha (father of Jarasandha) for a child but he gave only one fruit, where as the King had two wives; he cut the fruit into two half pieces and distributed to the two wives, but they delivered a child in two pieces; as the two pieces were discarded, a Demoness called Jara collected them and arranged the body pieces upside down and a boy came up with life, who was called as Jara-sandha or the one united by Jara. Hence Krishna's advice to Bhima to tear the body and throw the two parts apart topsy-turvey. After Bhima killed Jarasandha, some 21,000 Kings, defeated in wars and imprisoned, were liberated.]

Rukmini's abduction by Krishna: Maharshi Parashara narrated the story of Devi Rukmini's abduction by Krishna. Both of them were fond of each other and desired to wed together. But, Rukmi the brother of Rukmini hated Krishna and was keen on his sister wedding his friend Sisupala. He influenced his father King Bhishmak and even arranged their engagement much against the objection of Rukmini. At the Wedding Ceremony, the Guest List included Kings like Salva, Jarasandha, Dantavakra and such other opponents of Krishna; the King invited Balarama and Krishna too. Fearing that Krishna, who proposed earlier to wed Rukmini, might create trouble at the Function, Rukmi as well as Sisupala prepared for any eventuality alerting their Armies; Salva, Jarasandha, and other well wisheres too readied their armies too. But so did Balarama. Precisely when the Bride entered the Wedding Platform, Krishna took away Rumini like a surprise flash and both of them fled away in the Chariot of Krishna with the flag of Garuda atop. The armies of Sisupala and associates could hardly prevent the Glorious Abduction. Rukmi was unable to bear the insult and followed Krishna's chariot but was defeated and his moustache and beard were shorn by Krishna as a symbol of His victory. Subsequently, King Bhishmaka performed the wedding most appropriately.

Pradyumna was born to Rukmini and Krishna and the son looked exactly like Krishna. When he was hardly ten days old, Demon Sambara kidnapped the child not knowing that he was the son of Krishna threw him in the Sea as a huge fish ate him but the child was safe in its belly. A fisherman caught hold of the big fish and presented it to the King Sambara who in turn gave it to Mayavati the head cook of the King's kitchen who cut the fish to find an attractive baby inside. At that very juncture, Brahmarshi Narada appeared in the kitchen and revealed the Story to Mayavati of Lord Rudra turning 'Manmadha' (Cupid) into ashes when he and Rati (Cupid's wife) aimed Floral Arrows. Lord Rudra gave boons that in their next birth, Cupid would be born as Lord Krishna's son Pradyumna and Mayavati as Rati. As Pradyumna grew as a youngman, Mayavati desired to marry him despite wide difference of age. Pradyumna was popularly known as 'Vyuha' as the Lord of Intelligence, along with three of His other names viz Vasudeva (Lord of Consciousness); Sankarshana (Lord of Individuality) and Aniruddha (Lord of Intelligence). Eventually Pradyumna killed Sambara, married Mayavati and stayed with Rukmini and Krishna at Dwaraka.

Narakasura (Bhaumika): The end of notorious Bhaumika, the son of Bhumi (Demi-Goddess of Earth), is celebrated till date on the moon fall day preceding Kartika Month of every year as 'Deepavali'(The Festival of Lights). Krishna, accompanied by Satyabhama flew by Garuda to 'Pragjyotisha', Capital City of Bhaumasura [now in Assaam], surrounded by mountains and ramparts defended by fire, water and unmanned automatic weapons as also protected by 'Mura Pasha'- thousand miles-long deadly and sturdy wires as designed by Demon Mura.

Krishna shattered the defence buttresses and blew His Panchajanya (Conch shell) with deadening reverberation as Demon Mura's frontal fortification was destroyed. When provoked, the Demon tossed his powerful club which was slashed by Krishna's Sudarsana Chakra into pieces and devastated Mura. Seven deadly sons of Mura, who had the knowledge of weapons as fully as their father, pounced in a group but Krishna's Supreme powers were no match and they too were cracked. Bhaumasura shot at his 'Shataghni'- the powerful disc with hundred blades- and later on with his mighty spear with which he defeated Indra too both of which proved futile. Finally Krishna gave His nod to Sudarsana Chakra (Wheel) to pull down the Demon and exterminate him. Thus Bhaumasura was sent to 'Naraka' and hence his ignominious title as Narakasura.[Another version is that the Demon was arrowed down by Satyabhama herself, as he secured a blessing from Lord Brahma that only his mother Goddess of Earth ( Bhumi) could kill him; Satyabhama was the reincarnation of Goddess Earth]. It was at Indra's distress call that received Krishna's attention was that the Asura appropriated Varuna Deva's Royalty Insignia which was an Umbrella; the Ear-Rings of Aditi- the Mother-Figure of Devas; and 'Mani Parvata' ( Mandara Mountain) where Demi-Gods resided were among the abominable acts of the Demon. As a gesture of good-will, Satyabhama's desire to transfer the 'Parijata' Tree (which emerged in the churning process of Ocean) to her garden from the Heaven was obliged by Indra. Krishna on His part released sixteen thousand royal maidens of Kings defeated by Bhaumasura and consented to marry them, in addition to the eight principal wives. Goddess Prithvi sought her apology for her son's sins and reiterated her own devotion to Krishna; she said:

Yadaahmadhbutaa Naathaa! Twaya Sukaramurtinaa,

Twat sprasha sambhavaha putrastadaayam mayyajaayata/

Soyam twayyaiva datthomey twayyaiva vinipaatitah,

*Gruhaana kundaley chaimey paalayaasya cha santitam/* 

Bhaaraavatarana –arthaaya mamaiva Bhagavaaninam,

Amshena lokamaayaatah prasaada sumukhah Prabho/

Twam Kartaacha Vikartaacha Samhartaa prabhavopyayah,

Jagataam twam Jagatrupah stuyatechyuta kim tawa/

Vyaaptiravyaapyam Kriyaa Kartaa Kaaryamcha Bhagavaanyathaa,

Sarva Bhutaatma Bhutasya stuyatey tava kim tathaa/

Paramaatmaacha Bhutaatmaa twamaatmaa chavyayo bhavaan,

Yathaa tathaa Stutirnaatha Kimartham tey pravartatey/

Praseeda Sarva Bhutaatmannrakena tu yhatkrutam,

Tatkshamya- taamadoshaaya twatsutasvannipaatitah/

( Nathaa! As soon as you in Varahrupa touched me to save me from sinking into Rasatalaa, then and there I was blessed with a son (Bhaumika) and thus you gave me a son and now took him away too now! Please accept the Kundala and other possessions as he has died now but do kindly spare his progeny of any blames. Achyuta! You are the Creator-Protector and Terminator and the Unique Form of the Universe; how could I indeed acclaim and commend you; you are the Swarupa of Vyapti - the Vyapya-Kriya-Karta-Karyarupa as also the Paramatma-Bhutatma-Avyaya Jeevatma and since you are everything, then how could indeed I commend you. Do forgive your own son Narakasura for his misdeeds!)

**Parijata Apaharana:** As the victorious Krishna and Satyabhama fancifully reached Swarga dwaara after the battle with Narakasura, Krishna blew his conchshell and Aditi along with Indra and Devas welcomed the guests. Devi Aditi complemented Krishna while Indra and Devas performed puja to Krishna with

various flowers but Shachi Devi disallowed puja by the flowers of Kalpa Vriksha as the Krishna couple were human beings. There after, the latter visited the Garden of Swarga and Satyabhama desired to take the Tree in her garden in Dwaraka. Shachi Devi flatly refused despite the persuation of Krishna and Devi; surprisingly Indra too sided with Shachi Devi on the plea that Indra gifted it to his wife and he had no hold on it. Arguments between Indra and Krishna ensued and ended up with fights which worsened to fulfledged battles. Indra took up his Vajrayudha and all other Devas fell in line; Krishna blew up his Shanka while Garutman pulled up Varuna Pasha; Yama threw his 'Danda' on Krishna and the latter's mace made smitherins of the hyamna danda; Agni's blistering arrows were instantly cooled with Krishna's Jala Banaas; Garuda and Iravata attached each other. As Indra confronted Krishna with his Vajra and Krishna took up his Sudarshana chakra; Indra was afraid of the consequences and tried to run back and Satyabhama heckled Indra saying that the latter was after all the Devendra and it was not proper to show his back as Shachi would offer him a Parajata garland! Having jeered Indra thus, Satyabhama said that since she was also a woman she talked to Indra in such a jocular tone but in fact she was never serious in demanding the Parijata tree; as Shachi Devi said that it was her property and hence she had no intention of stealing other's property so that this battle might better end up and as the guests to Swarga might as well return back to where they belonged. Indra was put to defensive by Satyabhama's conversation and replied:

Na chaapi sargha samhaara sthiti Kartaakhilasya yah,

Jitasya tena mey vreedaa jaayat8ey Vishvarupinaa!

Tenodbhava Pralayapaalana kaarena vreedaa katham bhavati Devi niraakrutasya/

Sakala bhuvanasutirmurtiralpaaalpa sukshma vidita sakala Vedairjaayatey yasya naanmyah,

Tamajamakrutameesham shaswatam swecchayenam Jagadupakrutimartyam ko Vijetam Samarthah!

(Why should I be ashamed of getting defeated by Vishwa Prabhu who is the Cause of the Existence, Preservation and Termination of the Universe! Who could indeed overcome if that Tinest yet Grossest and Most Magnificent Form which creates the World and Vedas descends on Earth on his own volition to help and correct humanity by assuming human form?) When Krishna replied to Indra jocularly that he was after all a human being and what Satyabhama sought was a celestial product, then Indra requested Krishna not to taunt him further and despached the Parijata Tree to Dwaraka with the assurance that as long as Krishna would be there in human form, the Parijata tree too would be on Earth!

On return to Earth Krishna accepted eight thousand wives released from Narakasura's prisons, besides eight Principal wives viz. Rukmini, Satyabhama, Jambavati, Nagnajiti, Mitravinda, Lakshmana, Kalindi and Madri.

Aniruddha's wedding with Usha: Banasura, the grand son of the famed King Bali who gave the entire Universe in charity in lieu of three feet to Lord Vamana, was the father of daughter Usha who fell in love with Aniruddha, the son of Pradyumna and the grand son of Lord Krishna. Banasura was a dedicated devotee of Lord Siva, and the Lord awarded several invaluable benedictions to the Demon including powerful war weapons and thousand hands to relase the armaments simultaneously. Once Usha happened to see both Shiva and Parvati sitting together and being an Antaryami Devi Parvati joked with Usha that one day she would too land up in a situation like that. Usha asked Devi Parvati as to when would that day arrive! Parvati replied that she would dream of a youth on the night of Vaishakha Shukla Dwadashi. As the day arrived, Usha did get the dream and informed of the incidence to her friend Chitralekha, the daughter of Banasura's Minister named Kushmanda. As Usha was unable to bear the feelings of love, Chitralekha showed several drawings of eligible amd handsome bachelors and after a few days, Usha succeeded finally to identify the youth. Then it was learnt that the youth was the son of Krishna. In course of time, the couple met and their romance became intense by the day. Learning of the desire of his daughter with Aniruddha, the son of Pradyumana -the erstwhile Cupid who was burnt into ashes by Lord Siva's third eye- and the grand son of Krishna (Avatar of Lord Vamana), Banasura quashed the wedding

proposal and reprimanded his daughter since Krishna was his foe. Banasura prevented his daughter meeting Aniruddha and when the latter fought with him, he imprisoned Aniruddha. Yadavas in Dwaraka wondered as to what happened to Aniruddha. On learning from Narada Muni, it was learnt that Aniruddha was imprisoned in Shonitapur, the Capital of Banasura and Krishna, Balarama and Pradyumna lest by Garuda to that Place. There, they confronted Pramathaganas of Shiva and fought with Jwara the three footed Chief of the 'Parshads' named Maheswara and defeated him. This led to a full-fledged battle between Krishna and others on one side and Banasura, Shankara and Kartikeya on the other. As furious Shastra-Astraas were exchanged by both the Parties, the whole world was affected with Pralayaagni. Balarama attacked Banasura and the fight got intensified with alarming consequences. Meanwhile Krishna recalled his Sudarshana Chakra and sliced off the mighty hands of Banasura and was about to cut off the Asura's head too. It was at that climatic moment, Shankara addressed Krishna to stop and said as follows:

Krishna Krishna Jagannatha jaano twaam Purushottamam,

Paresham Paramaatmaanaadi nidhanam Harim/

Tatpraseedaabhayam dattham Banaasuraasya mayaaPrabho,

Tatthvayaa naanrutam kaaryam hyanmayaa vyaahrutam vachah/

Yasmat samshraya drupotoyam naaparaadhi twayaavyaya,

Mayaa dutta varo Daityastatastwaam Kshamayaamyaham/

(Hey Krishna, Krishna, Jagannaatha! I am aware that you are the Purushottama —Parameswara-Paramatmaa and Adyanta-Rahita! Do get cooled down. I have provided shield to Banasura my devotee and assured that I would stand guarantee at the time of his peril; please do not falsify my faith in me. He has not done any thing wrong to you but is egoistic due to my backing and therefore pardon him). Krishna replied:

Yushmadatta varo Baano jeevitamesha Shankara,

Tadvaakya gouravaadetan-mayaa chakram nivartitam/

Twayaa yadbhayam duttam taddattamakhilam mayaa,

Matto vibhinnamaatmaanam drushtamarhasi Shankara/

Yoham sa twam Jagacchedam Sadevaasura maanusham,

Matto naanyaseshedam yastatwam jnaatumihaarhasi/

Avidyaamohitaatmaanam twam gacchha Vrishabhadhwaja/

(Shankara! If you so wish as you had given him a bediction, Banaasura would continue to be alive. In order to respect your assurance to him, I am withdrawing Sudarshana Chakra; if you had given him protection, so do I; You should never feel that you are different from me; you should always consider me as yourself and together we are the Devas, Asuras, human beings and all the rest; all those who consider us as different from each other are shrouded in Maya or Illusion; indeed, I am pleased and am gone.) Thre after, Krishna and all the rest headed to Aniruddha's prison , where the latter was released by 'Naga bandhana' or tight-tied by a serpent which ran away at the appearance of Garuda Deva while Banasura politely agreed for the Sacred wedding of Usha-Aniruddhaas.

**Krishna kills Sishupala:** At the invitation of King Yudhishtara to attend the Rajasuya Yagnam (Horse Sacrifice) being performed by Pandavas especially after the devastation of Jarasandha, Lords Krishna and Balarama arrived at Indraprastha, the new beautiful Capital City, built by Maya. As a climax to the Celebrations, a function was held to select the best personality who graced the 'Yagna'. Nobody wished

to comment but Sahadeva, the youngest of Pandavas, proposed the name of Krishna. There was all round approval of the proposal and Dharmaraja initiated the procedure by inviting Krishna.

Just at that time, King Sisupala, a great associate of Jarasandha since killed by Bhima, expressed displeasure at the selection of Krishna on the proposal of a boy, Sahadeva of Pandavas. He said that elders in age, experience, wisdom were available and there was no special qualification for Krishna who ran away from Jarasandha twenty three times in succesive wars and his real capability in wars, duels, and dealings involving honesty and frankness were suspect. Sisupala criticsed Krishna transgessing all limits of decency. Finally having counted the number of abuses hurled at Him, Krishna hurled His Sudarsana Wheel to slit Sisupala's neck. Sisupala was the son of King Dhamaghosha and Srutadevi, the latter being the sister of Vasudeva whose son was Lord Krishna. In other words Krishna and Sisupala were cousins. When Sisupala was born, he was dark and ugly with three eyes and four hands. His parents had almost decided to disown him, but a voice from Heaven suggested not to do so as an Illustrious Person would soon fondle the child and snip out his extra limbs and he himself would also kill him.Krishna's aunt Srutadevi requested Him to postpone the killing of the child as far as possible. Krishna promised that He would wait till his hundredth abuse. Incidentally, Sisupala and Dantavakra were stated to be the Demons of 'Dwapara Yuga' born after the curse of Sanaka Kumara brothers to the Vaikuntha Gate Keepers Jaya and Vijaya.

As a sequel to Rajasuya Yagna, there were two major developments: Firstly, the unbearable jealousy of Kauravas against Pandavas who became extremely prosperous and popular among the various contemporary Kings and worse than that, the extremely hurt pride of Duryodhana especially when Draupadi the wife of Pandava sons laughed out loudly when he fell straight into a water pool when he thought that there was no water but ground and when he lifted up his robes as there was no ground but a water body. Secondly, the battles of Sisupala's great friends like Salva and Dantavakra were in the offing against Yadavas. While seeds of jealousy were firmly sown in Duryodhana's mind leading to disastrous consequences for Pandavas thus leading to the Great Battle of Mahabharata, the destructive attempts by Sisupala's friends were almost instant. Salva secured earlier an everlasting air-vehicle from Lord Siva because of deep devotion and landed at Dwaraka when Krishna and Balarama were away at Indraprastha and overpowered Pradyumna who fled from the battle, as Salva presented illusory heads of Krishna and Balaram to him.On return, the Lords shattered the airship and Salva too. Dantavakra and his sons Romaharshana and Viruddha met the same fate. Thus the chapter of Sisupala's death was closed. Simultaneously, the run-up to Mahabharata Battle at Kurukshatra was picking up fast as the foul play of Dices between Shakuni on behalf of Kaurava sons and Dharmaraja on behalf of Pandavas. Ast he Battle was shaping as an inevitable consequence, Balarama being a neutral figure, especially since Duryodhana was his disciple while Krishna identified himself as Pandava's well-wisher, proceeded on a pilgrimage to Holy Places. His visits covered Prayaga, Ganga, Gaya, Godavari, Srisailam, Venkata Hills, Kanchi, Madurai, Srirangam, Rameswaram and Kanya Kumari. He reached Kurukshetra at the time when Bhima and Duryodhana were engaged in a duel with maces as almost terminating the Great Battle.

Shri Krishna Niryaana was the climax of the termination of Yadukula that got initiated by a few playful Yadu Kumaraas at Pindaraka Tirtha who dressed the son of Jambavati called Saambu as an expectant woman and asked a group of Rishis to ascertain whether the woman would deliver a boy or a baby! The Munis under reference included Kanwa-Narada and Viswamitra who from their Divya drishti realized the hoax of the fake garbhini and said in anger: that the woman would deliver neither a boy nor a girl but a 'Musala' or a lump of an iron instead and that would result in the destruction of Yadu Vamsha! The Yadava Boys were stunned at the reply and reported the matter to Ugrasena! Saambu did deliver a Musala from his stomach which was pounded as powder but the remainder bit was thrown into the Sea and it was devoured by a fish and a fisherman called Jara caught hold of the fish and as he cut it he found a sharp iron piece which he kept for subsequent use. Meanwhile, Indra and Devas despatched Vayu Deva who appeared before Krishna and prayed to him as follows: 'Devaadi Deva! Indra has asked us as well by Ashtaavasus, Marud Devatas , Rudras , Saadhyas and Adityas that at our instance you had very kindly

assumed an incarnation and lightened the enormous burden on Earth by demolishing innumerable Danavas and other Dushta Shaktis for a long hundred years and over and the Three crores of Devas are now at peace; we request you to know your mind as to how to proceed further'. Bhagavan replied: 'I am fully aware of my next move; I have already initiated the process of Yadava destruction as considerable annihilation of the enemy forces of the virtuous Pandavas including the killing of Jarasandha besides of Kauravas was concluded too. As I have still to complete the task of terminating Yadavas as I brought them to Dwaraka and that bit of task too once concluded, I shall be freed of my mortal responsibilities and return to Vaikuntha'. So saying, Krishna made arrangements by dispatching Uddhava to Badarikaashrama on Gandhamaadana Parvat to Naranarayana Maharshi Ashrama where he would secure Siddhi after the close of his life. Select Yadavas including himself, Baladeva and elders like Ugrasena, Vasudeva left for Prabhasa Kshetra along concerned Devis; remaining Yadavas most of got dead drunk killed each other including Pradyumna, Saamba, Kritavarma, Satyaki, Aniruddha, Pruthu and Akrura by using the high grown sea beach grass roots which sprouted from the powder of the Musala delivered from Saambu's garbha thus terminating Yadu Vamsha; the elders including Balarama etc who left for Prabhasa Kshetra took resort to Yogic ends and finally Krishna and the famed charioteer Daruka remained; Balarama sat under a Tree and from hisface a Maha Sarpa emerged:

Nishkramya sa mukhaattasya Maha Bhogo Bhujangamah,

Prayayaavaarnavam Siddhaih pujamaanastathogaraih/

Tatorghyamaadaaya tadaa jaladhissammukham yayou,

Pravivesha tatastyoyam pujitah pannagottamaih/

(There a gigantic Sarpa moved towards the huge Ocean as worshipped by Sidhas and Nagaas while Samudra welcomed and worshipped and the Maha Sarpa entered the Ocean). Meanwhile Krishna assumed his full form with four hands armed while Shankha-Chakra- Gada-Sarangaas performed pradakshinas and he rested under a tree bush. Imagining that a deer was resting since Krishna's feet were moving behind a tree bush, Jara Vyaadha who recovered an iron left-over bit from the fish caught in the Sea, sharpened his arrow and shot at the Lord's moving feet and ashamed to do so but the ever merciful Krishna bestowed him Siddhi. Krishna then sent Daruka to convey the news of Krishna Niryana to his dear disciple Arjuna to perform the obsequies of himself, of Balarama and the illustrious Yaduveeras; Rukmini and Krishna's wives performed Krishna Sahagamana or sacrificing themselves in the a same Fire with which the mortal human form of the Avatara succumbed. Maharshi Parashara commented thus:

Gatey tasminsa Bhagavaan samyojyaatmaa namanapmani,

Brahmabhutey vyayeychintye Vaasudevamayelaley/

Ajanyamarey Vishnaavaprameyo-khilaatmani,

Tatyaaja Maanusham dehamateetya trividhaam gatim/

(As He left, Bhagavan Krishna discarded his human form and recalled his Soul which is Avyaya-Achintya- Vaasudeva Swarupa-Amala-Ajanma- Amara- Aprameya- Akhilaatma-and Brahma Swarupa Vishnu!)

As Arjuna was totally drowned in uncontrollable grief and distress, Veda Vyasa assuaged his inner and core-emotions said: Bhagavan Krishna arrived as a human being along with us all as a Marga darshaka or a moral teacher to prescribe and guide us about the virtuous the innate values of life and to uproot the evils of the Society that Daityas and many in the form of Human beings came to adopt; now that the burden of Bhu Devi got lightened Paramatma took up the need and the deed; since the noble reason and requirement were fulfilled, he put the World back on its heels and disappeared, since Jatasya Maranam Dhruvam!

Veda Vyasa stated:

Jaatasya niyato Mrityuh patanamcha tathonnateyh,

Vipra yogaanasaanaastu samyogah sanchaye kshayah/

Vijnaaya na budhaasshokam na harsha –mupayaanti ye,

Teshaameyveytarey cheshtaam sikshantassanti taadrushaah/

(Whatever is born is certain to die; which is grown well has to decrease; Samyoga or Togetherness has to terminate as Viyoga or loneliness; Sanchaya or Increased Collection has to end up as Kshaya or Decay; Intelligent persons do not get elated too much since exultation might end up in depression or even as damage; that is the reason why one ought to realise that great heights might lead to great falls too). *Yaschetaccharitam tasya Krishnasya Shrunuyaatsadaa, Sarna Paapa vinirmukto Vishnu lokam sa gacchati/* (Those persons who listen to Krishna Charitra would surely get relief from sins and attain Vishnu Loka)!

## **Tapatriayas and Paramartha Swarupa**

Maharshi Parashara described about Tapatriayas or the Three Kinds of Difficulties that all human beings are subjected to as also the means of realising the Paramartha Swarupa. The Tapatriayas originate due to Adhyatmika, Aadhi Daavika and Adhi Bhoutika reasons. Adhyatmika based Tapaas are either due to 'Shaaririka' (physical) ailments or 'Manasika' (psychological) imbalances. Shaaririka Tapaas include dieseases related to head, digestive, heart, breathing, vision, limbs, skin, fevers and so on; related are the various physiological problems of blood-urinary-pelvic nature. Manasika Tapaas are related to Kama, Krodha, Bhaya, Dwesha, lobha, Moha, Vishada, Shoka, Asuya, Apamana, Irshya, Matsara etc. Adhi Bhoutika Tapaas are due to the difficulties attributed to animals, birds, Pishachaas, Serpents, Rakshasaas and poisonous related creatures like scorpions. The troubles on account of Adhidaivika nature are due to cold, heat, air, rains, drought, water, earthquakes, cyclones and so on. Additionally, the troubles are related to birth, childhood, youth, old age, ignorance, Avidya, loneliness, smell, lack of resources, poverty, immaturity, inexperience, lack of opportunity, fear of death, death itself and multiple kinds of experiences of Naraka. Maharshi Parashara emphasized that there are problems of excessive of opulence, excellent health, excessive youth, and such other excesses and some times ignorance is bliss. More so there could be Tapaas due to discriminations of sex, age, social status, experience, opportunity, family background; origin of birth viz. religion, Varnashrama and age. Disappointments in life, more specifically relating to money and fame, including their earnings, perservation and its vinasha or destruction happen to be yet source of Tapatriya.

Having said this, Maharshi Parashara analysed that those entities or things which are dear to one's own psyche /self happen to be the root-causes of dissatisfaction like the seeds sown turn so become trees:

Dravya naasho tathotpattho paalaney chasadaa Nrinaam,

Bhavanyaneyka Duhkhaani ytathaivershti vipattishu/

Yadyaatpreetikaram Pumsdaam Vastu Maitreya jaayatey,

Tadaiva Duhkha Vrikshasya beejastwamupagacchati/

Kalatra Putra Mitraatha Griha Kshetra dhanaadikaih,

Kriyatey na thaa bhuri sukham pumsaam Yathaasukham/

Iti Samsaara duhkhaarka taapa taapita chetsaam,

Vimukti paada paccha-yamaamritey kutra sukham Nripaam/

(Maitreya! Which ever things that are deeply desired by human beings are indeed the seeds of Maha Vrikshaas of griefs and regrets. Those entities like wife, children, friends, wealth, houses, money, fields and so on have always created more of worries than causes of happiness and conentment. In the same

way, could there be happiness except under the shade of the Moksha Vriksha by a person who is victimised by the heat of Samsara Duhkha as intensified by Surya Deva!) This indeed is the reason as to why the torments of birth, childhood, old age and various other causes are overcome by the Unique Medicine of **Bhagavat Prapti**. This again is the lasting and singular solution prescribed by Panditas to accomplish Bhagavat Prapti.

Karma and Jnaana are the two ways of realising Bhagavat Prapti. Jnaana in turn is achievable by two means; one is 'Shaastra Janya' or attainable by the knowledge of Shaastras and another is Viveka Janya or that which is secured by Intelligence or Inherent Aptitude or Awareness. Shabda Brahma Jnaana is Shaastra janya and Parabrahmaka Bodha is Vivekaja. In any case, 'Ajnaana' or lack of Awareness is as bad as darkness and to overcome that darkness, one has to light up the lamp of Shaastra jnaan; in comparison, Viveka Jnaan which is inherent to a person is comparable to what is as good as derived from Surya. In other words, Shaastrajanya Jnaana is learnt or absorbed by Shravana-Grahana Indriyas or 'Indriyodhbhava Jnaana'. Having thus defined Jnaana, Maharshi Parashara distinguished Brahma in two forms viz. Shabda Brahma and Para Brahma. Having achieved expertise in Shabda Brahma or the Shabda Janya Jnaana, a Pandita undergoes what is called 'Jignasa' or introspection and by appying the means of Viveka janya Jnaana attains Para Brahma. The formula under reference thus is: Grahana Jnaana + Jignaasa + Viveka Jnaana = Para Brahma!

Parashara Muni annotated further that Atharva Veda distinguished the two words of Vidya viz. 'Para' and 'Apara'; the word Para seeks to <u>attain</u> Brahma and Apara as per Ruk-Yajur-Sama Veditrayi <u>is</u> Brahma Itself!

Yattadayaktam ajara machintya maja mavyayam,

Anirdeshyamarupam cha Paanipaadaabhi Samyutam/

Vibhu Sarvagatam Nityam Bhutayoni-rakaaranmam,

Vyaapya vyaaptam yatah Sarvam yaddai pashyanti Surayah/

Yad Brahmaa tatparam dhaama tat dadhebhyam Moksha kaamshibhih,

Shtruti Vaakyoditam Sookshmam Tadvishnoh Paramam Padam/

Tadeva Bhagavadvaachyam swarupam Paramatmanah,

Vaachako Bhagavad cchaabdha stasyaadyasyaakshayaatmanah/

(It is that Manifestation of Paramaatma who is Avykta-Ajara-Achintya- Aja-Avyaya-Anirdeshya-Arupa-Paani Paadaadi Shunya-Vyapaka-Sarvagata-Nitya- Bhutaadikaarana-Swayam Kaaranaheena-Sampurna Vyapya and Vyapaka. Yogis recognise Him through their 'Jnaana Netraas'or their Eyes of Wisdom and 'Mumukshis' or Seekers percieve Him as 'Paramapada'or His Tiny Form; 'Bhagavat' is the Vachya (adjective) Swarupa of Parmatma as also His Vachaka Swarupa as the Noun.) This 'Shabda'of **Bhagavat** / **Bhagavan** has two connotations: the 'Bha'kaara stands both for He who is the 'Poshana Karta' or the Preserver and also the 'Ga'kaara standing for 'Adhara' or the Hold / Grasp or Clamp; 'Ga' kara also denotes the Provider of Karma Phala or the Benefit of Good Deeds-Rachayita or the Architect of the Universe and Laya kaara or the Terminator. The word Bhaga embraces six names viz. Aishwarya-Dharma-Yasha-Shri- Jnaana-and Vairagya!

Maharshi Parashara further stated that the word **Vaasudeva** denotes the following:

Bhuteshu vasatey sontarvasnyatra cha taaniyat,

Dhataa Vidhaataa Jagataam Vaasudevastatah Prabhuh/

Sa Sarva Bhuta Prakritim Vikaaraagunaadi doshaamscha Muney Vyatitah/

Ateeta Sarvaavaranokhilatmaa tenaastutam yadbhuvaraanraaley/

Samasta Kalyaana gunaatma –kosou Swashaktileshaavruta bhuta vargah,

Icchhaagriheeta –abhimatorudehassam saadhitaasesha jagaddhito yah,

Tejo balaishwarya mahaavibhodha Suvveerya shakyaadi gunaika raashih,

Parah Paraanaam sakalaa na yatra keshaadayaassanti Paraavereshey/

Sa Ishvaro Vyashti-Samashti Rupo Vvyaktaswarupo Prakrata Swarupah,

Sarveswarassarvadruk Sarvaviccha Samata shaktih Parameswaraakhyah/

Samdrushyatey yena tadasta dosham Shuddham Param Nirmalamekaswarupam,

Samdrusshyatey vaapyamagamyatey vaa tajnaana-majnaanamatonyaduktam/

(As the Prabhu is pervasive among all the Beings and as all the Beings are absorbed into Him, besides He is the Supreme Architect and Protector of the Universe in totality, he is called Vaasudeva. He is Sarvaatma yet beyond all the 'Avaranaas' or Enclosures; He is the Prakriti of all the Bhutaatmaas, the endless manifestations of the Prakriti and its characteristics but unaffected by Prakriti's deeds, insufficiencies and deficiencies; it is He who fills in the void in between Prithvi and Akaasha; He is the embodiment of Auspiciousness and replete with the features of Propitiousness and by applying hardly a minute portion of his Maha Shakti is all omnipresent and hence called Vaasudeva. He is the unprecedented and unending stockpile of Teja or Radiance, Bala or Might, Ishwarya or Opulence, Maha Vijnaana or Supreme Knowledge, Veerya or Virility, Shakti or Power and Energy; He is the Samishti-Vyashti Rupa or of the Unique Form of Singularity and Plurality; of Vyaktaavyakta Rupa or of the Perceivable and Imperceivable Forms; indeed He is the Sarva Swami- Sarva Saakshi-Sarva Shaktimaan. Indeed it is that which seeks the Nirmala or Transparent-Vishuddha or Pure-Nirdosha or Blemishless-Unique Paramatma that is called Para Vidya or Jnaana; and the rest is Apara Vidya or Ajnaana!

## Vishnu Purana 'Mahatmya' and 'Upasamhara' (Significance and Winding-up)

Vishnu Purana occupies pride of place among the Ashtaasasha Puranas. Maharshi Parashara conveyed to Maitreya that this Purana was first recited by Brahma himself to Sage Ribhu and was further recited to a galaxy of illustrious personalities including Priyavrata, Dadhichi, Sarasvata, Bhrigu, Purukutsa, Vaasuki, Pulstya, and now by Maharshi Parashara. Pathana-Shravana-Manana of this Sacred Purana even in parts bestows the fruit of performing Ashwamedha Yagna and its Avabhruta Snaana or the concluding Snaana at the end of the Yagna. Prolonged stay and daily worship of Bhagavan at several Punya Kshetras like Prayaga, Pushkara, Kurukshetra and Samudraas would yield the benefit of association with this Purana.

Yadagnihotrey suhrutey varshenaapnoti Maanavah,

Maha punya phalam Vipra tadasya shravanaatsakrut/

(A single reading of this Purana would accord the Maha Punya of Agni Homas for a year as per prescribed procedure!) The fruits of reading or hearing the Puranas are endless like Shri Krishna Darshana, day long worship and fasting at Mathura after Yamuna Snaana on Jeyshtha Shukla Dwadashi; Pitru Pinda daana on that day besides reading even one chapter of the Purana preceded by worship to Shri Krishna and so on.

Etat Samsaara bheerunaam paritraanamanutthamam,

Shravyanaam paramam shraavyam pavitraanaamanutthamam/

Duhkha pranaashanam Nrunaam Sdarva dushta nibarhanam,

Mangalam Mangalaanaam cha bhaagurayebraveet/

(This Purana provides Raksha /Shield to all those who are constantly tormented by the complications and hitches of daily life; it relieves them of fears of any kind, rids of sins, assures of propitiouness and success; enhances wealth and health; provides excellent progeny and happy family life and over-all contentment.)

### Vishnu 'Paratwa Nirnaya':

Yasminnyastamatirna yaati Narakam Swargopi yacchintaney Vighno yatra niveshitaatma manaso Brahmopi lokolpakah, Muktim chetaasi yah sthitomaladhiyaam Pumsaam Dadaatyavyayah kim chitramdagham prayaati Vilayam tannachyutey keeritey/ Yagjnanavido yajanti satatam Yagneswaram karmino yam vai Brahma mayam paraavaramayam dhyaayanti cha jnaaninah, Yam sanchintya na Jaayatey no vardhatey heeyatey naivaasanna cha sadbhavatyati tatah kim vaa Hareh Shruyataam/

Kavyam yah Pitrurupadhrugvidhi humtam havyam cha bhungttey Vibhurdevatvey Bhagavaananaadi nidhanah Swaahaa Swadhaamsamjnitey, Yassmin Brahmaani Sarva Shakti nilaey maanaani no maaninaam Nishthaayai prabhavanti hanti kalusham shrotam sa yaato Harih/

(What is the surprise if sincere dedication is registered in a clean mind and a transparent heart while performing 'Achyuta Kirthana' so that one would not have to reach Naraka, let alone Swarga and even Brahma loka, as the 'Avayaya Prabhu' could grant Moksha itself! What else could be expected when a person would neither be born nor dead, grown nor diminished, and neither experienced with a Truthful Cause nor performed a deed involving an inventive lie or falsehood, if he as a Yajnavetta executed Yagnaas, or as a Gyani totally immersed in meditation of Brahma Swarupa! That 'Anaadinidhana Bhagavan' assumes the forms of Devas and accepts the offerings of 'Swaaha' in Agni as also assumes the Pitru Rupa and accepts offerings of 'Swadha' and thus demolishes the sins through the medium of Homaas in Agni!)

Naantosti yasya na cha yasya samudbhavosti Vriddhirna yasya parinaamavivarjitasya, Naapakshayam cha samupaitya vikaarivastuyastam natosmi Purushottama meeshameedyam/ Tastaiva yonu Gunabhuk bahudhaika eva shuddhyopya shudda ivabhaati hi Murtibhedhaih ,Jnaanvitah Sakalasatwa vibhutikartaa tasmai Namostu Purushaaya Sadaavyayaaya/ Jnana pravruttiniyamaikyamayaaya pumso bhagapradaana patavey Trigunaatmakaaya,Avyaakrutaaya bhava bhaavana kaaranaaya Vandey Swarupabhaavanaaya Sadaajaraaya/ Vyomaanilaagni jalab hurachanaamayaaya shabdaai bhogya vishayopanayakshamaaya, Pumsah karanairupakaarakaaya Vyaktaaya sukshma brihadaatmamavatey natosmi/ Iti dhamajasya yasya rupam Prakruti paraatmamayam Sanaatanaysya ,Pradishatu Bhagavaanasesha pumsaam Harirapa janma Jaraadikam, sa siddhim/

(My salutations to Purushottama who is immesurable and is bereft of beginning, end, growth and decay; to that Pradhana Purusha who is Singular yet Multitudinal, as manifested in a variety of features and characteristics, who is essentially of the pristine and perfect Form but assumes multitude of shapes and profiles and who is the core of Jnaana and Realisation; to that Swayam-Siddha or Auto-Generated phenomenon of Infinity who is a grand mix of Jnaana-Pravrutti-Niyamana representing Satva-Raja-Tamasika Gunas and is the Symbol of Solitude and Seclusion but in the thick of happenings and events; to that Supreme and Unknown Energy manifested as Akasha-Vayu-Agni-Jala-Prithvi; and to that Sukshma-Virat Parama Purusha! May that Prakriti-Purusha-Bhagavan Vishnu endow us with the Siddhi or boon of Mukti by avoiding Janma-Jaraa-Maranas!)

### ['Vishnu Purana concludes]

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## 1. SELECT STORIES FROM PURANAS

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## SELECT STORIES FROM PURANAS

#### **Preface:**

Hindu Puranas are replete with Stories with the moral of destroying Evil and vindicating Virtue. They describe incidents related to Avataras, Devas, Vamshas, Kings, Rishis, Demons, and humanity in general. The underlining message in all the Puranas is that all the Species in the Lord's Creation - be it Devas or Demons, humanity or other living Beings are bound by the basic Principle ie. one sows as reaps. One's own 'Karma' or action is decided by the previous action in the never-ending cycle of births and deaths. This current action of any Being shapes the future Karma. The Supreme Force creates 'Maya' or Illusion and influenced by 'Tri Gunas' or The Three Characterisics of Satva-Rajas-Tamas Nature, Maya decides each and every action or the Cause which further leads to the Reaction or the Effect! Hence, morality is the crux and behaviour is the corner stone of all Beings, with special reference to human beings.

Veda Vyasas scripted Eighteen Main Puranas besides several Upa-Puranas. The Main Puranas are Brahma Purana, Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Brahmanda Purana, Bhagavata Purana, Vishnu Purana, Matsya Purana, Kurma Purana, Varaha Purana, Vamana Purana, Shiva Purana, Linga Purana, Skanda Purana, Markandeya Purana, Agni Purana, Narada Purana, Padma Purana, Bhavishya and Garuda Purana. Some of the prominent Upa Puranas include Deva Bhagavata, Narasimha, Vayu, Sthala, Nilamata Puranas.

#### Some basic facts common to Puranas

The Unknown and Eternal Paramatma or The Supreme Energy materialised the Alternate Power called Prakriti / Maya which further appeared as Maha Tatwa or the Great Awareness. The latter made possible the occurrence of 'Ahamkara' or Ego in Abstract Form or the Inherent Consciousness which got transformed as Bhutas or Tangible Entities the very First Entity being Narayana who created 'Apo Naara' or the Radiant Water who floated on that Water and was hence called Narayana. He deposited his virility with the resolve of creating and there got manifested a Brahmanda, the Huge Golden Egg inside which there was seated Hiranya garbha Brahma. The Egg had two parts viz. Diva/ Urthwa Loka or the Upper Part and 'Bhuva' or Earth and the Space between these Parts was 'Akaasha' the Sky. There were manifestations eventually of Sapta Lokas (Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, Swarloka, Maharloka, Janarloka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka), Sapta Patalaas (Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talaatala, Mahatala, Rasatala and Patala); Dasha Dishas or Ten Directions viz. Uttara or North-East or Purva-Dakshina or South-Paschim or West-Ishanya or North East -Agneya or South East-Nirruti or South West- Vayavya or North West-Urthwa or Upper Region and Atho Lokas or the Nether Worlds; Sapta Dwipas (Jambu, Plaksha, Salmaali, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaka and Pushkala); Sapta Samudras (Lavana or Salt, Ikshurasa or Sugarcane juice, Sura or Wine, Ghrita or Classified Butter, Dahi or Curd, Ksheera or Milk and Suswada or Sweet Water); Sapta Parvatas (Sumeru, Kailas, Malaya, Himalaya, Udyachala, Agastyachala, Suvela and Gandhamadana); Ashta Loka Palakas (Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirruti, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera and Ishana); Kaal maana or Time Calculation (Triti-hundred tritis one Vedha- three Vedhas one Lava-Three Lavas on Nimesha- Three Nimeshas one Kshana- five nimeshas one kashta or eight seconds- fifteen kashtas one laghu or two minutes- fifteen laghus one danda- six to seven dandas one fourth of a day or night-four praharas or yamas one day or night- two pakshas a month-two months a Ritu or Season- Six months one Ayana-365 combinations of a day / night one year- one year a Deva year-1200 Yugas comprising Satya of 4800 Deva Years, Treta Yuga of 3600, Dwapara of 2400 and Kaki yuga of 1200 Deva Years make one a Maha Yuga-100 Maha Yugas one Kalpa and Two Maha Kalpas are one life time of Brahma; Brahma is now passing through his fifty first year and his life span is 100 such years; we are now in the 28<sup>th</sup> Kali yuga of the first day of the first year of the third Sweta Varaha kalpa, second paraartha in the reign of the Seventh

Manu named Vivaswanta. Kali Yuga is calculated to have commenced on 17th February 3102 BC of Julion Calendar). Besides the Kaala maana (Time), other notable creations were Manasa (Thought), Vaak (Speech), Shad Vargas or the Six Aberrations of Kama-Krodha-Lobha-Moha-Mada- Matsara viz. Desire, Anger, Greed, Infatuation, Arrogance and Jealousy; as also: Pancha Bhutas viz. Earth, Water, Agni, Wind and Sky; Nava Grahas of Surya, Chandra, Mangala, Budha, Guru, Shukra, Shani, Rahu-Ketu; Chatur Vedas of Rik-Yajur-Saama and Atharva besides Shat-Vedangas viz. Siksha including Sangeeta and Nayaaya, Vyakarana, Kalpa Grandha, Nirukta, Chandas Shastra and Jyitisha. Ekadasha Rudras or Eleven Rudras viz. Mahaan, Mahatma, Matimaan, Bhishana, Bhayankara, Ritudwaja, Urthwakesha, Pingalaksha, Rucha, Shuchi, and Kalaagni; Sapra Rishis viz. Marichi, Atri, Angirasa, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, and Vasishtha; Four Kumaras viz. Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanat and Sanatana; besides Narada-all Brahma's mind-born sons.; Chaturashramas, Yagnas and Agni Homas like Shodasi, Ukta, Purushi, Agnishtoma, Aptoryama, Atiratra, Vajapeya, Goshava etc. Other facts worth noting in the context of Puranas are Fourteen Manvantaras (Swayambhu, Swarochisha, Uttama, Tamasa, Raivata, Chakshusa, the present Vaivaswata, Savarni, Bhoutya, Rouchya and four more Savarnyas) and Prajapatis and Vamshas, especially of Surya and Chandra and their lineages.

Daksha Prajapati and his wife Prasuti had sixty daughters, ten of whom were given in charity to Dharma, seventeen to Kashaypa Muni, twenty seven to Chandra and two each to Rishis Angira, Krasaswa and Bhuta. Dharma's wives gave birth among others to Twelve Sadhyas called Jaya Devas considered as good as Devas reputed in the context of Yagnas like Darsha, Pounamavasya, Vithi, Vivithi etc. Dharma's another wife Vasu gave birth to Ashta Vasus like Dhara, Soma, Ayu, Pratyusa etc. From Angirasa and Vastu Devi was born Vishwakarma and so on. But the most significant progeny of Daksha's daughters was from Kashyapa Muni as follows: Indras and Devas from Aditi; Diti gave birth to Daityas like Hiranya Kashipu (killed in Narasimha Avatara as he tormented his own son Prahlada) and Hiranyaksha (who dragged Bhu Devi to Rasatala but was rescued by Vishnu's Avatara viz. Matsya Deva) as also Marudganas (when Diti performed a very severe Vrata to destroy Devas and got conceived from Kashyapa, Indra feigned affection to Diti and when she was asleep entered her womb and by his 'Siddhi'called 'Anima'or miniaturasing cut the child seven times by his Vajrayudha and made further seven pieces totalling forty nine and after delivery each piece became a Marud by Kashyapa Muni's powers and the Marudganas turned out to be share-holders of Yagnas and as good as Devatas and were Indra's followers!); Danu Devi gave birth to Danavas whose Chief was Viprachit and the latter's wife Simhika gave birth to Simhika who were more cruel and notorious than Danavas in grit for Tapasya, mainly targetting Sages and Brahmanas. Rahu was the eldest son of Simhika; the most infamous among the Simhikas were Vatapi, Bhouma and Namuchi. The worst of Danavas were Shambhara, Maya, Tarakasura, Jambha, Naraka, Pralamba etc. who had passion for destroying Yagnas, Shraddhas, children and cows too. Devi Kadru another wife of Kashyapa Muni was the mother of Serpents, the most famed ones of the species being Sesha, Vasuki and Takshaka besides Iravata, Mahapadma, Kambala, Ashwatara, Shankha, Karkotaka, Dhananjaya, Kaliya and so on. Khasa Devi had two sons one at dawn time and another at dusk; the elder son had four hands and four legs with high hair growth all over his body and the younger one had three heads, three hands and three legs. Bothe were ferocious and grotesque; one wanted to eat his mother out of extreme hunger and another desired to save the mother. Kashyapa named them Rakshasas; they were weak and dull but as the dusk grew into night they became invincible and all powerful with the ability to change into any Form as they wished enjoying the flesh of Devas, Sages, human beings, animals or birds. Surabhi was the mother of cows and buffalos; Vinata the mother of Garuda and Aruna the charioteers of Vishnu and Surya; Arista gave birth to Gandharvas; Muni was the mother of Aprasas or Angels; ILA Devi was the mother of creepers; Tamra gave birth to vultures, eagles and large birds; Timi to acquatics and Saras to tigers, lions and ferocious animals. Thus Kashyapa Vamsha stood for Dharma, Kshama, and Virtue and at the same time for Adharma, jealousy, cruelty and sheer depravity.

## **Stories related to Manus and Vamshas**

As the pace of Creation in the Universe was slow at the beginning, Brahma divided himself into two one as himself and another as a female called Shatarupa. The latter did Tapsya for ten thousand years and begot a husband named Swayambhu Manu born on his own. Manu and Shatarupa gave birth to Veera, Priyavrata and Uttanapada.

**Priyavrata** ruled Sapta Dwipas of which Jambu Dwipa was a part of Bharata. In his childhood Priyavrata secured Brahma Gyan (Enlightenment) and declined to marry. Manu admonished his son that he was too young to become an ascetic and the Almighty created human beings to pass through childhood, student life, married life, detachment an renunciation and that the golden rule of married life should be like that of a dew on a lotus leaf and so on. Finally, Privavrata ended up with two wives; he had the distinction of travelling by his chariot and earmarked the entire Bhu Loka into Sapta Dwipas and entrusted the Seven Dwipas to be entrusted to his sons.

Varudhini and Pravarakhya: The births of King Swarochi and Manu Swarochisha had an interesting background. A learned Brahmana youth called Pravarakhya on the banks of River Varuna observed the required rituals regularly and worshipped guests. Once a Siddha who had knowledge of Mantras, Tantras and especially of indigenous herbs and their usages arrived and Pravarakhya evinced interest to visit Himalayas; he gave an exotic herb and asked the youth to apply its 'lepana' or its essence on his feet and he could visit Himalayas instantly by closing his eyes. But the Siddha cautioned that the lepana would dry up by the Sunset. Indeed, Pravarakhya landed in the thick jungles atop Himalayas and was lost in an unparalleled vision of ice mountain linings and the abundant glory of flora and fauna, the dizzy views of valleys, waterfalls etc. The youth was fully conscious that he would have to return by the dusk time. In that place of blissful silence, he spotted a damsel-an Apsara named Varudhini- and initiated conversation; the friendly dialouge ended up with her sincere entries to marry her; when she was refused, she begged him to atleast mate with her once. Pravara a strict Brahmachari of proven celibacy ran away from her and in the process his lepana on his feet got dried up and he lost his way. As he was badly delayed for his evening rituals back home he prayed to Agni Deva who in the form of an elderly Brahmana appeared and reached him home. Meanwhile the frustrated Varudhini became too passionate for Pravara. A Gandharva boy he was rejected by Varudhini earlier got scent of the situation and having changed his Swarupa as a Maya Pravarakhya approached her and said he changed his mind and cheated her into bed on the condition however that she should close her eyes at the time of their union so that she would not realise that he was not the genuine Pravara . Varudhini and Maya Pravara lived together for a year and Swarochi was born of Pravara's intellect and discipline and Varudhinis's charm and physical attraction.

Swarochisha Manu's story was far more interesting. Once King Swarochi he was wandering in a forest aimlessly and heard a desperate female voice in great anguish as though was being chased. Soon enough, the female appeared and requested Swarochi to save her by a demon; she said that she knew some 'Astras' or Mantrik Arrows from her dead father and he could save her from the Danava who was chasing her. Swarochi then killed the Danava and a grateful female narrated her story: her name was Manorama and along with her friends Vibhavari and Kalavati wandered in a forest and offended a Muni while in his meditation. The Muni cursed Manorama an Apsara to descend to Earth and her friends to become as lepers. When the Apsaras begged of the Muni, the latter agreed that a brave youth would be chased by a Danava and the curses of the Muni would be reversed. Incidentally, the Danava who was killed was Manorama's own father! Swarochi married Manorama but she was unhappy that her companions remained as lepers. Swarochi cured both Vibhavari and Kalavati of their leprosy by his knoweldge of herbal medicines. A grateful Vibhavari said that she was a Gandharva Kanya (unwed) and that she could teach Swarochi the language of animals provided that he would agree to marry her. Kalavati also offered to teach him the 'Padmini Vidya' the art of learning the way to abundant Prosperity that was taught by Devi Parvati herself when Kalavati wanted to commit self-immolation as her father died of a thunderebolt. Thus Swarochi was fortunate to wed three celestial damsels in a row! [Incidentally, Padmini Vidya denotes Eight Sources of Wealth viz. Padma or investments in precious metals used for charities,

Maha Padma or wealth from high value acquisitions leading to large scale deeds like Yagnas, Makara or prosperity involving famous deeds like battles, Kacchapa is the wealth that is land based to be utilised for Dharma Karyas or Deeds of Virtue, Mukunda is wealth emerging from Fine Arts leading to fulfillment of life, Nandaka is that kind of wealth utilised for social functions, Neela is that source of wealth involving Dhanya, Vastra and such other transactions and Shankha is the wealth for one's own family.]

Having lived happily for six hundred years, King Swarochi one day went a hunting spree and witnessed a female deer being chased by a boar; the King tried to kill the boar but the deer begged him to kill it instead but he disagreed since she was defenceless. As she insisted to kill her on mercy grounds so that she would be able to marry a handsome person in her next birth, he asked as to who that handsome could be and she replied coyly pointing to the King; the latter stated that it might not be possible. She then asked her to embrace her once and a miracle would happen by the Vana Devata or the Goddess of the Forest. The King embraced the deer and the deer delivered Swarochisha Manu.

King Uttama fell prey to a dancing girl and abandoned his own wife Bahula and in a weak moment abandoned her to forests. He regretted his action latter and tried to recover her but failed. After long lapse of time a Brahmana called Susharma complained that his wife was kidnapped and it was the duty of the King to recover her. He then took the help of a 'Trikalajna' who knew the Present, Past and the Future and came to know that the Brahmana wife was under the duress of a Rakshasa; the King located the Rakshasa and brought him under control. The Trikalajna also informed that in Patala a Naga Raja called Salapotaka was forcing Queen Bahula to marry him and that she should also look after the Nagha Princess who was deaf and dumb. With the help of the Rakshasa whose life was spared by the King earlier even if the Rakshasa kidnapped the Brahmana's wife, the King reached Patala and killed the Naga King and sought pardon to the Queen for his foolish act. The Queen desired that the Naga Princess be some how restored her speech and hearing capacity. Susharma the Brahmana who was grateful to the King performed 'Sarasvata Sukta Parayana' (recitation of the Prayers to Goddess Sarasvati) bestowed the power of Speech and Hearing to the Naga Princess. A Maha Muni called Karna visited to the Kingdom and was pleased with the King's good deeds after his initial mistake in restoring the Brahmana's wife, the Queen as also the Speech and Hearing capacity of the Naga Princess and blessed King Uttama to secure a famed son Uttama Manu who would control the whole world!

King Surashtra had hundred wives but without a single child. He prayed to Surya Deva to extened his life but all his wives died. He resorted to severe Tapasya standing one legged amid 'Panchagnis' or the Five Sacred Fires in top summer; in acute winter braving the icy exposure in the open and in the rainy season withstanding torrential rains. He got carried away in a flood by holding the tail of a female deer and was eventually washed ashore. The deer talked in a female voice and said that she was his first wife and while in the flood when he held the animal tight, she got pregnant; in her child- hood, she ran after a deer couple ready for mating and the male deer said she would curse her; when asked as to how a deer could talk in human voice, it replied that he was the son of a Muni in her earlier life and mated with a female deer and was born as a 'Jatismara' with the knowledge of previous birth. The Muni Kumar turned male deer asked the princess to mate but she refused and the malr deer cursed the Princess that in the next birth who would be a she-deer. King Surashtra heard about the background of his wife turned deer and in course of time delivered a boy but the deer died. The King brought up the boy as Lola with the pet name as **Tamasa** who became the fourth Manu eventually and ruled the world.

Sage Rutavaak could not secure a child for long and after prolonged Tapsya finally secured a male child in the fourth phase of Revati Nakshatra and the son turned out to be a wicked person of great notoriety. The Sage consulted Muni Garga but the latter could not offer a solution as the last phase of Revati was adverse. Rutavaak performed relentless Tapasya and by the virtue of its power made the fourth phase of the Revati Star fall on a Mountain called Raivataka. That specific part of the Fourth Phase of the Star fell in a Sarovara and due to the impact of the fall was materialised as a baby and a Sage named Pramucha brought her as Revati. The Muni desired that Revati would marry a youth named Durdama and Revati insisted to marry only during the fourth phase of Revati Star which however did not exist since it had

already fallen on Raivataka Mountain. The Sage had then to revive it again by his Tapasya and the Durdama-Revati couple got wedded and gave birth to a son named **Raivata** who became the fifth Manu.

The birth of the sixth in the series was traced to a King named Anamishra and Queen Giribhadra who gave birth to a boy who laughed loudly when he was fondled by the mother. As the mother wondered about the reason of the laughter, the boy spoke that there was a cat looking at the child! The mother was frightened and ran away. A Rakshasi appeared in the form of a child frightening the Queen by hiding the original Prince; the Rakshasi smuggled away the child of a Brahmana couple and ate it but spared the Prince. As the Prince called Vikrant grew and at his Upanayana function he asked her mother whether he should seek blessings from his original mother or a duplicate! Apparently, the boy required 'Atma Shuddhi'and proceded to tapasya to Brahma for a very long time. The latter was very pleased and appointed the Prince as the next Manu and named him **Chakshusa!** 

## The Story of Surya Deva and Progeny

The Story of the seventh and the current Manu Vaiwaswata was indeed outstanding and eventful. Surya Deva who was also called Viwaswan married Vishwakarma's daughter Sanina Devi. But since Surva was too powerful and radiant, Sanjna was unable to withstand his heat and light and was so afraid of him that she could glance him with wobbly and unsteady eyes. The couple gave birth to Viwasvata Manu and Yama Dharma Raja. Yet, Sanjna Devi could not adjust and continued to suffer Surya's heat; Surya got annoyed and cursed her that she would give birth to a River named Yamuna whose course was uneven and unsteady. Sanjna Devi couple was unable to hold the wrath of her husband any longer and having created a Chhayaa Sanjna (a shadow of hers) and briefed her to pretend like the original Sanjna, left for her father's home. Her father Vishwakarma chided her and asked her to return to her husband. But she assumed the Swarupa of a mare and commenced performing Tapasya in a far off Mountain meadows. Vishwakarma and Devas prayed to Surya to reduce the severity of his Swarupa to sixteenth of his original energy. [The remaining parts were absorbed in Lord Vishnu's Sudarshana Chakra, Shiva's Trishula, Kubera's Palki or palaanquin, Yama Raja's 'danda' or stick, Kartikeya's weapon called Shakti and various Astras or Mantrika Arrows]. Meanwhile Chhaya Devi settled down and gave birth to Shaneswara and River Tapati. In course of time, Yama Dharma Raja noticed Chhaya Devi's attitudinal changes in displaying partiality of treatment to Shanishwara, and River Tapati as against the earlier children. As Yama complained to Surya about the partiality of Chhaya Devi, Surya confronted her and she blurted out the Truth that original Sanjna created her as a shadow replacement. On finding out the whereabouts of the original Sanjna Devi, Surya also assumed the form of a horse and landed where the mare was in meditation. Presuming that a horse was trying to reach her, the mare sought to secure her rear and in the process their noses got entangled and two sons named 'Naasatya' or nose-born and 'Dastra' ot teeth-born were materialised. There after a horse-riding son with Shield and Sword was born named Revanta. Sanjna was happy that her Tapasya succeeded in reducing the severity of Surya Deva. Eventually Vaiwaswata became the current Manu, Yama Dharma Raja the Lord of Death, Yamuna and Tapati as the famed Rivers and Shaneeswara as a Planet. The Sanjna-Chhaya combine also gave birth to two Ashwini Kumars who became the Physicians of Devas as well as Saavarni the future Manu.

## Future Manus-Savarnis, Rouchya and Bhouthya

While the seventh in the series of fourteen Manus viz. Vaiwaswata Manu is the current one, predictions about future Manus also were provided in the Puranas, especially the Markandeya Purana in detail. The Eighth Manu would be Saavarni, to be followed by Daksha Savarni, Brahma Saavar ni, Dharma Saavarni and Rudra Saavarni. There were vivid descriptions about the last two Manus as follows:

Ruchi Muni was unmarried and as a bachelor was not eligible to Agni Karyas. Pirtru Devatas appeared and lamented that they were unable to receive any contributions to them; only Grihastis could pronounce 'Swaha' to Agni and 'Swadha' to satisfy Pitru Devatas and the Muni was disabled to satisfy the two other kinds of 'Runas' or indebtedness to Devas and 'Atithis' also. But Ruchi Muni argued with the Pitru Devatas that 'Atma Samyam' or Self-Control was essential to 'Mukti' or Salvation and that he would like

to avoid the slush of Samsara or family life. Pitru Devas then advised Ruchi Muni that Vedas prescribed that Samsara was the natural ladder to Moksha and 'Samyama', 'Niyama' or Self Control and 'Karma Phala' or the fruits of duties and obligations were the steps of the ladder. The Pitru Devatas further instructed that what was controversial was not the institution of marriage but overcoming the limits of desire, decency and virtue and that Grihastya was the test of life! Convinced by the instruction of the Pitru Devatas, Ruchi Muni finally agreed to family life and performed Tapasya to Brahma; meanwhile Pitru Devatas located a suitable Apsara to wed the Muni and Brahma blessed him with a glorious son who would be the next Manu viz. **Rouchya.** 

Sage Bhuti swas the ever-angry disciple of Angirasa Muni who was dreaded by even Devas. Surya Deva desisted from being too hot in his Ashram, and Vayu, Varuna and Chandra could ill-afford to display their extreme features. The Muni had no children and perhaps that was the cause of his frustration and temper. The responsibility of managing the affairs of the Sage's Ashram was entrusted to one of his disciples named Shanti. Bhuti gave a special instruction to Shanti that there should be 'Nityagni' the Constant Fire in the Homa Kunda or the Fire-Pit. Shanti once went out to fetch 'Samidhas' or twigs for the Homas as also flowers, fruits and other material for the Ashram, he returned late to the Ashram and to his utter dismay, the Nityagni was put off. Fortunately, Sage Bhuti was out to perform a Yagna to his elder brother's Ashram as the latter too did not have a child. Shanti then prayed to Agni Deva without food for a week and the latter gave his appearance being pleased by his Stotras. Agni Deva was instantly materialised as 'Nityaagni' and he asked Shanti to choose any boon of his wish; Shanti requested for an illustrious son to his Guru. Agni was pleased with the selflessness of Shanti and granted the wish to bestow a glorious son to the Muni who would be a future Manu called **Bhoutya**; Agni also granted higher Lokas to Shanti.

#### Dhruva the immortal

Swayambu Manu's son King Uttanapada married to Suniti and Suruchi and the respective sons were Dhruva and Uttama. The younger wife and son dominated the King. Once Dhruva desired to sit on his father's lap as his cousin too did, the younger queen prevented Dhruva and talked insultingly and the father remained passive. The young mind of Dhruva was badly hurt and he walked off to his mother who expressed her helplessness and said that only Bhagavan Narayana could help. The disgusted boy entered a nearby forest where he encounterd Sapta Rishis and conveyed his anguish that he was not able to sit on his father's lap. The Rishis unanimouly advised that he could sit on 'Moksha Pada' or the Seat of the Supreme, let only on his father's lap provided he could worship Narayana relentlessly and please Him. Dhruva requested the Rishis to teach him as to how to worship and in one voice gave him the Upadesha and the Mantra of *Om Namo Vaasudevaaya Shuddha Jnana Swarupiney*. Armed with the method of puja and Japa, Dhruva entered a forest named Madhubana on the banks of River Yamuna, where subsequently Shatrughna of Ramayana killed Daitya Madhu's son Lavanasura. The young Dhruva performed Dhyana and Puja of Narayana with enormous concentration and dedication for years together; so much so that as a single legged Dhruva leaned to the left, Bhumi too got tilted and vice versa and in the process, Rivers-Samudras and Parvatas got disturbed. Indra utilised all kinds of gimmicks to advise, tempt, frighten and subdue the young Dhruva but to no avail. Finally, delegations of Devas prayed to Janardana but the latter assured that the boy had no ambitions to dislodge any of them of their positions including those of Indra, Surya, Varuna or Kubera and none of them needed to fear on that count. Finally, Bhagavan appeared before Dhruva and asked him to terminate his Tapasya. Dhruva prostrated before Narayana, Dhruva was elevated to heights of trance; he requested Narayana to reveal himself which no Parama Yogi or Maharshi ever realised. Maha Vishnu granted Dhruva the vision of his Brihad Swarupa and bestowed to him the unique 'Dhruvasthaana'-the Permanent Place on the Sky even above the Lokas of Chandra, Surya, Mangala, Budha, Brihaspati, Shukra, Shani Grahas, and even above the Places of Nakshatras, Sapta Rishis and Devas. Vishnu assured that while Devas would have the longevity of only Four Yugas and a few only of Manyantaras, Dhruva was granted existence for a full Kalpa! He called Dhruva's mother also to occupy the position of a Nakshatra near Dhruva Loka as she was indeed the very first to inspire Dhruva towards Narayana!

# King Vena and Prithu Chakravarti

In the lineage of Chakshusa Manu and the Puru Vamsha were Angira and his wife Sunita the daughte Mrityu who gave birth to **King Vena.** In the beginning, Vena's kingship was normal but eventually he ordered that none should perform Yagnas to Devas but to himself. He was so conceited that he claimed himself as a symbol of bravery, victory and unparalleled knowledge. He enacted Regulations verging on sacrilege and sought them to be enforced. For long time, the Subjects suffered him with hatred but the sages revolted and a day arrived when he was imprisoned; in fact Maharshi Atri the Kula Guru spearheaded the popular uprising. They churned his thighs and there emerged an ugly and Frightful 'Kaala Swarup' which was stated to have misdirected his behaviour despite his glorious ancestry. However when they rubbed his right shoulder, there was a sparkling and imposing Figure materialised with bow and celestial arrows donning a Kavacha or a Body Safeguard.

The new **King Prithu** picked up speedy popularity as he proved be an ideal and virtuous Administrator endeared by Maharshis and commoners alike. In course of time there were no problems owing to physical ailments, mental tensions and even of natural calamities in the Society. This was the first King ever who performed Rajasuya Yagna. It was this illustrious Emperor who controlled Bhumi (Earth); the latter took the Form of a Cow and sought to run away as was she was expected too much from her by various sections of the Universe. But Pruthu Chakravarti (literally he whose chariot wheels move forward swiftly without being interrupted by any opponent party) however chased and forced her to yield maximum milk to one and all in the form that they desired it. Pruthu himsel milked her having converted Swayambhu Manu as the calf and made her yield food grains to all, while in regime of Vena the staple food was of flowers and fruits. Various sections of the world milke the material as they desired; for instance, Rishis converted Chandra as a calf, Brihaspati as the milkman, Tapomaya Brahma as the milk and Vedas as the container to fill up the milk; Devatas made Indra as the calf, Surya as the milkman and 'Pushtikaahara' or healthy food as milk; Pitru Devatas requested Yamadharma Raja as the calf, Antaka Deva as the milk man and 'Swadha'as the milk; Nagas selected Takshaka as the calf, Iravata Serpent as the milkmen and Visha (Poison) as the milk; Asuras appointed Mathu Daitya as the milkman, Virochana as the calf and Maya (Illusions) as the milk; Yakshas preferred Kubera as the calf, Rajananaabha Yaksha as the milkman and 'Antardhaana Vidya' or the Art of Disappearance as the milk; similarly all other species selected their own Milkmen and calves and Gandharvas opted milk in the form of fragrance; Rakshasas opted for blood, Mountains preferred 'Aoushadhis' and soon thus satisfying every one in his governance!

## Current Manu Vaiwasvata and Surya Vamsha

King Satyavrata was the subsequent Manu Vivasvanta who had the distinction of playing a major role in the context of Vishnu Bhagavan's Avatara (Incarnation) as **Matsya** or the Giant Fish. The Story was when Satyavrata was paying offerings of waters in the River Kirtimala, a tiny fish appeared in his palms and requested him not to throw it back into the River as big fishes would swallow it and as such keep it in a container. As the fish was kept in a pot, it became too big for the successive containers and grew into a huge fish which filled in the entire Ocean. The giant fish was none other than Bhagavan Narayana himself; the Matsyaavatara directed King Satyavrata to await the arrival of a maamoth Ship and meanwhile the King should collect samples of good human beings, flora, fauna and so on and load these materials. The Matsya further conveyed that as the Ship would arrive with Sapta Rishes aboard on it, it would be hooked to the horns of the Fish to be propelled by the Great Vasuki Serpent when the totality of the Universe would be submeged in water. Lord Brahma would then be woken up from his slumber as the Demon Hayagriva who would have been killed since he would attempt to steal Vedas and other Scriptures, Subsequently Brahma would resume the task of Creation of the Universe afresh!

**Manu Vivaswanta** gave birth to ten sons including Ikshvaku, Saryati, Nabhaga and Prushaghna. Episoded related to many of the sons of the Manu are intersting mentioned here-below in brief:

Ikshwaku's lineage included Puranjaya/ Kakustha, Yuvanashra and Mandhata. **Puranjaya** fought a severe battle with Daityas on behalf of Devas by riding a Great Bull who actually was Indra himself by holding the Kakutsa or the hump of the bull thus obtaining the epithet of **Kakutsa or Indravahana!** 

**King Yuvanashra** perforned a noted Yagna targetting Indra Deva to secure a son. During the Sacrifice days, he felt very thirsty one midnight in the Yagna Shaala and drank up the 'Mantra Jala' or the Sanctified Water kept in a vessel. The Rishis performing the Yagna were aghast to find the vessel empty next morning as the King drank up the Sacred Water. Eventually, the King got conceived instead of his Queen and a male child came out fromhis abdomen which had to be cut. The cried for milk and Indra put his index finger in the child's mouth and saved him!

The boy thus born was **Mandhata**, the undisputed Emperor of the World comprising Seven Dwipas 'from where Sun rose at where it was set!' He was stated to have discovered **Manasa Sarovara** on Mount Kailasha was he was reputed to have performed Tapas at the banks of the Lake. It was believed that there was a Serpent Mansion where the Emperor prayed under a Jamun Tree from which its fruits (Blackberry) dropped into the Sarovar making the sounds of 'Jam' and the area underneath the Sarovara was called Jambu Dwipa!

Mandhata's wife Bindumati was a pious woman and gave birth to **Purukutsa** and **Muchukunda** and **fifty daughters**. There was an interesting Story about the daughters. Sage **Saubhari** a very old and diseased person who did Tapasya under water for twelve years noticed that fishes in water were having sex and procreating; the Muni got tempted and approached Mandhata to let any of his daughters marry him. The Emperor was afraid that the Sage might give a 'Shaap' if declined and asked that anybody among the daughters was prepared to marry the Sage; none consented as the Sage was very old and disgusting physically with diseases. Mandhata had a problem but cleverly replied that his family custom was that all the daughters would have to wed the same person and none should disagree. The Sage transformed himself into a handsome youth by his mystical powers and presented himself. All the girls vied with each other to marry him and the youthful Sage built mansions and all of them enjoyed. But in course of time, the Sage realised that on account of the fishes in the water, his spiritual life was ruined and although very late in life reverted back to a more introspective life and intensified devotion to Vishnu.

Purukutsa married Narmada the sister of Serpent brothers and she took him away to Rasatala the subterrain world under instruction from King Vasuki as approved by Bhagavan Vishnu to overpower Gandharvas who invaded Rasatala and other Patala Lokas. Nagas were afraid of Gandharvas as some six crores of the latter descended there for hunting the priceless 'Ratnas' / Jewels. Nagas sought protection and prayed to Vishnu in desperation. Indeed Purukutsa succeeded and Nagas gave a boon to Narmada that whosoever bathed in River Narmada by reciting a Shloka would be safe from Sarpa- Visha or Snake-Poison; the Shloka states: Narmadaayai Namah Praatarnamaadaayai Namo Nisha, Namostu Narmadey tubhyam traahimaam vishasarpatah/ (Devi Narmada! My salutations to you in the day or night; kindly safeguard me from the fear of Serpents and their poisonous bites!) This recitation while entering dark places as also while eating food would safeguard from any kind of poisons thanks to Purukutsa and Narmada!

#### Trishanku

It was in the lineage of Purukutsa that Satyavrata or the well known **Trishanku** was born. The latter kidnapped a Commoner bride from her Vivaha-Vedika or Wedding Platform and his father, King Traiyaaruni-as prompted by Sage Vasishtha the Guru of the King, banished him for life into his Kingdom; while living in the outskirts of the Kingdom Satyavrata adopted the ways of a Chandala or the lowest caste of the Society. Sage Vishwamitra once left away on a long Tapasya for a period of twelve years and as a long drawn 'Anavrishti' (famine) broke up in the Region, Satyavrata provided food to the Sage's wife and children. But the latter stole Vasishtha's cows in his Yagna Shaala and fed Vishwamitra's wife and family with cow meat and the unsuspecting family ate it especially due to hunger. Yet, on return from his Tapasya, Vishwamitra was extremely pleased and felt highly obliged that Satyavrata supported his

family for twelwe long years! But Vasishtha never excused Satyavrata on three counts: he adopted the ways of Chandala; he stole the cows from his Ashram and finally he fed cow meat to the innocent and gullible family of a fellow Sage. Thus he cursed Satyavrata as **Trishanku** on the basis of three unpardonable sins especially to Brahmana families! He cursed Satyavata to become a fulfledged Chandala thus transforming his body complexion and ways of living. But Vishwamitra espoused the cause of Satyavrata; he not only restored the latter's original position as a Prince but also sought him to despatch him in his mortal form to Swarga by the power of his Tapasya. Devas refused the Prince's entry to Swarga and the Sage took it as a challenge and created a duplicate Swarga in the outer space near the original and thus caused the Prince to hang him upside down creating Trishanku Swarga of the Thrice-Sinned Trishanku!

Harischandra, the son of Trishanku etched himself a unique position for truthfulness and virtue in Indian mythology. He ruled his Kingdom with commitment and honesty on the strict lines of Dharma and became a darling of his Subjects. But he had no offspring and prayed to Varuna Deva; the latter blessed the King with a son no doubt but on the condition of offering the child to him in course of time. As and when Varuna Deva reminded the King of the Sacrifice appearing as a Brahmana, the King kept on postponing on some pretext or another. Meanwhile, Sage Vishwamitra developed extreme jealousy and hatred to Harischandra's Raja Guru Maharshi Vasishtha; the hatred was so intense that they cursed each other to become birds and Lord Brahma had to intervene after a few years and made them reverse the mutual curses. Harischandra's son Rohitasya learnt about the background of his birth viz. Varuna Deva's condition that his father would have to sacrifice him to the Deva sooner or later and fled away to forests. Varuna Deva cursed Harischandra to suffer dropsy since the latter could not fulfil his promise. Rohitasya desired to return to take over the Kinghip. But Indra appeared as an old Sage and advised the boy not to return to the Kingdom, lest Varuna would not leave him for a sacrifice and suggested that he should better proceed on Tirtha Yatras to negate the sacrifice to Varuna. Guru Vasishtha arranged that another person would be sacrificed instead of Rohitasya and prayed Varuna to agree to the arrangement that Harishandra be freed from the disease of dropsy. Keeping in view the background of his long standing enmity with Vasishtha, Vishwamitra decided torment Harischandra. He approached the King that he dreamt of Harischandra's promise to donate his entire Kingdom to the Maharshi! The gullible King was tricked to believe of the Sage's dream and was packed him to Kashi along with his wife and son who had returned back after TitrhaYatras since he was no longer required for human sacrifice. Vishwamitra tormened Harischandra thereafter to defray an astronomical amount by way of Dakshna or fees to be paid to him that he performed for the King in the past; his wife Chandramati and son Lohitasya had to perform menial jobs and were sold in an auction to a house-holder subsequently; he was employed as a bonded labour himself at a Burial Ground; his son was dead in a snake bite while the wife brought the dead body of the son to the same burial ground where Harischandra was a bonded worker; she had to sell her 'Mangal Sutra' or the precious possession of a house wife, and even had to tear off half of her sari to meet the expenses of the burial! Such were the extreme tests of fate that Harischandra put to all due to his determination to follow what his conscience had demanded and finally succeeded as Lord Vishnu, Indra and Devas appeared when finally Chandramati was forced to take away the rest of her saree to pay for the last rites of the dead son! As he and his wife stood the tests bravely they attained Vaikuntha as their Example was indeed a banchmark to the posterity! Rohitasya was brought back to life and was made the

**Muchukunda** who too belonged to the ancestry of King Ikshwaku was the able Commander of the Army of Devas in a series of battles with Daityas for long time completely disregarding his family and personal health. Indra expressed his gratitude and asked him for a boon. As he was so tired and sleepy, Muchukunda asked Indra to let him sleep and the latter agreed especially because one Deva year was equal to three sixty five human ears and that would provide Muchukunda ample rest. Indra also gave a boon that none should disturb his sleep and if some bodydid so that person would be burnt as ash. Muchukunda descended to Earth from Swarga and selected a Mountain cave to sleep. Meanwhile, Vishnu assumed the Incarnation of Krishna and killed innumerable Forces of Evil on Earth. The most vicious of

the Kings of the times Kamsa was killed by Krishna and the enraged King Jarasandha decided to uproot Krishna. Since he and his fellow Kings might not be able to do so, he sought the friendship of Kala Yavana the valiant and cruel Yavana King; the combined army surrounded Mathura where his grand father was reigning under the care of Krishna. Just before the battle was to commence, Krishna left the Mathura Fort by a leisurely walk and Kala Yavana was puzzled and followed Krishna who entered a Cave. Kala Yavana too entered thinking that Krishna was a schemy person and shoul be vary of his mischivous plans. The cave was pitch dark and there was no trace of Krishna. Suddenly the Yavana stumbled a human body and the latter growled with shouting anger. Muchukunda got disturbed from sleep and as he opened his eyes, Kala Yavana was burnt like a soft wood into a heap of ash, in keeping with Indra's boon that who so ever disturbed Muchkunda would be burnt alive as ash. Then Krishna made his appearance and Muchukunda recognised Bhagavan who instructed the latter to move to the Ashram of Nara Narayana in 'Badarikashrama' to perform Tapasya till his attainment of Mukti.

## The stories of Chyavana Muni and Sukanya, King Nabhaga, Pradyumna and Ila Devi

Vaivaswata Manu's another son *Saryati* gave birth to Sukanya. The latter when she came of age visited a forest once along with her companions and playfully prierced into a bush while amused about what she thought were glowing worms. But they were actually the eyes of a Muni named Chyavana performing Tapas with eyes wide open and in the process got blinded. The girl got confused when blood oozed out from the bush and ran away. The blinded Muni realised that a young princess did the indiscretion and gave a Shaap that the entire military force of the King should suffer with stoppage of their excretions. Meanwhile Sukanya conveyed to the King of her playful rashness and of the Muni's shaap. King Saryati along with Sukanya approached the Muni and prostrated to him seeking unreserved pardon; the King offered the young Sukanya to wed the old Muni so that she could serve the Muni in his blindness. In course of time, Sukanya got used to family life serving the blind Muni in his daily puja and other chores. She excelled herself in her 'Pativratya' or undisputed devotion to her husband.

One day, the two Ashvini Kumars who were the Physicians of Devas passed by the Ashram of Chyavana Muni and were highly impressed with the selfless and ideal service being performed by Sukanya as an example of Pativratya. They cured the Muni's blindness and the grateful Chyavana offered a boon to the Ashvini Kumars. The latter desired that they would like to have access to 'Amrit'which was provided to Devas but was denied to them. Chyavana Muni made a request to Indra but he refused. The Muni took up this as an insult to him and performed an elaborate Yagna an favour of Brahma Deva and the latter who was pleased by the Muni's Yagna instructed Ashvini Kumars to accord the same status to Devas and thus have access to the drink of Amrita eversince.

King Nabhaga was refused of material wealth: Vaivaswata's another son King Nabhaga advised his youngest son Junior Nabhaga to perform a sincere yagna in favour of the Planetary Heads since the junior Nabhaga received a raw deal by his elder brothers in the apportionment of the King's wealth when the senior Nabhaga proceeded to Vanaprastha. The Planetary Heads-the Ashta Dikpalakas- were very pleased with the Yagna and granted enormous wealth. But when the wealth in the form of Bhumi, Rajya, gold, Dhanya, Dhana, and Vahanas was about to be accepted by the junior Nabhaga, a dark and short Swarupa with a frightful face and offensive tone objected to receive the wealth so granted to him. Indeed that dark and dreadful person was Lord Shiva himself chiding the junior Nabhaga who preferred material wealth to Spiritual Prosperity!

King Pradyumna / Ila Devi: Vaivaswata Manu's son Vishshta performed a Yagna to secure a son under the supervision of Sage Mitra Varuna but due to a mistake of the 'Hota' of the Yagna, a daughter was conceived to the Queen instead of a son. But the Mantrik powers of the Sage, the daughter was converted as a boy named Pradyumna. As the latter became a King eventually, he went on a hunting spree to a forest and entered a prohibited area in the forest despite warnings; that was a very private area where Shiva-Parvati spent time together and the warning was that who ever entered there would become a woman. As per Shiva's instruction, the King became a woman and had to enter the Royal Palace surrepticiously.

Pradyumna callled Sage Vasishtha for help and the latter performed Tapas to please Lord Shiva. The Bhagavan bestowed a dispensation to the King that he would be a male for half year and a female for another half when she would be called Ila. During the woman-hood, Budha the son of Chandra Deva met Ila and their wedding resulted in the birth of King **Pururava** who was the foremost King in the **Chandra Vamsha** to be described later.

## Other famed Kings of the Surva Vamsha

King *Vidurath* discovered a huge cavity of Earth in a forest in his Kingdom. A Muni in the forest informed that there was a demon of Patala called Kujrumbha made several such cavities in the forest through which the demon entered and killed the passers by including animals. The Muni however cautioned the King that the demon had a potent weapon named Sunanda-a Mushala or a Mace which was originally built by Twashta Prajapati. He further told the King that the Mushala w On return to the Royal Court, the King consulted his Ministers and asked his sons to take large contingents of soldiers and kill thd demon after locating him. The demon destroyed the army and imprisoned the Princes. He also managed to abduct the Princess from the Fort and out of bravado stated that none could do any harm to him till he possessed Sunanda the Mace and thus forced her to marry him. But the Princess knew about the ineffectiveness of the Mace if touched by a woman. The King announced that whosoever could free the princess from the custody of the demon would be wedded to her. An intrepid youth named Vatsandra came forward and killed the demon, since the Mace was ineffective as it was already touched by the princess while being kidnapped. The princess and the youth got married happily.

King *Vishal* of Vidisha Kingdom was blessed with an extraordinarily pretty Princess named Vaishali. The King announced a 'Swayamvara' or bride's choice for marriage and many eligible Princes attended the function. One Prince named *Aveekshith* or the one who was not viewed by any malefic Graha / Planet in his birth chart tried to take away the Princess by force. But those other aspirants who attended the function over powered Aveekshith and imprisoned him. The King then proceeded with the Swayamvara but Vaishali insisted on selecting Aveekshi only. Meanwhile the King Kardama the father of the imprisoned youth attacked Vidisha and freed; the Prince felt humiliated and decided not to wed Vaishali. The disappointed Princess declared that she would wed the Prince or none else! She retired to a hermitage in a forest and performed Tapasya. Devas were happy with her devotion and blessed her with the boon of begetting a famous son who would rule the whole Sapta Dwipas soon. Vaishali wondered that after all she vowed of celibacy excepting Aveekshith. Even while she was thinking about her vow, a demon called Dhrutakesha tried to kidnap Vaishali and a passing Prince Aveekshith fought the demon and saved the Princess. On mutual consent, the married as per the Gadharva way and gave birth to a celebrated son called Marut who indeed became the Supreme Sovereign of the Sapta Dwipas.

Marut Chakravarti not only controlled Sapta Dwipas but also the Sky, Prithvi, Pataala Lokas and all the 'Jalasthaanaas' or wherever water existed. He performed thousands of Yagnas under the supervision of Samvarta Muni the son of Angirasa Maharshi and the brother of Brihaspati the Deva Guru. The Yagnas were lavish glittered with gold and jewellery. Brahmanas who were proverbially poor full of family needs and unfulfilled desires were surfeit with Dhana-Dhanya-Vastu-Vahana-Kanakas or cashfoodgrains-material wealth-chariots, horses, elephants and other carriages. The Chakravarti's sovereignty was at peak when Dharma or Virtue reigned, human desires were nil, Varnashrama Rules were predominant, sins were the lowest and Peace and Contentment were the watch-words. In this idyllic atmosphere however, the 'Raja Mata' (Royal Grandmother) sent a precautionary note to Marut and his father Avikshith that there were some lapses in Security arrangements of the Empire as some stray cases of poison deaths of Brahmana Vidyarthis or Students by Nagas from Naga Loka. This information infuriated the Chakravarti and made elaborate preparations to attack Naga loka and destroy it all together. The Naga Kings were worried and tightened the behaviour of the miscreant elements in Naga loka and apologised to the Chakravati who was however adamant. They also approached Aveekshith for intervention and protection. Marut emphasised 'Raja Dharma' to protect his Subjects and decided to go ahead with the attack of the Naga Loka while the father pleaded mercy to the 'Sharanaarthis' or those

who erred but sought pardon which too was an 'Ashrita Dharma' of Kshatriyas. Both the son and father took uncompromising postures and the 'Raja Mata' intervened and prevented ego-clashes of the Son and Father. Meanwhile, those miscreant serpents were rattled that due to their mischief the entire Naga Race faced the huge problem of destruction and by utilising the Mantra Shakti of the Naga experts revived the lives of the dead Brahmana Vidyarthis thus putting a lid on the controversial storm.

# Origin of Chandra, wedding, Shaapa, re-emergence and Stories of his Vamsha

Maharshi Atri performed Tapasya for thousand Divya years and pushed up his virility and the magnificent deposit in the form of drops from his eyes spread out outstanding illumination in all over the ten directions. Realising the unique development, Brahma facilitated the emergence of Chandra Swarupa and provided to him a Chariot to traverses across the entire Universe. Chandra made twenty one full circles from Prithvi to Great Samudra and in the process transmitted extreme luminosity which when it touched Bhumi created 'Anna' or Foodgrains and derivatives like seeds, herbs, Aoushadhis and so on. Brahma made him in-charge of Brahmanas and their activities. He organised an unprecedented Rajasuya Yagna which was attended by a galaxy of Devas and Maharshis, besides lakhs of Brahmanas who were showered with gifts and 'Dakshinas' or cash money. Nine illustrious women like Sini, Kuhu, Dyuti, Pushti, Prabha, Kirti, Dhriti and so on. At the time of his Avabhruta Snaana or Sacred Bathing to mark the Grand Finale of the Yagna, Chandra was like a personification of humility and honesty. But soon Chandra changed his attitude due to conceit and power; he committed the 'Mahapataka' or a great Sin of enticing Devi Tara, the wife of Deva Guru. Brihaspati, other Devas and Brahma himself chided his nasty and immoral acivity to no avail. Shukracharya the Asura Guru espoused the cause of Chandra and Tara and a fight broke out between Asuras and Devas as Deva Guru headed the Deva Sena (Army). In course of time, Tara was conceived and Brihaspati insisted that the delivery should not be in his residence til Tara's delivery and that she could join him after delivery.

Then **Budha** was born and he grew as an extraordinarily learned Vidwan of Veda-Vedanga-Shastras. Brahma was impressed with Budha and thus appointed him as a fulfledged Graha or Planet. Budha performed great Tapasya to atone the sin of his parents. Brahma considering Chandra's arrogance and selfishness, made Budha's placement in the firmament right opposite to that of his father's but Budha was friendly with Ravi and Shukra. Budha fell in love with **IIa**, a beautiful young woman, little realising that she was actually the King Sudyumna a pious ruler of his Subjects. The King entered into a forest not knowing that it was a forbidden place as Shiva and Parvati spent their privacy and the ban was that any male entering there would become a female. Thus the King became a beautiful woman but due to shyness did not return to his kingdom. Sage Vasishta who was the Raja Guru of King Sudyumna came to know of the curse and performed severe Tapasya to Maha Deva. Meanwhile, Budha met IIa per chance and married her and begot a child called **Pururava**. By then Vasishta was fortunate to secure Maha Deva Shiva's 'darshan' and requested that his King be returned to manhood. Shiva granted a partial dispensation that Sudyumna would become a male for half a year and during the second half continue as IIa Devi.

Pururava after Sudyumana's retirement proved to be a model King administering the Kingdom on the strict principles of Virtue as prescribed in Veda-Shastras. Meanwhile, Apsarasa Urvasi, a Celestial Damsel received a curse that she would have to leave to Earth for a fixed term and since she had the knowledge of youthful Kings in Bharata Desha she seduced Pururava and expressed her consent to marry him on three conditions viz. she would consume only ghee or classified butter, that she would not view her bare body except in bed and that he should take ample care of two sheep brought by her from Gandharva Loka. Mesmerised by her charm Pururava observed the conditions totally. But in course of time, her hold over him got somewhat diluted due to the urgent demands of governance. Also the tenure of the Sage's curse was over; Indra's men stole her sheep and the King did not pay much attention. He chased a few thieves in his Palace and he himself ran to chase them almost unclad and the celestial 'thieves' outsmarted him. Urvasi got terribly upset as Pururava broke the contract on all the three counts and left him to return to Heaven. Pururava was fustrated as the pangs of seperation were so severe that in

distress wandered aimlessly. By chance he saw Urvashi at Kurukshetra again and she explained to him that her wedding with him was of purely temporary nature and that he would have to get over his infatuation.

**Jahnu** was in the lineage of Pururava whom Devi Ganga desired to marry; despite his disinterst as he wanted to marry Kaverti, she changed her course and flowed upto an Yagna Shaala where King Jahnu was performing a SarpaYagna. Jahnu was annoyed and drank her up. The Maharshis begged of Jahnu to release her as his daughter and the released Ganga thus secured the encomium as **Jahnavi.** 

Nahusha who was also in the lineage of Pururava had the distinction of peforming ninety nine Ashwamedha Yagnas and was nearly qualified to become Indra who should have executed hundred Yagnas. Meanwhile there was a temoporary vacancy of Indratwa since Indra fled away since he killed Vritrasura with the help of the Vajrayudha made out of Sage Dadhichis's backbone; Vritrasura who was a Brahmana by birth and Brahma Hatya Sin chased Indra. Brahma thus appointed Nahusha as temporary Indra. Nahusha who was originally a King of Great Virtue bacame arrogant and power-mongering as he became Indra and claimed all the privileges belonging to Indra like Vajrayudha, Iravata the Elephant and even Indra's wife Sachi Devi. Nahusha insisted that Sachi Devi be his keep! Sachi Devi was non-plussed at this proposal. As advised by Deva Guru Brihaspati, she asked Nahusha to come to her residence but he should do so just as Indra was in the habit of arriving at her residence by a Palki (Palanquin) which actually was carried by Maharshis. Nahusha was excited to reach her Palace quickly and having got into the palanquin commanded Agastya Muni to reach him to Sachi Devi's Place at once; he said 'Sarpa Sarpa' meaning 'Quick, Quick' and in the process gave a kick to the Muni to go fast. Asgastya purposively misunderstood the word and converted the arrogant Nahusha as an Ajagara (Python) and dropped the latter to the depths of Bhuloka into thick forests. As a repentant Nahusha begged of clemency, the Maharshi granted a reprieve that the 'Shaapa Vimochana' would be possible only when Pandavas reached the forest for twelve long years before their 'Ajnaata Vasa' or Unknown Destiny having lost a bet in the 'Maya Juda' or wilful game of chess. As Draupadi desired to secure a Sugandhika Flower Bheema got into a pond and the Ajagara caught him and agreed to release him only if he gave correct replies to the Serpent's queries. Yudhishtara had to arrive and release Bhima and Nahusha alike. Meanwhile Brihaspati and Agastya found that Indra was hiding in a lotus stem in Mana Sarovara Lake and brought him back and prayed to Brahma who exonerated Nahusha from the Brahma Hatya Sin on the ground that Vitra was no boubt a Brahmana but committed sins of killing several virtuous and innocent persons.

Yayati, the son of Nahusha and his wife Viraja, was a famed Emperor who defeated all the Kings of the World and married Devayani the daughter of Asura Guru Shukracharya, besides Sharmishtha the daughter of Vishvaparva, a Rakshasa King. Indra was pleased to gift Yayati a Divine Chariot with seven powerful horses with which he traversed the world and divided his Empire into seven divisions to distribute it among five of his sons. A Maharshi gave a boon that if any of his sons could agree to exchange their youth to his old age then he could secure a fresh lease of youth. His eldest son Yadu from Devayani refused and so did others excepting Sharmishtha's son Puru who readily agreed. Yayati took over Puru's youth and enabled him travel around to unravel earthly pleasures for long. But finally returned discovering that the ephemeral joys of the world were endless like Agni in a Homa kunda assuming larger and larger proportions as long as ghee is served and no human would be satisfied with food, gold, ornaments or women. By so realising, he returned his youth to Puru and took to Vanaprastha or retirement.

**Kartaveeryarjuna** in the Haihava Vamsha from the lineage of Yadu was an illustrious and powerful Chakravarti who pleased Indra and obtained thousand mighty hands. The origin of Haihava Vamsha was interesting: Once Surya Deva's son Revanta rode on the Celestial Horse named 'Ucchaishwara' which was manifested in the course of 'Kshira Samudra Mathana' or the churning of the Ocean of Milk. As Revanta reached Vaikuntha, Devi Lakshmi recognised the co-born horse and was engrossed in her thoughts even as she was in intimate conversation with Lord Vishnu. The latter did not like the

interference and her thoughts and hence gave a 'shaap' (curse) that she would become a mare as she was lost in indifference to him. Lakshmi Devi requested her companion Parvati to persuade Vishnu to become a horse. The animal forms of Lakshmi and Vishnu gave birth to a male child in the forest and the boy was picked up by King Yayati's son Turvasu (Hari Varma) who was performing Tapasya for several years for a son of celebrity; that boy was named Eka Vira who later became the King. Eka Vira fell in love with Princess Ekavali the daughter of King Raibhya but a demon Kalaketu kidnapped her and taken away to Patala; the companion of the Princess called Yasovati however knew a Seed Mantra which she learnt from Dattareya by means of which Eka Vira reached Patala, killed Kalaketu and married the Princess. The son of Eka Vira and Ekavali was Kartaveeryarjuna who became the famed and undisputed Chakrayarti eventually. His valour was such that in an encounter with Rayanasura the villian of Ramayana subdued and arrested the latter's Ten-Heads under his mighty arms and released him only when Maharshi Pulastya made an appeal for mercy! The Chakravarti was no doubt famed universally as he ruled with Dharma as his cardinal principle but in due course of time, he became too vainglorious and over-domineering. Once he gifted a huge forest to Agni Deva and the latter comsumed it to satisfy his pleasure; but unfortunately for Agni and the Chakravarti, Maharshi Vasishta's Ashram too was burnt off and the Maharshi gave a 'shaap'to Karta-veeryarjuna that soon enough Vishnu's incarnation as Parashurama would appear and the over-inflated Chakravati would be destroyed, especially because the latter came to ill-treat and even torment Rishis, Brahmanas and the majority of his Subjects. Indeed the curse took shape and Parashurama was born. On one occasion, Kartaveerya visited the Ashram of Maharshi Jamadagni the father of Paraush Rama when the latter was away in Tapasya. As the King and his army landed at the Ashram, Jamadagni provided hospitality an served nice food to the King and the Army, thanks to the Celestial Cow Kamadhenu was present there in the Ashram serving food to the students of Jamadagni. The King claimed the Cow as the Ashram was in the control of the Kingdom. As an altercation between the Maharshi and the King followed, the King went back but sent his army to overpower the Maharshi and the Kamadhenu and in the encounted that followeed, Jamadagni was killed and the Celestial Cow flew off to Swarga. On return from Tapasya., Parashurama learnt of his father's cold-blooded murder and in extreme anguish and anger attacked Kartaveerya and killed him. Not satisfied still, Parashurama invaded the Kings of the nook and corner of Bharat in as many as tewnty one battles and uprooted the entire clan of Kshatriyas who all by that time earned the disrepute and hatred of the virtuous Subjects of the respective Kingdoms.

#### Parashurama's encounter with Ganesha

After avenging his father's death and the massacre of the erring Kshatriyas, Parashurama desired to personally pay homage to Bhagavan Shiva and reached Kailasa; he witnessed Nandeeswara, Maha Kaala, Ruru Bhairava, Rudraganas and Bhuta-Preta-Piscachas but finally Ganesha stopped him. All kinds of requests, and prayers failed and Ganesha refused entry to Bhargava Rama as Devi Parvati and Shiva were engaged in privacy. Finally, the latter lifted his Parashu (axe) and tried to force his entry; Ganesha lifted his trunk, looped Parashurama with it and encircled him round and round where by Bhargava visioned Sapta Dwipas, Sapta Parvatas, Sapta Samudras and Sapta Lokas viz.Bhur-Bhuvar-Swara-Janar-Tapo-Dhruva-Gouri Lokas and Vaikuntha / and Golokas. In the process, the mighty Parashurama hit one of Ganesha's tusks with the Parashu that Maha Deva once gifted to Bhragava and the tusk fell off and blood gushed out. The resting parents of Ganesha were shocked as Kartikeya rushed and informed them. Parvati's first reaction was to kill Parashurama but being the Loka Mata or the Mother of the Universe restrained herself and addresed Parashurama as follows: 'You are born in Brahma Vamsha to one of the illustrious sons Maharshi Jamadagni and to Devi Renuka of Lakshmi 'Amsha'or alternate Form of Devi Lakshmi. How did you do this to my son! Shiva is your Guru since he taught Trailokya Vijaya Kavacha and countless Asrtras to you. Is this the Guru Dakshina that you thought fit to give your Guru! You could have perhaps given a better Dakshina by cutting Ganesha's head instead of breaking his tusk only! My son Ganesha has the power of destroying crores of cunning animals like you but was only playful with you; yet,you have only wantonly hurt himby breaking his tusk-not as an accident but with vengeance; you may know that he recieves the foremost worship all over the Universe!' As Parvati addressed on the

above lines, Parashurama felt ashamed of himself, prostrated to his Guru Shiva and Devi Parvati and the Almighty Shri Krishna the Immortlal. Meanwhile a Brahmana boy was visioned who actually was Vishnu who analysed the situation; indeed there was no justification of what Parashurama did to Ganesha but Parashurama was momentarily taken aback by folly as otherwise he was also like Ganesha or Skanda! Vishnu therefore pleaded being the Universal Parents might not read much into the happening. Vishnu also assauged the hurt feelings of Parvati and requested her not to impose personal angles into the unhappy situation; He further said that her son had Eight names viz. Ganesha, Ekadanta, Heramba, Vighna nayaka, Lambodara, Shurpakarna, Gajavaktra and Guhaagraja! Parashurama pleaded mercy of Parvati since she was Jagan Mata or the Mother of Creation and begged of Ganesha for pardon of his indiscretion; Ganesha was graceful enough to agree of partial responsibility and the episode was closed happily.

#### Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Nrisimha, Vamana and Parashurama Avataras

An 'Avatara' (Incarnation) is like the lighting of a lamp from another lamp; like-wise, Bhagavan is a manifestation of same Bhagavan suited to specific purpose and particular end-use. Among such Avatars of Vishnu, the first well-known manifestation of **Matsya** which retrieved the Sacred Vedas stolen from Brahma by Makarasura, the son of Kashyapa Muni by Diti, one of his four wives besides Aditi, Kadru and Vineeta; Diti's other sons included Hayagriva, Hiranyaksha, Hiranya kashipu, Jamba, Maya etc. Makarasura dived deep into the depths of 'Maha Sagara' (The Great Ocean) along with the Vedas and other Scriptures, in the absence of which the entire order of 'Samsara' (Universe) was totally affected: there were no 'Chatur Varnas'; no Yagnas, Swadhaayas, Vashatkara and the Sacred Rites thus upsetting the Equilibrium of Universal Traditions and Religious / Spiritual Practices. This led to the inevitable Avatara as the Preserver of the Universal Order. By assuming the form of a huge Fish, Vishnu entered the Ocean, killed Makarasura and recovered Vedas and Dharma.

Following a curse given by Maharshi Durvasa, son of Sage Atri, to Indra as the latter ignored the Maharshi while passing by an elephant, Devi Lakshmi in the form of Rajya Lakshmi, deserted Indra Loka and the magnificence of Swarga vanished. As Devas, Indra and Brahma approached Vishnu, Narayana suggested that one way to recall Rajya Lakshmi to Swarga would be to resort to a massive churning of the Ocean involving not only Devas but also Danavas, Rakshasas, Gandhtavas and Yakshas. The temptation to Danavas etc. should be to obtain 'Amrit' although there might be several other products of lesser consequence that might emerge as deftly conveyed to the Danavas. The arrangement of the 'Samudra Mathana'was that Manthara Mountain was to be set as the churning rod, Maha Sarpa Vasuki was the string with which to tie up the Mountain and Bhagavan himself as balancing Shakti as the Avatar of Kurma (Tortoise) to ensure that the Meru Mountain would be made stable and steady. As the churning started, innumerable of the proud Danavas who opted for the head of thousand faced Vasuki out of pride got perished due to the poisonous flames where as Devas were at the tail end. Eventally, a massive 'Halahala' or the sky-rocketing poisonous flames engulfed the Univerese and by the grace of Three Names of Lord Vishnu viz. Om Achyutaya Namah, Om Anantaya Namah and Om Govindaya Namah, Bhagavan Shankara gulped the blue poisonous flames in his throat thus giving him the epithet of Neela Kantha. By the power of the three names of Vishnu, there would never be any hardship faced: Achyutaananta Govinda iti naamatrayam Maha Mantram hareh/ yo japetpriyato Bhaktaayaa Pranavaadhyam namontakam/ Tasya Mrityu bhayam naasti visharogaagnijam mahat/ Naamatrayam Maha Mantramjapedyam prayatatmavaan/ Kaala Mrityu bhayam chaapi tasya naasti kimanyatah (Whoever recites the Three Names viz. Om Achyutaaya, Om Anantaaya, and Om Govindaaya sincerely and with dedication, none of the poisonous diseases or Agni- based frights/deaths would affect)! As the churning continued, Maha Lakshmi's elder sister Daridra Devi appeared and was directed to stay in the homes of quarrels, Adharmas, violences and sins as also in the residences where residents of such homes in both the 'Sandhya' timings. As the further churning made progress, there emerged Varuni Devi, Nagaraja Ananta, GarudaPatni, Apsaras, Gandhavas, Iravata, Ucchaaishrava Ashwa, Dhanvantari, Parijaata Tree, Surabhi, Maha Lakhsmi, Chandra and Devi Tulasi. All the Devas and Brahma requested

Maha Lakshmi to be seated on Maha Vishnu's Lotus-like Heart where the whole World would worship on Ekadashi and Dwadashi days. Devas and Brahma eulogized Kurma Rupa Vishnu and requested him to provide shield to Sesha Nag and 'Diggajaas' or the Four Directional Elephants as also Bhu Devi all reting on the permanent Avatar of Maha Kurma. While the primary reason in the Kurma Avatar was the resurgence of Maha Lakshmi and her manifestation of Rajya Lakshmi who disappeared in Swaraga pursuant to Durvasa's curse to Indra Deva, another major fall-out of 'Ksheera Sagara Mathana' was the emergence of 'Amrit' meant for Devas, which again was distributed by Devi Mohini, another manifestation of Vishnu.

As Hiranyaakasha, the mighty son of Devi Diti pulled up Bhu Devi and dragged her into the depths of the Ocean down deep into the netherland of Rasatala, Lord Vishnu assumed the incarnation of **Maha Varaha** and killed him. Devi Prithvi heaved a great sigh of relief and prayed to Him saying that he was her rediscovery, her mighty 'Adhara' or the Hold, his unique rescuer and without her existence was unreal. Since Devi Prithvi was about to sink but for his timely mercy, she was popularly called Madhavi or the Lord as Madhava. Siince Maha Varaha roared as an acknowledgement of her 'Stuti', the resultant sounds were heard as Sama Veda and he lifted the Earth by his horns in one single 'go' and leapt up from Rasatala to restore her back into her original position when Devas showered flowers and Maharshis recited Vedas, describing the Lord's playful deeds. They said that the distance between the Underworld, Prithi and Sky was the only comprehensible Place that one's imagination knew as spread over by Him, but the Unknown still remained a great mystery or Maya! Even as Maha Varaha placed Bhu Devi as a mammoth ship on the endless water, Bhagavan made divisions of Sapta Dwipas and materialized the four Lokas afresh viz. Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, Swarloka and Maharloka and Lord Brahma resumed his task of Creation.

As Hiranyaaksha was killed, his brother Hiranyakashipu reached Meru Giri and did ruthless Tapasya for thousand 'Deva' years and pleased Parama Shiva with the Panchakshari Mantra 'Om Namah Shivaaya' and secured the very exhaustive boon of victory over 'Mrityu' (death) from Devatas, Asuras, Human Beings, Gandharvas, Nagas, Rakshasas, Animals, Birds, Reptiles, Siddhas, Yakshas, Vidyadharas, and Kinnaras, Diseases and 'Astra-Shastras'. Armed by the all comprehensive boon, Hiranyakashipu had truly turned to be the Over-Lord of the whole Universe keeping all the Lokas under his control, commanding Devas and even 'Pancha Bhutas'. He had declared that he should be worshipped in Temples and Yagnas be performed in his name! In course of time, he was blessed with a son named Prahlada and as the latter came of the tender age of a boy was sent to Gurukula where all the glories of Danavas were taught. But Prahlada was a staunch Vaishnava with supreme dedication to Narayana. When he returned from his early spell of Gurukula to his father, he stunned the latter when he was all praise for Vishnu and affirmed that Vishnu was the unique driving force of Universal Existence and that he was the Eternal, Timeless, Indestructible, All-Pervading, Omni Potent and Omni-scient Paramatma. Hiranyakashipu was in great rage that his opponent Vishnu who killed his brother Hiranyaksha was being praised in his presence and was about to kill the boy's Guru; Prahlada confirmed that his Guru tried his very best to divert him from Narayana to his own father as the Supreme but failed and thus the Guru was spared. Then Hiranyakashipu himself sought to tutor the boy by cajoling him, endearing him, self-praising his own achievements and so on. He utilized the Sama (Advice and Mild reproach), Bheda (seeking to divide Vishnu as an Evil Force and himself as an Almighty), Daana (gifts of whatever nature on Earth or elsewhere) and even 'Danda' by way of punishment. But, Prahlada never ever relented and continued to extol the virtues of Vishnu. As his father lost all his patience, he resorted to measures of deadly nature and Prahlada's conviction too got redoubled. The paternal care and affection of Hiranya -kashipu were totally replaced by hatred, vengeance and retaliation for his son who turned out to be his sworn enemy; he exposed him to poisonous snakes which gave him the kiss of death but Prahlada survived while extolling Narayana; he threw him into the cages of tigers which ate up his limbs but still the Parama Bhakta survived singing hymns of Govinda; he got the tender boy crushed under elephants but still the matchless follower of Madhusudana survived praising the Leelas of Keshava; he threw him from high mountain tops but still the most trusted devotee survived rejoicing the ecstasy of Madhava's glories! Finally, Hiranyakashipu got on to his wits' end; he

said that if Vishnu were 'Sarva Vyapi' (All Pervasive), he asked Prahlada to show that Narayana any where, say in that Pillar and broke it with his mace, or otherwise he would most certainly stop Prahlada's breathing. As though there were earth quakes and storms, there emerged the most fearful Man-Lion, Narasimha, who had half-body as a giant-like Lion roaring in a manner that the whole World trembled and the other half like a colossal human being as a personification of 'Mrityu' with mighty thighs and legs; the Strange Creation which was neither human nor leonine lifted the massive body of the Danava on his thighs and tore him into pieces with sharp nails and hefty hands, rejoicing the drink of the victim's blood and eating chunks of his meat! No doubt, Devatas were overjoyed at the death of the Danava but were terrified to vision the unusual form of Nrisimha and prayed to him to cool down; they prayed to Devi Lakshmi to pacify the Lord who made efforts to pacify his anger; Prahlada who too was in shock was declared the King to revive Dharma again.

As the grandson of King Prahlada, the illustrious Danava King Bali (son of Virochana), was born as a devout Vaishnava and 'Dharmajna' but at the same time as an enormous warrior who defeated Devas and Marudganas and controlled the Three Lokas. But in King Bali's regime, his 'Praja' (the Public) was extremely happy when Lord Varuna gave optimal rains, Devi Prithvi yielded excellent crops, cows gave maximum milk, and there was alround Prosperity and Peace. As King Bali was a highly dedicated to Srihari, the usual bitterness among the Pubic and the Establishment was absent and the values of 'Dharma' and 'Nyaya' (Virtue and Justice) in the Society were intact. But Lord Indra was dislodged from his throne and so were the various Devas. Sage Kashyapa and Devi Aditi prayed to Shrihari and requested to do justice to Devas and Indra as King Bali used 'Maya' to worship Vishnu and at the same time kept Indra and Devas aloof from Swarga cleverly and keeping the best of all the Three worlds with him! Kashyapa thus requested Vishnu to be born to the former and Aditi and by resorting the same kind of Maya, bestow his Throne and Indratwa to to Indra! Bhagavan agreed to be born to Aditi and Kashyapa as Vamana Avatar. As Vamana grew up as a Brahmachari, he learnt Vedas and other Scriptures and sporting 'Mriga Charma' (Skin of a Deer), Danda (Stick) and wooden footwear appeared at the Yagna being performed by King Bali and asked for a mere three feet of land as Bhu daan (charity of Land). Daithya Guru Shukracharya warned that this short man Vamana was a fake and was Bhagavan Vishnu himself. King Bali stated that if the Brahmachari was Vishnu himself, which other greater fortune there could be! Vamana then assumed a sky-high proportion of body and measured one foot as the entire Prithvi with land, Samudra, Parvat, Dwip, etc totalling fifty koti Yojanas (13-16 kilo mtr. perYojana); by way of the 'Dwiteeya Pada' (second foot space), Vamana Deva counted the Nakshtras, Grahas (Planets), Devalokas, Brahmaloka etc. But the second foot still fell short of the required size of the second foot.Brahma had the opportunity of Vishnu's 'Maha Vishwa Darshan'. As there was no space for the third foot, Vishnu Deva pushed Bali's head down to Rasatala and made him the King of Danavas, Nagas and water-based Beings till the end of the Kalpa!

Maharshi Jamadagni of Bhrugu Vamsha did Tapsya and pleased Surabhi the Celestial Cow and was extremely contented as the Holy Cow fulfilled all his desires and enjoyed a contented life. He married Devi Renuka and performed a Putra Kaameshti Yagna and was blessed with the son named **Parashu Rama**. After his 'Upanayana Samskara' and Gayatri Upadesha, he performed rigorous Tapasya, pleased Kashyapa who taught the Avinashi Mantra *Om Namo Narayanaya Namah* and performed Yagnas, Daanaas etc. One day, Haihaya King Kartavirya happened to visit the Ashram of Jagadagni and was impressed with Surabhi as the Cow that could fulfil all desires and wished to take it away by force. Surabhi killed the King's army and reverted back to Swargaloka. The King grew angry and killed Jamadagni. There Parashurama secured from Lord Vishnu, a 'Parashu' (axe), Vaishnava Dhanush and Shastra-Astras and instructed him to lessen the weight on Earth of highly crazy and egoistic Kshatriyas by killing them. On return to the Ashram, he found his father killed by Kartaviryarjuna and rushed to the latter's Kingdom, killed him, and went all out on a spree of killing Kshatriayas to completely uproot their clans (except Ikshvaku Vamsa as per his mother's request). As Shi Rama pulled down Shiva Dhanush, Parashu Rama surfaced again and challenged Rama to break Vaishnava Dhanush and when Rama did it, retired to the Ashram of Nara-Narayana thereafter.

## **Quick retrospective of Ramayana**

Swayambhu Manu preformed Tapasya to Lord Vishnu for thousand years and when the latter appeared, Manu desired that he would like to have Vishnu as his son. The Lord agreed and said that in fact as a part of the task of Preservation of 'Dharma' (Virtue), he would like to appear on Earth from time to time as and when Dharma was threatened and Evil Forces gathered momentum; he said: Paritranaaya Sadhunaam Vinaasaaya cha Dushkrutaam, Dharma samsthaapanaarthaaya sambhavaami yuge yugey! (I shall no doubt take human birth to revive Dharma and punish Evil from time to time). As promised by Vishnu, Swayambhu was born in Raghukula as King Dasaratha and became the father of Shri Rama in Treta Yuga, as Vasudeva in Yadava Kula in Dwapara Yuga and one thousand Divya Years hence as Brahmana Harigupta in Samhal Village in Kali Yuga. The two brothers Hirankaksha and Hiranvakashipu of the Satya Yuga were born as Ravana and Kumbhakarna in Treta Yuga. Muni Pulastya's son was Muni Vishvava and the latter's wife was Kaikashi; Ravana and Kumbhakarna were born to Vishvava and Kaikeshi. Kaikeshi also gave birth to Surpanakha and later on to the virtuous devotee of Narayana, Vibhishana. Ravana brothers performed severe Tapasya and secured boons of invincibility from Devas, Danavas and Rakshasas and harassed Devad who fled from Swarga and prayed to Vishnu who assured that he would soon be born to King Dasaratha as Rama and demolish the entire race of Ravana; Vishnu also asked Devas to assume the births of 'Vanaras' and assist in this holy task. In the Surva Vamsa, Vaivasvata Muni begot King Ikshvaku and Dasaratha was born to Ikshvaku. Devi Koushalya was born to the King of Koushalya and was wedded to King Dasaratha at Ayodhya on the banks of River Sarayu.Dasaratha also married Sumitra and Kaikeyi.He became a powerful yet righteous King with Sage Vasishtha as the Raja Guru and performed the Putra-Kameshthi Yagna. From the 'Agni Kunda'at the eventful Yagna, Maha Vishnu Him self gave Darshan to Dasaratha and assured that he would soon be born to him to save the Devoted and kill the Evil. He handed over a'Kheer Patra' to the three Devis; Kaushalya and Kaikeyi took half each and gave half of their portions to Sumitra; thus the eldest boy was born to Kaushalya, Bharat was born to Kaikeyi and Lakshmana and Shatrughna were born to Sumitra. Sage Vasishtha named the eldest as 'Shri Rama' since that was the 'Swataha Siddha' name as he was the husband of Shri Devi and the equivalent of Vishnu's Sahasranaamaas, providing salvation to the devotees and since his birth was in Chaitra month dear to Vishnu. As the boys grew up, Rama and Lakshmana was one pair and Bharata and Shatrughna was another. In the meantime, Bhagavati Lakshmi was materialized as King Janaka found her while digging Earth in Yagna by a plough top called 'sita' and thus named Sita and most endearingy brought up as his own daughter. Sage Vishvamitra derised that Rama and Lakshmana should protect one Yagna being organized by him on the banks of Ganga, sine there were always threats of Rakshasas to destroy Yagnas by pouring blood and such other foul material. Very reluctantly, Dasaratha allowed to let them go to protect the Yagna which apparently served many purposes as subtly planned by the Sage: one to let the World realize that Rama a mere teen-ager was of Vishnu 'Amsa' and introduced Rama to the Rakshasas that they should better beware; Vishwamitra could teach the nuances of Shastra-Astra Vidya to the brothers; to afford an exposure to Rama at Sita Swayamvaraamong the great Kings of the day including a warning to Ravanasura that the Avatar of Vishnu had arrived; and also to consummate the Sacred Wedding of Rama and Sita. As visualised the Sage, all these and many other events took place: the killing of Rakshasi Tadaki and the Rakshasa called Subahu as also the use of 'Vayavyastra' to sweep away demon Maricha to a far off place so that he would have to float again at a later date to assume the role of 'Maya Golden Deer' before Devi's abduction by Ravanasura; the liberation of Devi Ahalya by giving her normal form from a stone due to Sage Gautamiher husband's curse; the smash of Shiva Dhanush; the wedding of Rama and Sita apart, Lakshmana was married to Urmila, Bharat to Mandvi, and Shatrughna with Shrutikirti; the rupture of Parasurama's ego by the shatter of Vaishnava Dhanush and his exit from the active life into the Ashram of Nara-Narayana.

Even as the City of Ayodhya was going in euphoria with preparations of Shri Rama's becoming the Yuva Raja (the Heir Apparent) of the Kingdom, Devi Kaikeyi declared her intention known that Rama should proceed for a fourteen year long spell of 'Vana Vasa' (forest life) and Bharata to become the Heir Apparent; this was in the light of a boon that Dasaratha gave to Kaikeyi as she saved him on a war front

and she reserved to deman it at this juncture. Bharat was out of station at his maternal uncle's place and did not know about the demand; Devi Sita insisted accompanying Rama and so did Lakshmana; Dasaratha was in a swoon, followed by death; the entire population of the Kingdom was crest-fallen; Bharata insisted on Rama's return but on the latter's refusal took Rama's footwear kept on the Throne which was worshipped daily and he became a temporary Administrator on behalf of King Rama. Rama, Sita and Lakshmana the reached the mountain of Chitrakoot for a brief stay at the Ashram of Bharadwaja, further on to the Ashram of Atri Muni where the Muni's wife Devi Anasuya enlightened the regulations of a 'Pativrata' anf finally entered the Dandakaranya where they stayed for long with Munis visiting their 'Panchavati' (a thatched cottage). One frightful day, demoness Surpanakha, the sister of Ravana and Kumbhakarna, arrived at the Parnashala and proposed to Rama. Lakshmana cut off her ears and nose and as retaliation two Rakshasas attacked Rama and Lakshmana and the latter killed the domons. Surpanakha approached Ravana who planned the arrtaction of the golden deer disguised as Maricha. Sita was tempted to secure the deer and Rama alone chased the Maya Mriga and killed the demon while the latter shouted loudly the name of Rama to mislead Sita and Lakshmana so that Lakshmana would leave Sita and Ravana could enter the scene. Lakshmana drew a line around Panchavati with Mantras and asked Sita not to go beyond the line. Ravana arrived as a Muni and asked for alms and Sita wanted him to enter the line but Ravana did not and insisted Sita to come out. As soon as she came out, Ravana appeared in his original form and abducted her by his Pushpak Viman. As Sita was sobbing loudly, the giant bird Jatayu, who was a friend of Dasaratha, made desperate attempts to stop Ravana's Viman but the mighty Ravana slashed the bird's wings as it fell down in a faint. As Rama and Lakshmana did not find Sita on their return, they frantically searched and the dying Jatayu conveyed that Sita was abducted by Ravana. Having performed obsequies to Jatayu, Rama and Lakshmana reached the Ashram of Devi Shabari a unique devotee of Shri Rama and treated the brothers with fruits and Rama gave her the boon of Vishnu Sayujya. Hanuman met Rama and Lakshmana and assured all kinds of assistance to Rama in finding Sita and eventually to destroy Rayana and his clan. He introduced the fugitive King of Kishkindha named Sugriva, raised confidence to Sugriva in killing his valiant brother Vaali who occupied his throne and after reoccupying his throne sent Hanuman to Lanka in search of Sita. The mighty Hanuman crossed the ocean and spotted Sita in Ashoka Vatika sobbing under an Ashoka tree. Hanuman convinced Sita as a devotee of Rama by showing Rama's ring and assured her that very soon Rama and Lakshmana would reach Lanka with a huge Vanara Sena (Monkey brigade), kill Ravana and his entire followers and relieve her of bondage. Hanuman created havoc in the Ashoka vatika by killing all the security personnel, five Senapatis, seven sons of Ravana's Ministers, and a son of Ravana. Indrajit the elder son of Ravana who also was a reputed warrior having defeated Indra and specialized in wars on the clouds thus securing the epithet of 'Meghanadha' encountered Hanuman who feigned Indrajit's control; Hanuman was face to face with Ravana in the latter's court and allowed himself to let his tail burn which was extended endlessly and destroyed a large part of Ravana's City as a warning to him that soon Rama and Lakshmana would arrive at Lanka to destroy Ravana and his entire tribe. On return to Kishkintha, Hanuman conveyed Rama and others about Sita's bondage. Rama, Lakshmana and the mammoth Vanara Sena under Sugriva's leadership arrived on the sea coast to reach Lanka on the other side of the Ocean. Rama prayed to Samudra Deva (the Deity of the Ocean) to reduce the force of the violent tides and when Samudra Deva did not relent was even ready to punish the Deity. Samudra Deva the facilitated the construction of Rama Setu or the Bridge in the name of Rama across the Ocean; huge boulders were thrown into the Ocean with the name of Rama inscribed and the boulders floated enabling the construction of the Bridge. Meanwhile the younger brother of Ravana called Vibhishana, a staunch devotee of Lord Vishnu approached Rama for refuge and soon became a confidant of Rama about matters related to Ravana and his associates. Having crossed the Rama Setu, the gigantic and mighty Monkey Brigade commenced furious battle with the gallant Rakshasas. Indrajit who was a highly renowned warrior fought and killed thousands of Vanaras and succeeded in tying Rama and Lakshmana with 'Nagaastra', when Garuda the Carrier of Vishnu appeared and the snakes withered away. Meanwhile Kumbhakarna, another brother of Ravana who had a giant figure fought recklessly killing tens of thousands of Rama Sena, but finally fell down to the torrential rain-like arrows of Shri Rama. Indrajit attacked Lakshmana and made the latter unconscious

when Hanuman brought Sanjeevini Mountain with medicinal shrubs got Lakshmana revived; in the fierce battle that followed, Rama and Lakshmana destroyed Indrajit. In the meantime, Ravana desired to perform an 'Abhicharatmika' (Evil-oriented) Yagna out of desperation for Victory, but a few brave Vanaras got scent of it and destroyed the Yagna. Then Ravana rode into the battle with his entire army of massive strength comprising elephants, horses, chariots and infantry and massacred Vanaras. Indra sent his Divya Ratha (Divine Chariot) to Shri Rama with Matangi as the Charioteer and the Greatest Battle of Treta Yuga was fought for seven days and nights, even as all the Devas headed by Indra, besides Brahma and Rudra, watched the Grand Spectacle of Rama-Ravana Yuddha! Rama had systematically smashed Ravana's ten heads, but the destroyed heads were sprouting again and again and Ravana was thundering world shaking shrieks to show Rama's helplessness. Lord Shiva gave a boon to Ravana to let the smashed heads were revived again and again. Finally, Rama pulled up his most powerful 'Brahmastra' to destroy a stock of 'Ambrosia' in his belly (as hinted by Vibhishana) and crushed his chest which pierced through Earth and crashed into Rasatala into the nether world. Instantly, Devas who were visioning the proceedings from the Skies went into ecstasy showering rain of scented flowers on Rama; Indra, Brahma and Rudra were relieved; Gandharvas and Kinneras sang tuneful of lyrics of the Lord; Apsaras danced with immense joy; Sanaka and Sanandana brothers who gave a curse to Jaya and Vijaya the Dwarapaalakas of Vaikuntha as they were obstructed entry to vision Vishnu were satisfied that out of three births the first human birth was completed; Maharshis and Siddhas recited Vedas and Scriptures as also hymns extolling Shri Rama. Rama then appointed Vibhishana as the King of Lanka and blessed him and his progeny to rule till the next Pralaya!

Thereafter Devi Sita was directed to prove her 'Pativratya' (Purity) by entering into an 'Agni Kunda' since she stayed away for long time in Lanka before a huge gathering of spectators; even Devas, Brahma and Rudra witnessed the scene, let alone Rakshasas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, human beings etc. Agni Devata himself brought back from the Agni Kunda and declared Devi Sita as an ever Pure, Chaste, Blameless and a peerless epitome of Pativratya. Besides installing Vibhishana as the King, Indra and Devas too were bestowed with their lost glories denied to them for long due to the much-hated Ravana and his clan. The precious possessions of Swarga like Pushpaka Vimana of Kubera Deva were restored to the respective Devas. Accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana as well as Hanuman, Sugriva, Vibhishana, Vanara Yoddhas (Warriors) including Jambavanta, Nala, Neela, Subhaga, Sharabha, Sushena, and all the survivors among Vanara Sena crossed the Rama Setu, proceeded to the site of 'Shiva Linga Pratishthana' at Rameshwara and further on to Ayodhya to join the celebrations of Victory and Rajabhisheka.

On return an anxious Ayodhya awaited the 'Maryada Purusha', the Epic Hero and the Most Significant Avatara of Treta Yuga, proving once again that Lord Vishnu would assume human birth again and again as and when Dharma was in jeopardy and Adharma tended to take an upper hand in the Universe.

In Patala Khanda of Padma Purana, Bhagavan Sesha Nag briefly recalled the Events to Maharshi Vasyayan about the activities of Lord Shri Rama, the Epic Hero of Ramayana, after the killing the infamous Ravanasura at Lanka providing great relief to Indra and Devas, Rishis and the virtuous as also the entire humanity. While narrating the Events, Sesha Nag was in a trance as the spell of Shri Rama was so intense that the Illustrious Serpent, whose bed Bhagavan Vishnu- the incarnation Shri Rama- rested on. Lord Rama bestowed the Kingship of Lanka to Vibhishana, the younger brother of the slain Ravana and sat on Pushpaka Viman along with Devi Sita, Lakshman, Hanuman, Sugriva and various other stalvarts who fought in the Battle with Ravana. Even as the Pushpaka Viman took off from Lanka to Ayodhya, there were showers of scented flowers and reverberating sounds of 'Dundubhis' (drums) from the skies by Devas and on the entire route on Earth there were loud recitals of Veda Mantras by Rishis and Brahmanas signifying the 'Vijaya Yatra' or the Victorious Return to Ayodhya. Raghunandan Rama showed to Sita some glimpses of Places like the Rama Setu by which Vanara Sena or the Monkey Brigade crossed the Ocean, Kishkindha where he met Sugriva and Hanuman, and the spots where he and Lakshmana searched for Sita. The Pushpak Viman approached Nandigram, where all these years of 'Rama Vanavas' King Bharat was ruling Ayodhya on behalf of Shri Rama by decorating the latter's

footwear on the Throne, Hanuman was asked to fly earlier and inform Bharata. As the Vimana touched the ground, there was a high moment of emotional meeting of Rama and Bharata. As advance notice was sent, the entire City of Ayodyha prepared itself with festivities and colourful receptions with joyous singing and ecstatic dances to welcome the Maryada Purusha Shri Rama, Maha Sadhvi Sita, the illustrious brothers Lakshmana and Bharata. With the Pushpak Viman descending down, the entire population of Ayodhyapuri went rapturous rendering high-pitched slogans viz.: Victory to Shri Rama, Victory to Devi Sita, Victory to Lakshmana and Victory to Raja Bharata. Dressed in their best attires befitting the euphoric moments of bliss, the 'Puravasis' had no bounds of joy in welcoming the Hero and his Parivar emerging from the Viman. The high tides of humanity who suppressed their emotions during his absence of for fourteen long years were surcharged with passions and inexplicable hilarity. Shri Rama first entered Devi Kaikeya's Chambers and after prostrating before her asked her if there were any other wishes of hers yet unfulfilled! She stooped her head down in shame and could not utter one word out of remorse and anguish. From there, Shri Rama accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana visited Devi Sumitra and Shatrughna and postrated to her too; she expressed overflowing grief and relief and profusely thanked Rama for his highest consideration for her son Lakshmana. Further on both Rama and Sita entered the Chamber of Devi Kaushalya who swooned first for some time and after recovery embraced the son and daughter-in-law and declared that Sadhvi Sita was the finest example of womanhood for ever! After all the euphoria subsided, Bharat called the Ministers, Astrologers and Maharshi Vasishtha to decide on the time and date of Shri Rama Pattabhishekam (Coronation). The Historic Celebration of 'Rama Rajabhisheka' was a landmark in Treta Yuga attended by Lord Brahma, Devas, Maharshis and the highly satisfied 'Praja, and heralded the highly famed Rama Rajya. As Rama was seated as its Head on the Naksha (Atlas) of 'Sapta Lokas' of Prithvi, all the Devas, Daityas, Nagas, Yakshas, Asuras, and of course the entire humanity were performing their respective duties with devotion and care as per established regulations of Dharma (Virtue), Nyaya (Justice), Law and Order, and Social Security. Sadhus and Sages were happy as never before, none resorted to foul means of any kind, women folk had no difficulties and they too observed the regulations as Pativratas; Sacred Activities like Yagnas, Vratas, Punya Karyas, Tirtha Yatras, Daanas, Dhyanas, and Veda Pathanas were in full swing. In response to Rama's appeals Daityas, Maha Sarpas and other Power Joints of the Rajya, none dared to follow the ways of the Evil. To Devas too Shri Ram made requests not to impose any 'Adhi Daivika' based problems such as natural disasters like Earth quakes, floods and droughts or excessive rains or 'Akaala Maranas' or premature deaths. The Praja in Rama Rajya were instrtucted to observe the 'Varnaashrama Vidhana', perform useful tasks like construction of wells, Sarovars, Temples, 2Choultries, Udyanavanas or Public Gardens, Pashu Palana or raising cattle, farming and such useful engagements rather than indulge in unhealthy and antisocial activities such as thieving, pilfering, causing hurt to others, amassing money and squandering for foul tasks, prostitution, betting, racing, drinking and yielding to immoral activities. As Shri Rama was an ideal Institution of 'Sishta Rakshaka' (Protector of Virtue and Justice) and 'Dushta Sikshaka' (Punisher of the Evil), the normal Praja (General Public) proved to be a darling King owing to his suave and benevolent treatment and as a severe chastiser and Task Master of wrong doings.

As a petty minded Washerman in the Rama Rajya scandalised Sadhvi Sita once that after all she stayed in Ravana's Lanka for long enough and was not above suspicion concerning her character, Maryada Purusha Shri Rama abandoned her so as to set an example to his Praja. This was the time when Rama intensified the strictness of his administration in the Kingdom. Sesha Nag narrated to Vatsyayana that Agastya Maha Muni visited Rama once and in the course of exchange of views, Rama desired to know from Agastya about Ravana's background, who was the Villian-in-Chief of Ramayana forcing Rama to wage a battle with the Demon for kidnapping Devi Sita. Agastya Muni informed Shri Rama that Lord Brahma's son was Pulastya and the latter's son was Vishwavaka with two wives viz. Mandakini and Kaikasi. Mandakini begot Kubera who by virtue of his Tapsya became the Chief of Yakshas and a Pushpak Viman. Ravan, Kumbhakarna and Vibhishana were the sons of Kaikasi. Kubera performed sincere and strict Tapasya and achieved the position of a 'Loka Palaka'and possessed a Vimana too; he was coming and going to meet his parents by the Vimana. Kaikasi was jealous of Mandakini and so were Ravana and Kumbhakarna

against Kubera. This prompted Ravana brothers to peform Tapasya, although Vibhishana did the meditation for noble reasons. Lord Brahma was pleased with Ravana's Tapasya and blessed him to become the King of a large Kingdom and made him superior to Devas; as a result Devas fled from Swarga. Ravana occupied Lanka too and forcibly took away Kubera's Viman. Although Ravana and Kumbhakarna were Brahmanas, they took to the habits of Rakshasas, while they suffered Vibhishana who was virtuous and devoted. But as the evil actions of Ravana and Kumbhakarna were reaching a point of no return, Devas and Indra reached Brahma for help and along with Rudra they all approached Lord Vishnu. The latter declared (by way of an Akaasha vaani or the Voice of Skies) that soon a high merited King of Ayodhya of Surya Vamsa of the clan of 'Ikshvaaku'named Dasaratha would beget four sons from three wives viz. Rama to the eldest wife Kousalya, Lakshmana and Shatrughna to Sumitra and Bharata to Kaikeyi. The declaration also stated that Rama and Lakshmana would completely destroy Ravana and Kumbhakarna as well as their offsping and instal Vibhishana as the King of Lanka in a completely new set up following Dharma and Justice. The Akashavaani further said that several Devatas would be born as 'Vaanaras' or monkeys and bears. This was the retrospect of the demolition of Ravana, Kumbhakarna and others of the Clan.

Having learnt of the family background of Ravana and others from Maharshi Agastya, Rama felt extremely remorseful that he had perpetrated 'Brahma hatya'since Ravana was from Brahmana vamsa which was the like the unique tree bearing the various branches of Vedas and Shastras. Agastya told Rama that he was the incarnation of Vishnu who was the Kartha (Originator), Palak (Preserver) and Samharak (Destroyer) and Devi Sita was Maha Vidya Herself and the extreme evil exercised by Ravana gave relief to the world and as such what Rama did was laudable but not regretful. However if there was the least feeling of regret, he might as well perform Aswamedha Yagna as the famous King Manu, Sagara, Marut and Nahusha's son Yayati had in the past and attained 'Parama Pada'. Thus the inspiration to perform the Yagna came forth from Agastya Muni.

As a first step, a suitable, sturdy and steady horse was selected with excellent features. Then under the supervision of Vasishtha Muni, the Kingdom's Chief Rishi, Shri Rama tilled a four yojana wide and long bhumi on Sarayu River banks with a golden plough; selected a suitable Yagna Vedika (Platform) with the required number of Mandapas and Agni Kundas decorated with jewels; invited Maharshis and Tapasvis of high standing like Narada, Asita, Parvat, Kapila, Jaatukarnya, Angira, Aashtishena, Atri, Goutami, Haarita, Yagnavalkya, and Sarvat; constructed suitable Ashramas for the Invitee Rishis and disciples; Conferences were held to decide on the format, procedure and daily programing; prescribed do's and don'ts of physical, moral and spiritual content; 'niyamas and nigrahas' (norms and restrictions) etc. Lakhsmana brought the Yagnashwa at the appointed time, formal Pujas were performed by Brahmanas and 'Suvasini' Women; the Surya Vamsa flag of Victory was hoisted on the horse; a gold sheet was hung around the horse-neck with an Inscription saying that the horse belonged to Shri Rama and whosoever stopped it would be severely punished; Shatrughna was made over-all in charge of the huge armed Sena (Army), elephants, horses, chariots and carts leading the Yagnashwa; Pushkala the son of Bharata was made in charge of the rear side of the 'Ashwa'; Bhakta Hanuman headed the entourage and at the most propitious Muhurta the Yagna Horse was released, along with the recitals of Veda Mantras and 'Mangala Vadyas'amid big shouts of Victory to Shri Rama Chandra. The Procession with the Yagnashva in the lead moved on with instruction from Shri Rama that the course of the Ashwa should not be conducted as the horse would move freely. The first halt was at the Avicchtra Nagari where there was a noted Temple of Devi Kamakshi who appeared before King Samuda performing Tapasya and gave the boon of invincibility; she also asked the King to offer his entire Kingdom and riches to Shatrughna as he would pass through the Nagari along with the horse of Ashvamedha Yagna to be conducted Shri Rama of Surya Vamsha and the killer of Ravanasura. Accordingly, Shatrughna was given all kinds of honours by King Samuda. After a three day halt, the King made his son a 'Samanta Raja' of Ayodhya and moved on along with Shatrughna and Pushkala.

As the Yagnashwa moved on nearing the Ashram of Sage Chyavana and Devi Sukanya, Pradhan Mantri Sumati who was in the entourage of Shatrughna explained their episode: The son of Sage Bhrigu named Chyavan was engaged in very rigorous Tapasya when King Sharyati was performing 'snaan' in the River Narmada and Tarpana to Devas and Pitras; the Princess Sukanya along with her companions was moving about in a forest on the banks of Narmada. Out of fun, Sukanya nearing a bush pierced with a piece of wood into perhaps a couple of glittering worms, but got alarmed when blood spilt out and there were trebles of Earth and lightenings. She ran and informed her father who was resting on the river banks about the incident. The King went up to the bush and found to his horror that Sunanya did not pierce the lighting worms but the eyes of a Sage engrossed in Tapasya, causing him to blindness. The King apologised profusely and offered his teen age daughter to the sick and aged Sage in wedding as a compensation. The daughter Sukanya served the Sage with sincerity and once the two Asvini Kumar Brothers who were passing by were impressed with her 'Pativartya' (seva to husband) and gave her the boons of eye sight to her husband as also youth and charm. In gratitude, the Sage Chyavan, by virtue of his Tapasya, gave the boon to Ashwini Kumars to secure sips of 'Somarasa' (the Celestial Drink) denied to them hitherto as also fulfledged Devatva with eligibility for enjoying 'havis' or the fruit of Yagnas. Lord Indra was furious at these boons to Asvini Kumars and raised his hand to punish them all but the Sage Chyavan in turn held Indra's hand tight and Indra had no option to gtant the boons to Ashvini Kumars! While Mantri Sumati narrated the Story of the Sacred Couple of Sage Chyavan and Devi Sukanya, the 'Sacrifice Horse', Shatrughna and the entire entourage reached the Ashram, worshipped them and requested them to visit the Place of the Rama Yagna, as Hanuman carried the Chyavana couple to Rama Chandra and the Place of the Maha Yagna in progress.

As the Yagnashva moved ahead, Pradhana Mantri Sumati told Sharughna that they were about to reach Neelachala and the Sacred Temple of Bhagavan Purushottama with four arms on the Mountain top. They reached Ratnaathata Nagar where King Vimal who became extremely excited and organised refreshments to the entire entourage. He also made a symbolic dedication of is Kingdom to Shri Rama and gave away valuable gifts to Shatrughna and others. King Vimal narrated an unsual story about the incidents which happened in the past about the Neelachala Mountain. He quoted a Brahmana visiting the Neelachala Mountain and found outside the Purushottama Temple there were a few Tirtha Yatris who possessed four hands armed with Gada, Chakra, Saranga and a lotus. Similarly a Kirata (Hunter) saw spectacls of a few children with 'Chaturbhjas' armed likewise with glittering robes! When the children were asked by the Kirata, they said that a few morsels of Maha Prasada which fell on the ground were eaten, they came out with the Chaturbhujas!

From Neelachala, the Yagnashva halted at Chakranga Nagar ruled by King Subahu, where Prince Daman felt that the manner the Ashwamegha was publicised all over the World smacked of pride and ego and ordered his Senapati to keep his army ready to fight. On behalf of Shatrughna, Raja Pratapagna shouted that the Yagnaashva disappeared and Prince Daman replied that he had kept the horse and if possible might get it back after a fight! A battle ensued and Raja Pratapagna was defeated by Daman. Shatrughna wondered as to who was this imp of a Raja Kumar called Daman who did considerable damage to elephants, horses and chariots and felled on ground the capable Raja Pratappagna wounded with blood! Price Pushkala the son of Bharata was so angry that he swore to control or kill Daman. A fierce battle took place and finally Pushkala defeated Daman Kumar whose body was profusely bleeding and his horse took back to the Court of King Subahu. The King, his brother Suketu who was a master of Gada Yudhha (Battle of Maces) and Subahu's son Chitranga an expert of Battle Designs had all appeared together and designed a 'Krouncha Vyuha'; the entire strength of the sea-like army of Subahu was mobilised and put Shatrughna on red alert. The most powerful warriors of Subahu were kept at the tactical head position and sides of the 'Krouncha Pakshi's war design. Subahu was in desperate and distressed condition as his son was bleeding with wounds on death bed; revenge was the watchword of Subahu's entire army. Shatrughna knew the seriousness of the situation as a minor scuffle restricted to Daman and Pushkala had snow-balled into a full-fledged battle with military offensives and complicated battle designs. He addressed the Shri Rama Sena and exhorted its warriors that the situation was such that had to be faced

with alertness, valour and brain power to be able to break the Krouncha Vyuha. Raja Lakshminidhi the son of King Janaka took a vow that he would face Suketu and destroy the Vyuha designed by the latter in no time. There was a one-to-one battle as both were equally worked up and it continued for long time with ups and downs. The warriors then took to 'Gada-Yuddha' (mace-war) and it prolonged for long time; finally, Lakshminidhi was able to overpower Suketu and there were shouts of relief resounded while both the parties appreciated with each other. In the battle that continued, Pushkala killed Chitranga. Subahu was extremely upset with the killings of his brother and son and became most desperate to kill thousands of warriors, elephants, horses and foot-soldiers and finally challenged Shatrughna. Hanuman who was providing cover to Shatrughna as he was in the defensive position and received showers of arrows of King Subahu which hurt Hanuman. The highly enraged Hanuman kicked King Subahu on his chest by his powerful feet and grounded him. It was in a stage of stupor, the King witnessed a vision when Brahma and Devatas were eulogizing Shri Rama as an Avatar of Vishnu. Having realised his folly, he made desperate shouts to Daman, Suketu and Vichitra saying that Shri Rama was none else but Bhagavan Vishnu and the battle should end forthwith. There after he apologised to Shatrughna for what all had happened, performed 'Atmarpana' (Surrender) and returned the Yagnashva with honour.

As the Yagnashva moved on for a few days, suddenly there emerged a frightful darkness since close friends of the deceased Rayanasura, two Rakshasas of Patalaloka named Vidyunmali and Ugradamshtra wanted to avenge Ravana's death and luckily for them an opportunity came on its own with the launch of the Yagna and to trap the Rama Sena by hiding the Yagnashwa. The Rakshasa Brothers succeeded in hiding the horse. Bharat Kumar Pushkal made a deadly declaration that if he did not return with the Yagashwa, then he should be deemed a fictitious devotee of Shri Rama. Hanuman too took a similar vow. Other warriors too took vows and Shatrugna was not far behind. Meanwhile the Rakshasa Brothers shouted: where is Rama; we want to kill him and take revenge! Vidyunmali straightaway targetted Pushkala and threw a 'Shakti' on his chest, while Pushkala rained arrows on the Rakshasa and the latter's chest was pierced through as lot of blood flowed out from his heart and Vidyunmali fell on the ground unconscious. Reacting to this sharply, Ugradamshtra threw a red-hot Trishul from the Demon's viman on Pushkal's heart and the latter fell unconscious inside his chariot. Hanuman witnessed that Bharat Kumar Pushkal was in risk and instantly expanded his body to pull down the Rakshasa occupants of the Viman, especially Ugradamshtra and hurled a hot Trishul on the Rakshasa, who in turn used his Maya to bring in a complete cover of darkness in which it was difficult to perceive who was a companion and who was an opponent. Witnessing these fast developments, Shatrughna took the name of Shri Rama and slashed the Cover of Maya that Ugradamshtra brought in by one arrow and with another quick arrow of Sammohanastra on the battle field. By yet another arrow, he brought down the Viman from where Ugradamshtra was fighting. The demon used 'Paashupatastra' againt Shatrughna and the latter had no option but to utilise 'Narayanastra' to balance the former. Meanwhile a recovered Vidyunmali was about to toss a Trishul on Shatrughna but a smart Shatrughna hacked the hand of Vidyunmali with an arrow and simultaneously flinged another arrow to pitch down the demon's head. Soon after in quick action, Shatrughan also hurled a 'kripan' (Small knife) on Ugradamshtra and killed that demon brother too.

As the Yagnyashva ambled along towards the banks of River Narmada, Prime Minister Sumati suggested to Shatrughna a quick visit to the Ashram of Muni Aranyaka. When the Muni was informed by Sumati that an Ashwamedha Yagna was being performed, the Sage replied that those foolish persons who were wasting their time and energy in performing Yagnas and Vratas during the short life span should be advised to best utilise their time to Shri Rama 'Smarana' (Memory) as Shri Rama was itself an Yagna, a Vrata, a Puja, a Maha Mantra, Veda and Shastra. Then Suman introduced Shatrughna, Bharat Kumar, Hanuman and others and the Sage was thrilled to see them all and re-emphasised that there was no other Deity like Shri Rama and no there bhajan better than his. Shatrughna then arranged Muni Aranyaka's visit to Ayodhya and the Muni after meeting Shri Rama in person felt so satisfied that he did not wish for anything else in life and by the grace of Shri Rama left for Vishnu loka!

The Yagnashva reached the beautiful and properous Devapura at Vindhyas where even building walls were made of precious stones and the King Veeramani was an extraordinary devotee of Bhagavan Shiva. The elder Prince Rukmanga arrested the Yagnashwa and brought it to the Capital but since he came to know that the horse belonged to Shri Rama in connection with a Yagna, the King was hesitant to approve the action. Nor Shiva, who was prayed to by the King; the latter said that since the the action was already taken, it would not be in tune with Kshatriya Dharma to take a retreat step. By way of assurance, Shiva too resolved to fight with Lord Rama, since Shiva as a devotee of Sri Rama had as much responsibility to the King who also was a great devotee of Shiva. Thus a vicious circle got into motion. Meanwhile, Brahmarshi Narada alerted all concerned ie. Shatrughan, Shri Rama, the King Veeramani and the typical 'Kalaha Priya' readied the armies of both Sharughna and the King. Raja Veeamamari called his Senatpati and got an excellent army ready and Sharughna advised Rama's army to get readied too. The opening duel was of Rukmanga and Pushkal. Rukmanga recited a Mantra and the chariot of Pushkala commenced 'Bhubhraman' (circling fastly). With difficulty the Rath was stopped but the enraged Pushkala recited a return Mantra which made Rukmanga's chariot fly right up to the Surya mandal where it got burnt and fell down but Rukmanga was thrown out unconscious. King Veeramani was alarmed with fury approaching Pushkala and as a chain reaction Hanuman sought to reach Pushkala for rescue but Pushkala became over confident and prevented Hanuman and asked the latter to help Shatrughna instead. There was a one-to-one battle between Pushkala and Veeramani and by using a mighty arrow in the name of Shri Rama made Veeramani unconscious. Surprisingly, Bhagavan Shiva himself entered the battle field at this juncture as King Veeramani the unique devotee of Shiva fell unconscious! Shiva instructed Veerabhadra to help Veeramani and Nandi to control Hanuman. Thus Veerabhadra killed Pushkala, Shiva Himself made Shatrughna unconscious; at the same time appreciated Hanuman's valour. Hanuman addressed Bhagavan Shiva saying that quite often, Shiva was confirming his devotion to Vishnu and his Avatar Shri Rama, but it was surprising that this time he was fighting against Shri Rama! Hanuman replied that King Veeramani was a great devotee of his and it was a 'Maryada' or Courtesy to defend a devotee just as Rama too would defend his devotees likewise! Basically both were two entities of the Paramatma! Then Hanuman asked Bhagavan Shankara for granting boons to let all the persons who died in this battle be resuscitated. Shri Rama made his presence at the battle field when Shiva prostrated; Shatrughna, Hanuman and all the rest were highly surprised and the persons who were declared dead in the battle came back alive and all were happpy. Shri Rama then explained to one and all that the Dharma of Deities was to safeguard the interests of their Bhaktas and what Shiva did in defending King Veeramani and his side was the best that he had done; that his heart was full of Shiva and vice-versa and those thought other wise would be dispatched to Kumbhapaka Naraka! Those who were Shiva's devotees were Shri Rama's beloved Bhaktas and those who were Shiva followers were Vishnu's devotees too.

Sesha Nag described to Sage Vatsayan that as the Sacrificial Horse reached the precincts of Valmiki Ashram, Shi Rama's sons Lava and Kusha -who were unaware that Rama was their father as Devi Sita staying in Valmiki Ashram under the care of the Sage's care did not inform the twin boys of the relationship as they were born in the Ashram after Rama abandoned Sita-reacted sharply against the inscription on the Golden Plate hung around the Yagnashva; they tied the horse and brought it inside the Ashram. The soldiers accompanying the horse ignored the two boys who tied the horse out of child play and started untying the horse and instantly, the hands of the soldiers were severed as they ran to Shatrughna to inform the incident. Understandably, Shatrughna grew angry but felt that the boys who did this might not be ordinary but might have perhaps been Devatas at the behest of Indra! Thus he ordered his Senapati Kaalajit to quickly alert the Army for a full-fledged battle. In the battle that ensued between the Senapati and Lava Kumara, the Senatapti was killed and there was allround 'hahakar' (frieghtened shouts) from the Army. Shatrughna asked Pushkal to take a big Army and proceed against the boy Lava. Pushkal said to Lava that he would be gifted a chariot so that both might fight on equal terms; as a reply, Lava destroyed Pushkal's chariot instantly and asked Pushkal now grounded was heckled by Lava on 'equal terms'! In the battle that followed Pushkal rained arrows on Lava and in response despatched a cobra like poisonous arrow aimed at Pushkal's chest and the latter fell flat on the ground. Hanuman who

was nearby took the body of Pushkala to Shatrughna who instructed Hanuman to kill Lava mercilessly. The highly charged Hanuman hurled huge trees and boulders and Lava cut them to pieces as a sport. By the severity and swiftness with which poisonous arrows were flinged at Hanuman, the latter could not control himself even as the gigantic body that he assumed fell flat on the ground! The highly puzzled Shatrughna wondered as to who these two boys were who felled the Most Valiant Hanuman himself! As he drove the Golden Chariot towards the boys, he felt that their resemblance with Shri Ram was so striking that he asked them as to who they were and what their parentage was. The boys gave a stiff reply that it was not essential to know such details since their horse was captured by them and let him try if he could retrieve it. In the course of the battle, Shatrughna was stunned and stumbled as he had to quickly change his bows that were broken and the chariots that were destroyed and was finally knock down with unconsciousness. As Shatrughna was hit, Raja Surath and others surrounded and resorted to 'Adharma Yuddha' or unjust battle and caused Lava to hurt into unconsciousness. As the news of Lava's state was informed, Devi Sita was informed and Kusha hurried to the warfront and instantly faced Shatrughna who by now got revived and nodoubt knew that Kusha and Lava were twins and the sons of Shri Rama, but the most furious Kush had was on attack with the 'Narayana Astra' hurled on Shatrughna but this powerful arrow was turned ineffective. In reply, Shatrughna took a vow in the name of Shri Rama and rleased an arrow but the desperate Kusha took the vow on his Mother Devi Sita and retaliated. Shatrughna fell unconscious again. Sugreeva took over the position of Commander in Chief and fought with Kusha as also with Lava who recovered again by then. Sugreeva too fell down and Lava and Kusha tied both Sugreeva and Hanuman and carried them to Devi Sita who was aghast to witness the Maha Viras in that condition. The boys relented to her instruction to release them but as per Kshatriya Dharma they would have to return to the Battle Field. On releasing both Hanuman and Sugreeva, Devi Sita came to know that Shatrughna was lying unconscious. Devi Sita then remembered Shri Rama and addressed Surya Deva that if she were to be a true Pativrata, Shatrughna should be revived and not only that who ever lost their lives in the Battle should be also revived! Indeed her wish was fullfilled and all was well. As per Sita's instruction, Lava and Kusha released the Yagyashva and the entire entourage headed by Shatrugna returned to Ayodhya after the successful Victory tour of Yagyashva and all the defeated Kings who clashed with Rama Sena were paraded before Shri Rama. But Shri Rama was more curious to learn more about the valour of Lava and Kusha. He was keen on Devi Sita's return to Ayodhya and despatched Lakshmana to bring her back, but she refused to return. She agreed however to send Lava and Kusha after Sage Valmiki trained the boys to sing a ballad before Shri Rama and others. The boy's sang the entire Ramayana since the birth of Shri Rama and brothers, including Sita's abandon; Lakshmana leaving her to her fate; her rescue by Maharshi Valmiki her 'Agnatavasa' delivery of the twin brothers; the Sage's excellent training of the boys in warfare and Kshatriya Dharmas, knowledge of Adminstration and of Kingship; Shri Rama's popularity with Sages, citizens, and each and every being as Maryada Purusha; Sage Vishwamitra's insistence to safeguard his Yagna and the killing of Demoness Tataki and Subahu; Sita's Swayamvara; Kaikeyee's desire to Bharata's becoming the Heir Apparent and Ram's Vanavasi; killing of notorious Rakshasas, Sita's 'Apaharana' (kidnap) by Rayana; Rama's befriending with Sugreeva and Hanuman; Hanuman's trip to Lanka to trace Sita; the crossing of the Ocean; the killing of Ravana and the entire clan, Vibheeshana becoming the Lanka King; the Rama Rajya; Rama abandoning Devi Sita on the basis of a Secret Report of a washerman's allegation about Devi Sita's character notwithstanding Sita's pregnancy; and Rama performing Ashvamedha Yagna. Shri Rama was overwhelmed with emotions at the ballad sung by the the twins, his pride to have secured such illustrious twins and the remorse to have abandoned Sadhvi Sita. Already, Sage Valmiki arrived to attend the Ashvamedha Yagna as a respected Guest of Honour at Ayodhya. He narrated how Devi Sita was fortunately seen by him in the forest that Lakshmana abandoned her; her transfer to his Ashram and her continuous grief, the birth of Lava and Kusha, his upbringing with considerable training in Dhanur Veda, Fine Arts, and what all was required by an ideal Kshatriya and a King including the nuances of Administration, Yoga and Siddhis and an exemplary human being worthy of the sons of a Maryada Purusha. Valmiki further stated that he visited Varuna Deva, Agni Deva and other Lokapalakas who had unanimously referred to Devi Sita's purity and piety as a Maha Pativrata Sadhvi born into this world; a

ready proof of her 'Shuddhata' and highest devotion to Shri Rama was the coming back alive of lakhs of dead persons at the various battles en route the travel of the Yagnashva, since she wished so! Having heard what all Maharshi Valmiki stated in Public and in the midst of the most recognised and pious Sages-in-Chief soon after the Great Singing of Ramayana by Lava and Kusha, Shri Rama asked Lakshman to visit Valmiki Ashram and invite Devi Sita to Ayodhya, in the context of the Victory Celebrations as also the Sacred and Historic Termination of Ashvamedha Yagna. As Lakshmana reached the Ashram and requested Devi Sita, she asked him as to how could she return to Ayodhya having been humiliated and discarded with baseless allegations. Lakshman narrated most convincingly as to what all happened at Ayodhya, how the Twins sang Ramayana and the spontaneous reactions and glorious comments about Devi Sita from the Maharshis, Devas and Loka Palakas (as reported by Sage Valmiki). He prostrated before her and requested her to visit Ayodhya. The Ashvamedha Yagna concluded with the display of the pride of Surya Vamsha, the unreserved gaiety of the Praja of Rama Rajya, the relentless recitals of Veda Mantras by the Maharshis, the blessings of Brahma and Maha Deva; the showers of flowers from the heavens by Indra, Loka Palakas, Pancha Bhutas and Devas; the joyous singing of Gandarvas and the celestial dances of Apsaras. Most interestingly, even by the touch of Shri Rama the Yagnashva (Sacrificial Horse) turned into a human being redeemed after the touch, since Sage Durvasa cursed the person in the past and when sincerely apologised gave the boon of Rama's sacred touch.

Sesha Nag assured Sage Vatsayana that whoever heard or read the proceedings of Shri Rama's Ashvamedha Yagna would get rid off Maha Patakas, secure prosperity, excellent health, and contentment in life; even a chandala or athiest would attain 'Parama Pada'!

Sita's 'Paramdhana' and termination of Ramavatara: After the successful completion of Ashvamedha Yagna, Shri Rama continued his normal routine of observing celibacy and administration. Shatrughna killed Lavanaura and ruled Madhurapuri; Bharat administered both the banks of River Sindhu and controlled Gandharvas; Lakshman conquered Madra desha, installed his sons as the Kings and returned to Rama for providing service to him. Shri Rama did Ashvamedha Yanga, after installing a Golden Pratima of Sita; in fact he performed several Yagnas in the same manner. Sage Valmiki exhorted Rama about Sita's spotlessness and piousness time and again and Shri Rama finally opined that indeed he was fully aware of her chastity and purity but since the allegation came from the Praja (Public), Sita should prove her innocence before the people. Sita then declared in a huge Sabha that if she performed puja to any body else excepting Shri Ram in her mind, thought, tongue or action then my mother Bhu Devi might take her into her mother's fold. Immediately, there was an Earth-quake and Sita entered into a huge cleavage. Bhu Devi herself lifted Sita into her belly and the great Garuda, the Carrier of Lord Vishnu, lifted her from Rasatala to Vishnu loka as seated on a Golden Throne. After Sita's disappearance, Shri Rama ruled for eleven thousand years. One day, an old Tapasvi came to see Shri Ram and told him that none should enter his Chamber while he was giving an important message from Lord Brahma in secrecy. Shri Rama called Lakshmana and instructed that none should be allowed to enter as long as he was conversing with the Tapasvi and otherwise that person should be punishable with death. Lakshman himself stood at the door and ensured that none would disturb. The Tapasvi conveyed that since the death of Ravana, Kumbhakarna and other demons Rama was to live for eleven thousand years and that it was time for Rama to leave Earth and return to Vaikuntha. While this secret conversation was going on, Durvasa Maharshi arrived and wished to meet Shri Rama, but Lakshmana declined entry stating that a representative of Brahma was in an important conversation and that he could not see Shri Rama then. Durvasa grew angry and threatened Lakshmana with a severe curse if he did not permit entry. As there was no other alternative between Rama's instruction and Durvasa's threat of curse, Lakshman entered River Sarayu, taking his original Swarupa of Ananta Naga with thousand hoods. After the meeting with Kaala Deva in the form of the old Tapasvi, Rama realised that Lakshman also having gone, it was time for him also to terminate his 'Avatar'; he established Kusha in Kushayati Kingdom and Lava in Dwaravati as their Kings. Taking a hint from Shri Rama, Vibishana, Sugriva, Jambavan, Hanuman, Neela, Nala, Sushena and Nishada Raja Guha arrived. Shatrughna performed the coronatation of his sons at Ayodhya. The rest of them said that they would not like to stay back on Earth in the abscence of Rama

even for a moment. But Rama asked Vibhishana to continue in power at Lanka for long time and instructed Hanuman to continue on Earth forever to sustain the message of Shi Rama. The rest of them accompanied Shri Rama into the Sacred Sarayu River. Bharat, Shatrughna, and all the citizens of Ayodhya along with their wives, Mantris, Servants, Vedikas, Brahmanas, the nearby animals, birds, and all other Beings who accompanied Shri Rama never looked back. As Shri Rama went deep into the River, Lord Brahma, Devas, Rishis and all Celestial Beings extolled Raghunatha even as He took the Huge Form of Maha Vishnu with his four hands along with Bharata as Shankha, Shatrughna as Chakra, as also Gada with Sri Devi and Bhu Devi beside Him.

# Shri Krishna Charitra: his birth, miracles, account of his progeny and Niryana

As the most dreaded Daitya Kalanemi ruled over the entire Martyaloka and harassed the entire Public day and night, Bhagavan Vishnu terminated him but he came back in his next birth as Kamsha the son of Ugrasena; it was at that juncture there were a huge stock of Rakshasaas like Arishta, Dheniuka, Keshi, Pralamba, Naraka, Sunda, and Banasura the son of Bali Chakravarti and most of the Evil was spread over as Rulers of several Kingdoms. Devi Bhumi was unable to the bear the brunt of such Evil Forces and made a reverential appeal to all the Devas and through them to Brahma Deva and the latter made a powerful appeal to Bhagvan Vishnu to save the Earth which was being crushed by extraordinary pressure on account of the Evil .

In response to the Stuti by Brahma, Bhagavan assured that two of his 'Keshas'-one Shewta or white one and another a Shyama or dark complexion would be pulled out to soon descend as his 'Amshas'or incarnations on Earth and lighten its weight by uprooting all the Evil Forces and advisedy the Devas also assume appropriate Rupas as human beings inn the task of destroying the Rakshasas and humans in the form of Rakshasas. Bhagavan further instructed Yoga maya to perform a series of deeds including the birth of six sons to Devaki [they were Kalanemi's sons devoted to Vishnu and the father cursed the sons that they would be be killed by them in his hands in the next birth as per 'Harivamsha'] As King Kamsa was obsessed with the warning of Sage Narada that the eighth child of Devaki would kill him, he imprisoned Devaki and his brother-in-law who agreed to deliver all his progeny as soon as they would be born, Kamsa spared killing them and merely imprisoned them. Now, the game plan that Vishnu explained to Yogamaya was as follows: She would transfer Devaki's seventh son who would be of Sesha's Amsha as an embriyo into the Garbha of Vasudeva's second wife Rohini so that the Public would believe that out of fear Devaki's seventh child was a miscarriage but that Sesha-amsha would be known as Samkarshana as he would be implanted or attracted to Rohini's garbha; the Ashtami Putra would be Bhagavan himself born to Devaki but Yogamaya would be conceived to Yashoda; there would be a transfer of Bhagavan Krishna by Vasudeva to Yashoda and the girl child Yogamaya would be brought back to Mathura in the prison of Devaki; as in the past, the Yoga maya, the so called Eighth child thus transferred would fly away and warn Kamsa that the real Bhagavan was already born and soon kill Kamsa.Bhagavan blessed Yogamaya to undertake the deeds assigned and Indra would take her as his own sister; she would kill a number of Rakshasaas like Shumbha and Nishumbha; she would be known as Bhuti, Sannati, Kshaanti, Kaanti, Akasha, Prithwi, Dhruti, Lajja, Pushti, Usha and various other Shaktis in the Universe.

As per the plan indicated by Bhagavan Vishnu, he was born to Devaki Devi and along with Vasudeva gave his appearance in his full glorious form with four hands armed with Shankha-Chakra-Saranga and Gada for a while before taking the form of a boy; the violent winds sweeping Mathura herebefore bacame cool and calm by the midnight hour; Gandharvas sang tuneful hymns; Devatas showered celestial flowers from the heavens; clouds made lightenings and mild thunders from the sky; Vasudeva transferred the child to Gokula into the house of Yashoda and Nanda wading across the River Yamuna making way during the rain while Sesha Naga provided cover; and Vasudeva brought the female child Yogamaya from the bed of Yashoda who was unconscious back to the prison in Mathura. Meanwhile, the Security personnel of the prison of Devaki-Vasudeva were lulled to deep sleep till the 'Operation of Child Transfers', ie Bhagavan Krishna to Yashoda's bed and of Yogamaya to that of Devaki's. Kamsa reached the prison and despite the wailing protests of his sister sought to toss the child against a stone as he did to

seven other babies in the past, but the child flew from his hands and appeared on the sky as a Mayashakti with eight hands and shouted at Kamsa: Hey Kamsa! What is the use of your wasted breath in trying to toss me; your death would take place with certainty soon as the incarnation of Vishnu has already been born and would kill you again as you were the Kalanemi Daitya in your previous birth; so better plan soon to save your skin! Having said, Devi Maha Maya disappeared. Kamsa then thought that there was no point in keeping Devaki and Vasudeva in prison and called for an urgent conference of his Daitya Allies like Keshini, Dhenuka, Putana, Arishta and others to chalk out an action plan to the Boy was was born and addressed them as follows: 'Devas headed by Indra are seeking to kill me and us headed by Jarasandha; we had already witnessed the trials of Devatas in several of battles in the past, when they could never show their chests but only their backs! Had Indra forgotten the recent incident of his trial to stop rains in our Kingdoms and we forced the clouds to burst out and we had plentiful of rains and crops! I feel sorry for the desperation with which the Devas are once again trying to challengey us; it is highly amusing that they desire to kill me! In any case we have to be alert any way and double up our efforts!

In right earnest, the efforts of the Daityas to demolish Krishna even as a toddler were planned and executed; Kamsa first despatched Mayavi **Putana** in disguise as a pretty woman to breast-feed poisonous milk to Krishna but quite playfully Krishna bit her nipple as she was instantly killed; the entire Gokula was aghast as to how the Toddler had a miraculous escape and Nanda prayed to Bhagavan to save the child from all kinds of mishaps saying: May Bhagavan protect the child from all the directions of North-South-East and West; may Madhusudana save the child from the Vidashaas of North East-South East-SouthWest and North West; may Hrishikesha guard the child from the Sky and may Adi Sesha Deva shield the boy from Earth!

There have been a series of miracles that followed the Putana incident from time to time as the two brothers were growing in Yashoda-Nanda's house. One day Madhusudana was kept under a **Shakata** (Cart) in the backyard of their house and the child apparently cried for milk and threw up his legs while lying down and the cart was pushed up and got broken into pieces; the children around witnessed that the child did threw up the cart with his feet! The parents wondered as to how a child could do it! They performed a Puja with flowers-fruits-curd and 'Akshatas' or rice grains to ward off any Evil eye! After a few days Gargaachaarya performed **Namakarana**; the younger one as Krishna and the elder as Balarama. In course of time, the boys were able to crawl and disappear amid the flock of cattle and apply cow dung on their bodies; both Yashoda and Rohini were fed up and tied to a heavy stone used for pounding grains which was kept in between two huge **Yamalarjuna Trees** in the backyard and got busy with their houshold chores. Suddenly, there were heavy sounds as the two huge trees fell down and the neighbours witnessed that two Celesitial Beings emerged from the trees and flew away! Krishna was called Damodara as there was a scar around his waist due to the black mark of the rope with which Yashoda tied Krishna to the heavy stone.

As queer incidents like the killing of Putana, lifting of cart, sudden sand storm and uprooting of huge trees were happening, Nanda desired to shift to **Brindavana** from Gokula and made the entire population agree to the arrangement. All the 'Vraja vaasis' shifted to the new place and in course of time, the boys came of teen age, adopted distinct dress code, sported a golden headgear with peacock feathers and flute and excelled themselves as unique flutists especially as cowherds in the large company of Gopas and Gopikas exchaging practical pranks and mischief. One day, Krishna went with his friends without Balarama and while wandering came across a frightful water body known as the place in which **Kaliya** Serpent and its family stayed; the companions of Krishna suggested that the particular pond should be avioded as the water in it was highly poisonous as thirsty human beings, cattle and even birds would die instantly. But Krishna never heeded the warnings and from a tree top on the banks of the pond dived into it even with full awareness that the tree was burnt due to the poisonous flames that emitted from the pond. Gopala Ganas raised a hue and cry and informed one and all in Brindavan and the entire public got collected around the lake. Nanda Kumar wasa lost in dismay while Yashoda and quite a few Gopikas were readying to leap into the water, but Balarama cooled down the agitated relatives and the public

stating that Krishna was not an ordinary human being and that he was Bhagavan Vishnu himself; he conveyed to Krishna as follows: Deveshwara! Are you not aware that you are Ananta; and if so why are you displaying the Manava Bhaava or the characteristics of human beings! You are yourself the ultimate refuge of the Universe as its Creator-Presever-Terminator just as the axis of a wheel and its spokes! Indeed you are the embodiment of Three Lokaas and Three Vedas; Jagannaatha! You have assumed human form to demolish the Evil Forces and lighten the burden on Earth. Krishna! It is time that you discard this childishness and human features and quickly control the poisonous teeth of the cruel serpent once for all! There inside the poisonous pond the whole family of Kaliya surrounded Krishna and the enormous serpent sought to encircle his body; but Krishna smiled even as what Balarama said and fisted and pounded the most obnoxious creature in such a way that he held his tail with one hand and jumped up on its hoods and compressed them with mighty force; as Krishna brought the serpent in total control the latter obeyed Jagannatha and the unusual spectacle of floating and dancing Krishna atop the creature's hoods delighted the entire Vraja Praja! The poisonous water of the pond was full of Kaliya's red blood and his wives and children begged of Krishna not to kill it. The humiliated Kalia realised the magnificence of Krishna and extolled him stating: Even Brahma, Rudra, Chandra, Indra, Marudganaas, Ashvini Kumaaraas, Vasuganas and Adityas could not commend you adequately, how could I pay tributes to your excellence! Then Krishna instructed Kaliya and his large family to leave the pond at once and assured that his formidable enemy Garudmaan would recognise his footprints and let them pass to reach the Sea in which they could reside fearlesly for long time.

After the Kaliya incident, there were the exterminations of **Dhenukasura** who entered the group of cows which Krishna took out along with Balarama and other Gopas as also of **Pralambasura** who quietly joined the Gopas and participated in a game of carrying on his back the elder brother Balarama and flying him away but the latter suppressed the Asura by his ever increasing body weight and finally the Asura collapsed to death. There were quite a few other killings by Krishna of many Asuras in an exercise of lightening the evil forces on Earth; Vrishabasura was externinated, Daitya **Keshi** was despatched to hell and scores of other Daityas were slaughterd. Then there was the anger of Indra who was not traditionally worshipped by Vraja vaasis on the arrival of Sharat Ritu but as per the advice of Krishna they did not; Indra's fury resulted in torrential rains and washed out Vraja Bhumi but Krishna lifted **Govardhana Mountain** by his little finger to protect the Gokula Praja and provided shield to them all and there by destroying the ego of Indra. But Indra's fury was only to popularise Krishna's magnificence by creating an opportunity that Krishna indeed was Supreme. During the times that followed, the Gopikas of Vraja displayed intense attachment and infatuation for Krishna that culminated in Raasa-leelas or ecstatic dances in groups in which there were as many Krishnas as Gopikas on one to one count besides a Unique Krishna belonging to one and all!

Devarshi Narada then felt that the time was reap enough to provoke and destroy the major villian Kamsa and made a friendly call to the King. He conveyed to Kamsa the various deeds of Krishna and Balarama who now entered the teens and that it might be a good idea to invite them to Mathura to meet their parents and celebrate their trip to Mathura. The evil-minded Kamsa felt that as the Vrja Brothers might become more powerful and difficult to destroy by the day, he planned for a friendly trip to Mathura and asked Akrura the Yadava Elder to personally visit Gokula-Brindavan and escort Krishna and Balarama, ostensibly to attend a Dhanush Yajna on the next Chaturdashi and also enjoy the celebrations like 'Malla Yuddhhas' (wrestling matches) by the notorious Chanura and Mushtikaas. Kamsa day-dreamt that after killing Balarama Krishnas followed by those of Nanda and Vasudeva and his foolish and timid father Ugrasena now in prison, he would annexe Gokula-Brindavan easily and enjoy the property of cows and grains! Akrura left for Brindavana and invited Krishna-Balarama to Mathura to attend the Yagna and Celebrations; their parents were grieved; Vrajavaasis were saddened; Gopaas were upset; Gopikas were alarmed at the absence. As he approached Gokula, Akrura took bath in River Yamuna and happened to meet Krishna and Balarama in person as they too were whiling on the river banks along with their pals; he was in trance in visioning Krishna and broke out in a spontaneous 'Stuti': My hearty salutations to you the Sanmaatra Swarupa, Achintya Mahima, Paramatma, Sarwayyaapi, Aneka Rupaa due to Karanaas /

Causes but basically of a Singular / Unique Form--- Namo Vaasudeva, Namo Sankarshana , Pradyumna and Aniruddha!.

As Bhagavan Krishna and Balarama entered Mathura, they asked Akrura to leave them alone as they preferred to walk up by the 'Raja Maarga' to enjoy their interaction with the Public; the passers by were seeing and conversing among themselves in small groups in low tones. Their first encounter was with a Rajaka or Washerman who happened to be from the Royal Palace of King Kamsa; as the brothers were attracted to the colourful dresses, they asked the Rajaka to give them a few nice dresses but the haughty washerman talked rudely and arrogantly which provoked Krishna to beat him and pulled him down on the ground and helped themselves a few dresses of their choice. A little ahead, another person kept on staring at the boys and asked them nicely as to where were they coming from; he said that he was a Maali or a flower seller and invited them to his home nearby and offered them nice flower garlands; Krishna was pleased at his pleasant conduct and gave him the boon that all along his life, the Maali would be happy, prosperous and well-contented! The next encounter was with a Kubja or a short and deformed girl and Krishna asked her as to where was she going and what was she carrying; as she said she was carrying Gandha or sandal wood paste, Krishna wished to provide the fragrant paste to him and in turn, he lifted up by her chin and straightened her up by pressing her feet and she was made straight and shapely at once! She invited the boys to visit her home nearby where she offered them nice scents and aromatic pastes; such were the memorable encounters that Krishna and Balarama had while proceding to the 'Yaga Shaala' at the end of the Raja Marga. Inside the Yaga shaala there was a massive **Deva Dhanush** and Krishna broke it playfully as the thundering sound was heard all over; as he heard this huge sound, Kamsa realised that the boys had arrived and that they would have broken the Dhanush! He called Chanura and Mushtika and said that the next evening Krishna and Balarama would invite at the Yaaga Shaala to a friendly wrestling and that they should somehow kill them by giving an impression to the Public that the killing was accidental. Next evening the boys arrived at the Yaga Shaala to participate the Royal Celebrations and the Trainer of a huge rouge elephant called **Kuvalkayapeeda** readied the animal to lift up the boys at the Entrance Gate and trample them; Krishna-Balaramas on arrival understood the intention of the elephant and as it lifted them up they landed on its back and pounded it with their fists, twisted its tail and trunk and felled the animal down with a thud and it breathed its last. The entire audience especially the Yadavas cheered up the boys with resounding applause and the men and women in the Sports Arena loudly chattered about the ecscapades of the Boys ever since their arrival at Mathura including their encounters with the Rajaka, Maali, Kubja, Dhanush and the Rougue Elephant; they kept on discussing about his miracle acts of killing various Asuras, lifting Govardhana Mountain and the juicy tales of Raasa Leelaas! Meanwhile Kamsa announced that the duo of Krishna an Balarama would participate in friendly wrestling matches with the fearful wrestlers like Chanura and Mushtika. There were mixed feelings in the audience that such 'Malla Yuddhas' between the untrained teens and expert wrestlers were not just good jokes but of evil intentions and a few others felt that such deeds were indeed meant for fun. The wrestling bouts looked funny and comical in the beginning but as Chanura and Mushtika looked serious, the atmosphere became tense and as the tiny boys were lifted by the mountainlike professionals, the instrumental music in the theatre stopped and every one in the audience were holding their breath. Balarama shouted to Govinda: Victory be with you Krishna! Kill Chanura at once! Krishna sat on the Danava's shoulders and gave a mighty blow on his head which was smashed and the tall and powerful Chanura lost his balance and crashed on the ground with a thud and died instantly! It was then the turn of Balarama to hit on Mushtika's head, stomach and knees and the latter too was shattered. Krishna then took full control of another Malla Raja called Toshkala and both the brothers surrounded him and simultaneously punched and whacked him and that colossal wrestler too went the same way to death; the pack of other werestlers in the arena ran for their lives and there were such shouts and hoots from the audience cheering and acclaiming Krishna and Balarama with victory. As there was ruckus and uproar in the Hall, Yadavas went wild with ecstacy and other citizens of Mathura too were confident that the last hour of the tyrant King Kamsa had arrived. Kamsa shouted at the soldiers that let the 'Gwaala baalakaas' be chased and hounded; a smiling Vaasudeva leapt up on the Platform where

Kamsa sat with his Security Chiefs, dragged him down to the Wrestling Arena and overpowered him; thus the most heinous villian of the Era was exterminated once for all.

Then Krishna and Balarama prostrated before Vasudeva and Devaki who were also in the audience and the latter embraced the dear sons with affection on one hand and unlimited devotion on the other. Vasudeva addressed Krishna as follows: Prabho! Be kind to us; the benediction bestowed by you to Devataas that you would be born to us was amply fulfilled. You had recognised my worship and were born in our household to destroy evil forces on Earth and indeed my Vamsha had since been purified!---We have been in this Maya or Illusion that you are our son and was thus rattled from the fear of Kamsa and took you to Gokula; since you had grown up there and thus we now do not have that extreme obsession for you; so far we have witnessed such impossible deeds by you which were not conceivable of Rudra, Marudganas, Ashvini Kumars or Indra; Now my Moha / passion for you as a son is not there as now I realise you are Bhagavan Himself to protect the World from the Evil.

After prostrating before the parents and receiving their blessings, Krishna and Balarama greeted Yadava elders; consoled Kamsa's wives; released Kamsa's father **Ugrasena** from shackles and appointed him as the King; made Sudharma as the Raja Guru; requested Sandipa Muni to perform the 'Upanayana Samskara' of themselves; and entered into the house of Guru **Sandipa Muni** for tutelage for Veda Parayana, Astramantras and Astra prayoga, besides the nuances of Dhanurvidya -all in just forty six days! Sandipa Muni realised that such impossible and para-human abilities were displayed by Krishna-Balaramaas as though Surya and Chandra were their pupils in his house!). After their studies, Krishna and Balarama offered **Guru Dakshina** and the Muni wailed for their son dead in the Ocean at Prabhasa as he was devoured by a Demon Panchajanya ( who had the shape of a conch shell). The boys then entered the Ocean, killed the Demon and by blowing a conch shell made of the skeleton of the Demon entered 'Samyamani' the Abode of Yamadhararaja and brought the dead boy alive and gave the Guru Dakshina to the Muni and his wife!

There after they visited **Uddhava**, their childhood friend and nephew, requested him to visit the Vraja places and meet their parents and well wishers as also the Gopikas and narrate to them an account of their activities at Mathura. Uddhava on reaching the Places met them all, and narrated the happenings. He returned back, after an emotional and tearful send-off with return messages from all of them, especially Gopikas.

The two Queens of the deceased Kamsa, Asti and Prapthi, approached their father Jarasandha, the highly powerful Monarch of Magadha and asked for retribution for the 'misdeeds' of Balarama and Krishna. With a huge army under him, Jaraasandha attacked Mathura with some twenty three Akshouhinis of infantry, cavalry and elephantry and challenged Krishna and Balarama. But as Krishna was fighting the massive opponents even with a minor number of Army, he asked for his (Vishnu's) Shaaranga Dhanush with limitless arrows and his Gada /Mace called Kaumudi while Blalarama recalled his Hala / plough and Musala; Jarasandha and his huge army was shattered into pieces, bur Jarasandha was spared so that he could return back by regrouping his men and material. Indeed he returned back again and again, getting routed for seventeen times. When Jarasandha was expected to attack for the eighteenth time, - his allies viz. Yavanas, the Mleccha foreign forces- headed by Kalayavana attacked Mathura with thirty million barbarian soldiers of desperation and cruelty. Krishna and Balarama felt that while they would fight with Yavanas, Jarasandha's army might simultaneously harm Yadus. Thus they planned to build a new place, named Dwaraka (with twelve Gates) and asked Visvakarma, the Architect of Devatas who created a beautiful and well structured fortress City touching the Western Sea. By means of His mystic Yoga Maya (Power of Illusion), the Citizens of Mathura got transferred, lock-stock and barrel-overnight to **Dwaraka** and found themselves in luxurious palaces.

Even as Balarama was defending Mathura, Krishna attracted the attention of Kalayavana, passing singly by foot, by the Main Gate of Mathura. Kalayavana followed Krishna closely but always unreachable with some distance apart and led the Mlechha into a mountain cave. Thinking that Krishna Himself assumed a

new 'Rupa' (Body) as an old and haggardly person in the cave as Krishna was known for such powers, Kalayavana kicked the old man fast asleep. Indeed He was not Krishna but **Muchukunda**, the son of Mandhata of Ikshvaku dynasty. He was the defender of Demi-Gods from Daityas for long but since Lord Kartikeya became the Commander of Demi-Gods, the latter relieved Muchukunda of his duties and Kartikeya advised him of retirement and since then he was sleeping in the cave, unaware of hundreds of years passed by! By his very looks of fire, Muchukunda converted Kalayavana into ashes as per Indra's benediction that if anybody disturbed his slumber would be burnt to ashes! Muchukunda demanded Krishna to identify himself and the latter disclosed that he was the son of Vasudeva of Yadu Kula of Chandra Vamsha; Muchukunda then recalled Gargya Muni's statement that Krishna the son of Vasudeva and the Avatara of Vishnu would liberate him! He greeted Krishna and narrated Gargya Muni's statement and acclaimed him as follows: 'Bhagavan! Just as in the 'Devasura Maha Sangraam'when I helped Devatas to demolish Daiytas, the Daityas were unable to tolerate my radiance; but now I am similarly unable to withstand your extreme illumination of your Physique now! You are indeed the last and total shield against humanity:

Subsequently Krishna granted a wish to Muchukunda to be reborn as a Sage from his Kshatriya's current birth. Muchukunda exited from the cave into a World transformed from what he knew and realised that Kali Yuga was on the anvil, as the size of humans, animals, birds and trees was reduced considerably. He proceeded to Gandhamadana mountain and reached Nara-Narayana Ashram and meditated for the rest his life. Meanwhile, Krishna and Balarama found Mathura under the seige of Yavanas but with their Chief Kalayavana was found missing, they were shattered by a handful of Yadava soldiers and of course by Krishna and Balarama.

[Jarasandha imprisoned a number of Kings at Yudhishtar's Rajasuya Yaga since they agreed to Krishna becoming the Chief Guest; subsequently when Krishna, Bhima and Arjun visited Jarasandha's Palace in disguise as Bramanas to free the Kings, the three of them challenged him for a duel with any one of them and Bhima was chosen. Jarasandha was not getting killed for many days and Krishna hinted to tear the opponent's body by demonstrating the cutting of a branch of a tree and throwing up the pieces upside down in opposite directions; a Rishi blessed King Brihadhratha (father of Jarasandha) for a child but he gave only one fruit, where as the King had two wives; he cut the fruit into two half pieces and distributed to the two wives, but they delivered a child in two pieces; as the two pieces were discarded, a Demoness called Jara collected them and arranged the body pieces upside down and a boy came up with life, who was called as Jara-sandha or the one united by Jara. Hence Krishna's advice to Bhima to tear the body and throw the two parts apart topsy-turvey. After Bhima killed Jarasandha, some 21,000 Kings, defeated in wars and imprisoned, were liberated.]

Rukmini's abductionby Krishna: Maharshi Parashara narrated the story of Devi Rukmini's abduction by Krishna. Both of them were fond of each other and desired to wed together. But, Rukmi the brother of Rukmini hated Krishna and was keen on his sister wedding his friend Sisupala. He influenced his father King Bhishmak and even arranged their engagement much against the objection of Rukmini. At the Wedding Ceremony, the Guest List included Kings like Salva, Jarasandha, Dantavakra and such other opponents of Krishna; the King invited Balarama and Krishna too. Fearing that Krishna, who proposed earlier to wed Rukmini, might create trouble at the Function, Rukmi as well as Sisupala prepared for any eventuality alerting their Armies; Salva, Jarasandha, and other well wisheres too readied their armies too. But so did Balarama. Precisely when the Bride entered the Wedding Platform, Krishna took away Rumini like a surprise flash and both of them fled away in the Chariot of Krishna with the flag of Garuda atop. The armies of Sisupala and associates could hardly prevent the Glorious Abduction. Rukmi was unable to bear the insult and followed Krishna's chariot but was defeated and his moustache and beard were shorn by Krishna as a symbol of His victory. Subsequently, King Bhishmaka performed the wedding most appropriately.

**Pradyumna** was born to Rukmini and Krishna and the son looked exactly like Krishna. When he was hardly ten days old, Demon Sambara kidnapped the child not knowing that he was the son of Krishna

threw him in the Sea as a huge fish ate him but the child was safe in its belly. A fisherman caught hold of the big fish and presented it to the King Sambara who in turn gave it to Mayavati the head cook of the King's kitchen who cut the fish to find an attractive baby inside. At that very juncture, Brahmarshi Narada appeared in the kitchen and revealed the Story to Mayavati of Lord Rudra turning 'Manmadha' (Cupid) into ashes when he and Rati (Cupid's wife) aimed Floral Arrows. Lord Rudra gave boons that in their next birth, Cupid would be born as Lord Krishna's son Pradyumna and Mayavati as Rati.As Pradyumna grew as a youngman, Mayavati desired to marry him despite wide difference of age. Pradyumna was popularly known as 'Vyuha' as the Lord of Intelligence, along with three of His other names viz Vasudeva (Lord of Consciousness); Sankarshana (Lord of Individuality) and Aniruddha (Lord of Intelligence). Eventually Pradyumna killed Sambara, married Mayavati and stayed with Rukmini and Krishna at Dwaraka.

Narakasura (Bhaumika): The end of notorious Bhaumika, the son of Bhumi (Demi-Goddess of Earth), is celebrated till date on the moon fall day preceding Kartika Month of every year as 'Deepavali' (The Festival of Lights). Krishna, accompanied by Satyabhama flew by Garuda to 'Pragjyotisha', Capital City of Bhaumasura [now in Assaam], surrounded by mountains and ramparts defended by fire, water and unmanned automatic weapons as also protected by 'Mura Pasha'- thousand miles-long deadly and sturdy wires as designed by Demon Mura. Krishna shattered the defence fortresses and blew His Panchajanya (Conch shell) with deadening reverberation as Demon Mura's frontal fortification was destroyed. When provoked, the Demon tossed his powerful club which was slashed by Krishna's Sudarsana Chakra into pieces and devastated Mura. Seven deadly sons of Mura, who had the knowledge of weapons as fully as their father, pounced in a group but Krishna's Supreme powers were no match and they too were cracked. Bhaumasura shot at his 'Shataghni'- the powerful disc with hundred blades- and later on with his mighty spear with which he defeated Indra too both of which proved futile. Finally Krishna gave His nod to Sudarsana Chakra (Wheel) to pull down the Demon and exterminate him. Thus Bhaumasura was sent to 'Naraka' and hence his ignominious title as Narakasura. [Another version is that the Demon was arrowed down by Satyabhama herself, as he secured a blessing from Lord Brahma that only his mother Goddess of Earth (Bhumi) could kill him; Satyabhama was the reincarnation of Goddess Earth]. It was at Indra's distress call that received Krishna's attention was that the Asura appropriated Varuna Deva's Royalty Insignia which was an Umbrella; the Ear-Rings of Aditi- the Mother-Figure of Devas; and 'Mani Parvata' (Mandara Mountain) where Demi-Gods resided were among the abominable acts of the Demon. As a gesture of good-will, Satyabhama's desire to transfer the 'Parijata' Tree (which emerged in the churning process of Ocean) to her garden from the Heaven was obliged by Indra. Krishna on His part released sixteen thousand royal maidens of Kings defeated by Bhaumasura and consented to marry them, in addition to the eight principal wives. Goddess Prithvi sought her apology for her son's sins and reiterated her own devotion to Krishna. She said: 'I was blessed with a son (Bhaumika) and thus you gave me a son and now took him away too now! Please accept the Kundala and other possessions as he has died now but do kindly spare his progeny of any blames. Achyuta! You are the Creator-Protector and Terminator and the Unique Form of the Universe; how could I indeed acclaim and commend you; Do forgive your own son Narakasura for his misdeeds!

Parijata Apaharana: As the victorious Krishna and Satyabhama fancifully reached Swarga dwaara after the battle with Narakasura, Krishna blew his conchshell and Aditi along with Indra and Devas welcomed the guests. Devi Aditi complemented Krishna while Indra and Devas performed puja to Krishna with various flowers but Shachi Devi disallowed puja by the flowers of Kalpa Vriksha as the Krishna couple were human beings. There after, the latter visited the Garden of Swarga and Satyabhama desired to take the Tree in her garden in Dwaraka. Shachi Devi flatly refused despite the persuation of Krishna and Devi; surprisingly Indra too sided with Shachi Devi on the plea that Indra gifted it to his wife and he had no hold on it. Arguments between Indra and Krishna ensued and ended up with fights which worsened to fulfledged battles. Indra took up his Vajrayudha and all other Devas fell in line; Krishna blew up his Shanka while Garutman pulled up Varuna Pasha; Yama threw his 'Danda' on Krishna and the latter's mace made smitherins of the hyamna danda; Agni's blistering arrows were instantly cooled with

Krishna's Jala Banaas; Garuda and Iravata attached each other. As Indra confronted Krishna with his Vajra and Krishna took up his Sudarshana chakra; Indra was afraid of the consequences and tried to run back and Satyabhama heckled Indra saying that the latter was after all the Devendra and it was not proper to show his back as Shachi would offer him a Parajata garland! Having jeered Indra thus, Satyabhama said that since she was also a woman she talked to Indra in such a jocular tone but in fact she was never serious in demanding the Parijata tree; as Shachi Devi said that it was her property and hence she had no intention of stealing other's property so that this battle might better end up and as the guests to Swarga might as well return back to where they belonged. Indra was put to defensive by Satyabhama's conversation and replied: 'Why should I be ashamed of getting defeated by Vishwa Prabhu who is the Cause of the Existence, Preservation and Termination of the Universe! Who could indeed overcome if that Tinest yet Grossest and Most Magnificent Form which creates the World and Vedas descends on Earth on his own volition to help and correct humanity by assuming human form? When Krishna replied to Indra jocularly that he was after all a human being and what Satyabhama sought was a celestial product, then Indra requested Krishna not to taunt him further and despached the Parijata Tree to Dwaraka with the assurance that as long as Krishna would be there in human form, the Parijata tree too would be on Earth! On return to Earth Krishna accepted eight thousand wives released from Narakasura's prisons, besides eight Principal wives viz. Rukmini, Satyabhama, Jambavati, Nagnajiti, Mitravinda, Lakshmana, Kalindi and Madri.

Aniruddha's wedding with Usha: Banasura, the grand son of the famed King Bali who gave the entire Universe in charity in lieu of three feet to Lord Vamana, was the father of daughter Usha who fell in love with Aniruddha, the son of Pradyumna and the grand son of Lord Krishna. Banasura was a dedicated devotee of Lord Siva, and the Lord awarded several invaluable benedictions to the Demon including powerful war weapons and thousand hands to relase the armaments simultaneously. Once Usha happened to see both Shiva and Parvati sitting together and being an Antaryami Devi Parvati joked with Usha that one day she would too land up in a situation like that. Usha asked Devi Parvati as to when would that day arrive! Parvati replied that she would dream of a youth on the night of Vaishakha Shukla Dwadashi. As the day arrived, Usha did get the dream and informed of the incidence to her friend Chitralekha, the daughter of Banasura's Minister named Kushmanda. As Usha was unable to bear the feelings of love, Chitralekha showed several drawings of eligible amd handsome bachelors and after a few days, Usha succeeded finally to identify the youth. Then it was learnt that the youth was the son of Krishna. In course of time, the couple met and their romance became intense by the day. Learning of the desire of his daughter with Aniruddha, the son of Pradyumana -the erstwhile Cupid who was burnt into ashes by Lord Siva's third eye- and the grand son of Krishna (Avatar of Lord Vamana), Banasura quashed the wedding proposal and reprimanded his daughter since Krishna was his foe. Banasura prevented his daughter meeting Aniruddha and when the latter fought with him, he imprisoned Aniruddha. Yadayas in Dwaraka wondered as to what happened to Aniruddha. On learning from Narada Muni, it was learnt that Aniruddha was imprisoned in Shonitapur, the Capital of Banasura and Krishna, Balarama and Pradyumna lest by Garuda to that Place. There, they confronted Pramathaganas of Shiva and fought with Jwara the three footed Chief of the 'Parshads' named Maheswara and defeated him. This led to a full-fledged battle between Krishna and others on one side and Banasura, Shankara and Kartikeya on the other. As furious Shastra-Astraas were exchanged by both the Parties, the whole world was affected with Pralayaagni. Balarama attacked Banasura and the fight got intensified with alarming consequences. Meanwhile Krishna recalled his Sudarshana Chakra and sliced off the mighty hands of Banasura and was about to cut off the Asura's head too. It was at that climatic moment, Shankara addressed Krishna to stop, "Hey Krishna! I am aware that you are the Purushottama - Parameswara- Paramatmaa and Adyanta-Rahita! Do get cooled down. I have provided shield to Banasura my devotee and assured that I would stand guarantee at the time of his peril; please do not falsify my faith in me. He has not done any thing wrong to you but is egoistic due to my backing and therefore pardon him. Krishna replied: 'Shankara! If you so wish as you had given him a benidiction, Banaasura would continue to be alive. In order to respect your assurance to him, I am withdrawing Sudarshana Chakra; if you had given him protection, so do I; You should never

feel that you are different from me; you should always consider me as yourself and together we are the Devas, Asuras, human beings and all the rest; all those who consider us as different from each other are shrouded in Maya or Illusion; indeed, I am pleased and am gone. Thre after, Krishna and all the rest headed to Aniruddha's prison, where the latter was released by 'Naga bandhana' or tight-tied by a serpent which ran away at the appearance of Garuda Deva while Banasura politely agreed for the Sacred wedding of Usha-Aniruddhaas.

**Krishna kills Sishupala:** At the invitation of King Yudhishtara to attend the Rajasuya Yagnam (Horse Sacrifice) being performed by Pandavas especially after the devastation of Jarasandha, Lords Krishna and Balarama arrived at Indraprastha, the new beautiful Capital City, built by Maya. As a climax to the Celebrations, a function was held to select the best personality who graced the 'Yagna'. Nobody wished to comment but Sahadeva, the youngest of Pandavas, proposed the name of Krishna. There was all round approval of the proposal and Dharmaraja initiated the procedure by inviting Krishna.

Just at that time, King Sisupala, a great associate of Jarasandha since killed by Bhima, expressed displeasure at the selection of Krishna on the proposal of a boy, Sahadeva of Pandavas. He said that elders in age, experience, wisdom were available and there was no special qualification for Krishna who ran away from Jarasandha twenty three times in succesive wars and his real capability in wars, duels, and dealings involving honesty and frankness were suspect. Sisupala critcised Krishna transgessing all limits of decency. Finally having counted the number of abuses hurled at Him, Krishna hurled His Sudarsana Wheel to slit Sisupala's neck. Sisupala was the son of King Dhamaghosha and Srutadevi, the latter being the sister of Vasudeva whose son was Lord Krishna. In other words Krishna and Sisupala were cousins. When Sisupala was born, he was dark and ugly with three eyes and four hands. His parents had almost decided to disown him, but a voice from Heaven suggested not to do so as an Illustrious Person would soon fondle the child and snip out his extra limbs and he himself would also kill him.Krishna's aunt Srutadevi requested Him to postpone the killing of the child as far as possible. Krishna promised that He would wait till his hundredth abuse. Incidentally, Sisupala and Dantavakra were stated to be the Demons of 'Dwapara Yuga' born after the curse of Sanaka Kumara brothers to the Vaikuntha Gate Keepers Jaya and Vijaya.

As a sequel to Rajasuya Yagna, there were two major developments: Firstly, the unbearable jealousy of Kauravas against Pandavas who became extremely prosperous and popular among the various contemporary Kings and worse than that, the extremely hurt pride of Duryodhana especially when Draupadi the wife of Pandava sons laughed out loudly when he fell straight into a water pool when he thought that there was no water but ground and when he lifted up his robes as there was no ground but a water body. Secondly, the battles of Sisupala's great friends like Salva and Dantavakra were in the offing against Yadayas. While seeds of jealousy were firmly sown in Duryodhana's mind leading to disastrous consequences for Pandavas thus leading to the Great Battle of Mahabharata, the destructive attempts by Sisupala's friends were almost instant. Salva secured earlier an everlasting air-vehicle from Lord Siva because of deep devotion and landed at Dwaraka when Krishna and Balarama were away at Indraprastha and overpowered Pradyumna who fled from the battle, as Salva presented illusory heads of Krishna and Balaram to him.On return, the Lords shattered the airship and Salva too. Dantavakra and his sons Romaharshana and Viruddha met the same fate. Thus the chapter of Sisupala's death was closed. Simultaneously, the run-up to Mahabharata Battle at Kurukshatra was picking up fast as the foul play of Dices between Shakuni on behalf of Kaurava sons and Dharmaraja on behalf of Pandavas. Ast he Battle was shaping as an inevitable consequence, Balarama being a neutral figure, especially since Duryodhana was his disciple while Krishna identified himself as Pandava's well-wisher, proceeded on a pilgrimage to Holy Places. His visits covered Prayaga, Ganga, Godavari, Srisailam, Venkata Hills, Kanchi, Madurai, Srirangam, Rameswaram and Kanya Kumari. He reached Kurukshetra at the time when Bhima and Duryodhana were engaged in a duel with maces as almost terminating the Great Battle.

**Shri Krishna Niryaana** was the climax of the termination of Yadukula that got initiated by a few playful Yadu Kumaraas at Pindaraka Tirtha who dressed the son of Jambavati called Saambu as an expectant

woman and asked a group of Rishis to ascertain whether the woman would deliver a boy or a baby! The Munis under reference included Kanwa-Narada and Viswamitra who from their Divya drishti realized the hoax of the fake garbhini and said in anger: that the woman would deliver neither a boy nor a girl but a 'Musala' or a lump of an iron instead and that would result in the destruction of Yadu Vamsha! The Yadava Boys were stunned at the reply and reported the matter to Ugrasena! Saambu did deliver a Musala from his stomach which was pounded as powder but the remainder bit was thrown into the Sea and it was devoured by a fish and a fisherman called Jara caught hold of the fish and as he cut it he found a sharp iron piece which he kept for subsequent use. Meanwhile, Indra and Devas despatched Vayu Deva who appeared before Krishna and prayed to him as follows: 'Devaadi Deva! Indra has asked us as well by Ashtaavasus, Marud Devatas, Rudras, Saadhyas and Adityas that at our instance you had very kindly assumed an incarnation and lightened the enormous burden on Earth by demolishing innumerable Danavas and other Dushta Shaktis for a long hundred years and over and the Three crores of Devas are now at peace; we request you to know your mind as to how to proceed further'. Bhagavan replied: 'I am fully aware of my next move; I have already initiated the process of Yadava destruction as considerable annihilation of the enemy forces of the virtuous Pandavas including the killing of Jarasandha besides of Kauravas was concluded too. As I have still to complete the task of terminating Yadavas as I brought them to Dwaraka and that bit of task too once concluded, I shall be freed of my mortal responsibilities and return to Vaikuntha'. So saying, Krishna made arrangements by dispatching Uddhava to Badarikaashrama on Gandhamaadana Parvat to Naranarayana Maharshi Ashrama where he would secure Siddhi after the close of his life. Select Yadavas including himself, Baladeva and elders like Ugrasena, Vasudeva left for Prabhasa Kshetra along concerned Devis; remaining Yadavas most of got dead drunk killed each other including Pradyumna, Saamba, Kritavarma, Satyaki, Aniruddha, Pruthu and Akrura by using the high grown sea beach grass roots which sprouted from the powder of the Musala delivered from Saambu's garbha thus terminating Yadu Vamsha; the elders including Balarama etc who left for Prabhasa Kshetra took resort to Yogic ends and finally Krishna and the famed charioteer Daruka remained; Balarama sat under a Tree and from hisface a Maha Sarpa emerged and moved towards the huge Ocean as worshipped by Sidhas and Nagaas while Samudra welcomed and worshipped and the Maha Sarpa entered the Ocean. Meanwhile Krishna assumed his full form with four hands armed while Shankha-Chakra- Gada-Sarangaas performed pradakshinas and he rested under a tree bush. Imagining that a deer was resting since Krishna's feet were moving behind a tree bush, Jara Vyaadha who recovered an iron left-over bit from the fish caught in the Sea, sharpened his arrow and shot at the Lord's moving feet and ashamed to do so but the ever merciful Krishna bestowed him Siddhi. Krishna then sent Daruka to convey the news of Krishna Niryana to his dear disciple Arjuna to perform the obsequies of himself, of Balarama and the illustrious Yaduveeras; Rukmini and Krishna's wives performed Krishna Sahagamana or sacrificing themselves in the a same Fire with which the mortal human form of the Avatara succumbed. Maharshi Parashara commented thus: As He left, Bhagavan Krishna discarded his human form and recalled his Soul which is Avyaya- Achintya- Vaasudeva Swarupa-Amala-Ajanma- Amara- Aprameya- Akhilaatma-and Brahma Swarupa Vishnu!

As Arjuna was totally drowned in uncontrollable grief and distress, Veda Vyasa assuaged his inner and core-emotions said: Bhagavan Krishna arrived as a human being along with us all as a Marga darshaka or a moral teacher to prescribe and guide us about the virtuous the innate values of life and to uproot the evils of the Society that Daityas and many in the form of Human beings came to adopt; now that the burden of Bhu Devi got lightened Paramatma took up the need and the deed; since the noble reason and requirement were fulfilled, he put the World back on its heels and disappeared, since Jatasya Maranam Dhruvam! Veda Vyasa stated: Jaatasya niyato Mrityuh patanamcha tathonnateyh, Vipra yogaanasaanaastu samyogah sanchaye kshayah/Vijnaaya na budhaasshokam na harsha —mupayaanti ye, Teshaameyveytarey cheshtaam sikshantassanti taadrushaah/ (Whatever is born is certain to die; which is grown well has to decrease; Samyoga or Togetherness has to terminate as Viyoga or loneliness; Sanchaya or Increased Collection has to end up as Kshaya or Decay; Intelligent persons do not get elated too much since exultation might end up in depression or even as damage; that is the reason why one ought to realise

that great heights might lead to great falls too). *Yaschetaccharitam tasya Krishnasya Shrunuyaatsadaa*, *Sarna Paapa vinirmukto Vishnu lokam sa gacchati/* (Those persons who listen to Krishna Charitra would surely get relief from sins and attain Vishnu Loka)!

#### Maha Bharata in brief

Origin of Veda Vyasa: In the times of yore, there was a pious King Uparichara Vasu of Chedi Kingdom whose wife Girik was of compelling charm. The King secured from Indra an air-borne Vimana and in the contemporary world gained fame and respect. Once on the day of Shraddha to his father and forefathers, his wife desired union with him but the King declined due to the Ceremony and left for the forest nearby to bring an animal for sacrifice and other material required for the Shraddha. On return he was overcome by his wife's desire and spilt out his virility on banana leaf and commanded a trained falcon to carry the leaf as a packet to his wife since he did not wish to waste it. He falcon encounterd another falcon and forcibly took the packet away but the packet fell in the flow of water. In the meantime an Apsara found the dangling feet of a Muni who was in meditation on the banks of the water body and for fun dragged the feet into water. The Muni cursed the Apsara to turn into a fish and the fish swallowed the packet that fell in the flow and got pregnant. A fisherman who netted the fish took it home and there were two babies in its stomach and the King realised by his mystic powers that the babies were his own. Of the two babies, one was a male child and another a girl. The King returned the girl child to the fisherman with plenty of money and gifts and retained the boy whom he made as the next King. The female child eventually grew as Satyavati.

Parashara Muni, the grandson of Maharshi Vasishtha the mind-born son of Brahma, during his various travels spent a night in a hamlet on the banks of Ganga in the house of the Village chief and asked his daughter Satyavati to ferrry the Muni to the other side of the river. In the boat, he was sick of the strong smell of fish and teased her as Matsyagandhi. But noticing her body beauty desired to have a union with her then and there; he created by his mantra siddhi a misty cover in an island nearby and enjoyed her. He gave her the boon of conceiving an extraordinary son with universal reputation and called her as Yojanagandhi or a female who spread fragrance for a Yojana's width and breadth; the boon also assured her that her chasity would be intact and that shewould be a queen. Devi Satyavati gave birth to the illustrious Veda Vyasa who was also famed as Krishna Dwipayana or who was bornin a Dwipa or an Island. Vyasa had the unique distinction of dividing the originally Single Veda into four parts as also six Vedangas and scripted Maha Puranas and also Maha Bharata. In an extremely rigourous penance that he performed, Vyasa attained the vision of Maha Deva and the latter blessed Vyasa to secure an eminent son. Excited about his vision of Shankara, Vyasa performed an Agni Homa by creating Agni by the process of 'Arani' or rubbing wooden piecesto light up. Just then an Apsara or a Celestial Nymph took the the form of an attractive parrot crossed the Agni Kunda and as his concentration got disturbed she made a flashy appearance of her rare beauty and charm with her amorous looks The Muni could not control his pttion and dischrged his virility on the wooden sticks meant for Arani and then emerged from the Arani fire a boy of extraordinary radiance with the features of his father but with a nose resembling that of a parrot. The boy grew up with unique faculties of Spitituality as an Expert in Veda Vedangas and understandably Vyasa desired Shuka Muni to become a Grihasthi but the latter disagreed vehemently. Vyasa used all his means of persuasion and finally asked him to visit Janaka who through persuasion and arguments succeeded in convincing to become a Grihasta (House holder). But after a few years of house holding, Shuka Muni left for Mount Kailash to realise Paramatma and attained Salvation.

After the departure of his son, Veda Vyasa was a frustrated person and carried on with his disciples Asita, Devala, Vaisampayana, Jaimini, Sumanta and others and after their studies were over, he despatched them with the tasks of propagating Dharma all over. He left Meru Mountain to meet his mother Satyavati whom he left long ago on the banks of Ganges. He realised that his mother was married to the King of Hastinapur, Shantanu on the condition that another son of his, Bhishma born from his first wife Ganga,

would neither marry nor beget a child since there shold not be any progeny to claim the throne. Shantanu and Satyavati gave birth to Chitrangada and Vichitra-Virya. After Shantanu died, Chitrangada became the King but in a war with Gandharvas, Chitrangada died and Vichitravirya was made the King. Bhishma desired that Vichitravirya be married as he was eligible and when the King of Kasi announced a 'Swayamvara' (bride's choice among the Invited Kings), Bhishma forcibly took away three brides-Amba, Ambika and Ambalika to Hastinapura. On arrival, Amba requested that since she already selected the King of Salva at the Svayamvara, she might be please allowed to do so and Bhishma agreed. But the King of Salva did not agree and as she returned back insisting that as per Dharma Bhishma must marry her. Since Bhishma did not agree that even earlier, Amba left for the forest and became an ascetic. King Vichitravirya married Ambika and Ambalika but was not able to extend the progeny and died of premature death. Then came up a crisis of Kingship falling vacant without a heir. Satyavati called for Vedavyasa who was settled on the banks of River Sarasvati to help continue the lineage through Ambika and Ambalika. Ambika closed her eyes in bed with Veda Vyasa as she was not happy with the union and thus a blind boy, Dhrita-rashtra was delivered. Ambalika sent a Servant woman into the bed and a wise boy, Vidura was born. But when the mistake was realised and Ambalika had to go into the bed, she was too frightened into paleness afraid of the Maha Muni and thus was born Pandu. No doubt Pandu became the King before his elder brother who was born blind but since he died of early death due to illness, Dhritarashtra the blind had to be the King.

Chain reaction of Ganga-King Mahabhisha- Ashta Vasus- King Shantanu: There was a virtuous King Mahabhisha of Ikshvaku Dynasty who pleased Indra with a series of 'Asvametha' and 'Vajapeya' Sacrifices and attained Indra Loka after his death. Once he had attended the Court of Lord Brahma and along with him was seated Devi Ganga. He was immensely attracted to her and she too reciprocated with her amorous glances. Brahma got disturbed and cursed both of them to take to human lives as husband and wife. Mahabhisha opted to be the son of King Pratipa of Puru Dynasty. At the same time Ashta-Vasus (Eight Vasus) of the Celestial Region headed by Vasu Prithi and their families visited Sage Vasishtha's 'Ashram' and admired 'Kama Dhenu' the Sacred Cow whose milk bestowed disease-less longevity and sublime happiness. The wife of one of the Vasus, Dyau was impressed with the Cow and quietly stole it and its calf. Sage Vasishtha found in his 'Diya Drishti' (Celestial Vision) that Nandini the Sacred Cow was in the custody of Vasu Dyau and cursed all the Vasus to be turned as human beings. Being highly repentant, the Vasus beseeched Vasishtha to dilute the effect of the curse and out of compassion the Sage agreed to one year's human life to seven Vasus as their involvement was indirect but Vasu Dyau should have a full life time. The Vasus, who knew about Brahma's curse to Ganga Devi, approached her to give birth to Seven Vasus of one year's human life each and one life time's existence to the last born Vasu. But this was agreed to subject to the condition that her prospective husband should agree to freedom of her action without any reservation and if he did not, she would guit as the husband. Eventually, Ganga waited on the banks of River Ganges and awaited the arrival of King Pradipa of Kuru Dynasty for meditation. The King arrived to perform 'Surya Namaskaras' on the river bed and Ganga appeared as a charming woman and sat straightaway on his right lap, indicating thereby that the place was to seat a son / daughter. The damsel identified herself as Ganga Devi and replied that she would await his son's arrival who was yet to be born. In course of time, King Pradipa got his son, Shantanu, and as he grew as a handsome youth advised him to meet Ganga Devi who would propose but cautioned that he should not ask her questions and agree to whatever she asked. Accordingly, Ganga Devi, the eternal beauty, agreed to wed Shantanu and agreed to her conditions unilaterally. She gave immense happiness to Shantanu, who became the King after his father's abdication of the throne. After a year, they were blessed with a boy, but she took the baby and submerged him in the flow of Ganga! To his great surprise, Shantanu witnessed the horror of the child's cruel drowning in the flow but dared not say one word to his wife. This happening was repeated again and again for seven times and as the eight child was born, Shantanu protested and Ganga as per their contract left, but requested that the boy be named as Gangeya.

Gangeya, the exemplary Bhishma of Maha Bharata: For a long time since Ganga Devi left Shantanu, the latter had no interest in life and Gangeya, who was increasingly aware of his father's disenchantment in

the duties of Kingship, virtually carried on the burden lightly. As a dutiful son, he did whatever was possible or even impossible, but for the replacement of the position of a mother. Once when he accompanied his father on a royal hunt on the banks of River Yamuna and found an extraordinarily stunning woman whose body flavour was heavenly and intoxicating. Her captivating physical features sent tremors in Shantanu's mind and asked his son Gangeya to enquire about her. The lady replied that she was a fisherwoman and any enquiry about herself be ascertained by her father only at their abode. The fisherman was not sure whether her daughter's future would be assured since a grown up King-in-Waiting was already in place. Gangeya gave an assurance that he would not put in a claim for Kingship. But this did not satisfy the fisherman as Gangeya's next kin would definitely make the claim to the throne. Then Gangeya declared that in view of the apprehensions expressed by the fisherman and subtly endorsed by his daughter, he would take a Sacred Vow before all witnesses concerned that he would never ever marry! Shantanu as well as the entire Kingdom were taken aback by the decision of Gangeya. Shantanu tried to wriggle out of the deal, but Gangeya did not allow any departure from his vow; he said that the sacrifice being performed was not comparable to that of Parasurama, who for the asking by his father Jamadagni, had cut his own mother's head on the flimsy reasoning of her imagined flicker of mind when she saw a Gandharva bathing; or to Lohitasya who allowed himself to be sold to a Brahmin as a servant boy, for working heinous household duties leading to death, to repay his father Harischandra's debt to Sage Visvamitra; or obeying the implicit instruction of his father Dasaratha conveyed by Queen Kaikayi to abandon the self and wife Sita to fourteen years of forest life as an ascetic couple ending by the kidnapping of his wife and undergoing untold misery and torture! Thus quoting such examples, Gangeya announced to the whole World that not only he would not marry but protect the entire progeny of the 'Vamsa' as long as he lived! Thus was given Gangeya the indelible name of Bhishma in the generations to follow!

Pandavas and Kuaravas- Quick proceedings of Maha Bharata: Since the elder issue of Veda Vyasa from Ambika, Dhritharashtra was born blind, Ambalika's son Pandu was made the King with the approval of Bhishma, the driving force of the Kingdom, with Hastinapura as the Capital. The elder brother had two wives Gandhari and Sauvali, the former being the Prime Wife and the latter was a keep in the household. Gandhari, the daughter of Gandhara Desa and brother of Sakuni, gave birth to one hundred sons, the elder two being the notorious Duryodhana and Dussasana (actual names were Suyodhana and Susasana, standing for Good Warrior and Good Administrator). Gandhari preferred to close her eyes always, out of sentiment as her husband was blind. Sauvali's son was Yuyutsu. Pandu Raja, the earlier King, was married to Kunti, the daughter of King Surasena and the paternal aunt of Lord Krishna. The Raja also married Madri, the daughter of King Madra. When Kunti was a very young girl, her father asked her to assist Sage Durvasa in a four month long Sacrifice / Yagna performed by him and after the end of the Function, he was pleased to teach a Mantra to her which could invoke any of the Demi Gods and Allied Devatas including Indra, Surya, Yamadharma Raja and Vayu, as well as allied Demi-Gods like Aswini Kumars. Out of curiosity, Kunti experimented by invoking Sun God in her private chamber and to her great surprise and dismay she found Surya Himself standing before her and asked her as to whether she desired a son or a daughter. Being of a tender age of preteens, she was flabbergasted at the odd statement of Surya's but since the latter understood the predicament of the girl, Surya gave her the boon that her virginity would not be disturbed, but she should however be conceived. Kunti took her personal maid into confidence and even informing her mother of the incident, she did not step out of her chamber. After nine months, she delivered a boy of exceeding radiance and attraction with inborn armoury and ear-rings. With the help of the maid, she arranged the child in a floating box and placed it on a nearby waterbody. A charioteer of the Court of the King, Atiradha and his wife found the floating casket and as they did not have an issue, considered the child as a great blessing and brought him up as 'Karna' since he had earrings in-born and as Radheya after the name of the step mother. Therafter Kunti considered the incident as forgotten of her innocent childhood. Subsequently Kunti married King Pandu in a 'Swayamvara' (as per the bride's own choice), but soon thereafter, King Pandu received a curse from a Brahmana who was targetted by the King's arrow mistaken for a deer in copulation and the curse was that if he slept with a

woman, he would fall dead at once. The King knew that without begetting a son he would not be able to cross the River Vaitarani at the entry point of hell itself and the soul would get stuck there itself! Pandu suggested that Scriptures would allow a virtuous Brahmana to sleep with her and Kunti informed that she knew a Mantra as gifted by Durvasa Muni and by reciting that she could be blessed. Thus, Kunti invoked Yama Dharma Raja, Vayu, and Indra from time to time and was blessed with three sons, viz. Dharmaraja, Bhima and Arjuna respectively. She also passed on the Mantra to Madri who begot Nakula and Sahadeva as twin brothers. Once when Pandu ventured a wrong move to invite Madri in bed, Pandu died because of the Brahmana's curse as expected, and Madri too died in self-immolation, leaving the two sons to Kunti's care. Hence they came to be popular as Pancha-Pandavas. As Pandu died, Dhritarashtra was sworn in as the King and there were quick changes in Hastinapura, because of a blind King doting on his children especially Duryodhana who was in evil league as 'Dushta Chatushtaya' or the Four Wicked Men along with his younger brother Dussasana, his maternal uncle Sakuni and Karna (who was declared as the Ruler of a Subsidiary Anga Desa, as he was barred otherwise from Royal responsibilities and rights since he did not have Kshatria origin as the son of a charioteer). The Evil Four had constant quarrels with their Pandaya cousins, due to jealousy, as the cousins were far more disciplined and stronger as also since Kuru Vamsa elders and others liked them more. The Evil Four pretended sympathy for Pandavas and wanted them to move into a new Palace but their intention was to kill them while sleeping as the Palace was made of lac and susceptible to quick fire. Thanks to Krishna's foresight and precautionary measures, Pandavas exited safe from the burning Palace through a secret passage, as the Evil Four misled the Public that Pandavas and Kunti were burnt. Meanwhile Pandavas masqueraded as Brahmanas and stayed in a poor family house on rent. When the turn of sparing a person from the landlord's house came up for Sacrifice to a Demon, named Bakasura, (as per a contract with the village heads and the Demon that instead of his killing the Villagers indiscriminately), Bhima the strong man opted to reach the Demon's abode away from the Village and brought relief to the Villagers by killing him in a severe duel. From thereon, Pandavas still appearing as Brahmanas, moved on to King Drupada's Court for Druapadi's Swayamvara and succeded in the test of destroying a fish on a quickly moving wheel kept above one's head by an arrow while viewing its reflection down in a water pool underneath. This feat was possible only to an ace archer. Karna and Kauvaras attended the Swayam Vara too. Only Arjuna could perform the feat as Karna who too was a great archer had failed, again causing jealousy on learning that the Brahmanas were fake and actually they were Pandavas. On hearing the good news that after all Pandavas were not dead, the Elders of Kuru Vamsa including Bhishna, Dronacharya, and Kripacharya were overjoyed but the Evil Four were shaken. They agreed that a portion of the Kigdom be given away to Pandavas as a peace making measure and the Elders like Bhishna appreciated the gesture. Pandavas thus moved to a new Capital at Indrprastha where a fantastic 'Maya Sabha' or a Palace of Illusions built by the Divine Architect-Designer by the name Maya. Recovering from their days of misfortune, Pandavas recouped and performed 'Rajasuya Yagna' and invited Kauravas including the Elders like Bhishma, Drona, Vidura and Kripacharya as well as the Evil Four. Lord Krishna who had always been a staunch supporter of Pandavas was honoured as the Chief Guest and when King Sisupala the evil opponent of Krishna objected and insulted the latter, his Sudarsana Chakra (Wheel) snipped his head. The Evil Four, especially Duryodhana felt highly envious of Pandavas, invited them to Hastinapura only to trap Dharmaraja into an unjust chess game with Sakuni who was an expert in it and defeated Pandavas against stiff conditions of losing their Kingdom and even themselves including Draupadi, with whom an attempt was made for disrobing. The conditions were twelve years of forest life and one year of unidentifiable destination where they should not be recognised failing which, the terms could be doubled! During the forest life of twelve years, Kauravas tormented Pandavas and during the year long 'Ajnanavas' or unreconizable place, took refuge in changed status with Dharmaraja as Kanku Bhat or Brahmana Adviser to King Virat in his latter's court, Draupadi as 'Sairandhri' as the Maid in the Queen's Chamber, Bhima as the cook in the Royal kitchen, Arjuna as 'Brihannala'-the transgender dance teacher of the Princess Uttara; Nakula and Sahadeva as the keepers of horses and cows. During the course of their stay in the Virat kingdom, Pandavas underwent unknown torture and humiliation including the attempted molestation of Sairandhri by the King's powerful brother-in-law, named Keechaka who was quietly

eliminated by Bhima in a night duel. At the end of their stay in cognito, Kauravas tried to capture the cows of King Virat but by that time Brihannala came into the form of Arjuna as the 'Agyata vasa' year was over and destroyed the Kaurava Army single handedly and having utilised the 'Sammohana Astra' or the 'Mantra' which lulled the War Stalvarts like Bhishma, Drona, Asvatthama and of course the Evil Four into long slumber and released the cows of King Virat back home. There were talks of 'Sandhi' or Reconcilliation held by Krishna on behalf of Pandavas but the puffed up Evil Four refused even to a pinsome space to Pandavas, let alone five villages to the five some and the Great War of Mahabharata was fought for eighteen days dragging even the Elders of Kuru Vamsa like Bhishma, Drona and quite a few pious persons by the Evil Four on one side and Pandavas on the other with Krishna as Charioteer cum unarmed Adviser of Pandavas. A major casuality from the Pandavas side was that of brave and young Abhimanyu, the son of Arjun and Subhadra, in a 'Chakra Vyuha'(a circular closed fight) among manyto-one unjust encounter. There was mass destruction on both sides and the tragedies of stalwarts including the entire generation of Illustrious Elders who took part in the Battle as also the Evil Four, with Duryodhana as the last to fall to Bhima, who killed Dussasana earlier.

Maha Bhagavati allows vision of the dead at Kurukshetra Battle: Pursuant to the Great Battle, the respected ladies of both Kauravas and Pandavas who lost their husbands, sons, grand sons, grand fathers, fathers, in-laws and nephews collected on the banks of Ganges and prayed to Veda Vyasa to secure a glimpse of the departed, since the ladies could not go to the battle field. Among the ladies were Kunti, Gandhari, Draupadi, Subhadra and Uttara. Dhritarashtra and Pandava Heros were also invited to the expected miracle-spectacle. The Maharshi performed Pranayama and deep yoga- oriented meditation to the Unknown and Omniscient Devi Bhagavati. His intense and continued worship for quite sometime and as an indication of the positive response received from Maha Devi, there were indications on a huge skylong celestial screen and there were quick glimpses of the one-to-one fights and the resultant deaths and reactive celebrations; the screen views of the Linga and Limbless Bodies of the departed souls which were recognised at once by the concerned eyes, but not the converse.

Ashvattama punished and Parikshit born: Ashvathama could not reconcile to the death of his father Drona Acharya who was otherwise invincible but as per Krishna's advice, Bhima killed an elephant named Ashvathama and made Bhima shout that Ashvathama was killed and conveyed the news to Drona Acharya. Drona was horrified at the news, asked Dharmaraja for confirmation and the latter confirmed: 'Ashvathama died-the elephant! But he said further in a very low tone saying 'Ashvthama hata: Kunjarah'. Thus Drona was cheated, hung his bow and arrows and sat still in meditation, when Arjuna showered arrows and killed Drona.

Desirous of killing Arjuna in sleep, Ashvathama did not find him, but thus killed the full party of Arjuna's sons in sleep. In turn, Arjuna located Ashvathama and fought a fierce battle. Drona's son finally used to 'Brahmastra', the most potent Mantric arrow. Arjuna too retaliated by the use of the same Astra and controlled Ashvathama. Yudhistara and Krishna advised not to kill Ashvathama but cut the naturally born 'Shringa' Jewel (diamond horn), which itself was an ugly insult to him. The impact of Ashvathama's Brahamastra would have normally torn off Arjuna's pregnant daughter-in-law Uttara, bur for Lord Krishna's mystic intervention. The child thus born to Uttara was Parikshith who was then the last remnant of Pandayas.

As a King, Parikshith was highly spiritual and benevolent. Once when he concluded a Royal hunt and got thirsty, he visited the Ashram (Hermitage) of Sage Samaika who was in deep meditation and thus did not respond to the King's visit. He was annoyed and picking up a dead snake fallen on the ground nearby picked it up and placed it around the Muni's head as a garland. On return to the hermitage, the Sage's son Sringi saw the ugly sight and gave a curse that whoever did this insult to my father would be killed within a week's time. The King having known of the curse readied himself on the banks of River Ganges and requested Maha Muni Suka to enlighten him the Great Purana of Maha Bhagavata. On the seventh day, with all the security in a seven storeyed building on the river banks, Taksha made efforts to sneak in the

building somehow and intercepted a Brahmana by name Kasyapa desirous of making wealth from relieving the King's problem as he knew the Mantra of anti snake bite; Daksha gave away plenty of money to the Brahmana and got rid of him; in fact he tested the Brahmana whether he could really administer the Mantra and revive an entire tree burnt by poisonous flames of serpent's bite; the Brahmana did convert the tree's ashes to its original position. Later in the evening Taksha asked disciples to disguise as Brahmanas to carry fruits to the King on the pretext of reciting Atharvana Veda and the fruit which the King ate contained a small insect which was Taksha himself assuming an enormous body and killed the King.

Janamejaya's 'Sarpa Yagna' stopped by Sage Asita and Veda Vyasa: When King Parikshith met his end, his son Janamejaya was hardly a lad of eleven years and was declared as the next King. Guru Kripacharya trained him in the Science of Archery, Administration and Dharmasastra. He was married to Vapustama the daughter of King of Kasi and carried on with pious activities. Meanwhile a Sage Uttanka approached Janamejaya and provoked him to take revenge on his father's killer Taksha and perform Sarpa Yagna (Sacrifice of Serpents) and command Taksha into the Fire Pit (Homa Kunda) and Sacrifice all the Serpents in the process. Sage Uttanka told the King that his father could not go to heaven because of snake bite. Convinced thus, the King ordered that the Yagna be arranged. Thousands of snakes were burnt off and Taksha was so afraid of his life that he sought refuge from Indra. But, so revengeful were Janamejaya and Sage Uttanka that they were prepared to command not only Taksha but even Indra to Sarpa Yajna and haul them into the Fire Pit! Taksha thus approached Sage Asita to call on the King and to refrain from proceeding further in the Sacrifice as thousands of innocent Snakes were burnt off, for the sake of Taksha. Veda Vyasa explained the Episode of Sage Asita and King Ruru to the King. In the olden days, there was a Sage Jaratkratu who was practising high devotion to Devi Bhagavati in a forest. He had a vision of his dead father and forefathers in a cave who asked him to marry and suggested an eligible woman named Jarat Karu, who was the sister of Vasuki. Meanwhile the co-wives of Sage Kasyapa, viz. Kadru and Vinita had an argument as to what was the colour of the horses of the Sun God's chariot. Vinita guessed the color as white but Kadru had a bet that the colour was black. It was agreed that whoever lost the bet would have to carry the other on her back always while going to places. Kadru asked her sons to colour the horses black to win the bet. While some of her sons obeyed her but others did not. Kadru cursed those who did not comply be burnt off in a Fire pit and Vinita virtually became Kadru's slave. Vinita's son 'Garuda' the Carrier of Maha Vishnu, asked for the cause of her sorrow and she narrated as to what happened. Out of his affection for his mother, Garuda approached Kadru to pardon his mother and Kadru agreed provided that Garuda could bring Amrit (nectar) from the custody of Vaikuntha. Garuda was bent on relieving his mother's curse and fetched a jug of Nector from Vaikuntha. Kadru was delighted and released Vinita. All the family members and friends of Kadru were invited and asked to clean up themselves before taking spoonfuls of Amrit. But Indra quietly stole away the jug of Amrit. The invitees of Kadru returned from their baths and found that the jug was missing. They were disappointed but tried their best to lick any drops from out of the jar that might have spilt on the grass (Kusa) and as they licked their tongues were cut and hence were known as 'dvi-jihvas' or two tongued ever since. Vasuki and others who were troubled by Kadru approached Lord Brahma and complained against Kadru, the mother of snakes. He blessed them and said that the younger sister of Vasuki, Jarat Karu, should be proposed to wed Sage Jaratkaru. But the Sage was highly short tempered and the bride should be very obedient and trustworthy and the couple would beget a child who would enlighten, control and discipline the whole community of snakes and lighten the burden of their overhaughtiness to the world. That was why, Sage Asita prevailed upon King Janamejaya to stop the unique Sarpa Yagna and Veda Vyasa too approved of Sage Asita's request. Maharshi Vyasa had suggested that instead of the revenge-oriented Sarpa Yagna, he should rarher build a spacious Temple dedicated to Devi Bhagavati and also perform Devi Maha Yagna and such other Spiritual activities to release the soul of late King Parikshith and relieve the curse of the Brahmana boy.

## Some doubts in connection with Maha Bharata

Sage Jaimini requested Markandeva Maharshi for clarifications on a few doubts on the proceedings of Maha Bharata and the Maharshi suggested that the Sage might approach Holy Birds in Vindhyachala. Understandably, Jaimini asked Markandeya as to who the Holy Birds were and the latter related a Story that involved Indra, Narada and Apsaras or the Celestial Damsels. Narada visited the Court of Indra once and the latter requested as to how the Brahmarshi could be entertained: either by Songs of Gandharvas or by the dances of Apsaras. Narada preferred the dance of Apsaras and named a specific Apsara called Vapu as she was preferred by Narada. The co-Apsaras challenged Narada's preference and a dance competition followed; Narada said that whosoever could attract the attention of Durvasa Muni would be declared the best. The dance extravaganza disturbed Durvasa Muni and cursed Apsara Vapu who resorted to loud singing to become a bird for sixteen years in a series of births and deaths, that she should not give birth to a baby-bird and that she should die by a sharp weapon before securing her original form. The related story was that there were two brothers in the lineage of Garuda the Avian King and the Carrier of Vishnu. The brothers were named Kank and Kandahar; Kank flew freely once and witnessed the scene of a Demon Vidyudrup and his union with his wife Madanika, an Apsara. The demon objected and killed Kank. The infuriated Kandahar killed the demon and Madanika desired to become the wife of Kandahar and changed her form as a bird. Madanika was Vapu in her previous birth and the former and Kandahar gave birth to Taarkshi who married a Brahmana boy. The bird became pregnant at the time of the Great of Maha Bharata and while flying, Arjuna's arrow hurt her and two eggs fell out of her abdomen and the elephant on whose back Arjuna's opponent was riding saved the eggs under a big bell. At the end of the battle, a Sage named Shami found a big bell and underneath the bell were four chicks. The Sage took the chicks to his Ashram and brought them up and as they grew, they learnt Vedas from the recitals taught to the Sage's students. One day the grown up birds spoke in human voice and sought the permission of the Sage before flying away since their studentship was over! The wonder-struck Sage asked how the birds possessed such amazing powers and the latter replied that they were actually the sons of a Muni named Vipulaswan and their names were Sukrish and Tambaru, that his father was engaged in a Yagna when Indra appeared as an old bird and asked for human flesh, that the sons refused to sacrifice themselves while the father did the Sacrifice, that Indra said he was testing them of their devotion and while dying the father blessed the sons to keep their knowledge of the Scriptures in tact as 'Jatismaras' or those born would retain the memory of their previous birth! Guru Shami was pleased at the happening and blessed the Holy Birds to migrate to Vindhyas for propagating Dharma! Having learnt about the competence of the Holy Birds, Sage Jaimini who visited the Vindhyas and posed four relevant questions in connection with Maha Bharata:

## Why did Paramatma the Primeaval Force take to various Temporary Forms of existence!

The reply was simple: The Avyaktam Shasvatam Vishnum Anantam Ajamavyayam or the Imperciavable, Everlasting, All-Pervading, Endless, Unborn and Indestructible Supreme takes to different Forms as an ordinary Being as a Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion, Midget, or a Full Human Being, depending on exigencies only to ensure Universal Equilibrium so that minimal Virtue was mainained and the permissible level of Evil was not crossed. The Holi Birds asserted: Yadaa yadaahi Dharmasya Glanirbhavati Jaiminey! Abhyudhaanamadharmasya tadaatmaanam srujatasyasou/ (As and when Dharma is distressed and Adharma is encouraged, Paramatma assumes an appropriate Form and corrects the imbalances in the Universe; some times as human being or other times as in any Form of Creation!)

Why did Draupadi consent tomarry all the Pandava Brothers together! Indra suspected danger to his position and killed Trishira the son of Sage Twashta. The Sage went into a rage and plucked a strand of hair from his head and offered it homa kunda and by his mantrik power created the mighty Vritrasura with the specific mission to kill Indra. Indra already lost his sheen since he killed Trishira and requested Sapta Rishis to mediate for extending his life. But Indra killed Vritra too disregarding the pact between the Sapta Rishis and Twashta. These actions angered the Rakshasa community and Indra backed by Devas. Continuous warfare resulted in choas and harassment of Devas, Maharshis, Brahmanas, men, women and children. Bhu Devi experienced enormous weight of sin and made an appeal to Indra and

Devas. As a result, Yuhishtara the eldest of Pandavas came to be born by Indra's virility to Devi Kunti, Bheema was born to Kunti as the radiance of Indra was passed through Vayu Deva; Indra gave away a part of his own Shakti to Kunti by means of which Arjuna was born; Indra's virility was transferred through the two Ashwini Kumars to Devi Maadri to result in the birth of Nakula and Sahadeva. Thus Indra's manliness was responsible to create the Pancha Pandavas by the 'Amsha' of Indra either directly or through his Alternate Forms! Moreover, Indra's wife Shachi Devi as the 'Yagneshani' was created from Agni and hence Draupadi was Indra's better half. Yogeshwara Purusha Indra could divide his own radiance into as many parts as he wished. Thus, it was amply justified that Draupadi was the common wife of all the Five Pandavas as asserted by the Holy Birds.

Why did Balarama atone for the sin of Brahma Hatya during his pilgrimage! Balarama the elder brother of Shri Krishna remained neutral during the Great Battle of Maha Bharata between Pandavas and Kauravas, mainly since Duryodhana of Kauravas, the arch enemy of Pandavas, was his disciple in Gada-Yuddha or the battle of Maces in which Bheema of Pandavas was an expert too. Along with his wife Devi Revati Balarama proceeded on pilgrimage for twelve years. In course of his travels, he consumed 'toddy' an intoxicant drink and entered a garden of flowers and fruits and enjoyed the atmosphere along with his wife. He entered a hermitage in the forest where there was a congregation of Brahmanas being addressed by Suta Muni. The entire congregation stood up in reverence of Balarama excepting a Brahmana as the latter realised that Balarama was intoxicated. Balarama became furious and killed the Brahmana as the congregation left in disgust at the tragedy. On recovering his senses Balarama realised his great folly and decided to atone for his Brahma hatya Sin as also observed fast during his further pilgrimage and later on worshpped Puloma Saraswati to pay for further penance.

Why were the defenceless sons of Draupadi killed in sleep! Once Sage Vishwamitra decided to harass King Harischandra, partly due to the long standing hatred of the King's Raja Guru Sage Vasishtha but mainly to test the King for his virtue and truthfulness. Vishwamitra approached the King once and requested him to perform one yagna and the latter readily agreed. The Sage said: 'Let us presume that the Yagna was already performed and the Dakshina was already due to the Sage'. The King smiled and said that he was ready to give away the expenses for the Yagna and also his Dakshina. The Sage said that the expenses would be on his terms viz. the entire kingdom excepting the Queen Shaibya and Prince Rohitasya. That would be in addition to the dakshina! As the King had suddenly become a pauper and was further indebted towards the payment of Dakshina, Viswamitra harassed Harischandra as he was asked to leave his Kingdom which was all over excepting Varanasi the Place of Shiva. The Muni appeared again and again asking for the dues and the Five Lokapalakas sought to intervene as the persecution to Harischandra became uncontrolled. Vishwamitra cursed the Lokapalakas to be born as human beings. The Lokapalakas were frightened and begged for clemency from the Muni. The Sage softened the curse thay they would not get entangled with the worldly affairs after their births and would be killed in sleep without much prolongation of life. It was due the curse of Vishwamitra to the Lokapalakas that Draupadi gave birth to the sons who were killed in sleep by Aswatthama, the son of Dronacharya. Ashswatthama wanted to avenge the killing of the Acharya by Arjuna as Yudhishtara shouted a blatant lie to the Acharya about Ashwathaama being killed but whispered that an elephant called Ashwatthama was killed; following this Drona stopped the fight and let Arjuna kill the unarmed Drona too.

## Episodes related to Shiva and Parvati

#### *Links of Sandhya Devi-Arundhati-Sati-*Parvati:

Shiva Purana narrated an intersting link of the most revered Devis: Lord Brahma created **Sandhya** and Manmatha as his 'Manasika' or mind born children. He got infatuated with Sandhya and Lord Rudra chastised Brahma and the latter looked for an opportunity when Rudra might also be a victim of passion and Vishnu said that Maha Deva was above such temptations. Meanwhile Sandhya Devi who was

ashamed of Brahma's passion resorted to fierce Tapasya to Maha Deva for thousand years under the tutelage of Maharshi Vasishtha in disguise as Sage Medatithi as per Brahma's instruction. Since there was no response from Shiva she got desperate and tried to jump into the Homa Kunda (The Sacred Fire-Pit) in the Yagna being performed by Medatithi. Shiva made his appearance as she desired that none on her clan should ever be a victim like Brahma, that she should be an example of chastity and her husband should never cast a lustful eye on another woman. Shiva granted her wishes and advised that she might now fall into the fire-pit thinking of a person whom she desired to be her husband in her next birth. Shiva further gave her the boon that she would be the daughter of Daksha Prajapati as Sati Devi and as the daughter of Himavan as Parvati Devi in her subsequent two births. Sandhya then leapt into the fire-pit thinking of Medatithi (Vasishtha) as the husband in the immediate next birth. The Prana Vayu or the Vital Air of Sandhya's burnt body was carried to the Solar System and Surya Deva converted it into three parts as Pratah Sandhya-Madhyahnika Sandhya and Sayah Sandhya or of the morning-noon-evening timings of a day. The Sages at the Yagna were wonder struck that Sandhya was re-born as a girl-child as named Arundhati and was married to Vasishta when she came of age and earned the examplary fame of chastity; the practice of Vedic weddings is followed by the visioning of the Arundhati Star on the Sky by the new-weds as a part of the wedding procedure till date.

Daksha Yagna, Sati's sacrifice, Shiva-Parvati's wedding, Kumara's birth and Tarakasura Vadha

Brahma blessed Daksha Prajapati to beget a daughter with the 'Amsha' or part-manifestation of Devi Bhagavati as Devi Sati. Already Daksha got sixty daughters, ten married to Dharma, thirteen to Kashyapa Muni, twenty seven to Chandra, two to Bhuta Ganas, two to Kushashwa, six to Garuda and so on. As Sati Devi came of age, she fixed her mind on Rudra Deva and resorted to severe Tapasya. Rudra agreed to marry her, Brahma proposed formally and the marriage took place with pomp and show. Sati and Rudra shifted from Kailasa to Himalayas where Bhagavan enlightened Sati Devi on many matters of Spiritual Significance including the nuances of Mantra-Tantra-Yantra and Yoga. But meanwhile, Daksha Prajapati got increasingly jealous of Rudra Deva. At the ill-famed Daksha Yagna, Daksha denied 'Pradhana Havis'or the prime part of the Yagna to Rudra as per the usual practice and even as Sage Dadhichi pointed out the lacuna, the caution was ignored. Sati Devi felt that there was a mistake made by her father and insisted on attending the yagna despite Shiva's warning and his subsequent approval with great reluctance as Nandi and Rudra Ganas accompanied her. Daksha ignored her entry at the Yagna and in fact talked disparagingly against Rudra Deva. She could not contain Daksha's criticism of Maha Deva and having produced Yogic Fire ended herself to unite with Bhagavan. As Nandi informed Shiva of the tragedy, the latter pulled out a few hairs from his Jatajuta or the coarse knotted head- hair against a mountain and the energy so created broke the mountain into two parts, one of which having materialised Veerabhadra and another Devi Bhadra Kaali. The enraged Rudra asked them to destroy Daksha Yagna. Veerabhadra beheaded Daksha and together with Bhadra Kaali turned the Yagna into smithereens. Devi Bhagavata Purana stated that Shiva picked up the body remains of Sati Devi and performed furious Shiva Tandava to release his pent up emotions of intense love of Sati and hightened anger for Daksha; Vishnu apprehended Pralaya and used his Sudarshana Chakra to spread out the body remains of Sati and hundred and eight Shakti Peethas came into being. Veda Vyasa affirmed that worship at these Siddha Peethas or even hearing about these would destroy sins and bestow powers to the devotees concerned. Eventually, the instant fury of Shiva was cooled down by the prayers of Brahma and Devas and the ever merciful Shiva agreed to the resuscitation of Daksha by fixing the Goat-head of the Sacrificial animal. The ever grateful Daksha begged of Shiva's clemency and re-organised Daksha Yagna once again with Maha Deva occupying the High-Seat at any Yagna eversince.

## Devi Parvati's wedding with Maha Deva:

Of the sixty daughters of Daksha Prajapati, Swadha Devi was married to Pitru Devas and gave birth to Maina, Dhanya and Kalavati. The three of them once desired to have a 'darshan' of Vishnu and while waiting their turn did not recognise the illustrious Sanaka-Sanandana- Sanat Kumara and Sanatana

Brothers. The brothers took offence that the girls did not recognise them and cursed the girls to be born in Bhu Loka. The girls begged of forgiveness and the kind Rishis provided dispensations to the curse that Maina would be the wife of Himavanta; Dhanya would be the wife of King Janaka and secure a daughter called Devi Sita who would marry Shri Rama after breaking the Shiva Dhanush or Maha Deva's own Bow; and Kalavati wed marry Gopa Vrisabhan and give birth to Devi Radha the Spiritual Beloved of Shri Krishna. Thus Maina Devi became the wife of Himavanta and gave birth to Jagadamba herself, besides hundred sons born with wings; Indra was jealous of the sons and clipped their wings excepting of Mainaka who hid himself in Dakshina Samudra as a mountain and years later helped Hanuman during his reconnaaissance trip to Lanka to search Devi Sita. Devi Parvati from her childhood was intensely devoted to Maha Deva and dreamt of marrying him. Her parents too were cherishing the wish to have Shiva as their son-in-law. But, after Sati Devi's yogic end, Shiva was roaming around restlessly as a grobe trotter; his memories of Sati made him perspire once and out of his sweat were born Bhauma whom Bhu Devi nurtured and the former eventually attained a position in the Solar System as Mangala Deva or Mars.

At the instance of Devi Parvati, Himavan requested Maha Deva to assist him in his Tapasya but Shiva refused. She encountered Shiva and argued that she was Prakriti or Nature and Shiva was Maha Purusha and that his meditation would yield speedy results of his Tapasya! Shiva was impressed of her Spiritual Knowledge and finally agreed that she could assist him in his Tapasya. It was at this juncture the allpowerful Tarakasura, the son of Vajrang and the grandson of Diti, who did unprecedented Tapasya, secured Brahma's boon of invincibility excepting by a son of Shiva, presuming that Shiva was highly disillusioned after the death of Sati and it was highly unlikely that there could be even a remote possibility of Shiva's wedding and of the birth of a son to him. But being aware of Parvati being engaged in personal devotion to Shiva, Brahma advised Indra and Devas to pursue the prospect of Shiva's physical nearness to Parvati and seek the help of Kama Deva Manmatha's help to provoke Shiva's passion. But the plan misfired as the Nirvikara Shiva was annoyed and burnt off Madana into ash by the severity of his third eye, leaving Rati Devi into lurch as she was widowed in the bargain. Her earnest prayers to Shiva that her husband was victimised for a Deva Karya or a Task to Benefit Devas, the merciful Maha Deva gave the dispensation that Manmatha would join Shiva Ganas then and could be visible to Rati Devi only and gave the further boon that eventually Manmatha would be born to Shri Krishna and Devi Rukmini as Pradyumna and Rati Devi would be his wife as Mayavati again. The highly disappointed Parvati intensified her Tapasya and Bhagavan too melted gradually and consented to marry Parvati, as convinced by Vishnu, Brahma and Indra. Shiva deputed Sapta Rishis to test Parvati's seriousness to marry him. The Rishis returned fully convinced but Shiva himself desired to test and in the disguise of a Brahmana to dissuade her to marrya her stating that he was a Bhutanatha, a near Digambara and an uncouth and frightening entity with matted hair and serpents and ash all over his body. Parvati vehemently reacted and showed him the door. But she felt that the Tapasya apparently did not satisfy him and out of desperation tried to jump into a fire pit, when Maha Deva gave darshan to her and said: Why did you not realise that we are the Etranal Prakriti and Maha Purusha ourselves!

When the wedding announcement was made by Vishnu and Lakshmi, the entire Universe got transformed with ecstasy. Indra and Devas as also Sivaganas, especially Nandi, Bhairava; Maina and Himavanta; Sapta Matas viz.Brahmi, Mahendri, Maheswari, Kaum, ari, Vaishnavi, Vaarahi, Indri and Chamunda were overjoyed; Gandharva-Yaksha-Kinnara- Apsaras went into frenzy. The wedding was celebrated as the most memorable event of the Yugas and Kalpas.

The birth of Skanda: After the Wedding, Shiva and Parvati moved to Kailasa to spend their conjugal happiness, Tarakasura's evil activities reached a peak and a delegation of Devas headed by Brahma approached Vishnu who in turn prayed to Shiva about the grim situation. In a great hurry to meet Vishnu, Brahma and the Delegation of Devas, Shiva spilt his semen off ground and Agni Deva transformed into a pigeon pecked up the drops but could not contain the drops. Maha Deva himself suggested to Agni that the drops be better injected into a woman of immense virtue. Agni identified six women of extraordinary

virtue and injected the drops into their skin pores. They too could not contain the heaviness and of extreme effervescence and as advised by Himalaya left the drops in the flow of Ganges which carried to the bushes of reed (**Sarkanda**) and there appeared a boy of mysterious radiance. Even while this sequence of events were taking place, Parvati Devi was extremely furious and cursed the Deva Ganas who were all responsible for the huge wastage of Maha Deva's virility and cursed them all to become barren!

The birth of **Kartikeya**, as Krittikas had a role to play, took place at the most sancrosant time viz. Krittika Nakshatra Shashti of Suddha Margasira; Sage Viswamitra arrived and gave him the name of **Guhya** as he bestowed the totality of Vedic Knowledge; the Six Goddesses offered their six heads and six mouths; he was known as **Shanmukha**. As he grew for a couple of years or so he grew restless and moved on to Krouncha Mountain and proved his valour by crumbling it. Shiva Ganas located him and brought him to Shiva and Parvati who knew no bounds of joy that he was finally home. He was crowned as the King of Kailasha puri and Indra appointed him as the **Senapati** or the Commander in Chief of Deva Sena. **Tarakasura** confronted Devas and ridiculed them that he took refuge of a boy little realising that indeed he was a 'wizard boy'! Having despatched a few warm up weapons, Skanda Deva engaged him with light Astras which attracted ridicule but taking an opportune time, threw the Shakti missile suddenly and deftly that the Demon's chest was pounded and the greatest menace to the Universe was smashed for ever.

The erstwhile foe's right and left shoulders called Banasura and Pralamb who suppressed Devas into miserable submission for long many years were cut off by Skanda and the remnants of enemies were wiped too without a scar even!

# Glories of Maha Deva, his manifestations , origin of Shiva Lingas, Dwadasha Lingas and significance of Shiva Ratri

Slow-poison of Atheism by Arihan led to the killings of Tripurasuras by Maha Deva:

As Skanda Kumara killed the most dreaded Tarakasura, his sons Tarkasha, Vidyunmali and Kamalaksha who were dejected at their father's death were anxious to take revenge against Devas who planned for the birth of Shiva's son Kartikeya. They all resorted to extreme Tapasya to please Brahma and secured boons to construct three invincible forts built of gold, silver and iron situated in the Skies, Earth and the Lower Worlds and dominated the Universe tormenting the three lokas and tormenting Devas and Rishis. Devas had to vacate the higher lokas and approached Brahma and subsequently to Vishnu for succor. Vishnu realised that the Asuras were adept in 'Karmakanda' or performing rituals as per Vedas and Scriptures and as such some another method of deviating from the Rituals. Vishnu created from his body an Athiest called Arihan who made way to the Asuras and in the garb of teaching them rituals taught the medium of Reasoning and created confusion in their minds the concepts of faith versus logic or religion versus skepticism. Thus the slow poison of non-belief got spread out from the Asura Kings to their Subjects. Thus firm grounds were prepared for the destruction of their castles in which rituals were abolished and the 'why and what' kind of so-called rationalism prevailed. Then it was a very easy situation of the invincible forts to be destroyed in one go by Maha Deva himself by his most potent weapon viz. the Pashupataastra to terminate the Asuras and uproot their followers.

Demon Jalandhar supported by Lakshmi but fascinated with Parvati and killed by Shiva:

Even as a child born at Gangasagar the terminal point of Ganga and the Ocean, Jalandhar was so mighty and energetic that when he kicked Brahma in his neck who fondled the child the latter had tears in his eyes! Samudra brought up the child and thus Lakshmi the daughter of Samudra had a soft corner for her brother. As Jalandhar grew up he was married to Vrinda the daughter another Daitya King Kalanemi and the became the most cruel King of Daityas himself and forced Indra and Devas to vacate their positions in Swarga. Vishnu remained neutral due to Lakshmi's reluctance to harm Jalandhar; instead the latter had

access to Ksheera Samudra the abode of Lakshmi-Narayana. Narada Muni meanwhile created a problem for Jalandhar on two counts that Shiva's riches and powers were by far the most superior and that his wife Parvati was the prettiest woman in the Universe. Jalandhar sent Rahu as an emissary to Parvati with a proposal to wed him and the latter was motionless at the Daitya's audacity and kicked out Rahu as he was a mere emissary. She complained to Vishnu about this incident and the latter adopted the same technique of approaching Jalandhar's wife Vrinda disguised as a Brahmana with a similar proposal of marrying her. Some time later Vishnu impersonated as Jalandhar and approached Vrinda and on knowing the truth later, she cursed Vishnu before her self-immolation that he too would face similar situation later; indeed Rama was looking for Sita all over as she was abducted by Ravanasura! Jalandhar instigated the Shubh-Nikumbh brothers to attack Shiva who no doubt subdued them but assured them that eventually they would be terminated by Devi Bhagavati herself. Finally Jalandhar faced Shiva in a battle and the latter slit his throat by a fiery 'chakra' produced from his left toe! Vishnu suffered a guilt complex at the self-immolation of Vrinda and performed penance. Maha Deva asked Parvati to rally the support of Lakshmi and Sarasvati in this context and the three Devis materialised three seeds of trees viz. Amla, Tulsi and Malati and sprayed them at the Place where Vrinda self-immolated. The seeds were sprayed at Vrinda's immolation place and as they grew to become big trees they were sent to Vaikuntha as tokens of blessings to Vrinda's soul there!

Demon Shankhachooda was terminated by Shiva while Vishnu impersonated the Demon to cheat the latter's wife Tulasi!

In his earlier birth the Demon Shankhacooda was Sudama the Chief Attendant of Lord Krishna's 'Raasa mandali' or The Dance Group of Gopikas and Krishna at Brindavana; he was a 'Jatismara' or the person with the knowledge of previous birth. He was cursed by Radha Devi due to an indisrcetion to become a Demon. Sudama fell in love with Devi Tulasi and she too was cursed to be born along with Sudama as his wfe and she too was a jatismara. Shankachooda was fortified with constant recitation of Narayana Kavacha and thus became an invincible demon with enormous strength and fortitude; he defeated Devas and dislodged Indra and Devas from their thrones. The latter approached Maha Deva who sent Pushpadanta with a warning to Shankhachooda but the demon had the audacity of attacking Maha Deva him self! Shiva sent Shivaganas along with Bhadrakaali but to no avail. Then Ganesha and Kartikeya led Devas along with the Eleven Rudras, Dwadasha Bhaskaras and a huge contingent of Pramatha Ganas. While Shankachooda was waging the battle, Vishnu spread out his Maya and entered Devi Tulasi's chamber as Shankhachooda and pretended that there was a victory in the battle and that he was tired to rest with her. In the course of their union, Tulasi cursed Vishnu even as the news of her husband's death was learnt. The distraught Tulasi who lost her chastity gave a curse to Vishnu to turn ino a Stone. Vishnu however blessed Tulasi to accept her as his consort and become immortal as a Tree who was worthy of daily worship all over the World. As a result of Tulasi's curse Vishnu turned out to be a 'Salagrama' worthy of daily worship too.

Andhakasura's each blood drop was drenched out by Chandika Devi as instructed by Maha Deva

Originally a darling boy of Devi Parvati, Andhakasura bacame a menace to the Universe. In a playful mood, she closed Shiva's eyes and the perspiration on the latter's forehead created a boy of muscular strength called Andhaka. Parvati nurtured the boy with affection and care. When the Daitya King Hiranyaksha pleased Maha Deva with the King's rigorous Tapasya for several years and obtained the boons of longevity and invincibilty, Lord Shiva also gifted Andhaka to the King to assist him and treat him as his own son. Together, both Hirankasha and Andhaka conquered the Three worlds and the former even sought to pull down Bhumi besides Vedas and Scriptures to Rasatala and Vishnu had to assume the Form of Varaha and destroyed Hiranyaksha. Andhaka then resorted to severe Tapasya and obtained the boon that none other than Shiva could kill him. Empowered with the boon, Andhaka became arrogant and tormented Devas and Rishis even ignoring Parvati and Shiva. Meanwhile Daitya Guru Shukracharya pleased Maha Deva with his meditation and secured 'Mrita Sanjeevani' Vidya and stalled the killings of Daitya-Danavas and revived the dead ones also. A fiery Shiva was incensed that the Vidya was being

misused and killed Shukracharya; as he was being killed, the Guru expressed his sincere regret and the merciful Shiva released the Guru through his semen. Shiva then applied his Trident and killed Andhakasura but thanks to his boon of Brahma, the Daitya multipled himself for each drop of his blood. Maha Deva had then to instruct Devi Chandika to expand her tongue and drenched out the blood of Andakasura's body totally. Shiva lifted the body of the Demon as the latter prayed to Maha Deva to grant him admission to Siva Ganas.

Gajasura's boon to reside in his belly and got killed to attain Shiva Ganatwa:

Gajasura's boon to reside in his belly and get killed only by Maha Deva: ajasura an ardent devotee of Shiva performed severe penance and secured the boon of Shiva's residing in the belly of the Asura. A highly agitated Parvati requested Vishnu to locate the missing Shiva. Vishnu disguised himself as a street player along with Nandeeswara searched all over the Kingdom of Gajasura and came to learn that Shiva was inside the King's belly. The dance of Nandi pleased the Asura and Vishnu requested the latter to release Shiva on the condition that Shiva could exit from the belly by making him secure everlasting glory and that was how Shiva wore the skin of the Elephant-Demon as 'Gajambara dhaari' and assumed the name of Krittivaseshwara. [Another interpretation is that having pierced out of the Asura's belly, Shiva blessed the latter to let his head get fixed on his son's shoulders and make Gajasura's memory permanent as Ganesha!]

Several such Shiva Leelas were ascribed to Maha Deva like the Daitya Nirhada the maternal uncle of Prahlada who initiated the practice of co-Daityas killing Brahmanas in the form of tigers when the Brahmanas were asleep at Yagna Shalaas and Shiva too assumed the form of another tiger to kill the Asura tigers. On one Shiva Ratri, thousands of Brahmanas were awake after Shiva Lingaarchanas and Shiva assumed thousands of tiger forms to kill the perpetrator Asuras. Another story described was that of Vidal and Utpal Daityas who entered the Shiva Ganas in their forms during a ball game in which Shiva and Parvati were at play and the Omnisceint Super Gods hit the balls so hard that the masquerading Asuras died instantly and the balls got converted as Siva Lingas.

# Basic Manifestations of Shiva:

Incarnations as <u>Pancha Mukhaas</u> or the Five Faces are: *Sadyojaata* in white complexion looking west ward blessing Brahma to initiate the process of Creation; *Vamadeva* in red complexion looking northward in deep meditative posture; *Aghoresha* in blue complexion looking southward representing destructive as also regenerating energy with Roudra Mukham; *Tatpurusha* in yellow complexion looking Eastward as a deluding or misleading Purusha Swarupa and *Ishaana* facing South East being copmlexion-less Sada-Shiva who is Eternal, Omni Present- Omni Scient and Omni-Potent!

The <u>Ashta Murtis</u> or Eight Swarupas of Shiva are Sharva, Bhava, Rudra, Ugra, Bhima, Pashupati, Ishana and Maha Deva; these Swarupas represent Pancha Bhutas or Five Elements of Earth-Water-Radiance-Ether and Sky, besides Sun-Moon-and Kshetragjna. Sharva is All-Knowing, Bhava is the Bestower and All-Merciful, Rudra is the Punisher and the Corrector, Ugra or the Destroyer, Bhima the remover of all kinds of difficulties, Pashupati the Liberator of Samsara or the Earthly-bondages or chains, Ishana the Supreme Witness of Actions and Sufferings and Shiva the ever-provider of coolness and fulfillment also manifested in Moon as Maha Deva.

The <u>Ekadasha Rudras</u> are Kapali, Pingala, Bheema, Virupaksha, Vilohita, Shastra, Ajapaada, Ahirbudhya, Shamshu, Chand and Bhava who are the regular and constant destroyers of Evil Forces and the ever generating demonaic Shaktis in the Universe.

The corresponding <u>Dasha Shakti Swarupas</u> or the Counter-Part Maha Vidyas are: Maha Kaal-Kaali, Tar-Tara, Bhuveneshwar-Bhuvaneshwari, Shodasha-Shodashi or Shri Vidyesha-Shri Vidyeshi, Bhairava-Bharavi, Chhinna mastak-Chhinnamasta, Dhumavan-Dhumavati, BhagalaMukha-Bhagala Mukhi, Matanga-Matangi and Kamal-Kamala.

<u>Arthanaareshwara</u> is a significant and Composite Form of Purusha and Prakriti. As Brahma felt a major limitation of not being able to procreate freely and immensely, a Celestial voice was conveyed to him that he should perform Tapasya to Bhagavan Shiva sincerely. Shiva manifested him self as Arthanaareshwara and provided guidelineds to create male and female beings and thus expedite the process of procreation.

<u>Tri- Sishu Murtis</u> were the Triplets born to Atri-Anasuya couples. Sage Atri was the Manasa Putra or the the mind born son of Lord Brahma; the couple performed a powerful penance to Maha Deva and the severity of the Sacrifice was such that extreme heat from the fire-pit radiated all over the world and Devas approached Brahma who along with Vishnu conferred with Shiva and appeared before Atri and Anasuya and desired to test her chastity in the forms of Munis who demanded that they should serve food to them naked! She donned tree leaves and served food. Three boys were born: Chandra with Brahma's Amsha, Dattatreya with Vishnu's Amsha and Durvasa with Shiva's Amsha. Devi Anasuya (literally meaning as the person without jealousy) was thus the unique woman with Tri Murtis as her kids!

Durvasa: Being of the Amsha of Maha Deva, Maharshi Durvasa was stated to be of extremely short temper. An interesting happening was narrated by Sage Suta to the congregation of Rishis about Maharshi Durvasa: King Ambarisha was highly virtuous and pious who was in the habit of observing fasts and worship to Bhagavan on every Ekadasi (eleventh) day of a month and on the next day of Dwadasi (twelfth) day, he would break the fast only after a Brahmana or more would commence their food. It was on a Dwadasi day that along with several of his disciples, Durvasa made a sudden appearance, agreed to join for mid day meals and took away all his Sishyas for taking bath in a river nearby. Just at the nick of time when Dwadasi was nearing its end, Durvasa and disciples did not return; the King had to cut-short the fast and took one sip of water and precisely at that split second Durvasa and others arrived. Durvasa became furious that the King did not wait for him but had a sip of water already; he pulled out a lock of hair which became a flame and would have turned the King into ash but for the instantaneous appearance of 'Sudarshan Chakra' (since the King was a very high devotee of Lord Vishnu) which not only put off the fire but chased the Sage. A celestial voice was heard not to hurt the Sage as he was of part embodiment of Bhagavan Siva and that he was only testing Ambarisha. The King beseeched Durvasa's sincere pardon and so did Sudarshan Chakra too. There were many other instances when Sage Durvasa used to test the real characteristsics of illustrious personalities- apparently to enlighten the posterity - like Sri Rama who was once ordered not to be disturbed by anyone but Lakshmana had to do so since Durvasa arrived and as an atonement discarded even Lakshmana for his wrong action; when Durvasa was taking bath in Ganga naked by intention or mistake, Draupadi tore a part of her sari to cover the Sage, and he blessed her that at the time of 'Vastrapaharanam' (Draupadi's disrobing) in an open Court, the piece of cloth would come to her rescue as Dussasana tried to disrobe her; and finally saved another great embarrassment to Pandavas and Draupadi by the sudden arrival of Durvasa with many disciples while she was unable to cook so much of food for all of them, but Lord Krishna arrived and suppressed the hunger of all of them as a morsel of rice remained in the utensil and that turned to be plentiful to Durvasa and disciples!

Other manifestations of Maha Deva: Bhagavan Shiva assumed innumerable other forms. He appeared as **Yakshewara** to humble Devas as they became arrogant as they secured 'Amrit' after churning Ocean and asked them to cut pieces of grass and they were so mighty but they failed and realised that He was Maha Deva Himself; He incarnated as **Hanuman** when Lord Siva was infatuated with Mohini, Saptarishis carried His semen to Anjana Devi through Vayu Deva, as a child swallowed Sun God to release him only after Deities requested the child when Sun agreed to be Hanuman's teacher, joined Lord Rama as His devotee, assisted Rama to locate Sita as also destroyed Ravana along with his clan and had became immortal eversince; He assumed the form of **Mahesha** along with Girija since Bhairava, the door keeper of Kailasa, made Parvati unhappy causing Her to curse as mortal named Vetal who performed penance of such intensity that pleased Siva and Parvati; He embodied as **Vrishabha** (Appearance of an Ox) to enter the lower lokas (nether worlds) with the aim of punishing Vishnu's wicked sons but when they were destroyed Vishnu fought with Vrishabha not knowing the Ox-like form was of Siva's; when Vishnu

prayed to Siva the latter presented Sudarsan Chakra to Vishnu. Lord Siva disguised as a Yatinath to test the depth of devotion by a Bhil couple named Ahuk and Ahuka and sought resting place overnight but even while Ahuk said that their hut was just enough for two persons, Ahuka agreed to sleep outside to let the guest sleep inside the hut, while a wild animal killed Ahuk yet Ahuka quietly tried to jump in the husband's funeral pyre when Lord Siva manifested and blessed that the couple to become Nala and Damayanti in the next birth as the Lord would appear as a 'Hamsa' (Swan) to unite them; Siva disguised as a **beggar** to another poor woman who was hesitating to look after an orphan boy as she had her own child too, yet advised the woman to bring up both the kids, since the orphan boy was the son of King Satyarath who was killed by enemies while the Queen went to forest along with the just born child but was killed by a crocodile in a river thus prevailing on the poor woman not to abandon the orphan and eventually found a pot of gold to her surprise; Lord Siva appeared as **Sureshwara** in the guise of Indra when child Upamanyu performed concentrated penance to Bhagavan to become rich as he did not have enough money to buy milk when his poor mother said that Siva could only provide money but as a result of his penance Indra appeared and not Siva which disapponted Upamanu to resume the Tapasya with far higher devotion and Siva Himself appeared; and Bhagavan's Incarnation as **Kirat** (hunter) when a forest bound boar (actually a Demon Mookasura sent by Duryodhana) killed by Arjuna and Kirata simultaneously was claimed by both ending up in a mutual fight and finally a victorious Siva was impressed by Arjuna's valour and gifted 'Pasupatastra', the most potent arrow of the World!

Nandikeshwara: As regards *Nandikeshwara*, the origin was that Sage Shailada secured a boon from Maha Deva that a son of extraordinary Spiritual Knowledge would be born with four hands and three eyes but would be short lived for seven years only. The boy was born was a prodigy of Vedas. But realising that the lad would be short-lived, the Sage took to severe Tapasya again to Maha Deva who blessed the boy to live for ever! He instructed the Sage that a garland worn by Shiva himself should imbibe His powers and sprinkled water from His locks as the water flowed as 'Panchanadi'or five rivers. Shiva then appointed the boy as the Chief of Shivaganaas. Devi Parvati brought up the boy as her own and gave Nandeswara full freedom in their house-hold! Any prayer to Shiva should be through him only!

Bhairava: was created from Bhagavan Siva's third eye as He decided to snip the fifth head of Brahma who annoyed the Lord for the sin of temptation with his own daughter. But the sin of removing a head of Brahma construed as 'Brahma hatya' (killing a Brahmana that too of the stature of Brahma) haunted Bhairava and he wished to atone the sin by begging alms in the skull of the dropped Head. He reached Vaikuntha and Lakshmi Devi gifted a Vidya or learning called 'Manorath' or fulfilment of one's mental wishes. Lord Siva dropped oegrass (a plant in sea akin to elephant grass) in the skull-bowl and directed Bhairava to Kasi as this sin of Brahmahatya could not enter the Temple but he went to Patalaloka intead. As Bhairava dropped the skull, he got rid of the sin for-ever. The place where the skull fell is regarded as that of 'Kapala Moksha' or Salvation of the Skull.

Sharabheshwara: is another incarnation of Maha Deva, in the curious form of a giant bird which is partlion and part-human [depicted as a figure in the Temples of South India]. When Lord Vishnu assumed the incarnation of Narasimha (Man-Lion) and devastated the Demon Hiranyakasipu and saved Prahlada- the die-hard devotee of Vishnu, Narasimha continued His fury for a long time and various efforts including Prahlad's prayers and even Veerabhadra's intervention in the form of a mighty fight proved futile. The Giant Bird was able to control Narasimha and flew the latter away held by its beak. On way, Lord Vishnu recovered His normalcy and praised Siva for averting a universal havoc. The body of Narasimha was destroyed and its Lion's Head was worn in a garland of Sharabhevara or Lord Siva.

The Story of Siva Linga's Origin:

In the secluded and thick forests of Darukavana, select Rishis and Yogis called were engaged in deep Tapasya and their wives who were all Maha Pativratas were engaged in serving the Tapasis in their Spiritual Activities of 'Karma Kanda' like 'Japa-Homas'. Maha Deva arrived in that atmosphere to test the depth and earnestness of their devotion in the disguise of a semi lunatic but as an astonishingly handsome youth; he was half-naked some times laughing and some times crying but behaving erratically. Out of curiosty in the beginning and as a temptation eventually the women folk including the elderly ones, not to mention of the youthful ones and of course the 'kanyas' made a beeline to the handsome young man and the Rishis found a noticeable transformation in their outlook with sympathy and soft corner. Some entrerprising women even tried to converse with the person but he did not respond positively. As the men in that small Society reprimanded him and even threatened him to leave the Place, he did not reply and laughed away as though they were in a negative mode. Finally, his presence became a nuisance upsetting their peace of mind as the women folk started getting more and more attracted to him by the day. In one go, the Rishis confronted him and cursed him that his Linga be dropped. Brahma appeared and admonished the Maharshis and apologised to Maha Deva. The Munis too realised their terrible mistake and sought unreserved apologies to the youth in disguise. Maha Deva no doubt accepted their sincere apologies but reprimanded them for their flippant reactions without trying to assess the truth; he said that the entire Srishti occurred due to Stree and Pumlingas and one shopuld not hasten to wrong conclusions; a Brahmavaadi might be a naked person, or ash-smeared or even a child and leastcommunicative as he might be engrossed in inner-meditation enjoying bliss or crying for the betterment of Society around and as such 'prima facie' interpretations might be misleading. This was how Shiva guided the Rishis not to confuse Maya for Satya or Illusions for Reality! Maha Deva also suggested that 'Karma Kanda' could certainly be a foundation to the path for Self-Realisation or a means for Salvation but not the end by itself just as mistaking wood for the forest!

Shata-Rudreeyam: Thus Linga Formations are representations of Maha Deva and worship to Lingas is most certainly the worship to Shiva and his virility itself. While there are crores of Linga Swarupas made of sand, rock, metal and various other matetial bases all over the Universe, distinct Beings like Brahma-Vishnus, Deva-Danavas, Yaksha-Gandharvas, Muni-Manavas and others were stated to worship Shiva Lingas in their own ways having materialised them with varying materials and varying names of Shiva. This staggering mateial base with which the Lingas were made and distinguished with different names of Maha Devas was called Shata Rudreeyam.: Brahma meditated the feet of a Golden Linga called Jagat Pradhana; Krishna to the head of a black stone Linga named Urjit; Sanakadi Munis to the heart of Jagadrati Linga; Sapta Rishis worshipped a Darbha Linga named Vishwa Yoni; Narada conceived an allpervasive Akaakasha Linga and worshipped Jagatvija; Indra worshipped a Vajra Linga named Vishwatma; Surya to a copper Linga called Vishwasruga; Chandra to a pearl Linga named Jagatpati; Agni worshipped Indra Nila Mani Linga called Vishweshwara; Brihaspati to a Pushparajamani called Vishwa Yoni; Yama Dharma Raja to a brass Linga called Shambhu; Shukracharya paid penance to Padmaraaga Man Linga called Vishwakarma; Kubera worshipped a Golden Linga called Ishwara; Vishwa Deva Ganas prayed to a Silver Linga named Jagatgati; Ashtavasus to a Glass Linga known as Bhavodbhava; Marud Ganas to TriLoka Linga made of three metals called Umesha/ Bhupesha; Rakshasas prayed to an Iron Linga called Bhuta Bhavya Badhavya; Guhyaka Ganas prayed to a Mirror-made Shiva Linga named Yoga; Jaigeesha Muni performed puja to Maya Linga named Jaigeeshwara; King Nimi did penance to a Ugala Netra Linga or Two Eyed Linga called Sharva; Dhanvantari worshipped Gomaya Linga (cowdung) in the name of Sarva Lokeshwareshwara; Gandharvas made pujas to a wooden Linga called Sarva Shreshtha; Lord Rama made intense Japa to Vidyunmani Linga named Jyeshtha; Banasura made sacrifices to a Marakata Mani Linga named Varishtha; Varuna Deva revered Sphatika Mani Linga named Parameshwara; Naga Ganas prayed to Munga (Black Pearl) Linga named Lokatrayankara; Shani Deva performed Japa on Saturday Amavasya Midnights to Bhavari Swarupa Linga (Honey Bee) called Jagannatha; Ravana worshipped Chameli Flower Linga named Sudurjaa; Siddha Ganas prayed to Manasa Linga called 'Kama Mrityu Jaraatiga'; and so on.

Dwadasha Jyotir Lingas: Nandeshwara described the most Celebrated Twelve Shiva Lingas viz. Kedarnath in Himalayas [Uttaranchal], Bhima Shankar in Dakinya [Pune, Maharashtra], Vishweshwara in Varanasi, Triambaka on Godavari Banks, Somanath in Sourashtra [Gujarat], Mallikarjuna in Shri Shaila [Andhra Pradesh], Mahakaala in Ujjain [Madhya Pradesh], Omkareshwara [also in Madhya Pradesh], Vaidyanath at Deogarh [Bihar], Nageshwara near Dwaraka [Gujarat], Rameshwara [Tamil nadu] and Ghishneshwara [near Ellora Caves, Aurangabad, Maharashtra].

Somanath is a Sparsha Linga and the Water Body Chandra Kund is stated to cure Leprosy and Tuberculosis. Its legend originated from Daksha Prajapati's Curse since Daksha married off twenty seven of his daughters to Chandra but the latter displayed extreme affection for Rohini to the complete neglect of others and Daksha cursed Chandra to gradually disappear from the Sky. There was havoc to the worlds in the absence of Chandra as there was neither moon shine nor coolness in the nights and worse still there were no 'Aoushadhis' nor Brahmanas whose Lord Chandra was performing Yagnas. Lord Shiva sorted the problem of creating Shukla Paksha or the First Bright Fortnight as Chandra would reach a peak of Shine upto Pournami and in the subsequent fortnight of Krishna Paksha would wane upto Amavasya.

Shri Shailam: Shiva and Parvati appeared as Mallikarjuna and Bhramaramba as Kartikeya left for Tapasya on the Krouncha Mountain since he felt cheated on his return from a 'Bhu Pradakshina' or circumambulation of Earth as per a Pact approved by his parents for an earlier wedding but his brother Ganesha did not do so and merely performed three Pradakshinas around his parents much faster than Kartik; Ganesha knew that the Pradakshinas were as good as Bhu Pradakshina around their parents as per Scriptures! Shiva and Parvati tried to reach Kartikeya on Mountain to pacify him. Devi Parvati assumed the form of bees all over her body to kill Mahishasura and hence her Avatara as Bhramaramba. It is stated that Vrishabha Deva the Carrier of Maha Deva did severe Tapasya at the same Place and Shiva Parvatis obliged their darshan in the form of Mallikarjuna and Bhramaramba here. Also Rama installed a Sahasra Linga there and so did Pandavas the Pancha Pandava Lingas. Further, Adi Shankara is stated to have scripted his memorable Work of 'Shivananda Lahari' here.

Ujjain: Lord Shiva's Swayambhu (Self-Generated) Linga as Mahakaal on the banks of River Kshipra is a unique specimen of Jyotirlingas maintained on Tantrik Principles. The mythological background of the Temple related to a pious Brahmana well versed in Vedas and Sciptures who gave birth to four highly learned sons named Deva Priya, Priyamedha, Survita and Suvrata. A demon called named Dushana lived on a nearby hill Ratnamala who could not tolerate the very concept of Vedas and their applications and particularly hated the Brahmana brothers and on one day along with his co-demons encountered the brothers while they were engrossed in an 'Abhisheka' to the Mahakaala Linga. As the demons surrounded the Brahmana brothers and were about to kill them, there was a frightful and reverberating roar of 'Humkaara' which instantly exterminated the killer demons. The Brahmana brothers prostrated gratefully before the Linga and recited soulful stotras and Maha Kaala made his unique appearance and intensified their Tri-Kaala pujas which were continued grom generation to generation. The experience of early morning 'Bhasmabhishekas' with the bhasma / ash of the first dead body of Ujjain as purified appropriate Mantras with the Sacred waters of River Ksdhipra continues to be awe-inspiring till date! Ujjain, the erstwhile Capital of Avanti has a glorious past as it was ruled by Mauryas and Guptas, especially by Vikramaditya and his renowned 'Nava- Ratnas' or the Nine Gems of Poets especially of Kalidaasaa, Vetala Bhatta and Varahamihira; his step btother Saint Bhartuhari who spurned on Kingship is still reputed for Bhartruhari caves as one went inside beyond a point would never return! Kala Bhairava Idol in the Temple in the vicinity of the Caves accepts half of any intoxicating liquor and leaves behind as a 'Prashad' or return of the Offerings. Ujjain is one of the Seven Illustrious 'Mukti Sthalaas' or Salvation Places in Bharat, besides Ayodhya, Mathura, Haridwar, Varanasi, Kanchipuram and Dwaraka.

*Omkareshwara:* Situated on the banks of River Narmada on the Mandhata Island formed in the shape of OM in Sanskrit, Omkareshwara is another famed Jyoir Lingas. The Legend was that Narada provocked the powerful Vindhya Mountain as the latter boasted of his height and might; Vindhya was noboubt high but was not comparable to that of Meru Mountain, Narada said. Vindhya Raja felt jealous and resorted to

concentrated Tapasya to Maha Deva who granted Vindhya's request to establish a Shiva Linga on the banks of Narmada River. Puffed by Shiva's presence there, Vindhya grew taller and taller to compete with Sumeru. This disturbed Surya's routine circumambulation of the Universe as he had to return half way as one half of the Universe remained dark. Devi Bhagavati asked Sage Agastya from Varanasi to visit Vindhya Raja who out of veneration for the Muni bent down as Agastya asked Vindhaya to be in that position till he returned and the Muni had yet to return from Dakishna Bharat eversince!

*Kedareswara:* Flanked the snow-clad peaks of Himalayas at a height of 3585 m from Sea level Kedar is the highest point of human comprehension where the Kedareshwara Jyotirlinga is present. The incarnations of Vishnu as Nara and Narayana Maharshis in the form of Mountains meditated to Shiva for times immemorial. Pandavas performed penance to Shiva for the welfare of humanity and the latter was materialsed as a Swayambhu Linga as Kedareshwara- a large expanse of Black Stone with an inclined elevation in the middle. The belief is that the Pancha Pandavas in their final journey reached the Temple chasing a Bull- Lord Shiva Himself-and Bhima sought to catch the tail but failed; finally they all attained Salvation at the Mountain Top. It is also believed that Adi Shankara too attained his Moksha on the Mountain Top.

Bhima Shankar: Located in the Ghat Region of Sahyadri Hills near the head of the Bhima River that merged with River Krishna too, Bhima Shankara Jyotir Linga was stated to have materialised on its own as Maha Deva killed Demon Bhima the son of Kumbhakarna, the brother of Rananasura. Demon Bhima wished to avenge the killings of his father and King Ravana by Shri Rama and secured the boon of invincibility against Devas and other Beings from Brahma by the dint of extreme penance. Besides dislodging Indra and Devas from their Seats of Power, the Demon Bhima provoked Maha Deva as the Demon tormented his devotee a staunch Shiva Bhakta named King Kamarupeshwara insisting that instead of worshipping Shiva the Demoon should worship him instead. As the Demon was about to destroy the Shiva Linga worshipped by the King, Mahadeva appeared and sliced the demon's head and the sweat from Shiva's forehead while killing the demon turned into a water flow since called Bhima River. The Jyotir Linga manifested as a powerful representation of 'Artha Nareeswara' bestowing proof of fulfilment of devotees who throng the Temple in large crowds especially on Mondays and Shiva Ratris. As in respect of Ujjain, the Swayambhu Linga here too is set at a level lower than the normal Ground. The Bhima Shankar Temple is also stated to have ben associated wirh the killing of Tripurasuras and there was a manifestation of Devi Parvati in a Place nearby as Kamalaja since Brahma worshipped her.

Another version from the Koti Rudra Samhita of Shiva Purana indicated *Dakininam Bheema Shankara* as the slayer of Bhimasura and that Bhima Shankara's Temple was situated at **Kamarup** (Assam) on Bhimapur Hill where King Sudakshina was saved and the Jyotir Linga was consecrated as Shiva Rathis were celebrated with tremendous pomp and show with great fervour. Yet another version stated that Bhima Shankar Jyotir Linga appeared as a Swayambhu at Kashipur near **Nainital** which was chronicled as the Dakini Country where Bhima of Pandavas married a Dakini woman named Hidimba and there too there was a Jyotir Linga as Swayambhu.

Varanasi: Famed as the Place of Devas that was founded by Bhagavan Shiva Himself some thousand years ago, Kasi the confluence of Rivers Varana and Asi, has a hoary legend with world-wide reputation, referred to in Rig Veda and Puranas. This was the spot where Bhagavan Vishweshvara manifested as Avimukta Jyotirlinga. Brahma was stated to have made such extraordinary Tapasya to such an extent that Vishnu moved his head across so fast in disbelief and his ear-ring fell on the banks of the River Ganges and continued his search there and the Sacred Spot was named 'Manikarnika' ever since. As Brahma recited Vedas in praise of Maha Deva once, the latter was annoyed as Brahma's wrong and misleading stanza was recited and Shiva sliced one of Brahma's 'Pancha Mukhas' or Five Faces in great exaspration; the sliced head found a lasting Place as Brahmakund. Varanasi is also reputed as one of the Shakti Peethaas where Sati Devi's ear-rings fell where Devi Vishalakshi's shrine stands now. The Shrine of Devi Annapurna exists where during a long spell of famine broke in Kasi and Devi Bhagavati herself served 'Anna' or cooked rice food to one and all daily and Maha Deva too was a beneficiary as a beggar

of the charity of food so received into the Brahma Kapala of the sliced head of Brahma since the Brahma Hatya sin haunted Shiva till his Vimochana! The illustrious Harischandra Ghat where King Harischandra was posted as a Slave at Smashana or burial ground continues its operations of despatching the Souls of dead bodies to Kailasa! Ranging from Kings and Queens, Foreign Plunderers, Saints like Adi Shankara, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Vivekananda, Dayananda, Tulasi Das, and Guru Nanak, non-Hindu Followers and even athiests have been attracted to this Unique Kasi and Lord Vishweswara blesses them all!

Tryambakshwara: Located some thirty kilometers away from Nasik in Maharashtra the Jyotirlinga attracts thousands of pilgrims round the year providing boons of fulfillment of material desires and spiritual solace. This is the Source Point of the Holy River Godavari; the famed couple of Sage Gautama and his wife Ahalya made such selfless prayers to end the long spell of famine and Lord Varuna blessed a constant flow of Water. As the incessant flow of water and the resultant abundance of foodgrains created jealousy of co-Sages and their wives, they created a Maya Cow which destroyed grains. Gautama killed the Maya Cow and the co-Sages banished the Gautama couple to a lonely hermitage on the mountain called Brahmagiri. The Sage made an extraordinatry penance and the pleased Maha Deva who bestowed a doubled boon of calling up Ganga in the form of a River called Gautami and also to manifest a Jyotir Linga named Traibakeshwara. There was a legendary allusion that when Narayana created from his navel a lotus stem and on top of it Brahma was generated, Brahma did not approve of Narayana's superiority and when a quarrel followed, a mammoth Shiva Linga manifested on its own as a Column of Fire. The Column had no beginning nor top but Brahma lied that he found the height of the Fire Column and quoted a Ketaki Flower as a witness. Shiva gave a curse that the Ketaki flower should not be utilised for worship to any Deity and that there should not be worship to Brahma. Brahma gave a return curse to Shiva that the Trayambakeshwara Linga should be pushed underground. Indeed, the Trayambakeshwara was under Brahmagiri and the Jyotirlinga is small in size in a depression on the floor with water constanly oozing out from the top. Varaha Tirtha is famed as Lord Vishnu had a bath in the River in Varaha Swarupa. Kushwa Tirtha is called so as Sage Gautami spread his Kushasana or Darbhasana while receiving the waters of Ganga.

Vaidyanath (At Deogarh/Parli?): Ravanasura performed a relentless penance for several years but Shiva remained unresponsive. He dug up a pit and worshipped Shiva Linga and sacrificed his hands one by one and finally Shiva appeared and gave the boon of invincibility of Devas, ignoring however human and other Beings on Earth. He also secured the boon of a carrying Shiva to Lanka for adoration in his Puja Griha; Shiva gave a Linga but cautioned that it should not be kept on ground, lest it would not be pulled out again. Devas were concerned that Shiva's absence from Kailasha might adversely affect Dharma and thus prayed to Parvati and Ganesha to ensure that the Shiva Linga would not reach Lanka. Parvati with Varuna creatred an illusion of sweet water and Ravana was tempted and got his stomach bloated; he asked a passer- by boy (Ganesha) to hold the Linga for an ablution and the boy kept the Sacred Linga on the ground and got stuck: that was the famed Jyotir Linga of Vaidyanath.

The controversy is whether this Linga is at Deogarh in Jarkhand off some 220km from Patna or at Parli or Kantipura in Maharashtra. In Deogarh, million devotees worship especially in the Shravana Month (July-August). Several pilgrims traditionally carry Ganges water from Sultanganj to Deoghar, a distance of hundred kilometers, to perform Abhisheka to the Linga and some Sadhus even carry by walk water barefooted! The Legend was that Ravanasura desired to perform ablutions and as there was no water, he used his fist to hit the Earth and there emerged a pond called Shiva Ganga. In Parli in Maharashtra the legend is that Amba Yogeswari desired to marry Vaidyanath (Maha Deva) and waited for the bridegroom party to arrrive even past the Muhurta or the precise time of wedding and Amba cursed the party to turn into Stones. Another Story ascribed to this Kshetra was that after Samudra Mathana or the churning of the Ocean of Milk, Dhanvantari was hidden among fourteen gems inside the Shivalinga and as Demons tried to take them away forcibly, huge flames came out and the latter had to retreat. The belief among the devotees is that after performing Abhisheka,the Tirtha water contains

medicinal properties to cure all kinds of diseases. This Sacred Place is also considered as Mohini Avatara of Vishnu distributed Amrit to Devas and denied to Danavas. A Vateswara Temple in the vicinity is believed to contain a Vata Vriksha (Banyan Tree) where the incident of Satyavan and Savitri occurred and Yama Deva blessed the couple with long-life! A Pond nearby named after Muni Markandeya signified the hallowed place where the Muni embraced the Shiva Linga to escape death and Maha Deva was pleased by his devotion and granted eterrnal life.

Nageswara Jyotirlinga (Dwaraka/ Naganath/ Jagdeshwar):

The Place of Maha Deva's manifestation of a Jyotirlinga as Nageswara at Dwaraka in Gujarat or Naganath at Aoudh in Prabhasa Kshetra in Maharashjtra or as Jagdeshwar near Almora in Uttarakhand is a controversy but all the three palces have substantial following of devotees in all the Kshetras. The legend was that there was a Demon couple named Daruka and Daruki and the latter performed extreme meditation to Devi Parvati who granted her the boon that whereever she went their forest too should travel and the demons created havoc by way of destroying Yagnas and Spiritual Tasks and killing Brahmanas and devotees. Sage Ourva gave a curse to the demons and followers would be destroyed on Earth and the latter had to move into the Seas where too they attacked Ships and harassed the Ship mates. One Vaishya traveller of a Ship named Supriya who was a staunch devotee of Maha Deva was thrown into a prison along with fellow shipmates by the demons and as Vaishya appealed to Shiva the latter appeared and destroyed the Demon and his party. The devotees commemorated the joyous monent as Maha Deva manifested on the Sea Coast as Nageshwara Linga.

Some 18 km from Dwaraka the Jyoirlinga of a small size appeared as set underground of a few feet and it could be touched by devotees. The Story was that Sant Namadeva and approached the Linga and rendered soulful bhajans (group singings) even while a band of Brahmanas were reciting 'Rudra Paaraayana' and the Temple Management asked the Sant's party to shift to the back of the Temple and when the bhajans were sung the Shiva Linga turned around facing the Bhajan Party and the Management of the Temple prostrated to Namadeva. As the Temple is closed, the belief has been that snakes hover around the Linga with their hoods opened up. A huge Shiva Idol was built to beckon devotees visiting the Nageswara Linga.

The Naganatha Jyotirlinga at Naganatha in Aoudh in Maharashtra was stated to have been visited by Adi Shankaracharya. The legend of this Linga was that when Pandavas visited the Place during their 'Aranya Vasasa'or forest life after being banished as nomads for twelve long years following their loss of Kingdom as Yudhishtara lost the game of dice, Bhima discovered a pond of warm milk in the surroundings and as he tried to dig up the milddle of the pond there was blood gushing out; Bhima reached the depths of the pond and was surprised to notice that blood gushed out from a Shiva Linga of extreme radiance. The Story of the demons Daruka and Daruki are also in vogue in this Kshetra. Interestingly there are idols of a sulking Parvati and pacifying Shiva as though Daruki's killing was not appreciated by Parvati and Shiva explained the need to do so.

Bala Jagdeshwara Jyotirlinga at Darukavana in Almora has the Story of 'Balakhilyas' or dwarf Maharshis perrforming a strict discipline of Tapasya along with their families and Maha Deva desirous of testing them appeared there as a semi-lunatic, half-clad but hefty and handsome youth. The womenfolk came to be inreasingly infatuated with the highly reticent and unresponsive youth of wonder and the group of Rishis encounterd the youth one day and gave a 'shaap' that his 'Linga' or manhood should be dropped! Indeed that dropped Linga of Shiva was manifested as an extremely brillinat Jyotirliga as Jagdeshwar who has no physique, Gunas or Characteristics, Sex, Age, Time, Distance and Tatwas. The Rishis were ashamed of their suspicion that the semi-lunatic youth was seeking to woo their women folk but Maha Devaarrived there to guide them that Karma-Kanda or worship for the sake of physical discipline was not enough but that should be accompanied by mental purity and forbearance as well! The main bye-line Mantra from Shukla Yajur Veda which resounds in the Pujas at the Temple is: *Aum Traamabakam Yajamahe Sugandham Pushti Vardhanam, Urvarukamiva bandhanaan Mrityor Mokshiyemaamritaat/* 

(We pray to Maha Deva whose eyes are the Sun, Moon and Fire; may He protect us from disease, poverty and fear and bless us with prosperity, longevity and good health!)

Rameshwaram: Signifying the celebrartion of victory following the devastation of Demon Ravana and his clan, Lord Rama performed the installation of Shiva Linga in gratitude and dutiful homage to Maha Deva. Having crossed the 'Setu bandhana' or the bridge across the Sea, Rama decided to install the Linga after prayers at Varanasi and despatched Hanuman to pray Vishwesvara and bring a fascimile of the Kasi Linga for installation but since Hanuman could not return by the Muhurtha or the Exact Time of Auspiciousness, Devi Sita improvised a Langa Swarupa out of Sea-shore Sand and was consecrated formally amid the chanting of Veda Mantras. On return, Hanuman was disturbed that he could not bring the Kashi Linga and tried to remove the 'temporary' Shiva Linga and tried his best to replace it with what he brought from Kashi but could not; instead a seperate Linga was installed in the vicinity of the Sand Linga. There are thirty six Tirthas or Water-wells around the Temple-twenty within the Temple Complex itself and all of these are stated to possess medicinal properties. It is customary that several devotees take bath from the water-wells and walk with wet clothes into the nearness of the Jyotirlinga for 'Darshan' for worship to it.

Ghrishneshwara: There was a pious Brahmana Sudharma who had no progeny as his wife Sudeha was barren. She proposed that her younger sister Ghushma / Kusuma- a staunch devotee of Shiva - to wed her husband and made them agree. Eventually, Kusuma gave birth to a boy. But the elder sister became jealous and one day threw the child in a nearby pond; but a Shiva Linga was immersed in the pond too. Kushma wept at the loss of the child and intensified her faith to Maha Deva. A few days hence, the dead body of the child floated and there was commotion all over in the village. Maha Deva granted his vision to Kusuma and conveyed that he would punish Sudeha but Kusuma requested Shiva to pardon her sister. The ever merciful Shiva brought life to the dead son and the entire village realised the miracle of the dead boy coming back alive. Kusuma prayed to Shiva that he should stay in the pond for ever and that was the origin of Ghrushneshwara or Kusmeshwara Jyotirlinga, which is some thirty km away from Aurangabad in the village of Verul or Yelur where River Yela flows. The Jyotirlinga of Ghrishnashwara as also accompanied by Devi Parvati as Grishneshwari. It is stated that the Patel of the Village secured a treasure in a snake-pit and enabled the construction of a Temple to house the Jyotirlinga. [Ellora and Ajanta caves, which are World Heritage Sites also Shirdi are 30 km, 106 kmand 130 km away from the Ghrishneshwara Temple].

Upalingas: Apart from the afore-described Dwadasha Jyotirlings, there are quite a few Upalingas too like Atrishwara Linga in a forest named Kamda on Chitrakuta Mountain where the Maharshi saved people from prolonged drought for some fifty years; once Arti fainted out of thirst and his wife Anasuya went in search of water; Devi Ganga appeared and offered water from a spring and Anasuya carried a Kamandalu-full of water and quenched Atri's thirst. It was from that Spring emerged the Sacred Mandakini River and as the result of the Tapasya, the prolonged drought ended and Bhagavan Shiva appeared as the Atrishwara Linga. Mahabaleshwara Linga emerged maily at Gokarna and partly at Murudeshwara, Dhareshwara and Gunavante in Karnataka; Ravanasura obtained Maha Deva's Atma Linga but despite the warning that it should not be kept on ground upto Lanka from Kailasa, he had to stop over to attend to ablutions and trusted Ganesha who appeared as boy wh downed the Linga which got stuck to the ground. The mighty Ravana tried to pull it out but parts of Linga were scattered yet the Linga was fixed to the Earth. Batuknath Linga appeared as a result of intense Tapasya for several years by a son of Dadhichi Muni called Sudarshan since he sinned on Shiva Ratri by sleeping with his wife and without taking bath performed 'Abhisheka' to the Shiva Linga. Devi Parvati requested Shiva to pardon Sudarshan as otherwise he was a steadfast devotee. Satisfied by the sincere atonment of Sudarshana, Maha Deva manifested himself as Batuka Natha Linga. Similarly there were many such manifestations of Maha Deva as Hatakeshwara Linga signifying Prakriti-Purusha combine at Daruka Forests in Uttaranchal Forests; Rishishwara Linga at Naimisharanya; Laliteshwara Linga on way from Deva prayaga to Kedareshwara and Pashupatinatha Linga in Khatmandu, Nepal.

Pancha Bhuta Lingas: Representing the Pancha Bhutas or the Five Elements of Prithivi (Earth), Aapas (Water), Tejas (Radiance), Vayu (Air) and Akasha (Sky), Five Lingas were manifested as follows: Prithvi Linga as Ekamreshwara with Kamakshi as his consort at Kanchipuram in Taminnadu; Jala (Water) Linga as Jambukeshwara with Akhilandeshwari as his consort at Tiruvanaikaval in Trichinapalli, Tamilnadu; Tejo Linga as Arunachaleshwara with Unnamalai Devi as his consort at Tiruvannamalai again in Tamilnadu; Vayu Linga as Kalahasteswara with Devi Jnana Prasoonamba as his consort at Kalahasti in Andhra Pradesha and Akasha Linga as Vaidya Nateshwara / Nataraja along with Devi Shivakami at Chidambaram in Tamilnadu.

The Prithvi Linga called Ekamreshwara manifested on its own to enable Bala Kamakshi to perform Tapasya in the vicinity of a Ekamra Vriksha or a Mango Tree in Kanchi Kshetra. The Linga is of hand size of the shape of a Plantain Tree flower signifying the imprints of the bracelets of Mahadeva's embrace of Devi Parvati! The legend of the manifestation of the Linga was that as crores of Shaktis who claimed equality to Parvati, Mahadeva smiled and all the Shaktis got disrobed and Parvati closed his three eyes so that he did not have to see their nudity. But when Mahadeva's eyes were closed there was Pralaya and 'Surya Chandradi Devas' disappeared. Parvati was stunned and regetted her indiscretion which actually was an extraordinary sin as the entire Universe was extinguished! Parvati fell on Shiva's feet and he asked her to take the Swarupa of a Bala and perform Tapasya in Kasi first as Katyayani the adopted baby of Katya Muni; at the time of famine in Varanasi, Bala provided food all the population of Kasi and gor the encomium as Devi Annapurna. Subsequently Bala shifted to Kanchi as directed by Mahadeva and did Tapasya under the Ekamara Vriksha at Kanchipura and grew up as Kamakshi; that indeed was the background of the Ekamreshwara Linga.

The Jala Linga at Jambukeshwara manifested on its own under a Jambu tree in forest in Tiruvanai -kaval near Chandra Tirtha a tributary of River Kaveri. The legend was that there were two members of Shiva Ganas called Pushpadanta and Malyava who were cursed to become an elephant and a spider; they both worshipped the Jala Linga in their own ways; the elephant with flowers and bathing the Linga with its trunk while the spider ensured that tree leaves would not fall on the Linga by spinning a web. The elephant complained that the spider made the Place dirty above the Linga and the spider defended that the falling of tree leaves would convert dirtier. In the quarrel that followed both died and Shiva granted Kingship to the Spider in its next birth and the elephant was reborn again in the same form and the King built several Shiva Temples including the Jambulinga Temple in which the Shiva Linga was partly submerged in water.

Arunachaleshwara Linga in Tiruvannamalai has the legend that both Brahma and Vishnu found an 'Agni Stambha' or a huge Pillar of Fire and their efforts to know its beginning and end proved futile. Brahma performed Manasika Puja or worship in mind and so did Vishnu; pleased by their devotion granted them the boon to convert the endless Agni Stambha to a miniatured Linga which could be worshipped not only by Devas but human beings aslo. Interestingly, even at the Pralaya or the Great Dissolution the Land of Arunachaleshwara was in tact. The Arunachala Mountain Range has Pancha Mukhas or the Five Faces of Lord Rudra viz. Tatpurusha, Aghora, Sadyojata, Vamana Deva and Ishana. It is strongly believed that a full 'Pradakshina' or circumambulation of the fourteen km distance of the Mountain would be as good as a Pradakshina of Maha Deva himself. A huge mass of devotees push around the Mountain barefooted on every full moon night and the Pournami of Chaitra Month happens to be very special culminating into a ten day festival of 'Kartika Deepa Darshana' when a mammoth lamp is lit in an open vessel with three tonnes of ghee atop the mountain.

Shri Kalahasteswara Linga too was stated to be a Swayambhu or Self-Generated on the banks of River Swarnamukhi some 36 km away from Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh. This is essentially a Vayu Linga and successive Kings of Chola, Raya, Pallava and Pandya Vamshas made enormous contributions of the Buildings of this famed Shiva Linga. The Temple has the Legend that Three Species of God's creation viz. a Spider called Shri, a Snake called Kaala and an Elephant called Hasti were very devout followers of the Swayambhu Linga; Shri the Spider weaved cobwebs on the top of the Linga as Kala the serpent

placed Gems on the Top of the Linga and the Hasti collected waters from the Sarovaras and by throwing sharp currents of water worshipped by way of 'Abhishekas' or washings of water. Thus the Spider-Snake-Elephant trio worshipped Shiva on their own thus justifying their Actions. Another Story of Kalahasti to related to a legend of Bhakta Kannappa a hunter who offered his hunt as Naivedya or offering every day. One day the Linga showed three eyes weeping and bleeding blood. Kannappa had extreme anguish and cut and fixed one of his own eyes to that of Maha Deva. As the latter's second eye too commenced crying, Kannappa never hesitated and fixed his second eye on Maha Deva's face. That was the heightend faith of Kannappa. Maha Deva appeared and restored the eys of Kannappa and desired that he should be near to the Linga and eversince he joined the band of sixty three Nayanars in the vicinity of Kalahasteswara. The Kalahasti Temple is reputed to ward off Rahu-Ketu Doshas or deficiencies of Graha Dosha, Sarpa Dosha or of unmarried women or women of barrenness.

Shri Nateshwara (Akasha) Linga at Chidambaram in Tamilnadu is famed for the 'Chidambara Rahasyam' or the Secret of 'Shunya' or 'Nothingness' of the Universe signifying 'Akasha' and the Ever-Repetitive Cyclical Process of Srishti-Sthiti-Laya or Creation-Preservation-Termination. The legend is that Adi Sesha, the bed of Lord Vishnu, desired to witness the Cosmic Dance of Maha Deva and came down to Earth as Patanjali or the one who descended. A high devotee of Shiva called Vyaghrapada who prayed to Mahadeva to grant him the powerful paws of a tiger with which to pluck the leaves of BilwaTrees for worship also desired to witness Shiva's Cosmic Dance. Maha Deva along with Devi Shiva Kami gave an appointment to Patanjali and Vyaghrapada to witness the Unique Shiva Tandava or the Cosmic Dance of Shiva. Lord Vishnu as well as Brahma and Devas went ino ecstacy as they were fortunate to vision the spectacle of the Tandava.

### Significance of observing Shiva Ratri

Austerities by way of day/night fasts and devotion on Maha Shiva Ratri falling on Krishna Paksha or the Dark fortnight of Phalguna Month is considered as extremely fruitful. In the early morning of Shivarati Day, a devotee should take a vow to observe the day/night fast and perform Archanna, Abhisheka, Japa with 'shodasopacharas' or Sixteen Services like Gandha-Pushpa-Dhupa-Deepa- Naivedyas every three hours followed by 'Jagarana' till next morning. Next morning, the devotee should perform Punah-Puja and Bhojan to Brahmnas along with dakshina. It is stated that obeservance of Shiva Ratri Fast- Puja-Jagaran even by mistake, let alone proper and systematic worship, would lead to enormous fruits.

In this connection, Suta Muni described in Shiva Purana an episode to Sages at Naimisharanya as follows: There was a poor hunter named Gurudruha who got extremely hungry along with his family members on a full day and that night happened to be Shiva Ratri. He entered a forest on the eve of Shivaratri and waited for any animal as a prey to satisfy the hunger of the family; he waited near a waterbody over a 'Bilwa Vriksha' or a bel tree under which there was a Shiva Linga as a coincidence. Having waited for three hours (first Prahara) in the night, he was lucky to sight a female deer along its kids approaching the waterbody to quench their thirst. He pulled out his bow and a arrow ready to aim at the mother deer and by a twist of fate the branch of the bel tree on which he sat moved, some leaves of the branch showered on the ShivaLinga and some water in a vessel carried by him spilt down on the Linga, thus performing the first Prahara Puja! The deer which was very sensitive even to small sounds of leaves and water falling from the tree noticed that thd hunter was ready to kill it. The animal made a sincere and convincing request to the hunter that if he allowed it desired to leave the deer kids to their father and definitely return back to be killed by him. The hunter agreed very reluctantly and let the animals leave. The second Prahara was closing but there was no trace of the animal. But the sister of the earlier deer approached the pond along with her kids and the earlier happenings repeated viz.the hunter pulled out his bow and arrow, the bel tree leaves as also the water drops from the hunter's vessel fell on the Shiva Linga and the sister of the earlier deer made a similar request and the hunter let the animal leave as in the case of the earlier deer thus accomplishing the next the worship of the Shiva Linga. As the third Prahara was closing, the husband of the original deer came in search of his wife and the kids and the happenings of the previous Prahara repeated again. During the Fourth Prahara, all the animals arrived viz. the original

deer, her sister and the respective husbands. But the psychology was the hunter was transformed as the animals displayed their truthfulness and high sincerity, spared all the animals and performed sincere worship to the Shiva Linga with Bilwa leaves and water from the pond. Luckily for him he sighted a few fruits from a banana tree nearby with which he performed 'Naivedya' and served the Prashad to his wife and children. He repented for his evil deeds as even animals displayed virtue and sincerity. Bhagana Shiva revealed himself and blessed him that in his next birth he would be a Nishad again during Shri Rama's incarnation of Vishnu and attain Vaikuntha there after!

# The Legends of Venkatachala, Jagannatha and Badari Kshetras

Venkatachala: Skanda Purana described that King Akasha performed an elaborate Yagna on the banks of Arani and while tilling in course of the Yagna tilled the land of Yagna and found a girl child whom he named as **Padmavati** and brought her up with care and affection. Sage Narada who visited the King saw the child and predicted that as she grew of age would wed Lord Srinivasa of Venkatachala. Padmavati as she grew up went out to a forest along with her companions and encountered a handsome youth called Anant (Srinivasa) who tried to draw her into conversation and proposed but she rebuffed out of semiacceptance. But Anant desired Padmavati immensely and sent an emissary named Vakulamala to King Akasha and the latter was happy at the alliance and soon the holy wedding took place in style. Among the various celebrities, Devi Lakshmi too attended and congratulated the new couple! [ But Srinivasa had to borrow hefty money from Kubera to defray the wedding expenses and the interest money itself continues to be repaid till date from the earnings of donations being made by the lakhs of devotees!] Padmavati's earlier birth was Vedavati who was a companion of Devi Lakshmi and when the latter became Shri Rama's spouse, Vedavati proceeded for Tapasya to forests but Ravanasura misbehaved with her and she ended her life by jumping into fire and cursed Ravana that soon he and his clan would be wiped out by Lord Vishnu's Avatara. As the drama unfolded of Sita's abduction following Lakshmana's insult to Ravana's sister Surpanakha, Ravana's masquerading as a Maya Tapaswi, Maricha's taking to the Form of a Maya Mriga (Deer), Rama-Lakshmana's battle with Ravana and his clan and the latter's great destruction, then the question of Sita's purity of character was raised by Rama. Agni Deva who had for long concealed real Sita's identity as she was transferred to Patala, Maya Sita was actually the wife of Agni viz. Swaha Devi; indeed Swaha Devi was Vedavati who turned later as Maya Sita and thereafter as Padmavati Devi!

Skanda Purana delineated some telling episodes highlighting Venkateswara Mahatmya. One was that of a **Nishad** (Hunter) named Vasu, his wife Chitravati and son Vira. Nishad was the Chief of his clan living honestly and peacefully. His daily practice was to offer cooked rice and honey as 'Naivedya' to Venkatachalapati and eat the 'Prashad'. One day, the Nishad who to go out and entrusted the task of offering the Naivedya to his son Vira but instead of performing the offer to Shrinivasa, he gave some to Agni, some to tree bushes and the rest was consumed. On return, the Nishad was extremely agitated that the daily offering was not made to Venkateswara and was even about to kill his son for the greatest sin that he committed; just at that time Lord Venkateshwara appeared before the Nishad in full glory with his four hands ornamented and armed and prevented him from harming the son and said that the acts of his son was in fact worth emulation but not condemnation for he performed a 'homam' as an offering to Agni Deva, a homage to Nature and only the remainder as the left over 'Prashad with devotion. Bhagavan thus appreciated the father and son and blessed them.

The above happening was reported by the Nishad to the King of the Land named **Tondaman.** Even as a Prince, the King was noble, intellectual and devotional. Once as a Prince, he went on hunting in a forest and chased a wild elephant which crossed the River Swarnamukhi and reached the Ashram of Suka Maha Muni and found a parrot in the Ashram which was always screeching the name of 'Srinivasa, Srinivasa'. The Prince chased the bird upto the mountain top where it vanished but he met the Nishad who said that the parrot was a pet of Suka Muni and was always in the habit of screeching the name of Srinivasa. The Nishad then narrated his story of worship to Srinivasa by offering cooked rice and honey. In fact the Nishad took the Prince to have a darshan of Srinivasa and the latter was thrilled. On return to the

Kingdom, the Prince was informed by his faher to take over as the King since the latter was retiring. On taking over the responsibility, Tondaman was busy; suddenly after a few monnths, the Nishad approached the King agitated and conveyed that in a dreamt he visioned a Varaha Murti and said: 'Nishada! You must reach the King atonce and command him to perform 'Abhisheka' with lots of milk to a 'Shila' (Stone) underneath a specific thick bush, pull it out and ask a Shilpi (Sculptor) to form a Varaha Murti with Bhu Devi on his lap. King Tondaman followed the instructions of Venkatachalapati as per the Nishada's dream and consecrated the Temple in a magnificent manner. Among the Brahmanas who attended the function, one requested the King to please arrange look after his pregnant wife till he returned from a Tirtha Yatra. The King agreed and after a few months, the Brahmana returned but found the woman had a miscarriage and expired. The King felt extremely guilty and approached Srinivasa who in a dream directed his wives to take dips in Asthi Sarovara Tirtha; as they did so, the Brahman's wife who had a miscarriage and died also emerged along with the Queens. This miracle was witnessed by thousands of devotees and the Brahmana was overjoyed!

King Tondaman was in the daily habit of worshipping Bhagavan Venatachalapati with golden lotuses. He wondered one day how Tulasi leaves pulled out of muddy plants got mixed up with the lotus flowers and a voice came from the Skies that there was a pot-maker (Kumhara) in Karmapuri who also did daily puja to the Lord and that he accepted both the pujas of the King and the Kumhara too in the same manner! The King reached the Kumhara and the latter and his wife denied that they never perfomed any puja but they heard a voice that the King would knock at their door and simultaneously a Pushpaka Viman would land to take them to Vishnuloka! Apparently the Kumhara couple did great pujas in their previous births! The King returned to Venkateshwara and a benign Lord appeared and bestowed lasting bliss to him too!

In the vicinity of Tirumaleshwara Temple are **Tirthas** like Swami Pushkarini, Papanashana Tirtha, Krishna Tirtha, Akashaganga Titha, Chakra Tirtha and so on; each one of these Tirthas had a Sacred Background. For instance Swami Pushkarini washed off the sin of Brahmana Kashyap who had the power of saving a curse; King Parikshit was cursed by Shringi, the son of Samika Muni, as he was infuriated that the King put around a dead snake around the neck of the Muni who was engrossed in deep tapasya. The Great Serpent Takshaka was to bite the King within a week's time as a result of the curse and Brahmana Kashyap had powers of preventing Daksha to do so but the Brahmana was purchased by Daksha and thus did the sin of not saving the King. Papanasha Tirtha eradicated the extreme poverty of a Vedic Scholar called Bhadramati with several sons and daughters and as per an advice of Narada Muni gave a token of 'Bhudaan' of five feet of Land that he received from a rich donor. As the Bhudaan was given away to another vituous Brahmana the Lord appeared in person and fulfilled all of his desires and provided Salvation later; indeed the Brahmana who received the donation was Venateswara himself! Akasha Ganga Snaan was prescribed by Matangi Muni to Anjana Devi and Vayu Deva as the Snana bestowed to them an Illustrious Son Hanuman! On a subsequent time, a Brahmana called Ramanuja did Tapasya of extreme rigour with Panchagnis or Five Sacred Flames around him irrespective of Heat-Cold-Rain and attained Narayana Darshana and gave the double boon of Enlightenment and the presence of an Eternal Water Spring of Akasha Ganga.

Eight-folded approach to Venkateshwara: While Suta Muni narrated Skanda Purana to the congregation of Sages at Naimisharanya he prescribed an Eight-fold Bhakti Route to Lord Venkateshwara: 1) To display 'Snehabhava' or feelings of Friendship sincerely towards His Devotees; 2) To provide Service and Satisfaction to the Devotees; 3) To perform Puja without expectations; 4) To direct or dedicate all actions to Him; 5) To generate Bhakti and love in all the Jnanendriyas or Sense Organs like eyes, ears, nose, mouth and skin and the corresponding Karmendriyas or Actionable Organs like seeing, hearing, smelling, speaking and feelings of the Lord; 6) To hear and cogitate about the 'Mahatmya' of the Lord and accord importance to whatever is said, described, sung, taught and thought of the Lord; 7) To always keep the name of Srinivasa on one's lips, thoughts and heart and 8) finally dedicate oneself to Lord Ventateshwara and take comprehensive and absolute refuge unto Him! Those who are fortunate of seeing even a glimpse of the Idol of Venkateshwara are sure to experience the awe and satisfaction of nearness

and lasting memory and familiarity. Those who think of Srinivasaeither of curiosity, greed, love of materialism, fear, or a casual occurrence undergo a tangible tranformation of outlok, approach to life and morality. If even a casual approach to the Lord has a multiplier effect, one could imagine the far reaching impact of the Eight-fold dedication to Him! Just as Fire is capable of pulling down a huge mansion within minutes, the stock-pile of sins gets ablaze into ash as fast, provided one takes the shelter of Srinivasa. Human life is indeed difficult to attain compared to several other species and asylum unto the Lord would surely assure Salvation.

Purushottama (Jagannatha) Kshetra: Sage Jaimini narrated the Story of King Indradyumna, an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu who was keen on having a darshan of the Idol of Neela Madhava at a Temple situated in the Nilachala Mountain on the East Coastal side of Bharata Varsha in the Utkala Region and asked his Priest to ascertain the route and arrange for the trip. One of the Pilgrims (Bhagavan Himself) who said that he just returned from there and described the details of the route. The King and his large entourage undertook an arduous journey and having crossed Mahanadi camped overnight and the Local Chief of Utkal Region gave the disheartening news that there was a huge sand storm and the Idol of Neela Madhava was underneath a heap of debris. Brahmashi Narada appeared and consoled the King and asked him perform hundred Yagnas and then NeelaMadhava would manifest from under the debris. Narada further said that a 'Vata Vriksha' (Banyan Tree) with four branches would appear near the debris; that Vishvakarma the Celestial Artist would carve out four Idols of Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra the sister of the brothers and a Sudarshana Chakra; that a conch-shaped Purushottama Kshetra would get materialised and that Lord Brahma himself would consecrate the Wooden Idols but the instructions of Neela Madhava must be followed by the King in spirit and deed. Sughat the son of Vishwakarma completed the construction of the Temple within five days while made the Idol of Nrisimha Deva which was installed by Narada. The task of carving wood from for the four major Idols was taken up and a celestial voice was heard saying that the Idols would emerge on their own, that the oldest worker be sent inside the the Main Gate which should be closed till the job was over, that the sound of drums be kept on till the task was going on inside to cover the sounds from there, that if somebody heard the sounds from inside then he or she would be stone-deaf forever and if somebody saw any activity from inside that person would lose vision forever! On the fifteenth day a celestial announcement was heard that the Idols were almost ready; instructions were given about the colour schemes of the Idols viz. deep blue cloud for Janannatha, white for Balabhadra, Crimson red like rising Sun for Subhadra and deep red to the Sudarshana Chakra. As the finishing touches were being provided, Indradyumna was in trance and at the time of consecration, Narada, the King and the entire entourage entered the Sanctum Sanctorium chanting Dwadasha Mantra viz.Namo Vaasudevaya in praise of the Lord, Purusha Suktum addressed Balabhadra, Sri Suktam for Subdhadra Devi and appropriate Mantras to invoke Sudarshana Chakra. Finally at the Muhurat Time, Lord Brahma initiated the most hallowed function of 'Kumbha-bhisheka' on Shuddha Vishakha Ashtami on Thursday with Pushyami as the Nakshatra as witnessed by Deva-Yaksha-Kinnaras and Maharshis. The famous nine day Ratha Yatra commenced on Shuddha Ashadha Vidiya and returned from the banks of Bindu Tirtha on the eighth following day. The Annual Ratha Yatra continues till date.

Badari Kshetra: Badari Kshetra is one of the most outstanding and ancient Pilgrimage Points on Himalayas where Bhagavan Narayana resides. Maha Deva himself was stated to have advised Skanda Kumara that among the various Kshetras of Bharata Desha, Badari was the unique Place of worship as that not only carried the footprints of Vishnu but Kedara Kshetra was in the same region where the magnificent Shiva Linga was also present thus affording double advantage of worshipping Shiva and Narayana, signifying the unity of both the Swarupas of the same Deity. Again, Badari had been the abode of Agni Deva as he was called 'Sarvabhakshaka' or the Consumer of each and every material and was rightly acclaimed as 'Sarva Papa Naashaka' or the destroyer of all kindss of sins; Vishnu gave the boon to Agni that he would be a purifier par excellence. Lord Shiva also sensitised Skanda that there were Five Sacred Shilas (Rocks) representing Naradi, Narasimhi, Varaahi, Garudi, and Markandeyi and each one of the Rocks was capable of bestowing boons to whosoever worshipped to them as these were the very

Shilas that the Five of the Illustrious Personalities did extreme Tapasyas and secured the Vision of Vishnu in His full and glorious Form.

Another legend ascribed to Badari Kshetra related to a mass Prayer by Devas to Brahma that in the successive yugas access to Vishnu was a great facility but in Kali Yuga it was not so easy. Brahma headed the Delegation of Devas to Narayana lying on 'Ksheera Sagara' or the Ocean of Milk and complained . Narayana replied that all the Devas were irresponsible and ignorant that Narayana was difficult to reach in the Kali Yuga! In fact, he was far easier to access in the Kali Yuga than in the earlier Yugas and the Delegation should realise that a fulfleged presence of His was readily available to only to Devas but to human beings even at Badarikashrama! As Devas were ashamed of their lack of awareness, they made instant Yatras along with their families and that was how there was added magnificance of the Kshetra. There is a strong belief down the ages in the current Yuga that visitors who visit the Hallowed Place would have their sins demolished and attain Vishnu Swarupa whose heart would be replete His vision, whose tongue and ears with His glories, whose belly full of even a morsel of the Prashad offered to Him, and whose kneeled head touched the feet of His Idol.

Kapala Tirtha in Badarika is popular for performing 'Pinda Danaas' to 'Pitru Devas' as that was the hallowed place where Maha Deva snipped Brahma's fifth head as the latter did the great sin of infatuation of his own daughter Devi Saraswati. Brahma Tirtha was the Place where Vishnu in his incarnation as Hayagriva emerged and expanded his broad thighs to kill Madhu-Kaitabha demon brothers as the latter secured permission from the Avatara that they should be killed simultaneously on the Sea where there was no water. Badari is one significant Place where River Saraswati is visible with her full force adjecent to the Kapala Tirtha where Pitru Karyas are executed.

# Ekadashi Vrata-the Legend of King Rukmanga

As 'Eakadashi' or the eleventh day of any month is stated to be a special day for worship of Vishnu, observance of of 'Upavas' (Fasting), Puja and Vrata are stated to be of significance to qualify for the nullification of sins and a stepping stone for attaining 'Vaikuntha'. In fact the advantage of peforming Vrata in full faith and devotion is stated to reap the fruits of Ashwamedha Yagna and Rajasuya Yagna, besides avoiding 'Yama Darshana' or the need for the visits of hell. With no exaggeration, observance the Eakadasha Vrata is said to be superior than the bathings in the Sacred Rivers/Kshetras like Ganga, Kashi, Pushkar, Kukukshetra, Narmada, Devika, Yamuna, Chandrabhaga etc. To signify the import of the Ekadahsa Vrata, King Rukmanga of Surya Vamsha was in the habit of publicising the Vrata by consistent announcements on Elephant tops to alert all the citizens to compulsorily observe day long fasts with the exceptions however of those above eighty years of age, expectant mothers, Kumari Kanyas, and with severe diseases or of disturbed minds. As the Law was enforced with strictness, there were bee-lines of citizens to 'Vishnu Dhaama'; but Lord Yama Dharma Raja had free time and Chitragupta was jobless as the paths leading to various Narakas which were always overcrowded with the dead souls waiting in long queues for their turns before admission to specified Narakas were to be decided had turned quiet! Dharma Raja was alarmed that the order books were thinning day by day. Lord Brahma was approached and having examined the Order Books he too was astonished and created a Damsel named Mohini and fully briefed her about the purpose of her creation. On the manifestation of Mohini, Brahma Maya overcame King Rukmanda and decided to marry her at any cost. She agreed but on her terms viz. when ever she decided to do any thing should be instantly carried out without asking questions as otherise she would leave the King at once. She demanded annulment of the Vrata and indeed King's passion for its obesrervance was gradually eroded too! Since then, performance of the Vrata became optional and discretionary! But indeed the faith continues among some Human Beings especially of Vishnu Bhakatas, albiet rather feebly till date.

#### Ego clashes of illustrious personalities

Puranas were replete with Stories of personality problems due to the inter-play of Satvika-Rajasika-Tamasika 'Gunas' and indeed such clashes were common not only between Devas and Demons, Vamshas vs. Vamshas, Kings versus Kings of course, Maharshis versus Kings and Maharshis among Maharshis, let alone mutual quarrels caused due often to non-issues and wasteful arguments. Glaring examples were Parashurama versus King Kartaveeryarjuna and the blood-shed that followed with Parashurama uprooting traces of Kshatriyas in a series of battles; and King Nahusha and Agastya Muni as the King filled in a temporary vacancy of Indra, claimed Sach Devi as his wife and rushed to her by a Palanquin traditionally carried by Maharshis and kicked Agastya Muni to hurry up and the latter twisted the meaning of the expression 'Sarpa Sarpa' (quick quick) as Maha Sarpa or a Python and threw Nahusha down to Mountain Valleys in Bhu Loka. The above instances were described in the above pages. Following are a few other examples of such personality clashes:

King Nimi Vs. Maharshi Vasishtha: King Nimi of Ikshwaku dynasty was extremely righteous desired to perform a Homa in the name of Bhagavati. The Raja Guru Vasishtha Muni agreed to be the Head Priest and conduct the Yaga. As all the preparations were ready just on the appointed time, Vasishtha Muni sent word that Indra Deva wished to perform a Yagna and thus the homa by the King be deferred to another date. King Nimi was furious and went ahead with his Yagna as scheduled in the absence of Vasishtha Muni. On return Vasishtha saw that the Homa was in the process and cursed the King to drop dead and since the Sacrifice was not yet concluded, Nimi became a 'Videha' or body-less to enable the King to complete the 'Purnaahuti' or the Grand Finale of the Yagna. Lord Yama Dharmaraja was pleased with the Yagna and gave him the option of entering the first Jeeva Body of Brihaspati or continuing the Videha Body and the King preferred to be 'Videha' or body-less. The King on his part gave a return curse to Vasishtha to die too and the latter prayed to Brahma Deva who was Vasishtha's Manasa Putra. Brahma blessed Vasishta to enter Mitravaruna's Jeeva Body which was kept in tact; the earlier Mitravaruna was infatuated with Aprara Urvashi and two issues were born of whom one was Agasti who became an ascetic and the other was King Ikshwaku. Mitravaruna's jiva body was still in tact even Brahma created Vasishtha: now the jeeva body of Vasishtha since dropped dead as a result of Nimi's curse had entered the duplicate of Mitravaruna without any loss of original Vasishtha's wisdom and radiance!

King Yayati Vs.Danava Guru Shukracharya: King Yayati married Shukracharya's daughter Devayani and Sharmishtha the daughter of a Rakshasa. But Shukracharya was unhappy that Yayati married again and there were misunderstandings between the wives. Devayani complained to her father and Shukracharya cursed Yayati to become old and impotent. Yayati could have given a return 'Shaap' but reconciled to the father-in-law's curse and requested him to pardon him. Danava Guru diluted the Shaap that if any of the King's sons was prepared to take over the old age of Yayati, then he might regain his youth back. The youngest son of Sharmishtha named Puru volunteered to lose his youth and let his father regain his youth. The fall out was that Yayati regained his youth and enjoyed life for thousand years and finally got vexed up and his ways of youth and returned it to Puru with the blessings of Puru's redoubled youth!

<u>Vasishtha Vs. Vishwamitra:</u> Yet another instance of the display of 'Ahamkarra' or intense Self-Image was in respect of the too powerful Munis. Vasishtha was the 'Manasika Putra' of Brahma while Vishwamitra a Kshatriya King Kaushika. The King visited Vasishtha's Ashram and demanded Nandini the calf-daughter of Kamadhenu the Celestial Cow as the calf rightly belonged to him as the King and Vasishtha flatly refused and by his Yogic powers the King failed to possess Nandini. The provoked King performed such extreme tapasya that he possesed enormous mystic powers and was called a Rajarshi to start with and a Brahmarshi subsequently and carried his grudge and jealousy for Vasishtha always. King Trayaruni of Purukutsa Vamsha was advised by Guru Vasishtha to banish the Prince Satyavrata (Trishanku) from the Kingdom since the latter abducted a commoner bride from the wedding platform by force despite her defiance. Satyavrata moved out to the outskirts of the Kingdom and adoped the ways of living a Chandala. But he helped Vishwamitra's wife and children by feeding them during a long spell of famine when the Brahmarshi went away for twelve years. But he served them cow meat to Vishwamitra's

family. Vasishtha cursed Satyavrata as Trishanka or on three counts viz.the latter abducted a commoner's bride, he adopted the way of life as a chandala and served the <u>cow</u>-meat to Vishwamitra Muni's family. Yet, Trishanku was endeared by Vishwamitra and sought to send him to Swarga in human form and when Devas kicked him created Trishanku Swarga by using his Tapasya Phala. What was worse he harassed King Harischandra to such an extent that his son died and wife became a desperate wretch. Vasishtha was fed up and cursed Vishwamitra to become a crane and in turn the latter cursed Vasishtha a Sarasa bird and both the birds quarrelled with each other for many years and Brahma had to intervene to relieve them of their mutual curses and bring about a rapproachment.

Yagnavalkya and Vaishampayana: The illustrious Yagnavalkya Rishi was the disciple of Sage Vaishampayana who taught Yajurveda to the former. The Guru and Sishya once had a heated argument about the interpretations of the Veda and the Guru demanded that whatever the Sishya learnt from him be vomitted in the form of digested food. As the vomit came out some of the co-Students of the Guru assumed the forms of 'Titthiris' (partridges) and picked up the 'Ucchishta' or the remains of the vomitting and the same came to be titled as Taittiriya Samhita and the Yajurveda came to be called Krishna Yajur Veda. The disillusioned pupil Yagnavalkya decided not to approach a human Guru and prayed to Surya Deva to accept him as his Guru. Pleased by Yagnavalkya's penance, Surya descended in the form of a horse and disclosed a new form of Yajur Veda called as Shukla Yajur Veda not known to Vaishampayana too; the Shukla Yajur Veda or Vajasaneya (Vaaji being a horse) materialised from his manes; the Shukla Yajur Veda has the rhythm of a horse gallop! Surya Deva directed Yagnavalkya to approach Devi Sarawati also to sharpen the memory of the Maharshi. Pleased by his prayers, Saraswati gave the boon to Yagnavalkya of acquiring qualities of a unique and erudite scholar of unprecedented fame!

Prahlada Vs. Nara Narayana Maharshis: Some times misunderstandings erupt suddenly and unmindfully leading to unhappy and even disastrous consequences on account of ego clashes. This happened even to King Prahlada a unique and unswerving Narayana Bhakta. As Hiranyakashipu was killed by Vishnu's incarnation of Narasimha Deva, King Prahlada was crowned and his governance was exactly opposite to that of his cruel father as it was highly virtuous and dedicated to Narayana. But the King came to know of a disgraceful incident viz. a highly poisonous snake dragged Chyavana Maharshi's feet while he was bathing in the Sacred River Narmada into Rasatala. King Prahlada came to know of the incident and apologised to the Muni profusely; during his dharmic discussions with the Muni, Prahlada requested as to which were the most Sacred Places of Bharata. Chyavana singled out Nimisha and he visited that Place at once. In the Nimisha Forests, Prahlada moved about looking prey of deers for his food and found a huge tree on which there were two pairs of ovesized bows and arrows hung and under the tree there were two Munis in deep meditation. The King wondered that it was ridiculous to see two Rishis seated on Mrighacharma or deer skin in deep meditation and also sporting bows and arrows. Prahlada approached them and ridiculed them that they were neither Rishis nor warriors; Nara Narayanas were provoked and challenged the King. The mild fight with one arrow from Nara was met with five arrows from Prahlada. This led to a mighty battle; Nara overshadowed the Prithvi, Akaasha and Dishaas. Prahlada pulled up Brahmastra but Narayana released Maheshwa-rastra. Prahlada was incensed and attacked Narayana with his mace. Narayana Muni rained flames from his eyes and Prithvi trembled and quakes caused heavy destruction. Prahlada prayed to Bhagavan Vishnu and the latter appeared and cautioned the King that Narayana Muni was simply unconquerable on any battle front by Devas or Daityas. Vishnu further stated : 'As a matter of fact, I am Narayana Maharshi myself'! Prahlada prostrated before Narayana Maharshi, renounced Kingship in favour of Andhakasura the son of Hiranyaksha the brother of Hiranyakashipu and took over the Sacred Path of High Devotion.

<u>Saraswati and Lakshmi Devis:</u> Markandeya Purana in the Chapter related to 'Kamakshi Vilasa', there was a reference on how Mahendra and Brahma became victims of the ego-clash of Devis Saraswati and Lakshmi. Motivated by her self-pride and arrogance, Sarasvati claimed that she was superior to Lakshmi as she was the Goddess of Learning in the whole Universe while Lakshmi claimed that she was the root cause of wealth and prosperity. Both the Devis approached Indra and the latter opined that Lashmi was

not only the origin of 'Bhoga Bhagyas' but also the consort of Narayana. Saraswati was enraged at this reply, called Indra as characterless since he spoilt the purity of Ahalya Devi, that he was arrogant, schemy and partial minded; thus she cursed Mahendra to become an Elephant. Devi Lakshmi felt sorry that on account of her support to her he was victimised but since the curse of Saraswati was to be observed, Indra might descend from Swarga to Simhachala Kshetra in Bhuloka to pray homage to and seek permission from Narasimha Deva to enter Hari Kshetra in Kancheepura. Lakshmi further stated that in the form of an elephant he would meditate deeply and on entering the Hari Kshetra would discover two lizards on his back which actually were Brahmana boys who on instructions from their Guru were collecting wooden twigs for homams but were turned as lizards on account of shaap by one Yaksha since he was disturbed. Soon as the elephant entered Hari Kshetra, Indra recovered from Saraswati's shaapa and the boys too got back their original forms and blessings from Indra. Vishwakarma the Celestial Builder who construtced the Varada Raja Kshetra in Kanchi arranged the two lizards -one made of gold and another of silver- as hung on a ceiling girder to the East of the Temple still by bestowing the boon of prosperity by Lakshmi Devi once they are touched!

Continuing the narration of the ego-clash of Saraswati and Lakshmi, Markandeya referred to the claim of mutual superiority as both the Devis approached Brahma Deva for his opinion and he favoured Lakshmi instantly. Sarasyati was highly disappointed with Brahma and took away the 'Danda' or the Insignia that Vishnu once gave to enable Brahma to undertake Srishti or Creation of the 'Charachara Jagat'. This action of Saraswati disabled Brahma to undertake further Srishti. He did not desire to entreat Saraswati to return the Emblem but he performed a massive and unparelleled Yagna at the Harikshetra; however Brahma did not ask Saraswati to participate the Yagna. The latter felt that she was bypassed and out of fury created a Maya Shakti which created huge flames to destroy the Yagna. But the saviour of Hari Kshetra Narayana arrested the hands of Maya. Saraswati took this as a challenge and released Kapalika Shakti but Vishnu in the form of Narasimka Deva destroyed the Shakti. Enraged by her discomfiture, Saraswati released Daityastra but Daityari Narayana disabled the Astra. Vagdevi then created a 'Karaala Vadana Kalika' but Vishnu materialised an Eight-Hand Maha Swarupa and suppressed the Kalika Devi by sitting heavy on her shoulders. Finally with all her powers being exhausted, Saraswati was humiliated and frustrated and took the Form of Pralaya Swarupi called Vegavati River with disastrous speed from Brahma loka down to Earth heading towards Hari Kshetra. Vishnu sensed the impending danger and decided to resort to her 'manbhanga' by his standing nude like a huge log of wood across the lightning flash of gushing waters. Saraswati having visioned Narayan's nudity felt ashamed and instead of facing him entered a 'Bhu Bila' or a big fissure of Earth and escaped. Then the Yagna resumed without any hindrance and after the 'Purnahuti' Varaja Raja Swami manifested himself and handed over the Insignia to Brahma Deva to resume Srishti again. Such was the high drama that followed the ego-clash of Saraswati and Lakshmi Devis.

# Play of 'Maya': The Story of Narada Maharshi

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

It was then the turn of Narada to narrate his autobiography and how Maha Maya had influnced his own life. Narada ('Nara' stands for knowledge and 'Da'stands for Giver or Provider) is popular as a 'Loka

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

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

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

Yet another Story of Narada was about his womanhood! Lord Vishnu and Narada were exchanging views about the impact of Maya and indirectly mentioned that he saved himself from it excepting that he was cursed by Brahma and Daksha and had problems. Vishnu asked for his vehicle Garuda and suggested to Narada to go for a drive across the sky. He stopped Garuda at the City of Kannouj and desired that he and

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

### Stories describing the implied messages of Bhatavad Gita Chapters

Shri Krishna asked Arjuna to fight the Battle of Kurukshetra as that was the Kshatriya Dharma (Duty of a Kshatriya) and dedicate all actions and results to Bhagavan, as the latter was the Cause of every action, the Causation or the basis of action and the Causer or the Creator of the Cause. Bhagavan defined that out of the Eighteen 'Adhyayas' or Chapters of Bhagavad Gita, five Adhyayas constituted five of His faces, five Adhyayas his ten hands, one Adhyaya was his belly, and two were his feet. Padma Purana asssured that intelligent persons who read one Adhyaya of Gita a day, or half of it, or a quarter of it or even a Stanza at least would pave way to Mukti and cited the example of **Susharma** who was no doubt a Brahmana but a chronic sinner; he did neither 'dhyana' nor 'Japa' nor even Atithi Seva or Service to Guests; on the other hand, he was a drunkard, meat-eater and a womaniser. One day, he died of a snakebite and after suffering several Narakas and births as the retribution of his sins was born as a bull and served under an oil extractor for many years died of hard work and exaustion. A few kind persons contributed prayed for its salvation and among them was a Veshya (Prostitute) who donated some 'punya'on her account. In the rebirth the bull was born as a Brahmana in the same village as a 'Jatismara' or with the memory of the previous birth. He located the Veshya and asked her as to which Punya she donated to the dead bull. She said that she bought a parrot which used to mutter a stanza and that gave a soothing effect. The Brahmana learnt from his powers that the parrot learnt the stanza from the cage in which a Rishi stayed in his Ashram but a hunter stole the parrot and sold it to the Veshya. On reaching the Rishi, the Brahmana was told that the Stanza that the parrot learnt was from the First Chapter of Gita!

A Vedic Pandit Deva Sharam of Purandarapura of Dakshina Bharata was anxious to learn 'Tatwa Gyana' and approched a 'Mahatma' (Great Learned Person) in this connection. The Mahatma directed the pandit to a Goat Keeper called Mitravan in a forest who was seated on a rock on the banks of a river bed nearby. Mitravan nattated to Deva Sharma about his experience of a tiger attacking a group of goats; while all the goats fled away, one remained as though it invited the tiger to eat it up. The tiger asked the goat as to why it also did not run away as other goats did. The goat asked as to why the tiger did not pounce on it and the tiger replied that its hunger vanished suddenly. Both the tiger and the goat asked a Mahatma who in turn referred both the animals to a Vanara Raja (Monkey). The latter replied that there was a highly religious Brahmana named Sukarna who meditated at a Shiva temple nearby for several years and that he should be asked as to why the tiger did not suddenly lose appetite and did not pounce on the goat which was readily willing to eat it up. Sukarna replied that there was a 'Maha Purusha' or a Great Saint inside the temple and when he (Sukarna) requested him to teach 'Tatwa Gyan' or Self-Realisation, the Maha Purusha asked him to read an inscription on a rock outside the temple which stated: *Karmanyevaadhi kaarastey maa phaleshu kadaachana, maa karmaphalaa heturbhuh maa tey sangostwa karmani*/ (Partha! You have freedom only to perform your duty; the rest is not relevant to you; but you

should perform the duty without expecting returns and rewards! Bhagavan further clarified that a 'Tatwa Gyani' or He seeks Self-Realisation and a 'Sthita Pragna' or he with stable conscience has to be one who treats happiness or sorrow with eqanimity, without desire, fear, or anguish: *Duhkeshwanu dwignamanaah Sukheshu vigataspruhah*, *Veeta raaga bhayakrodhah sthidheermuniruchyatey*/ Thus the chain of Deva Sharma-the Mahatma- Mitravan the goat-keeper-the Tiger and the Goat-the Vanara Raja-Sukarna-and the Maha Purusha revealed the Message of Tatwa Gyan which simply stated that one should practise one's own duty and Tatwa Gyan would unfold itself! This indeed is the message in the *Second Chapter* of Bhagavad Gita.

The *Third Chapter* titled Karma Yoga gives the Message that 'Swadharma' or one's own duty needs to be followed at any cost, even if the Dharma of others is attractive: *Shreyan swadarmo vigunah paradharmatswanushthaat, Swadarmey nidhanam shreyayah paradharmo bhayaapah*/ A Brahmana named Jada practised 'Vaishya Dharma' or the profession of a businessman, amassed considerable wealth, became a victim of vices, desired to amass more money, travelled a lot, was killed by a gangof robbers, finally became a Pretatma (Goblin).and stayed on tree. Jada's son who was a dutiful Brahmana went out in search of his father and having learnt that his father was killed by robbers proceeded to Varanasi and stayed under the same tree coincidentally overnight and before sleeping recited the above Stanza of Gita. Instantly, the father in the form of Pretatma appeared after liberation and was taken away by an air-plane to Vaikuntha and asked the son to proceed to Varanasi and in the course of Shraddha recite the Third Chapter of Gita so that the forefathers too would attain Salvation.

Recitation of the *Fourth Chapter* describing JnanaYoga redeemed two Apsaras who were cursed by a Tapaswi named Satyatapa as they were bathing nude to attact the attention of the Tapaswi whom Indra suspected to dethrone him and instructed the Apsaras to disturb the Tapaswi. The Apsaras were cursed to become two bilwa trees next to each other on the banks of Ganga in Varanasi and when they begged of pardon the kind Tapaswi agreed for redemption from the curse when a Mahatma called Bharata would lie down between the trees and recite the Fourth Chapter of Gita. As soon as the recitation was over, the trees dried up and when Bharata reached his Ashram, there were two 'Kanyas' (maidens) awaiting the return of the Mahatma to thank him. Eversince then the Apsaras (Kanyas) regularly recited the Jnana Yoga chapter; it was in this Chapter Lord Krishna declared: *Yadaa yadaahi Dharmasya glanir bhavati Bharata! Abhyuddhaanamadharnasya sadaatmaan srijaamyaham/ Paritraanaaya Sadhunaam vinashaya cha dushkrutaam Dharma samsthaapa –naarthyaaya sambhavaami yugey yugey/* (Arjuna! As and when Virtue is affected adversely and Vice dominates, I shall take an incarnation to vindicate virtue and destroy the Evil).

In the Karma Sanyasa Yoga dealt with in the *Fifth Chapter* of Gita, the story of a Brahmana named Pingala of Madra Desha was illustrated as he ignored the duties of a Brahmana and took to music and dance and his expertise secured the favour of the King. Pingala married a low class woman named Pingali who eventually disliked the Brahmana and killed him in sleep. Owing to their sins, Pingala and Pingali went through hells and in their next births became a vulture and parrot respectively. Being aware of the memory of past lives, the Vulture met the parrot and tore the latter apart and the parrot got thrown in a pond and died but a hunter trapped the vulture in a net and that too got killed. Surprisingly, both the birds attained salvation! The explanation given by Yama Dharma Raja was that though both the birds were sinners, their dead bodies fell in the same stream on the banks of which a Muni sat reciting the fifth chapter of Gita underlining the Karma Sanyasa Yoga.

The episode of King Janashruti of Pratishthanapuri on the banks of River Godavari was described in the *Sixth Chapter* as he was a rare example of virtue, fame and noble deeds. When the King was strolling on the terrace of his palace he overheard the remarks of a group of 'Hamsas' (Swans) since he understood the swan language that the greatness and vitue were nealy reaching the level of Mahatma Riek who resided in the Temple of Chandra sekhara at Manikswar on top of Himalayas in the Kashmira Region. The King decided to visit that Mahatma and proceeded with huge entourage and several chariots-full of gifts including gold, jewellery, clothes, foodgrains and cattle. On way from Pratishthanapuri to

Maniksawara the King visited many Tirthas including Kasi, Gaya, and Mathura. King Janashruti reached the Shiva Temple at Manikswara and spotted a beggar-like Sadhu stationed on an empty cart who was identified as the Mahatma Riek. The King offered the chariots-full of gifts, the Mahatma became furious and shouted on the King saying that he could not be purchased with huge gifts! The King profusely apologised and fell on the feet of the Mahatma shivering with fear and shame. As the latter cooled down a bit, the Mahatma confessed that he attained celestial vision by constantly reciting the Jnaana Yoga from the Sixth Chapter of Gita: *Yadaahi nendriyarteshu na Karmaswanushajjyatey, Sarva Sankalpa Sanyaasee yogaarudhasta dochatey*/ (A Sadhaka or Yogi would become ripe only 'Indiraas' or body parts of exrernal and internal nature and their demands are overcome, Karmas or Actions are subdued and the concepts of 'You' and 'I'are eliminated and then only, a person would truly become a real Yogi!

The *Seventh Chapter* titled Vigyana Yoga gave the example of Shankhakarna who followed the profession of a Vaishya; having become extremely rich and prosperous he married for the fourth time and being avaricious desired to travel to Places to obtain further riches! He was bitten by a serpent and eventually became a serpent. He appeared as a snake in the dreams of his children and asked them to dig up a specified shrub in the backyard of his residence to discover crores of cash and jewellery. The sons who recited the Seventh Chapter of Gita discovered the riches which they decided to utilise for charitable purposes; the father too was liberated as the sons who were extremely pious and reversed the selfish pattern of their father. The underlying message of the Chapter is that Dharma begets Dharma and viceversa and Vigyana is the doorstep to Dharma. The father lacked the capacity to differentiate duty and virtue as against irresponbsibility and evil.

Akshara Brahma Yoga is the title of the Eighth Chapter of Gita which underlines the Basic Truth that Parbrahma is the Supreme and Indestructible. The episodes of Bhava Sharma a Brahmana who married a Veshya (Prostitute) with unforgivable habits of meat-eating, wine-drinking and debauchery and a Brahmana couple called Kushibala and Kumati who were involved in base tantras and were examples of deceipt, greed and anger. The couples died and were converted as 'Brahma Rakshasas' or Huge Demons. They stayed on two Tada Vrikshas or Palm Trees and often regretted their misdeeds. They exchanged their views as to how to obtain 'Mukti' or liberation from their current lives. Once, a Veda Vedva Brahmana who came under the shade of the Palm Trees advised the Rakshasa Couple that they could be liberated if they could receive BrahamaVidya's Teaching, Adhyatmika Tatwa Vichara or the Awareness of Inner Consciousness and KarmaVidhi Gyan or knowledge of performing Karmas or deeds then they could be liberated from their present condition. The Brahma Rakshasis got utterly confused and said: Kim tat Brahma!! Kimadhyatmakam! Kim Karma! (Who is that Brahma! What is that Adhyatma! And which is this Karma!) As soon as the Brahma Rakshasis muttered these words, a miracle happened as the Brahma Rakshasa couples got Mukti and so did the Palm Trees too. These were the opening lines of the Eighth Chapter of Gita! The further lines of the Stanza are: Adhi bhutam cha kim proktam Adhi Daivam kimuchyatey? To this query of Arjuna means: What is Adhi Bhutam! What is Adhi Daivam!. To this query Krishna replied: Aksharam Brahmaparam Swabhaayo-dhyatmamuchyatey, Bhuta bhaayodbhaaya karovirangaha karma sanjnitah/ (Arjuna! The Supreme Soul is Brahma and His nature is Adhyatmika or the Internal Features, Adhi Bhoutika or the External Features and Adhi Daivika or the happenings created by Paramatma Himself!)

The significance of the *Ninth Chapter* of Gita was explained by the instance of a Sacrificial Goat at one Yagna by Madhava a Brahmana who resided on the banks of River Narmada.. The goat talked suddenly in human voice to the surprise of the 'Ritviks' and onlookers. It said that Yagnas were meaningless as all the human beings would have to go through the process of birth-childhood-youth-old age and death. The same fate was awaiting the goat too, the animal said. The onlookers asked the goat as to who was it in the previous birth and it narrated the story that it was a Brahmana who performed a sacrifice to Devi Chandika as his son was ill; but Devi cursed him as it was improper to sacrifice a goat to cure his son's illness and cursed the Brahmana to become a goat. The goat further narrated that there was a King named Chandra Sharma in Kurukshetra who gave in charity a 'Kaala Purusha Pratima' at the time of Solar

Eclipse but a chandala couple emerged from the Pratima and were about to devour the King and the Brahmana and the latter was quick in reciting the Ninth Chapter of Gita entitled 'Raja Vidya Raja Guhya Yoga'and the chandala couple called 'Paapa' (Sin) and 'Ninda' (Blame) disappeared at once. The substance of the Chapter is: *Ananyaschintanaamtoma maam ye janaah paryupaasatey, teshaam nithyaabhi yuktaanaam yoga kshemam vahaamyaham*/ (Those who always think and meditate of me, surely I look after them and assure them of their welfare). Ever since then the King always recited and reflected the purport of the Chapter. Eventually, the goat was released to freedom.

Vibhuti Yoga was the title of the Tenth Chapter of Gita. A Brahmana called Dhirabuddhi visioned of Atma Tatwa and Bhagavan Shankara had immense affection for the Brahmana. Once when Bhagavan sat on the mount of Kailasha, a Hamsa (Swan) fell at his feet with a thud and bemoaned that while flying above a Pond in Saurashtra it crossed a lotus shrub and its natural color of crystal white got fully black since the lotus shrub released sixty five bees which blackned the swan. The lotus shrub was in its third previous birth was a Brahmana house-wife called Sarojavadana who was no doubt a Pativrata but was immersed in play with a Mynah bird in a cage when her husband called her and the Brahmana cursed her to become a Mynah. The Mynah was brought up by a Muni Kanya and the Muni was in the constant recital of the Vibhuti Yoga or the Tenth Chapter of Gita and the bird learnt the 'Adhyaya' fully and in its next birth became an Apsara. The Apsara was bathing in a Sarovara when Sage Durvasa out of fury cursed her to become a lotus shrub and the Swan crossed that very shrub that released the sixty black bees which changed the colour of the Swan! Such was the power of the Vibhuti Yoga in which Lord Krishna told Arjuna that all kinds of 'Vibhutis' or manifestations were his own like radiance, powers, virtues, meditation, prosperity and victory. The Vibhutis in this context included the swan crossing the lotus shrub was out of ignorance; Sarojavana's attachment to the Mynah was out of attraction; her husband's curse was due to anger; the accursed Mynah's learning of the Tenth Chapter was due to concentration and memory power; her becoming an Apsara was an upgradation of life; Muni Durvasa's curse was an expression of anger to create a lotus shrub; Dhirabuddhi's vision of Atma Tatwa and Bhagavan Shiva's affection was due to the devotee's extreme devotion!

The Eleventh Chapter of Gita is entitled Vishva Darshana Yoga and one illustration of the effectivness of the yoga related to the Episode of a Prama Bhakta named Sunandana Muni residing in Meghankara Nagar on the banks of River Pranita. The Muni undertook a travel to visit 'Tirthas' and on way stopped over in a village where the village head warned the Muni that a Rakshasa moved about in the village and might catch hold of a stranger as per an Agreement with the Rakshasa that none of the villagers be killed for his food but might eat up a stranger if required. Next morning it was learnt that by mistake the son of the Village Head was killed! The Muni asked the Head as to how the Rakshasa arrived in the first instance! The background was that there was a Brahmana Farmer in the village who did not heed the loud cryingsof a stranger when he was chased by a huge vulture and fell in a ditch; the Brahmana Farmer could have easily saved the stranger by lending a helping hand by lifting the stranger but the Brahmana did not bother; a Tapasvi detested the casualness of the Brahmana and let the stranger to be killed and thus cursed the Brahmana to become a Rakshasa. On hearing the background of the Rakshasa, Sunandana Muni recited in full the Eleventh Chapter of Gita and liberated not only the Rakshasa but also lifted to Vishnu Loka by a Vimana the Village Head's son killed by the Rakshasa too. The Chapter quoted Shri Krishna's instruction to Arjuna saying: 'I am enabling you Arjuna! To view the vision of my Supreme Form who has no beginning nor end; whose might is unlimited; who has countless hands; who possesses Surya and Chandra as his eyes; who has a fiery and radiant face like Agni and who has a powerful and red-hot scorching Form!'

The *Twelfth Chapter* is considered as a highlight of Bhagavad Gita since it deals with Bhakti Yoga. A young Prince of Kolhapuri of the south-west of Bharata Varsha visited the most reputed Maha Lakshmi Temple and prayed to Lakshmi Devi most sincerely as the latter was pleased to respond to the euologies and asked the Prince of his desire. He narrated that his father King Brihadratha had half-completed an Ashwamedha Yagna and died while the Sacrificial Horse no doubt returned from its 'Vijaya Yatra' or the

Victory March but was missing and the Yagna remained half-accomplished. He requsted Devi Lakshmi to restore the horse and let the soul of his dead father who was still embalmed in oil be given the satisfaction of completing the Yagna. Bhagavati Lakshmi directed the Prince to appoach a Siddha Samadhi Muni at the very entrance of the Temple and that he would do the needful. As directed, the Prince made the request to the Muni and was astonished to invoke certain Devas who confessed that the horse was hidden by them under the instruction of Indra Deva. He pulled up the Devas concerned and commanded that the horse be brought there at once. Indeed the horse was brought there in tact. The Prince was so impressed that he emboldened himself to request the Siddha Muni hesitantly whether his father whose body was still in oil could be brought back to life so that he could complete the Yagna himself! Siddha Muni smiled and asked the Prince to take him to Yagna-shala and having reached there sprinkled 'Mantra jala' or the Sanctified Water and the King came back to life again. The Prince was totally taken aback and asked the Muni as to how the miracles happened including the admonition to Devas to bring back the horse and what was more thrilling the revival of his dead father back to life! The Muni gave a cool reply that the powers that he attained were due to his constant recitation of Bhakti Yoga Chapter of Bhagavad Gita! The Holy Book's Bhakti Yoga Chapter states: 'A devotee who is free from likings and dislikings as also from happiness or unhappiness and who dedicates all his deeds to me totally with unreserved faith is my favourite!'

'Kshetra Kshetragna Yoga' was elucidated in the Thirteenth Chapter of Bhagavad Gita: On the banks of the twin River Tunga-Bhadra in the Southern Part of Bharata Varsha, there was a popular Kshetra called Haraihara where a Vedic Brahmana named Hari Dikshit lived. His wife Kuvaacha was however a characterless slut. Looking for a companion in bed, one night she treaded into a forest and faced a Tiger. The tiger felt that if the woman faced was of morality, she should not be killed but the animal pounced on Kuvaacha and killed her straightaway. The woman experienced several hells like Rourava and was born as a Chandalini. As she grew up she became a victim of diseases and reached a Temple of Jambhaka Devi where a Brahmana always recited the thirteenth chapter of Gita the essence of which was to distinguish the 'Kshetra' or the human body and the 'Khetrajna' or the Supreme Being. The woman was fed up through harrowing experiences in Narakas and the incurable diseases in her current life and the meaning of verse by verse of the thirteenth chapter that the Brahmana explained to her was like ambrosia to her inner self and a totally transformed Kuvaacha attained Salvation. The exhortation to Arjuna by Bhagavan Krishna explained the body of every human being was like Kshetra and by inference those who realise this basic Truth would tend to perform honest efforts and aim at Ishwara Prapti.Lord Krishna further asserted: 'Arjuna! Do realise that I am the Kshetrajna; the real Jnaana is the awareness of the Kshetra and Kshetrajna'!

The Fourteenth Chapter of Gita dealing with 'Gunatraya Yoga' highlighted 'Bhava Bandhana Vimochana' or Relief from the shackles of 'Samsaara' or worldly desires and provided the illustration of the King of Simhala, Vikrama Betala who went on a hunting spree on horses chasing a few hares with a few dogs showing the way. The hares crossed a breach but the dogs could not; there was a peaceful Ashram of Vatsa Muni who along with his disciples always recited the Gunatraya Vibhaga Yoga of Gita. One of the disciples of the Muni cleaned up his feet with water before entering the Prayer Hall of the Ashram. The sand and water mix turned muddy and the hares fell in the slush. As soon as the hares fell in the slush they were air-lifted by a Vimana bound for Vishnu Loka thanks to the recitation of the Fourteenth Chapter. Meanwhile the dogs chasing the hares fell in the slush and they too were air-lifted to Gandharva Loka. Then followed King Vikrama at the Ashram and the Prayer Hall and asked the Muni as to why the hares and dogs went to higher lokas. The Muni explained that there was a Brahmana named Keshava and his wife Vilobhana who were both quite vily; the Brahmana killed his wife and in the subsequent birth became as dogs while the wife turned into hares. Both these were the beneficiaries of the recitation of the Fourteenth Chapter. Lord Krishna gave the message of the 'Adhyaaya': 'Once the three Gunas of Satva-Rajasa-Tamasa, which are responsible of old age and death, then human beings break away from the chains of Samsara and attain Salvation. The person concerned who worships Krishna with

unreserved devotion would cross the barriers of the Tri-Gunas and would be able to step into the 'Parama Brahma Sthiti' or the Highest Salvation!'

The 'Daivasura Sampad Vibhaga Yoga' of Gita was illustrated by an uncontrollable Rogue Elephant called Arimardan on the Court of King Khangabahu of Saurashtra in Gujarat. Several Elephant Tamers from the Kingdom and many others failed to tame even by using heavy iron rods, piercing tridents and such other weapons even while streams of blood flowed but each time the tamers tried, Arimardan turned more and more violent. One day a Brahmana arrived and touched and cajoled the wild animal with affection as the onlookers wondered as to how such a miracle occurred! The Brahmana confirmed that he was a regular reciter of the Chapter of Gita. The King then ordered that the elephant be set free and as a result even boys and girls played with it on the Sreets. Bhagavan Krishna then addressed Arjuna saying: 'Ignorance, arrogance, pretentiousness, egotism, anger and Self-Image are all features of Asuras while the Three enemies of human beings viz.Kama (desire), Krodha (fury) and lobha (avarice) were destoyers of one's own Soul and entry points of Naraka which are avoided by intelligent persons. The ignorance of the elephant misdirected him and taming was accomplished by affection, humility and peacefulness.

The Chapter titled 'Shraddha Traya Vaibhava Yoga' which is the penultimate Adhyaya of Gita illustrates the Story of King Khangabahu of Simhala Dwipa, his servant and their elephant. One Dussahana drove the elephant in a race, made it run too fast by poking it by an 'Ankusha' and out of annoyance the animal dropped Dusshahana dead. The servant in his subsequent birth was born as an elephant in the same Royal Court. The new elephant (Dussahana) was gifted by the King to a Poet who in turn sold it to the King of Malwa for a good price. But on reaching Malwa, the elephant took suddenly ill and lied down without food and water. Many experts treated it but to no avail. Medicines, charities and Prayers did not help. Finally, a Brahmana recited the Seventeenth Chapter and the elephant started recovering and tried to stand up but fell down dead. The Brahmana who recited the Chapter explained that the dead elephant in its earlier birth was Dussahana and as as a result of the recitation attained Moksha. King of Malwa continued the reading of the Chapter and attained Sayujya later. Lord Krishna told Arjuna: The features and ways of life are normally shaped by every human being by his own 'Swabhava' or personal traits.

The Final Chapter of Bhagavad Gita named 'Moksha Sanyasa Yoga' contained the quintessence of Vedas and Shastras signifying the termination of Samsara Bandha or the shacles of Life. It is the destroyer of 'Arishadvargas' or the Six Enemies of humanity viz. Kama-Krodha-Moha-Mada-Lobha- and Matsarya; the final goal of Siddha Purushas and the High-Point of Entertainment of Maharshis. Sincere recitation of this Grand Finale of Gita constitutes sure steps forward to Moksha or the total break-away from the endless cycles of Life! The Episode behind the Final Chapter was that when Indra was enjoying a dancemusic ensemble of Apsarasas, a few Vishnu-Dootas rushed in to convey that a new Indra would be soon installed in Swarga Loka. Indra wondered whether the Indra-Elect performed hundred yagnas successully or constructed lakhs of water-bodies or planted crores of trees for the joy of the travellers or organised countless 'Anna Danas' and charities as he did. He reached Bhagavan Vishnu and expressed agitation about the news of the new incumbent and whether his own position was at stake! Vishnu smiled and asked Indra to meet the new-elect at Kalikagram on the banks of Godavari who was a constant reciter of the Final Chapter of Bhagavad Gita; Vishnu further assured Indra that he too could retain his position if he performed likewise too. Indra visited the Indra-Elect in the form of a Brahmana and realised that each such recital of the Final chapter would be equated to the fruit of performing one Yagna plus all the Punya Karyas or the benevolent and splendid tasks that Indra did in the past qualifying him to achieve 'Indratwa'! The Supreme Message of the Moksha Sanyasa Yoga is thus summed up as: Sarva Karmanyapi sadaa kurvaano madvyapa-ashrayah, Madprasaadaadavapnoti Shasvatam padamavyayam/ (Do accomplish the everlasting and indestructible 'Parama pada' by performing the needful 'Karmas' and keeping complete faith in me!

Interesting Origin of Bhandasura, Manifestaion of Lalitha Devi and Bhandasura Vadha

As Tarakasura was harassing the world and was gloated with a boon from Brahma that only Maha Deva's son Skanda could exterminate the Asura, Indra and Devas were anxious that Devi Parvati should soon wed Maha Deva. The latter approached Vishnu and requested for a quick solution as Maha Deva was absorbed in very long Tapasya after he was totally disenchanted after Devi Sati's self- sacrifice pursuant to Daksha Yagna since Sati was frustrated that her husband Shiva was insulted by her father Daksha in non-invitation of his Yagna to Shiva. In response, Vishnu looked amorously sideways to Devi Lakshmi and there got manifested Manmatha with arrows of flowers and a sugar-cane bow. Brahma blessed Manmatha to become an Embodiment of Love on the Universe. Indra and Devas got the hint and requested Manmadha to utilise all their skills to kindle attraction of Maha Deva in favour of Devi Parvati who was already serving Shiva in Tapasya by arranging the wherewith all like fruits, flowers and other material utilised in Shiva's puja in progress. Manmatha agreed and released an arrrow of flowers. For a split second, Maha Deva opened his eyes and saw Parvati with a momentary fultter of thought of liking for her, but soon got over that feeling and discovered as to who was behind this disturbance as Manmatha was lurking behing the trees! A furious Maha Deva opened his third eye and converted Manmadha as a heap of ash!

Ganesha was playful and materialised a Purusha from that heap. Ganesha was delighted at his Creation and embraced the Purusha. He advised him to worship Maha Deva so that he could grant Siddhis to him; Ganesha gave the instruction of 'Shata Rudreeya' and the Purusha recited hundred times and sought Shiva's boons; the boon was that half of his enemy's Shakti should be dissipated while he faced them and that the Astra-Shastras of the enemy should become futile; the boon further assured that he should enjoy his privileges for sixty thousand years! As Brahma learnt of the purport of the boon he stated out of desperation: Bhand! Bhand! why was this boon was granted! Eversince the Purusha came to becalled as Bhandasura. Bhanda became a terror to the Universe and Asura Guru Shukra gradually honed his battle skills. He called up Mayasura and made him construct another Amaravati and declared himself as Indra. He acquired a Kireeta which was gifted to Hiranyakashipu by Brahma. Shukra gave him an Umbrella given to him by Brahma and he was never bothered him by disease or fatigue. Thus Bhanda became an Apara Indra with all the fanfare of Indraloka. Bhanda had eight warrior sons and four daughters. Eventually, Indra and Devatas became subservient to Bhanda. Being a staunch devotee of Maha Deva, his progeny too adopted the father's qualities; his sons were Indra Shatru, Amitraghna, Vidyunmaali, Vibhishana, Ugrakarma, Ugradhanvu, Vijaya and Shritiparaga. There were regular Yagna Karyas and the Havya bhoktas were Bhanda and his followers! Vedaadhyayana was common in the houses of common Asuras of Bhandasura's households.

Bhanda's grandeur was ever growing for sixty thousand years but gradually, the spendour slackened and his virtuosity too commenced to wane. That was the time that Vishnu was waiting for as Indra was almost on a breaking point; a **Loka Mohini Maya** was created with the mission of enticing Bhandasura and also despatched a few Apsaras led by Vishvachi to attract Bhanda's key persons in the Court and the Sacred deeds like Yagnas were affected; Vedas were forgottten and Shiva's worship took a backseat.Guru Shukracharya's cautions were ignored and thrown to winds. Sage Narada then took up the mission of reviving the self-confidence of Devas who were dormant in their spirits and self-assurance so far; he prompted Devas to virtually wake up and worship Parashakti. Infused by Narada's sermons, Devas were activated and got refreshed with enthusiasm and reinforcement of devotion to Devi Parvati. While Bhanda's advisers, army and Praja were gradually sinking in moral turpitude, Devas came to enjoy confidence and morale boost-up. Guru Shukracharya warned Bhanda and his men that Vishnu did lasting and irrevocable damage by spreading Maya and inciting them into fast slippages of their erstwhile demeanor of excellence. On realising their mistakes, Bhanda made last-dig amends by reviving Shiva Puja, Homas and Vedadhyanas, but alas his efforts lost the punch and determintaion.

Lalitodbhavana, Stuti by Devas and Wedding with Shiva: Devas were engaged in collective and continuous efforts of Yagnas and homas. On one glorious day, Indra and Devas witnessed a huge

illumination from the 'Mahaagni Kunda' within a circular shaped radiance a profile of a Devi fully ornamened and bright silk dressed with four hands with a Paasha, Ankusha, a Sugarcane bow and five arrows with a smile beaming on her face appeared. Devas were in bliss to witness that Supreme Vision and commended her. As Lalita Devi gave her appearance, Brahma arrived along with Maharshis and so did Vishnu by his Garuda Vahana. Shiva also arrived by his Vrisha Vahana. Narada and Devarshis, Gandharvas, Apsaraas too reached there and Vishwakarma was asked to build a suitable Nagari to accommodate several visiting dignitaries including the Mantraadhi Devata Devi Durga, Vidyadhi Devata Shyama and Ambika. Sapta Matru Devatas viz. Braahmi, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Vaaraahi, Indraani, and Chamunda came as also Ashta Siddhi Devatas viz. Anima, Mahima, Garima, Laghima, Praapti, Praakaamya, Ishitwa and Vasitwa. Crores of Yoginis made a bee-line too. Bhairavas, Kshetra palakas, Maha Saasta, Ganeswara, Skanda, Veerabhadra were there to readily serve Devi. Brahma then proposed to Hari that this was the opportune time to perform the Sacred Wedding of Devi Lalita and Maha Deva. With mutual consent, the wedding was celebrated under the auspices of Vishnu the brother of Lalita Devi. The latter gifted to her an arrow of never fading fragrant flowers; Varuna Deva gave a Naaga Paasha, Vishwakarma gave an 'Ankusha'; Agni gave a 'Kireeta'; Chandra Survas gave her sparkling ear-studs; Ratnaakara Samudra gifted a variety of Ornaments; Devendra gave an 'Akshya Madhu Patra' or a Vessel containing eversasting 'Madhu'; Kubera rewarded a Priceless Chintamani necklace; Ganga and Yamunas gave Vinjaamaras or hand fans; Indra and Devatas, Dikpalakas, Marud Ganas, Sadhyas, Gandharvas, Pramathaganas were delighted to hand over therir respective weapons to Lalitha Devi. Then Maheswara and Maheswaris were given a 'Vedokta Mantraabhisheka'. As both of them were seated on a Golden Throne, Brahma named Lalita Devi as Kameshwari or Kamakshi. As the whole Universe was thus replete with joy, excitement and anticipation the Bhandasura would soon be eliminated, Sage Narada prostrated and made a formal request to launch the Vijaya Sena Yatra or the Victory March to kill Bhandasura.

Lalitha Devi's Vijaya Yatra and Bhandasura Vadha: The Victory March commenced with sky-reaching reverberations of 'Vaadyas' or sound instruments of Mridangas, Murajas, Patahas, Jhallaris, Hundukas, Gomukhas, Barbaras, Hunkaaras and so on. From Lalita's Ankusha emerged Sampatkari Devi who alighted an Elephant called 'Rana Kolahala' who in turn materialised countless elephants. From Lalita Devis's Pashaayudha were materialised innumerable horses of varied descriptions like Vanayjas, Kambhojaas, Sindhujas, Tankanas, Parvateeyas, Paaraseekas, Kaala vandijas, Yavanobhutas and Gandharvas, Armed by her various hands, Lalita sat on a horse back even when **Dandanatha** or Senapati named Shrinatha led her army while the former in turn created several Chandi Shaktis seated on Mahishas / buffaloes or Lions; in fact, the Stree Shaktis created for the occasion were twelve in number viz. Panchami, Dandanaatha, Sanketa, Samayeswari, Samaya Sanketa, Vaaraahi, Potrini, Vaartaali, Maha Sena, Agina, Chakrewsari, and Arighna. Besides, there were sixteen Mantra Navikas named Sangeeta Yogini, Shyama, Shyamala, Mantranayika, Mantrini, Sachiveshi, Pradhaanesi, Shukapriya, Veenavati, Vainiki, Mudrini, Priyakapriya, Neepapriya, Kadambesi, Kadambavanavaasini and Sadaamada. Meanwhile, a Figure representing Dhanur Veda with four hands, three heads and three eyes gifted a Dhanush (Bow) and two containers full of Arrows to Jagadamba saying these would be useful to fight Bhandasura. Hahagriva then described Parameswari with the following Pancha Vimshati Naamaas viz. Shri Lalitha, Maha Raagni, Paraamkusha, Chaapini, Tripura, Maha Tripura Sundari, Sundari, Chakranatha, Saamraajni, Chakrini, Chakreswari, Maha Devi; Kameshi, Parameshwari, Kamaraga Priya, Kaama koti, Chakravarti, Maha Vidya, Shiva, Ananga Vallabha, Sarva Paaatala; Kulanatha, Amnaaya naaatha, Sarvaamnaya Natha, Sarvamnayna Nivasini and Shringrara Nayika; reciting these names of Lalita Parameshwari would bestow name and prosperity.

*Tri Ratha Varnana:* Ahead of Laliteswari's chariot called Kiri Chakra Ratha, were the Geya Chakra Ratha and Geeti Chakra Ratha. The Nine-Storyed front-running Chariot that moved towards Bhandaasura had huge contingents of Shaktis and these were Ashta Siddhis and Matrikas afore-detailed and **Prakata Shaktis** viz. Sarva Sankshobhini, Sarva Vidraavini, Sarvaakarshanakrunmudra, Sarva Vashankari, Sarovanmadana Mudra, Yashti, Sarva Mahaankusha, Sarva khastra charikaa Mudra, Sarva

Beejaa, Sarva Yoni, and Sarvatrikhandika. Also there were sixteen Chandra Kalaa Shaktis named Kaamaakarshi Kalaa, Budhyaakarshini Kalaa, Ahankaaraakarshini Kalaa, Sabdaakarshini Kalaa; Gandhaakarshini Kalaa, Chittaakarshini Kalaa, Dhairyaakarshini Kalaa, Smrityaarshanika Kalaa, Naamaakashinikaa Kalaa, Beejaakarshinikaa Kalaa, Atmaakarshinikaa Kalaa, Amritaakarshinikaa Kalaa and Shareeraakarshinika Kalaa. On the eighth Storey of the Chariot, are four armed and three eyed of the radiance of Surya Chandra and are charged with high emotions to kill Bhandasura. On the seventh Storey were Stree Shaktis like Ananga Madana, Ananga Madanaaturaa, Anangalebhaa, Ananga Vegaa, Anangaankusa, and Anangaalingapara all of whom were anxiously waiting to terminate Bhandaasura. On the sixth storey of the Chakra raja Ratha are like Kaalaagni and they possessed Agni Baana, Agni Dhanu, Agni Khadga who were all materialised from the Kaamaagni Shaktis and their names were Sarva Sankshobhini, Sava Vidraarini, Sarva -akarshana, Sarvaahlaadani, Sarva sammohihi, Sarvastambhana, Sarvjrumbhana, Sarvonmaadana and Sarva Dwandwaksha -yankari. On the fifth Storey were 'Kulotteernas' who had crooked eye-brows and carriers of Parashu, Paasha, Gada, Ghanta, and Manis. These Stree Shaktis were Sarva Siddhiprada, Sarva Sampadprada, Sarva Priyankara, Sarvanga Sundari, and Sarva Soubhyagyadayani; these were basically the boon-bestowing and merciful Devatas. The fourth Storey Devatas were ten in number viz. Sarvajna, Sarva Shakti, Sarvaish -warya prada, Sarva Sarva Jnaanamayi, Sarva Vyadhi Nivaasini, Sarvaadhaara Swarupa, Sarvaahapara, Sarvanandamayi, Sarva Rakshaa Swarupini and Sarvepsita phala pradayaini. The third Storey Shaktis Vaagadheeswaris, and Veenaa-Pustaka Dharinis called Vashini, Kaameshini, Bhogini, Vimala, Aruna, Javini, Sarveshi, and Kaalini; these were all Rakshasa Samhara kaarinis. The Shaktis in the second Storey of the Chariot are as powerful as Lalitaa herself and were very close to her and were equally armed like Lalita herself and they were always ready to help, protect and be of forgiving nature! These magnanimous Shaktis were called Kameshi, Bhaga, Nityaklinna, Bherunda, Vahnivaasini, Maha Vajreswari, Dati Twarita, Kula Sundari, Nityaa, Nilapaakaa, Vijaya, Sarva Mangala, Jwaalaamaalini and Chitra. Such was the magnificent presence of Maha Shaktis accommodated in the Chariot . Similarly Shaktis in the Geya Chakra Ratha Prathama Madhya or the central portion of the first Storey was Sangeeta Yogini who was very intimate to Sri Devi and was the Residence of Mantrinis. Other storeys of the Ratha too were similarly brilliant with other Shaktis. The front chariot was of ten yojana's height; the accompanying Geeti Chakra Ratha had a height of seven yojanas and that of Kiri Chakra Ratha was of six yojanas in which Laliteswari was sitting brilliantly.

Preamble to Dev's battle with Bhandasura: As the Three Chariots were on the move, Rakshasas were mortally frightened and there were deadly omens to them while Devi's entourages were in top spirits anticipating emphatic Victory. The fool hardy Bhandasura was bragging away as in a dream world that a woman called Lalitha was coming to fight who nodoubt was stated to be beautiful and graceful and that instead of encountering in a battle he would like to invite her to a private encounter!! Ha ha! Bhanda's younger brothers Vishukra and Vishanga were the World's most dreaded and terrifying warriors and the erstwhile devotees of Maha Deva who only knew how to subdue and conquer and were unaware of fear or surrender. As Bhanda was in the fancyand romantic world, the brothers tightened the screws and bolts of the chatiots and charioteers. The Great Rakshasa warriors who frightented Devas and kept on them leash as they woud to slaves were so strong that each of them were able to make a multitude of Devas demoralised for a very very long sixty thousand years of Bhandasura's unchallenged sovereignty aided by thousands of Akshouhinis of unique strengh and of Mastery of Crookedness and Maya! Such powerful Rakshasas uprooted Indra, created a fresh Swarga with modern facilities, controlled Lokapalakas, PanchaBhutas, Tri Murtis, and finally approached a Woman to lead! The Rakshasa warriors included Kutilaaksha, Durmnada kuranda, Karanka, Kaalavaasita, Vajradanta, Vajramukha, Vajraloma, Vikata, Vikataasana, Karaalaaksha, Karkataka, Dirgha Jihva, Humbaka, Karkasha, Pulkasa, Pundraketu, Jrumbhakaaksha, Tikshna shringa, Yamantaka, Atimaya, Ulukajitat, Kujvilaashwya, Attahasa, Mushaka, and Kumbhotkacha.

Bhandasura's Associates exterminated: Lalitha Devi sounded her 'Pataka Dhwani' or the Sound of The Fluttering Flag as a mark of attack and Bhandasura responded with his 'dundhibhis' or war drums which

deafened the Three Worlds. As a trail exercise, **Kutilaksha** commenced the Operation with ten lakh Akshouhinis and Sampadkari Devi attacked Durmada and in the first round there were casualities with an edge to Durmada. Sampakari showed her red eyes and in no time the Stree Shaktis extinguished the well trained oppposition and even before the re-fill arrived **Durmada** was killed. Kutilaksha shouted on Sapatkari and said that there was no great reason to celebrate the initial sacrifice which normally assessed the depth of the opposition; so saying, Kutilaksha attacked by a horseback appearing once in the Raksasha camp and suddenly opposite the Devi's camp; while on one side, Kutilaksha and Samvasraswati were grappled with each other, Kuranda faced Samatkari. The latter put up such an encounter that the rapidity of each other's arrows covered up Surya and the clash of their Astras provided illumination to periodically dispel darkness! Finally, Kuranda fell and Bhandasura realised the Shaktis meant business! Karanka and five Daitya Senapatis were then despatched who created a 'Rana Maya' called Sarpini which created poisonous flames and showered serpents but Nakuleshwari Shakti utilised Garudaastra and also showered Mongooses. As Karanka and five other Senapatis were destroyed, Bhandasura and Kutilaksha instructed Seven more Senapatis to face the attack from the side of Devi; these Senapatis were all born to Rakshasi Keekasa (born of Bones) and were named Baalaka, Soochi Mukha, Phaalamukha, Vikarna, Vikataanana, Karaalaayu and Karataka. The Sapta Senapatis were asked to proceed with three hundred Akshouhinis of army to attack Lalita Devi directly. But the invincible Shaktis displayed their penchant for blood-drinking and apart from the Sapta Senapatis the massive army was destroyed. Vishanga the brother of Bhandaasura entered the battle and surreptitiously went under Lalitha Devi's chariot and managed to hit his arrow on her hand fan. Kameswari and Tithi Nityaa Shaktis were highly infuriated and Kameswari told in a rather apologetic tone to Devi that since her chariot was fully secured by Maha Mantra Shaktis, the Rakshasaas were trying to use their Maya in the night to make an entry from the rear side under the chariot's wheel and now the Shaktis viz. Vanivaasini, Jwaalaamaalini would then display their power. Then the Nitya Shaktis aimed their arrows and killed countless Daityas; Kameswari killed Damana, Bhagamala shot straight into the Senanayaka Dirghajihva, Nityaklinna annihilated Humbeka, Bherunda Shakti thrashed Hulumallaka, Vahni vaasaa Shakti crushed Kaklusa, Maha Vajreswari Shakti destroyed Kesivahana, Shivaduti Shakti sent Plukasa to Yamapuri, Twarita cut Pundraketa into pieces; Kulasundari smashed Chandabahu, and so on. The villian who started the Adharma Yuddha viz. Vishanga tried to escape but Kameswari Devi caught him by his neck and tore off his Kavacha with her sharp nails and in the process he escaped narrowly but Kameswari let him off as a retreating timid was not fair to run after and what was more the night was just entering the early morning hours. There were floods of blood and unbearable smell of putrid dead bodies all over. Devi Lalita instructed Jwaalamaalini to encircle the entire area with flames to make the army of Bhandasura and also clean up the mess of dead bodies of his army. Her chariots were lifted up the Mahendra Mountain while Dandini Shakti remained on the left of Kiri Chakra Ratha, Shyamala Devi was in the southern side, in the North was Sampadeswari and in the front Hayasana was present. As Bhandasura's sons were asked to attack and display their prowess, Bala Shakti of nine years of age requested Devi to please let her play with the sons of Bhanda along with a fresh battalion of two hundred akshouhinis and Lalita smiled and consented. Bala Shakti uprooted the progeny of Bhandasura and wiped out the army despatched afresh. At this juncture Bhandasura was not only agitated but demoralised. Vishukra then set up a Maha Yantra and made a desperate bid when Ganesha saluted Lalita and took her permission to face the Maha Jaya Yantra as conceived by Vishukra. Gajasura arrived to operate the Most Potent Yantra. MahaVighna Nayaka took the forms of Six Vighna Nayakaas viz. Aamoda, Pramoda, Sumukha, Durmukha, Arighna and Vighna karta and each of these were the Chiefs of crores of 'Herambas'; these six forms of Ganesha and the crores of Herambas moved ahead of him and their mere 'Hunkaaraas' wiped out akshouhinis of Daityas, while the power of their trunks destroyed the remnants. Ganesha himself attacked Gajasura and killed him even as Vishukra who invented the so called Jaya Yantra was destroyed into smitheerens. An undaunted Bhandaasura was nodoubt frustrated and humiliated but the show had to go on and hence sent his brothers Vishukra Vishangas. Vishukra was so notorius that Trilokas were shivering at one stage and he was the Yuvaraja / successor of Bhandaasura. Both the brothers planned to attack Devi together instead of dividing themselves in two directions. Lalita Devi consented that Mantrini Dandini might take

the onslaught of the brothers. Mantrini was for all practical purposes the Maha Raajni Lalita herself! All the associated Shaktis of Mantrini were in such inspired disposition as their morale was sky-high; some alighted horses, some were in chariots and others mounted elephants. Shyama Shakti provoked Vishukra; Nakuli Devi fought with Vishu, Maha Maya Kunti with Peshu, Bhauravi with Madada, Laghu Shyama with Kushura, Swapnesi with Mangala, and so on. Vishukra released Trishaastra which made all the Shaktis highly thirsty and the army of Lalita had tough time to cope up the situatation. Dandini prayed to Sura Samudra and the intoxicated Shaktis were joyfully killing the Daityas with redoubled excitement. The Trishastra instead of creating thirst of water thus ended up in the thirst of Madhu and the Devi Sena had a glorious time in killing the Daityas with redoubled vigour and adventurism! Danda Nayika encountered both the brothers together and hit Vishanga with a 'hala' (plough) and Vishukra with 'Musala' (mace).

Bhandasura exterminated: With the death of his dear brothers, sons and Senapatis and army of several akshouhinis, Bhandasura was crestfallen and depressed; yet, he proceeded with Kutilaaksha and thirty five Senanayakas and two hundred and eighty five Akshouhinis of army; excepting one woman in Shunyaka Nagari, his Head Quarters, the entire population went fight in the final battle. He alighted his huge chariot drawn by lions; countless of his army members had little space to travel by Bhumi and had to fly on the sky. Soon on spotting Devi Lalita, he despatched the Astra of 'Andhataamishra' and she retalliated it with 'Vishwaavasaastra' / 'Suryaastra' and blunted his arrogance. He threw 'Antakaastra' and Devi replied it with the Astra of Maha Mrityunjaya. He used 'Sarvastra Smriti' and she destoyed it with Dharana / Medhaastra. Bhanda utilised Bhayastra to frighten Shaktis but Amba used 'Aindraastava' to relieve fears. The Asura used Maha Rogastra and she sent back 'Naama Trayaastra' which released the resounding voices of 'Achyuta-Ananda-Govinda' along with 'humkaara' sounds. Bhanadasura threw at her the 'Ayushnaasha' or Life Destroying Arrow, and Devi replied that Astra with 'Kala Sankarshini' or Life Extending Astra. The desperate Bhandasura then forwarded Maha-Asura-Astra which was the super-combination of the energies of several notorious Asuras like Madhu-Kaitabha, Mahishaasura, Dhumralochana, Chanda-Mundeswara, Chikshibhu, Chamara, Rakta beeja, Shumbha-Nishumbha, Kalakeya, Dhumra and so on. There were 'Hahaakaaras' from the Devi Sena and the combined strength of various Asuras was too overwhelming. Devi then laughed boisterously and materialised Durga who was the Composite Form of all Devaas; Maha Deva provided to her a mighty 'Shula', Vishnu his Sudarshana Chakra, Varuna his conchshell, Agni his heat and radiance, Vayu a bow and arrows, Indra his Vairaavudha, Kubera his chashaka or drinking vessel, Yama his Kala Danda, Maha Danda, and Paasha; Brahma his Kamandalu or vessel, Iravata his bell, Mritya Devata her Khadga and metal resistor, Samudra his 'haara' or necklace, and Vishwakarma gifted ornaments.

Then Devi Lalita assumed various forms: as **Durga** she was in full form of unusual splendour; as Narayani she alighted a Simha Vahana and fought; and she destroyed Mahashasura as Chandika as described in 'Durga Saptashati'. Bhandasura released 'Mookaastra' and Devi in turn created the Astra of 'Vakyaadini'. He used Vedaapaharana Astra and she met it with her right hand thumb! Bhanda's 'Arnavaastra' created huge flows of gushing water which was arrested by an Adi Kurma of yojana's height and width as created by Devi's right hand's pointing finger. Bhanda sent an Astra called Hairanyaaksha which created thousands of 'Hiranyakshas 'and Devi created Maha Varaaha from her right hand middle finger who destroyed them all. An infuriated Bhanda produced crores of Hiranyakashipus but an unperturbed Devi frowned from where emerged Prahladaas and Nrisimha Rupas from her right ring finger who were like Pralaya Rudras laying the Hiranya kashipus on the Deva's lap and pulled out his intestines and blood. Similarly Devi Lalita created Vamana Devas from her right hand little finger to control Balendras; Parashu Ramas to kill Kartaveerarya- arjunas from her left hand thumb; Shri Rama to destroy the ten headed Ravana and Kumbhakarna and Lakshmana to kill Indrajit and from Devi's left pointing finger; Balarama from materialised from Devi's left middle finger to kill Asuras; Vaasudeva was created by the left hand ring finger of Lalita Devi and he terminated countless Rajaasuras and other Rakashasaas like Kamsa, Sishupaala, Dantavaktra, Poundraka, Shambara, Pralamba, Narakasura, Banaasura and so on and thereby reduced the weight of Evil on Bhumi and from her left hand

little finger created Kali Deva who ended up Huna-Yayana- Kirataka and others. As all the Evil Forces were uptooted by Durga Devi thus, Devi Lalitamba liquidated Bhandasura's Senapatis with Narayanaastra and finally only Bhandasura was left out. She then released 'Maha Kameshwaraastra' which had the extraordinary radiance and energy of thousand Suryas and ultimately the greatest menace in Tri Lokaas was demolished; the Sunyaka Nagari was burnt off with the flames of the Kameswarastra and thus the Dwiteeya Swarga which Bhandaasura created sixty thousand years ago was turned into heaps of ashes; and so did Bhandasura whom Ganesha materialised from the ashes of Manmatha as a play! With the termination of Maha Bhanda, Devas celebrated with resonant sounds of Celestial Drums and showers of flowers from Swarga and they were re-installed in their original positions. Whosoever reads or hears the Legend of Lalita Devi's victory over Bhandaasura would become fearless; they would attain Siddhis, Bhakti, Shakti, Arogya, Keerti, Aishwarya and Mukti! At the huge relief that Tri Lokas came to experience, Brahma-Vishnu-Rudras-Indra and Devas-Adityaas-Vasus- Maruds- Sadhya Devatas-Siddha-Kimpurusha-Yaksha-Nishaachara-Daityas felt so gladdened in their hearts and Maha Devi Lalita sat on a Golden Throne looking relaxed and satisfied; there was a fresh wave of hope, virtue, courage, confidence and happiness began again to all the Beings with relief and fulfillment. Brahma and others made a spontaneous Commendation at the Victory of Maha Raajni Lalita Devi.

Victory Commendation and revival of Manmatha: Brahma then introduced Rati Devi the widow of Manmatha and requested her to terminate her widow-hood and Lalita Devi readily agreed to do so and asked her to be bathed and dressed up as a 'Sumangali' with chandana-kumkuma, flowers and ornaments. Manmatha got revived. Devi bestowed boons to him saying that from the hair roots of his body he would materialise crores of Manmathas for ever and that he would ensure all the married couple to get marital satisfaction for ever; those who blame him would fail in their marriage unions and males turn out to be impotent and females turn out as frigid and barren. The Nava Manmatha was further blessed by Devi that Maha Deva would renounce Vairagya and would be so fond of Parvati that he did not leave her thus acquiring the epithet of 'Arthanaareswara' Manmatha's Senaani was Chandra, and Peetha mardakas were 'Raaga' or sweet musical notes, Mandanalaya or provocative winds and the sweet cooing of Kokila or Koel.

## Maha Devi destroys Mahishasura and his clan

The most ferocious and brutal Demon of the times, Mahishasura, harassed and subdued King Indra and all the Devas including Surya, Agni, Pavan, Yama, Varuna etc. and occupied the Throne of the Swarga. Mahishasura's cruel acts created havoc among the helpless Munis and human beings and there was no end to the persecution that they were subjected to. The Trimurthis-Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara- got so angry that they their eyebrows released massive Fires of Fury which got combined as a huge 'Agni Parvat' (Fire Mountain), into which the individual Energies of all the Devas headed by Indra got merged too. The Form of Maha Devi so materialised created a luminous face with combined Shaktis in a formidal feminine form: while Yama's powers created her hair, Vishnu's power provided both her arms, Chandra's radiance gave sparkling jewels, Indra contributed the belly, Varuna's powers created thighs, Prithvi the rear, Brahma contributed the feet, Surva provided the fingers of the feet; Vasuganas contributed hand fingers; Kubera's 'Tejas' created the nose, Prajapati's energy provided the teeth, Pavaka created all her three eyes, both the 'Sandhyas' gave away 'bhrukutis' (mid-portion of eye brows) and Vayu supplied the Devi's ears. Maha Deva then contributed his Shula from his own, Narayana gave away a Chakra born out of his Chakra, Varuna gave a Shankha, Hutashana / Agni his Shakti, Vayu the Dhanus with powerful arrows, Indra gave his Vajra and a bell from Iravata, Yama gave his 'Kaladanda', Varuna a 'Pasha', Daksha Prajapati his Akshaya Maala (Rosary), Brahma his Kamanadalu (water vessel), Surya supplied his rays into Maha Devi's skin pores; Kaal gave away his 'Khadga' (sword); Samudra Deva contributed pure pearls, shining clothes, valuable chudamani, precious ear-rings, and bangles; Moon gave away 'Bhuja Kirtis' (Shouder-Ornaments), neck laces, and finger rings; Vishwakarma donated 'Astras', 'Kavacha' (Body Secure); Himalaya provided the carrier Simha (Lion); and like wise all the various Devas gifted various items of their valuable possessions. When suddenly, there was a bewildering roar of

a Lion's resound, the 'Trilokas' shuddered and felt that it was the end of the Universe! Mahishasura and his followers got startled with unprecedented shivers and took time to realise that indeed that was not the end of the Universe, but the beginning of the historic battle. Maha Devi's radiance got spread all over the directions when her thousand arms came into flashes of mercurial actions. The Senapati of Mahishasura's army named *Chakshusa* began a fierce fight and an additional 'Chaturangani Sena' (Four-winged army force comprising soldiers, horses, elephants and chariots) of an Asura named *Chamara* joined the stream while another sixty thousand chariots and following army led by *Udagra* too joined the Force. A further Force of one crore chariots reinforced the existing army of Mahishasura, which was led by Maha Hanu. Another Asura called Asiloma led a five crore ratha sena, and yet another Rakshasa named Bakshal brought in sixty thousand chariots further reinforcements, thus making a highly formidable force; further forces joined the fray from other directions. On the other hand, Maha Devi's 'niswas' and 'ucchvas' (exhaling and inhaling of breathing) created crores of her army and killed crores of enemy forces too. The hell-like of Mahishasura army was destroyed like flies in huge flames. In this melee, Chakshura's charioteer died, his chariot was destroyed and as he tried to leap over Maha Devi, her Lion tore his body into pieces; Chamara became offensive as Chakshura died and sped up his elephant towards Devi along with his 'Mayavi' Shakties; Devi's lion leapt in the air sky-high and with one pounce squeezed his elephant to death and Chamar's body was hit with such a smash that there were no traces of his body parts. In the battle that ensued, Udagra was hit by Devi's forceful throws of stones and boulders, while Uddhatasura was crushed by Devi's mace hits. Next, the demon Bashkal was destroyed by her Bhindipala and Tamra and Andhak were shot by her arrows. By the blaze of her Three Eyes, Maha Devi burnt off three demons called *Ugraveerya*, *Ugrastha and Maha Hanu*. She cut into pieces the head of Bidalasura by the might of her sword. Durdar and Durmukh tried to send mantik arrows at her but the return arrows sent them away to Yamaloka. Devi Kaalarathri used Kaladanda and Kalasura was put to instant death. She sported her Khadga with a light touch and *Ugradarshan* flew away to a far off place never to return. Asiloma who led a five crore army of Charioteers fell like a sick bird on the battle ground with the fire that emerged from Devi's angry eyebrows! The Devi Ganas and the Great Lion who went berserk as Mahishasura's army made a depleted and demoralised retreat to save them.

Now, **Mahishasura** led a fresh reserve of army, assuming his original form of a Mahisha or a buffalo, made several offensive gestures by way of forcefully pulling up his powerful horns high, by taking speedy circlings, by throwing up his mighty tail and by thumping his hooves making sounds like earthquakes. The Asura jumped forward towards the Lion who created havoc and killed many of his warriors, whereby Maha Devi became livid with rage but Mahisha too got enraged and dug deep into the Earth and threw mountains by braying with frightful reverberation. The Asura's breathing was so heavy that mountains shivered and sand storms got into motion with high velocity. Chandi Devi desired to kill Mahishasura in one go, but Maha Devi restrained Chandi and threw a powerful rope around the buffallo neck; She then assumed the form of a roaring lion, then as a huge elephant, and like a mammoth 'Veera Purusha'. Meanwhile Chandika Devi consumed a huge cup of wine, got drunk with a resounding laugh with blood red eyes and said like a drunkard; 'Oh miserable Stupid! Keep on with your roar as long as my wine is swallowed; your last moments have now started ticking and you should soon leave this World as your ignominous life would get terminated.' By so saying, Chandi jumped up and strangled Mahishasura's mighty neck and sliced it open; soon Rishi ganas performed 'Veda Parayana', Gandharvas sang sonorous hymns of praise for Devi Chandi who was but a shadow of Maha Devi, Apsaras danced to their glory and Devas headed by Indra went into deep raptures in great jubilation with unreserved gratitude to Parama Maha Devi. In one high voice, all the Devas glorified Maha Devi as follows: 'We greet with reverence that Ambika Devi, whose capability is spread all over the moving and non-moving objects of the universe, whose Supreme Energy enables all the Deva Murthis to be on their own; whose Origin or Qualities defy description by Brahma, Vishnu or Mahendra, let alone illustrious Maharshis; and whose unparalelled kindness and consideration is ever-fulfilling and never failing to humanity. We salute Devi Chandika who would ever neglect nor ignore those who have unqualified faith and commitment in that Punya Swarupa or the Embodiment of Propitiousness and also never spare those who persist in evil

deeds and never have the psyche of remorse nor any sense of guilt. Highly pleased by the above commendations of Devatas, Maha Devi gave an opportunity to them to ask for boons and they said politely that after the killing of Mahishasura, they had no further requests to make, excepting that She should kindly respond as and when exigencies might arise in future and She said: 'Thadhaastu'! (Be it so!)

# Shumbha and Nishumbha executed by Maha Devi

The immortal Story of the killing of Shumbha Nishumbha Demon brothers as was told by Mahatma Markandeya. The most infamous Danava brothers, from the notorious lineage of the Hiranyakasipu, attacked Indra the King of Devas; diverted the 'havis' or the uncooked offerings to Agni at Yagnas meant for Devas to themselves; performed the tasks of Surya, Chandra, Kubera, Varuna, Vayu and other Devatas and turned all the Devas from Swarga, who became wanderers and as refugees in forests. They remembered the assurance given by Devi Vishnu Maya, when they celebrated Her victory at the devastation of Mahishasura and his followers; at that time She said: 'As and when You remember me when faced with a hardship, I will demolish your difficulties at once!.`

As Devas extolled Maha Devi, Devi Parvati was bathing in the pure water of Ganga and realizing that Devas were dislodged from the Swaraloka, appeared before them as Ambika whose popular name was Kaushiki or Kalika of dark skin but of unprecedented charm and beauty. Devas realised that Devi Kaushiki decided to reside at the top of Himalayas. Two Danavas named Chanda and Munda, the followers of their Masters Shumbha and Nishumbha of the lineage of Hiranyakasipu, happened to vision Kaushiki Devi on the Himalayas and were completely taken aback at her extraordinary magnificence. They hurried up to their Masters and conveyed to them of their greatest discovery of Devi Kausiki. They said that their Masters had no doubt achieved the most precious possessions of the Universe like the Iravata Elephant, Ucchaiswa Horse, Parijata Tree, Hamsa (Swan) Viman, Maha Padma Nidhi of Kubera, Kinjilkini called Kamal from Samudra Deva, Kanchanashraavi named Umbrella from Varuna Deva, the most valuable Ratha or Chariot from the Foremost Prajapati, Maranaprada Shakti of Lord Yama, the most potent 'Pasha' of Varuna Deva, all the richest 'Ratnas' or jewels of Samudra Deva and the 'Uttariya and Vastra' (clothes) sanctified by 'Vahni' (Flames) of Agni Deva; But without possessing the Rarest 'Stree Rathna' or the Most Invaluable Jewel of a Woman was visioned by Chanda and Munda would pale into insignificance before that prized possession! When Chanda and Munda described so much about the 'Stree Ratna', Shumbha and Nishumbha sent an able emissary called Sugreeva to Devi Kausiki to convince her about their unique qualities of proven bravery and capability. Devi replied: What ever had been said was indeed correct, since the two great brothers were the mightiest warriors in the Trilokas, but she had a 'Pratigna' or Vow viz.: Whosoever could win me over in a battle, crush my pride and equalise my Shakti would be my Master; now, let either Shumbh or Nishumbh try their luck and take on me in the duel and why delay further? As the emissary told Devi in great anger that let alone Shumbha or Nishumbha but even he could take her by hair and present her before his Masters, as Devi replied coolly that it was not proper to harm an emissary and as such he would better convey what she had said to his Masters.

Enraged by this arrogance of Devi, Shumbh instructed **Dhumralochan** to bring her by hook or crook. The latter ran up to Devi Ambika with a view to humble her, but by her mere 'Hunkaar' sound, the Demon got turned into ash; his huge army of soldiers came to action as they shot arrows, a variety of objects like Shulas and Shaktis and despatched horses, elephants and chariots. The Carrier of Ambika, named Kesari (Lion) got provoked with anger and with an earth-shaking roar, jumped out in lakhs of Forms and tore the bodies of soldiers apart into pieces. Shumbha went into white rage with biting lips as Dhumralochana was turned into ash and his large army of front ranking soldiers was destroyed; he ordered Chanda and Munda to march a huge army and drag 'that woman' tied up by her long hairs and present her before him. When Chanda Mundas led an ocean-like 'Chaturanga Bala' or the Four

Divisioned army comprising Charioteers, Elephants, Horses and Foot Soldiers adept in offensive warfare with high skills of military power, they all witnessed a grand and lonely female figure sporting a mischievous smile on the mountain top. From the smile of Devi's face, there was a sudden transformation of her skin to black, her eyes became red, her teeth got protrusive and her tongue was elongated. This appalling figure of Devi jumped from the mountain top along with the roaring Lion, creating lakhs of such figures all over, and playing one elephant against another, one horse against another and one chariot against another, breaking heads, and turning the battle field into streams of blood and disfigured bodies without heads of many, limbs of several and carcasses of lakhs of dead animals. As the ocean-like army of committed soldiers was massacred, both Mundasura and Chandasura rushed towards Ambika Devi, one raining away strings of 'Astras' and another flinging sharp weapons at mighty speed simultaneously, She threw around illusionary meshes which placed both of them into straight-jackets and with powerful blows smashed their heads; the ferocious Devi took the broken heads of the Asura brothers into her hands and laughed so violently that thundered the Earth and Sky, thus attaining the memorable epithet of **Chamundi.** 

The desperate Shumbha and Nikumbha ordered that the entire reserve army be marched with **Udhayudh** leading eighty six core Group of Commanders, **Kambu Daitya** with eighty four, **Kotiveerya** with fifty, **Dhumravamsajat** with hundred Group Commanders, each of them being equal to the combined efforts of Devas who ran away once before as they could hardly defend Indra's Chair. Noticing the desperate effort of the Danava brothers, Parama Devas including Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu, Kartikeya and Indra collected their respective Shaktis; Brahma flew by his Hamsa Vahana (Swan) along with his Brahmani Shakti, Vishnu by Garuda as also Varaha Shakti, Narasimha Shakti etc. Devi Chandika asked Shiva to warn the Shumbha and Nishumbha brothers to end up the war even at this stage and make a retreat to Patala and leaving Swarga. But the highly arrogant brothers heckled at Maheswara and there was no way but to return to the battle field. Brahma utilised Brahmani Shakti to pour forceful waterfalls from his Kamanadalu; Maheswari Shakti through Tri-Shulas, Vaishnavi Shakti through innumerable 'Chakras', Kaumari Shakti through Shulas, Indra by Vajra, Varahi Shakti by Damshras, Naarasimha Shakti by the help of sharp nails etc. The highly notorious core Group commanders were thus destroyed without trace.

**Raktabija**, the sister's son of Shubha and Nishumbha Brothers had the boon of creating as many Raktabija Danavas as the blood drops of each new body. Devi Ambika desired Chamundi to lap up the blood even before fresh Raktabijas were born. But there was a mismatch in the blood drops and the instant creation of further Danavas and hence Devi decided to extend her tongue so farther that finally blood drops dried up and Raktabija met his termination.Both Devas and Munis witnessed this strange happening and were mesmerised as to how Devi Ambika tackled the tricky situation!

When even the invincible Raktabija got killed despite his crafty tricks, Shumbha and Nishumbha came face to face against Devi. Both the brothers rained arrows on her while she poured heavy waterfall-like Astras from the clouds and kept the brothers at dismay. Suddenly, Nishumbh hit the head of Devi's lion on his head. Devi retaliated like a lightning and used an 'Astra' named 'Kshurapra', and destroyed his sword; he used a Shakti while Devi despatched a double Shakti. He threw a 'Shula' against her but she shielded it with her 'Mushtighaath' (grasp of her grip). He threw at Devi his mace and she responded it with her Trishul. Losing further patience, Devi Ambika finally felled Nishumbha on the ground with a torrential knock of her arrows. As Nishumbh fell down, Shumbha expanded his body all over the sky assuming eight hands with a variety of potent arms and approached her like a flash. That was the time when Ambika sounded her conchshell as though the ultimate time had arrived to script the end of Shumbha. In the most ferocious form of Kaali, Devi Ambika jumped up sky high and as she came down with a thud and as Shumbhasura released his final Astra called 'Ugradeepti' emitting flames and heat which was controlled by her 'Maholka' Astra. Then Devi said: 'you 'Duratma', you have still not realised my Power. This is all my Creation; I am the Cause, I am the Doer and I am the Act; you are a part of my scheme; never think high of you; your time of death is ticking!'

As she was saying this, Shumbhasura reached to her like a flash and tried to jump at her but she slapped him so hard that he tumbled down. She pierced her Shula right into his heart and he fell on to earth with a thud as there was a quake and Rivers and Oceans overflowed and mountains quivered momentarily. But soon there was a clear sky, good omens appeared, there were pleasant rains of flowers, Apsaras danced to their glory, Gandharvas sang melliflous hymns in praise of Devi, Trimurthis exclaimed that truth was vindicated, Devas led by Indra fell into raptures with joyful tears in their eyes and Maharshis and Yogis predicted the arrival of a propitious era here again.

Extremely gratified by the eulogies of Devas, Maha Devi assured unremitting support to Devas as and when there would be a need besides saving the virtuous and punishing the guilty as an integral part of Her scheme of activities. She stated that in the course of Vivaswata Manvantara, She would be born again as Vindhyachalavasini and kill Vaipachitta named Danavas; while She would eat the Rakshasas at that time, She would be known as 'Raktadantika' as Her teeth would look like blood-red 'Dadimi Kusuma'. Some hundred years hence, Munis would make Group Prayers for her as there would be severe drought and famine of water and Munis could percieve her by her red eyes alone as 'Shataakshi' since She would be 'Ayoni janita' or born on Her own. As there would be no rains for long time, She utilised Her own Physique and generated food grains and vegetables to sustain humanity to be acclaimed as 'Shakambhari' and assuming a frightful form at Himalayas killed a very treacherous Demon called Durgama. When Muniganas would pacify her with their prayers, She would be popular as Bhima Devi. When another 'Mahasura', called Aruna would torment Trilokas some time later, She would assume the form of Sixlegged 'Bhramaras' (Bees) in countless numbers and annihilate the Asura and his companions.

### **Epilogue: Vedic Faith is Everlasting despite pulls and pressures!**

Even as extension of Dwapara Yuga there had been threats to Arsha Samkstiri / Hindu Culture, vide Shi Krishna's efforts to decimate the Yavana King who joined hands with Jarasandha of 'Maha Bhagavata'. The strength and glory of the eras of Panadava clan declined after Parikshit, Janamejaya and Shataanika. In the weak lineage of the Kings, the King Pradyot performed Mleccha Yagna and Kali along with his wife was stated to have made an appeal to Bhagavan Narayana not to create hurdles in the spread and might of Kali Yuga and Narayana assured Kali that soon a man named 'Aadam' and woman named 'Havyavati' would promote the cause of Mlecchas and speed up the spread of Kali Yuga. Vishnu himself appeared to have advised a Mleccha King named 'Nyuh' to build and launch a huge Ship (Novah's Ark?) to save Believers of God. There was continuous storm for forty days and Oceans overflowed and submerged Earth. In the initial period of Kaliyuga, Bharata Varsha gradually adopted Videsha Samskrti; new culture, life-style and even language. For instance, earlier languages got corrupted and new expressions emerged: Vraja Bhasha, Praakruti, Sanskrit or Sanskrit based Prantiya Bhashaas and various Dravidian languages got adapted to 'Gurundika' (English) and other Mleccha (Alien) Bhashas. In the process, the Vedic Dharma witnessed change and evolution. As the Rulers changed, so did the cultures but the core remained intact. Buddha/ Ashoka created a new verion of Hinduism; Vikramaditya resisted the onslaught of Barbarians like Shakas, Mlecchhas, Yavanas, Tursharas, Parasikas (Persians), and Hunas. Shatavahanas controlled Shakas, Chinese, Bahmikas, Kamarupas, Rome and Ishaamashih (Jesus Christ). King Bhoja resisted the cult of Prophet Mahammad.But Pathans overpowered Prithviraja and thus the Bharata Varsha witnessed dissipation of Hindu Dharma, Varnashrama became a virtual non-entity excepting in very feeble form. It was in such extreme situation, the glorious contribution made by renowned 'Acharyas' to revive and sustain Hindu Dharma; the illustrious such Acharyas included Ramananda, Nimbaditya, Madhavachray, Jayadeva, Shankaracharya and his great followers like Giri Sharma, Vana Sharma, Purib Sharma, Dundi Raja and so on; Ramanujacharya, Chaitanya Maha Prabhu, and so on. The role of Regional Kings like Shivaji and even Kings of alien Dharmas like Akbar-as Hindu influence in reverse-was evident on the large canvas of Hinduism. Thus like the 'Jeeva Nadis' (ever flowing Rivers of Bharata Varsha) as Ganges, Vedic Culture will indeed survive, albeit incorporating and absorbing external and internal influences in the process of evolution, and continue in its Core Form for ever till the existence of humanity!

#### 2. PURANA SARAAMSHA

### (Quintessence of Puranas)

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### 'PURANA SAARAAMSHA' (QUINTESSENCE OF PURANA S)

Avikaaraya Shuddhaaya Nirtyaaya Paramaarmaney, Sadaika Rupa Rupaaya Vishnavey Sarva Jishnavey/ Namo Hiranya Garbhaaya Harey Shankaraayacha, Vasudavaaya Taaraaya Sarga sthityanta karmaney/ Ekaaneka Swarupaaya sthula sukshaatmaney namah, Avyakta Vyakta bhutaaya Vishnavey Mukta Hetavey/ Sarga sthiti vinaashaaya Jagetoyo-jaraamarah, Mula Bhuto Namastasmai Vishnavey Paramatmaney/ (My obeisances to you Vishnu Paramartma! You are the 'Hiranya Garbha Brahma', Hari, Shankara, Vaasudeva and Sarva Deva Jyoti Swarupa; you are the 'Avikaara' devoid of the six characteristics of Existence, Birth, Growth, Evolution, Decay and Destruction; the Symbol of Purity and Transparency; the Everlasting, Supreme, Unique and All-Pervading Vishnu. My reverences to you as the Integrated and Resplendent Entity of Brahma, Hara, Shankara and Vaasudeva who is the Root Cause of Creation, Presence and Termination; the Substance of the Miniscule to the Maximum Magnitude and the Undefined yet Visionable Being of Paramatma).

#### **Preface to Puranas**

In 'Hindu Sampradaaya', the very first thought goes to Vedas and Puranas. When one thinks of Puranas, the mind-set gets invariably tuned to Naimisharanya and Suta Maha Muni. Even a child witnessing or participating in a Vrata like Ganesh Chaturthi or Saynanarayana Puja would have surely heard of Naimisharanya. This Forest had become a Symbol of Hindu Dharma for the reason that while Dwara Yuga was almost over and Kali Yuga was being entered into, Brahma released the Kala Chakra called Manonmaya Chakra or Maya to assess the impact of its Entry from one Yuga into another. This Chakra (disc/wheel) appeared to have travelled round the entire Universe and finally got broken as the prescribed circumference of the Chakra viz the 'Nemi' fell short of the measure and Brahma felt that that was a 'Safety Zone'where he could take up 'Punah Srishti' and also devote that Extremly Hallowed Land for the use of Yagnas and other Sacred Activities; this was the Place where Veda Vyasa was famed to have executed the division of Vedas and scripted Puranas and this was also the Place where Suta Maha Muni disseminated knowledge of Puranas, Vedangas and various other Scriptures. This large segment of Land called the Naimisharanya still exists till date some 80 km away from Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh, leaving vestiges of the Past of some 5000 years at the cross point of the Yugas. There is a Chakra Tirtha even now where lakhs of Rishis were stated to have bathed and performed Yagnas. This Tirtha is supposed to be fathomless where a huge Hanuman Idol of 18feet-believed to be self-manifested-is in position; the local fables reveal that Rama and Lakshmana were rescued from Patala by Hanuman where the latter were hidden by Ravana and came up from Chakra Tirtha; the Britishers wished to disprove this belief that Chakra Tirtha was fathomless and sent a cable of 1000 meters (30,000 ft depth) and gave up the experiment! Till date, there is a Vyasa Gaddi (Seat) under a Banyan tree; a Shiva Temple where Shiva Linga's eyes look east in the morning and gradually look west at the Sunset and a Lalitha Devi's Temple of reputation. Even now, Yagnas and Homas are conducted at Naimisha and thousands take bath on Full Moon days, Solar/ Lunar Ecilpses etc.

Puranas are the Panchama Vedas but in a way are stated to be more practical than Vedas; Vedas themselves were perhaps apprehensive that those Pandits who no doubt recite and even know the literal meaning of Vedas well, might not be able to interpret the implication of Vedas well enough. Manu Smriti stated: *Bibhetyalpa shrutaad Vedo maamayam prataaryeyditi, Ithihaasa Puaanaabhyaam Vedam samupabrumhayet/* (Vedas might get concerned that Panditas capable of their recitation might not succeed to explain them well and hence Puranas could interpret their purport clearly, no doubt based on Vedas. Moreover, Vedas prescribed rules and regulations expecting posterity to follow without raising questions as to why the rules must be followed but did not explain why and what would be the consequences otherwise. For instance, Vedas command that one should be truthful and virtuous: *Satyamvada Dharmamchara*; but would not explain why. The language, style and diction of Vedas too are complex with hidden meanings. On the other hand, Puranas are easily understandable in simpler form describing past happenings, illustrative episodes when various personalities acted in good ways or otherwise and the resultant fruits that they reaped etc. thus warning humanity or facilitating to perform and motivating human beings to act and take initiative. Thus Guide lines are provided and dos and dont's are clarified and perfected.

Main Ashtaadasa Puranas are Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, Vishnu, Shiva, Bhagavata, Bhavishya,Narada, Markandeya, Agni, Brahma Vaivarta, Linga, Varaha, Skanda, Vaamana, Kurma, Matsya,Garuda and Brahmaanda.Upa Puranas include Sanatkumara, Narasimha, Skanda II, Shiva Dharma, Ascharya (Durvasa), Narada II, Kapila, Ushna (by Sukracharya), Brahmanda II, Varuna, Kaalika, Maheswara, Samba, Shoura, Parashara, Maricha etc.

### 'Srishti Vidhana'

Pancha Lakshanas (Five broad features) of Puranas are: Sarga, Prati Sarga, Manvantaras, Vamshas and Visarga. Paramatma (Supreme Shakti) and alternative Power called Prakriti materialised Maha Tatwa (Great Awareness); Maha Tatwa generated Ahamkara (Ego in abstractness or Self-Consciousness) which

enabled the Creation of Pancha Bhutas. The very First Creation was of Narayana created by Apo Naara or the Radiant Water. The floating Narayana through his Virya / virility produced a Golden Egg and Brahma the Hiranya Garbha was inside the Egg which had two parts; the upper part being the Urthva Loka and Bhuva the lower part; the space in between was Aakaasha.

In Prati Sarga, Brahma created Dasa Dishas, Kaalamaana (Concept of Time), Arishad -vargas, Ekadasa Rudras (Ajaikapaada, Abhirbudhnya, Virupaaksha, Raivata, Hara, Bahurupa, Triambika, Saavitra, Jayanta, Pinaki, and Aparajita); Chatur Vedas, Ashtaadasha Puranas, Shat-Vedangas viz Siksha including Sangeeta and Nyaya; Vyakarana, Kalpa Grandha, Nirukta, Chandas Shastra, Jyotisha including Jataka Skandha; Buddhi, Charaachara jagat -moveable and immobile Universe, Sapta Rishis (Marichi, Atri, Angirasa, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, and Vasishtha); Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanaatana and Sanat Kumara brothers; Prajapatis; Narada; Manvantaras, Chatusshasthi Kalas, Sapta Dwipas (Jambu, Plaksha, Salmaali, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaka and Pushkala) and Sapta Samudras (Lavana, Ikshurasa, Sura, Grita, Dahi, Ksheera, and Suswada ie. Salt water, Sugar cane juice, Sura, Classified Butter, Curd, milk, and sweet water), Sapta Parvatas viz. Sumeru, Kailasa, Malaya, Himalaya, Udyachala, Agastyachala, Suvela and Gandhamaadana; Ananta Shesha was at the root of Meru. Brahma also created Eight Lokapaalakaas viz. Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirruti,, Varuna, Vayu and Ishana; Sapta Lokas viz. Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, Swarloka, Maharloka, Janarloka, Tapoloka, and Satya loka; Sapta Patalas viz. Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talaatala, Mahatala, Patala and Rasatala. Brahma further created Chaturvarnas, Chaturaashramaas, Yagnas and Yagaas, Agni Homas like Shodasi, Ukta, Purushi, Agnishtoma, Aptoryama, Atiratra, Vajapeya and Goshava. Some of Prajapatis born of Brahma like Daksha made contributions in expanding their progeny and he begot from his wife Ashkini sixty daughters of whom seventeen were given to Kashyapa Muni, while the rest were given to Yamadharma Raja, twenty seven to Chandra, and to each to Angira, Kaalrashava and Bhuta. Kashyapa's wives included Aditi (Daityas), Diti (Devas), Danu (Danavas), Arishta, (Gandharvas and Kinnaras) Surasa, and Kadru (serpents), Surabhi, (Cows, buffalos and oxen), Vinata (Vihangas), Tamra and Ira (Trees, creepers), Kadru (Serpents), Vishva (Yakshas and Rakshasas), Muni (Apsaras) and so on.

# Matter, Space and Time

As regards the concept of time, the calculation was done on the basis of **Padardha** (Matter) and **Parithi** (Space); the sum of Space occupied and the movement of Matter determined is the **Paramaanu Samaya** (atomic time). Thus the Matter, Space and Time are measurable. The Time Units were arrived as per the mix of these Entities called Transerenus or celestial atoms and the duration of integrating these entities. The smallest unit of three transerenus is called 'triti'; hundred tritis make one vedha; three vedhas make a lava; three lavas make one nimesha or blink of an eye; three nimeshas one kshana; five nimeshas one kashta or eight seconds; fifteen kashtas one laghu or two minutes; fifteen laghus one nadika or danda; sixseven dandas one fourth of a day or night; four praharas or yamas make one day and night; two pakshas a month; two months a Ritu /season; six months one Ayanam or two complete movements of a year by Sun; Dakshinayana is the movement of Surva from top to bottom and Uttarayana is the movement of Sun from bottom to top. 365 combinations of a day and night make a year. Normally the span of human life is hundred years. A human year is a day to Devas; Satya Yuga is stated to have a span of 4800 Deva Years; Treta Yuga 3600 Divine years; Dwapara Yuga 2400 years; Kali Yuga 1200 years; 12000 divine years one Maha Yuga; 1000 Maha Yugas make one Kalpa or a day to Brahma and two Kalpas one day and night to Brahma; Brahma's life span is 100 Brahma Years or two Pararthas; one Maha Kalpa is half of Brahma's life span; Brahma's present age is now fifty years plus; that is how our daily prayer states: Dwiteeya Parthaey! One Maha Kalpa there are a mind-boggling 311040 crore of human years. We are now in the 28<sup>th</sup> Kaliyuga of the First Day of the First Year of Sweta Varaha Kalpa, second Parartha in the reign of the Seventh Manu Vaivaswata. Kali Yuga is calculated to have commenced on 17<sup>th</sup> February 3102 BC of Julion Calendar, Each Manu rules for 71 Maha yugas, Brahma is 51 year old having lived for 155 trillion years. We are now in the Third Kalpa (Varaha Kalpa).

## Brief on Planets- Sun, Moon, Sisumara and Bilwa Swarga

Now about the Planets: Bhu Loka as Planet resembling the form of a lotus flower comprises the Sapta Dwipas and Sapta Samudras over an area of one million yojanas or 8 million miles; Jambu Dwipa has an area of one lakh yojanas with Sumeru Mountain as the pericarp. Lokaloka is the border of Bhuloka controlled by four Gajapatis viz. Rishabha, Pushkarachuda, Vamana an Aparajita. From Meru to Lokaloka is billon miles and an equal distance from there is Bhurloka. The Planet of Sun is in between Bhurloka to Bhuvarloka, called Antariksha overseeing half of the Universe like a grain of wheat. Sun's movement in the Antariksha (outer space) from North to South Dishas is Dakshinayana over six months and from South to North over another six months influencing fortunes of one and all is called Uttarayana. As Sun travels to North from South, nights become longer and from South to North, days become longer. Sun travels from Manasarovara Mountain in a circle. His set route is from the East of Sumeru to Devaloka of Indra; to his loka towards South is Yamaloka; to the West is Nimkolani of Varuna; and to North to Vibhavati the Chandra loka; Surya Deva's Chariot called 'Trayimaya' thus performs Parikrama of the four Lokas of Indra, Yama, Varuna and Chandra and would have travelled 760 million miles approx. By the time one could utter the words Bhur Bhuvassuvah, Surya's chariot would have travelled 16000 miles! Surya's chariot has 2.8 million miles long and seven lakh miles wide. The Ratha Sarathi, Arunadeva (Brother of Garuda and younger son of Kadru, the daughter of Kashyapa Muni) controls the horses looking to Sun God and driving on the opposite direction. The Seven horses are named Gayatri, Bruhati, Usnik, Trishthup, Anushthup, and Pankti.

Chandrama travels faster and the distance between this Planet and Surya is of a lakh yojanas (800, 000 miles). Yet, Sun takes a year to travel through all the Rashis or Zodiac Signs while Moon takes a month for the Parikrama; in other words, in two and quarter days, Moon passes through a month of the Sun and hence the difference of Solar and Lunar calculations. Chandra is known as Jeeva (Praanadaata), Manomaya (mind alerter), Annamaya (potency provider from foodgrains, herbs and plants), Amritamaya (source of life) and Sarvamaya (all pervading). Moon fall day (Amavasya) and Moon rise day (Purnami) have their own significance in the Solar and Lunar Calendars. The distance between Moon and the twenty seven Stars is two lakh Yojanas. Distance from Stars to Shukra and is the same, which is a helpful Planet providing prosperity. Budha (Mercury) is also as distant from it to Shukra and is helpful except in nearness to Sun. Mangala is not considered as favourable. Jupiter is generally helpful. Saturn is invariably unhelpful. Normally, each Planet is away by a distance of 16 lakh miles but the distance from Saturn is halfway to Sapta Riushi Mandala or the Constellation of the Great Bear (Ursa Major) the Great Well Wisher of the Universe connecting humans and Gods. Above the Constellation is the Pole Star (Dhruva) and Sisumara Planetary System or the Sisumara Samsthaana which has the shape of a Dolphin and represents Vasu Deva Himself. It is coiled with its head down, with the Pole Star as its tail, on the top of the tail as Prajapati, Agni, Indra and Dharmja; at the hip position Sapta Rishis, the body with various Stars, Upper chin Agasthi, lower thin Yama Raja, its mouth Mars, genitals Saturn, neck-back Guru, chest Sun, mind Moon, navel Venus, breasts Ahwini Kumars, neck Rahu, heart Vasudeva himself, life-air Mercury, and the body hair pores various Stars on the Sky etc. Thus Sisumara Chakra is a view of Bhagavan Himself! Beneath Sun are Rahu and Ketu the Sub-Heaven Planets.

Under the Earth is **Bilwa Swarga** of over an equal expanse comprising Seven Lokas called Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talatala, Mahatala, Rasatala and Pataala, and the residents of these Lokas being Daityas, Danavas, and Nagas are all fond of luxurious life with material enjoyments like wine, women and food, having no illnesses as they all enjoy 'haataka' or herbal juice and blessed with prosperity and wealth. Twenty eight **Narakas** exist like Tasmira, Arthamishra, Rourava, Kumbhipaaka, Asi Patra, Kalasutra, Andha kupa and Raktakta Bhojana, where retribution of justice is rendered against sins committed by various Beings.

### **Manvantaras**

Then the Theme of Puranas invariably covers Fourteen **Manvantaras and Vamshas**. The past Manus were Swayambhu, Swarochisha, Uttama, Taamasa, Raivata, Chakshusa and the current one is Vaiwasvata; the names of the rest of the Manus to follow would be Saavarni, Bhoutya, Rouchya and four

more Saavarnyas.From Swayambhu Manu's lineage was born **Dhruva** the son of Uttanapada; as he was given partial/unfair treatment to his cousin brother and step-mother, he performed exceptional Tapasya to Narayana under the Guru Narada Maharshi as Vishnu himself appeared and granted Dhruva a unique position of the Sky as a Pole Star. A descendant of Swarochisha Manu viz. a King figured out in Puru Vamsha named Vena and his illustrious son **Prithu Chakravarti** who chased Prithvi in the form of a cow and after controlling her forced her to yield ample milk to various species in the Universe under his Sovereignty in the way desired by them; human beings milked foodgrains, Rishis milked Tapomaya Brahma, Pitru Devatas milked 'Swadha', Nagas milked Visha / Poison, Asuras milked Maya or Illusions, Kuberas milked Antardhana Vidya, Gandharvas milked Sugandha, Rakshasaas milked blood, Parvatas milked Auoshadhis, Vrikshas milked the milk-cut white gum etc thus satisfying all the species.

### Surya and Surya Vamsha

In the context of the current Manu called Vaiwasvata, Daksha Prajapati had given seventeen of his daughters to Maharshi Kashyapa and Aditi gave birth to Vaivasvan (Surya Deva) and other Devatas, Diti to Daityas, Danu to Danavaas and so on. Vaivaswan gave birth to Vaivaswata Manu, Yamadharma Raja, Yamuna, and Ashwini Kumars from Sanjana Devi (daughter of Vishvakarma) and Saavarni Prajapati the future Manu and Shani Deva from Chhayaa Devi, the shadow created by Sanjana Devi. Vaivaswata Manu had nine sons among whom **Ikshwaku** the eldest was the most famed followed by Naabhaga; since this Manu performed one Yagna with the desire of begetting a daughter, Ila was born and wedded Budha and they gave birth to Puru. From Naabhaga the lineage included Ambarisha, and Raivata. An interesting episode was that Raivata along with his daughter **Revati** visited Brahma who was then enjoying Gandharva Songs and by the time Brahma asked for the purpose of their visit and got the reply from Raivata that he desired to secure suitable husband to Revati, Brahma suggested the name of **Balarama** (Krishna's elder brother) and by the time Raivata and Revati returned to their Kingdom, they found themselves strangers as they discovered that a full Yuga lapsed from Treta Yuga to Dwapara Yuga and destiny brought Balarama and Revati together although Revati is older to Balarama by a full yuga! In the Ikshvaku Vamsa, there was another illustrious King called Kuvalaashva whose Kingdom was for long pestered by a powerful Daitya named Dundhu who secured boons of invincibility under water. The King instructed his hundred strong sons to drench out water from the Ocean-banks and pulled out the Daitya, who when exposed out of water lost his invincibility and was killed; the King's war tactics were stated to be unprecedented. Mandhata, Purukutsa and Muchukunda were the other famous sons of in the Vamsha. Mandhata Chakravarti was reputed to have built the ancient Temple of Omkareswara Linga near Ujjain near Narmada River as also discovered Manasa Sarovara on Himalayas and Jambu Dwipa thereunder. Muchukunda was stated to have slept off through Kalpaas in Dwapara Yuga in Yoga Nidra in a mountain cave; Krishna enticed into the cave a Yavana King-an associate of Jarasandha the father-inlaw of Kamsa whom Krishna killed-and made him face the tired eyes of Muchukunda and the powerful rays of his vision burnt the Yavana!

In Purukutsa' lineage was a King named Tridhanva whose son **Satyavrata** as a Prince kidnapped a commoners's daughter who was about to be married and this created a great social resentment and the King banished the Prince him out of the Kingdom on the advice of Sage Vasishtha the Raja Guru. The Prince adopted the ways of a Chandala and took to excessive drinking and immoral life-style. However, when Maharshi Vishwamitra went away on a long time Tapasya, his wife and children fell on days of misfortune and utter poverty and the Prince as a chandala took care of the Sage's family; once he stole away the Sacrificial cow of one Yagna being done by Vasishtha, killed it and fed the cow's meat to Vishwamitras's family to lessen the pangs of their hunger and unsuspectingly the Sage's wife and children ate the cow meat. Vasishtha discovered that the Prince stole the Yagnya Pashu, killed it and ate the cow meat and even fed it to the Sage's wife and family. Vasishtha further cursed the Prince for three kinds of serious sins viz steatling a cow, killing it and feeding its meat to a Brahmana family of a Great Sage Vishvamitra. Out of gratitude, Vishwamitra on return from his long Tapasya asked Satyavrata for a boon and the latter desired to visit Indra loka but in his mortal body. By the power of his Tapasya

Viswamitra no doubt made the request of Satyavrata possible and sent him upto Swarga –dwara but the gates of Swarga did not open up and as a retaliation the Maharshi created a Trishanka Swarga nearby the original Swarga and fulfilled Vasishtha's curse to Satyavrata as *Trishanka* or the latter committed three sins viz. to kidnap a bride and adopt a corrupt life; to steal a Sacrificial Cow, kill it and to let a Rishi's family to eat; and finally desired Vishwamitra to seek and fulfil an absurd boon of reaching a human body to reach heavens!

King Satyavrata's son was **Harischandra** who unlike his father was a Symbol of Virtue, Truthfulness and Sacrifice. He was harassed by Vishwamitra to such an extent on flimsy grounds that he lost his Kingdom and his personal freedom, besides selling off his wife and son, leading to abject poverty and son's death; it was his destiny which finally let his son get back life and secure Swarga to himself and his wife.

It was in Harischandra's lineage that King Sagara ruled; he was born with poison (Sa + Gara) as his step-mother, tried to poison his mother during the latter's pregnancy and his father was short lived due to immoral life. As his mother tried to immolate herself, Sage Ourvi rescued her into his Ashram and after bringing up the child, the Sage taught him Veda Vedangaas and martial arts and made him an expert in warfare, besides teaching him 'Agneyastra'. Sagara regained his throne after defeating his several enemies like Haihayas, Shakas, Yayanaas and others. He performed Ashwamedha Yagna to celebrate his victories. His mentor Sage Ourvi offered two choices to the King's two wives: one to secure sixty thousand sons or just one who would be the next King; one wife opted for a single son and another to have lot of sons. The Sage offered a fruit with one seed and a pumpkin with 60,000 seeds; the wife with one seed delivered Asamanjas (and his son is Anshuman) and another who desired lot of sons gave several embriyos. Thus along the Sacrificial Horse, the sixty thousand Sagara Putras were despatched and as suddenly it disappeared dug of the sea shores to search for it; hence the name of Saagara as dug-up of deep sea by Sagara Putras. In the process of digging up, Sage Kapila was found by the sons in Tapasya underneath the Sea and having suspected him to have robbed the horse, insulted him and man-handled. Kapila Muni opened up his fiery eyes and all the Sagara Putras were converted as ash! As the misadventure took place, Anshuman pleaded mercy to the dead sons of Sagara and the kind Kapila Muni gave the boon of redemption of the dead souls provided the Holy River of Ganges could flow all over the place where the ashes of the dead were purified. Anshuman and his son Dilip tried Tapasya but failed.

It was **Bhagiratha** that finally succeeded through relentless Tapasya to Bhagavans Ganesha, Vishnu, Shiva and Devi Ganga herself. Since Bhagirath was wholly instrumental in this most distinguishing act, Ganga Devi came to be reputed as Bhaagirathi.

In the long lineage of Bhagirath in the Surya Vamsha that followed, the illustrious personalities included Raghu, Aja, Dasharatha and the Epic Hero **Shri Rama** who stood tall in the Immortal Ramayana. Such was the most glorious chapter of Surya Vamsha and Ikshvaaku Vamsha which dominated the Global Scene in the History of Mankind through the two significant Satya and Treta Yugas!

#### **Chandra and Chandra Vamsha**

Maharshi Atri performed Tapasya for thousand Divya years and pushed up his virility upward in his body during that long period; that magnificent deposit got converted into eye drops and spread over all the Ten Directions. On realising this development, Brahma provided a Chariot to that unique illumination which came to materialse as Chandra and he did twenty one 'Pradakshinas' from Prithvi to Samudra and in the process his radiance germinated 'Anna'(food grains), various other food and source materials presumably pulses, roots, creepers, vegetables, Auoshadhis / herbs and Vegetables and, oils etc. Besides, Brahma made Chandra as the Chief of Brahmanas. For long time Chandra continued in a highly virtuous and ideal manner, but in course of time he changed his attitude from modesty to honesty and acquired arrogance and pride which culminated in committing the worst of sins viz. enticing the wife of his own Guru Brihaspati named Devi **Tara** despite the interventions of Brahmanas and Maharshis, the Guru's warnings and Brahma's admonitions. Tara got pregnant and confessed that the child would be of

Chandra's; Deva Guru suggested that the illegal child must be born in Chandra's residence and then only Tara would be allowed into his house without the child. Chandra named the boy as **Budha**, who was an outstanding Scholar of Vedas and Shastras and impressed by his erudition and virtue, Brahma appointed Budha as a ful-fledged Planet positioned right opposite Chandra and perhaps correctly so!

Budha's son was **Pururava** who was a highly virtuous King and Apsara Urvashi enticed him and gave birth to Ayu, Amaavasu and six other sons. In the lineage of Amaavasu was born Jahnu who performed Sarpa Yagna; Devi Ganga approached Jahnu with a proposal to wed him and flooded the Yagna Shaala but Jahnu desired to marry Kaveri the daughter of Yavanaashva. Since Ganga insisted to marry Jahnu, he got tired of her and drank her up; the Maharshis present begged of Jahnu who agreed to revive her as his daughter and that was why the River was known as Jahnavi. Pururava's another son was Ayu and Ayu's eldest son was the famed Nahusha, who performed ninty nine Aswamedha Yagnas and nearly got the eligibility to Indratva. In fact, Brahma appointed Nahusha as proxy Indra, since Indra killed Vritrasura a Brahmana with the help of the backbone of Maharshi Dadhichi converted as Vajraadutha and disappeared as a fugitive in a lotus stem in Manasarovara. Nahusha gradually became arrogant and egoistic and asked Sachi Devi to serve him as his keep. Sachi Devi wanted to escape Nahusha and on his insistence asked Nahusha to come to her house by his own carrier as Iravata used to go to her by Indra and thus Nahusha also should come to her by his own distinct Carrier. Nahusha pushed aside a Palki of Maharshis and commanded Agastya Muni to lift the Palki quickly; Nahusha said Sarpa Sarpa, meaning thereby Quick Quick. Agastya Muni felt that not only Nahusha blatantly took away his Palki and even had the audacity say Sapa Sarpa to the Muni to reach Sachi Devi's home. Agastya Muni purposively misunderstood Nahusha's Sarpa Sarpa and converted Nahusha as an Ajagara (python) and dropped and cursed the arrogant Nahusha from Indraloka to the thick forests in Bhuloka. On praying the Muni, Nahusha got a reprieve in the next Yuga when Yudhister would provide relief to the Ajagara'. When in Dwapara Yuga Pandavas were suffering 'Aranyavasa' following Yudhishter's losing fake chess game and one day in the Forest life Draupadi longed for a Saugandhika flower in a pond and asked Bhima to fetch to her; it was at that time the Ajagara coiled Bhima's body and when Draupadi ran for Bhima's rescue, Yudhistara gave correct replies to the difficult questions asked by the Ajagara, then Nahusha got Shapa Vimochana (Relief from Agastya's curse). As Nahusha got his python's form, Agastya helped Sachi Devi to search for Indra who hid himself in a lotus stem in Manasa Sarovara and brought Indra back to Swarga and sought Brahma's exoneration of committing Brahmahatya dosha, on the ground that though by birth Vritrasura was a Brahmana, he was an unpardonable demon responsible to commit countless killings of thousands of innocent persons.

Nahusha and his wife Viraja gave birth to Yayati among four other brothers. Yayati became the famed Emperor who defeated all the Kings in the World. Shukracharya the Danava Guru gave his daughter Devayani to Yayati who also married Sharmishtha the daughter of Vrishaparva, a Rakshasa. Devayani gave birth to Yadu and Turvasu, while Sharmishtha had Druhya, Anu and Puru. Indra was pleased to have gifted a divine chariot with such powerful horses that Yayati was able to cover the whole world within six days and nights. Having conquered the Earth, he divided the Seven Dwipas into five divisions and distributed among his sons. As he got a boon that he could regain his youth if any of his sons would agree to exchange their youth against his olde age, he was tempted to get back his youth again, since he was getting old already. He approached his edest son Yadu who declined the offer and so did all other sons except Puru who readily agreed. Yayati cursed Yadu and the others and accepted Puru's offer which enabled him to travel around and unravel the earthly pleasures for long. But finally he returned from his travels having found out that the ephemeral joys were endless like the Agni in a homakunda assuming larger proportions as per the ghee served into it, no human being could ever be satisfied with food, gold, ornaments and women and the more that a human being got lured into the whirlpool of life the worse that he would be dragged into it. Thus he realised that there could nerver be a better satisfaction than that of a spiritual life. By so confessing, he returned his youth to Puru and left for Vanaprastha / forest life in seek of Paramatma.

In the lineage of Yadu, there was on offshoot branch of Haihaya Vamsa into which the illustrious Kartaveerarjuna who too became a powerful Chakravarti having secured thousand mighty hands from Indra Deva. He proved to be an ideal ruler providing shield and contentment to his citizens that was rare in human history. His valour was such that in an encounter with Ravanasura the Epic Villian of Ramayana, he imprisoned the Asura and Maharshi Pulastya had to request him to be released! But in course of time, Kartaveerya became too vainglorious and killed Jamadagni Maharshi since he did not give away his kamadhenu. Meanwhile, Agni Deva approached Kartaveerya to let him satisfy his thirst and gift a huge forest so that he could consume it; unfortunately for Agni and Kartaveerya the Ashram of Vasistha Maharshi was burnt off too and the Maharshi gave a curse to Kartaveerya that soon enough there would be an incarnation of Vishnu as Parashurama who would not only kill Kartaveerya but also exterminate the contempory Kshatriya Kings who had become so haughty and cruel towards Rishis, Brahmanas and the Subjects in gereral. Indeed the Curse of Vasishtha became a reality and Parashurama had uprooted the Kshatriya Kings in as many as twenty seven battles!

In the centuries-long ancestry of Kuru Vamsha, King Shantanu bore the brunt of the Kaurava dynasty as its key-figure. He and Devi Ganga gave birth to Deva vrata, popularly called Bhishma Pitamaha. He was so named since took a unique vow of celibacy and against the institution of marriage to facilitate the wedding of his father's deep desire to wed Satyavati alias 'Matsyagandhi' renamed by Maharshi Parashara as 'Yojanagandhi'; ther Maharshi took fancy for her while crossing a River as she-a fisherwoman- yielded to the Maharshi's request and he granted the boons to her that her body smell of fish would change to that of a Yojana-wide fragrance, that her virginity would be intact and that she would be the Queen a famous King. As a result of this happening, a Vishnu Swarupa was born to Satyavati and Parashara as the most reputed Maharshi Veda Vyasa who had the singular distinction of scripting Ashtaadasha Maha Puranas, countless other Scriptures and of course the Immotal Epic, Maha Bharata. It was against this background that Shantanu fell for Satyavati who insisted that in the event of her wedding to the King Shantanu, neither his elderson Devavrata nor his progeny should claim rights of Kingship to the throne of Kaurava dynasty and thus the fierce vow taken by Satyavrata which got him the renown of Bhishma. Subsequently, Shantanu's son was named Vichitraveerya died an untimely death and as there was a threat of non-incumbency to the dynasty throne, Bhishma was invited to copulate his cousin's wives as per the exceptionally approved Niyoga Practice in vogue then; as a result, Vichitraveerya's widows Ambika and Ambalika begot Dhritarashtra (born blind as Ambika closed her eyes in the union out of fright of Veda Vyas) and Pandu (since Ambalika got pale out of horror at the sight of the Maharshi); both the women planned to depute their maid and normal and virtuous Vidura was born to her in the third attempt). Dhritarashtra married Gandhari and gave birth to hundred sons headed by Duryodhana and Pandu's wife Kunti gave birth to Yudhishtara from the Amsha of Yama Dharma, Bhima from the Amsha of Vayudeva and Arjun from the Amsha of Indra while Kunti bore a child even before her marriage by the Amsha of Surya Deva but out of fear left the child in a floating basket in a water flow which was found by a childless woman called Radha and brought him up thus known as Radheya or Karna since he was born with Karna-kundalas or ear-rings. As the Kauravas and Pandavas grew up with mutual ill feelings, fanned by Dhritarashtra on one side and Shri Krishna siding the virtuous Pandavas on the other, an inevitable Maha Bharata Battle climaxed and ended with bloodbath of Good and Evil forces with Krishna Bhagavan assumed a historic role, exemplifying his assurance of: Paritraanaaya SaadhunaamVinaashaaya Dushkrutaam, Dharma Samsthaapanaartdhaaya Sambhavaami Yugey Yugey!

### **Common coverages of Puranas**

Common coverages on most of the Puranas are related to Srishti, Manvantaraas and Vamsas; emphasis is laid on Dasaavataras in general and focussed attention besides the specialised Avataras say like Matsya, Kurma, Varhaha, Vamana, and so on. Of course, treatment of Krishna is strong in some Puranas and is highlighted, say in Bhagavata, Narada, Padma, Brahma Vaivarta, Agni, Brahma, and so on. Details of **Dakshayagna**, immolation of Sati Devi and the aftermath as also Shiva Parvati's wedding preceded by

'Kamadahana', mediation by Sapta Rishis between Himavanta and Shiva,birth of Skanda Kumara leading to Tarakasura Vadha by Kumara are repeated often by many Puranas like Shiva Purana, Skanda Purana, Matsya Purana,Padma Purana, Bhagavata Purana,Linga Purana and so on.

Vratas are highlighted in almost all the Puranas and great emphasis is laid on the methods of performing the Vratas, shodashopacharas, the details of Mantras, Stutis and phalas in observing the Pujas as illustrated in the 'Kathas'. Satyanarayana Vrata, Ganesha Chaturthi, Naga Panchami, Skanda Shasthi, Radha saptami, Madhana Dwadashi, Mangala Gauri, Varalashshmi Vrata and so on. In fact, Narada Purana and Bhavishya Purana have mines of Vrata details. So does Matsya Purana which provided an overview of Sixty Four Vratas plus Ananta Triteeya, Saarasvata, Bhima Dwadasi, Shiva Chaturdasa and more Vratas in full details. Nava Graha Puja, and Vaastu Puja are given in great detail in the same Purana. Varaha Purana is yet another Purana specialising in Vratas in respect of each and every Avatara of Vishnu from Matsya to Kalki!

Similarly, considerable importance is given to **Tirtha Darshanaas**. Outstanding examples of Puranas devoting prominence to Tirthas are Skanda Purana devoting chapters after chapters covering Arunachala, Venkatachala, Puroshotthama Khsetra, Badari/ Kedara, Ayodhya, Rameshwara, Kashi, Avanti, Prabhasa Khetra, Dwaraka, Manasa Tirtha,etc. Padma Purana provides a compendium of endless Tirthas through out the length and breadth of Bharata Varsha. And so does Varaha Purana ranging from Vishnu Para and Shiva Para Tirthas. Siva Purana highlights Dwadasha Linga Darshana viz. Kedara in Himalayas, Bhimashankara in Maharashtra, Visweswara, in Kasi, Triambika in Maharashtra, Somanadha in Sourashtra, Srishaila in Andhra, Mahakaalka in Ujain, Omkara near Ujjain,(M.P), Vaidyanatha at Deogarh (Bihar), Nageswara near Dwaraka (Gujarat), Rameshwara in Tamilnadu, and Ghishneswara in Aourangabad (Maharashtra). There are innumerable Upalingas mentioned in Koti Rudra Samhita! Similarly, fifty one **Shakti Peethas** spread over the length and breadth of Bharata.

Varnaashrama Dharmas: In Maha Bhagavata, there is a Chapter titled Uddhava Gita, in which Bhagavan Krishna preached to his special devotee named Uddhava that the basic principles of Varnashrama Dharma required a fourfold classification of Brahmanas with the duty of Spiritual and Intellectual pursuits: Vaishvas with the duties involving Finance, Business and farming: Kashatrivas to perform Administration and Defence, and Shudras as Labourers and Artisans, besides general services. BUT, the division should be made on the basis of aptitude, regardless of birth; the Veda base was given in Bhagavata allowing persons to accept symptoms of propensity and talent: "Yasya yallakshanam proctum pumso varnaabhivyanjakam, Yad anyapraapti drusyata tatteniva vinirdisat'' "(If a person reveals symptoms of being a Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya or Shudra even if he / she may be accepted by the symptoms. BUT, the Regulative Principles do prescribe that the concerned 'Vidhis' or definite duties be performed too like refraining from meat (Ahimsa), renouncing intoxicants (Purity of consciousness), resorting to illicit relations with women/men (loyalty and faithfulness) and gambling (illegal acquisition). There are also niyamas or optional duties like Bahyantara Suchi, Japam, meditation, austerity, sacrifice, dependability, hospitality and worship; (Shoucham, Tapas, Swadhyaya or study, Santosha (contentment); Daanam (Charity) and Ishvara Pranadaanam (total dedication), Satsanga, practice of Yoga, Surva Namaskaras.

A Brahmana is one by birth; by virtue of Samskara or training or practice he becomes a Dwija; and by virtue of Vidya or knowledge he is called a Vipra. Thus the features of a proper Brahmana are Janma (birth), Samskara (tradition and training) and Vidya. A fulfledged Brahmana is Vidya, Mantra and Vedas accompanied by practice and penance. Indeed perfect Brahmins in our contemporary world are becoming very few and far between. Such an ideal Brahmana wakes up in the Brahma Muhurta, after prayers to Ishta Devatas of Vishnu-Shiva-Shakti and after morning ablutions takes Snaana rendering Purusha Sukta; performs Sandhya Vandana, Yoga, Surya Namashkara, Pitru Tarpana, Agnihotra homa, Sahasra naama puja and Madhyahna Sandhya. During the day he performs Swadhyaya of Scriptures, Vedanga Pathana/ Practice of Siksha / Sangeeta, Kalpa Grandha, Vyakarana Shastra, Niruka Varnana, Chaanads Shastra, Jyotisha Shastra / Jataka Skandha; Evening Snaana, Sandhyavandana and Evening Puja. It is rather

improbable that such ideal Brahmanas are ordinary. The least that one could perform is daily Gayatri Vandana, possibly thrice a day.

### Sandhya Vandana-Mantrartha and Scientific Explanation

Sandhya Vidhi is explained in various Puranas especially Agni Purana, Padma Purana, Bhavishya Purana and Narada Purana. This seeks to optimise ('Nyasa') of the integration of the body, the inner Soul and the Supreme Force. In the human body there are ten important veins which create Prana Vayu viz. Ida, Pingala, Sushumna, Gandhari, Hastijihva, Prutha, Yasha, Alambusha, Huhu, and Shankhini. Apart from Prana Vaayu, there are nine other forms of breathing viz. Vyana, Apaana, Samaana, Udaana, Naga, Kurma, Krikara, Devadutta, and Dhananjaya. Most importantly, there are Five forms of Life's breathing process which are of utmost importance: Prana (The Principal Energy), Apaana (Internal Energy), Samaana (the Balancing Energy), Vyaana or the Central Energy, and Udaana (the External Energy). Thus Devi Gayatri is stated to possess Five Faces representing Five Portions of the Sacred Gayatri Mantra: OM (the Central Face)-BHURBHUVASSASAHAH (the Second Face)- TAT SAVITUR VARENYAM ( the Third Face)-BHARGO DEVASYA DHIMAHI (the Fourth Face) -and DHIYO YONAH PRACHODAYAT (the Fifth Face). The Trimurtis Brahma (the Creator), Vishnu (the Sustainer) and Maheswara (the Liquidator) with the three Gunas or Attributes are together absorbed in the Prayer to Devi Gayatri; integration of the human body who renders the Mantra and Paramatma takes place instantly via the Three Murtis and the best conduit is the Gayatri Mantra. The literal meaning of the Gayatri is: Om (Hey Paramatma!); Bhur (the Embodiment of Vital Energy), Bhuvaha (the Destroyer of Sufferings), Swaha (the Form of Hapoiness), Tat (that God), Savitur (Bright like Sun), Varenyam (The Magnificent), Bhargo (the Destroyer of Sins), Devasya (The Divine Force), Dhimahi (May Receive), Dhiyo (Intellect), Yo (who), Na (our), Prachodayaat (let it be inspired in the right direction); In sum the meaning states: Oh God, Yor are the Creator of Life, the Destroyer of Sorrow, the Bestower of Happiness and the Creator of the Universe; may we receive your Supreme Light to demolish our sins and guide us in our intellect in the right direction)!'

[Scientific explanations were offered by modern Scientists about the Gayatri Mantra. According to Astro Physics and Astronomy, a sound is produced due to the fast movement of Bhumi, the Planets and the Galaxy or the Milky Way, called Akshaya Ganga having some 100,000 million Stars. The Galaxy, the Moon and the Earth-all revolving around Sun-each moving on their own axis at a mind boggling velocity speed of 20,000 miles per second produce a Super Sound and Rishis named it as OM. The sum of Gayatri is as follows: The Earth (Bhur), the Planets (Bhuvaha) and the Galaxy (Swahah) are rotating on their axis at a great velocity as a Unique Sound is made which was a Formless Entity. The total Kinetic Energy generated by the movement totalled or balanced the total Energy consumption of Cosmos and this was named as Pranava or the Body Energy (mass of Galaxy multiplied by velocity and further multiplied by two: Mass x Velocity x 2). That Entity (God) who manifested in the Form of Radiance (Sun or Savitur) is worthy of bowing or of reverence. We should meditate (dheemahi) upon the light (bhargo) of that Entity (Devasya) as also perform the chanting of OM. May he (Yo) guide us in the right Direction (Prachodayaat) our intellect (dhiyo)!] Chanting the Gayatri Mantra by understanding the meaning and purport even a few times a day would demolish sins and the more number of times one recited would secure multiplied fruits.

## 'Daanas' and 'Tirtha Yatras'

On becoming a King, Vena was intially an exemplary King of high virtue.But in course of time, one unclad, broad-chested and Kamandal dhari Jain Muni arrived in Vena's court and brain-washed him in a belief that had no role for Yajan- Yaajan-Vedadhaayan- Tapasya-Dana-Swadha /Shraadha-Swaha / Agnihotra or homa. Saptarshis tried their best to rescue from the evil grip of the misleading belief of 'Arhan'. Thus the Rishis and the majority of the wise and God-fearing masses churned the body of Vena and cleansed it as described earlier and installed Pruthu as the King. Vena was sent on Tirtha Yatras and performed Tapasya and Lord Vishnu appeared and got him back on the moral track to refresh in his

memory of the values of what were vehemently opposed by him earlier, especially of Tirtha Yatras and charities. Bhagavan Vishnu Himself extolled the supremacy of Daan and advised King Vena to perform Daan as the sure destroyer of sins and promoter of fame and happiness. Vishnu affirmed that He would readily reward whoever gave charity with a clean heart to a well-deserving Brahmana of foodgrains, clothes, Gold, Bhumi, Cows, Cash and such other gifts. Bhagavan further described that there were four kinds of Danaas, viz. Nithya, Naimitthika, Kaamya and Praaya. Nitya Daana is in the form of Anna (food), fruits and flowers, Vastra (Clothes), Taamboola, Abhushana (Jewellery), Gold and such other items after worshipping Devas and Pitras. Naimitthika daanas are performed on Amavasyas, Pournamis, Ekadashis, Samkranti days or when Sun's directon changes towards Uttarayana; Pournamis of Magha, Ashadha, Vaishakha and Kartika months; Somavati Amavasya, Aswin Krishna Trayodasi, Pitru Tithi etc. and these are effective and highly propitiating. Kaamya Daanaas are in the context of Vratas, Deva Pujas, weddings, Jaata karmas, Upanayanas, Temple Pujas, Bhu-sthapana karyas or Earth breaking tasks of housing, wells, Sarovars etc. all targetted for the success of the desired tasks. Other types of Danaas of Praya nature are oriented to 'Mrityu' and targetted to provide to Peace to departed Souls in 'Paralokas'.

Describing the significance of Tirtha Yatras to King Vena, Bhagavan Vishnu emphasised River Ganga as the most sacred, besides other Rivers like Sarasvati, Narmada, Yamuna, Taapi (Tapati), Charmanvati, Sarayu, Ghaghra, Vena, Kaveri, Kapila, Vishaala, Godavari, Tungabhadra, Bhimarathi, Vedika, Krishaanga, and so on. In fact, there are countless such Tirthas dotting the Punya Bhumi of Bharat in which Snaana and Daana karmas yield excellent results and all such Tirthas are dotted all ove the Punya Bhumi of Bharat in which Snaana and Daana karmas yield excellent results and all such Tirthas are called Vishnu Tirthas. In fact, Tirthas are everywhere like Sarovars of Manasa status, Mountains like Meru, Himalayas and Vindhya; Yagna Bhumis, Agnihotra Homa Places, Shraddha Bhumis, Deva Mandirs, Homa Shalas, Vaidika Swadhyaaya Mandirs, Goshaalas, residences of Somayaaji Brahmanas, where Pita and Mata live, where Puranas are recited and heard, where Veda Shravana is heard, where Guru lives and each and every Place of Worship!

As regards the unique significance of 'Daan' (Charity)-its Profile and Fruits, once Arjuna visited the Ashram of Sage Narada and secured blessings, especially since Arjun made the 'Panchaapsara Tirthas' accessible once again. In this context, Narada described to Arjun about 'daan' (charity), its two 'hethus' (varieties), six 'Adhishtaans' (Reasons), six 'Anks' (Parties), two 'Parinaams' (end results or fruits), three bhedas (classifications) and three 'Vinas Saadhanas' (negative results). The two 'hethus' as normally perceived are about the size of the charity-small or big- as also of the quality. But such 'hethus' are not as important as the 'shraddha' or dedication and devotion are. Bhagavan Siva would be pleased only by the sincerity and pure heart that is attached to the charity rather than any other aspect. Again, 'Dhana Daan' or the charity of money is more popular than 'Vastu Daan' or charity of material, 'Vastra Daan' or charity of clothes etc. since charity of money would buy back Vastu or Vastra. Then the six 'Adhishtaans' or reasons of Daan are: 'Dharma Daan' without strings attached ie.Daan given to the Virtuous or Dharmatmas; 'Artha Daan' keeping in view some purpose or utility; 'Kaama Daan' like favours for women, wine or such other benefits in view; 'Lajja Daan is due to compulsions of Public or Society; 'Harsha Daan' is made on receiving good news and out of happiness; and 'Bhaya daan' out of compulsion, fear or avoidance of risks.

The six 'Anks' or donor/receiver parties are as follows: The Positive Donors are 'Daatas' by nature; the 'Dharmatmas' or the Virtuous; those desirous of donating willingly and happily; the 'Vyasana rahit' or devoid of bad habits; 'Pavitra' or Symbols of Purity and 'Anindaneeya' or the blemishless. The Negative Donors are ill mannered, indolent, evil minded, persons of bad habits, persons who swear to support the Evil and persons who are sleepy! Among the Good Receivers of Charity are those of good 'Kula' or caste, who has 'Vidya' or good Education, good 'Aachaar' or family bearing / tradition, earners of rightful way of life or of Satvik Life, of kind heart, 'Jitendriya' or of Controlled Emotions and finally of excellent parenthood. The second category of receivers of donations is of pleasant visage, of sincerity and thankfulness but not of demanding nature, cantankerous or mean. The donors of charity must have the

perspective of what kind of material is required or useful to the receiver or otherwise the purpose of charity would be defeated. The two 'Parinams' or end results/fruits are either gain of 'Punya' for the 'Paralok' or after death or for use in 'Ihalok' or the current life to the receiver. The latter 'Dannas' or for the use of Ihalok are of four types viz. Dhruva, Trika, Kamya and Naimittika. Dhruva is for public use like digging wells, construction of Temples, gardens, Choultries, schools etc. Trikha is for daily utility like 'Nithya Daan', say Vidya Daan. Kamya Daan is to fulfill one's own desires like victory, wealth, might etc. Naimittika Daan is like Samkranti Daan, Grahana (Eclipse) Daan, Daan at auspicious occasions like weddings, Vraths etc. or Kriyapeksha Daan like Shraadh, Vratas etc.; Gunapeksha Daan like Vidyabhyas and so on.

Three 'Bhedas' or types of Daan are classified; the best types are charity of houses, temples, buildings, Bhumi (farms / fields), cows, Wells, gold and ornaments and the best of course is to give away one's own life itself as 'Daan'. The Secondary Variety of charity relates to Anna (Food grains), Vastra (Clothing), 'Vahan' etc. The tertiary kind of Daan is to donate footwear, umbrellas, utensils, curd, honey, 'Asan' or seating, deepa or Light, wood, stones etc. Now, there are three kinds of 'Daan Naashak' reasons viz. 'Paschattaap' or regret of having given the Daan; 'Apaatra Daan' or charity to the wrong and unserved person or 'Ashraddha Daan'is to a person on account of laziness. Paschattapaya Daan indicates as to why the Daan is given at all; Ashraddha Daan is Rakshasa Daan and Apaatra Daan is as bad as not giving it away. The worst Daan is 'Paisacha Daan' or the charity duly given is returned under duress or due to the bad behaviour of the receiver or the donor.

Incidentally, Apaatra Daan should be avoided to an undeserving Brahmana who is bereft of 'Vidya', sells his/her conscience if his Bhumi is accepted; if he accepts a cow to kill it or sell it; if he accepts gold to encash it, a horse that might destroy the receiver's eyes; Vastra to harm his wife; ghee his manliness; til seeds that might harm his children and so on.

## **Some Interesting References and Episodes from Puranas**

Avadhuta Dattatreya: Known as a Three Headed Avatar of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara, representing the three Gunas of Sat-Rajas and Tamas, Dattatreya was a mystic Saint and an Avadhuta ('Ava' stands for bad materials and Dhuta stands for 'washed away'). He carried four dogs representing four Vedas. He was an Avatara mainly to propagate Ashtanga-Yoga comprising Yama (Morality), Niyama (Discipline), Asana (Right posture), Pranayama (Control of Life Force), Pratyahara (withdrawal of senses from worldly desires), Dharana (Concentration), Dhyana (Meditation), and Samadhi (Alignment of Self with the Supreme). He was a kind of Travelling Yogi always on the move. Once a Yadu King came across Dattatreya and asked him as to how did he learn so much in life and the reply was that he learnt everything from Prakriti (Nature) which bestowed full knowledge and there was no need for 'Adhyayana' or formal learning from one Guru but as many as twenty four Gurus viz. the Pancha Bhutas (Five Elements), Sun and Moon and Nature's species. Prithivi taught patience and service to all; water taught the need for washing off external and internal cleanliness; Tejas / Fire provided cooking simple and healthy food, motivation to worship by homams and burning off the Arishad Vargas; Vayu taught Yoga by controlling breathing and vital energy and spreading fragrance or Virtue against bad odours of wordly attractions; and Sky taught immunity from rains, winds and storms and an instant awareness of the allpervading, eternal and infinite Supreme Power. From Sun he learnt discipline, periodicity, self-lessness and Spiritualism and Moon taught the inevitability of waxing and waning, coolness of temper and equanimity, besides immunity from disease. From a pigeon, Avadhuta learnt helplessness against fate and the futility of excessive attachment when its female companion was trapped in a net and when tried to save got caught itself; from a python, he learnt extreme patience and persistence till the python finally secured its prey; from Sea, he learnt the profundity and depth; a moth taught him not to rush into flames but to weigh the pros and cons; a honey bee taught him diligence to collect honey by flying from flower of flower and thus to acquire knowledge; a bee hive taught him not to store too much lest one day the bee hive keeper would take it away by force; a deer got attracted by music and got caught by a hunter; a fish got attracted by a bait; a prostitute got easy money realising too late there were thousands of other ways

of living; an elephant got killed due to reckless competition with another elephant; a hawk got a piece of meat and had momentary pleasure but a bigger hawk snatched away the piece; the Avadhuta saw a child without any a care and concern and imagined that one should be like him; saw a girl husking rice at her home and on seeing a stranger removed her bracelets making lot of noise and thus avoided embarrassment; an arrows-man concentrating to hit the target fully unmindful of a King passing by; a spider weaving threads from its mouth to catch flies and after the catch, destroyed the threads reminding the Almighty's ways of creating, preserving and destroying; and finally realising the example of a wasp which entered a larva's (insect) hive and as the insect stayed put out of fear finally became the wasp itself thus meditation making a human being converting himself into God!' (Source: Maha Bhagavata)

Why Draupadi was wedded to Pancha Pandavas? Bhu Devi requested Indra to lessen the burden of Evil Forces on Earth. Indra asked Surya, his son Yamadharma, and Vayu Deva to pass on his own virility to Devi Kunti thrice and once to Devi Madri. Simultaneously, a pious Sage awarded a boon to Kunti even when she was a Kanya (Virgin); out of curiosity Kunti desired to test the boon and invoked Surya. The latter appeared and blessed Kunti. She got conceived and had to suffer the situation by keeping the child in a floating box left it on a water body nearby. Sighting a child in a box, Radha a childless wife of a charioteer in the King's Court adopted the child and since the latter was born with Kundalas on his ears was named as Karna or Radheya. After her wedding with King Pandu the latter was cursed by a mating deer coulpe which were hurt an forest hunt that the moment he tried to meet his wives in bed, he would die. Kunti pacified King Pandu that she knew a Mantra by virtue of which she could invoke Devas and that was how Yudhishtar was born of Dharma Raja, Bhima was born of Vayu, Arjun of Indra himself, while Madri the younger wife of Pandu gave birth from Ashwini Kumars-but all the Devas carrying Indra's own veerya. Draupadi was Indra's wife Sachi Devi herself as she was born as Yagneshani emerged from Agni and Yana Purusha was Indra who divided his radiance among his own progeny of Karna and Pancha Pandavas. Hence there was no sin involved at all! (Source: Markandeya Purana)

Play of Maha Maya-Veda Vyasa and Narada share their experiences: Veda Vyasa narrated his experiences of Maha Maya to Narada; he described that his father Maharshi Parasahara was enticed with Devi Satyavati a fisher woman while he was travelling by her boat driven across a River and in a lonely island had his union with her who had the epithet of a Matsyagandhi. He gave her boons that her 'Kanyatwa' (virginity) would be intact, that a Maha Purusha of Narayanaamsha would be born of the union (none else other than himself), that her body odour would instantly change as a Yojanagandhi spreading fragrance a yojana all around, that she would be the Queen of a great King Shantanu and that she would be a key figure in the furtherance of Kuru Vamsha. Another instance that Veda Vyasa highlighted was that at his mother's insistence he had to go to bed with his dead younger brother's wives to beget two sons Dhritarashtra and Pandu as also a servant woman's son Vidura. Yet another impact of Devi Maya was that he got attracted to Apsara Ghritachi in the form of a parrot (Suka) and spilt out his virya near an Agni Kunda and thus gave birth to Suka Maha Muni an epitome of Brahmacharya and unique knowledge of Vedas and Scriptures; Vyasa was so passionately fond of his son that the latter when refused to marry was sent to Videha King Janaka of high wisdom and convincing power and prevailed on the son to finally got him married!

Narada ('Nara' stands for knowledge and 'da' means giver) the Loka Sanchari (Universal Traveller) who had a penchant for interference with other's affairs -albeit for Loka Kalyana- fell flat against Maha Maya. He obstructed Daksha Prajapati's sons Haryasvas to enter marital life by advising them to perform Tapasya instead and gave them the Mantra Om Namo Narayanaaya. Daksha cursed Narada that the latter would soon be a Grihasta. In course of time both Narada and Maharshi Parvata fancied to visit Bhuloka and since they had to spend the rainy season agreed during the pilgrimage to accept the hospitality of King Sanjaya. The King asked his youthful daughter Damayanti to make the necessary arrangements for their pujas. Gradually, Damayanti got attracted to Narada for his erudition, especially his unparalleled knowledge of Sangeeta and his expertise in playing Veena.Narada too reciprocated her amoral approaches. Parvata did not approve, parted his company and even cursed him with a monkey face. King

Sanjaya and his wife sought to hurry up and Damayanti did not mind his monkey face either, since Kinnaras also had horse-faces. After their wedding, Parvata made a visit to the Narada couple and the former withdrew his curse against Narada. In another context, Narada bragged that he was not a victim of Maha Maya to Krishna who quietly took him by his Garuda vahana for an outing, suggested that they might refresh on way to a lake near the Capital of Kannouj, asked Narada to get into the water so that Krishna too would do likewise and as Narada had a dip and popped up he forgot who he was; in fact Narada became a charming woman and Krishna left by Garuda leaving Narada as woman was attracted the King of Kannouj, married 'her', begot sons and grandsons. After long lapse of time, grandmother Narada was bereaved since her sons died in a war against enemies; an elderly woman (Krishna) escorted 'Narada' to another lake near Kannouj meant for bathing women after the obsequies and after the bath, 'Narada' re-emerged from the lake as original Narada and the so-called elderly woman took the form of Krishna again! Narada realised that Maha Maya (Krishna) did have the last laugh at Narada's costly encounter! (Source: Skanda Purana)

Significance of Rudrakshas: Maha Deva was tired in tracking the tricky and invincible Demon Tripurasura, finally pulled out his 'Ajagava' dhanush and despatched the unique Vikaaraal arrow and killed him. The long chase of the Asura who was fortified with Brahma's boons tired out Maheswara and this tedious task ended up with profuse tears from his right eye signifying Surva Netra and from the streams thus materialised emerged Rudraksha Trees yielded twenty kinds of yellow seeds, while from his left eye called Soma Netra came sixteen varieties of white coloured beads and from the third eye on the forehead called Agni Netra came black beads. Eka Mukhi Rudraksha represents Shiva himself by wearing which a person gets immunity from killing a Brahmana; the Dwi- Mukhi represents Deva and Devi which has the power of committing two of Maha Patakas; Tri Mukhi represents Agni Deva which could ward off the sin of killing a woman; Chaturmukhi represents Brahma terminating the evil of any kind; Panchamukhi is like Rudra demolishing the sins of consuming all kinds of material including poison; Shanmuki representing Shanmukha washes off even Brahma hatya; Saptamukhi stands for Manmadha wearing which removes the sin of stealing gold and other valuables; the Ashta Mukhi stands for Ganesha bestowing plenty of food grains, vastras and all-round prosperity besides the sin of illicit relationships; Lord Bhairava is represented in the Nava Mukhi meant for providing contentment and demolition of several sins; Dasha Mukhi manifesting Janardana controls the negative effects of Planets and destroys the evil effects of Piscachas, Goblins and the like; wearing Ekaadasha Mukhi is as potent as executing Ashwamedha and Vajapeya Yagnas as also charity of several cows; Dwadasha Mukhi is a manifestation of Twelve Adityas (Mitra, Ravi, Surya, Bhanu, Khaga, Pushan, Hiranyagarbha, Marichiman, Aditya, Savitr, Arka, Bhaskara) yielding the Punya of performing Gomedha and Ashwamedha Sacrifices and fearlessness from enemies, cruel animals and poisonous reptiles, snakes etc. A Trayo- dasha Mukhi is stated to be normally a rarity which represents Kartikeya and if available could ward of the worst possible sins of patricide and matricide besides bestowing Ashta Siddhis. A Chaturdasha Muhkhi is stated to be the rarest of the rare as its possession is like carrying Maha Deva Shiva Himself. Wearing Eka Mukhi, Pancha Mukhi, Ekadasha Mukhi or Chaturdasha Mukhi bestows the best of the best effects, viz. of physical, mental, psychological and spiritual nature. It is said that close contact of Rudrakshas with body parts like head, neck, heart and hands protect the wearers with medical values against depression, stress, diabetes, cancer, heart / blood related diseases. (Source: Padma Purana, Devi Bhagavata, Siva Purana, Skanda Purana etc.)

Eight-folded approach to Venkateswara: Sage Suta prescribed an Eight-folded Bhakti route to Lord Venkateswara: 1) To display and ensure Sneha Bhava (feeling of friendship) towards his Bhaktas (devotees); 2) To perform service to his Bhaktas and satisfy them; 3) To perform puja to him with sincerity; 4) To direct all actions to him by the self; 5) To generate Bhakti and Love in the eyes, ears, tongue, touch, hands, legs and mind towards him; 6) To hear (Shravana), see (Vision), praise / sing / recite, describe and cogitate about him; 7) To keep his 'namaas' on his lips, thoughts, and heart always and 8) To surrender and dedicate Him absolutely and seek unreserved refuge from Him. Those who are fortunate to have a glimpse of the fantastic Idol of Srinivasa do experience the awe and lasting memory

that leaves behind a familiarity and nearness. To those who think of Srinivasa, either out of curiosity or greediness, love of materialism, fear or casual occurrence do undergo a definite transformation of outlook, approach to life and morality. If such casual approach has a multiplier effect, one could imagine the far-reaching impact of the Eight-folded dedication! As fire is capable of pulling down a huge mansion within minutes, the stockpile of sins gets ablaze into ash as fast, by taking the shelter of Srinivasa. Human life which is indeed difficult to secure compared to myriad forms of creations ranging from animals to insects or even as inanimate species, is stated to be well spent and appropriately lived through, if one takes asylum of the Supreme Power which is Avyaktam (Unknown), Saashvatam (Everlasting), Vishnum (All-pervading), Anantam (Endless), Ajam (Unborn) and Avyayam (Indestructible) called Venkateswara! (Source: Skanda Purana).

Narada's questionnaire to deserve Brahma's charity of Maha Tirtha Land: Sage Narada framed a questionnaire and circulated all over Bharata Desha to elicit best replies so that Brahma would allot a large Maha Tirtha Land in charity. But the Sage was disappointed at the innumerable replies received. Finally he was advised that there was a Village called Kalaap where a small Brahmana Community lived. Narada visited the village and met the elders there who were great experts in Vedas and Shastras, Vedaangas and Puranas. As the questionnaire was provided to them, they looked amused and said that the answers were so ridiculously simple that an elementary school boy would be adequate to reply; they selected a boy named *Suthanu* who was considered to be rather dull. In his preface before giving the replies to the questionnaire, Suthanu read out his 'pravara' or introduction about his Vamsha and himself: Chatussagara Paryantam Gobrahmanebhyassubham bhavatu-his Rishis of three generations, Vamsha, Veda Sakha ie. Rig-Yajur or Saama-his name etc. and said 'Ahambho abhivaadaey, and prostrated before Narada; the boy said that some times Brahmanaas recite Mantras without knowing the meaning and such Brahmanas were like two legged animals. Having said this, Sutanu composed himself before giving his replies:

The first question was about 'Matrikas' and 'Aksharas'; the reply was there were twenty Matrikas each constituting twenty letters in a Matrika, besides which there are fourteen Swaras, thirty three 'Vyanjanaas', Anuswaraas, Visargas, Jihva muleeya or to tongue ended voice. The Swaras from 'A kar' to 'Auom Kar' represent Manu Swarupas viz. Swayambhu, Swarochish, Auttam, Raivat, Tamas, Chakshu, Vaivasvata (the present Manu), Savarni, Brahma Savarni, Rudra Savarni, Daksha Savarni, Dharma Savarni, Roucha and Bhoutya; from letters Bha to Sha are eight Vasus viz. Dhruva, Ghora, Sowmya, Apa, Nala, Pratyasha and Prabhasa; from Ka to tha are Twelve Adityas viz. Dhata, Mitra, Aryama, Shakra, Varuna, Amshu, Bhaga, Vaiwasvan, Pusha, Savita, Twashta, and Vishnu; from da to ba are Eleven Rudras viz. Kapila, Pingala, Bhima, Virupaksha, Vilohita, Ajaka, Shasana, Shasta, Shambhu, Chanda, and Bhava; letters Sa and ha represent to Ashwini Kumars, and the Anuswara, Visarga, Jihva Muliya and Upadhaneeyas stand for Jarayuja (born by Yoni), Andaja (born of egg), Swedaja (born of sweat) and Udbhuja (born from Earth). The second question was about the twenty five materials for domestic / personal utility and the reply was Pancha bhutas of Prithyi, Apas, Tejas, Vayu, and Akash (Earth, Water, Radiance, Wind and Sky respectively; Five Karmendriyas (Mouth, Hands, Feet, Anus and ; Genital); Five Jnanendriyas (Ears, Eyes, Tongue, Nose and Skin) and the corresponding reactions viz. Shabda (Sound), Rupa (Vision), Rasa (Taste), Ghraana (Smell), and Sparsha (Touch) and Pancha Vishayas are Manas (Mind), Buddhi (Thought), Antaraatma (Consciousness), Ahamkara (Ego), Prakriti (Nature / Maya), and Purusha (Almighty). The *third question* related to the art of converting several women as one entity and the reply is Buddhi or mental condition which is comparable to the capricious womanhood; it is Buddhi that assumes myriad kinds of feelings, reactions and impulses.

The *fourth question* related to a person who knows the scripting of sentences connected to strange fiction and that is what a 'Sansara Bandhan' or the lure of life all about! The *fifth query* was about a learned Brahmana living in an ocean with the full awareness that a ferocious crocodile is around always. The reply is that the joy of living by way of Moha (obsession), Vyamoha (enticement) and Lobha is despite the awareness that death is round the corner.

The *sixth query* was about the eight-fold Brahmanatwa and the reply is that the latter is classified as Matra, Brahmana, Shrotriya, Anuchan, Bhruna, Rishi Kalpa, Rishi and Muni. A normal Brahmana by birth has the advantage of Upanayana and Gayatri Upadesha without Vedic Karmas and is only a Matra type. If he follows Vedic Achara like practising truthfulness and Piety then becomes a Brahmana. He is qualified as a Srotriya, if he performs rituals and is proficient in atleast one Veda Sakha, besides six Vedangas. A higher class of Brahmana is an Anuchaana who could practise, teach / preach and a Bhruna has Tatwa Gyan, a Rishi Kalpa is an Ashrama dweller; Rishis are meditation centric and Munis possess Yogic powers.'

eighth queries were about the first days of each Yuga and Manvantaras and these are Kartika Shukla Navami, Vaishakha Sukla Triteeya, Marga Krishna Amavasya and Bhadra Krishna Trayodasi are in respect of Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kalki Yugas respectively; while those of Manvantaras aforementioned (vide Question one above) are Ashviyuja Shukla Navami, Kartika Dwadasi, Chaitra and Bhadra Tritiyas, Phalguna Amavasya, Puasha Ekadasi, Ashadha Dasami, Magha Saptami, Shravana Krishna Ashtami, Ashadha Purnima, Kartika Purnima, and Phalguna/Chaitra/ Jeyshtha Purnimas respectively. All these days are worthy of Homas, Charities and penances.

The ninth query was about the first ever ride by Surya Deva had on his chariot and the reply is that it was on Ratha Saptami day on Magha Sukla Panchami when austerities and charities must be observed to secure Surya Deva's blessings of long life of wealth and excellent health.

The *tenth question* was about the tremendous anxiety and stress that human beings always have like a black serpent experiences. The reply is that a human being who has to crave for daily food has a similar doubt that a serpent has for daily death; both the species suffer from the daily uncertainty of food and death.

The *eleventh qurery* was about the most intelligent

person in life and the reply was that the most practical person would be a person who prepares dfaily updates of the balance sheet of Papa-Punya, especially when old age sets in and the long journey is awaited.

The *final* 

question sought a suitable reply: what are the two most significant means of Salvation? The boy Sutanu replied promptly: One is the Karmic and Dharmik way and another is the Vihanga Marg or the Sky Route involving Nishkarma and Jnaana Marg; indeed are there any other routes open to human beings.

Having received the replies to the questions, Sage Narada was thrilled and recommended the Kalaapa village to receive the Daana of Mahi Sagara Sanganma Maha Tirtha, situated from Klaapa Village some hundred yojanas by Akasha Marga away from the Kedara Mountains. As a result, some thirty thousand Brahmanas of immense quality who were versatile in 'Vedaadhyaana' and Anushthaana (Ritualistic Meditation) were transferred to Mahasagara by the grace of Kartikeya. (Source: Kartikeya Purana)

Anecdotes of Kartikeya and Ganesha: There were different 'Avatars' (incarnations) of Kartikeya and Ganesha in various Kalpas. In 'Sveta Varaha Kalpa', the two anecdotes about Kartikeya and Ganesha- the Illustrious Sons of Siva and Parvati- were narrated by Lord Brahma to His Son Devarshi Narada. As both the Brothers came of marriageable age, the question arose as to who should be married first and the parents decided that whosoever could circumambulate the entire Universe first would get the choice. Kartikeya flew off by His carrier- a peacock- without even waiting for a minute, Ganesha who applied His mind and recalled what Vedas stated that a single 'Pradakshina' of one's parents would yield the fruit of 'Bhu pradakshina'. Even half way through the full circle of the World, Sage Narada intercepted Kartikeya and conveyed that Ganesha's wedding with Siddhi and Riddhi was in progress already (they were blessed with two sons Kshema and Labha eventually). Kartikeya felt cheated by the parents and retired at Krouncha Mountain and the parents brought Him back by cajoling the dear son who felt hurt! It is on this day of Kartika Pournami, Kartikeya's 'darshan' is considered as most auspicious.

The Story of Ganesha's birth is indeed popular. When Nandi was asked to bar entry into the Interior Place of Parvati as She was taking bath, Nandi no doubt prevented but Bhagavan still entered and She was not amused. She decided to create an idol of a boy which was infused with life and empowered Him to challenge anybody with the necessary powers. The boy followed the instruction and did not allow entry

even to Siva. The Pramadha ganas were asked to teach a lesson to the boy by Siva but they were defeated in no time. Siva Himself decided to force His entry but to no avail. Finally, an irritated Bhagavan snapped the boy's head and Parvati became furious and Her angry manifestations surprised Siva Himself. She insisted that the boy be brought to life forth with. Siva suggested locating anybody sleeping in the northern direction and the Sivaganas were able to trace only an elephant. The severed head of the boy was fixed with that of the elephant and He was revived. The assembly of Deities who first fought with the boy and witnessed the entire scene earlier decided that any function in the World ought to be commenced with worship of Ganesha foremost as He is the Lord of preventing impediments and of providing success. Ganesha's worship on Bhadrapada Sukla Chathurdhi is a must all over Bharatadesa as one is dreaded of becoming a victim of undeserving blames since Moon God received a curse from Ganesha that whoever saw the Moon on the particular Chaturdhi night without worshipping Him would become a sure target!

Special implication of Ekadashi Vrata-the legend of King Rukmanga: As Ekadashi Vrata is stated to be the special day of Vishnu, observance of Upavasa (fasting), Puja and Vrata on this day is stated to be one of the pre-requisites to qualify the abolition os sins and attainment of Vaikuntha. In fact, the advantage of performing the Vrata in full faith and devotion as prescribed would ensure the fruits of executing several Assymedha and Rajasuva Yagnas, besides avoiding Yama Darshana. It is not the bathings in Sacred Ganga, Gaya, Kashi, Pushkar, Kurukshetra, Narmada, Devika, Yamuna and Chandrabhaga that are of importance but performing the Vrata. To signify the import of the Vrata, King Rukmanga of Surya Vamsha was in the regular habit of publicising the Vrata by announcements on elephant tops to alert all the citizens that one and all in the age groups of eight to eighty five years must observe fasting, Puja and penances on Ekadashi with exceptions of expectant mothers, Kumari Kanyas, persons suffering from diseases or with disturbed minds. As the law was enforced with strictness, there were bee-lines by the citizens to Vishnu dhaams and Lord Yama Dharma was had free time and Chitragupta was jobless, as the paths leading to Yama loka which were normally over crowded had very few sinners in thin streams. Maharshi made a trip to Yamaloka and enquired of Dharmaraja as to why the hells which were always busy, noisy and bristling with tremendous activity became suddenly quiet and motionless! Dharma raja informed Narada that King Rukmang enforced Upavasa and Puja compulsory on Ekadashas extended to Dwadashis too. Dharmaraja took Narada ton Chitragupta to see the accounts of arrivals which revelaled telling figures as per the Records. Then both Dharma Raja and Chitragupta approached Lord Brahma to sensitise him of the developments as the Order Books were getting thinner by the day. Brahma having examined the accounts and the Reports and decided some instant action since the subordinate officials were helpless and were having to face action as per the Rule Book.Lord Brahma then created a highly charming woman named Mohini and fully briefed her about the purpose of her creation. On the arrival of Mohini on the scene Brahma Maya overcame the King Rukmanga and decided to marry her any cost. She agreed but said although she might not ask for any thing including his entire Kingdom but whatever was desired by her should be agreed by him without objection. That was how Brahma averted the crisis as Mohini demanded the annulment of the Ekasha Vrata Rule!

Shata Rudreeyam: 1) Brahma dedicated a golden Linga to Bhagavan Siva named Jagat Pradhana and prays it at His feet 2) Sri Krishna set up a black coloured Linga called Urjit and prays to Siva's head 3) Sanaka and other Manasa Putras of Lord Brahma pray to Siva Hridaya (Heart) Linga as Jagadrati 4) Sapta Rishis pray to 'Dharbhaankura maya' (Dharbha made) Linga called Viswa Yoni 5) Devarshi Narada conceived Siva Linga as an all pervasive 'Aakash' (Sky) and prayed to Jagatvija 6) Devaraj Indra prays to a Diamond Linga called Vishvatma 7) Surya Deva prays to a copper Linga called Vishwasruga 8) Chandra performs Puja to a Pearl Linga known as Jagatpathi 9) Agni Deva prays to an Indra Nila Mani Linga named Viswesvara10) Brihaspathi prays to a Pushparajamani with the name Visva Yoni 11) Sukracharya pays penance to a Padmaragamani Linga called Viswakarma 12) A golden Linga is worshipped by Kubera called Iswara 13) Viswa Deva Ganas perform puja to a Silver Linga called Jagatgati 14) Yama Dharma raja pays his obeisance to a peethal (brass) Linga named Shambhu15)

'Ashtavasus' execute 'Aradhana' to a Glass made Linga called Shambhu 16) Maruganas performed regular puja to a Triloha Linga (three kinds of metals) called Umesh / Bhupesh 17) Raakshasas pay penance to an iron Linga and named Siva as Bhuta Bhavya Bhavodbhava 18) Guhyaka Ganas perform puja to a mirror-made Siva Linga named Yoga 19) Muni Jaigeeshva does Upasana to Brahmarandhramaya Linga named Jaigeeswara Yogeeswar 20) The famed King Nimi

considers the Ugal Netra or the Two Eyes as Parameswara Linga called Sharva 21) Dhanvanthari worships Gomaya Linga (cow dung) in the name of Sarva Lokewswareswara 22) Gandharvas perform Puja to wood based Siva Linga named Sarva Sreshtha 23) Lord Rama did intense 'Japa' to 'Vidyunmani' Linga in the name of Jyeshtha 24) Banasura paid homage to Marakathamani Linga named Varishtha 25) Varuna Deva offers reverence to a Sphatikamani Linga named Parameswara 26) Lokatrayankara is the name given to a Linga made of Munga (Black Pearl) by Nagagana 27) Devi Saraswathi pays reverence to Suddha mukta maya Linga named Lokatrayashrita 28) Sani Deva performs 'Japa' on Saturday Amavasya midnight at Maha Sagara Sangama the Bhavari (Honey Bee) Swarupa Linga named Jagannadha 29) Ravana implored to a Linga made of Chameli flower and named it Sudurjaya 30) Siddhaganas paid respects to Manasa Linga called Kama Mrityu Jaraatiga 31) Raja Bali worshipped Yashamaya (Famed) Linga named Jnanatma 32) Marichi and other Maharshis pray to Pushpamaya (flowerful) Linga with the name Jnana gamya 33) Devathas who performed noble deeds made approbation to Shubhamaya Linga (Propitiousness) named Jnaanajneya 34) Maharshi Phenaj (foam) who drank Phena did Upasana to Phena Linga called Sarvavid 35) Sage Kapila performed Japa to Balukamaya Ling named Varada. 36) Saarasvat, the son of Devi Sarasvathi did Upasana to Vanimaya Linga named Vaageeswara. 37) Sivaganas made a Linga of Bhagavan Siva and provided penance to Rudra. 38) Devathas made a Jambu River golden Linga to pray to Sitikantha. 39) Budha prays to Shankhamaya (conchshell) Linga by the name of Kanishtha. 40) The Two Ashvini Kumars pray to Muktikmaya Parthiva Linga named Suvedha. 41) Ganesha made a Siva Linga made of Wheat Flour worships it by the name of Kapardi 42) Mangala Graha (The Planet of Mars) made a Buttermade Linga called Karaala to pray. 43) Garuda prays to an Odanamaya Linga named Haryaksha. 44) Kamadeva Manmadha prays to a jaggery made Linga called Rathida .45) Sachi Devi, the Consort of King Indra paid reverence to a Salt-made Linga Buddhakesha. 46) Visvakarma prayed to a Prasaadamaya (or of the shape of a Mahal / Building) Linga called Yamya. 47) Vibhishana made a dustfulof Linga called Suhrutam to pray. 48) Raja Sagar who brought Ganga from Siva's Head made a 'Vamsamkura' Linga called Sangat. 49) Rahu made a Hing (asafoetida) made Linga named Gamya to worship, 50) Devi Lakshmi made a Lehya Linga named Harinetra and worshipped it, 51) Yogi Purush prays to Sarvabhuthatha Linga called Sthaanu. 52) Human beings prepare a wide variety of Lingas and worship them by the name of Purusha. 53) Nakshatras (Stars) pray to Tejomaya (full of Radiance) Linga called Bhaga / Bhaskara. 54) Kinnaras make a Dhaatumaya Linga by the name of Sudeepth for Japas. 55) Brahma Raakshasa Ganas pray to Asthimaya (Bones) Linga named Deva Deva. 56) Charanas worship dantamaya (full of Teeth) Linga called Ramhas. 57) Sadhya ganas pray to Saptaloka maya Linga titled Bahurupa. 58) Ritus worship Doorvaankura maya Linga named Sarva. 59) Celestial Damsel Urvasi prays to Sindhura Linga named Priya Vasan. 60) Apsaras perform Archana to Kumkuma Linga called Abhushana. 61) Guru Deva performs puja to Brahmachari Linga named Ushnivi. 62) Yoginis offer their obsequiousness to Alakthak Linga by name Suvabhruk. 63) Siddha Yoginis worship Srikhanda Linga named Sahasraaksha. 64) Dakinis perform puja to Lingas made of Mamsa or Meat and call Siva by the name of Sumidhsha. 65) Manna Ganaas worship Annamaya Linga called Girisha. 66) Agasthya Muni worships Vreehimaya Linga to Siva named Sushanth. 67) Muni Devala made Yavamaya Linga and called Siva with the name of Pathi. 68) Valmiki Muni made a Linga of Valmikas and prayed to Chira Vasa. 69) Pratardan prays to Baana Linga named Hiranyabhuj. 70) Daityagana made Rayi made Siva Linga and prayed to Ugra. 71) Daanavas worship a Nishpaavaj Linga known as Dikpathi. 72) Baadal (Clouds) pray to Neeramaya (waterful) Lingas called Parjanya. 73) Yaksharaj made Maashamaya Linga and performed puja to Bhutapathi. 74) Pitruganas made Tilamaya (Sesame seeds) Linga and worshipped Siva as Vrishapathi. 75) Gouthama Muni worships Godhulimaya Linga named Gopathi. 76) Vanaprastha ganas display veneration to a phalamaya (full of fruits) Linga named Vrikshavrita 77) Karthikeya is highly

devoted to Siva in the form of a stone Linga called Senanya 78) Ashtavatar Nag worshipped Dhanya linga called Madhyama. 79) Yagna Kartha prayed to Purusha Linga named Sthruva hasta. 80) Yama worships 'Kalaaya samaya' Linga called Dhanvi. 81) Parasurama prays to Yavaankura Linga named Bhargava. 82) Pururava prays to Ghritamaya (Gheeful) Linga by name Bahurupa. 83) Mandhata paid admiration to a Sugary Linga by name Bahuyug. 84) The clan of Cows utilises a Dugdhamaya Linga (full of Milk) for paying their respects and sincere devotion to Nethra sahasrak. 85) Pathivrata Sthrees (Women devoted to their husbands) worship to Bhatrumaya Linga called Viswapati. 86) Nara and Narayana worship Siva in the form of Mounji Linga named Sahasra Sirsha. 87) Pruthu worships Thaaksharya Linga known as Sahasra Charan. 88) Birds pay their homage to Vyoma Linga in the name of Sarvatmaka. 89) Prithivi prays to Gandhamaya Linga named as Dvithanu. 90) The entire Animal Kingdom prays to Bhasmamaya Linga known by the name of Maheswara. 91) Rishiganas perform Upasana to Jnanamaya Linga called Chirasthan. 92) Brahmanas do penance to Brahma Linga in the name of Siva as Jyeshtha. 93) Sesha Nag worships to 'Gorochanamaya' Linga named Pashupathi. 94) Vasuki Nag prays to Visha (poison) Linga with the name of Shankara. 95) Takshaka Nag prays to Kaalakutamaya Linga called Bahurup. 96) Karkotaka Nag pays esteem to Halahalamaya Linga named Pingaksha. 97) Shringi prays to Vishamaya Linga by the name of Dhurjati. 98) Puthras (Sons) perform in the name of Pitrumaya Linga (Fathers) called Vishwarupa. 99) Siva Devi worships Parama maya Linga named Vyambak. 100) Matsya and such other Jeevas pray to Shastramaya Linga named Vrishakapi.

Phalasruti: Whoever recites Siva Shata Rudreeyam in the morning, the sins committed by the mind, tongue and action get vanished; diseases and fatigue get dissolved; fear and apprehension evaporate; and worries and anxiety disappear. Those who utter the hundred names of Parama Siva and make Salutations to Him as many times would instantly secure mental peace and contentment. (Source: Skanda Purana)

Observance of Maha Shiva Ratri and its Significance: Austerities by way of day/night fasts and dedicated devotion on Maha Sivaratri falling on Krishna Paksha or dark fortnight of Phalguna month every year are considered as the sure steps to 'Iham and Param' viz. Happiness in the current phase of Life and Attainment of Salvation threafter! In the early morning of Sivarathi day, a devotee should take a vow to observe day/night austerities. In the night or Sivarathri, there must be Archana, Abhisheka, Japa and full fledged worship either at a Temple or at home depending on convenience; actually the worship by way of continuous 'Maha Nyasayutha Abhisheka' with Archana along with 'Shodasopacharas' or the sixteen types of Services and Arti, but for the sake of convenience, the Puja may be repeated every three hours during the night along with Laghu Nyasa Abhisheka, Archana, Arti etc. The night long austerity must be followed by 'Punah Puja' on the following morning and Bhojan (meals) along Brahmanas; Brahmanas who should also be satisfied with 'Dakshinas'. After observing 'Sivarathris' for fourteen consecutive years, one could perform 'Udyapan' or successful completion of the Sivarathri Vratha. Observance of Maha Sivarathri even by mistake could yield fruits, let alone proper and systematic worship; this was illustrated by an incident said Sutha Muni at the congregation of Sages at Naimisaranya:

There was a poor hunter named Gurudruha who became extremly hungry along with his family members on a whole day and that night happened to be a Sivarathri. He entered a forest on the eve of Sivarathri and waited for any animal to kill and satisfy the hunger; he waited near a waterbody over a bel tree nearby under which there was a Siva Linga as a coincidence. Having waited for the first 'Prahara' (three hours) of the night, he was lucky to have sighted a female deer along its kids approaching the water body to quench its thirst. He pulled out his bow and an arrow ready to aim at the mother deer and by a twist of fate the branch of the bel tree on which he sat moved, some bel leaves fell on the Siva Linga and some water in a vessel carried by the hunter got spilt down on the Linga, thus performing the first Phahara puja. The deer which was very sensitive even to small sounds of leaves and water falling from the tree noticed that the hunter was ready to kill it. The animal made a sincere and convincing request to the hunter that if allowed it desired to leave the deer kids to their father and definitely return bach to be killed by him. Very reluctantly, the hunter agreed and let the animals leave.

The second Prahara was closing but there was no trace of the mother deer. But the sister of the earlier deer approached the pond along her kids and the happenings of the earlier Prahara repeated viz.the hunter

pulled out his bow and arrow, the bel tree leaves as also the water drops from the hunter's vessel fell on the Siva Linga, the sister deer made a similar request and the hunter let the animal leave as he did to the earlier one, thus accomplishing the worship of the third Prahara.

As the third Prahara was closing, the husband of the original deer came in search of the female deer and the kids and the earlier happenings repeated once again and the earlier Prahara puja too was executed successfully. It was a great sight of all the deers of both the families approached during the final Prahara and the hunter was delighted that he could have a feast any time but the earlier happenings repeated and the fourth Prahara worship too was implemented. But, after the fourth worship, Gurudruha's psychology was transformed; he repented for his evil thoughts and took a vow to eschew his erstwhile acts of violence. Bhagavan Siva revealed Himself before Gurudruha as a transformed person and blessed him that in his next birth, he would be Nishad during Rama's incarnation and the latter would give him the boon of attaining Vaikuntha. (Source: Shiva Purana)

### Over-View of 'Astaadasha Puranas

Brahma 'Maanasa Putra' Maharshi Marichi approached Lord Brahma to describe the 'beeja' (seed), 'lakshana' (characteristic), 'pramaana' (means of knowledge / contents), 'vakta' (Acharya) and 'shrota' (the Listener) of the main line Puranas which provide the knowledge of the 'Charaachara Jagat' or the moveable and immoveable Universe. Among all the 'Kalpas', there actually was stated to be one Single Purana comprising one hundred crore 'Shlokas' (stanzas) with the 'Four Purusharthas' of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Mokshas as the 'bijas'; but Bhagavan Vishnu created Vyasa Muni in each Yugas and the latter in turn condensed the Single Purana with only four lakh Shlokas and distributed it among Eighteen Puranas with varied number of Shlokas among these. In fact, it is stated that the Single Mother Purana continues to be in position in the Deva Lokas. The four-lakh shlokas are sub-divided among the Eighteen Puranas viz. Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, Vishnu Purana, Vayu Purana, Bhagavat Purana, Narada Purana, Markandya Purana, Agni Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Brahma Vaivartha Purana, Linga Purana, Varaaha Purana, Skanda Purana, Vamana Purana, Kurma Purana, Matsya Purana, Garuda Purana and Brahmaanda Purana.

Mahatma Vyas first produced **Brahma Purana** with the underlying message of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha and ten thousand 'Shlokas'. This Purana described about the creation of Devatas, Asuras and Prajapatis like Daksha; about the 'Vamsa' (clan) of Bhagavan Surya; the incarnation of Lord Vishnu viz. Shri Rama and of the Epic of Ramayana; about Chandra Vamsa and of another incarnation of Vishnu viz. Shri Krishna; description of 'Sapta Dwipas' as also of 'Bhugola', the higher lokas and of the Lower Lokas of 'Pataala'; about the activities in 'Narakas'; Daksha Yagna and Parvati's wedding with Maha Deva. In the 'Uttara Bhaaga' of the Purana, 'Tirtha Yatras' were detailed with special reference to Purushotthama Kshetra; 'Ashrama Dharmas' were highlighted and Principles of 'Vaishnava Dharma', Yoga / Shankhya Siddhanta, and 'Brahmavaada Digdarshana' were explained. The Purana's 'Vakta' was Suta Maha Muni and the 'Shrota'was Shaunaka Muni. Its 'pramana' and 'lakshanas' are of 'Bhoga' (Worldly Pulls and Pressures) while the principal objective is 'Moksha'. Even reading or listening to the 'Anukramanika' or the Contents of the Purana would result in the control of 'Indriyas' or physical and internal organs, while its reading or hearing of it on a Vaishakha Purnima by honouring a Brahmana with Bhojan, and charities especiallyof a cow and gold ornament would assure attainment of Brahma loka.

Padma Purana has five 'khandas' symbolising 'Panchendriyas' wherein Maharshi Pulastya delineated to Bhishma the details in 'Srishti Khanda' of Creation of Brahma as well as by Brahma of Eight Vasus, Eleven Rudras, Twelve Adityas, Forty Nine Maruganas, Fourteen Manus, Sapta Rishis and Pitras and so on besides of Pushkara and other Tirthas, Brahma Yagna, Veda paath lakshanas, Pitraas and Shraaddha Vidhana. In 'Bhumi Khanda', Pitru Bhakti and the illustration of Shiva Sharma were cited; Vritrraasura vadha; Prudhu / Vena and Sunita's tales, the interesting examples of Nahuha, Yayati, Chyavana Muni and Parrot Kunjal, Significancre of Tirthas etc. too were covered. 'Swarga Khanda', was about Tirtha Yatras especially to the neighbouring places of Narmada, Kurukshetra, Kalindi, and Kashi, In 'Patalala Khand', the highlights were of Ramayana and Krishaayana, while Bhagavad Gita Mahatmya and of the rest of

Avataaraas of Vishnu were vividly depicted in 'Uttara Khanda'. Veneration of a Brahmana on a Jyeshtha Purnima with Bhojan and daanaas bestows the fruits of reading, hearing and meditating of Padma Purana.

Vishnu Purana comprising twenty three thousand 'Shlokas' is considered as a demolisher of past and present sins. The naarator of the Purana was Shakti Nandan Muni Parashara and the 'Shrota' was Maharshi Maitraya. In the 'Poorva Bhaaga', six major 'Amshas' or aspects were covered of which the First Amsha concerned with 'Adi karana Sarga (Primary Creation), 'Devotpatthi', 'Samudra Madhana', narratives of Dhruva, Pruthu, Praachatesa, and Prahlada. The Second 'Amsha' described the account of Priyavrata who demarcated the Earth into Sapta Dwipas; depiction of the under-sea worlds of Pataala etc. as also of Seven Swargas; the movements of 'Grahas' Planets), 'Bharata charitra', 'Mukti Marga Nidarshana' etc. The third Amsha referred to Manvantyaras, importance of Karma kanda, Shraddhas etc. Portrayal of Surya vamsha and Chandra Vamsha Kings was attempted in the fourth Amsha. In the Fifth Amsha, vivid accounts were given on Shri Krishna's childhood 'leelaas', youthful acts of 'Dushta Sikshana' and 'Sishta Rakshana', his weddings, overnight transfer of the residents of Mathura to Dwarakaa etc. A picture of Kali Yuga, four kinds of Pralayas and Gyanopadesha of Brahma Tatwa were the underscores of the Sixth Amsha. In the 'Uttara Bhaga' of Vishnu Purana, Suta Maha Muni gave narrations to Shounaka Muni concerning various chronicles on Dharma titled 'Vishnu Dharmottaraas'such as Punya Vratas, Yama-Niyamas, Dharma Shastra, Artha Shastra, Vedanta, Jyotisha, Vamsha Varna Prakarana, Stotras, Mantras and all other 'Sadhanas' (means). This Vishnu Purana tries to cover all significant 'Siddhantas' of Shastras which Veda Vyasa considered fit for attaining Moksha. Those who read or hear the Vishnu Purana with reverence and earnestness would both secure the 'Ihika' or Worldly and 'Amushmika' or Other Worldy desires most certainly. If a devotee would write down or get it transcribed by others and donate a cow to a Vishnu Bhakta Brahmana on a Purnima of Ashadha Month would be readily qualified for Vishnu Loka after the end of his/her life! Even a mere perusal of the Contents of Vishnu Purana would help with encouraging results.

With twenty four thousand Shlokas scripted into it by Vayu Deva himself, the Vayu Purana yields the fruits of propitiousness by its reading, or having it read. Comprising two parts of 'Poorva' and 'Uttara', the Purana gives an effective delineation of the means of obtaining Salvation. In the Poorva Bhagaa, the features of Sarga (Creation) are vividly expressed, besides the descriptions of the different 'Manvantaras' and Kingships especially of Gayasura and of his extermination. The significance of 'Masaas' has been discussed, declaring that the month of 'Maagha' as the best. 'Daana Dharmas' and 'Raja Dharmas' have been dilated at length. Also, narrations about Prithvi, Pataal, Dishas and Aakaash have been made in some detail in the Poorva Bhaaga. The Uttara Bhaaga of the Vayu Purana contains 'Shiva Samhita' and is fully depictive of the Sacred River of Narmada and surroundings. It is stated that this River was materialised from Bhagavan Shiva's Body and was the confluence of Brahma and Vishnu too. It is further stated that the northern bank of Narmada comprised the devotees of Rudra and the southern bank of the River by Vishnu Bhakas. From the famed Omkareshwara Kshetra towards the west leading to the Sea, there are as many as thirty five 'Sangamas' of which eleven are positioned on the nothern bank and twenty three on the southern bank; the thirtyfifth sangam is said to be at the Maha Sangam of Narmada and the Sea. In fact, there are as many as four hundred Tirthas on either side of the banks including those at the Sangamas, although there really were stated to have existed sixty crore and odd dotting along the River lines! Those who write the Vayu Purana in full and donate a cow alongwith jaggery on Sravana Purnima to a Vedic Brahmana and his family would reside in Rudra Loka during the ensuing fourteen Indratvas.

Brahma Deva informed Maricha Maha Muni about the excellence of **Shrimad Bhagavata Purana** which had eighteen thousand Shlokas and assured that it was like a 'Kalpa Vriksha' with twelve branches represented by each 'Skanda' or Chapter. Veda Vyasa was the author of the Purana and 'shrotas' or listeners were several. The Opening Skanda, as reported by Suta Maha Muni to a congregation headed by Shounaka Muni, dealt with King Parithkshit's request to Suka Muni, the illustrious son of Veda Vyasa, to preach as much knowledge of Dharma and awareness of the Supreme Power as possible within a week's time since the King was cursed by Samika Rishi's son that Parikshit would die within a week due to

snake bite; the King did the indescretion of hanging a dead serpent around the neck of the Muni who was in Tapasya. The second Skanda explained the concept of the Gross and Minute manifestations of Paramatma, the analysis of 'Maha Tatwas' - the Causes of 'Srishti' (Creation). The third Skanda described the dialogues between Vidura of Maha Bharata fame and Maharshi Maitreya about the procedure of Creation by Brahma as well as of Kapila Maharshi's narrative of Sankhya Yoga. The fourth Skanda depicted the process of 'Visarga' (Secondary Creation) and referred to the Stories of Devi Sati and Daksha Yagna, of Dhruva, King Prutha all in the context of Manus and Prajapatis and happenings during these time-frames. The fifth Skanda covered the history of Prajapati Priyavrata and progeny, demarcation of Sapta Dwipas, description of Planets and Narakas etc. The sixth Skanda covered the Story of the illustrious Brahmana called Ajamila, Daksha Prajapati's creation, the termination of Vritrasura and creation of Marudganas. Prahlada charitra and varnashrama dharma as also the'dos' and don't's by way of 'Karma' were discussed in the seventh Skanda. Gajendra Moksha, Samudra mathana, King Bali and his control through Vishnu's Avatara as Vamana and Matsyavatara were described in the Ashtama Skanda. The Ninth Skanda dealt with Surya vamsha and Chandra vamsha Kings. The Tenth and Eleventh Skandas depicted the totality of Krishna's Avatar covering the Bala Leelas, escapades of Youth, extermination of Adharma and revival of Dharma, Happenings at Dwaraka, his extraordinary role on Bharata Battle, Prabhasa Kshetra, Udbhava Geeta and the end of Yadu Vamsha. The final and the Twelfth Skanda described the accounts of subsequent Kings, the end of Parikshit, Markandeya Tapasya, the magnificence of Surya Deva and winding up by Suta Maha Muni by the aspects of Moksha prapti. Those desirous of higher achievements of Bhakti would do well by organising Maha Bhagavata 'Pathana'/ 'Pravachana' and 'Shravana' by a virtuous Brahmana on Bhadrapada Purnima and perform 'Puja' to the Vakta along with Suvarna Daana/ Vastra daana.

Narada Purana comprised twenty five thousand Shlokas based on Brihad Kalpa Katha. Narrated by Suta Maha Muni to Shounaka Muni, the Purana was basically conceived by Brahmarshi Narada himself but preached by Sanaka Brothers to Narada. The earlier part of the Purana dealt with 'Pravritti Dharma' and the second part was devoted to 'Moksha Dharma'. Sanandana described at length the Six Vedangaas as Moksha Sadhanas and about the illustration of Suka Deva in this context. The Third Part gave 'Upadeshas' to Narada by Sanat Kumara about 'Pashu paasha vimoksha' and Mantras concerning major Deities, Diksha, Puja procedures, Stotras etc. The fourth Part provided details of tithi-wise and Maasawise Vratas as also an Index of 'Ashtadasha Puranas'. The 'Uttara Bhaga' of the Purana gave details of Ekadasha Vratas, Vasishtha-Mandhata Samvada, King Rukmanga and Mohini, curse to Mohini, her revival and her exposure to Tirtha Yatras. Sincere study and 'shravana' of the Purana on Ashwin Purnima followed by Puja to a Brahmana with daanas of seven cows, clothing and so on would surely pave the way to Salvation.

Markandeya Purana has nine thousand Shlokas and the various 'Dharma Sandehas' or doubts related to the practice of Virtue-oriented Principles raised by the Sage Jaimini to Mahatma Markandeya were referred by the latter to Holy Birds, who were the sons of Sage Vipulaswan viz. Sukrish and Thumbaru in their past life; the Muni cursed the sons to turn as birds as they refused his instruction to be eaten by Indra who appeared as a bird and demanded human flesh at the Muni's Yagna. Sage Jaimini's doubts were cleared by the Holy Birds as to why Devi Draupadi consented to marry all the Pandava brothers, why Bala Rama had to atone for the sin of 'Brahmahatya' and why were the defenceless sons of Draupadi killed by Ashvatthaama, the learned son of Dronaacharya. Having been satisfied by the replies of the Birds, Sage Jaimini sought to be enlightened by several other topics related to the exemplary Harischandra who stood firm to follow Dharma and Satya; the rivalry of Sages Vasishtha and Vishwamitra resulting in mutual curses to become birds; the story of the better enlightened 'Jatismara' Sumati with the knowledge of previous birth than his father Mahamati and the son's 'pravachana'or teachings about the aftermath of life, its recyclings, classification of hells and their experiences; retributions and rewards of human deeds; the great examples of Kaushiki and Anasuya as Pativratas; the Story of Dattatreya and Kartaveeryarjuna; King Alarka and Queen Mother Madalasa, Yoga Siddhis, the Accounts of Fourteen Manus; Devi Mahatmya and Surya Deva Mahatmya/ Surya Vamsha headlights.

Those who read, hear and annotate the Purana and pay reverences to a virtuous Brahmana on a Kartika Purnami day by gifting a golden 'Pratima' with an enbossed elephant would qualify Shiva Loka.

Agni Purana was addressed by Agni Deva himself to Sage Vasishta through fifteen thousand Shlokas describing Ishaana-Kalpa. It provided an account of 'Dashavataras' at length followed by Agni Karyas, Mantras, DikshaVidhanas and Abhishekas. Then the details of Mandala Lakshanas, Devalaya vidhi, Shalagrama puja, Deva Pratishtha, Bhugola and Khagola Varnana, Shatkarmas, Yantra, Mantra, Shat prakara Nyasa, Koti homa vidhi, shraaddha vidhi, Griha Yagnas, Shrouta Smaarta Karmas; Maasa-Tithi-Vaara-Nakhatra Vratas; Sandhya / Gayatri Vandana; Rajyabhisheka vidhi; Swapna/ Shakuna phalas; various Shant Mantras and Procedures; Dhanur vidya, Ayurveda, Yoga and Vedangas like Vyakarana, Chhandas, Sahitya, Jyotisha etc. Agni Purana Vachana, Pathana, Manana and Lekhana-hearing, reading, cogitating, and writing- on Margasirsha Purnima and daana of 'pratimaas'/ idols of golden lotus and cow with tilas would yield the 'Punya'to secure fulfillment of desires in 'Iham' or the on-going life and 'Param' / Swarga Prapti thereafter.

Bhavishya Purana which contained fourteen thousand Shlokas was originally recited by Brahma to Narada to Veda Vyasa to his disciple Sage Sumantu. The Purana is divided into five Parts viz. 'Brahma Parva', 'Vaishnava Parva', 'Shaiva Parva', 'Soura Parva'and 'Prati Sarga Parva'. The highlights of the Purana are Sacred Rites, Varnashrama Dharmas, Vratas including Ganesh Chaturthi, Naga Panchami, Skanda Shashthi, Ratha Saptami, Suryoraadhana, Agni Homa vidhi, over-view of Yugas, Satya Narayana Vrata; the advent of Jesus Christ and Prophet Muhammad, Revival efforts of Hindu Dharma, Shankara and Ramanuja Acharyas, Mughal Empire, Victoria and British Rule and finally various Vratas in prevalence. Veneration to the Purana is best done by reading, writing and Pravachana on Pousha Purnima and paying respects to learned Brahmanas along with daanas of gold ornaments, clothing and bhojan.

Brahma Vaivarta Purana scripted by Veda Vyasa consisted of eighteen thousand Shlokas and divided into four 'Khandas' viz. Brahma Khanda, Prakriti Khanda, Ganesha Khanda and Shri Krishna Khanda; it underlined the identity of Shiva and Vishnu. In fact Narada prayed to Bhagavan Saavarni and the fact of one-ness of Shiva and Vishnu was over-emphasised. Addressing the congregation of Munis, Suta Maha Muni commenced with 'Srishti Varnana', Origin of Vishnu from the body of Shri Krishna, background of Radha, Gopas and Gopikas, and Creation of animate and inanimate beings. In Prakriti Khanda, the Mahatmyas of Devis Durga, Radha, Lakshmi and Sarasvati were given; besides narrations of and Savitri Satyavan, Surabhi, Swaha and Sudha, Surata, Ganga Mahatmya, Ramayana and worship of Lakshmi. In Ganesha Khanda, the supremacy of Ganesha was extolled at length, besides covering the accounts of Jamadagni, Parashurama, and Kartaveeryarjuna. Shri Krishna Khanda was totally devoted to Krishna's childhood leelaas, his youth and romantic accounts, his adventures in destroying evil forces and saving the virtuous, his key role on the context of Maha Bharata etc. This Sacred Purana is highly worthy of reading, concising, writing and worshipping especially on Magha Puranami. Charity to a Vidwan by way of Pratyaksha Godaan would grant the donor with Brahmaloka praapti and cotentment as long as one lived on Earth.

Highlighting Bhagavan Shiva's extraordinary magnificence, **Linga Purana** was written by Veda Vyasa but as conceived by Maha Deva Himself with some eleven thousand 'shlokas'. At the commencement of the Purana, Creation of Universe was depicted followed by 'yogaakhyaan' and 'kalpaakyaan'. 'Linga pradurbhaav' (emergence of Linga) and procedure of worship was explained later on. Subsequently, the Story of Muni Dadhichi, exposition of 'Yuga Dharma', description of 'Bhuvana kosha' or the World, as also details of Surya Vamsha and Chandra Vamsha were scripted. This was followed by the depiction of 'Linga Pratishtha' or formal set-up of Linga with Mantras as also the discussion of 'Pashu-paasha vimokshana' or salvation of human bondage. The topics of Shiva Vrata, 'Sadaachara', 'prayaschitta' and 'Shrishaila' Temple visit were also covered. The destruction Andhakasura and Jalandhara were described as also the 'Avataras' of Vishnu as Varaha and Nrisimha. The devastation of 'Daksha Yajna', the blazing of Manmadha and the wedding of Shiva and Parvati were covered. The sacred 'Shiva Sahasranaamaas' were rendered, apart from the description of Ganesha Mahatmya and Shiva Tandava. In the Uttariya

Bhaga, the Vishnu and Shiva Mahatmyas were given. Then followed the coverages of the significance of Snaana, Yaaga, daana, Shraaddha and Shiva Puja 'Mahimas'. Pratishthaapana mantras, Aghora kirtana, Vajresdwara Maha Vidya, Gayatri Mahima, Triambika Mahatmya and such other topics too got extensive coverage. Those Shiva Bhaktas who would read, reproduce, reflect and render the most auspicious Linga Purana on any day but most certainly on Phalguna Purnima day would certainly yield considerable returns. If these deeds were accompanied by charity of 'tila dhenu' (cow) either as a Pratima, or better still in a live form, one would definetely accomplish 'Shiva Sayujya'.

Varaha Purana scripted by Veda Vyasa with twenty four thousand stanzas divided into two Parts and was dominted by high Vishnu-consciousness. Initiated with a conversation between Bhagavan Varaha and Devi Prithvi, the Purana covered the exemplary devotion displayed by Kings Priyavrata, Ashwasira, and Vasuas well as Sages like Raibhya and Gomukh. After 'Shraddha' Kalpa, accounts of concerned Deities governing specified days were described for instance Agni on Pratipada, Aswini Kumars on Dwitiya, Devi Gauri on Triteeya, Ganesha on Chaturthi, Naga Devatas on Panchami, Kartikeya on Shashthi, Surya Deva on Saptami, Ashta Matrikas on Ashtami, Durga on Navami, 'Dasa Dishas' on Dashami, Dwadasi on Vishnu and ten incarnations, Dharma Purusha on Trayodasi, Chaturdasi on Rudra Deva, Amavasya on Pitaras, and Moon on Purnima. Then various 'Vratas', 'Daanas', and Tirtha Yatras/Punya Khestras were discussed in the Purana. The portrayal of Bhu Devi's rescue from the clutches of demon Hiranyaksha by Varaha Murti, which indeed was the main Subject matter of the Purana, was described very effectively. The Purana was indeed the Kalpa Vriksha of Vratas and Tirtha Yatras aside from 'Daana Mahimas'. Its veneration on Chaitra Purnima with its reading, writing, and memorising contents, along with 'daana' of a golden 'Garuda' should help secure Vaikuntha to Bhaktas.

The largest and one of the most popular of Puranas which was dominated by Bhagavan Shiva viz. the **Skanda Purana** also called as Kartika Purana has eighty one thousand Shlokas, divided by Veda Vyasa into Seven 'Khandas' viz. Maheswara Khanda, Vishnu Khanda, Brahma Khanda, Kasi Khanda, Avantya Khanda, Nagara Khanda and Prabhasa Khanda. A bird's eye-view of the entire Purana includes Kedara Mahatmya, Daksha Yagna, Shiva Linga Puja, Samudra Mathana, Shiva-Parvati's wedding, birth of Skandha, carnage of Tarakasura, Panchalinga Sthapana, Appearance of Maha Kaal, significance of various Tirthas like Arunaachala, Venkataachala, Purushottama Kshetra, Badari Kshetra; of the months of Kartika, Margashira and Vaishakha; and of the Mahatmya of Ayodhya, Rameswara, and Dharmaranya, Kashi, Avanti, Prabhhasa and Dwaraka; Shiva Mantra-Shiva Ratri-Shiva Pradosha and Shiva Kavacha etc. Perhaps the best coverage of Tirthas all over Bharat was attempted in Skanda Purana. Those who reproduce the entire Skanda Purana as scripted by Veda Vyasa and gift it to a deserving Vedic Pandita along a golden 'Trishul' (Trident) on a Magha Purnima day should indeed be blessed with 'Shivaloka prapti'.

Containing ten thousand 'Shlokas' Vamana Purana was originally conceived by Maharshi Pulasthya and advised Narada about it and the latter passed it on to Veda Vyasa, while Vyasa imparted it to his disciple Romaharshana with the instruction of reciting it at the congregation of Munis at Naimisharanya headed by Maha Muni Shaunaka. This Purana has two Parts; the former Part opened with the coverage of slitting Brahma's fifth head, Kapala mochana and destruction of Daksha Yagna. The subsequent contents included 'Madana Dahana', Prahlada-Narayana battle, the big conflict of Devas and Danavas, the Story of Sukeshi and Surya, Kaamya Vrata, Durga Charitra, Tapati Charitra, Kurukshetra, the birth of Parvati, the wedding of Tapati, the Stories of Gauri, Kaushiki, Kumara, and Jabala; Siva's battle with and killing of Andhakasura and former's request to Shiva to provide him with full-fledged *Ganatwa*; birth of Marudganaas; the tales of King Bali, Lakshmi, Trivikrama etc. In the 'Uttara Bhaaga', there are four 'Samhitas' pertaining to Maaheswari, Bhagavati, Souri, and Jnaneswari. In the Maaheswari Samhita, there was a vivid description of Shri Krishna and his devotees. In the Bhagavati Samhita, Jagadamba's delineation was provided, while in the Souri Samhita, Bhagavan Surya's Mahatmya was explained from the view point of destruction of sins. In the Ganeswari Samhita, there were the significant explanations about the extraordinary powers of Ganesha and Bhagavan Shankara. Reproduction of the text of Vamana

Purana during 'Sharat kaala' and perform 'ghrita dhenu'daana would redeem 'Pitras' from 'narakas' to Swarga and the devotee himself would reach 'Vishnupada' after his end of life.

Kurma Purana with seventeen thousand 'Shlokas' divided into four Samhitas was essentially a Vishnu dominated 'Grandha' of great significance. Brahma introduced this Purana to Maharshi Marichi about several Principles of Virtue targetting the attainment of the Four Purusharthas of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. In the 'Poorva Bhaaga' of the Purana there were covrages of Bhagavan Kurma and Maharshi's conversation, Varnaashrama Principles, Creation of Universe, outline of the method of 'Kaala Sankhya, Shankara Charitra, Parvati Sahasra naama, Yoga, Bhrigu Vamsha, Creation of Swayamshu Manu and lineage, Dahsha Yagna and its destruction, Daksha Srishti, Muni Kashyapa and progeny, Atri Vamsha, Shri Krishna-Markandeya Samvad (conversation), Vyasa-Pandava Samvad, Yuga dharmas, Mahatmya of Kasi and Prayaga, and the effectiveness of 'Vaidika Shaakhaa' or the Following of Veda practioners. In the 'Uttara Bhaaga' of the Purana, there were the Ishwariya Gita and Vyasa-Gita, and Instructions on Dharmic Principles. This was followed by 'Brahma Samhita' covering 'Prati Sarga'or Universal Destuction and Renewal. In 'Bhagavati Samhita', there are five Parts, the first four Parts being devoted to the four Varnas of Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudras and their respective duties; the fifth Varna viz. of 'sankara' or mixed origin was also prescribed of duties by following so that the persons concerned might be shifted to higher levels in future births. The third Samhita called 'Souri Samhita' which teaches 'Shat-karma bodha' and the Fourth one entitled 'Vaishnavi Samhita' is a Guide to accomplishing 'Moksha'. This Purana is an excellent exposition of the established Principles of Dharma and a comprehensive Guide to the pure and devout Hindus seeking 'Uttama Gati' or the most appropriate Route to Salvation. This Sacred Purana is best read, heard and written on a day of Solar Movement from Southern direction to Northern (Uttaraayana day) or vice versa called Dakshinaayana and give away charity of a golden 'Kurma' to a Vedic Brahmana.

Matsya Purana again scripted by Veda Vyasa over fourteen thousand 'Shlokas' commenced with the discussion between Matsya Deva and Manu, and continued with description of Brahmanda (Universe), Creation of Brahma, Devas, Asuras; emergence of Marud Ganaas, Manvantaras, King Pruthu, Creation of Surya and Vaivaswata Muni, Pitru Vamsha, Shraadhha kaal, creation of Soma and his vamsha, King Yayati, Kaartaveeryaarjuna, Bhrigu's curse, Vishnu's ten incarnations, Praise of Puru Vamsha, Hutaashana Vamsha, Nakshatra Vrata, Purusha Vrata, Martandashayana Vrata, Kishnaashtami Vrata, Ananata Triteeya Vrata etc. besides Graha Shanti, Shiva Chaturdahi, Sarva Phala tyaaga, Sankrasti Snaan, Shashthi Vrata Mahatmya, Snaana Vidhi, Antariksha gamana, Dhruva Mahima, Shreshtha Pitara Mahima, Shiva-Parvati wedding, Kartika's birth, Tarakaasura's extermination, the Story of Nrisimha, Vaaranasi / Narmada Mahatmya, Vaastu Vidya, Deva Mandira Nirmaana, future Kings etc. This highly virtuous Purana is conducive to excellent health, extension of life, securing fame and name, and fulfillment of wishes. Pathana, Shravana, Lekhana, Manana and Kirtana of this Purana as well as daana of a golden Pratima of Matsya to an erudite Brahmana also with Go-daana at 'Vishuva Yoga' would result in 'Vishuu dhaama praati'.

Garuda Purana was Vishnu Deva's sermon to Mahatma Garuda, as conveyed by Brahma to Maharshi Marichi and it contained nineteen thousand 'Shlokas'. At the beginning of the Purana in the 'Purva Bhaaga', there was brief introduction of 'Srishti'and was followed by the Puja of Surya Deva and other Deities, Diksha Vidhi or procedure of assuming Diksha or disciplined way of life; Shraadda Puja, Nava Vyuha Puja, Vaishnava Panjara, Yogaadhyaaya, Vishnu Sahasra naama kirtana, Vishnu Dhyaana, Surya Puja, Mrityunjaya Puja, Maalaa Mantra, Gopala Puja, Trailokya mohana Shridhara Puja, Vishnu-Archa, Pancha Tatwaarcha, Deva Puja, Sandhyopaasana, Durgaarchana, Maheswara Puja, Sarva Deva Pratishtha, Ashtaanga Yoga, Daanadharma, Praayaschitta vidhi, Naraka varnana, Jyotisha, Saamudrika Shastra, Swara Jnaana, Nutana Ratna pariksha, Tirtha Mahaatmya, Gaya Mahatmya, Pitaropaakhyaana, Varna Dharma, Ashrama, Preta shuddhi, Niti Shastra, Vratha katha (story), Surya/Chandra Vamsha, Shrihari Avataara katha, Ramayana, Hari Vamsa, Bhaaraataakhyana, Ayurveda, Chikitsa, Dravyaguna, Roga naashakaVishnu Kavacha, Garuda Kavacha, Traipura Mantra, Prashna chudaamani, Vyakarana, Chhanda,

Tarpana, Bali Vaishya Deva, Sandhya, Paarvana Karma, Nitya Shaaddha, Sapindana, Dharmasaara, Praayaschittha (atonement of sins), karma phala, Yogashastra, Vishnu Bhakti, Nrisimha Stotra, Vishnvarchana stotra, Vedanta / Saankhya siddhanta, Brahma Gyana, Atmaananda, and Geetaasaara. The Uttara Khanda starts off with Preta Kalpa varnana. Asked about Dharma, Bhagavan Vishnu explained about the route to 'Urthwa lokas' or the higher destinations and the performance well defined acts of Virtue including Shodasa Shraaddhas, 'daanaas'etc. Then were scripted the route to Yamaloka, the wreched experiences on way, 'Preta's' features, 'sapindikarana', 'pretatwa mukti', the erstwhile deeds of help rescuing the Preta from various torments, Yama loka varnana, determination of sins or good deeds, effectiveness of follow-up deeds by progeny performing the rites after the death under reference, Madhya shodasda shraaddha, proactive deeds to enable 'swarga prapti' of the deceased, 'sutaka dina sankhya'or the number of 'Asuchi' depending on the relationship to the deceased, Narayana bali karma, Vrishotsarga Mahatmya, Nishidha karma tyaga, criteria for Swarga Prapti, etc. The Purana also gives accounts of the seven under worlds, five upper worlds as also of Brahmanda Charitra, Pralayas, ever-repetitive cycles of birth and deaths etc. Reading, writing, hearing, thinking and imagining of post-life experiences of the contents of Purana during 'Vishuva' Yoga time along with charity of a golden swan to a Brahmana would help reduce the severity of sins.

**Brahmanda Purana** with twelve thousand 'Shlokas' has four Parts titled 'Prakriya paada', 'Anushanga paada', 'Upodghata paada, and 'Upa samhaara paada'. The first two Paadaas are considered as 'Purvi Bhaga' and the latter two as 'Uttari Paada'. The Prakriya paada narrrates Instructions on Duties, description of 'Naimisha' or the popular Forest Place of the Congregation of Rishis, Creation of Hiranyagarbha, formation of Lokas, etc. The Second Part gives a picture of Kalpas and Manvantaras, Lokagyana, Creation of human beings, Creation by Rudra, Rishi Sarga, Agni Vijaya, Kaala sadbhaava, Priyavrata's vamsha, Prithvi's length and breadh, Bharata Varsha, Sapta Dwipas, the under-world of seven regions like Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Rasatala, Patala etc; Bhurbhuvah like upper Lokas, details of Grahas (Planets) and their features, Adityavyuha's description, Devagraha anukeertana, the incident of how Shiva became 'Neela Kantha', Amavasya varnana, Yuga tatwa, Yana pravartana, features of human beings as per Yugas, Rishi pravara varnan, Swayambhu Manu's details, the chronicle of the rest of Manus, etc. In the 'Upodghaata Paada', there are the detyails of Sapta Rishis, Prajapatis, Marudganaas, Kashyapa's progeny, Rishi Vamsha, Pitru Kalpa, Shraadha Kalpa, emergence of Vaiwaswata Muni, the lineage of Manus, Ikshvaku Vamsha, Atri Vamsha, Amaavasu Vamsha, the tale of Yayati, Yadu Vamsa, Kaartaveerya, Parashu Rama, Vrishni Vamsha, Sagara charitra, Krishnaavataara, Bali Vamsha, and depiction of future Kings on the Earth. In the Uttara Bhaaga of the Brahmaanda Purana, there are descriptions of Upasamhaara Paada including 'Pralaya' (The Great Dissolution), Time measurements, account of Fourteen 'Bhuvanas' / worlds, sins and the resultant hells, practice of virtue and attainment of 'Shiva dhaam'

Who should read Puranas! Lord Brahma told Maharshi Marichi that basically Bhagavan Vishnu bestowed a Single Purana to him which was of the volume of crores of Shlokas; Brahma passed on to Vasishtha Maharshi who in turn gave away to Parasara Muni and the latter pronounced it aloud and Vayu Deva carried it to Veda Vyasa. Vyasa selected only four31lakh stanzas and disrtibuted these among Eighteen Puranas. These were sketched for 'Loka Kalyan' and even these highly abridged versions are apparently tough to digest. It is believed that a person who could read, hear, reproduce, annotate and assimilate all the Eighteen Puranas in full as written by Veda Vyas should have no rebirth into this 'Samsara'once again. Besides, this kind of ideal person, should practise the Sacred Principles enunciated among them. In any case, the contents of any or all Puranas should not be preached to a 'daambhik' (vainglorious), 'Paapaachari' (sinful), unbearable of Devas, Gurus and the Virtuous and to 'shath' (stubborn) persons. Only those who are self-controlled, matured, good-featured and God-fearing should be specially invited and inspired to inculcate interest in the Puranas and their contents. (Source: Narada Purana).

Epilogue-The Vedic Faith is Everlasting despite pulls and pressures!

Even as extension of Dwapara Yuga there had been threats to Arsha Samkstiri / Hindu Culture, vide Shi Krishna's efforts to decimate the Yavana King who joined hands with Jarasandha of 'Maha Bhagavata'. The strength and glory of the eras of Panadava clan declined after Parikshit, Janamejaya and Shataanika. In the weak lineage of the Kings, the King Pradyot performed Mleccha Yagna and Kali along with his wife was stated to have made an appeal to Bhagavan Narayana not to create hurdles in the spread and might of Kali Yuga and Narayana assured Kali that soon a man named 'Aadam' and woman named 'Havyavati' would promote the cause of Mlecchas and speed up the spread of Kali Yuga. Vishnu himself appeared to have advised a Mleccha King named 'Nyuh'to build and launch a huge Ship (Novah's Ark?) to save Believers of God. There was continuous storm for forty days and Oceans overflowed and submerged Earth.

In the initial period of Kaliyuga, Bharata Varsha gradually adopted Videsha Samskrti; new culture, lifestyle and even language. For instance, earlier languages got corrupted and new expressions emerged: Vraja Bhasha, Praakruti, Sanskrit or Sanskrit based Prantiya Bhashaas and various Dravidian languages got adapted to 'Gurundika' (English) and other Mleccha (Alien) Bhashas. In the process, the Vedic Dharma witnessed change and evolution. As the Rulers changed, so did the cultures but the core remained intact. Buddha/ Ashoka created a new verion of Hinduism; Vikramaditya resisted the onslaught of Barbarians like Shakas, Mlecchhas, Yayanas, Tursharas, Parasikas (Persians), and Hunas, Shatayahanas controlled Shakas, Chinese, Bahmikas, Kamarupas, Rome and Ishaamashih (Jesus Christ). King Bhoja resisted the cult of Prophet Mahammad.But Pathans overpowered Prithviraja and thus the Bharata Varsha witnessed dissipation of Hindu Dharma, Varnashrama became a virtual non-entity excepting in very feeble form. It was in such extreme situation, the glorious contribution made by renowned 'Acharyas' to revive and sustain Hindu Dharma; the illustrious such Acharyas included Ramananda, Nimbaditya, Madhavachray, Jayadeva, Shankaracharya and his great followers like Giri Sharma, Vana Sharma, Purib Sharma, Dundi Raja and so on; Ramanujacharya, Chaitanya Maha Prabhu, and so on. The role of Regional Kings like Shivaji and even Kings of alien Dharamas like Akbar-as Hindu influence in reversewas evident on the large canvas of Hinduism. Thus like the 'Jeeva Nadis' (ever flowing Rivers of Bharata Varsha) as Ganges, Vedic Culture will indeed survive, albeit incorporating and absorbing external and internal influences in the process of evolution, and continue in its Core Form for ever till the existence of humanity!

Om Purnamnadah Purnamidam Purnaat Purnamuduchyatey, Purnasya Purnamadasya Purnameva vasishyatey/